

# Geographical Indications(GI) Guide Book of Liquor

May 2021  
Edition



## Introduction (Purpose of this book)

The Geographical Indication (GI) system for alcohol was established in 1995 with the aim of promoting the appropriate use of “place of origin” names as the common property of a region.

Based on the premise that sake has established characteristics unique to its place of origin, the name of the place of origin can be used exclusively by receiving a designation by the Commissioner of the National Tax Agency.

As of January 2021, 14 production areas have been designated, including “Japanese sake”, which is a GI at the national level.

This publication contains an overview of the system, the designation status of the Geographical Indications, as well as information on the 13 GI-designated production areas (excluding “Japanese sake”) that has been collected with the cooperation of each production area and the alcohol producers in each area.

With the introduction of the GI system, the connection between the alcohol produced and its place of origin becomes clearer, and it can be expected to increase the added value as a “regional brand”.

It also helps to differentiate the products from other products.

Furthermore, it can enable the government to perform oversight and prevent the distribution of counterfeit products.

Similar labeling is also prohibited, thus preventing “freeriding” on a “regional brand” that has been built up through hard work.

But this is not the only thing that is protected by implementing GI.

This system is also necessary to protect the world view and culture of how people can enjoy the added value of alcohol with peace of mind.

From the consumer's point of view, it is difficult to understand the value of an alcoholic beverage only from the description on the product label, etc.

Since the production standards for GI-designated sake are published, alcohol retailers, sommeliers, and other alcohol professionals can provide homogeneous and well-founded information.

Consumers being able to check the product’s quality before purchasing assures their peace of mind.

For production areas, this leads to the establishment of regional brands and plays a role in regional revitalization.

For consumers, it is a marker that allows the enjoyment of Japanese alcohol with peace of mind and a better understanding of the product.

We hope that reading this book will help promote and revitalize regional brands throughout Japan.

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## What is Geographical Indication (GI) for alcoholic beverages?

A Geographical Indication (GI) is a way to show that alcohol is from the "correct place of origin" and that its production satisfies "certain standards". Under this system, consumers are encouraged to protect the "place of origin" as a common property of the region and to use it appropriately; 14 designations have been made (as of January 2021), including "Japanese sake," which is a national-level GI.

When you decide to buy alcohol, drink it and enjoy it, how do you choose which one? You can talk to someone at a store, or in some cases you can refer to online reviews. However, even if you pick up a product in a store, it is difficult to judge the value of the alcohol just from the description on the product's label unless you are very knowledgeable about alcohol. In such cases, a reliable marker is the "Geographical Indication (GI)".

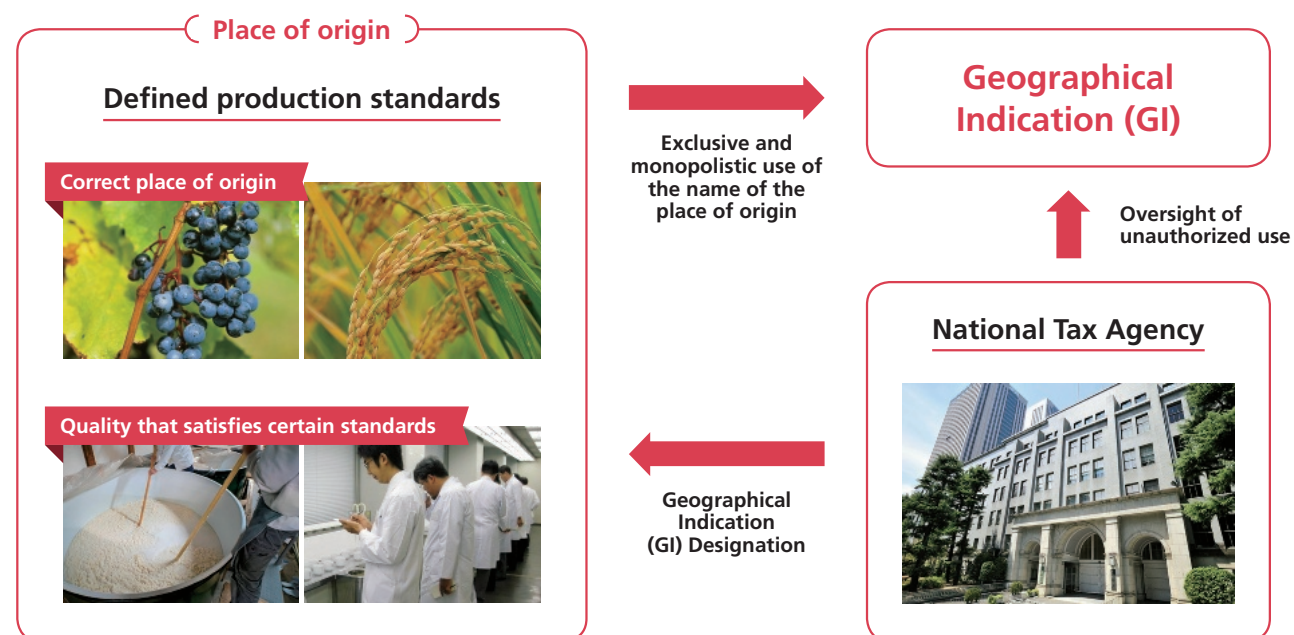
Geographical Indications are used to indicate the "correct place of origin" of alcoholic beverages and that their production satisfies "certain standards". If a product is clearly labeled with a geographical indication, the place of origin is self-explanatory and allows consumers to purchase with peace of mind. In other words, it is a labeling system that has "government endorsement" and enables correct product selection.

For alcohol that receives Geographical Indication designation, the production standards to be observed are made public, and for sake and wine in particular, sensory evaluation is mandatory before shipment. This makes it possible for consumers to

confirm the characteristics of the alcohol before purchasing it. In Europe, where Geographical Indications are widespread, they have come to be treated as reliable local products, for example French Champagne and Italian Chianti.

From the viewpoint of sake producers and production areas, the system not only makes it easier to communicate the characteristics of their alcohol to consumers, but also helps to protect the value of the regional brands. Products that are not from the correct place of origin, products whose quality does not meet the standards, and products that consumers may misidentify as having geographical indications will be strictly controlled. It will also help prevent "freeriding" on regional brands, such as through the distribution of counterfeit products.

As of January 2021, 14 Geographical Indications for alcohol have been designated in Japan. The regions are all unique and attractive. For a drink on special occasions, you can enjoy the increased quality and comfort of GI alcohol- this way of choosing may become the norm.



## Structure of the Geographical Indication System for Alcohol

Geographical indications are defined as an intellectual property right in the TRIPS Agreement (Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights), an annex to the World Trade Organization Agreement. In particular, it provides for strict protection of wines and spirits, prohibiting their use even if the labeling is not misleading to consumers. Geographical Indications, which have been introduced not only in Japan but also around the world, are a sign of trust that consumers can refer to when selecting alcoholic products.

### Why was this system created in the first place?

The Geographical Indications system was born in modern Europe. In 1851, the first ever world's fair was held in London and the French bottled wine exhibited at the fair was highly acclaimed, which led to the distribution of imitations in England using names such as "Chablis," which was the place of origin of the bottled wine.

With the conclusion of a free trade agreement between France and Britain in 1860, during the expansion of the international division of labor, with France exporting agricultural products such as wine to the United Kingdom and the United Kingdom specializing in industrial

products, it became easier to bottle in Britain low-quality, low-priced barrel wine produced in France and sell it under the name "Chablis" from France.

In order to rectify this situation, a system that crossed borders was necessary because French domestic law could not cope with the situation. This is how the Geographical Indication system was born. In this sense, the Geographical Indication system has been developed in line with the development of international trade, and the two are still closely related.

### Why can we trust alcohol with a Geographical Indication?

Alcohol is produced in a variety of regions in Japan, and from a broad perspective each region has its own unique characteristics, such as the Kyushu region where distilled alcohol is widely produced, and the Kinki region where sake is widely produced.

In the background to these characteristics there is always an "inevitability" (causal relationship) that has been consolidated over time by the natural environment such as topography and climate, and human activities such as culture and history.

The basis of the Geographical Indication system is to define "genuine alcohol" produced in a region by clarifying the "inevitability" and the

characteristics of the alcohol produced in that region.

In particular, for processed products with a complex production process such as alcohol, the quality may vary greatly even if produced in the same region. The quality of alcohol with a Geographical Indication is firmly controlled by a "management organization" consisting of professionals who have a deep understanding of the "genuine alcohol" of the region. Through this initiative, consumers will be able to easily distinguish "genuine alcohol" by the labeling of the place of origin.

### How is alcohol with a geographical indication labelled?

Alcohol produced and shipped in an area designated with a Geographical Indication and whose quality has been checked by a "management organization" is labeled with the name of the

Geographical Indication (place of origin) and one of the following three marks. It may be indicated by a specific mark in some regions.



## What is Geographical Indication (GI) for alcoholic beverages?

In December 2015, "Japanese sake" was added as a national-level GI to the geographic indications that had been designated in each region.

As the overseas popularity of "Japanese sake", which contains many elements of Japanese history and culture, has been increasing each year, this is part of the effort to enhance the brand value of "Japanese Sake" as a whole.

Japanese sake is a traditional alcoholic drink that is consumed at weddings, funerals and annual events, and is deeply connected to the lives and culture of the Japanese people. Based on this historical and cultural background and other factors, the National Tax Agency designated Japanese sake as a geographic indication and has protected it since December 2015. The geographic indication "Japanese sake" is limited to Japanese sake made from domestic rice and produced in Japan.

If rice wine made with foreign-grown

rice or made outside Japan is distributed in the domestic market, it cannot be labeled as "Japanese sake," making it easier to distinguish between the two. It also allows the unique quality and reliability of 'Japanese sake' to be conveyed to customers overseas.

In particular, geographical indications for alcohol are expected to be protected in foreign countries in the same way as in Japan, since the system is internationally recognized by the WTO. By encouraging countries to protect the geographic indication "Japanese sake" through

international negotiations, we can differentiate "Japanese sake" from rice wine produced outside Japan and improve the brand value of "Japanese sake". For example, the Japan-EPA that came into effect in February 2019 protects "Japanese sake" as a geographical indication. In addition, under the Japan-U.S. Trade Agreement that came into effect in January 2020, the U.S. promised to continue the process of considering protection of the labeling of "Japanese sake".

Through designation...

### Only rice wine made from domestic rice and produced in Japan can exclusively be called "Japanese sake".

① Rice wine made from foreign rice or produced outside Japan cannot be labeled as "Japanese sake"

when it enters the domestic market, making it easier to distinguish between the two.

② We can appeal to foreign countries that "Japanese sake" is a high-quality and reliable Japanese alcohol.

③ By encouraging other countries to protect the geographical indication "Japanese sake" through

international negotiations, it will be possible to differentiate "Japanese sake" from rice wine produced outside Japan. The brand value of "Japanese sake" can be improved.

Contributing greatly to fostering domestic demand for Japanese sake and the promotion of exports

## The "gateway" to creating new value for alcohol

Is Geographical Indication a system that is beneficial to both producers and consumers, and how can the enjoyment of sake be spread while protecting regional brands?

We asked Mr. Goh, manager of the Liquor Tax section of the National Tax Agency that is responsible for the system, about the general situation of GI and the aims of the system.

**Q: Please tell us the background to the National Tax Agency's initiatives including the promotion of geographical indications for alcohol.**

**A:** Japan's alcoholic beverages have formed an important local industry, both historically and culturally, and in recent years have created new value from the perspectives of regional development and Cool Japan, etc., so we believe that their development will contribute to the revitalization of regional economies and the Japanese economy.

The National Tax Agency is engaged in a variety of initiatives to promote alcohol, one of which is to designate and expand the use of Geographical Indications (GI) in order to enhance the brand value of the alcohol in Japan and overseas.

Geographical Indications for alcohol are defined by the World Trade Organization (WTO) as an intellectual property right and are widely used internationally as a standard tool for regional branding of alcohol, so we believe that this system is essential for promoting the export of Japanese alcohol.

**Q: How does the use of Geographical Indications for alcohol contribute to branding?**

**A:** Geographical Indications are only allowed to be displayed on alcohol that meets the criteria of "correct place of origin" and "quality that satisfies certain standards".

As alcohol is a luxury item, it is a major premise that the consumer enjoys the taste and aroma, and in the same way that the phrase terroir is often used throughout the world for European wine, we also believe that the value expressed by the connection between the region and the alcohol produced in that region, which is created by natural factors such as climate and terrain, and human factors such as history and economic activities, to be an important element in the enjoyment of alcohol.

We believe that one of the roles that Geographical Indication should play is to build and secure a common regional brand image by having regional producers clearly state their "production standards" in order to facilitate

brand communication between producers and consumers regarding such quality and value.

**Q: Please tell us about the future trends for Geographical Indications of Japanese alcohol.**

**A:** There are two major trends.

The first is the designation of new Geographical Indications. There are still many alcohol production areas in Japan, so we will continue to promote the designation of new geographical indications. In order to achieve this goal, we will also provide regions aiming for designation with procedural and technical support from experts.

The second is the refinement of Geographical Indications. A Geographical Indication does not increase value as a regional brand simply by being designated. We believe it is important to build and implement a regional brand strategy in each region following designation as a Geographical Indication.

To this end, we provide "branding start-up support" for public relations and other activities immediately after designation as a Geographical Indication, and hold symposia for alcohol professionals such as liquor stores and sommeliers, who play an important role in directly communicating the value of alcohol to consumers. In addition, in order to convey the image of a regional brand to consumers in a more understandable manner, we have initiatives for the revision of production standards for geographical indications to clarify their quality and value.

Further, we are working to ensure that the GIs of Japanese alcohol are protected in other countries in the same way as in Japan, through international negotiations such as the EPA.

**Osamu Goh, born in Tokyo in 1973.**

He joined the Ministry of Finance after graduating from the University of Tokyo Faculty of Law in 1995. He has served as manager of the Liquor Tax section of the National Tax Agency's Taxation Department since July 2020.

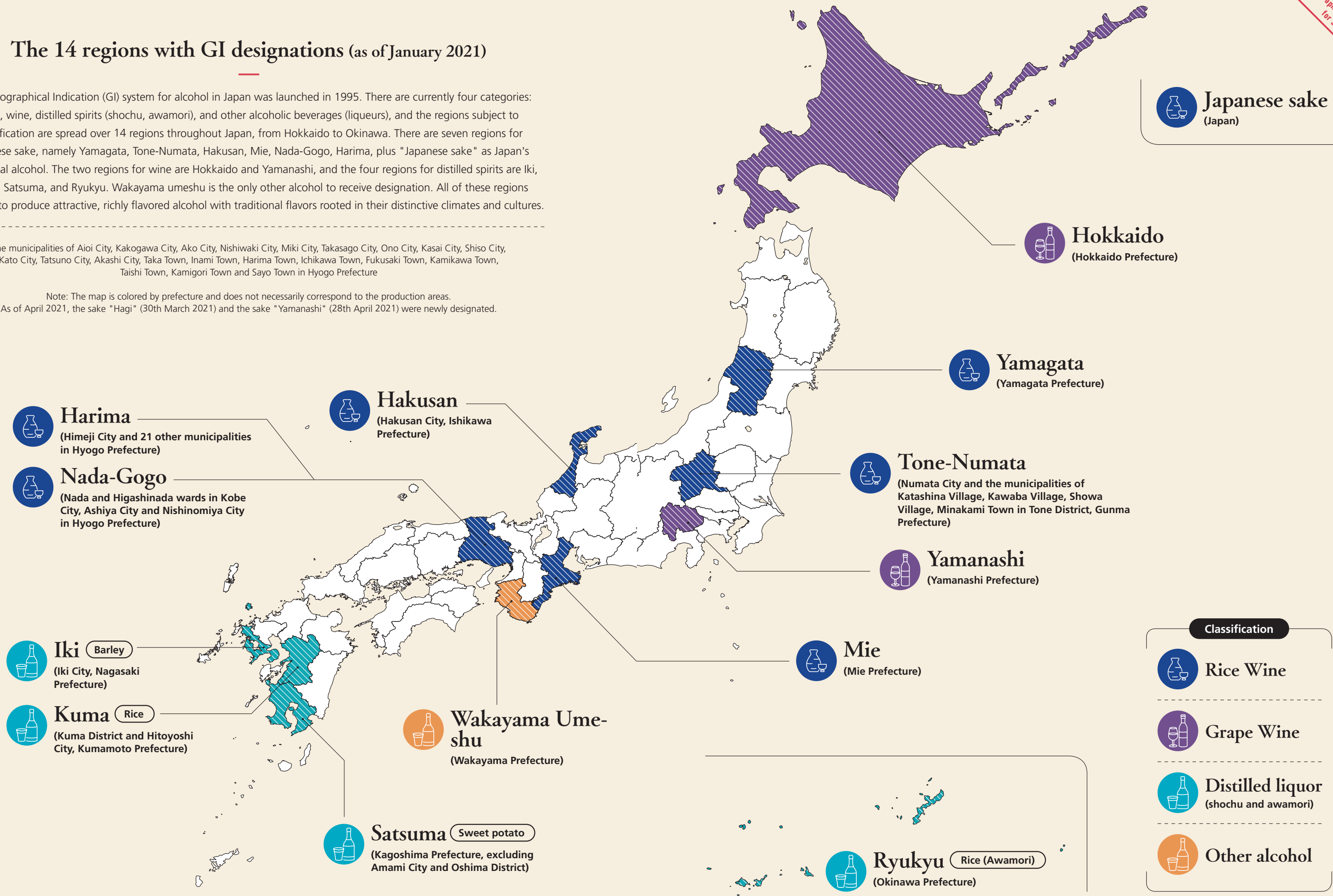


# The 14 regions with GI designations (as of January 2021)

The Geographical Indication (GI) system for alcohol in Japan was launched in 1995. There are currently four categories: sake, wine, distilled spirits (shochu, awamori), and other alcoholic beverages (liqueurs), and the regions subject to classification are spread over 14 regions throughout Japan, from Hokkaido to Okinawa. There are seven regions for Japanese sake, namely Yamagata, Tone-Numata, Hakusan, Mie, Nada-Gogo, Harima, plus "Japanese sake" as Japan's traditional alcohol. The two regions for wine are Hokkaido and Yamanashi, and the four regions for distilled spirits are Iki, Kuma, Satsuma, and Ryukyu. Wakayama umeshu is the only other alcohol to receive designation. All of these regions continue to produce attractive, richly flavored alcohol with traditional flavors rooted in their distinctive climates and cultures.

The municipalities of Aioi City, Kakogawa City, Ako City, Nishiwaki City, Miki City, Takasago City, Ono City, Kasai City, Shiso City, Kato City, Tatsuno City, Akashi City, Taka Town, Inami Town, Harima Town, Ichikawa Town, Fukusaki Town, Kamikawa Town, Taishi Town, Kamigori Town and Sayo Town in Hyogo Prefecture

Note: The map is colored by prefecture and does not necessarily correspond to the production areas. As of April 2021, the sake "Hagi" (30th March 2021) and the sake "Yamanashi" (28th April 2021) were newly designated.



**Japanese sake**  
(Japan)

**Hokkaido**  
(Hokkaido Prefecture)

**Yamagata**  
(Yamagata Prefecture)

**Tone-Numata**  
(Numata City and the municipalities of Katashina Village, Kawaba Village, Showa Village, Minakami Town in Tone District, Gunma Prefecture)

**Yamanashi**  
(Yamanashi Prefecture)

**Mie**  
(Mie Prefecture)

**Hakusan**  
(Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture)

**Harima**  
(Himeji City and 21 other municipalities in Hyogo Prefecture)

**Nada-Gogo**  
(Nada and Higashinada wards in Kobe City, Ashiya City and Nishinomiya City in Hyogo Prefecture)

**Iki** **Barley**  
(Iki City, Nagasaki Prefecture)

**Kuma** **Rice**  
(Kuma District and Hitoyoshi City, Kumamoto Prefecture)

**Satsuma** **Sweet potato**  
(Kagoshima Prefecture, excluding Amami City and Oshima District)

**Wakayama Ume-shu**  
(Wakayama Prefecture)

**Ryukyu** **Rice (Awamori)**  
(Okinawa Prefecture)

- Classification**
- Rice Wine
  - Grape Wine
  - Distilled liquor (shochu and awamori)
  - Other alcohol

# Sake with a blessing inherited from the earth on the island of the Gods

The ingredients barley and rice that are nurtured on vast plains in a warm climate combine with the water purified on the island to produce a unique sake. One taste and you will feel the charm of Iki's history, climate, and the island itself.



