

## OTHER ACTS

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**Publication of an application pursuant to Article 26(2) of Regulation (EU) 2019/787 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the definition, description, presentation and labelling of spirit drinks, the use of the names of spirit drinks in the presentation and labelling of other foodstuffs, the protection of geographical indications for spirit drinks, the use of ethyl alcohol and distillates of agricultural origin in alcoholic beverages, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 110/2008**

(2023/C 65/04)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 27 of Regulation (EU) 2019/787 of the European Parliament and of the Council <sup>(1)</sup>.

## SINGLE DOCUMENT

**‘CUBA’**

**PGI-CU-2768**

**Date of application: 8 April 2021**

**1. Name(s) to be registered**

Cuba

**2. Third country or countries to which the geographical area belongs**

Republic of Cuba

**3. Geographical Indication type**

Geographical Indication

**4. Category or categories of the spirit drink**

Rum [Category 1 of Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2019/787]

**5. Description of the characteristics of the spirit drink**

Alcoholic drink produced from distillates obtained from molasses extracted from sugar cane grown and processed in Cuba, and mixtures of such distillates, aged in white oak barrels. The distillates obtained have an ABV content of less than 96 %.

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 1.

*Main physico-chemical characteristics*

Characteristics	Minimum	Maximum
Ethanol, expressed as % volume at 20 °C.	37,5	41,0
Total acidity, expressed in grams of acetic acid per hectolitre of 100 % vol. alcohol.	2	100
Aldehydes, expressed in grams of acetaldehyde per hectolitre of 100 % vol. alcohol.	-	30
Esters, expressed in grams of ethyl acetate per hectolitre of 100 % vol. alcohol.	1	90
Higher alcohols, expressed in grams of higher alcohols per hectolitre of 100 % vol. alcohol.	8	400
Methanol, expressed in grams of acetaldehyde per hectolitre of 100 % vol. alcohol.	-	10
Colour, expressed as units of optical density. Standard samples may be used for this measurement.	-	1,3

Given the characteristics of their technological design and the fact that particularly aged bases are used, rums in the 'Extra' category can exceed the maximum limits set out in the specifications, with the exception of the limit on methanol content.

*Main organoleptic characteristics*

- *Appearance*: A translucent, shiny, full-bodied drink with no suspended particles. Colour ranging from very light amber to dark amber, depending on ageing.
- *Aroma*: Aroma with low alcoholic intensity. The highlights are its fruity complexity, the balance between the aromas present in the initial distillates and the notes acquired in the ageing process; undeveloped wood aromas are not predominant and a cohesive sensory profile is maintained. This aromatic balance is closer to the initial distillates, which are fresher, herbaceous and slightly fruity, in white rums, and to notes of ageing, vanilla, dried fruit, cocoa and tobacco, in dark rums.
- *Taste*: Pleasant mouthfeel. Flavours open up and magnify in the mouth and after swallowing. In the mouth, depending on whether the rum is white or dark, flavours evolve, recalling the taste of honey, fruit, coffee, cocoa, tobacco and dried spices. The retronasal effect evokes the original spirit without being aggressive, sharp, astringent, bitter or with woody aromas predominating.

Rums covered by the 'Cuba' geographical indication are classified in accordance with the following names and sensory profiles:

- *Aged white rum*: Shiny, transparent and very light amber in colour. In the nose, it has slight notes of natural ageing balanced with the sweet, herbaceous notes of the original spirit. Using the 'copa seca' technique, in which a recently emptied glass is used to breathe in the aromas, there are perceptible notes of the ageing process which linger a while. In the mouth, it has the typical flavour of white rum, slightly spicy with good harmony between the well-developed aromas from distillation and ageing; well-balanced notes of sweetness and bitterness; with a light body and a neat, smooth and warm aftertaste in the throat when swallowed.
- *White label or amber-coloured aged rum*: Shiny, transparent and light amber in colour. In the nose, the aroma is intense and balanced between herbaceous notes and clear vanilla hues. Using the 'copa seca' technique, there are perceptible notes of the natural ageing process which linger for a while. In the mouth, it has the typical flavour of white rum, with slight to moderate spiciness and well-developed aromas from distillation and ageing; slight sweet-fruity notes are perceptible along with citrus notes, well-balanced with moderate notes of bitterness; with good body and a neat aftertaste that fills the palate and gently warms the throat when swallowed.

