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GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION

AGUARDIENTE DE HIERBAS DE GALICIA

TECHNICAL FILE

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GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION TO BE REGISTERED

Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia

CATEGORY OF SPIRIT DRINK:

Other spirit drinks, in compliance with Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 1576/1989.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPIRIT DRINK

Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia is a traditional spirit drink made in Galicia. It is based on the grape marc spirit protected by the geographical indication *Orujo de Galicia*, and involves maceration and/or alcohol distillation in the presence of its characteristic herbs. The final product must have an alcoholic strength of no less than 37.5 % vol. and no more than 50 % vol. The sugar content must be less than 100 g per litre.

Physical and chemical characteristics

The chemical composition of *Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia* must be as follows.

Parameters	Maximum	Minimum
Alcoholic strength (% vol.)	50	37.5
Methanol, g/hl a.a.	950	200
Total acidity expressed as acetic acid, g/hl a.a.	150	-
Acetaldehyde (ethanal), g/hl a.a.	150	-
Ethyl acetate, g/hl a.a.	250	-
Total higher alcohols g/hl a.a.	600	225
Copper, mg/1 sample	9	-

(g/hl a.a.= grams/100 litres of absolute alcohol)

Organoleptic characteristics

Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia has the following organoleptic characteristics:

- Appearance: translucent - clear.

- Colour: ranging from straw-coloured to greenish-yellow.

- Aroma: intense, smooth, delicate, flavoursome, full, with floral aromatic notes and marked character of the grape marc spirit on which it is based, complemented by its characteristic herbs. Absence of damp, burned or unclean odour and acidic notes.

Flavour: lasting, balance between the base alcohol and notes of aromatic herbs and spices, recalling the characteristics presented by the aroma.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The area covered by the geographical indication *Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia* comprises the whole of the Autonomous Community of Galicia. The grape and the by-products of wine-making, marc and lees, must be produced in that area. The distillation and manufacture of *Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia* must also be carried out there.

METHOD OF PRODUCTION

Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia is obtained by heat distillation. Grape marc is placed in the distillation apparatus to which direct heat or steam is then applied, in the presence of herbs selected for the preparation. An alternative method involves macerating the herbs in grape marc spirit protected by the geographical indication *Orujo de Galicia*. The hygiene and sanitary conditions must be appropriate for the grape marc. For this reason, it must be preserved and stored in anaerobic conditions.

The distillation apparatus used may be the traditional types of pot still. Any other apparatus may also be used provided that good quality distillates are obtained through steam heating, with the particular characteristics of grape marc spirits being retained. Batch distillation is carried out in the presence of the marc at less than 86 % volume. Within the same limit, redistillation of the first distillate and methanol removal are permitted.

It is expressly forbidden to add any other alcohol of vinous or agricultural origin to the distillate at any stage of the production process.

A minimum of three plant species are used in the manufacture of *Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia*. Any species appropriate for culinary use is permitted. The

following are among the most traditional: mint, camomile, lemon verbena, rosemary, oregano, thyme, coriander, orange blossom, fennel, liquorice, nutmeg and cinnamon. Plants must comply with the legislation in force and be fit for human consumption.

Various products permitted under Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 are used for sweetening.

Permitted food colourings may be used.

The production process uses natural flavourings only. It is expressly forbidden to add aromas and/or flavouring preparations, extracts or essences of any type.

LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL ENVIRONMENT OR ORIGIN

Registration of the geographical indication *Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia* is supported by the specific characteristics of the product and the reputation that it has thus gained for it on the market.

Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia is a distillate with certain specific characteristics. These are the result of two factors: the production process using the traditional know-how of local producers, passed down from generation to generation, and the raw materials used. The latter are the marc and lees, by-products of wine-making. Many of the grape varieties used are characteristic of the Autonomous Community of Galicia and rarely found outside the region. Certainly they are produced in climatic and soil conditions very different from those in other parts of Spain. White grape varieties include Albariño, Loureira, Treixadura and Godello. Among the red varieties are Mencía, the various Caíños and Sousón. There are many more in both cases. The grape varieties are very well adapted to the soil and weather conditions in the different wine-producing areas of Galicia. In general those conditions are very different to those in other wine-producing areas of the Iberian Peninsula. These varieties are particularly aromatic with high levels of terpene compounds, which increase as a result of the conditions in which local producers work. This produces distillates with an aroma and flavour combining floral and fruity notes with those of the herbs used.

