Eight Plants That Make Mayos Mayos
David Yetman and Thomas R. Van Devender

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This chapter describes eight species of plants that make the Mayos Mayos. These include the Cordia parvifolia DC., Stenocereus thurberi, Agave vivipara L. and Vallesia glabra. This chapter also describes the applications and uses of these plants in medicine, culture, artifacts, construction, and as food. It also provides photographs of the grown plant of each species.

An Annotated List of Plants
David Yetman and Thomas R. Van Devender

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This chapter presents an annotated list of known to and used by Mayos for various purposes. This list contains some 370 species from 82 families for trees, shrubs, herbs, vines, and grasses. This chapter also discusses Mayo taxonomy and classification of vegetation and explains Mayo names for exotic species. The list includes Carlowrightia arizonica A. Gray, Agave aktites Gentry, and Amaranthus palmeri S. Watson.
This chapter analyzes the impact of changes taking place in the tequila industry on the farmers and workers who grow agave, the main ingredient in tequila. Although agave cultivation has contributed to a more secure future for a few families, the story of the agave farmers is more often one of persistent poverty, marginalization, and uncertainty. The cycles of surplus and shortage of agave, which have long characterized the industry, contribute to environmental problems and economic concentration among the farmers and the tequila companies. Because the Tequila Regulatory Council and the federal government refuse to consider any collective strategies or regulations to manage the supply or price of agave, they are allowing the tequila companies to push the agave farmers out of the supply chain altogether. Even more vulnerable and less visible than the farmers are the people who work in the agave fields: the agricultural workers and jimadores (agave harvesters).

Making Mezcal in the Shadow of the Denomination of Origin
Sarah Bowen

This chapter looks at how the institutions that regulate mezcal impact the lives of small mezcal producers throughout Mexico. The varieties of agave and the practices used to make mezcal still vary between regions. Every decision influences the taste of mezcal, producing spirits that are dizzying in their complexity and diversity. Yet, starting in the early 1990s, the Mexican government took unprecedented steps to standardize where and how mezcal could be produced. The denomination of origin, the standard, and the Mezcal Regulatory Council were all modeled directly on the institutions that regulate the tequila industry. Advocates argue that they help ensure the quality and safety of mezcal and expand its market. But the institutions that regulate mezcal ultimately protect the interests of a small group of powerful elites,
threatening to make mezcal look more like tequila and to eliminate small mezcal producers from the supply chain altogether.