

Cinco Estrella de Mayo

Another Cinco de Mayo has come and gone, many reflect upon the day as a celebration of Mexico's victory over the French at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862.



But the point for many isn't really the historical reasons as to why we're celebrating; Ask most people and they'll tell you it's Mexico's independence day – which is not true, that's in September; but more importantly it is about celebrating a culture with food, drink and music.

The main drink of the evening aside from the Coronas and Tecate's is of course the Margarita. Tequila with a splash of orange liquor, lime and simple syrup, served in it's signature glass with a salted rim; that's the recipe we're all familiar with. Most bars will cut corners, use well (as in the cheap stuff) tequila, triple sec, and "margarita mix, which is really just "sweet and sour mix" with a little green coloring...and that's really just... well... I don't really know what those mixes are made of.

If you want a quality margarita, there are many places that will make it as it was intended. Search further and you may find some establishments that will up the ante and use premium tequila. Several places even boast having the most expensive margarita.

The Adobo Grill for example has the "Maria Felix Margarita" for \$50

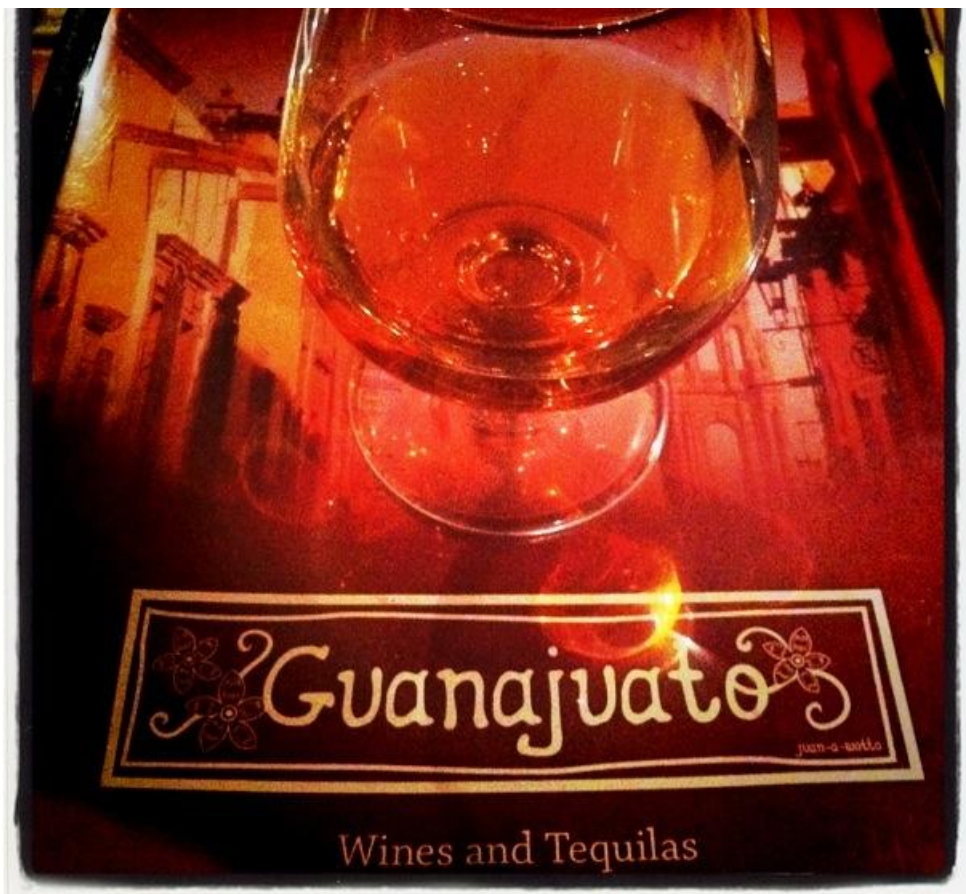


Herradura Selección Suprema and Grand Marnier 150 year with just-squeezed lime juice and a sea salt rim — prepared tableside

Back in 2008, margarita aficionados were all abuzz about the Riverside Grand Margarita at the Riverside Hotel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I haven't heard if they still offer it. All I can tell you is that it's made with Patron Gran Platinum, Fresh Limes, and a "special" (a.k.a. expensive) triple sec made to commemorate Grand Marnier's 150th anniversary – and that back then it would set you back \$65.

Honestly \$65 for a margarita does not impress me at all. **Guanajuato** (<http://www.myguanajuato.com/>) in Glencoe, Illinois offers the Patron Gran Burdeo Anejo





an ultra-premium dark tequila which is triple distilled, velvety smooth and aged for at least 12 months in American or French oak barrels, distilled again, and racked in hand-selected Bordeaux barrels, adding the flavors of vanilla, raisins and dried fruit which are found in the greatest Bordeaux wines.