Nagasaki Prefecture  
(Kyushu)

Barley  
shochu

IKI



## Receive the blessings of nature on the island created by the gods

A long time ago, two gods, Izanagi and Izanami, created the fifth island, Ikinoshima. This island, which appears in a passage of the "Kojiki", Japan's oldest history book still in existence, is Iki.

It is a remote island of Nagasaki Prefecture, located in the Genkai Sea that stretches across northwestern Kyushu. With a population of only about 25,000, the island can be circumnavigated in an hour and enjoys a surprisingly rich natural environment. The beautifully colored sea is a treasure trove of seafood such as sea urchin, squid and yellowtail. In the inland area there is the famous, rare cattle known as Iki beef, of which only about 900 heads are put to market each year. And on the plains, rice and barley have been cultivated since ancient times. Is there any other island that is so loved by nature? The sea, the mountains and the plains, everything on the island has been protected and nurtured by the gods.

More than 150 Shinto shrines still exist on the island, and their influence on the customs and culture of the island's people is deep. The most symbolic one is the ritual performance called Iki Kagura. It

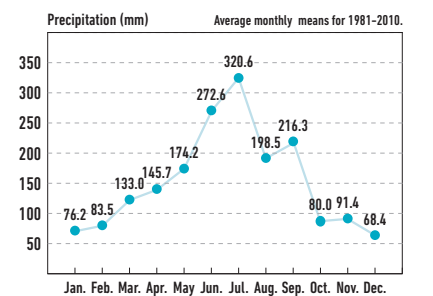
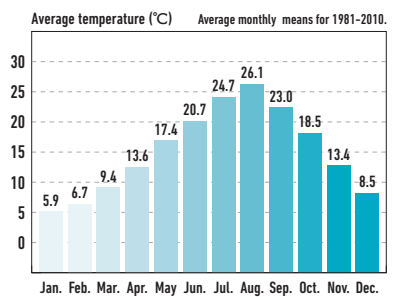
has been handed down since the Muromachi period and the Kagura dance and music are both performed only by the Shinto priests. Plus, where there is a shrine, then there was also a sacred alcohol. But sake made from precious rice was naturally considered valuable. So the people made alcohol with barley, which was cheaper than rice. "When returning to their home town for the Bon Festival, a bottle of shochu and 12 bundles of somen noodles are offered to the Buddhist altar." The islanders say that such a custom existed in the past. That is how familiar shochu was to the people of Iki.

## Vast plains of barley and rice fields where sprouts grow

Iki's shochu made from barley is historically the oldest and it is considered the birthplace of barley shochu. Why was barley shochu liqueur born on this island? The key to the answer is the island's terrain and foreign relations. Iki has the second largest plain in Nagasaki Prefecture. There are no tall mountains in the inland area, and the hours of sunshine per day is long. It is an ideal area for growing barley, whose greatest enemy is moisture. In addition, the manufacturing method using malted rice, which is

characteristic of Iki shochu, originated from the fact that this area had an abundant rice harvest.

If the materials are abundant, the next step is technology. There are several theories about how distillation technology was introduced, but the most popular theory is that it came from the Korean Peninsula. The distillation technology brought from the continent was combined with doburoku or nigori sake, a drink dedicated to the gods, and shochu was born. It was inevitable that shochu culture blossomed in Iki, which has been regarded as an important base for trade since ancient times.



# The island's climate and environment nurture the barley, rice, and water that are gifts from nature

## The refreshing aroma of barley gives Iki Shochu its deep flavor.

In early spring, we visited Fukaetabaru, where barley for shochu is grown. At this time of year, the barley is still young and green, but will be golden by harvest time in April and May. "The barley that is being grown is of good quality and has a high starch value thanks to advances in breeding. The refreshing aroma when it is made into alcohol comes from the barley, and this is the taste of Iki shochu," said Mr. Hiroyoshi Nagata of Iki no Hana. Looking at the ears of barley swaying comfortably, it is clear that the taste and rich aroma are created by the relaxed growth of

## The character of Iki Shochu comes from the power of rice and water.

the barley in this region.

The name "Iki Shochu" rests largely on the fact that it is brewed with malted rice. The ratio of malted rice to barley is 1:2. The one third ratio of malted rice is very high, which enhances the sweetness and thickness. Shochu is generally made from around November to March. The raw materials, rice and barley, are harvested from summer to fall. In the past, the chief brewer and distiller were all farmers who worked part-time, so the off-season was perfect for making alcohol. In addition, Iki has a mild climate, so brewing alcohol during the cold season is suitable because there is less chance of bacteria growth and deterioration of the mash. The shochu-making season in Iki reaches its peak from fall to winter.

Another essential ingredient for brewing is water. The majority of Iki island is covered in a volcanic rock called basalt. Approximately 600,000 to 1,000,000 years ago, there were countless small volcanoes that were active. Over a long period of time, rainwater filtered through the rock layers formed by the accumulation of lava and ash and was absorbed into the ground, which created a number of water veins. Thanks to this, groundwater still flows abundantly in Iki today. The water quality is slightly hard and is rich in minerals. This water plays an important role in promoting

## The culture of Iki shochu that was nurtured through history

the fermentation of the rice.

Because rice was harvested in abundance, during the Edo period

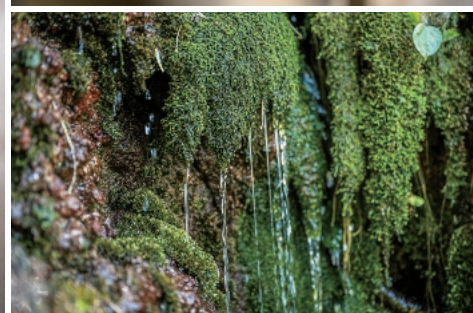


1. Fermentation progresses slowly in the tank. Iki shochu is produced by the combination of human hands and the power of nature. 2. Representatives of the seven breweries that belong to the Iki Shochu Association. Each of the breweries is working hard to develop Iki Shochu through friendly rivalry, using the rich local ingredients and inherited production techniques. 3. The seven ears of barley on the GI mark represent the seven breweries.

a heavy annual tribute was imposed on Iki, which was the territory of the Hirado domain. The islanders grew barley as a back crop to rice and used it as their staple food, and the surplus barley was used to make shochu. The people of Iki must have enjoyed shochu as a small pleasure in the midst of the painful burden of paying the tribute and daily life. Even though it was for private use, some equipment was necessary. Several farmers cooperated to make shochu, sharing equipment such as jars and stills, money and raw materials. At the risk of repetition, Iki is a small island. On this small island, unity and friendly rivalry among the shochu breweries

are essential. In order to keep alive the alcohol that is produced from the blessings of nature, the dregs of the shochu distillation process are used to feed cattle. The mechanism of this cycle is the wisdom and technology handed down from our predecessors. Surrounded by the sea, the island's fishing culture also flourished. In Ashibe Town, a port town on the island, there are divers who still work hard at traditional skin-diving fishing. Kana Okawa, who moved here from outside of the prefecture, lives in this area. While she also runs a guesthouse, Minatoya in Ashibe Town, during the fishing season she dives into the sea every day. "I moved

here when I saw an opening for a diver successor. When I first started living on the island, I realized that I could treat myself well by having seasonal food every day. I'm attracted by the abundance of food, the ease of living, and the daily life on the island," she says. The dining tables of the port people are still lined with the island's produce and Iki Shochu today. Barley shochu is popular not only at banquets and festivals, but also in everyday life. It goes well with all kinds of food, including seafood such as sea urchin and raw fish, vegetables such as asparagus, and rich meat dishes.





- ① Isshu  
Yamanomori Shuzojo
- ② Sesshu 25%  
Omoya Shuzo
- ③ Saruko with Square  
Deluxe case  
Saruko Izushuzo
- ④ Amanogawa:  
Ikizukushi  
Amanogawa Shuzo
- ⑤ Ikinoshima 25%  
Ikinokura Shuzo
- ⑥ Shodai Kasuke  
Ikinohana
- ⑦ Iki Super Gold 22  
Genkai Shuzo



## The long history of the island is continued through the taste and culture of the islanders.

### The creation of unique shochu through distillation and maturing at each brewery

According to records when the Liquor Tax Act was established in 1899, there were 38 shochu distilleries on the island, but now only seven distilleries make shochu. What influences the individual flavors of each distillery? The answer can be found in two aspects: distillation and aging.

Iki Shochu is distilled using a pot still. In this method, the fermented mash is placed in the still and heat is applied to extract the alcohol and flavor components. Distilling the mash in a pot still in batches retains the freshness of the ingredients. Depending on the time and conditions of distillation, the shochu

has a completely different taste and aroma.

When mentioning individuality, we must also discuss maturation. The distilled shochu is kept in a cellar-room and continues to mature through the power of its own chemical changes. "It is difficult to taste shochu straight after distilling because the alcohol is too strong. Storing it there and letting it mature allows the water and alcohol to blend together, giving it a rounded flavor without the harshness," Akito Yamauchi of Genkai Shuzo says that the method of storage and maturation brings out the distinct character of each distillery. "After several years in the barrel, the shochu is infused with pigments and aromas that leach out from the barrel, giving it a unique character. Storing the

shochu in stainless steel tanks or in enamel tanks gives it a mellow aroma while maintaining its refreshing taste." The differences in cellaring methods and maturation periods result in unique flavors.

The ingredients, techniques, and wisdom have been handed down through more than 400 years of Iki shochu history. "As we enter a new era, drinking and eating styles are changing. It is necessary to make new proposals, not only for drinking on ice or straight, but also with carbonated water. We want to raise the island's brand power by communicating the appeal of Iki shochu to the world." The shochu culture that has been created by the islanders using the ingredients nurtured on the island and inherited through generations will continue to be passed down in the future.

## Product Specification of Geographical Indication “壹岐 (Iki)”

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (a) Characteristics of liquor

"Iki", which is a Pot distillation shochu, retains the fresh bouquet of barley from which it is made and the sweet and deep flavor of rice koji. Furthermore, it has a sharp taste originating from the water used as an ingredient.

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factor

Iki City, Nagasaki Prefecture, is an archipelago centering on Ikinoshima island which is in the Genkainada Sea north of Kyushu, and the region has a rich supply of underground water which has been refined by the basaltic layer over a long period of time. Iki's underground water, which is rich in minerals and pure, is one of the important ingredients in Iki, and is used in many ways from ingredient preparation to mixing the distilled unprocessed shochu ("Genshu") with water. In the production process, the underground water of Iki maintains good fermentation and gives Iki its deep flavor, as well as eliciting a sharp taste due to the use of the underground water for mixing with the Genshu.

##### (2) Human factor

It is said that the production of "Iki" began as local farmers produced it for their own consumption due to the wealth of groundwater in Iki and the abundance of rice and barley harvests.

The roots of Pot distillation shochu lie in the production of distilled liquor on the Chinese continent and in south-east Asia which was subsequently introduced in Japan. According to the "Korean Peninsula Route theory" which is one of the influential theories espousing this route, Japan and Korea were actively engaged in trade in the 15th century, at which time Korea was already manufacturing distilled liquor. This technology was introduced to Japan via Tsushima and Iki, and it is presumed that the origins of production of shochu lie in this era.

Furthermore, historical records show that Iki, Nagasaki was the earliest region in Japan to introduce production of shochu made from barley and it is assumed to be the "birthplace of barley shochu".

Barley shochu produced in other regions is produced from barley koji and barley, however, "Iki" is traditionally produced from rice koji and barley, using a ratio of 1:2, and this traditional method is one of the factors in establishing the characteristics of "Iki".

### II Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor

It is necessary to satisfy the following criteria to use the geographical indication "Iki".

#### (a) Ingredients

- (1) Grains use only barley.
- (2) Only rice koji produced from rice is used.
- (3) The weight ratio of rice koji and grains for the moromi must be approximately 1:2.
- (4) Water collected in Iki city, Nagasaki prefecture.

#### (b) Production method

- (1) Fermenting and distillation of the ingredients is performed in Iki city, Nagasaki prefecture.
- (2) The product is made by fermenting rice koji and water to make the primary moromi, to which is added steamed grains and water before fermenting further to make the secondary moromi, which is distilled in a pot still.
- (3) If the product is stored in the production process, it is stored in Iki city, Nagasaki prefecture.
- (4) The product is bottled in Iki city Nagasaki prefecture in the containers that will be used to deliver the product to consumers.

### III Matters relating to management for maintaining the characteristics of liquor

In order to use the geographical indication "Iki", it is necessary to receive confirmation from the following organization (hereinafter "Control Body") in accordance with the Work Implementation Guidelines prepared by such Control Body, regarding whether or not the liquor for which such geographical indication will be used satisfies the "Matters Relating to Ingredients and Production Method of Liquor".

**Name of Control Body:**  
**Iki Shochu Management Committee**

**Address:** Iki Shochu Cooperative, 639-3 Higashifure, Gonoura-cho, Iki city, Nagasaki prefecture,  
**Phone number:** 0920-47-0423  
**E-mail:** ikisyuzou@future.ocn.ne.jp

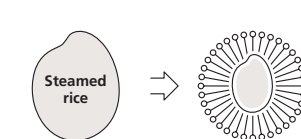
### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Pot distillation shochu (Article 3, Item10 of the Liquor Tax Act)



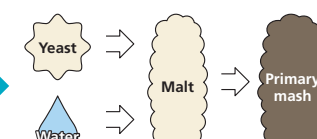
### How to make Shochu

#### ① Making the primary mash



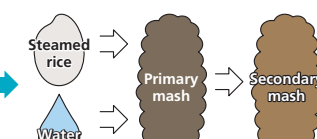
Steam the rice and let it cool. (steamed rice)  
Apply koji bacteria to it and let the koji grow.

#### Preliminary preparation



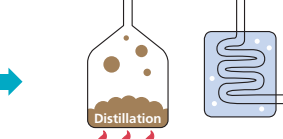
Add water and yeast to the resulting malt. (Preliminary preparation) After about one week of maturation, the resulting product is the primary mash.

#### ② Making the secondary mash



Add the steamed barley and water to the primary mash. (Secondary preparation) After about two weeks of fermentation and maturation, the resulting product is the secondary mash.

#### ③ Distillation



This secondary mash is distilled in a pot still to make shochu. It is then aged and packed in containers.



# 500 years of history nurtured in a legendary village The wisdom of shochu making nurtured and re- fined by the locals through time

"Kumamoto Prefecture, located in central Kyushu, has a rich natural and historical environment centered around Kumamoto Castle, one of the three most famous castles in Japan, with the Aso mountains to the east, the Amakusa coastal area to the west, and the Kuma River, one of Japan's three largest rapids, to the south. In addition, the temperature difference throughout the four seasons, which is unique to the basin, is a factor in the nurturing of rich crops.



Kumamoto Prefecture  
(Kyushu)

Rice  
shochu

# Kuma

## Kuma's rice shochu, born in the Hitoyoshi Basin

Located in the southernmost part of Kumamoto Prefecture, Hitoyoshi-Kuma consists of one city, four towns and five villages: Hitoyoshi city, Nishiki town, Asagiri town, Taragi town, Yunomae town, Mizukami village, Sagara village, Itsuki village, Yamae village and Kuma village. Kumamoto Prefecture is known as a basin with the Kumamoto Plain,

where the prefectural capital Kumamoto city is located, surrounded by mountains including Mount Aso. The Hitoyoshi-Kuma region is also a typical basin that is surrounded by Kunimi-dake, the prefecture's highest mountain, to the north, Mt. Ichifusa, the prefecture's second highest mountain, to the east, and the Kirishima mountain range and the deep Kyushu mountain range to the south. The water stored in these mountains

flows out to create the clear Kuma River, one of Japan's three largest rapids, which flows through the center of the Hitoyoshi Basin. Due to its geographical features as a basin, the area has an inland climate with sharp temperature differences, and it is also known as the "foggy town" as dense fog frequently occurs, especially from November to February, when the fog sometimes clears as late as noon. In fact, several million years ago the Hitoyoshi Basin was a large lake second to Lake Biwa, and the mist-shrouded view from the top of the mountain may represent the scenery of the ancient lake.

On the plains of the Kuma River basin, where the climate is warm and rainy and clean groundwater is constantly supplied from deep forests surrounded by 1,000-meter tall mountains, high-quality rice has been grown since ancient times. Kuma Shochu was created 500 years ago from that rice and abundant water.

## Kuma Shochu - protected by the history of the Sagara clan

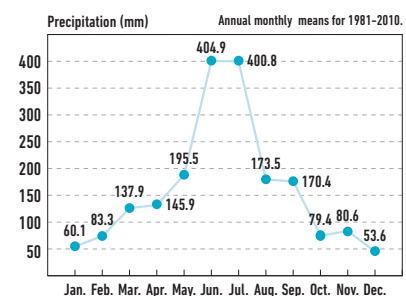
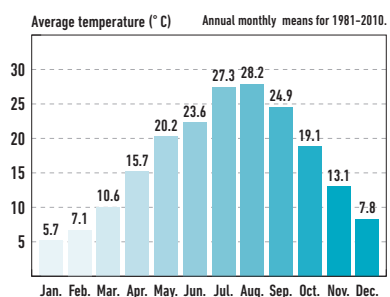
The Hitoyoshi-Kuma region was ruled by the Sagara clan for more than 700 years from the Kamakura period to the Meiji Restoration. By the order of Minamoto no Yoritomo, the founder of the Kamakura Shogunate, Sagara Yorikage came to Taragi from Tōtōmi (Shizuoka) in 1193, and then Nagayori went to Hitoyoshi to unify the area into Hitoyoshi-Sagara, which

was ruled as the Sagara Domain for 37 generations until the Meiji Restoration. It is said that the Sagara clan actively traded with Southeast Asia and the continent, and distillation techniques were brought from there, which provided an opportunity to start making shochu.

It is not clear when shochu was first consumed in Japan, but it is said that shochu production started in Kuma and Satsuma in the first half of the 16th century; in 1954, during the dismantling and repair of the main hall of Hachiman Shrine, a nationally-designated important cultural property in Isa city (formerly Okuchi city), Japan's oldest graffiti was discovered, which contained the word "shochu". It is not clear when shochu was first consumed in Japan, but it is said that shochu production started in Kuma and Satsuma in the first half of the 16th century; in 1954, during the dismantling and repair of the main hall of Hachiman Shrine, a nationally-designated important cultural property in Isa city (formerly Okuchi city), Japan's oldest graffiti was discovered, which contained the word "shochu". Written on the inside of a piece of wood behind the ceiling, when put into modern language it said, "Even though it was construction work for the Hachiman Shrine, the head monk was very stingy and didn't give us shochu to drink even once. It was quite a problem." It was dated as Year 2 of the Eiroku era, i.e. 1559, and at

that time control of this region changed rapidly between the Sagara clan and the Shimazu clan of the Satsuma Domain. As sweet potato shochu was made from the 1700s, it is thought that this shochu was rice shochu, which suggests that the neighboring Kuma region also customarily drank shochu.

Thereafter, rice production in the Sagara Domain increased through large-scale construction work, including the Hyakutaro Canal and Kouno Canal irrigation work, and the Edo Shogunate assessed the Sagara Domain at 22,000 koku of rice. However, it is needless to say that the abundant rice, which output was actually closer to 100,000 koku, and blessed water became the foundation of the Kuma Shochu culture.



# Kuma's shochu is rooted in the local community, preserving tradition and embracing change

## Rice shochu - surviving while at the mercy of time

Kuma Shochu has been made since the Muromachi period, 500 years ago, and has repeatedly evolved with the times. The Sagara clan, which served under Toyotomi Hideyoshi in the Japanese invasions of Korea during the Azuchi-Momoyama period, brought back dozens of prisoners of war from the Korean peninsula, some of whom are said to have been distillers in the peninsula style. In the Edo period, the "alcohol production share system" began, and "shares" were required in order to make and sell rice shochu in the Hitoyoshi castle town. Outside of the castle town, there was a separate permit system called the "irate liquor store" which allowed the production and sale of rice shochu and was a valuable asset, but it was also possible for samurai and farmers to make shochu at home, and they drank homemade shochu made from barley and miscellaneous grains. In the Meiji era, the alcohol production share system was abolished and

anyone could brew sake as long as they reported it, and a cluster of 60 distilleries formed. In 1898, the manufacture of shochu and other home-brewed liquors was completely banned, but by 1901 the number of shochu distilleries had grown to about 200.