These specific characteristics are undoubtedly responsible for the good reputation of the spirit drinks of Galicia throughout Spain.

This reputation dates back a very long time. Distilling spirit drinks from grape marc is a longstanding practice in Galicia. It is closely linked to wine production. Its use as a beverage and for medicinal purposes is very much part of the lives of local people.

The earliest references to the production of spirit drinks in Galicia are found in pharmaceutical contexts. References from the 16th and 17th centuries describe distillation in private and institutional pharmacies. There is evidence that pot stills were being imported during this period, and indeed even made in the province of Ourense. The stills were intended for large pharmacies, including the one in the Royal Hospital in Santiago.

In 1739, the Government of the Kingdom of Galicia argued that the right to produce spirit drink from grape marc was beneficial to the development of the wine-producing areas, and for supplying villages and towns with alcohol required for medical purposes. Other references from the 18th century complete the picture of this burgeoning rural craft. These include the existence of pot stills in wine cellars in the area that today corresponds to the *Ribeira Sacra* wine designation of origin. Pot stills also existed in the dwellings of large landowners in Santiago, and in early factories and plants in Pontevedra around 1799. In 1778, there was even a commercial enterprise in Anllo, in the present-day municipality of Sober, that failed because the majority of vineyard owners in the municipality distilled their own grape marc. Again with reference to the 18th century, it is possible to identify the first itinerant spirit drink merchants of Galicia. These also worked in the wine areas of northern Portugal, and possibly further afield.

Various factors influenced the development of this rural industry, including growing demand for the product, both for human consumption and medicinal purposes. Another factor was the gradual fall in incomes of families in the wine-producing areas. As a result, it was necessary to extract maximum profit from the harvests, and to market by-products of any kind, either raw or processed. There were also periods of limited taxation which removed restrictions on making spirit drinks for personal use. This

burgeoning sector was consolidated in the 19th century, especially the latter half, thanks to increased consumption. Production was largely in the hands of family businesses. This would prevent it from developing as a significant economic sector given the limited supply of the raw material.

Given this background, it is hardly surprising that the tradition became established in Galicia of making spirit drinks flavoured with the herbs available. The particular history of spirit drinks flavoured with herbs must be understood in the context of two historical phenomena. Firstly, there was the status of distillates as medicinal cures, almost from the earliest days of distillation in the medieval Western world. Secondly, there was the widespread tendency among ordinary people to copy the tastes and habits of wealthier people.

The earliest records refer to hospitals, particular the Royal Hospital of Santiago. Inventories from the 17th and 18th centuries provide evidence that drinks based on medicinal herbs were made and used for pharmaceutical purposes.

Furthermore, from the 17th century, changes in European tastes led to a gradual acceptance of drinks with high alcohol contents.

Various medical treatises that were widely read in Galicia provide further evidence. These show that spirit drinks made with herbs were already staples of folk medicine. Nevertheless, there were differences between such drinks. The rosolí of the wealthy classes was not the same as the drinks made with different herbs using local grape marc distillations. Rosolí gallego was a highly aromatic spirit drink with a very sweet taste, with colours ranging from red to gold.

Regional exhibitions in the second half of the 19th century provide evidence that the artisanal tradition of grape marc spirit was already established as a model. Indeed, there were producers in every province of Galicia. Numerous examples of grape marc spirit were included in the exhibitions. There was also a huge variety of distillates using combinations of herbs. For example, at the Regional Exhibition of Lugo in 1878, two producers from the municipalities of Sober and Sarria presented their distillations of grape marc with herbs. The appearance of *aguardiente aromático* at trade fairs is a clear

sign of the esteem in which it was held by the more prosperous sections of society. It also represents a trend, among a number of producers at least, to produce high-quality liqueurs.