At \$71 a snifter, surely it would make for an extraordinary, not to mention expensive, margarita... but then who can put a price on happiness? I stopped by there back in march and tried it for myself, truly an amazing experience. Take a break from the city and head north to Glencoe and seek out Guanajuato and try out their

selection of premium tequilas.

If you truly want the best, you're going to have to do it yourself. It's going to take some time and a bit of money but hey it's the best and dammit, you're worth every penny...

Let start with the tequila. Yes, there are a lot of really good tequilas out there but we're looking for the elite. My choice is **Barrique de Ponciano Porfidio**. This is produced in small batches every year; about 2000 bottles. The combination of leading edge distillation methods along with its aging in virgin French limousin oak and Italian acacia wood barrels produce a tequila like no other. What's so awesome about that you ask? Ask the biggest wine connoisseur (a.k.a. wine snob) you know and they'll tell you limousin is a big deal because the wood has a looser, wider grain which imparts more flavor from the wood...and the acacia wood provides depth and complexity. Great care and attention to detail was taken in crafting this tequila, if you're lucky enough to find a bottle be prepared to pay between \$600 to \$1000 for it. It is, I'm told, worth it.



You could argue that a margarita made with **Tequila Ley .925 Pasion Azteca** would push the price into the stratosphere but considering the bottle is 18 pounds of Platinum and is encrusted with 4000 diamonds, I'm sure most of the 1.5 million dollar price tag is going towards

the packaging. (though if you want to be cheap, you could get a smaller bottle for a quarter mil) Not to discount the liquor inside but I could put tap water in an 18 pound vessel made of platinum and diamonds and it could fetch a substantial price.

Next is the orange liquor. Now we all know price is not always relative to quality. Just because it's expensive does not ensure it's good and just because it may be inexpensive does not mean it's bad. Such is the case with **Solerano Blood Orange Liqueur** from Sicily. Slightly dry with a citrus zest finish makes it stand out.



Or course if you want to stay with the gold standard, there's **Cointreau Noir** ... it's a blend of Cointreau liqueur and Rémy Martin cognac...I'll pause here and let the decadence wash over you ok.



The other option, the most popular option would have to be of course **Grand Marnier Cuvée Cent Cinquantaire** we're talking about a orange liqueur blended with cognac that has been aging for up to 50 years! All of the cognacs used in the blend have aged for a minimum of 15 years and all hail from the champagne region in France. It really doesn't get much better than that.



Key Limes



Rangpur Limes

For the limes, the margarita purists will tell you only **Key Limes** will do. Key limes are the little round fruits with the thin rind produced mostly in Mexico. They're tart and a little bitter... they're also...well, typical. A nice alternative would be a **Rangpur Lime**...though technically not a lime, it's a mandarin orange lemon hybrid but the acidity would work very well.

last but not least is the simple syrup. Typically simple syrup is sugar diffused in water. Eh.



The juice extracted from sugar cane is a different thing altogether. If you have the means, you should extract it yourself instead of cheating and finding canned sugar cane juice; a quality juice does the job.

Also, a small squeeze of organic agave syrup gives it just the right touch.



Since this is a pursuit of the very best margarita, attention must be placed on even the tiniest of details. When mixing, use a metal shaker, not a boston shaker with the mixing glass, why? because instead of ice which would dilute the drink. Instead use either whiskey stones or **Capron Steel Rocks** (<http://caprondesign.bigcartel.com/product/rocks-luxurious-quaffing>) to chill and aerate the drink...the rigorous shaking could break the mixing glass of a traditional boston shaker.



Laeso Salt

As for the salt on the rim, if you want the very best, there is a small island off the Danish coast called **Laeso**. Their method for producing salt has not changed in over a thousand years and has become one of the most sought after salts in the world. One kilogram goes for around \$30.

Last but not least, the ice in your glass needs to be held to the same lofty standards as every other component in your drink. Ice from the trays in your freezer made from the water from your sink isn't going to make the cut. Even in the world of ice, there is a best.

[\(http://www.glace-ice.com/\)](http://www.glace-ice.com/)

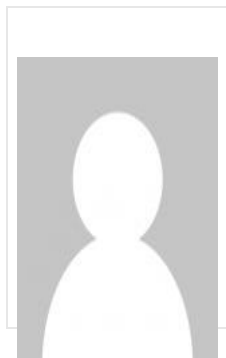


Glâce Luxury Ice is the world's leading premium drink-ice brand. Our proprietary manufacturing process creates a zero-taste™ profile ice which, unlike traditional ice products, allows the consumer to maximize the beverage experience. Our elegant design provides minimum dilution and maximum cooling, greatly enhancing enjoyment at the point of consumption.

A pouch with 5 individually carved spheres shipped to your door will run you \$25, it's purity is noticeable and may just ruin regular

tap water ice for you.

Not bad huh.. actually it's the best of the best and considering the whole is greater than the sum of it's parts, we're talking about a very Feliz Cinco de Mayo.



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