The pre-Meiji method of making shochu was to use brown rice, prepare it in a bowl, and distill it in a copper "helmet" design still, and it had a unique aroma and taste. However, compared to the shochu made from the same amount of rice today, it was only half the amount, making it a luxury item in those days. After the Taisho era, white rice was used as the raw material and the "two-stage brewing method" was introduced, which made it possible to ferment large quantities of malt. "Distillation technology has also evolved to achieve a certain level of efficiency, and yields have steadily increased.

At the start of the Showa era, war restricted the use of rice and made it impossible to make shochu. Therefore, the distilleries in the

Hitoyoshi-Kuma region began to make shochu using sweet potatoes and barley, and adopted techniques brought by master brewers who fled from Okinawa. What changed there was the koji bacteria. The black koji used in awamori was adopted, and the white koji that mutated from it is now almost exclusively used. The "reduced-pressure still" introduced in 1972 was a technical innovation that led to the spread of Kuma Shochu throughout Japan, and now almost all of the 27 breweries produce reduced-pressure-distilled shochu.

## What kind of food goes well with Kuma Shochu?

The taste of Kuma shochu is divided into two main types based on the distillation method. One is "atmospheric pressure distillation", which has been used since long ago and produces a rich aroma and full flavor. The other is "reduced-pressure distillation," in which the air in the still is depressurized with a vacuum pump, lowering the boiling point and producing a gorgeous aroma and soft taste. The taste and color differ



depending on the storage method; in the case of "barrel-aged" shochu, the unblended shochu is stored in oak barrels, which gives it a barrel-derived aroma and taste, creating a flavor that is like whiskey.

Rather than asking which food goes well with the rich flavor of Kuma shochu, it is no exaggeration to say that Kuma shochu goes well with anything. It is common knowledge that rice is the staple food of the Japanese people. It may be a little too much to say it is because it is made with that same rice, but there's no way they shouldn't go well together. In addition, as mentioned above, there is a wide variety, and the atmospheric-pressure-distilled shochu, which has a deep aroma and rich flavor, goes well with meat dishes and well-seasoned dishes such as kanroni, a dish simmered in soy sauce and sugar and uses sweetfish, a popular ingredient in Hitoyoshi-

Kuma. The reduced-pressure-distilled shochu with mild aroma and clean taste is good for fish dishes and pasta, as well as simple dishes that make the most of the ingredients such as salt-grilled ayu. Barrel-aged shochu can be paired with chocolate-based sweets. Kuma shochu has a fruity flavor with a prestigious ginjo aroma, and can be used with carpaccio and herb dishes, as well as a base for citrus cocktails.

## Unique servers and cups nurtured alongside shochu

It is also important to know how to drink Kuma shochu. The first way is to enjoy shochu is to consume it directly as 'iki' (straight), for those who wish to relish the taste. On the rocks is recommended for a refreshing cool feeling, and mixed with water or with hot water is also recommended for drinking with a meal. And for serving it hot, there is the "gara-choku" cup that is unique

to the Hitoyoshi-Kuma region. The gara is a white porcelain flask used for heating the shochu and holds about a cup and a half. In the past, it was common to heat 35% shochu directly over a fire and drink it warm, which is why there is a small sake cup called a choku. People actively exchange drinks at banquets, but in this region "kuma-ken" is a unique form of entertainment. It's a kind of rock-paper-scissors game between two people, but instead of three patterns of rock, paper and scissors, there are six patterns including using one or two fingers. The winner is the person who is one level higher than their opponent, and the object of the game is to win two times in a row. The loser must drink a full choku cup of shochu. It is said that the retainers of the Sagara clan often played this game at the lord's Edo residence, and the culture of this game has been passed down from generation to generation.

## To create even just one passionate fan

We spoke with Kazunobu Torikai, chair of the Kuma Shochu Makers' Association and president of Torikai Shuzo, about the history and future of Kuma Shochu.

"Why did the Kuma area have rice shochu? It all comes down to the water and rice. In addition to being surrounded by mountains and having an abundance of groundwater suitable for brewing alcohol, advances in civil engineering technology in the 1700s enabled the successful development of new rice fields, which were valued as Kuma rice. There were few rebellions due to famine, and shochu was made from the abundant rice that was the main food source.

An ABC analysis of the current Kuma shochu industry shows that four distilleries account for 88% of the total, and the other 21 breweries share the

remaining 12%. Like with scotch and Bordeaux, large and small distilleries coexist. We know that even small distilleries can continue to exist with their own individuality, so as an association we hope to create an environment where we can further carry on the history that has continued until now. In addition, in order to be accepted in the world's food customs and culture, the craftsmen at each distillery are further honing their skills and aiming to create something that the world will be satisfied with, even if it means creating just one passionate fan."



## The making of world-class Kuma shochu

We asked Fumihito Shimoda, vice-chair of the Kuma Shochu Distillers Association and president of Yamatoichi Shuzomoto, about the distilling method and characteristics of Kuma shochu.

"The basics are the same, but each distiller is particular about the ingredients, water, and the number of days the mash is aged, and differences in the stills themselves also affect the taste. The differences in taste from clean to strong are created from differences in levels at the beginning of the process. Subtle differences in the process affect the taste, so each distiller never stops pursuing their own flavor. Also, the yeast was traditionally made with yeast that originally lived in the distillery, but in recent years we have been using yeast developed by Kumamoto Prefecture combined with yeast from the distillery. Of course, some distilleries develop their own yeast, and a rich variety of shochu is

produced.

Throughout the world, people usually start drinking distilled spirits as a cocktail base, but I want people to enjoy the variations in Kuma shochu itself. I want them to know that it goes well with meals with a variety of meals as is.

The torrential rains in July 2020 caused damage to distilleries in Hitoyoshi city and Kuma village, and some distilleries need to reconsider their future due to suffering damage from several floods. But right now we are trying to move forward without losing a single one of the 27 distilleries. We are still a long way from recovery, but we are doing our best and trying not to lose."



# Flavor born from technological innovation is creating a boundless future for Kuma shochu

## Using only water, rice, and yeast

To make any alcoholic drink, yeast is used to turn sugar (mainly glucose) into alcohol, and Kuma shochu is no different. First, washed rice is steamed, and then seed koji is attached to it and propagated to make koji. Brewers employed yellow koji mold, which has been used for Japanese sake, miso, etc. in the Hitoyoshi-Kuma region, but were troubled by unwanted bacteria that proliferated in warm and humid areas. Around 1940, the black koji bacteria used in Awamori and sweet potato shochu was introduced. The citric acid that is generated prevents the growth of unwanted bacteria. Around 1950, white koji bacteria, which was a mutation of the black koji, started being used and still is today.

The yeast and the rich soft water of the Hitoyoshi Basin, which each distiller draws from underground, are added to the rice koji that has been propagated using the koji bacteria, as the "primary preparation". The

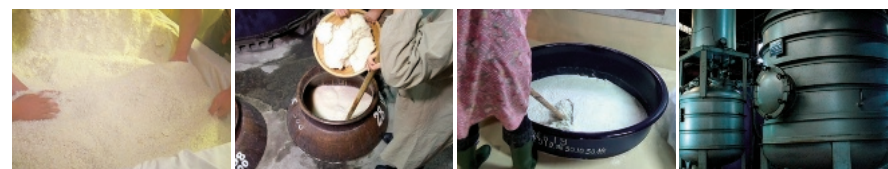
primary mash made here is used to increase the yeast, and in the next stage, called the "secondary preparation," steamed rice and water, which are the source of food for the yeast, are added to make the secondary mash, which is further converted to alcoholic.

The secondary mash that has been sufficiently matured is distilled using the two methods mentioned earlier: atmospheric-pressure distillation and reduced-pressure distillation. In atmospheric-pressure distillation, the mash is heated at normal atmospheric pressure and the alcohol vapor, which boils at 80 degrees Celsius, is cooled to produce a rich, full-flavored raw alcohol. In the reduced-pressure distillation, the boiling point is lowered to 40 to 50 degrees Celsius by reducing the pressure in the still. Through this, unwanted odors and flavors are suppressed to produce a light and

soft tasting shochu.

In recent years, reduced-pressure distillation has become the mainstream, because it is "light and easy to drink" and is consumed not only locally but also nationwide. However, the atmospheric-pressure distillation method will never be forced away, and the old-fashioned strong taste will continuously win the heart of Kuma shochu fans. In addition, the aging methods add to the flavor. These include barrel aging, aging in jars, and mature shochu that has been aged for more than three years. Also, by using yeast such as the Kumamoto yeast developed in Kumamoto Prefecture, shochu with a fruity ginjo aroma like sake can be made.

There is probably no other alcohol made from the same raw materials and within the same region that has this much variation.



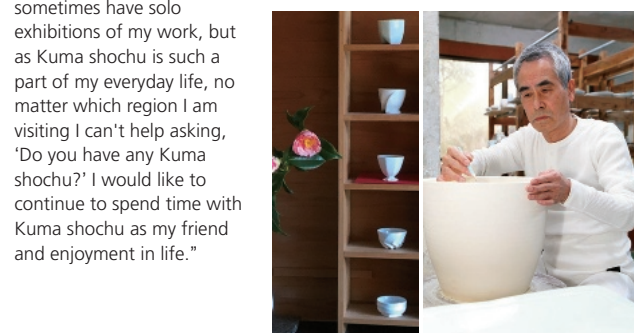
## Keeping me company like a friend

Rekkou Kubota oversees the Yuto Kiln in Hitoyoshi city. He is a potter who creates flowing lines on porcelain and has fans all over Japan.

"I make white porcelain and off-white porcelain in my hometown of Hitoyoshi city. I use soft expressions by molding and "streamline" sculpturing the porcelain, which has an image of being hard. There are many Buddhist sculptures in Hitoyoshi-Kuma, including the 33 Kannon of Sagara, and the soft robes that I have seen since I was a child seem to have given me creative power.

I enjoy the reduced-pressure distilled Kuma shochu in my daily life. I think the fresh taste of the shochu is a perfect match for the off-white porcelain that is tinted with a light blue. For barrel-aged, amber-colored shochu, I recommend a white porcelain which allows the shochu's beautiful color to stand out. We first formulate a plan for manufacturing porcelain but my mind becomes entrenched once I am faced with my work. In the evening on such

days, I will start to come up with ideas that are outside of the box while enjoying my shochu and supper and relaxing in the company of friends. I sometimes have solo exhibitions of my work, but as Kuma shochu is such a part of my everyday life, no matter which region I am visiting I can't help asking, 'Do you have any Kuma shochu?' I would like to continue to spend time with Kuma shochu as my friend and enjoyment in life."



## Product Specification of Geographical Indication “球磨 (Kuma)”

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (a) Characteristics of liquor

"Kuma" which is a pot distillation shochu, usually has the mild sweet taste of rice and a refreshing flavor. Furthermore, products made with atmospheric distillation exude an aromatic bouquet characteristic of rice and those produced using reduced-pressure distillation exude a fruity bouquet.

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factor

Kuma district in Kumamoto Prefecture and Hitoyoshi city in the same prefecture are situated in the Kuma basin surrounded by mountains in the central area of Kyushu, and despite the low longitude, the average temperature in winter is low and the temperature variation is high. It has many days of heavy fog, and in such an environment fermentation at low temperatures and storage in a suitable environment are possible, making it a suitable area for production of shochu with a refreshing bouquet.

In addition, the water in the Kuma river system that flows through the Kuma basin is soft water suitable for shochu production, and "Kuma" retains the mild sweetness of rice through the use of water from this region.

Furthermore, the Kuma basin experiences high variations in temperature and is endowed with an abundant and high quality supply of water from the Kuma river, making it one of the leading areas for growing good quality rice in Kumamoto prefecture.

##### (2) Human Factor

It is said that as the Kuma basin is blessed with abundant sources of water and plentiful rice production, the area has been able to keep producing shochu from rice since the era rice came to be valued. Furthermore, as it was an isolated region with the basin closed off deep in the mountains, rice was not subject to exploitation by outsiders. While in other regions production of shochu from rice was restricted due to famine and other reasons and people made liquor from ingredients other than rice, the brewers of Kuma were able to keep on producing shochu from rice.

The brewers of Kuma continued to be particular about using only rice as an ingredient in their shochu, and the current "Kuma" can be said to have its origin in such history, as the brewers pursued the flavor of Kuma and passed on their techniques.

As the rare visitors to the area were treated to "Kuma", it became known as "high quality liquor from a mysterious land".

### II Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor

It is necessary for the following criteria to be satisfied in order to use the geographical indication "Kuma".

### II Requirements for alcohol materials and manufacturing methods

In order to use the geographical indication name " " the alcohol must meet the following requirements.

#### (a) Ingredients

- (1) The grains used is rice grown in Japan.
- (2) The koji rice used is only rice koji made from rice grown in Japan.
- (3) Water collected in Kuma district in Kumamoto prefecture or Hitoyoshi city in the same prefecture.

#### (b) Production method

- (1) The fermentation of ingredients and distillation are performed in Kuma district, Kumamoto prefecture or Hitoyoshi city of the same prefecture.
- (2) It is made from moromi made by fermenting ingredients including rice, rice koji and water which is distilled in a pot still; provided however that this is limited to products where the primary moromi made from rice koji and water has rice koji and water added to it and is fermented further.
- (3) If it is stored in the production process, storage is in Kuma district, Kumamoto prefecture or Hitoyoshi city of the same prefecture.
- (4) The product is filled in Kuma district, Kumamoto prefecture or Hitoyoshi city in the same prefecture in the containers in which it will be delivered to consumers.

### III Matters relating to management for maintaining the characteristics of liquors

In order to use the geographical indication "Kuma", it is necessary to receive confirmation from the following organization (hereinafter "Control Body") in accordance with the Work Implementation Guidelines prepared by such Control Body, regarding whether or not the liquor for which such geographical indication will be used satisfies the "Matters Relating to Ingredients and Production Method of Liquor".

**Name of Control Body:**  
**Kuma Shochu Management Committee**

**Address: 5-1 Fumoto-machi, Hitoyoshi city,**  
**Kumamoto prefecture, Kuma Shochu Cooperative**  
**Phone number: 0966-22-5059**

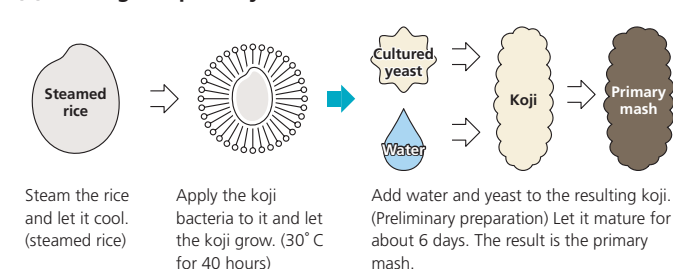
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Pot distillation shochu (Article 3, Item 10 of the Liquor Tax Act)

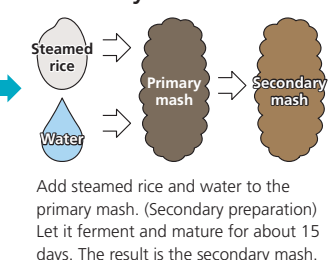


## How to make Shochu

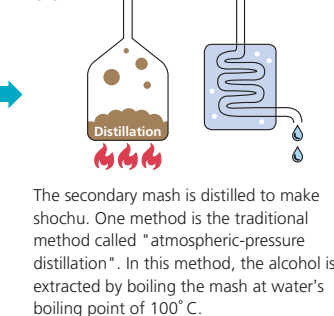
### (1) Making the primary mash



### (2) Making the secondary mash



### (3) Distillation



# Japan's oldest distilled liquor, with a near 600-year history dating back to the Ryukyu Kingdom era

From the birth of the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1429, through American occupation and the return of Okinawa to Japanese rule, Awamori has survived alongside the Okinawan people through rapid changes in history. The oldest distilled liquor in Japan and recognized as a GI under the name "Ryukyu", Awamori has an exceptional originality that is part of Okinawa's identity.



Okinawa Prefecture

Awamori

# Ryukyu

## Liquor born from and utilized by diplomacy

Okinawa Prefecture is a chain of small islands located in the southwest of the Japanese archipelago. During the era of the Ryukyu Kingdom, the islands flourished as one of the leading trading nations in East Asia by making use of their geographical location to travel across the seas and conduct intermediate trades with China and Southeast Asian countries. As diplomacy flourished, a variety of

cultures were introduced, along with their food, clothing, housing, and entertainment. It is said that the technology for distilling alcohol was one of the imports introduced in the 15th century from Siam (Thailand) and China, which were trading partners of Ryukyu at the time. Based on distilled spirits that were obtained through trade, the Ryukyans learned local distilling techniques and used black koji, which is suited to brewing alcohol in the Okinawan climate. to gradually improve the process and

create an original drink. This, it is said, are the origins of Awamori.

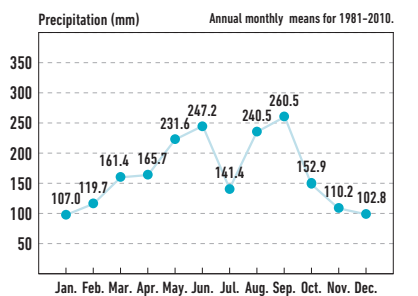
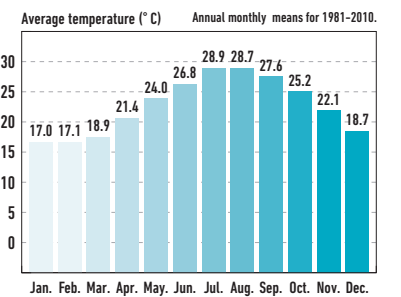
The spirit of providing hospitality to foreign guests has long been a deeply-rooted part of the culture in Okinawa. In the days of the Ryukyu Kingdom, Awamori was an important drink when entertaining guests. History shows that awamori was an indispensable item to Okinawan diplomacy, with it being treated as a luxury drink when hosting royalty and envoys from China, and also being offered to the Tokugawa Shogunate.

## Awamori production was permitted only in three towns in Shuri

In order to maintain a high level of quality, the production of awamori was placed under the control of the royal government. Only the towns of Torihori, Sakiyama, and Akata in Shuri were allowed to produce it. These areas, which could be seen from Shuri Castle, were known as "Shuri Sanka" and approximately 40 distilleries lined the streets at that time. The awamori they produced was brought to Shuri Castle and stored in a building called the "Zenigura". It was an era when not only the production of alcohol by commoners was severely restricted, but also its consumption. Shipments of awamori were sometimes attacked by bands of thieves so the royal government, drawn to the tradition of karate developed in Okinawan, decided to assign skilled karate practitioners to escort the precious cargo. There are several versions to the story, but the unique link between the Okinawan culture and awamori has long been recognized by the people.

Awamori is made with high alcohol content so that it can be stored for a long time in the subtropical climate, and its flavor improves over time due to it being rich in components that mature. The Okinawan ancestors were quick to realize the appeal of the aging process of the liquor and so they created a culture for nurturing

vintage awamori in earthenware pots, cultivating "aged awamori" in the pursuit of even better flavor. By some estimates, it was not until the Meiji era that commoners were allowed to consume awamori where some families brewed aged awamori as old as 100 or 200 years, starting from the Ryukyu Kingdom era. Both the distilleries and the aged awamori were destroyed by fire during World War II, but the passion of the craftsmen led to the revival of awamori after the war. Today, 47 distilleries can be found across the prefecture, from the main island of Okinawa to Miyako Island and the Yaeyama Islands, visitors can enjoy awamori of various alcohol percentages and flavors.



# Black Koji and Aging Techniques: Revival of the 100-year aged awamori

## The keys to awamori production: Shuri's spring water and black koji bacteria

We visited Zuisen Distillery, which has been making awamori since 1887 in the town of Sakiyama, one of the three "Shuri Sanka". In the middle of the stone staircase leading up to the second gate of Shuri Castle, there is a spring called Zuisen, which means "joyous spring". The founder of the distillery was so impressed by the spring's pure water that he adopted the name Zuisen for his company, hoping for a product with such pure taste. This abundance of spring water is one of the factors that led to the development of awamori production in the castle towns of Shuri. Mr. Gaku Sakumoto, the sixth-generation president of the distillery, says, "The geological formation of Shuri Castle consists of limestone, which allows water to pass through easily, and mudstone, which does not easily absorb water.

When it rains, water seeps into the limestone, collects between the mudstone, and gushes out from where the layers meet. That's why Shuri Castle always has abundant spring water even though it's on a hill."

