

# WHISKEY MAIZ NATION

**The way Rye whiskey came about in Oaxaca, Mexico reads a little like a fairy tale, but that's how amazing innovations sometimes happen in this part of the world.**

In 2016 Jonathan Barbieri was looking to expand his mash bills using some of the antique wheat varieties that have been grown by smallholding farmers in Oaxaca since the arrival of the Spanish nearly 500 years ago.

He was following an off-road tract to a remote hamlet he'd heard of, where they grow wheat and apples at over 9,700 feet above sea level in the Sierra Madre, when he came upon a farmer who needed a lift. As they drove through the cloud forests, it became clear that both men were heading for the same village. Conversation then turned to the varieties of wheat that they still grow there and Barbieri asked if there was anyone in the village who happened to be growing rye. At such a high altitude, Barbieri thought, it might get cold enough to support the grain's early-growth cycle. "Yes," the man said, "my uncle grows rye! I'll bring you to his house."

This chance meeting, in the middle of the fabled Sierra Madre of Oaxaca, led to the creation of the first-ever rye whiskey grown, mashed and distilled in Mexico. But there's still more to the story! How did rye seed even get to the mountains of Oaxaca? We know that wheat came with the first wave of Spanish colonizers and that bread and other wheat-based foods were quickly absorbed into the colonial diet. To this day, people bake bread every morning in adobe ovens throughout Oaxaca's diverse ecosystems.

And, like most farmers who cultivate wheat in the high sierra, Jonathan's new found friend was a baker (the families of both





men are, after eight years of working together, very close). And one fine day as he was rounding a blind curve on his way down the mountain to sell his loaves of bread, he nearly crashed head-on with another driver who was coming the other way, from the valley below.

Fortunately, they managed to stop within millimeters of each other. Both men descended from their vehicles, each bearing a small gift for the other. The farmer-baker brought out his loaves, while the other, a foreigner, bore as his gift, a small bag of seeds. (I told you it sounds like a fairy tale. And, it's true!) "Please, he said take these seeds, try them. See if they will grow on your land. I shall return in one year"

The man never returned. But the following year, it was Barbieri who arrived and agreed to buy his first 300 kilos of mountain grown, Oaxacan rye. He mashed and distilled this modest amount in the famous eighty-liter copper pot still he used for experiments. The results were pure, beautiful, delectable. And ever since, Barbieri and Maíz Nation have been laying down barrels of this unique elixir.

Today, Maíz Nation's annual rye acquisition runs in the tons and they produce around four barrels a year. The high-mountain rye used for Maíz Nation whiskey is ground, mashed, fermented, distilled and aged at the SolCraft Distillery, presenting a one-of-a-kind terroir that completely delivers on complexity and texture.

**Unique in terroir and unique in origin, Maíz Nation is incredibly proud to present the first Mexican Rye Whiskey to the world!**

Handcrafted off-grid at SolCraft Distillery in Oaxaca, Mexico  
Very slowly distilled on small, copper pot alembics  
Non chill-filtered

Imported by Lot001 Brands