Catalogues of regional and national exhibitions show the variety of spirit drinks and liqueurs produced and consumed in Galicia. Another example is the comprehensive catalogue printed by Jacobo Souto and Son in 1858. It records exhibits at the Agricultural, Industrial and Artistic Exhibition of Galicia held in Santiago de Compostela. There are also the catalogues of the National Wine Exhibition of 1877; the Regional Agricultural, Industrial and Artistic Exhibition of Galicia in 1875; and the general catalogue of exhibitors and prizes awarded in the Regional Exhibition of Lugo in 1897.

In Galicia, in the nineteenth century, consumption of herbal spirit drinks was very extensive, albeit under different names such as *resolío, aguardiente estomacal and aguardiente aromático*. It was mentioned in works by the great authors of Galician and Spanish literature, including Rosalía de Castro in *Cantares gallegos* (1863), Curros Enríquez in *Aires da miña terra* (1880), Emilia Pardo Bazán in *Los pazos de Ulloa* (1886) and, in the twentieth century, Ramón Otero Pedrayo in *O señorito da Reboraina* (1960).

In the early decades of the 20th century, the beverage really became established. At that time, there were two different methods of production. One consisted of putting all the herbs and the sugar, together with the grape marc, in the ‘pota’, i.e. a receptacle that was part of the distillation apparatus. The mixture was then distilled. The other involved putting the herbs in the distillation tube and the sugar in the vessel in which the distillate was collected, as recorded by Xavier Castro in *Yantares gallegos*: *historia de la dieta atlántica* (2010) and Clodio González Pérez in Galicia. *Antropología* (1997). The earliest records of herbal mixtures being sold for distillation also date from this time.

The real boost to the prestige of Galician herbal spirit drinks came in the twentieth century thanks, in particular, to the increase in publications on food and drink. This came largely, although not entirely, from the pen of the person who probably

contributed most to consolidating the prestige of the drink: Álvaro Cunqueiro. Works of fiction apart, Cunqueiro's writing is highly informative on various themes. His books on food and drink are key to understanding the culinary culture of Galicia. His work *La Cocina Gallega*, which has been reprinted numerous times and in different languages, refers to the quality of the herbal spirit drinks of Galicia. The same can be said of the work compiled in collaboration with J.M. Castroviejo, *Viaje por los montes y chimeneas de Galicia*: *Caza y cocina gallegas* which contains various passages praising the aromatic distillates of Galicia.

Other authors should also be mentioned. These include Jorge Víctor Sueiro with *Aguardientes, licores y queimadas* (1984) and Xosé Posada with his *Manual de los vinos y aguardientes de Galicia* (1982). Both publications provide information for understanding and popularising the drink.

Without doubt, one of the best proofs of the reputation of this product is its sale in the various parts of Galicia. Indeed, of particular relevance in this respect are the fake versions sold in Cuba in the first half of the twentieth century, with names purporting to allude to the Galician origin of the drink.

As with grape marc spirit, the herbal variety has undergone a twofold development in the last 100 years. On one hand, artisanal production continued in the hands of 'poteiros', or spirit distillers, who used mixtures of herbs made at home or bought in the pharmacy. On the other, production lines were created in the factories that were being established in Galicia. Both systems respected the production process and raw materials, and allowed the supply to increase while also preserving the different recipes and traditional varieties.

Furthermore, in order to protect the product with a quality mark, the geographical indication *Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia/Augardente de Herbas de Galicia* was recognised by the Consellería de Política Agroalimentaria y Desarrollo Rural de la Xunta de Galicia (Department for Agri-food Policy and Rural Development of the Government of Galicia), by Order of 8 September 2004.

EUROPEAN UNION OR NATIONAL/REGIONAL PROVISIONS

- Regulation (EC) 110/2008 of 15 January 2008 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 1576/89.

- Order of the Consellería de Medio Rural [Environment Council] of 3 January 2012 approving the regulations for the geographical indications of *Orujo de Galicia*, *Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia*, *Licor de Hierbas de Galicia* and *Licor Café de Galicia*, and of its joint Regulatory Council for Geographical Indications of Traditional Spirit Drinks and Liqueurs of Galicia (*Diario Oficial de Galicia* No 10, 16 January 2012).