Awamori can be made all year round, regardless of the season. The black koji bacteria grown in Okinawa since ancient times has made this possible. Spoilage may occur in a warm and humid climate because of the unwanted bacteria produced in the fermentation of mash. However, black koji produces more citric acid than other koji bacteria, making it resistant to other bacteria and is ideal for making alcohol in Okinawa. In addition, black koji has the ability to create a rich, deep, mellow aroma and the flavors which are typical of awamori. Today, Okinawa is said to be the only place in the world where black koji bacteria is used exclusively to make alcohol. "Awamori is the pride of Okinawans. It is also an

honor that the awamori from all 47 distilleries in the prefecture have received GI certification. I want all of the distilleries to work together and

## Aged awamori, with a savory umami flavor that increases through continual replenishment

promote awamori to the world."

We visited "Kara-Kara Tochibugwaa", which serves rare vintage awamori, and talked to Nagamine Tetsunari, the owner and awamori master. "Western liquor such as whisky generally ages by absorbing the aroma from the cask, whereas awamori ages through the chemical changes in its own components, regardless of the container. However, just letting it sit doesn't make it a good aged awamori, so the technique of "shitsugi" has been used to make aged awamori since the Ryukyu Kingdom era." "Western liquor such as whisky generally ages by absorbing the aroma from the cask,

whereas awamori ages through the chemical changes in its own components, regardless of the container. However, just letting it sit doesn't make it a good aged awamori, so the technique of "shitsugi" has been used to make aged awamori since the Ryukyu Kingdom era." "The older base awamori is replenished by adding comparatively younger aged

awamori. By repeating this process, the quality of the awamori is stabilized, and the rich aroma and mellow taste become deeper. "Vintage Awamori most often tends to be a later riser. As that saying goes, the aroma of the aged awamori is enriched the longer that it is exposed to air." "Enjoy a sip using the traditional "Karakara" serving flask and small "Chibuguwaa" cup.

The aged awamori, which has been aged for 20 to 30 years, has a sweet aroma like vanilla and maple syrup. Prior to the war, people in Okinawa used to age 100-year old awamori in their homes. Now various efforts are being made to promote 100-year old awamori for future generations. Aged awamori is a family treasure whose spirit lives on today and links us to the future.



1. Zuisen Distillery has been based in the town of Sakiyama since its founding. 2. "I feel it is our duty to continue producing awamori in Shuri," says Mr. Sakumoto, the distillery's president. 3. Families also have jars in their own homes for aging awamori. 4. Awamori stored in a jar continues to mature on its own. 5. Awamori has long been used in cooking, for example in tofuyo and rafute. 6. "There are a variety of ways to enjoy Awamori, such as mixed with water during a meal and drinking it straight after meals," says Mr. Nagamine.

# A unique production process that lends deep aroma and taste by keeping the distinct flavor of the ingredients

## Prepared using only koji made with black koji bacteria from Okinawa and rich water

Awamori's production places importance on the koji preparation. Shochu is generally made by first making malted rice, then adding sweet potato or barley as a secondary preparation, whereas for awamori, all of the ingredients are used to ferment malted rice in a single step. This traditional method unique to Okinawa was developed to reduce the number of steps in order to prevent the mash from spoiling due to the warm climate, and give more fullness and depth to the flavor. Indica rice is mainly used as its hard, smooth texture makes it is easy to blend with the black koji bacteria, it yields more

alcohol than other types of rice, and it has a distinct, sweet flavor. Okinawan water from the Ryukyu limestone strata is used in the preparation. The mineral-rich hard water helps drive the activity of the black koji bacteria and yeast. Fermentation is well on its way when you see bubble forming and sense the aroma of the fruit. It takes about two weeks for the mash to mature, and its condition is checked every day.

## A single batch-distilled alcohol drink retains the flavor of its ingredients

The use of a pot still for distillation is also unique to Awamori. It retains the aroma and flavor of the ingredients while raising the alcohol content. As

such, the use of a pot still allows the creation of unique awamori with its distinct aroma and subtle taste. The unblended spirit has an alcohol content of around 50% immediately after distillation, so water is added to adjust its strength. Freshly made awamori has a strong aroma and sharp taste. It is generally aged for six months to one year and shipped when it has become mellow. If it is aged for three years or more, it can be labeled as aged awamori. Apart from the range of aromas produced based on alcohol percentage and the aging period, the flavor of awamori can also vary greatly depending upon the container it is stored in, be it a stainless steel tank, ceramic jar, or glass bottle.



## Product Specification of Geographical Indication “琉球 (Ryukyu)”

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (a) Characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Sensory factor

“Ryukyu,” which is a pot still distilled liquor made by distillation of fermented mash made from rice koji using the black koji mold and water as ingredients, has a robust flavor from the optimal amount of oil originating from the rice koji used as an ingredient. Products made from the traditional atmospheric distillation have a pleasant aroma, while products made from reduced-pressure distillation have the flavor of fruits such as apples and bananas. In particular, aged liquors (stored three years or longer) made from atmospheric distillation have a rich and deep aroma, a harmony of a sweet vanilla aroma from the components from the rice broken down by the enzymes from the black koji mold and the aroma of Matsutake mushrooms.

##### (2) Microbiological factor

The academic name for the black koji mold (*Aspergillus luchuensis*) used in “Ryukyu” is a name originating in Ryukyu, and specified as a National Fungi. “Ryukyu” uses only rice koji made using black koji mold, and water and yeast are added to the rice koji and fermented, with the whole koji preparation being a traditional production technique unique to Ryukyu and passed down through generations in Okinawa prefecture. It is this technique that gives “Ryukyu” its sensory elements, including a rich and deep aroma and robust flavor.

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factor

Okinawa prefecture is in the Ryukyu Islands to the south-west of the Japanese archipelago and has been an important trading port in East Asia since old times. With its subtropical climate come high temperatures, high humidity and significant rainfall. In sake brewing in such climate, the possibility of spoiling due to unwanted bacteria in the fermentation of moromi is high. However, the black koji mold which forms a high amount of citric acid compared to other koji molds maintains good fermentation, and the various components formed by this black koji mold give “Ryukyu” its unique characteristics. In addition, the Ryukyu limestone belt runs through Okinawa, and the water is hard water with abundant mineral content, and as the climate is hot, the microorganisms (black koji mold and yeast) are active, creating a complex and rich flavor.

##### (2) Human factor

The history of production of “Ryukyu” is long and there are several theories about the history of the production techniques. Because there are similarities with the production methods of distilled liquors used by the trading partners of the Ryukyu kingdom, it is said that various techniques were introduced over 500 years ago from South-east Asia or the Chinese continent through cultural exchange which conformed to the weather and culture of Ryukyu are the origin for Ryukyu's unique traditional production method. “Ryukyu” is also called as “Ryukyu Awamori” or “Awamori.” There are many different theories about the origin of these names. Some say that the name, “Awamori (literally, bubbles that rise and swell),” which has an alcoholic percentage of over 40% immediately after distillation, came from the way bubbles are formed in a container when the liquor is poured from a height to measure the alcoholic content. Awamori with a particularly high alcohol percentage is also called, “Hanazake” (literally, flower sake), since the bubbles in the container are layered, looking like as if flowers are in full bloom. “Ryukyu” has a culture of being matured after distillation over the years. Ryukyu that has been aged for at least three years is called, “kusu (aged shochu).” Whisky or other liquors

are generally stored in barrels and matured as they obtain the fragrance component of barrels. “Ryukyu,” on the other hand, is stored in jars and bottles and matured as the flavor component contained in the sake itself goes through physical and chemical changes. Thus, Ryukyu is characterized by its ongoing maturity even after being packed in a container and put on the market. At the geographical origin, the culture and techniques of nurturing “Ryukyu” into “kusu” by consumers by themselves, called “shitsugi” (sake making) has been established.

### II Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor

It is necessary for the following criteria to be satisfied in order to use the geographical indication “Ryukyu”.

#### (a) Ingredients

- (1) Only rice koji made using the black koji mold belonging to *Aspergillus luchuensis* is used for the rice koji.
- (2) Water collected in Okinawa prefecture is used for the water.

#### (b) Production method

- (1) Fermentation of ingredients and distillation is performed in Okinawa prefecture.
- (2) Moromi made by fermenting the ingredients of rice koji and water is distilled in a pot still.
- (3) If it is stored in the production process, storage is in Okinawa prefecture.
- (4) The product is filled in Okinawa prefecture in the containers in which it will be delivered to consumers.

### III Matters relating to management for maintaining the characteristics of liquors

In order to use the geographical indication “Ryukyu”, it is necessary to receive confirmation from the following organization (hereinafter “Control Body”) in accordance with the Work Implementation Guidelines prepared by such Control Body, regarding whether or not the liquor for which such geographical indication will be used satisfies the “Matters Relating to Ingredients and Production Method of Liquor”.

Name of Control Body:  
**GI Ryukyu Management Committee**

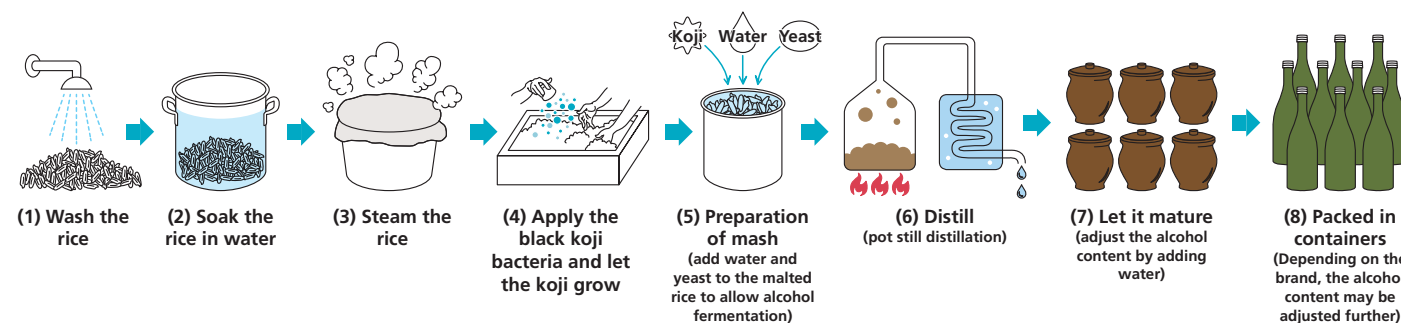
Address: Okinawa Awamori Distillers Association,  
8-9, 2-chome Minato-machi, Naha City, Okinawa prefecture  
Phone number: 098-868-3727  
Email: [info@okinawa-awamori.or.jp](mailto:info@okinawa-awamori.or.jp)  
Website: [www.okinawa-awamori.or.jp](http://www.okinawa-awamori.or.jp)

### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Pot distillation shochu (Article 3, Item 10 of the Liquor Tax Act),  
material alcohol (Article 3, Item 17 of the Liquor Tax Act)



## How to make Awamori



# Sake brewing that combines ancestral wisdom and a southern environment with volcanic plumes of the majestic Sakurajima in the sky above

Kagoshima Prefecture consists of the southernmost part of Kyushu Island, called the mainland, and outlying islands. Stretching over roughly 600km from north to south, it is rich in expression, with some areas experiencing freezing temperatures each morning in winter, and others, the humid subtropical climate characteristic of the south.



Kagoshima Prefecture

Sweet Potato Shochu

# Satsuma

## The charming presence of Sakurajima, symbol of Kagoshima Prefecture

“Sakurajima is doing well, it’s raining ash around today.” I heard such a voice coming from behind as I looked up at the growing mushroom-shaped cloud of smoke that seemed to have just erupted, while being rocked by the tram (streetcar) running through Kagoshima City. An active volcano which rises near the middle of the Kagoshima mainland, it’s needless to

say that Sakurajima is a source of pride for the local people. The volcano erupts almost daily, and its volcanic ash, called “he” in the Kagoshima dialect, flutters about in the wind. There is even a weather report segment called “Winds over Sakurajima” that forecasts the direction of tomorrow’s ash flow, something unlikely to be found anywhere else. It’s common to think of natural disasters when hearing of a volcanic eruption, but it’s an everyday sight in Kagoshi-

ma, and for some reason everyone seems happy when they see smoke billowing up from Sakurajima.

It’s not only ash, but also rain that falls from the sky, and just as you begin to enjoy the pleasant climate of spring, the rainy season arrives in no time. In Kagoshima Prefecture, it rains like a squall during the rainy season. But in Kagoshima, there is a word called “Shimazu rain,” which is the joyful thought that “rainy days are harbingers of good things.” The name comes from Tadahisa Shimazu, first head of the Shimazu clan that is said to be the illegitimate child of Minamoto no Yoritomo, born on a rainy day in the Heian era. I feel that this positive way of thinking, that “today is a good day,” no matter rain nor ash, shows the laidback and kind human nature of the south.

With a total length of about 600km including the outlying islands, it may be obvious that Kagoshima Prefecture has large climate differences from north to south. For example, the average minimum temperature in Isa City, located in the northern part of the prefecture, reaches below zero in January as if you were in a snowy region. Meanwhile, in Ibusuki City in the southern part of the mainland, it’s so warm

that rape blossoms bloom in the same month. Going down to the southernmost island of Yoron, the average temperature is around 15 degrees, which is about the same as Okinawa. Seeing these climate differences, you keenly realize how expansive Kagoshima is again, and how the warm, southern image doesn’t apply to every area. In terms of

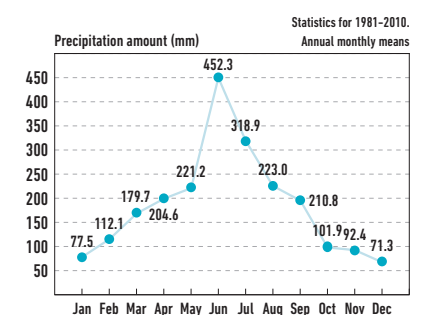
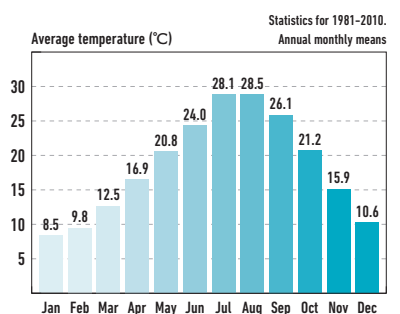
## Kagoshima Prefecture, longest in Japan and home to a diverse climate

climate classifications, it straddles the temperate and subtropical zones, but Yakushima Island, with the Kyushu region’s highest peak towering above it, also has aspects of a cool temperate zone. It is a rarity in the world to have three climates within a single prefecture.

Annual precipitation in rainy Kagoshima is over 2,000mm, making it one of the rainiest prefectures nationally, and among them, Yakushima Island has the highest annual precipitation in all of Japan. The Kuroshio Current is warmed near the equator and flows toward Yakushima from the eastern side of Taiwan. With that momentum, the warm, moist air climbs up Yakushima’s high mountains where it cools near the

peak, forming clouds and causing large amounts of rain. When the summer arrives, typhoons also pass by as if they were just waiting for it. It’s safe to say that the island is loved by rain. That rich rainwater then nurtures the forests, which are the source of life and livelihoods on Yakushima.

A lot of beautiful nature remains on this “island of water” Yakushima, and its native Yakusugi Cedar forests, which include Mt. Miyanoura in the island’s center, are registered as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site.



# For the shochu industry's expanding possibilities, geographical indication is a powerful weapon in anticipation of global advancement

## Was sweet potato shochu the perfect liquor for production in Kagoshima's natural environment?

Sweet potatoes, an essential ingredient for sweet potato shochu, grow with roots that crawl through the soil so they are not blown away even in typhoon-prone Kagoshima, often called the "Typhoon Ginza." They also rot in pooled water after heavy rainfall, but Kagoshima's Shirasu plateau was made from accumulating piles of volcanic ash, so while the soil quality is poor it has outstanding drainage, making it an environment extremely suited to growing sweet potatoes.

Another important raw ingredient is koji mold. At first, yellow koji was used like in Japanese sake, but it was hard to stabilize due to unwanted bacteria that proliferated in warm and humid Kagoshima. So, the black koji used in making awamori became customary for shochu-making. Black koji bacteria is characterized by the large amount of citric acid produced during the brewing process, raising the acidity of the fermenting mash compared to other koji bacteria and preventing spoilage caused by

unwanted bacteria. This remarkably improved the accuracy of sweet potato shochu-making.

Sweet potato shochu is made through a combination of Kagoshima's climate and plateaus, optimum raw ingredients, and additionally the immeasurable research and efforts of those who have come before us.

## Moving forward as one toward a future of new possibilities

Kagoshima Prefecture has the largest number of shochu cellars nationwide with 113 at present (as of May 2021), which is why Kagoshima is called the shochu kingdom. It's said that there are over 2,000 different brands, but no two taste the same. New shochu cellars have been hard to come by, but in 2018 a new cellar was born.

Mishima Village is made up of three outlying islands in Kagoshima Prefecture: Takeshima, Iojima, and Kuroshima. On Kuroshima, the Mishima Shochu Muku no Kura cellar was newly established with the aim of revitalizing the local area. As a publicly-established, publicly-run shochu cellar, it is a rarity in Japan,

created through the cooperation of Mishima Village residents, the Mishima Village Office, and people from the Kagoshima mainland.

The sweet potatoes used as raw ingredients are cultivated by the entire community, from the farmers to the cellar staff. The village office promotes the project and cultivates dormant farmland, and the office staff themselves work at the shochu cellar to actually produce shochu. The shochu-making area has also become a place of exchange between island residents, village office staff, and immigrants to the island, including community revitalization volunteers. It started from the desire to make shochu in the village, but legal and licensing hurdles made it difficult, so the sweet potatoes to be used as raw ingredients were being sent from Mishima Village to a brewing company on the Kagoshima mainland. Then, with continued lobbying, they were permitted to produce it within the village as a "shochu special district" under the condition that the village's water and sweet potatoes be used. This integrated production, from sweet potatoes to shochu-making, gave birth to a new civic pride. Both long-established cellars with over 150 years of history and brand new cellars alike approach shochu-making with sincerity day in and day out, wishing for the development of the



Mr. Yuichiro Hamada, Chairman of the Kagoshima Shochu Makers Association and President and Representative Director of Hamadasyuzou He has recently discovered new, untraditional ways of enjoying sweet potato shochu, like mixing it with soda water or snacking on jellied red bean paste with it, strongly stating that shochu still has plenty of potential.

entire shochu industry.

## Is the sweet flavoring beloved by the people of Kagoshima meant to match sweet potato shochu?

People often say that Kagoshima's flavoring is sweet, and it's certainly true. They put granulated sugar in boiled dishes, and their mozuku seaweed in vinegar doesn't even make you cough. The flavor of their soy sauce is particularly shocking, often mistaken for the sugared soy sauce used on mochi in the Kanto region on New Year's. This sweet soy sauce, though, matches extremely well with chicken sashimi, Kagoshima's soul food.

Why is the flavoring sweet? There are various theories. People living in the warm climate of Kagoshima burn more calories than those in colder regions, so they prefer sweeter flavors to make up for it. Sugar producing areas such as Amami Oshima are nearby, so sugar was easy to get. Or, because sugar was a luxury item at the time, using copious amounts in cooking had a meaning of hospitality. The theories

go on and on, and among them is one that says Kagoshima has a culture of drinking dry flavored sweet potato shochu, so they preferred sweetly flavored dishes to go with it. Hence why they also preferred a sweet soy sauce. Hearing this theory, I can't help but nod my head in agreement.

I think that many different factors have come together to create a climate that likes sweet flavors, but sweet potato shochu does goes well with dishes that are a bit sweet and sashimi (both fish and chicken) eaten with sweet soy sauce. The umami and body felt from the sweetness enhances and mellows the flavor of

the ingredients, fusing with the dryness of the sweet potato shochu in your mouth, making you reach for the next bite. Then another drink of sweet potato shochu, and back again with your chopsticks, the endless loop complete.

Although it's my own personal taste, the combination of Kagoshima's sweet and fluffy "tsuke-age" ("satsuma-age") fried fish cakes and sweet potato shochu gives a sense of security that I could even compare to being back home. Also, tasting sweet potato shochu together with sweets like chocolate gâteau is a fresh and fun time that is a bit different from normal.





# GI Satsuma sweet potato shochu, one of a kind, will continue its evolution

## Unexpectedly unknown? How sweet potato shochu is made

If you understand the production process for making sweet potato shochu, you'll feel all the closer to the chief brewer when drinking it.

