

## **Mexico eyes China as world's biggest tequila market**

BEIJING, Dec. 10 (Xinhua) -- Mexico has launched a watershed campaign to promote its national liquor tequila to China, in hope of China becoming the world's biggest consumer in three to five years.

Roberto Anaya Moreno, general director of Mexico's National Chamber of the Tequila Industry (CNIT as in Spanish) made the above comment in an interview with Xinhua Thursday, on the sidelines of a tequila pairing event organized in Beijing.

The Mexican spirit has been gaining notable popularity among Chinese drinkers since its arrival in 2013, when Mexican exporters were first allowed to export the liquor directly to the Chinese market, he said.

Anaya estimates that China will near or even surpass United States to be the No.1 tequila consumer by 2020, year in which the CNIT hopes to sell around 10 million liters of the drink here.

"We are two millennium civilizations who share a very similar tradition of enjoying a good spirit", said Anaya comparing tequila with Chinese baijiu. "It is very easy for the Chinese people to accept the good quality of and the profound culture behind tequila", he added.

The logo for the China campaign shows a Chinese dragon totem married to the feathered serpent Quetzalcoatl of Mexico's aboriginal Aztec-Mayan mythology, beside a blue agave plant, which gives the drink its distinctive taste.

Tequila is a drink of infinite possibilities, said Enrique Escorza Zamudio, minister at the Mexican Embassy to Beijing, who told Xinhua that the magic of tequila lies in bringing people close, making friends and being sincere, "as Mexico would like to offer to the Chinese nation."

"Tequila can be enjoyed among friends and family on casual occasions, and it can be served at the most luxurious business banquets," said Escorza.

CNIT's statistics show that during the first three months of 2015, exports of tequila to China grew 17 percent year-on-year with more than 260,000 liters shipped across the Pacific.

From June 2013 to June 2014, tequila exports to China went up 104 percent, according to the same source.