That Order establishes the following requirements:

- The Regulatory Council for Traditional Spirit Drinks and Liqueurs of Galicia, governing body for geographical indications, is required to maintain three registers which must be kept up to date:

a) Register of producers of by-products from wine-making (wine cellars)

b) Register of distillers

c) Register of manufacturers and packagers

- The registered operators are responsible for the traceability of the raw materials and products, and for compliance with the regulations applicable to their field of activity. Manufacturers must provide evidence that each batch intended for sale complies with the specifications in this document, as well as other applicable regulations.

- Only natural and legal persons appearing in the Regulatory Council's registers may produce, manufacture, package or market, as applicable, spirit drinks eligible for the geographical indication *Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia*.

- It is the exclusive right of signatories in the appropriate registers of the Regulatory Council to use the name of the geographical indication *Aguardiente de Hierbas de*

Galicia, with its symbols, emblems and logos, in publicity, advertising, documentation and labelling.

- In the registered production units, the handling or storage of grape marc and lees and the distillation, manufacture and packaging of spirit drinks to be protected by the geographical indication must be carried out in a manner that ensures that the protected products are clearly separated from other products which are not protected. There must be clear identification on vats or storage containers for grape marc intended for distillation to produce protected spirit drinks, as well as on the containers of the spirit drink itself.

- In order to enable monitoring of production, manufacture and packaging and of stock volumes and, where necessary, to guarantee the origin and quality of the products covered by the geographical indication, the owners of the registered production units, whether natural or legal persons, must declare the following:

a) Grape marc producers:

- Quantity of by-products (marc and lees);

- Sales of by-products: quantities and customers;

- Stocks of by-products at the time of declaration. On depletion of by-product stocks held at the time of declaration, a statement must be made of sales, quantities and end clients.

b) Distillers:

- Declaration of stocks of different distillates;

- Quarterly declaration of by-product acquisitions, with indication of origins;

- Quarterly declaration of grape marc spirit sales.

c) Manufacturers and packagers:

- Declaration of stocks by product type;

- Quarterly declaration of grape marc spirit acquisitions;

- Quarterly declaration of sales of *Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia*.

SPECIFIC LABELLING RULES

The name of the geographical indication must feature prominently on the product labelling, in its Galician and/or Spanish version. Use of the logo, which appears in the annex to this document, is optional. The obligatory information stated in the applicable legislation must also appear.

Labels intended for use must be approved by the Regulatory Council to ensure compliance with the specific regulations applicable. Labels may not be used which, for any reason, might confuse the consumer or tarnish the good name of the geographical indication *Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia*.

All packaging used to dispatch the beverage covered by this geographical indication to the end consumer must include a seal or secondary label issued by the Regulatory Council and affixed to packaging in a way that prevents them from being re-used. The aforementioned label must include the geographical indication logo. Both versions of the latter can be found in the annex to this document.

APPLICANT

Name: Consejo Regulador de las Indicaciones Geográficas de los Aguardientes y Licores Tradicionales de Galicia [Regulatory Council for Geographical Indications of Traditional Spirit Drinks and Liqueurs of Galicia].

Address: Pazo de Quián-Sergude 15.881 Boqueixón (A Coruña) Galicia - Spain

E-mail: orujo@orujodegalicia.org

Telephone: 0034 981511566

Fax No: 0034 981511934

PROOF OF TECHNICAL FILE COMPLIANCE

The monitoring authority responsible for ensuring compliance with the conditions stated in this technical file is Ingacal (Instituto Galego da Calidade Alimentaria) [Galician Institute of Food Quality] Ingacal is a public body which comes under the Consellería del Medio Rural de la Xunta de Galicia. Its contact details are:

Name: Instituto Galego da Calidade Alimentaria (Ingacal)

Address: Pazo de Quián s/n. Sergude. 15881- Boqueixón (A Coruña)

Telephone: 0034 881 997 276

Fax No: 0034 981 546 676

E-mail: ingacal@xunta.es

ANNEX

Logos of the geographical indication

Aguardiente de Hierbas de Galicia


AUGARDENTE D HERBAS D GALICIA
GALICIA
INDICACIÓN XEOGRÁFICA


INDICACIÓN XEOGRÁFICA
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