There are several types of koji mold used in sweet potato shochu-making, such as black koji, characterized by its full-bodied aroma and and substantial body and umami, and white koji, sharp and fresh with a light taste. Yellow koji, which has been used for Japanese sake since long ago but is delicate and difficult to manage, has also come to be used at more cellars in recent years due to advances in shochu production technology. With temperature and sanitary controls, you can make a smooth and refreshing shochu with it. In addition, the Kinzangura cellar in Ichikikushikino City has revived "golden koji" from its slumber since its discovery in the Meiji era, brewing sweet potato shochu with a fragrant, fruit-like aroma.

Once the koji is made, water and shochu yeast are added to it and the yeast is left to grow for about a week, making the primary mash. Here, the

koji turns starch into sugar, which the yeast turns into alcohol, and finally it's time for sweet potatoes to appear as the star of the show. There are over 40 different types of sweet potatoes, including the commonly used Kogane Sengan variety, the Joy White variety which was selectively bred for sweet potato shochu, red sweet potatoes which are the primary variety produced in Kagoshima, purple sweet potatoes, and orange sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes go bad more quickly than regular potatoes, so they are harvested and shipped off the day before or the morning of, dirt and all. Both ends of the potato are cut off while quickly washing off the mud and dirt, and any damaged, discolored, or insect-eaten parts are scraped off by hand. If the potato has any damaged parts, it will result in a degraded odor. It hard work done using cold water in the autumn and winter months, but it is very crucial for delicious sweet potato shochu. These sweet potatoes and water are added to the primary mash and left to ferment for about 10 days, with the resulting product called the secondary mash.

By distilling the completed fermented

mash, you get the unblended sweet potato shochu. The "first drip" contains a high alcohol content, so distillation is continued for a while until it settles down at about 37-38% on average. Authentic shochu is a single batch-distilled shochu, so it retains a good amount of the potatoes' flavor. There are 2 distillation methods: atmospheric pressure distillation done at normal pressure, and reduced-pressure distillation done by reducing the pressure of the still with a vacuum pump. Atmospheric pressure distillation produces rich flavors and aromas and is suited for long-term aged shochu, while reduced-pressure distillation produces less volatile components, giving a quality that is light and clean with no peculiarities.

The unblended shochu is ripened in tanks and earthenware urns after distillation, and water is added to adjust the alcohol content down to about 25% before being bottled and shipped.

Shochu manufacturing techniques are evolving day and night as producers continue to take on new challenges while preserving the basic traditional methods.

### I want to spread knowledge of shochu that has gained little understanding

Kagoshima University, located in Kagoshima City, Kagoshima Prefecture, is home to the only place in Japan where you can specialize in shochu-making. I spoke with Yoshihiro Samejima, visiting professor at the Education and Research Center for Fermentation Studies, which aims to foster the talent that will be responsible for the future development of the shochu and fermentation fields, and to serve as a base for disseminating shochu culture.

"Shochu is really very flexible, from its ingredients, distillation process, cellaring, and to its drinking methods. And the fact that it's made using traditional

techniques and production methods with local crops is a characteristic not found in other types of alcoholic beverages. Japanese shochu is already recognized for its health benefits, and the problems distilled liquor have held for years around the world have already been resolved, such as its impact on health and difficulty being paired with meals. I think the future of the world of distilled liquor lies with shochu. Shochu is also the only distilled liquor to have built a world for itself at the same level as fermented liquor, making it very unique. Its colorless and transparent appearance, temperature when drinking it warm, alcohol content, and even snacks are the same as sake. If people were to learn about and spread this culture, the shochu market should still expand. A university is a great place to do

that kind of work. Students come from all over Japan and overseas and are able to experience the authentic Kyushu shochu culture, and since they're very adept at information sharing, shochu culture is easily spread."

The world of distilled liquor will revolve around this place. It was with such hope that it was named the Hokushin ("north star") Distillery. Moving forward, shochu will exert its leadership in the world.



## Product Specification of Geographical Indication “薩摩 (Satsuma)”

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (a) Characteristics of liquor

“Satsuma”, which is a pot distillation shochu, has the gorgeous, rich bouquet of the sweet potato from which it is made and is characterized by its sweet and rich taste which is in harmony with the bouquet created by using the high quality and fresh sweet potatoes grown in Kagoshima prefecture. Furthermore, it has a smooth palate from right after it is distilled.

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factor

The Shirasu Plateau which covers a large area of Kagoshima prefecture drains well and has many areas where the ground water level is low and is suitable for growing sweet potatoes. Therefore sweet potatoes have been grown here widely since the Edo period and it is Japan's biggest producer of sweet potatoes.

As a result, Kagoshima is a region well-suited to producing shochu from sweet potatoes as it can obtain a stable supply of this ingredient.

##### (2) Human factor

The sweet potatoes were introduced from Ryukyu in the 17th century and as they were first grown in Satsuma, they became known as "Satsumaimo".

The “Satsuma” production technique has been established and passed on by the Kurose master brewers in the present-day Kurose district, Kasasacho, Minamisatsuma City, Kagoshima prefecture and Ata master brewers in the present-day Ata district, Kinpocho, Minamisatsuma city, Kagoshima prefecture.

Currently the Kagoshima Prefectural Institute of Industrial Technology takes the lead in technology development and dissemination and Kagoshima University's Shochu and Fermentation Science Education and Research Center also conducts research and development of shochu from sweet potatoes and nurtures human resources.

From the Meiji era on, the use of black koji mold (*Aspergillus luchuensis*) and white koji mold (*Aspergillus kawachii*), secondary fermentation process, development of apparatus for producing koji, and improvements to distillation apparatus, have allowed the production of even higher quality “Satsuma”.

As a result of these improvements to production technology, the characteristics of the current “Satsuma” have been established.

### II Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor

It is necessary to satisfy the following criteria to use the geographical indication “Satsuma”.

#### (a) Ingredients

- (1) The type of potato used is only sweet potato harvested in Kagoshima prefecture (excluding Amami city and Oshima district, hereinafter the same).
- (2) The koji used is only koji made from rice or from sweet potatoes harvested in Kagoshima prefecture.
- (3) Water collected in Kagoshima prefecture.

#### (b) Production method

- (1) Fermentation of ingredients and distillation are performed in Kagoshima prefecture.
- (2) The moromi made of koji, sweet potatoes, and water is fermented and then distilled using a pot still.
- (3) If it is stored in the production process, storage is in Kagoshima prefecture.
- (4) The product is filled in Kagoshima prefecture in the containers that will be used to deliver the product to consumers

### III Matters relating to management for maintaining the characteristics of liquor

In order to use the geographical indication “Satsuma”, it is necessary to receive confirmation from the following organization (hereinafter “Control Body”) in accordance with the Work Implementation Guidelines prepared by such Control Body, regarding whether or not the liquor for which such geographical indication will be used satisfies the “Matters Relating to Ingredients and Production Method of Liquor”.

#### Name of Control Body:

**Satsuma Shochu Management Committee**

**Address: 8-15 Kinkocho, Kagoshima city,  
Kagoshima Prefectural Brewers Association  
Phone number: 099-222-1455  
Email: k-kagoshima@tanshikijoryu-shochu.or.jp**

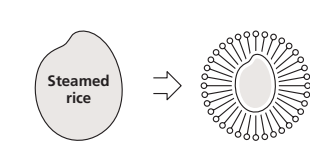
### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Pot distillation shochu(Article 3, Item10 of the Liquor Tax Act)



## How to Make Shochu

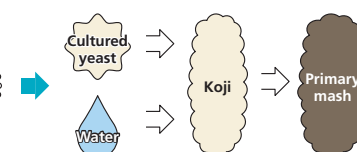
### (1) Make the primary mash



Steam the rice and let it cool. (steamed rice)

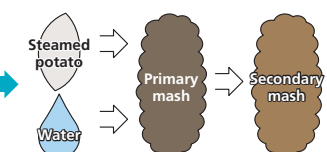
Apply the koji bacteria to it and let the koji grow.

### Preliminary Preparation



Add water and yeast to the resulting koji (preliminary preparation). Let it ripen for about 6 days. The result is the primary mash.

### (2) Make the secondary mash



Add steamed potato and water to the primary mash (secondary preparation). Let it ferment and ripen for about 10 days. The result is the secondary mash.

### Secondary preparation



Distill the secondary mash to make shochu.

# Aiming for greater heights in the challenge of a new era

Hakusan, first in Japan to be designated as a geographical indication for refined sake. Facing greater heights without fear of innovation, while respecting its beautiful nature and lasting history.



Ishikawa Prefecture

Japanese Sake

# Hakusan

## Heavy snow and raging rivers formed the basis of sake brewing

Hakusan City spreads out like a fan at the foothills of the sacred Hakusan, one of Japan's three famous mountains. The Tedori River basin on the northwestern side of Hakusan City sees an annual average of about 220 days of precipitation, with an annual average precipitation amount of about 2,600mm in the plains and about 3,300-3,600mm in

the mountains. This is twice the national average, and the humidity is also high at about 70-80% throughout the year. In the winter, temperatures drop due to seasonal winds from the northwest, and as large amounts of water vapor from the Sea of Japan cause snow to pile up, the mountainous area is one of the most prominent regions of heavy snowfall in the country. The bitter cold gently promotes fermentation, and the snow cleanses the air by

covering up dust and dirt, creating the perfect environment for sake brewing.

On the other hand, the plains have a relatively mild climate, with annual average temperatures about the same as the national average, and flourishing rice farms that make use of the wide arable land and abundant water. This abundance of water is brought by the Tedori River, once known as the "raging river." Its upper reaches lie on the slopes of Hakusan, which are prone to collapse and have caused many disasters, but at the same time it is also the source of water that has supported and helped develop the people's lives. The countless floodings of the Tedori River have carried large amounts of soil and created a vast alluvial fan. Hakusan City is located right in the middle of this alluvial fan brought by the Tedori River, and although the river flows throughout the entire city, it is called a raging river less now that flood control work has progressed.

## The rich-bodied flavor brought by the sacred Hakusan

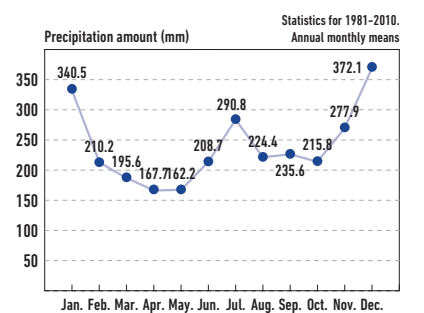
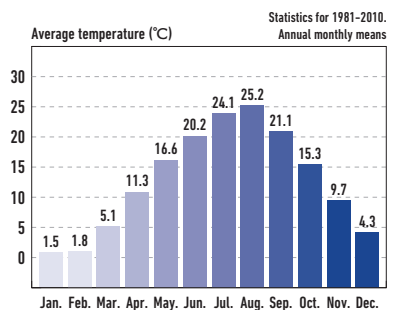
"The biggest and only thing Hakusan refined sakes have in common is their rich body," says Kazunari Shata, Representative Director of Shata Shuzo Co., Ltd. and chairman of the Hakusan Sake Makers Association. "There are strict

requirements in order to claim to be 'GI Hakusan,' such as having a rice polishing ratio below 70% and a koji ratio over 20%. The 5 GI Hakusan cellars also each have different sake brewing concepts. Even so, all of the cellars have achieved a rich-bodied flavor with umami that you can sense the quality of."

What brings out this rich body is the subsoil water of Tedori River that is used during preparation. This brewing water has been filtered through the many strata of earth that have piled up through flooding and is rich in minerals. It gently promotes fermentation during sake brewing and brings out the umami of the rice, producing a rich refined sake with a flavorful body.

Yasuyuki Yoshida, President and CEO of Yoshida Shuzoten Co., Ltd., speaks of how it is only this subsoil water, flowing down and absorbing minerals from the strata over 100 years, that could produce the unique GI Hakusan refined sake. "Tedori River's subsoil water, which contains snowmelt from Hakusan, slowly absorbs minerals from the strata and becomes a slightly hard water. The rice grown around the cellars also has a unique minerality from the effects of the soil. We want to make use of this minerality of the water and rice to create a fresh and crisp refined sake unique to Hakusan." GI

Hakusan's rich body fascinates many people. Ayako Suwa, an artist from Ishikawa Prefecture and director of "food creation," is one of them. Ms. Suwa, who has now set up a studio in a forested area of Yamanashi Prefecture, said, "Even from far away, I feel as if I'm in the nature of Hakusan with its grand mountains and pure water when I drink it. Ishikawa Prefecture has a developed raw food culture and way of thinking that sees it as extravagant to eat food as it is, and I feel the same sense of extravagance from GI Hakusan's refined sake. It feels like tasting the land of Hakusan itself."



# Achieving symbiosis with beautiful nature, a new-age sake brewed with modern senses and techniques

## Protecting and developing the land from an SDGs perspective

The entirety of Hakusan City has been designated as the “Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark” by the Japanese Geopark Committee, which aims to conserve and utilize the earth’s heritage with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) as its parent organization. By communicating the charm and value of its land and conducting sustainable development while preserving nature, the city raises itself up and promotes the SDGs. The SDGs are 17 goals to change the world that were determined at a UN summit in 2015. Efforts are underway around the world aimed at achieving these goals by 2030. “I believe that these SDG perspectives will become extremely important in the future of sake brewing,” Mr. Yoshida says. “Rice is grown and harvested from spring to autumn, sake is brewed once it gets cold, and rice is then grown when it gets warm again. In that way, sake brewing has been long done while blending into the cycle of nature. I think it’s amazing to be able to brew sake in a comfortable environment year-round with the use of lots of electricity, but I’ve come to think that it’s a shame to see the logical and beautiful cycle of nature collapse due to global warming, and I want to hold it in check. We switched our all of our company’s electricity to natural energy

from May 2021 so that we can continue our sake brewing with the blessing of Hakusan for the next 10 or 100 years.”

Yoshida Shuzoten donates a portion of its proceeds to the Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark and is involved in activities to protect and nurture nature. Ms. Suwa, who lives surrounded by forests and is well aware of the importance of nature, is currently participating in a forestry project as part of Hakusan City’s SDG activities based on the belief that “thinking about forests leads to the creation of water.” “Getting inspiration from nature, finding play in nature on my own, I feel that those formative childhood experiences have an effect on my current activities. Since setting up my live-in studio in the middle of a deep mountain forest, I’ve come to think more deeply about how we should use the forest while also protecting it.”

“Getting inspiration from nature, finding play in nature on my own, I feel that those formative childhood experiences have an effect on my current activities. Since setting up my live-in studio in the middle of a deep mountain forest, I’ve come to think more deeply about how we should use the forest while also protecting it.”

Greater value is born not just by protecting water, nurtured by the forests, and the forests, nurtured by the mountains, but by utilizing them in a sustainable form over the long term. Sake brewing would not be possible

without the blessings of nature, such as rice, water, and microorganisms, and an increasing number of sake cellars are promoting the SDGs. It is greatly significant for Hakusan, an area that has acquired geographical indication, to contribute to society through Japan’s world-class sake culture. The promotion of the SDGs will lead to increased value not only for Hakusan, but for the entire refined sake industry.

## The “Next-Generation Hakusan” built through succession and reformation

Of the refined sake produced by Shata Shuzo, 80% is prepared with the ‘yamahai’ method. It is a nationally renowned traditional method by the Noto chief brewers of Ishikawa prefecture, who are among the four great chief brewers of Japan, and it requires extremely advanced techniques. Mr. Shata says, “Yamahai preparation requires complex temperature adjustments and takes twice as long to complete as compared to regular yeast starter. It is a very labor-intensive method. However, we believe that the deep flavor and body of refined sake can only be expressed through the yamahai method of preparation.”

Shata Shuzo has long continued its research and makes fine improvements to its yamahai-brewed refined sake every year. While handing down the “authentic techniques” to the next generation that have long been passed



down, they are always incorporating a breath of fresh air, looking for and practicing new ways of sake brewing that match the times.

“I want the next generation, the younger generation of chief brewers, to take over the yamahai method. I would like to see them create a new yamahai style for the times that can be enjoyed by their generation, while utilizing the traditions that have been built up until now. That’s because each generation has different tastes and seeks out different flavors.” To meet such wishes of his senior brewers, Mr. Yoshida, who could be called the representative of the next generation of chief brewers, is also dedicating his time to yamahai preparation. Yoshida Shuzoten uses a dedicated room for the yamahai method and is working on

a yamahai-prepared brew with an unprecedented flavor.

“We’re aiming to brew sake with a pleasant acidity and balanced umami, the characteristics of the yamahai method.”

The mainstream type of yamahai-prepared sake has a strong umami flavor, but the kind we’re bringing forward makes use of a fresh acidity and fermented gas feel. To do so, we of course make a strong yeast starter, but we’ve also made significant changes to the controls during mash fermentation and after the sake has been pressed. Made by passing the baton between natural lactic acid bacteria and various other types of bacteria, yamahai is a preparation method with amazing hidden potential. The pleasant acidity and

balanced umami that are characteristic of yamahai go well with low alcohol content sake, which serves as an important axis of the new sake we are bringing forward. We’d like to continue making new efforts while preserving tradition,” Mr. Yoshida says with determination.

The chief brewers of Hakusan have pioneered sake culture with discipline, respecting tradition without fear of innovation. By adding modern sense and technology to the techniques inherited from their predecessors, they will continue to develop their sake brewing with an eye to the times. Under the superb environment for sake brewing that the beautiful nature of Hakusan has brought about, Hakusan’s refined sake continues to aim for greater heights even today



1. Ayako Suwa, director of “food creation,” working at her studio surrounded by an abundance of nature. 2. Kazunari Shata, Representative Director of Shata Shuzo Co., Ltd. and chairman of the Hakusan Sake Makers Association. 3. Yasuyuki Yoshida, President and CEO of Yoshida Shuzoten Co., Ltd. 4. Yasuyuki Yoshida preparing a yamahai-brewed Japanese sake. 5. Ayako Suwa enjoying GI Hakusan Japanese sake. 6. Traditional “ikki soba,” which holds its roots in the Sengoku “Warring States” period. 7. The abundant blessings of Hakusan’s foothills, such as wild vegetables, char, and goby.

## “Always a challenger,” honest and daring sake brewing

In the olden days, Hakusan’s refined sake was commonly known as “Kaga chrysanthemum sake.”

The water of Tedor River was called chrysanthemum water and respected due to the clusters of wild chrysanthemum growing in its upper reaches, including Zawadsky’s chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum japonicum, and Aster scaber. Chinese Taoist teachings say that the “water collected from the drips of chrysanthemum will become an elixir of longevity and immortality,” so refined sake made from chrysanthemum water was prized and called chrysanthemum sake.

The “Double Ninth Festival,” during which people drink chrysanthemum sake to ward off misfortune and pray for longevity, is said to have been introduced to Japan during the Heian period, but “Kaga chrysanthemum sake” first appeared in literature in the

7th year of the Daiei era (1527) during the Muromachi period. It’s said that when Abutsubo, the chief of Shirayama Hime Shrine (Shirayama main shrine), visited Kyoto, he entertained the court nobles. Shirayama Hime Shrine is the main shrine of over 2,000 Shirayama shrines in Japan, and when the high-ranking chief priest visited Kyoto, the capital at the time, he chose “Kaga chrysanthemum sake” as his gift to represent his land. From this point of view, it’s easy to guess how valuable and appreciated chrysanthemum sake was.

The 5 GI Hakusan cellars have roots in chrysanthemum sake, with such history and status.

The GI Hakusan cellars, a select few who are raising their value with discipline, each have diverse concepts.

Shata Shuzo, carrying through their idea that “the five senses and experience are indispensable in passing down techniques,” are particular about brewing by hand wherever possible.

Manzairaku Sake Kura Co., Ltd.

continues its pursuit the ideal sake through a combination of the traditional techniques of chief brewers with the newest equipment.

Kanaya Shuzoten Corporation strikes a balance between traditional sake brewing and innovative challenges under the philosophy of “contributing to sake culture.”

Yoshida Shuzoten is creating the next generation of sake by repeatedly taking on novel challenges while protecting and nurturing the natural environment.

Under the belief that “Japanese sake is an intangible cultural asset,” Kikuhime Co., Ltd. tackles sake brewing with the utmost care and by drawing fully upon their skilled techniques.

What the 5 richly diverse GI Hakusan cellars have in common is that they are dissatisfied with the status quo while still continuing traditions, taking a proactive stance and not being afraid to take on challenges. The lineup of highly individual, choice Hakusan refined sake continues to steadily take on challenges and evolve, even at this very moment.

