

FRIENDS

MEZCAL

Smoky Soulmates

With a base of charred agave, mezcal is delightfully smoky, much like many whiskies, and fans of either will find plenty to like in both spirits. “Mezcal and whiskey each have a great depth of flavor that enhances a cocktail—and even more so when paired together,” says Carlos Batista, food and beverage director at Landrace in the Thompson Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. “And you only need a couple of simple mixers, such as honey and lemon juice, to tie it all together.”

Batista notes that pretty much any style of whiskey will mix well with smoky, vegetal, earthy mezcal. “A wheat whiskey is great because it tends to be milder, drier, and at times fruitier, so it doesn’t overpower or compete with the mezcal,” he says. “Bourbon’s notes of vanilla, toffee, caramel, and oak pair beautifully with mezcal, but a great rye is also fantastic, as it can add some spicier notes to the cocktail.” And the smoke notes of a peated scotch mingle nicely with the agave smoke of mezcal. “Mix the two together and it creates different layers of smoke, all unique,” Batista says.

To achieve balance in a whiskey-and-mezcal cocktail, Batista suggests pairing a lighter whiskey with a smokier mezcal, or vice versa. “But at the end of the day, it’s really all about personal preference,” he says.

—Sally Kral



Mezcal meets wheat whiskey in the Smoked Lavender Flower (left) and Tennessee whiskey in the Smoky Piña (right).

JEFF HARRIS / DRINK STYLING BY DUNCAN FITZPATRICK

Smoked Lavender Flower <i>Carlos Batista</i>	1½ oz. wheat whiskey	½ oz. mezcal	¾ oz. warmed lavender honey	½ oz. fresh lemon juice	Microwave the honey 10 to 15 seconds to liquify it. Shake all ingredients with ice until well chilled. Strain into a double rocks glass and garnish with a lavender flower or lemon peel.	
Mezcal Bourbon Sour <i>Carlos Batista</i>	1 oz. bourbon	1½ oz. mezcal	¾ oz. light agave nectar	½ oz. fresh lime juice	1 large egg white	Dry shake all ingredients until frothy, about 1 minute. Add ice and shake hard again for another 20 to 30 seconds until the shaker is frosty. Strain into a coupe or Martini glass and garnish with a lime twist.
Another Old Fashioned Type <i>Carlos Batista</i>	1 oz. blended scotch	1 oz. mezcal	¼ ½ oz. agave syrup	2-3 dashes orange bitters	Stir all ingredients with ice and strain into an Old Fashioned glass over one large ice cube. Garnish with an orange peel.	
Smoky Piña <i>Carlos Batista</i>	½ oz. Tennessee whiskey	½ oz. mezcal	1 oz. fresh pineapple juice	½ oz. fresh lime juice	¾ oz. simple syrup	Shake all ingredients with ice until well chilled. Strain into an ice-filled Highball glass and garnish with a pineapple leaf.