- *Gold label rum*: Shiny, transparent and light amber in colour. In the nose, the aroma is intense and harmonious, with slight sweet-fruity notes in which the fruit predominates, and moderate, well-developed ageing. Using the 'copa seca' technique, there is a persistent aroma of natural ageing with a rapid transition from wood to phenolic compounds, ending with sweet notes of almond when the glass is fully dry. In the mouth, it ranges between slight and moderate spiciness, with slight sweetness balanced with slight bitterness, well-developed aromas from distillation and ageing, a body that fills the palate and a feeling of gentle warmth in the throat when swallowed, as well as a clean aftertaste with a slightly persistent astringent note.
- *'Reserva' aged rum*: Shiny, transparent and amber in colour. In the nose, the aroma is robust, with a harmonious balance between moderate notes of ageing and well-developed slightly fruity notes; using the 'copa seca' technique, there is a persistent aroma which transitions from wood to phenolic compounds and ends on a sweet note of almond. In the mouth, it ranges between slight and moderate spiciness, with slight sweetness balanced with moderate bitterness and well-developed, moderate notes from ageing, a body that fills the palate and a feeling of gentle warmth in the throat when swallowed, as well as a clean, long aftertaste with sweet notes from the natural ageing process.
- *Aged rum*: Shiny, transparent and amber in colour. In the nose, the aroma is intense and dry, with strong notes of ageing and predominant hints of vanilla-coconut. Using the 'copa seca' technique, there are marked notes of the natural ageing process which linger and transition from wood to phenolic compounds, ending with sweet notes of almond. In the mouth, there is a slight spiciness with a slight sweetness that is well-balanced with a moderate lingering bitterness and strong, well-developed notes from ageing; a robust body that fills the palate with noticeable intensity and a feeling of gentle warmth (without irritation) in the throat when swallowed; as well as a long, palate-filling aftertaste with sweet-bitter notes.
- *Extra dry rum*: Shiny, transparent and light amber-coloured rum, sometimes with very light green tones. In the nose, the aroma is intense and dry, with clear notes that are reminiscent of sugar cane molasses balanced with fruity notes and ending with intense notes from the ageing process. Using the 'copa seca' technique, there are strong, well-developed notes from the natural ageing process, ranging from woody notes to sensations of dryness. In the mouth there is a slight spiciness and the robust body and flavours of the aged spirit; woody notes predominate, balanced with notes of sweet fruits. Gentle warmth in the throat when swallowed, with a clean, long aftertaste with lingering notes of ageing and slight astringency that completely fills the palate.
- *Extra aged rum*: Shiny, transparent and dark amber-coloured rum. In the nose, there is a long, intense aroma from the ageing process which offers complex vanilla-coconut / sweet-caramelised notes. Using the 'copa seca' technique, the notes from ageing are long and very clear, with strong character and a rapid transition to phenolic compounds followed by noticeable and persistent notes of almond. In the mouth, there is a slight spiciness to start with, with a full-bodied flavour that completely fills the palate with its intensity, and slight sweetness balanced with persistent, moderate bitterness and well-developed aromas from distillation and ageing, with a favourable balance of the notes from ageing, with notes of vanilla and chocolate, of robust character and noticeable persistence. Gentle warmth (without irritation) in the throat when swallowed, with a clean, long aftertaste and a note of bitterness from the ageing process that lingers and completely fills the palate.

## 6. Definition of the geographical area

The geographical area concerned is the territory of the Republic of Cuba in the archipelago of the Antilles, located at a latitude of 23,2-19,9° N and a longitude of 84,8-74,2° W.

## 7. Method of production

The method of production comprises the following stages, all of which must take place in the defined geographical area:

### *Growing of sugar cane*

Different varieties (known locally as 'clones') of the plant are sown in fertile soil in Cuba, generally at an altitude that is equivalent or close to sea level. The varieties used are almost exclusively sourced from Cuba.

### *Obtaining the molasses from sugar cane*

#### Fermentation

There are two main factors in the fermentation of the molasses to produce the spirits used to make rum:

- 1) The specific qualities of the molasses, with low acid concentration being beneficial for the quality of fermentation and the quality of the rum. Therefore no molasses used to make 'Cuba' rum contains sulphur compounds in concentrations that could cause undesirable compounds to form.
- 2) The specific characteristics of the yeast used in the fermentation process to obtain fresh cane spirits for 'Cuba' rum must be such that, in conjunction with the concentration of nutrient salts used and the degree of secondary fermentation, the isoamyl alcohol concentration is never higher than 2.5 times the sum of the isobutyl and n-propyl alcohol concentrations.

The fermentation time is relatively short (between 24 and 26 hours).