## Hakusan’s refined sake, pioneering a new age by innovating on top of tradition



- ① **Tengumai Junmai Daiginjo**  
Shata Shuzo Co., Ltd. / 720ml
- ② **Manzairaku Kiku no Shizuku Ginjo**  
Manzairaku Sake Kura Co., Ltd. / 720ml
- ③ **Tedorigawa Yamahai Junmai Daiginjo**  
Yoshida Shuzoten Co., Ltd. / 720ml
- ④ **Takasago Junmai Ishikawamon**  
Kanaya Shuzoten Corporation / 720ml
- ⑤ **Kikuhime Kashu Kikuzake Junmai**  
Kikuhime Co., Ltd. / 720ml



## Product Specification of Geographical Indication “白山 (Hakusan)”

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (a) Characteristics of liquor

Hakusan’s sake in general is rich, full-bodied, taking advantage of the delicious taste of rice.  
Among them, Junmai-Ginjo-shu and Ginjo-shu have a fruity flavor and moderate sourness, and with its rich taste and flavor, make drinkers feel the dignity.

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factor

Hakusan City of Ishikawa Prefecture is located on the alluvial fan of Tedorigawa-river which issues from the sacred mountain Hakusan that has been a religious subject from over 1300 years ago, and is blessed with affluent underflow water. This water contains a lot of calcium and little potassium and therefore, it facilitates mild fermentation during the sake brewing process and promotes the dissolution of rice and hence, brings the delicious taste of rice and forms the rich, full-bodied quality of sake which is peculiar to Hakusan.

##### (2) Human factor

From time immemorial, Hakusan’s sake has been cultivated by history and tradition of “Kikuzake (chrysanthemum sake).” In ancient times, “Kikuzake” is a sake with chrysanthemum petals being floated in a cup. According to the “Engishiki” which was compiled in the Heian Period and was one of the ceremonial rules, there was a custom to drink Kikuzake in the palace at the time of the Chrysanthemum Festival during the period. According to one estimate about “Kikuzake,” a trickle of sake made after drinking up full-bodied sake looked like a chrysanthemum pattern.

Moreover, in the Tokitsugu Yamashina’s book “Tokitsugu-kyoki” (written in 1527), there is a description that the Hakusan’s “Kikuzake” was brought to Kyoto, meaning that sake has been brewed in the area through the ages.

Furthermore, in the Ekiken Kaibara’s book “Fuso-kisho” (written in around 1700), with regard to sake brewed in the Hakusan area, the following descriptions were found and hence, it is clear that the quality of the sake has received a high evaluation through the ages: “Kashu Tsurugi (now Hakusan City) is located approximately 12 kilometers off from Kanazawa. There is a river flowing in from Hakusan. It is called Tedorigawa-river. Sake is brewed using the water. Sake is brewed using snow-broth. Sake is clear and very delicious. Someone travels around a country and tastes various sake. This is the world’s best sake.”

Based on such background, sake makers in the Hakusan area pursue technologies to brew extremely tasty and full-bodied sake and to make drinkers feel the dignity, as well as make efforts to develop products such as Yamahai-jikomi (Yamahai brewing method) etc. In addition, they make efforts to maintain the characteristics of sake and improve the quality of sake by, among others, launching a local brand “Hakusan-Kikuzake” in 2005.

### II Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor

To use the geographical indication “Hakusan,” it is required to meet the following requirements:

#### (a) Ingredients

(1) Only domestically produced rice (limited to brown rice for brewing with a rating of grade 1 or higher under the Agricultural Products Inspection Act – Act No. 144 of 1951, and the rice-polishing ratio of 70% or less) is used for rice and rice koji.

(2) Water collected in Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture.

(3) Ingredients for “Sake” stipulated in Item 7 of Article 3 of the Liquor Tax Act are used. Provided, however, that among the ingredients for sake stipulated in Article 2 of the Enforcement Order of the Liquor Tax Act, ingredients other than alcohol (limited to the case in which, among ingredients, the weight of alcohol does not exceed 50% of the weight of rice, including rice for koji) may not be used.

(Note) The rice-polishing ratio shall be the one indicated in Item 1 of Article 1 of the “Standards for Production Methods and Quality Indication for Sake - Notification of the National Tax Agency No. 8 of 1989.”

#### (b) Production method

- (1) Sake manufactured in accordance with the production method of sake stipulated in Item 7 of Article 3 of the Liquor Tax Act (except for the part concerning the sub item c. of the Item 7) in Hakusan City of Ishikawa Prefecture. Provided, however, that the Ekika-jikomi (liquefaction brewing) shall not be made for producing Moromi.
- (2) Shubo shall be used for brewing.
- (3) The percentage of use of Koji-mai (rice for koji) shall be 20% or more.
- (4) If sake is stored during the brewing process, it shall be stored in Hakusan City of Ishikawa Prefecture.
- (5) Sake shall be filled in the container scheduled to be delivered to consumers in Hakusan City of Ishikawa Prefecture.

(Note 1) “Preparation for liquefaction” is a preparation method to liquefy sake rice by using enzymes without being steamed.

(Note 2) “Shubo” is yeast starter propagated by rice, rice koji and water to help with the process of producing sake.

(Note 3) “Proportion of koji rice used” is based on Section 1, Item 3 of “Labeling Standards for Producing Process and Quality of Sake (1989 National Tax Office Notice No.8)”

### III Matters relating to management for maintaining the characteristics of liquor

To use the geographical indication “Hakusan,” sake makers, before liquor with the geographical indication are transferred (except for transfers applicable to the provisions of Paragraph 1 of Article 28 of the Liquor Tax Act) from the production site of liquor (including a site regarded as the production site with a license of production liquor under the provisions of Paragraph 6 of Article 28 and Paragraph 4 of Article 28-3 of the Liquor Tax Act - Act No. 6 of 1953), need to get confirmation based on the business application guidelines prepared by the following control body whether the liquor with the geographical indication satisfy the “Matters relating to the characteristics of liquor mainly linked with the production area of the liquor” and the “Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor.”

Name of Control Body:  
**GI Hakusan Sake Management Organization**

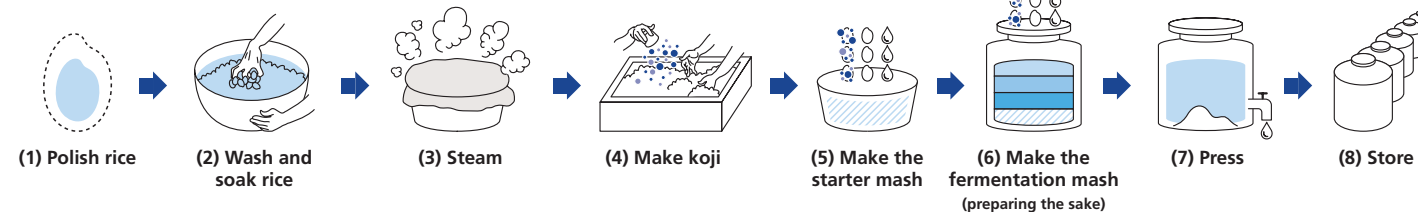
Address: c/o Hakusan Sake Makers Association Higashi-Shin-machi 12 Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture  
Phone number: 076-276-4888  
Website: [www.sake-hakusan.info/](http://www.sake-hakusan.info/)

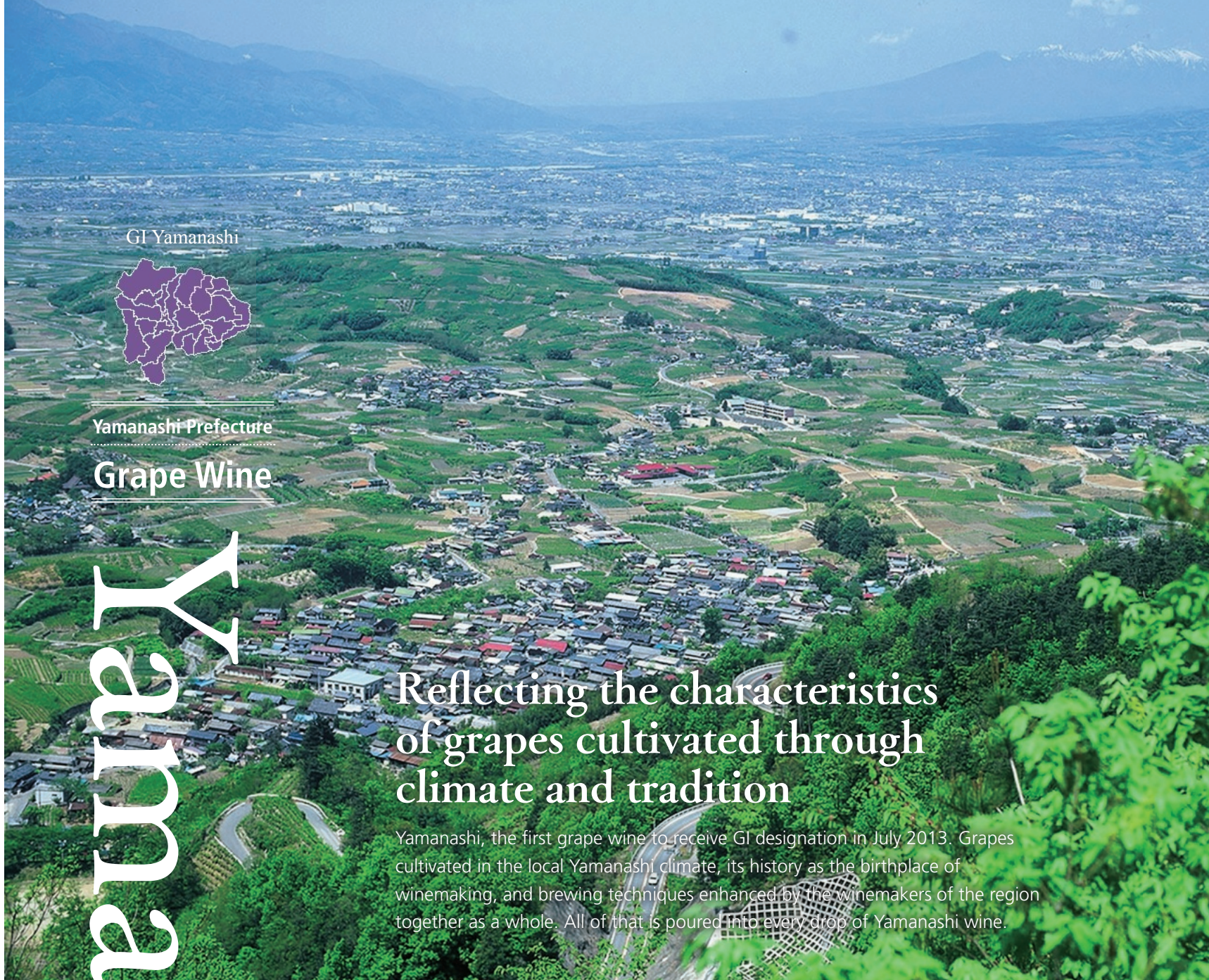
### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Seishu /sake (Article 3, Item 7 of the Liquor Tax Act)



## How to Make Japanese Sake





GI Yamanashi



Yamanashi Prefecture

Grape Wine

# Yamanashi

## Reflecting the characteristics of grapes cultivated through climate and tradition

Yamanashi, the first grape wine to receive GI designation in July 2013. Grapes cultivated in the local Yamanashi climate, its history as the birthplace of winemaking, and brewing techniques enhanced by the winemakers of the region together as a whole. All of that is poured into every drop of Yamanashi wine.

### A unique valley climate ideal for grape cultivation

The birthplace of wine in Japan, Yamanashi has long walked through history together with wine, including its much talked about declaration as the “Wine Prefecture” in 2019. The vineyards, which bud in the spring and bear fruit in autumn, have become a landscape that lies in the hearts of the people of Yamanashi.

An inland prefecture, Yamanashi’s

topography is centered around the Kofu Basin, surround by tall mountains on all four sides: Mount Fuji to the south, the Southern Alps to the west, Yatsugatake to the north, and the Chichibu mountains to the east. As a result, it’s not easily influenced by the rainy season or typhoons, and has a low amount of precipitation throughout the year. It has a unique valley climate, with large temperature differences throughout the day and some of the longest

hours of sunlight in the country. The alluvial fan found in the valley also has good drainage, making it ideal for cultivating fruit which grows with relatively little water. This natural environment, with bright sunlight in the afternoon and cool nights, raises the fruit’s sugar content and improves its coloring. In particular, Yamanashi boasts the highest production of grapes, peaches, and Japanese plums nationwide, making it also known as a fruit superpower.

Tracing back the history of Yamanashi’s grape cultivation, there are two legends on the origin of the Koshu variety. One says that in 718 during the Nara period, the Buddhist priest Gyoki had a dream during his ascetic practice in which Yakushi Nyorai appeared holding a grape, and when Gyoki made a wood carving of the image he had seen and offered it to Daizenji temple on Kashioyama, he found a grape vine there. The theory is that this became Koshu. The other is a theory that says a resident of Katsunuma named Kageyu Amemiya discovered Koshu grapevines in 1186 during the Kamakura period. Either way, Koshu has had an unbroken history of cultivation for close to 1,000 years. The results of DNA analysis have revealed that the Koshu variety’s roots lie near the Caspian Sea, and that it was introduced to Japan via China by following the Silk Road. In the Edo period, a cultivation method using bamboo shelves was

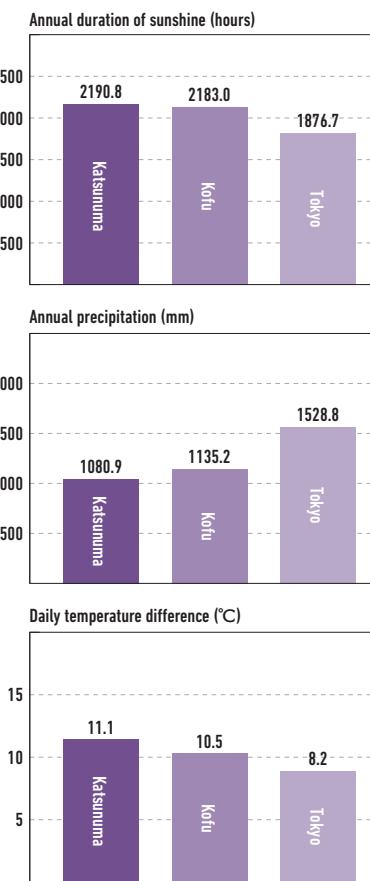
invented in Katsunuma. In rainy Japan, the shelves with their good ventilation became the prototype for cultivating grapes, which prefer a dry climate. In Katsunuma, which had prospered as an inn town, the grapes became popular among travelers as a local specialty.

### From famous grape country to the birthplace of winemaking

Winemaking began in Yamanashi in the early Meiji period, then famous as grape country. Winemaking was encouraged as part of the Meiji government’s industrial development policy, and it is said that Hironori Yamada and Norihisa Takuma produced wine using crimson glory and Koshu grapes in 1870. In 1877, Dainippon Yamanashi Wine Company was established as Japan’s first private winemaking company. Later, two young men from Katsunuma, Masanori Takano and Tatsunori Tsuchiya, spread the winemaking techniques they learned while studying abroad in France to their hometown, and from there Yamanashi developed as a wine producing area centered around Katsunuma. Grape farmers also ventured into winemaking, and wine became a familiar drink to them. Wine came to be loved as an alcohol rooted in the local climate and a unique wine culture has been built up, such as storing it in large 1.8L sake bottles and drinking it out of

teacups.

Currently, there are about 90 wineries in Yamanashi, including family-run wineries that have continued on for generations since the early Meiji period, major manufacturers, as well as newly-launched wineries. The region has been well known as a wine producing area boasting the most wineries and top production in Japan, from long ago to today.



Japan Meteorological Agency: Climatological normals from climate statistic data (1981-2010, 1986-2010 only for Katsunuma’s annual duration of sunshine)  
\*Daily temperature difference is the difference between the annual average maximum temperature and annual average minimum temperature.

# The time-proven grapes ideal for Yamanashi's climate

## Koshu, a variety cultivated over many years

Mr. Mitsuhiro Anzo, chairman of the Yamanashi Prefecture Wine Manufacturers' Association, spoke about how Yamanashi's grapes benefit from the blessings of the local climate.

"Yamanashi is a valley that is noteworthy of mention even within Japan, with mountains visible in every direction. In addition to natural factors, like the low rainfall and long hours of sunshine, there's an appeal in having vineyards at different elevations. The elevation at the center of the Kofu Basin is just under 300m and reaches about 800m as you head toward the mountains. Depending on the elevation, you can produce various different varieties of grapes. The soil varies from place to place, with clay-like soil from volcanic activity producing fruity and gently acidic grapes, and the gravelly, well-draining soil of the alluvial fan tending to produce grapes with brilliant aromas."

Among the different grape varieties, "Koshu" is synonymous with Yamanashi. It's a variety unique to Japan that is also registered with the

International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV).

"Even at a modest estimate, Koshu has been cultivated in this region for over 800 years. Plants are gradually replaced by strains that suit the land, so it can be said that the filter of time has proven that these grapes are ideal for Yamanashi's climate. And although it falls short of Koshu, the Muscat Bailey A variety grown in large quantities for red wine is also suited to the Yamanashi climate, having been cultivated here for over 80 years.

Over a long period of time, cultivation methods have been established in Yamanashi that are suitable for the local climate and varieties, raising the quality. The same variety will also produce different flavors depending on factors like the soil and elevation, which lead to the wine's characteristics. "For Koshu, the low elevation of Kofu produces a fruity wine with low acidity, while higher elevations can produce a type with minerality and a solid acidity. Recently, the clean, citrus-like aroma produced by planting on riversides with good drainage has been attracting attention. With Muscat Bailey A as well, Katsunuma produces

a splendid strawberry-like aroma, while the higher elevation of Hosaka produces the nuances of a classic red wine with a subdued aroma. It's interesting for us brewing as well, because the styles differ based on the area where the grapes are grown."

## A wine producing area with an ethos of lively information exchange

One feature of Yamanashi's brewing is the sur lie method. Meaning "on the lees" in French, it is a method of adding umami to wine by leaving the yeast produced during fermentation until the spring rather than racking it off immediately.

"Koshu grapes have a pink color. The skins contain tannins, giving them astringency, so white wine has usually been made by pressing the grapes lightly so as to avoid any effects from the skin. Doing so leads to a lighter wine, and Koshu wines were predominantly sweet until the mid-1980s. After trial and error attempting to make a dry wine that could be enjoyed with a meal, we adopted the sur lie method for Koshu, which originates from the Loiré region in France.

The wine company Mercian's know-



how that they gained through repeated research was soon made public and became the standard in Yamanashi. Unique to an area with a dense population of wineries, there is a living tradition of 'crossing the fence' and cooperating as a region as a whole to liven up their wine.

"Recently, some wineries have started to try various European varieties like Petit Verdot and Shiraz at different elevations, and everyone is sharing their information. New wines will be born from new varieties, and we want to refine Koshu and Muscat Bailey A to enhance the appeal of GI Yamanashi," says Mr. Anzo. And if you're interested in GI Yamanashi, he'd like for you to go visit.

"I think it's more enjoyable to see it with your own eyes, feel the breeze, and drink the wine as you recall the

nature of Yamanashi from back home. Food and alcohol produced from the same region go well together, so I want you to enjoy the wine together with foods from Yamanashi, like Fujinosuke brand trout or Koshu wine beef, which is raised on wine lees.

## Deep regional characteristics that come out in both art and wine

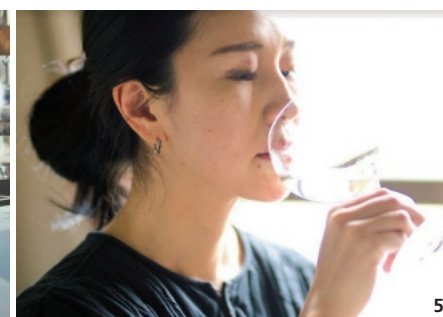
Ena Furuya is a textile artist who works on her creations in Yamanashi, where she was born and raised. Visiting her studio, a stunning grape vine was planted in the garden.

"Grapes are something familiar and important to the people of Yamanashi. We've had sake bottles of wine in the house ever since I was little that my parents and grandparents would drink. It was only

when I left the prefecture that I realized what a rare thing that is."

Ms. Furuya says that even when she was living in Tokyo, it was Yamanashi wine that she would pick up.

