



## Mexican distillery visit busts mucho misconceptions

by [Chris Owen](#) ([RSS feed](#)) on Nov 23rd 2011 at 2:00PM



On a recent visit to a Mexican distillery, we learned a few things about tequila but a lot more about the people of Mexico who have done remarkably well considering the natural resources they have to work with.

Mazatlán is located on Mexico's Pacific Coast at the foot of the Sierra Madre Mountains. Not far from there is pretty much the perfect place on the planet to cultivate the blue agave plant, which makes into some of the finest tequilas known to man.

The 130-year-old Vinata de Los Osuna Plantation and Distillery today stands as the only surviving agave plantation, located on the outskirts of the town of La Noria, not far from Mazatlan.

We passed through what might commonly be mistaken as desert wasteland, dotted by blue agave plants mixed in with huge cactus but not a lot of anything else. It was a typical scene from any number of old western films where cowboys came in off the trail full of dust and stories of banditos.

While the distillery itself now utilizes modern technology in the production of the agave spirit, the original distillation process and its antiquated tools are still maintained and on display.

Still, the process is the same today as it was 100 years ago and not unlike what it takes to make a variety of spirits. The Blue Agave plants are roasted, sugar is extracted, there's a fermentation process then distilling and finally aging.





That someone would even think to use these plants for anything is remarkable. They look like weeds. That they built a name in the world of spirits and created an income source from the agave plant is even more amazing but typical of Mexican ingenuity.

The tourism industry is big in Mexico too and host to some amazing places like the Vinata de Los Osuna Plantation and Distillery where visitors can tour daily.

Top Misconceptions About Tequila learned in Mexico from people that make it:

1. **Tequila comes from a cactus.** No, tequila comes from the agave plant.
2. **Tequila is best consumed via shot glass with lime and salt.** Nope. Good tequila is best done in a snifter-like glass, no salt or lime needed to hide the taste.
3. **Good Tequila contains a worm in the bottle.** No, Tequila never comes with a worm in the bottle. Some mezcals, cheap imitations of tequila, do.
4. **Gold Tequila is the best tequila.** Wrong again, clear, white is best. Sorry Jose Cuervo and everyone I ever told gold was "the good stuff".
5. **Tequila is high-octane alcohol.** No, tequila is nearly always sold at 40% alcohol in the US, much like any other liquor.



Bonus tequila tip: There is no good brand of tequila that comes in a plastic bottle.

*Photos: Chris Owen*

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