



How the Gringos Stole Tequila: The Modern Age of Mexico's Most Traditional Spirit

Chantal Martineau

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Tequila is one of the fastest-growing spirits categories in America, the margarita the country's most popular cocktail. But no longer is it only cheap party fuel—it has become America's luxury sipping spirit. *How the Gringos Stole Tequila* eloquently traces this extraordinary evolution.

As Chantal Martineau makes clear, there's far more to the story than an upmarket trend shift. Martineau spent several years immersing herself in the world of tequila—traveling to visit distillers and farmers in Mexico, meeting and tasting with leading experts and mixologists around the United States, and interviewing academics on either side of the border who have studied the spirit and its raw material: agave.

How the Gringos Stole Tequila addresses issues surrounding the sustainability of the limited resource that is agave, the preservation of traditional production methods, and the legal constructs designed to protect tequila from counterfeiting. It examines the agave advocacy movement—made up of agave growers, distillers, bartenders, importers, and scholars—that has grown up alongside the spirit's swelling popularity.

But besides detailing the culture and politics of Mexico's most iconic liquid export, this book also takes readers on a colorful tour of the country's Tequila Trail, as well as introducing them to the mother of tequila: mezcal. Including an unprecedented drinking guide to Mexico's agave-based spirits and a stunning collection of full-color photographs of the production process, *How the Gringos Stole Tequila* will long remain the definitive look at the evolution of North America's only truly native spirit.

How the Gringos Stole Tequila: The Modern Age of Mexico's Most Traditional Spirit Details

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From Reader Review How the Gringos Stole Tequila: The Modern Age of Mexico's Most Traditional Spirit for online ebook

Dean says

A nice read particularly for those with an interest in both Mexico and Tequila.

The author does have an anti capitalist point of view as evidenced by her title. We didn't steal Mexico's Tequila. We bought it! Close to \$2 Billion US Dollars sent to Mexico last year.

She doesn't think we have stolen Mezcal yet. I guess the premise is as sales of Mezcal rise it too will be stolen or compromised by Gringos and our evil American corporations like Brown Forman and our evil British cousins and their corporations like Diageo.

Her case was strong enough that more Mezcal field tasting is in order. I will have to check in with Julio to see what kind of stock Tommy's has.

Very good due diligence on both the brands and tasting notes for both Tequila and Mezcal.

Amuse says

ho-hum

Casey Bee says

Really fantastic read. I've learned a lot about Mezcal and Tequila, and the list in the back of things to try is the best kind of to-do list I can think of. Seems to be well researched, but also was a great personal account of moving through Mexico and talking to people who are obviously passionate about their craft. She talks about how America stole (and made) tequila, but for her the big crime is the potential of that ruining the mezcal industry....which is (mostly) pure now.

Martin Doudoroff says

Timely, excellent journalism.

Curt Fox says

Via Goodreads First Reads:

Over the years, I've read countless books about beer, from its history to its manufacture to the business itself, and it became clear that no matter how much you might enjoy drinking something, exhaustive detail in a book about that something runs the risk of becoming a sleep aid. I've come across the same phenomenon in books about gin, bourbon, and cocktails in general. It's as though the author's love of the subject blows past the governor that says "enough detail!" You end up with a veritable tome that you feel obligated to read (If they love beer enough to do all this writing, don't you owe it to them to read it?) even if it means missing much of it due to glassy eyed stares.

But Chantal Martineau? She seems to have gotten this engaging work on tequila just right.

There is history, there is agronomy and agriculture, there's business and politics and marketing. You've got stories about plants and people and food, insects and worms and technology both antique and new. Did I say stories? I did, and here's the key to the book: it's a story about Mexican agave-based liquors and the people who have made them, currently make them, and will make them going forward. And it's a story that moves along at a comfortable but fetching pace. With each new datum, you find yourself wanting more. And it keeps giving.

I tend to be a sucker for research well-done, but I feel mildly hypocritical admiring Martineau's hands-on approach to garnering material for her book, because really, how rough a task was it traveling about Mexico, sipping tequilas and mezcals and listening to stories about where they came from? And yet, it was a task indeed, because how easy would it be to look past the meaningful notes, losing the nuances of stories due to one or two copitas of mezcale too many? That said, if anything did actually get by her during these data-gathering adventures, it surely doesn't show in the finished product.

I got to the end of her book feeling as though I know pretty much all I could need to know about the tequila/mezcal business. Yes, there could have been more detail, but how much of the science behind fermentation, for instance, must be thrust before me? Rather, tell me how the liquor is made, though not in such depth that I could start doing it myself tomorrow, but in a way that I feel I know a whole lot more than I did before I read about it.

And one enchanting feature I fell for quickly was the way she neatly convinced me that the spirits themselves had as quirky and distinct personalities as the people crafting them. And in case you feel inspired to sample some of those she's painted so nicely (liquor, not people), there are several pages at the end listing select varieties and their creation techniques, along with a summary of notable qualities.

You don't like tequila? Plenty of people say that. But if you've never tried any of the finer concoctions she writes about, then you can't really say you've had TEQUILA. She, not unlike you, or me for that matter, also swore off the stuff after a bout with a brand almost closer to sterno than good, artisanal tequila. But she fought past that self-inflicted prejudice. Might I recommend you at least try to do the same? You'll thank me. More importantly, you'll thank Chantal and her countless hours of arduous research. I know I have.

Luella says

I received this book through a Goodreads giveaway. The book was informative and covered issues about tequila through many disciplines and angles especially from historical and scientific angles.

It was also entertaining and not dry although some chapters felt disjointed and some things were explained over and over like the diffusers but other things were not like DF is used later and I had forgotten that it meant Mexico City and had to look it up. That was my main issue with it. Over all the book is written in a casual style that is a nice balance of not too professional but not really pandering to the layman.

The book portion is only about 180 pages the rest of the book is a list of tequilas and mezcal that are supposed to be good based on information gathered by the author from company reps.

I think even if I had hated the book that list in the back would have been worthwhile. All in all I learned a lot more about where and how tequila is processed and it opened my eyes to all sorts of issues that I had no idea existed. I would recommend this book to others who had any interest at in learning more about tequila, meszcal or other drinks of Mexican origin.

Eric Zandona says

I liked the book, however, the title is overly sensationalistic and distracts from the main theme of the book.

Theresa says

I won this book in a giveaway and enjoyed reading it. I think the title is a bit too vague and may not entice some readers. I recently was in Mexico, took a private tour with a native, and got to see first hand the making of tequila, so I did enjoy the in depth look at this. There is so much culture and history with this drink that is unknown. I really enjoyed the appendix and her descriptions of the different tequilas. It is kind of like note taking in a wine tasting tour. I will enjoy my next Patron with a lot more knowledge and appreciation.
