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# MEXICAN CARIBBEAN

# INFO

RIVIERA MAYA

## Mexican Drinks

# your Momma's margarita

To drink tequila like the Mexicans do, ask for a shot of your favorite tequila with a side of sangrita (sayn-GREE-tah), a spicy concoction of tomato and citrus juices that's to be alternately sipped, like a mini-chaser.

The Associated Press

Unlike in the United States, margaritas in Mexico are almost always made with fresh juice and pure agave tequila.

"It's hard to find a bad margarita in Mexico," says Kim Haasarud, Los Angeles mixologist and co-author of "101 Margaritas."

But to drink tequila like the Mexicans do, ask for a shot of your favorite tequila with a side of sangrita (sayn-GREE-tah), a spicy concoction of tomato and citrus juices that's to be alternately sipped, like a mini-chaser. Most bartenders make their own.

Browse at a "tequileria," a shop that sells nothing but tequila. Most have tasting counters; all have prices and selection that will put your local liquor store to shame.

### **A primer to premium tequilas**

Ready to experiment with premium tequilas? Here's what you need to know about the main styles.

#### **Blanco**

Unaged and crystal clear. The connoisseur's choice for its

purity and bite, blanco, or "silver" tequila, is young, bright and sharp. Drink it straight, sipped from a slightly chilled shot glass, with a little squeeze of lime if preferred. Best for making fresh margaritas.

#### **Reposado**

Aged up to 1 year in wood barrels. Preferred by some for its mellower flavor and increased body. Drink it straight, from a slightly chilled shot glass or snifter; or on the rocks with some freshly squeezed lime juice.

Can be used in a margarita, but not recommended. "If you see someone making one of these 'Cadillac' margaritas with aged tequila, all they're doing is gopping it up so you can't taste the tequila anymore," says restaurateur and tequila connoisseur Laurence Kretchmer.

#### **Añejo**

Aged one to three years for a dark, amber color and complex flavor. With a smoky, woody profile like scotch, best served straight.

The Mexican government last year approved the "extra añejo" designation for tequilas aged more than three years. Only a handful of producers have tried it so far.

If you want to make a margarita on your own, here is Haasarud's basic recipe.

#### **Basic Margarita**

**Kim Haasarud, Los Angeles mixologist and co-author of "101 Margaritas"**

2 ounces 100 percent agave tequila (blanco is best)

1 ounce orange liqueur (triple sec or Gran Marnier)

Juice of 2 limes

Juice of half a lemon

2 ounces of simple syrup (one part sugar and one part water, heated in a pan until the sugar has dissolved)

Mix all ingredients, pour over ice (crushed or cubes) and shake well. Serve entire contents in a tall glass. Do not strain out the ice.

**Start to finish:** 5 minutes

**Servings:** 1