"I like the refreshing taste of Koshu which is fruity and swoops in, leaving you with a pleasant aroma. I've heard that grape growing is important for wine. The flavor of the soil itself comes out, so that can only be made in Yamanashi. I'm also conscious of expressing nature in my work, so I put myself in places with an abundance of it. In presenting my work with myself as the medium, those regional characteristics come out somewhere. I feel that we have some points in common as people who make things," she says, describing GI Yamanashi wine from a creator's perspective.



1. Katsunuma has long-established wineries with characteristic Japanese-style houses, such as Kurambon Wine. 2. Mitsuhiro Anzo, chairman of the Yamanashi Prefecture Wine Manufacturers' Association and general manager of Château Mercian. 3. Fumio Shonai, vice chairman of the Yamanashi Prefecture Wine Manufacturers' Association and manager of the Suntory Tomi no Oka Winery. 4.5. Ena Furuya, active in Japan and abroad presenting her batik wax-resist dye works with flower motifs

## Winemakers' policies appear in their wine's characteristics

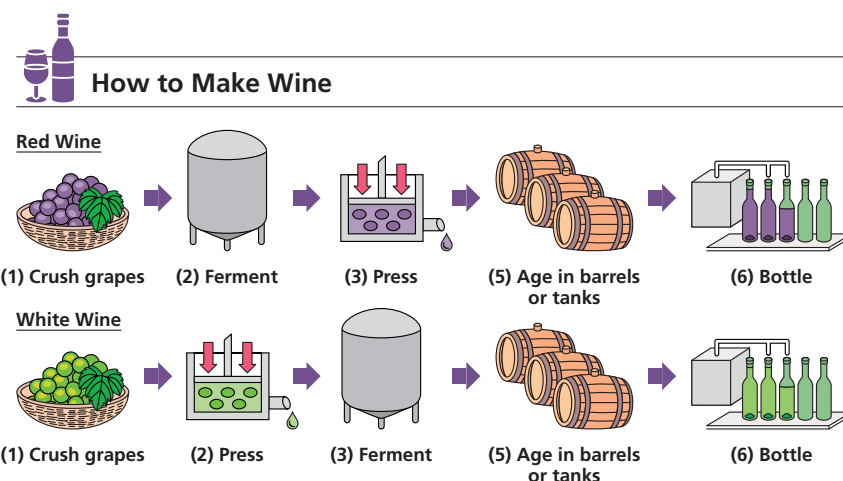
Wine reflects the characteristics of the land. GI Yamanashi wine uses only grapes harvested within Yamanashi Prefecture, and limits them to 42 varieties such as Koshu and Muscat Bailey A. Standards have also been set for the production methods, including that brewing, cellaring, and bottling be done in the prefecture.

"Each winery has various policies on things like pressing methods and yeast selection, but in winemaking it is important to pull out the maximum amount of characteristics from the grapes and lead them into the wine," says Fumio Shonai, vice chairman of the Yamanashi Prefecture Wine Manufacturers' Association. GI Yamanashi wines are full of the

passion of the winemakers, who carefully select grapes and control quality by assessing the harvests that differ year to year. They are characterized by their balance and the characteristics of the grape varieties that emerge, such as their original flavor and aroma.

"A variety of different styles of wine are made from the single Koshu grape, including skin-fermented

orange wine and sparkling wine. GI Yamanashi certification ensures that a certain quality will be delivered to the customer. GI is also a global system, so I think this will become a step forward in launching out into the world," says Mr. Shonai. These wines rooted in Yamanashi's climate and natural features are produced with an eye not only to Japan, but to the world.



## Leading the characteristics of grapes steeped in Yamanashi's local climate into wine



- ① **Tamamoro Koshu Kiiroka 2018**  
Château Mercian / 750ml
- ② **Jyonohira 2015**  
Château Mercian / 750ml
- ③ **Tomi no Oka Koshu 2019**  
Suntory Tomi no Oka Winery / 750ml
- ④ **Tomi no Oka Red 2017**  
Suntory Tomi no Oka Winery / 750ml
- ⑤ **Kurambon Sparkling Koshu**  
Kurambon Wine / 750ml
- ⑥ **Kurambon Koshu**  
Kurambon Wine / 750ml



## Product Specification of Geographical Indication "山梨 (Yamanashi)"

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (a) Characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Sensory factor

Yamanashi wines are well-balanced beverages that reflect the characteristics of grape varieties such as their original aroma and taste. This is achieved by selecting varieties and improving qualities, such as Koshu and Muscat Bailey A cultivated from long ago in Yamanashi, and the Vinifera species native to Europe, selecting those that will take root in Yamanashi's natural environment and devising methods to improve cultivation methods, etc.

Among those, wines made from Koshu variety have a rich aroma and spreads a gentle taste in one's mouth. Dry wine on the other hand has a fruity citrus scent and a crisp acidity.

Wines made from Muscat Bailey A have a rich red-purple tone of color, a splendid fragrance suggesting sweetness, and a mild astringency from tannin.

Furthermore, white wines made from the Vinifera species have a mild sour taste, the characteristic fragrance of ripened Vinifera fruit, and a voluminous feel in the mouth. Red wines made from Vinifera have a sturdy tone of color, striking a good balance between its heavy body from tannin and well-roundedness.

##### (2) Chemical factor

Yamanashi wines, including those with sparkling wines, are beverages that fulfill the following conditions regarding alcohol percentages, total sulfur dioxide concentrations, volatile acidity values and total acidity values:

- (i) Alcohol content is 8.5% or above and below 20%. However, the upper limit for beverages with supplementary saccharides is below 15%, and the lower limit for sweet wines (this indicates products with a residual sugar level of 45 g/L or more. Same for all cases below) is 4.5% or above.
- (ii) Total sulfur dioxide content are 250 mg/L or below (excluding sweet wines).
- (iii) Volatile acid content for red wines are 1.2 g/L or below. For white and rosé wines, it is 1.08 g/L or below.
- (iv) Total acidity are 3.5 g/L or above.

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factors

Yamanashi prefecture is a mountainous region surrounded by the Akaishi Mountain ranges running along the prefecture's western border and Mount Fuji range spreading from the prefecture's southern border to the northeast.

The area is scarcely influenced by the sea or ocean and is therefore not much affected by the rainy season or typhoons. The climate is characteristic of a basin, where temperatures rise during the day but fall drastically in the mornings and evenings, creating large temperature differences.

These natural factors provide an ideal environment for the cultivation of grapes, where the influence of extreme humidity caused by the rainy season is limited during the grapes' growing season, and wind damages by typhoons and illnesses caused by lack of sunlight are less likely to occur during the grapes' ripening period. These provide positive influences on the grapes' overall quality such as coloration and sugar concentration.

The grapes' cultivation land is spread mainly along the Fuji River's tributary river basin.

Many of the grape cultivation lands lie on gentle slopes made from granite and andesite colluvial land with deep soil layers that are fertile and have good drainage.

These good conditions allow grapes to grow and ripen healthily, creating well-balanced wines that nicely maintain the characteristics of the species.

##### (2) Human factors

The production of Yamanashi wine is said to have started around 1870. At the time, most of the cultivated grapes were consumed as table grapes and the surplus were used to produce wine.

Even if the cultivation volume of grapes increased, they could be processed into wines and sold, which allowed farmers to engage in grape cultivation without the fear of excess production. In this way, their grape cultivation techniques as well as creativity were repeatedly improved.

In addition to this, the production volume of wines also increased, as did the advancement of fermentation techniques, creating a virtuous cycle to contribute to the economic developments in the region.

Since the Meiji period, the government, the Yamanashi prefectural office and municipalities have provided various aids to such wine industries, including lawful services, financial support and research development to improve grape varieties.

Today, a wine center exists in the Yamanashi Industrial Technology Center and a grape cultivation department for the purpose of fermentation is established in the Yamanashi Fruit Tree Experiment Station, both as prefectural institutions. Not only do these institutes develop research on grape cultivation and wine fermentation, but they also provide technological guidance and support for Yamanashi wine makers, becoming a technological foundation to produce high quality Yamanashi wine.

Additionally, a fermentation research institute (today the Institute of Enology and Viticulture) was established at the University of Yamanashi in 1947, an example of further commitments to ongoing research and human resources development efforts.

Grape production regions in Japan receive greater rainfall compared to production regions in Europe and the influences of rain can be seen during the grape cultivation season in Yamanashi prefecture as well.

However, a variety of contrivances are used by Yamanashi wine makers, such as placing umbrellas over hedge grown grapes and nurturing grapes high up in a hedge to avoid rain splatters. In this way, the cultivation of high quality grapes has taken root in the region.

Iron in wines produce a fishy smell when wine is combined with seafood dishes, but Yamanashi wines contain less total iron content compared to those produced abroad.

This is because, even though Yamanashi is not located along the sea, there are many sushi restaurants in the region and the people have a tendency to favor seafood. Therefore, Yamanashi wines have undergone numerous production contrivances in order to adapt to the peoples' tastes.

Yamanashi wines go well with dishes such as Japanese cuisines that use seafood ingredients, which is one of the reasons wine has become such a familiar beverage to the people of Yamanashi.

### II Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor

To use the geographical indication "Yamanashi", it shall satisfy the following conditions:

#### (a) Ingredients

(1) The wine must be made solely from grapes harvested in Yamanashi prefecture (limited to the species listed below).

Koshu, Muscat Bailey A, Black Queen, Bailey Alicante A, Delaware, Hybrid Species (Kai Noir, Kai Blanc, Sun-Semillon, Harmo Noir, Bijou Noir, Monde Briller), Vitis vinifera Species (Chardonnay, Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Cabernet Franc, Pinot Noir, Petit Verdot, Chenin Blanc, Pinot Gris, Viognier, Schönberger, Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Muscadet, Cinsaut, Tempranillo, Malbec, Tannat, Albariño, Sangiovese, Nebbiolo, Barbera, Pinot Meunier, Zinfandel, Zweigeltrebe, Grenache, Carménère, Petit Manseng)

(2) The wine must be made using ingredients for "fruit liquor" designated in Article 3-13 of the Liquor Tax Act. However, in regard to flavoring additives used in the fruit liquor as outlined in Article 3-13 D of the same law, it is limited to grape juice or concentrated grape juice (both limited to using grapes harvested in Yamanashi prefecture), and the sugars weight contained in the flavoring must not exceed a tenth of the liquor's weight after the flavoring has been added.

(3) The wine must be made from grapes with juice sugar concentrations of 14% or above for Koshu species, 18% or above for Vitis vinifera species, and 16% or above for other species.

However, if the weather was bad during the grape cultivation season, the required sugar concentrations for grapes harvested in that calendar year, including their cultivation season may be lowered by 1%.

Additionally, among the wines produced according to the production methods regulated in Article 3-13 C of the Liquor Tax Act, grapes used for products that acquire sparkling qualities through fermentation in containers that are planned to be shipped without changing containers or containers that can be sealed close must contain sugar concentrations of 11% or above for Koshu species, 15% or above for Vitis vinifera species and 13% or above for other species.

(4) The wine must be made without the use of water, alcohol or spirits as part of its ingredients.

In regard to brandy, such ingredients can be used only as an addition to beverages that were fermented in the very containers that they are scheduled to be shipped in. They may only be added in said container after the fermentation process.

#### (b) Production Method

(1) The wine must be produced in Yamanashi prefecture according to the production methods designated in Article 3-13 of the Liquor Tax Act and must be a "Japan wine" as designated in Paragraph (1),-3 of the "Standards for Production Methods and Quality Indication for Fruit Liquor, etc." (National Tax Agency Notice No. 18, October 2015)."

(2) When adding sugars (of the sugars used in fruit liquors according to Article 3-13 C of the Liquor Tax Act, this excludes saccharides used in products that acquire sparkling qualities through fermentation in containers that are planned to be shipped without changing containers or containers that can be sealed close) according to production methods designated in Article 3-13 B or C of the Liquor Tax Act, the weight of the added saccharides must be within the following ranges depending on the grape species used.

- 10 g per 100 ml for products using 100% of Koshu species
- 6 g per 100 ml for products using over 85% of Vinifera species
- 8 g per 100 ml for products using other species

(i) The total weight of acid for acidification added between the harvesting of grapes and bottling must be 9 g/L or below

(ii) De-acidifiers may be added until the total acidity is reduced to 5 g/L

(iii) As part of the production process, if the wine is to be stored, it must be stored in Yamanashi prefecture.

(iv) The wine must be bottled in Yamanashi prefecture in the very containers that are scheduled to be delivered to the consumers.

### III Matters relating management to maintain the characteristic of liquor

(a) In order to use the geographical indication "Yamanashi," it is necessary to obtain confirmation from the following organization (hereinafter "Control Body") that the liquor concerned fulfils the factors under "matters related to the characteristics of liquor which are essentially attributable to its geographical origin" and "matters related to the ingredients and production method of liquor" from the time it is produced in the winery (includes wineries that received a liquor production license according to regulations in Article 28, paragraph (6) or Article 28 3, paragraph (4) of the Liquor Tax Act (Act No. 6 of 1953)) to when it leaves (excludes those that fit regulations in Article 28, paragraph (1) of the Liquor Tax Act), based on the business implementation guidelines created by the control body.

#### Name of Control Body: Management Commission for the Geographical Indication "Yamanashi"

**Address:** Yamanashi Prefecture Wine Manufacturers' Association  
Local Industry Center Floor 2 3-13-25 Tokoji, Kofu City,  
Yamanashi Prefecture  
**Phone number:** 055-233-7306  
**Website address:** //www.wine.or.jp

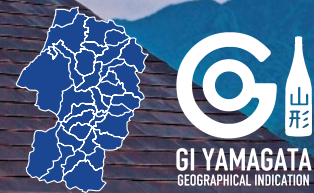
(b) If the management organization acknowledges that the weather was bad during the grape cultivation period, it must immediately make the decision public in accordance to the business implementation guidelines.

### IV Matters relating to liquor classes

Wine

# New traditions born of an immutable spirit fearless of change

Yamagata Prefecture became the first in Japan to obtain GI at the prefectural level for Japanese sake in 2016. Highly praised both at home and abroad, it never contents itself with its remarkable achievements. Rather, it continues to pioneer new traditions as a challenger always ahead of its time.



Yamagata Prefecture

Japanese Sake

# Yamagata

## A harsh but blessed climate suited for Japanese sake brewing

Surrounded by the beautiful Ōu Mountains to the east and the Dewa Mountains to the west, Yamagata Prefecture is composed of three valleys and the Shonai Plains stretching from north to south. Needless to say, it has some of the heaviest snowfall in Japan, with the snow reaching over three meters above ground in some areas. However, the prefecture has relatively

few natural disasters thanks to its terrain and is an extremely easy place to live, except for the harsh winters. With large changes between seasons and sharp temperature variations between day and night throughout the year, Yamagata's climate is suited to crop growing and has a high rate of food self-sufficiency. As one of the country's leading rice-producing areas and famous as a fruit kingdom, it's an abundant agricultural prefecture, with dairy and livestock farming prospering

there as well.

The major axis that supports such riches is the Mogami River, "mother of Yamagata." Flowing out from and stopping within Yamagata Prefecture, it is the longest river in Japan whose basin only covers one prefecture. The rich subsoil water of Mogami River reaches through about 75% of prefecture's area and has supported the people's lives since ancient times, allowing for significant development. The Mogami River contains an abundance of water from snow that has piled up on Mount Gassan, Mount Chokai, and Mount Zao, some of the One Hundred Mountains of Japan, which has seeped into the earth and been filtered over time. Using this rich and clear water for sake brewing creates the "soft transparency" that is characteristic of GI Yamagata Japanese sake.

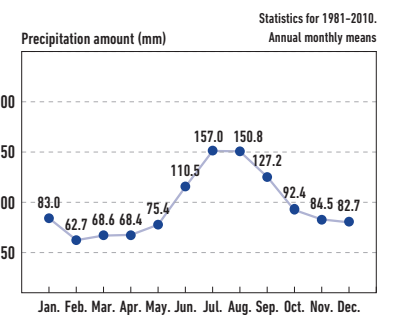
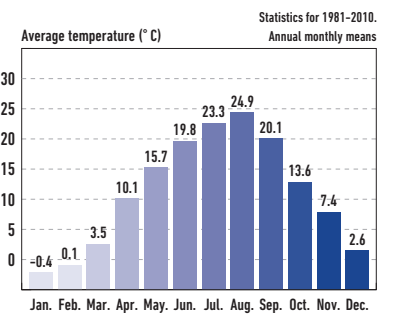
The hard winters not only produce ample snowmelt, but also bring about the perfect environment for sake brewing. The snow cleans the air by clearing it of dust, and the natural 4-5°C indoor environment from the heavy snowfall suits the microorganisms that promote the sake's fermentation while also being the perfect temperature to prevent the growth of unwanted bacteria. This snowfall, some of the heaviest in Japan, has been crucial for developing and maintaining the quality of Yamagata's sake brewing.

## Prefectural friendly rivalries since 1987

In December 2016, Yamagata Prefecture obtained prefecture-wide GI for Japanese sake. This achievement was the country's first, and the fact that only two prefectures have obtained this at present shows the high degree of difficulty involved. Behind this great achievement lies Yamagata Prefecture's long history of diligent study in sake brewing. In 1987, the Yamagata Brewing Research Society was established under the guidance of the Yamagata Research Institute of Technology, a prefectural organization, and began its activities aiming to improve sake brewing techniques and develop human resources. The society was bustling as the center for all 51 cellars in the prefecture. Masumi Nakano, chairman of the Yamagata Sake Brewers Association, which contributed greatly to the GI certification, and President and Representative Director of Dewazakura Sake Brewery Co., Ltd., has participated in the Yamagata Brewing Research Society since its inception and served as its fourth chairman.

"At the Brewing Research Society, we try the sake from each other's cellars and share our unabashed opinions. It's meant for us to improve, so no one holds back. I think the competitive nature of people in this prefecture is a factor in our improvements in quality. We're able to have friendly rivalry, saying, 'I'll make an even more delicious sake then!' without getting down," laughs Mr. Nakano.

At the Yamagata Research Institute of Technology, they collect and analyze data from every sake cellar in the prefecture, such as the rice's moisture content and fermentation temperatures, giving feedback to each cellar. This has enabled them to share superior techniques with precision. With sake brewing that relies on a handful of people called "chief brewers," there's the possibility that techniques will become distorted and cease to exist. Through a system of joint public-private cooperation, Yamagata has achieved a "team structure of stable sake brewing" where everyone possesses solid sake brewing techniques, becoming home to some of the country's top high level sake cellars.





# Aiming to create the “Yamagata” world standard with Yamagata water, Yamagata sake rice, and Yamagata chief brewers

## Building traditions as challengers without fear of change

Enjoying change without fear, while paying respect to traditional sake brewing. Flowing through the roots of Yamagata Prefecture’s sake brewing is precisely its immutable spirit. They have developed low-alcohol sake and fresh, acidic sake, hot sake on the rocks and beer garden style cold sake ‘hiya’ gardens. These are just some of the many efforts that have been made to expand the possibilities of Japanese sake.

Yamagata Prefecture was an early exporter of Japanese sake, and currently the number of exporting cellars has climbed to over 80%, boasting the top volume of exports in the Tohoku region. Among the first to embark into exports was Dewazakura Sake Brewery, which began in 1997. The words of Mr. Nakano corroborate this sentiment, saying, “I want our prefecture to be one that doesn’t just follow successful paths, but pioneers new areas while inheriting history and traditions, and sowing new seeds.”

GI is an internationally authoritative

system in which the producing areas publicly guarantee their quality and value. Some examples of world-famous GIs include wines from Burgundy and Champagne. Only sparkling wines produced in the Champagne region have the right to call themselves “Champagne,” and by clearly differentiating itself from other regions, Champagne has increased the value of its land and products and solidified its standing as a major brand. With Japanese sake, there is a possibility for “Yamagata” to build a status for itself similar to Burgundy and Champagne.

Continuing their friendly rivalries to further develop their sake rice and improve techniques and quality, they will aim for new heights with “all Yamagata Japanese sake,” using Yamagata’s water, Yamagata’s sake rice, and Yamagata’s chief brewers. Under the belief that “a series of change through new challenges will eventually become tradition,” Yamagata Prefecture is always taking on fresh challenges.