#### Distillation

The spirits are distilled in a specific process that is different to that which is employed in other countries, with the following characteristic technical elements:

- Surface velocity of vapours in the distillation column.
- Time that the liquid rests on each tray in the enrichment zone.
- The distillation column must guarantee the required contact between the vapours and the copper.
- Specific ratio of volume of liquid in contact with copper surface.
- Distillation trays specially designed to prevent high temperatures in the reboiler and thus prevent the spirits from being burned.
- Fractional condensation used to select the currents that will ultimately make up the spirits. This means that there is a specific ratio of condensation surfaces in each condenser and that the sensory profile of the mixture accepted as the traditional spirits for 'Cuba' rum is subject to constant updating and controls.

The spirits resulting from the distillation must be formed by partial condensate mixtures with an ABV of between 74 % and 76 % and they can only be obtained from the continuous, direct distillation of the must of fermented cane molasses.

#### Ageing

At least two ageing stages are required. The first corresponds to the original spirits. The second corresponds to the 'base rum', which consists of a mixture of aged spirits with a distillate for rum (both filtered through activated carbon) and purified water, or just purified water on its own. In the specific case of Extra aged rum, the use of a certain proportion of 'base rum' that has undergone a third ageing stage is required. The inclusion of additional ageing stages is optional and is left to the discretion of the Cuba rum masters.

The ageing process is natural, i.e. caused by the distillates coming into contact with the wooden barrels, which must in all cases be made of white oak.

#### Mixing

Mixing is the art of mixing the spirits and the various types of base rum produced in each of the three ageing stages in an undifferentiated manner for each product and brand, resulting in the finished rum or mixtures that will go on to a third or subsequent stages. A distillate for rum may be added to accentuate the lightness.

The ageing facilities for 'Cuba' rum contain rums of very different ages and processing stages. Given the practice whereby part of some finished products undergo subsequent ageing, they contain rums made by different generations of Cuba rum masters, which the masters believe form a true archive of Cuban rum.

*Filtration*

Various types of filtration are allowed: by mechanical means, active carbon filtration and plate (also known as 'paper') filtration.

The silica stone and sand used as the mediums for the activated carbon in the filters used in the production of 'Cuba' rum are extracted from Cuban mines.

**8. Specific rules concerning packaging**

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**9. Specific rules concerning labelling**

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**10. Description of the link between the spirit drink and its geographical origin, including, where appropriate, the specific elements of the product description or production method justifying the link**

The link between the spirit drink and its geographical origin is based both on the reputation of the name, 'Cuba', and on certain specific characteristics which are essentially due to the combination of natural and human factors found in the area.

*Specific character*

The Cuban climate is different to that of other parts of the Caribbean and Central America where rum is also produced. In winter, the temperatures in Cuba are lower and there is less rainfall than in the rest of the area. This creates conditions that are very favourable for growing sugar cane, in particular for sucrose concentrations to rise during the harvest season.

By contrast, in the summer (the time of year that the sugar cane is growing and developing), the lesser impact of the Atlantic anticyclone provides for more abundant and consistent rainfall.

The sugar cane varieties planted are almost all sourced from Cuba and are part of a unique genetic heritage.

These natural factors favour molasses with the following specific characteristics, which in turn have an impact on the specific character of the end product:

- Low viscosity and acidity, which favours the fermentation process and ultimately the quality of the rum's aroma, as the sulphur concentration in the molasses is not high enough to cause undesirable aromas during fermentation or distillation.
- High total sugar content and an excellent ratio between fermentable and non-fermentable sugars, which contributes towards a short, efficient fermentation, thus allowing to maintain the typical balance in the aroma of the spirit.
- There is also natural microflora - known as non-harmful natural microflora, consisting of mesophilic and thermophilic microorganisms, including bacteria, yeasts and fungi - which also has a role to play in forming the aroma of the end product during the fermentation stage.
- Presence of an adequate concentration of nitrogen compounds, especially amino acids, which favour the formation of higher alcohols, compounds which are essential components of the typical sensory profile of the spirit and end up being transferred to the rum.

Lastly, it is important to highlight that the Cuban climate allows the distillates and blends to be aged in natural temperature and humidity conditions all year round. This guarantees that the process can be carried out properly, without any imbalances as regards the formation of compounds during the long ageing period.

As for the method of production, the use of a specific yeast culture in the fermentation process, which also has a decisive impact in the distillation and condensation processes carried out after fermentation, contribute towards making the production method for 'Cuba' rum unique and ensures that the distillate obtained has a specific aromatic profile.

Another important step in the production process is filtering the aged spirits and distillates for rum through activated carbon in order to achieve typical sensory characteristics when producing the base rums, which undergo subsequent ageing and contribute decisively to the sensory profile of the finished rums.

