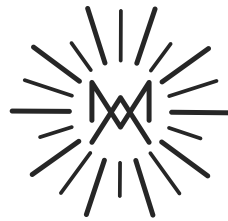


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Philosophy Mezcal Amores Initiatives



Mezcal Amores is a project made with love. We are a group of individuals in love with our heritage, culture and history. We are following our dreams by shedding light on what mezcal is all about and inviting people to get to know it and join our community. This is a spirit born from a philosophy, a spirit with a story to tell.

## **Objective of Mezcal Amores Philosophy**

Our main objective is to create a win-win situation for all the parties involved in the process by implementing a model that benefits everyone at every level of the Amores project. Mezcal Amores is committed to supporting local communities, maestros mezcaleros, agave growers and the local economies of Oaxaca and Guerrero where our mezcal is produced. We provide high-quality mezcal while preserving the land. The primary goal of our philosophy is to be as sustainable as possible in everything we do. We dedicate 15% of our gross profit to improving ecological, economic and social sustainability in the mezcal producing regions.

## **Ecological Sustainability Plan**

Mezcal Amores / Amaras is committed to assuring the preservation of the land and production of mezcal for future generations. We have created an ecologically sustainable plan to reach our goals.

### **1. Reforestation Program.**

Our reforestation program consists of replanting 10 agaves – of the same species – for each agave we use. In 2014, we planted 10,000 Espadín, 10,000 Cupreata and 5,000 Tobilá in proper ecosystems where these species belong. In 2015 we have planted 35,000 Espadín, 30,000 Cupreata, 8,000 Tobilá and 4,000 Tepezate.

We are meticulous about which variety of agave we plant, where they are grown and how many we plant to make it sustainable. Mezcal Amores works only with cultivated or semi-cultivated agaves, which means that we choose to not use wild agave for making Mezcal Amores if we don't have a prior reforestation plan in mind.



# Mezcal Amores Philosophy

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This is not a common practice for mezcal brands. An agave can take between 5 to 35 years to reach maturity (depending of the species), it is our commitment to ensure the long-term preservation of the species and its biodiversity to ensure the plant's future lineage and guarantee jobs for future generations of mezcal producers.

## 2. Nurseries.

We aim to have a nursery close to each distillery. We already have two and we are planning to complete construction of three more before the end of the year. The land where we plant the agaves belong to the community; this is mutually beneficial to both the local community and Mezcal Amores. The owners themselves work their lands so they can benefit from the fruits of their labor.

We encourage producers and growers to move from mono-culture to organic poly-culture according to habits and traditions of each village in order to protect the long-term viability of their lands and to not be exclusively dependent on the agave by growing beans, pumpkins, chilies and corn in the same fields while the agaves are growing and reaching what we internally called the perfect "Milpa".

We keep close attention to each batch of agave and the land where we plant to maintain the highest quality.

From the process of planting agave to the bottling of the finished product, we work very closely with the growers, maestro mezcaleros and bottlers to respond to their needs, achieving goals as a team.

## 3. No chemicals or additives in our process.

The production process is 100% natural and organic. The agaves are roasted for 5 days in a conical stone oven, then they are ground on a horse-drawn Egyptian mill, the fibers and the juice extracted from the agave plant matter are transferred to open air fermentation vats made of pine where natural fermentation takes place. Mezcal Amores does not use any additives or extra yeasts to accelerate the fermentation process. This is a common practice, which negatively affects the final product. After 7 to 30 days, depending on the season and the climate, the juice converts from sugars to low alcohols; the mash is placed in a small pot still where a double distillation takes place.

## 4. Use of Agave residue

After distilling, the remaining fibers are collected to use mainly as a compostable fertilizer in the agave fields and sometimes as a component for building walls. This entire process creates little to no waste. We are currently working on improvements such as working with 100% sustainable wood as well as reducing agave residue resulting from the distillation.

# Mezcal Amores Philosophy

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## Economic and Social Sustainability Plan

We attempt to achieve economic and social sustainability in the communities and with the producers we work with by ensuring fair trade of agave and liquid (mezcal). This ensures that the multi-generational producers can grow their businesses without altering their traditional method of making mezcal.

### 1. Horizontal Growth

We are currently working with 12 producers in Oaxaca and Guerrero. We believe that building community and creating relationships with maestros mezcaleros based on confidence, trust and hard work is the only way to make a real change in terms of sustainability and economic growth. Working with more than one producer exclusively allows a better wealth distribution and also allows producers to respond in a healthy and sustainable way to the increasing demand of mezcal. We allow each maestro mezcalero to work at his own pace and at his capacity to preserve his or her traditional process and methods of production. As a result of this, the end consumer can benefit from a unique product with diverse and distinct terroir from each batch. We have noticed that as a result of building trust with the communities and maestros mezcaleros we work with, some of the family members have come back from the US to work closely with their families in the production of mezcal because they see a future in the project.

### 2. Purchase liquid at 20% above the market average

Mezcal Amores pays maestros mezcaleros approximately 20% above market average price for

the liquid they commission. Paying the right amount of money for the liquid has a positive impact on the living conditions of everyone who works at the distillery allowing them to receive higher incomes.

### 3. Price pact for buying agave

In 2014, we implemented the first future price for agave, which means that agave growers are not fully dependent on the fluctuation of market prices. Mezcal Amores ensures regular incomes based on a previously agreed upon price range and allows agave growers to have a vision towards the future. Amores was the first company to implement the future price of agave practice in Mexico.

### 4. Micro loans for maestros mezcaleros

We provide part of the budget to offer interest free microloans to maestros mezcaleros who are interested in improving and increasing their facilities with new equipment such as pot stills, fermentation vats, etc. We are open to hearing what projects they have in mind so we can work on providing loans for feasible projects. As a result of the microloans, new jobs have been created in the communities, allowing the community to grow as a whole.

### 5. Future plans

Finally, in the near future, when the Amores sustainability plan achieves a predetermined set of goals we will shift the plan's budget to support the communities in other areas such as education, health and nutrition. The assistance provided will be tailored according to the needs and traditions of each community.

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