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Chilean/Peruvian Pisco Top Facts

Updated by Bethany Coats
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Pisco:

1. The name “Pisco” is most likely derived from the Quechuan word for bird, which was used as the name of the inhabitants of the Peruvian region where Pisco began.
 - a. Christian Callec- Chilean Pisco: Crystalline Spirit Pt. 2
2. Can be traced back to the 16th Century
 - a. La Bodega – History of Pisco
3. Is a colorless, grape brandy
 - a. Steve Dolinsky – How to Make a Pisco Sour

Chile vs. Peru:

1. Regions of Productions
 - a. Chile: By law, Pisco can only be produced in the Elqui valley, in Atacama and Coquimbo – the country’s two D.O. (Designation of Origin- The law states that “the name of Pisco can only be used for spirits obtained from distilled wine produced from grapes grown in Atacama and Coquimbo”.) regions. These zones are:
 - i. **Atacama:** Copiapó and Huasco river valleys
 - ii. **Coquimbo:** Elqui, Limarí and Choapa river valleys
 1. Kristen Bieler – The Promise of Pisco: Chilean Pisco Makes a Surge in US Market
 - b. Peru: The only production areas of Pisco are located on the coast of Lima, Ica, Arequipa, Moquegua, and the Locumba, Sama and Caplina valleys in the Department of Tacna, Peru.
 - i. Taste of Peru- El Pisco
2. Distillation
 - a. Chile: Chilean Pisco is distilled from fully fermented wine.
 - i. Peru vs. Chile: The Pisco War
 - b. Peru: Peruvian Pisco is distilled from fresh new wine (not fully fermented) that is especially selected for the making of Pisco.
 - i. Pisco: A Peruvian Tradition of Excellence
3. Aging
 - a. Chile: Required to age for a minimum of 6 months, but can also age for any period long than that. There are 3 classifications of this process:
 - i. Transparent: 6 months aging in a stainless steel or inactive wood container

- ii. Guarda: Stored in French or American Oak for at least 180 days
 - iii. Aged: Aged in active French or American Oak for one year, though most producers age for two or more.
 - 1. Kristen Bieler- The Promise of Pisco: Chilean Pisco Makes a Surge in US Market
 - b. Peru: Rests for a minimum of 3 months in containers of “glass, steel or any other material which does not alter its physical, chemical, or organic properties”.
 - i. Taste of Peru- El Pisco
4. Aged
- a. Chile: Permitted to age in wood, but not required to
 - i. Pisco- what is Pisco?
 - b. Peru: Kept in steel, glass or plastic containers
 - i. Lauren Viera- The Pride of Peru
5. Post-Distillation
- a. Chile: Producers are allowed to add purified water in order to adjust the alcoholic level of the blend
 - i. La Bodega- History of Pisco
 - b. Peru: Laws prohibit any treatment of the distilled spirit that could influence the original taste
 - i. Pisco- what is Pisco?
6. Most Popular Pisco Drink:
- a. Chile: Pisco- a combination of cola and Pisco
 - i. Elyse Glickman- Chilean Today, Cool Forever
 - b. Peru: Pisco Sour- National Drink of Peru- egg white, lime juice, simple syrup, bitters
 - i. Paul Clarke- A Primer to Peruvian Pisco
7. Grapes Used
- a. Chile: Grouped into 2 categories based on aromatic expressiveness:
 - i. Muscat types (Pink Muscat, Muscat of Alexandria)- very fragrant
 - ii. Pedro Jiménez, Moscatel de Austria and Torontel- not very fragrant
 - 1. Kristen Bieler- The Promise of Pisco: Chilean Pisco Makes a Surge in US Market
 - b. Peru: 8 grape varieties – Quebranta, Common Black, Mollar, Muscat, Albilla, Italia, Torontel and Aguardiente
 - i. Pisco is Potent and Spicy, as Well as the Pride of Peru
8. Label
- a. Chile: There are many producers gathered under an umbrella of a few labels
 - i. Patricio Tapia- The Other Pisco: Chile vs. Peru
 - b. Peru: There are hundreds of labels, mostly artisanal, and each with their own philosophy and label
 - i. Patricio Tapia- The Other Pisco: Chile vs. Peru
9. Label
- a. Chile: Don’t show the year of harvest on labels
 - i. Patricio Tapia- The Other Pisco: Chile vs. Peru
 - b. Peru: Show the year of harvest on labels
 - i. Patricio Tapia- The Other Pisco: Chile vs. Peru
10. Production

- a. Chile: Often housed in newer, modern facilities with technology guiding the process; resulting in consistent flavor and style
 - i. Cecelia Messina- It's Peru vs. Chile in a Battle of South American Brandy
- b. Peru: Made by hundreds of artisanal producers using century old processes; resulting in the same characteristics as those produced hundreds of years ago
 - i. Patricio Tapia- The Other Pisco: Chile vs. Peru