Finally, it is not possible to understand 'Cuba' rum without the Cuban rum masters. This is an essential human factor and a key component in the expertise of rum production, the subtleties of ageing and the expression of its mixtures. Cuban rum masters are responsible for ensuring that the Cuban values, identity and character are passed on. They are also in charge of ensuring that their work, handed down through the generations, is genuine, authentic and that it provides historic continuity.

The expertise of the Cuban rum masters, guarantors of the aromatic profile that is specific to 'Cuba' rum, is present throughout the production process and especially in the ageing and mixing stages:

- In the ageing stage of the process, the Cuban rum masters pay special attention to the sensory value of the spirit used, as they are aware that it is a decisive element in determining the sensory profile of the future rum. Among other aspects, they have to select the characteristics of the barrel (white oak, size and length of time in use) employed for each of the stages in the ageing process (minimum two) in order to achieve the typical sensory profile required for each of the stages.
- The blends of spirits and the different base rums used in each of the stages of the ageing process, carried out under the guidance of the master, are decisive in achieving the finished rum that is aged to maturity, without wood or its defects predominating and with its characteristic balance of aromas.

### *Reputation*

The undisputed reputation enjoyed by 'Cuba' rum is linked to its geographical origin. Although rum as a generic product did not originate in Cuba, it is commonly accepted that Cuba is the birthplace of the concept and flavours associated with light rum, including its smoothness and delicate aromas. It was Cuba that made the product known to the rest of the world.

There is a long history of spirit production in Cuba. References indicate that stills were already in operation in the early 16th century and that cane spirits were being made at almost all cane processing facilities.

It was in the 19th century that the production of quality rum as we know it today first began in Cuba, coinciding with an increase in exports.

By 1862, a superior quality rum was being made in Santiago de Cuba: a light, transparent product free of undesirable aromas. By 1873, an extra dry rum was being extracted from barrels, which would later be referred to as 'White Label Rum'. Although its creators were not aware of it at the time, they had just invented the original Cuban rum.

By 1876, the Cuban rum industry was so well developed that it took part in an international exhibition for the first time: the Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia. The programme for the exhibition includes a description of four rums and three spirits, one of which was awarded a 'Medal of Honour'. One year later a 'Gold Medal' was awarded at the World Exhibition [sic] in Madrid. Cuban rums went on to win medals at the World Exhibition in Barcelona (1888), at the Brussels International Exhibition (1888), at the Paris International Exhibition (1889), at the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago, Illinois in 1893; at the Bordeaux Wine Exhibition in France (1895); at the Brussels International Exhibition in Belgium (1897); at the Paris Exhibition (1898); at the Exposition Universelle in Paris (1900); at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo (1901); and at the Charleston Exposition in South Carolina (1902), etc.

Since then, Cuban rums have continued to win prizes in the most important international competitions. These are some of the most recent awards: Gold medal won by 'Ron Eminente Reserva' in June 2021 at the most prestigious wine and spirits competition in China, the China W&S Awards; two stars awarded by the International Taste and Quality Institute (ITQI) to 'Ron Cubay 1870' in Brussels in June 2021; Master medal awarded to 'Havana Club Tributo 2021' and several Gold medals awarded to other 'Havana Club' brand rums in the 2021 edition of SB & DB Autumn Blind Tasting; three Gold medals awarded to 'Havana Club' brand rums in the 2021 edition of the International Spirits Challenge; Master and Master & Taste Master medals awarded to 'Havana Club Professional Edition C' and 'Havana Club Maximo Extra Añejo' in the 2021 edition of the Rum Masters; etc.

The product enjoys an undisputed reputation linked to its geographical origin, to the extent that there is now an inextricable link between Cuba and rum among the general public. References to 'Cuba' rum can be found in travel guides and other general publications on the country; some examples are the magazines *Cuba Plus*, *Excelencias*, *Buen Viaje*, *Lugares de América*, Travel Trade Center, *Guía de Turismo Nacional* or the Lonely Planet Cuba guidebook. The book *El Sabor Líquido de lo Cubano*, which is devoted solely to cocktails made from Cuban rum, won 4th Prize in the spirit drinks category at the Gourmand Best Cookbook Awards, which are considered to be the Oscar's of the food industry.

**Reference to publication of the product specification**

[https://mega.nz/file/ChtRnajR#UdugXESNVEo7DaAPZXaUwgVB2UpfWrSSe\\_t9LKZYQPo](https://mega.nz/file/ChtRnajR#UdugXESNVEo7DaAPZXaUwgVB2UpfWrSSe_t9LKZYQPo)

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