## The transparent and diverse flavors born of the Ginjo Kingdom

Yamagata Prefecture is widely known as the “Ginjo Kingdom” for its high rate of Ginjo sake production as compared to other prefectures. Their Japanese sake includes many brews famous throughout the country, produced in an environment blessed for sake brewing. The lineup includes Dewazakura, Juyondai, Kudokijozu, and Yonetsuru, choice brands that lovers of sake would have had at least once. Junmai and Honjozoshu have a good balance of acidity and sweetness, and you can truly sense the full umami of the rice. Junmai Ginjo and Junmai Daiginjo have a brilliant peach and banana-like fruity aroma with an impressively clear taste free of any unpleasant flavors. While each has their own characteristics with richly diverse flavors, the one thing they all have in common is the “soft transparency” that the Mogami River’s snowmelt brings.

A native of Yamagata Prefecture, Tomoko Takiguchi is a certified sake sommelier, a gourmet food writer, and the Representative Director of Green Create Co., Ltd., a PR firm involved in projects both domestically and abroad. She speaks of how the appeal of GI



Photographer: Kazuhiro Matsuki

Yamagata is this soft transparency.

“When you taste Yamagata’s Japanese sake, the first thing you feel is its softness and mellowness. And compared to sake from other prefectures, many of them have a transparency to them that smoothly disappears after drinking. I think that the water really makes a big difference. It was so normal when I lived there that I never even noticed, but now I’ve come to think that the environment is really blessed with such clean and abundant water.” Ms. Takiguchi says that while the transparency is a large point of commonality, the diverse flavors of Yamagata’s Japanese sake make it easy to pair with a variety of dishes. “I choose my sake based on the food I’m eating, but Yamagata’s sake has a variety of flavors that go with any food, so I drink it often. While it of course pairs well

with Yamagata’s local dishes, it also goes with Western food, fruits, and sweets. With Junmai Daiginjo for example, I like to enjoy it paired with Yamagata’s specialty ‘dashi’ pickled vegetables or a fruit and tofu salad seasoned with white sesame.”

One factor in achieving GI Yamagata’s diverse flavors is the high degree of flexibility in the sake rice that is used. The production regulations state that the water must be “collected from within Yamagata Prefecture,” but only stipulate that the sake rice be “domestically produced.” This lack of restrictions has led to the production of diverse flavors, but Yamagata Prefecture’s own sake rice development is also thriving. In 1984, the “Yamagata Prefecture Sake Rice Promotion Council,” comprised of the prefecture, the Sake Brewers Association, and the

JA Co-operative was established and began its research on sake rice. After 11 years, Dewa Sansan was born as Yamagata’s first original sake rice. Well suited for Junmai Ginjo, the birth of Dewa Sansan became the foundation for the “Ginjo Kingdom” Yamagata and still produces many famous sake today.

This was followed by Dewa no Sato, suited for Junmai sake, and in 2017 Yukimegami was born, ideal for brewing Junmai Daiginjo and achieving world-class, high-grade sake quality. The “sake rice trilogy,” pride of Yamagata, was complete. While the prefecture focuses on their own sake rice development, they are also proactively incorporating national sake rice varieties such as Yamada Nishiki and Omachi. GI Yamagata’s strength lies in its flexibility and limber spirit to honestly accept and embrace what is good.



1. Dewazakura Sake Brewery Co., Ltd., recipient of numerous prestigious awards at home and abroad. 2. Improvements in techniques as a prefecture have given birth to many local chief brewers. 3. Masumi Nakano, chairman of the Yamagata Sake Brewers Association and President and Representative Director of Dewazakura Sake Brewery Co., Ltd. 4. Tomoko Takiguchi, Representative Director of Green Create Co., Ltd. 5. Wild vegetable tempura that gives a taste of the mountains’ blessings, such as butterbur scape, Japanese spikenard, and ostrich fern. 6. Yamagata’s local side dishes, such as walnut tofu, fried sandfish with pickled vegetables, plantain lilies and firefly squid with vinegared miso.

**Proven quality and value backed by an international reputation**

GI Yamagata Japanese sake has won numerous awards at both domestic and international contents. At the International Wine Challenge (IWC), a leading international contest, Yamagata Prefecture has won the highest number of gold winners in Japan for six consecutive years. The IWC's sake category began in 2007, and since then Dewazakura Sake Brewery has won awards every year, winning gold for nine consecutive years since 2013. At the 2021 contest, Dewazakura Daiginjo and Dewazakura Kijo-Shu were selected as gold winners. The fact that only 103 of the 1,499 brands in this category have been selected demonstrates their high quality and value.

Trophies are awarded in each

category amongst the gold winners, and amongst those trophy winners, only one can be crowned the "Champion Sake." The Champion Sake is the pinnacle of all Japanese sake submitted to the IWC, and Dewazakura has been in that spotlight twice. Dewazakura Sake Brewery became the first brewer to win the Champion Sake twice with Dewazakura Junmai Daiginjo Ichiro in 2008 and Dewazakura Junmai Dewanosato in 2016. Dewazakura Dewanosato was selected as champion in the year with the most submissions on record, with 1,282 brands from 346 cellars. In addition to Dewazakura, Yamagata has also put out many trophy winning Japanese sake eligible for the championship, garnering a worldwide reputation.

Obtaining GI status has further increased its value and solidified

Yamagata's status as "Japan's representative prefecture for fine sake." The appeal of GI Yamagata certified sake is their unconventionally interesting and rich characteristics. While all of them have a sake quality that combines transparency and softness, it is their abundantly diverse, deeply refined flavor that captivates the drinker. The 51 GI Yamagata cellars have a history of studying together as a prefecture to produce consistently superior, high-quality Japanese sake, and have continued friendly rivalries that cross the boundaries between sake cellars to improve their techniques. Not content to rest in their position as the first prefecture nationwide to receive prefecture-level certification, or on their high praise from both Japan and abroad, Yamagata Prefecture will continue to pioneer new traditions, always as a challenger.

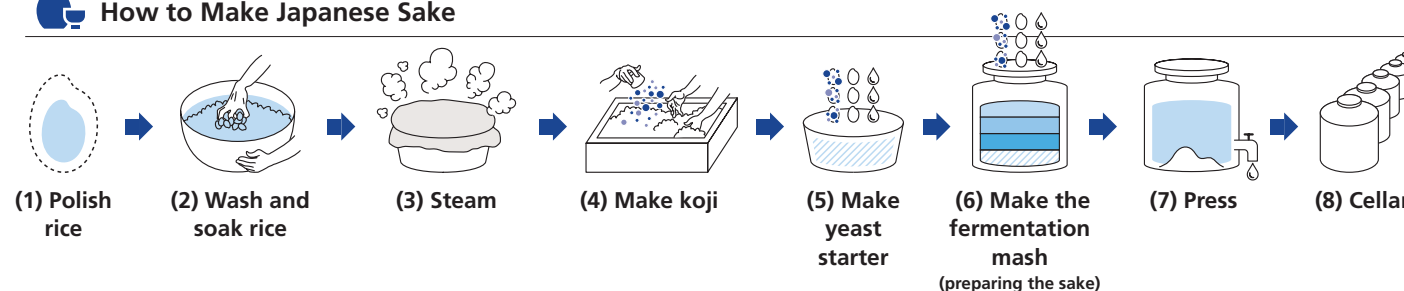
## Yamagata's Japanese sake, inheriting new traditions born from continuous challenges



- ① Dewazakura Junmai Daiginjo Yukimegami 48% 720ml
- ② Dewazakura Junmai Daiginjo Yukimegami 35% 720ml
- ③ Dewazakura Junmai Ginjo Tsuyahime 720ml
- ④ Dewazakura Junmai Daiginjo Yukiwakamaru 720ml
- ⑤ Dewazakura Junmai Ginjo Dewa Sansan (Unpasteurized) 720ml
- ⑥ Dewazakura Junmai Dewanosato 720ml



### How to Make Japanese Sake



### Product Specification of Geographical Indication "山形 (Yamagata)"

#### I Matters relating the characteristic of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

##### (a) Characteristics of liquor

"Yamagata" generally has silky and clear texture.

In particular, Junmai-shu and Honjozo-shu of "Yamagata" is rich, delicate, and mild. Also, Junmai-Daiginjo-shu and Ginjo-shu of "Yamagata" are extremely pure due to a harmonious mixture of their smooth texture and fruity flavor.

##### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

###### (i) Natural factor

Yamagata Prefecture is located in the Japan Sea climate zone, where there is heavy snow in winter. This climate brings excellent groundwater of the mountain range in Yamagata, which is indispensable for "Yamagata" brewing. Groundwater in Yamagata is limpid, soft water with low iron content suitable for seishu making. Using this water for brewing "Yamagata" contributes to pure texture.

In addition, the bitter winter cold of Yamagata Prefecture suppresses the microbes that spoil seishu and is suited to long-term, low-temperature fermentation. For this reason, Yamagata is an ideal location for special method for Ginjo-shu. Combined with limpid mother water, this climate has helped brewing "Yamagata" with a soft texture.

###### (ii) Human factor

In Yamagata Prefecture, under the leadership of the Yamagata Research Institute of Technology and the Yamagata Prefecture Sake Brewery Association (Technological Research Committee), the public and private sectors and local communities have all worked together to organize programs aimed at developing human resources and improving brewing skills. As a result, technical skills of filtration, pasteurization, and storage to preserve the distinctive flavor of freshly pressed seishu have been spread throughout all the breweries in "Yamagata".

In Yamagata Prefecture, which is also well known for its fruit production, consumers tend to prefer seishu with fruity, harmonious flavor reminiscent of bananas and of fruits grown in Yamagata, such as Fuji apples, melons, and La France pears. Yamagata Research Institute of Technology has also been conducted to study technologies for seishu brewing, especially Ginjo-shu production.

Since 1978, the Yamagata Research Institute of Technology and Yamagata Prefecture Sake Brewery Association have been providing short-course to develop human resources for the brewing of Yamagata seishu through lectures and workshops on seishu brewing technology. In 1987, as part of efforts to improve their brewing skills, seishu breweries in Yamagata and the Yamagata Research Institute of Technology's staff members organized the Study Group of brewing Yamagata to provide training focused on the making of Ginjo-shu.

Also, the brand project "Yamagata Sanga" was launched in 1981 with the aim of developing a Daiginjo-shu that represents Yamagata Prefecture. Since 1985, Daiginjo-shu that passed a severe quality test with a certification rate of 30% to 40% administered by the "Yamagata Sanga" Evaluation Committee have been able to ship under the unified brand name Yamagata Sanga. Consumers' objective evaluation of "Yamagata Sanga" seishu sold on the market is fed back to breweries through study meeting groups and other organizations, thereby improving the overall level of seishu brewing skills in Yamagata Prefecture.

Their efforts have contributed to producing the unique properties of "Yamagata".

#### II Matters relating the raw materials and production method of liquor

To use the geographical indication "Yamagata", it shall satisfy the following conditions:

##### (a) Raw materials

- Rice and rice koji should be grown Japan.
- Only water originated in Yamagata Prefecture is used to brew "Yamagata".
- Only the materials for seishu specified in Article 3-7 of the Liquor Tax Act (Act No.6 of 1953) are used.

However, except for alcohol, seishu materials that are specified in Article 2 of the Ordinance for Enforcement of the Liquor Tax Act cannot be used (alcohol can be used only in cases where the weight of alcohol used does not exceed 50% of the weight of rice used as material (including rice for making koji)).

##### (b) Production method

- "Yamagata" must be produced in Yamagata Prefecture by the seishu production method specified in Article 3-7 of the Liquor Tax Act.
- In the seishu making process, "Yamagata" must be stored within Yamagata Prefecture.
- "Yamagata" must be bottled in Yamagata Prefecture for delivery to consumers.

#### III Matters relating management to maintain the characteristic of liquor

To use the geographical indication "Yamagata", it is necessary to obtain confirmation from the following organization based on quality management created by the organization manages sensory test and verifies compliance with product specification.

Name of Control Body:

**Yamagata Prefecture Sake Brewery Association**

Address: 1-7-46 Midorimachi, Yamagata City, Yamagata Prefecture, Japan

Phone number: +81-23-641-4050

Website address: <http://www.yamagata-sake.or.jp/>

#### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Seishu/Sake (Article 3, Item 7 of the Liquor Tax Act)





Hokkaido  
Wine

# Hokkaido

## New possibilities lay hidden in the wine made in the northern land

A booming wine producing region with a rapidly growing number of wineries, Hokkaido became the second to receive GI designation for grape wine in June 2018. Winemakers, filled with a spirit of challenge, have turned their difficulties into a springboard to carry new wind into Japan's wine industry.

© Hokkaido Wine Co., Ltd.

### A cool climate with low precipitation ideal for grape cultivation

There is a place where new wineries are springing up one after another that is attracting attention. Hokkaido ranks first in Japan in acreage for cultivating winemaking grape varieties, and third in Japan for wine production after Yamanashi and Nagano. The number of wineries has reached 47 (as of March 2021) as more and more people migrate to

Hokkaido from outside the prefecture aiming to make wine.

Representative grape producing areas include Yoichi in the Shiribeshi region, Iwamizawa in the Sorachi region, Furano in the Kamikawa region, and Ikeda in the Tokachi region. These areas get a lot of sunshine at over 1,100 hours from April to October, and have cool average temperatures under 15°C. This creates grapes with high sugar content and that are also rich in

organic acids, resulting in a wine rich in acidity. In addition, the amount of precipitation is low at under 700 mm, and there is relatively little risk of disease.

Many of the grape varieties grown are of European origin, reflecting the cool climate. The large number of German varieties among them is characteristic of Hokkaido, including varieties like Kerner. The cultivation of German varieties from Kerner to Müller-Thurgau and Bacchus has historically flourished in Hokkaido, accounting for the majority of all wine made in Japan. As for white grape varieties, the acreage for cultivating Sauvignon blanc and Chardonnay is also on the rise recently.

The premium Pinot noir variety is also increasing, as represented by the naturalist vineyard Domaine Takahiko (Yoichi, established in 2010). In the past, it was considered difficult to grow Pinot noir in Japan, but the producers in Yoichi became able to make quality Pinot noir wine that pairs with Japanese food. In 2011, Yoichi was designated as Hokkaido's first Special District for Wine, and new wineries are popping up one after another. With a relatively mild climate for Hokkaido, vineyards on the hillsides and long hours of sunshine, the environment is ideal for the growth of grapes.



© Hokkaido Wine Co., Ltd.

Neighboring Otaru is home to the main winery of Hokkaido Wine, the first company to succeed in cultivating German grape varieties in Hokkaido. It is the largest winery on the island and continues to stably produce wine using grapes from Otaru and Yoichi. They also produce a large volume of wine from table grape varieties such as Niagara and Campbell Early.

The town of Ikeda, located on the Tokachi Plain on the Pacific side of central Hokkaido, began making wine in 1960 using Crimson Glory grapes that bear fruit even in the harsh winters. Today, wines are made from purple grape varieties that are hardy against the cold, such as Zweigelt and Kerner, Kiyomi, a clonal selection of Seibel grapes, and the crossbred Kiyomai and Yamasachi.



Japan Meteorological Agency: Climatological normals from climate statistic data (1981-2010)

### Climate Divisions for Wine Producing Areas

Division	Applicable Regions	Ideal Grape Varieties
Region I	Germany, Northern France, Hokkaido	Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot noir
Region II	Bordeaux (France), Northern Italy, Yamagata	Cabernet, Sauvignon, Merlot
Region III	Southern France, Southern Italy, Nagano	Shiraz, Sangiovese

# Grape cultivation that has achieved evolution in the face of bitter cold

## Facing the challenges in nature and heavy snow

The first grapevines grown in Hokkaido date back to about 150 years ago. In 1875, the Hokkaido Development Office distributed table grape saplings, which led to the 'Development Office Winery' being established in Sapporo the following year. This led to the beginning of Hokkaido's wine history, but it also marked the start of a long struggle against heavy snow and bitter cold.

Hokkaido's grapevines endure harsh winters under snow and soil, waiting for spring to arrive. Yutaka Sano, chief of the Ikeda Town Grape and Wine Research Institute, a pioneer of Hokkaido's winemaking, says grape cultivation cannot be discussed without talking about the battle against nature.

"Hokkaido basically has a cold climate, but it differs from region to region. For example, Iwamizawa on the Sea of Japan side gets sudden heavy snow, but in Ikeda Town in Tokachi, which gets little snow as the clouds are blocked by mountain ranges, dry winds blow which cause

bitter cold days with minimum temperatures dropping below -20°C.

Grape producers have experimented for many years with methods for preventing frost damage that are suited to their respective areas. In areas of heavy snowfall with lots of vineyards, such as the Sorachi and Shiribeshi regions, they plant grape vines at an angle so that they are firmly covered in snow, which acts as a coat to protect them from the cold.

"We don't get a lot of snow in Tokachi, so we use a method where we bury the vines in soil. It's hard because we then have to dig up the soil by hand, whereas snow melts naturally in the spring."

For that reason, they put their efforts into developing grape varieties that are suited to cold regions, like crossbreeding the Crimson Glory grapes that grow natively in eastern Hokkaido.

"European varieties need 120 days to ripen, but the summer growing season in Tokachi is a month short at only 90 days. First we made Kiyomi as a quickly ripening variety, but it's weak against the cold. So we crossed it with the Crimson Glory which has

excellent cold tolerance. After crossbreeding over 21,000 varieties, Yamasachi and Kiyomai were the only two we could commercialize. This terribly daunting work went on for 50 years."

## The relentless pioneering spirit that gave root to wine culture

It was the Crimson Glory that originally led to the birth of the Ikeda Town Grape and Wine Research Institute. Hit with bad harvests due to cold damage, Ikeda Town engaged in grape cultivation for agricultural revitalization. They continued to take on that challenge while being ridiculed as trying the impossible, and their wine culture took root.

"Originally, Tokachi was not a place where grapes could be grown. Kaneyasu Marutani, mayor of Ikeda Town at the time, saw the Crimson Glories loaded with fruit despite the cold damage and realized that growing grapes must be possible even in cold places, and thought that they needed a wine industry to revitalize the town. Today, the per capita wine consumption of Ikeda's townspeople is 4-5 times the Japanese average,"



says Sano. The pioneering spirit of the people of Hokkaido, who once opened up this land of extreme cold, lives on in winemaking as well.

"Recently, global warming has made it possible to grow major varieties here, so I feel that this place can arouse a spirit of challenge in winemakers. There's a lot of things going on now with the increase in wineries, and I think we're at the stage of establishing what type of wine it is that makes the most of Hokkaido's terroir. Going forward, I'd like to work on improving quality while using the GI system to communicate the appeal of Hokkaido's wine both domestically and internationally and engage in efforts to vitalize our production areas.

## Hokkaido's wine, for daily enjoyment

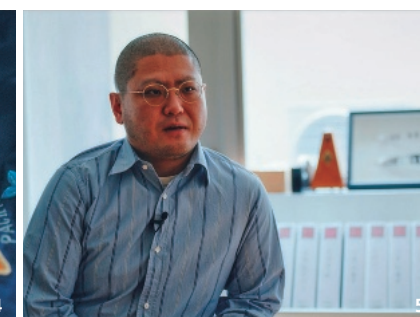
Shin Matsushima, who manages the high fashion brand Cantate, is from the town of Makubetsu next to Ikeda Town. He's been familiar with wine for a long time.

"I have this impression that a lot of Hokkaido's wines have a clean minerality, acidity unlike anything else, and lily-like floral nuances. My hometown had half-bottles of wine available at yakiniku restaurants and some wines that were only available to be bought by town residents, so wine was a familiar daily drink."

Asked about what food pairs well with Hokkaido's wine, he said, "Basically, Hokkaido's dishes have strong, sweet and salty flavors. So I

think these kind of rich foods match with Hokkaido's acidic wine. You can try pairing it with buttered baked potatoes to feel like you're on a trip," says Mr. Matsushima. He also spoke about the possibilities of GI from the perspective of a creator who is also particular about Made in Japan goods.

"It's the same with clothes. Customers are happier when you can talk about who made it, where, and how. Peace of mind is all the more important for things you put in your mouth, and if Japanese wine producing areas become more clear, we can say that it's made in Hokkaido and I feel it will lead to people taking more interest in it."



1. The Ikeda Town Grape and Wine Research Institute, called the Wine Castle, is a popular tourist attraction. 2. Yutaka Sano, chief of the institute. 3. In the spring, saplings are grown from the cuttings of pruned grape vines. 4. An embroidered jacket from Cantate with Tokachi motifs, such as Mount Tokachi. 5. Shin Matsushima, designer of Cantate. Also known for his deep knowledge of food.

## Turning grapes rich in organic acids into wine

Hokkaido's wine is characterized by its rich acidity. That's because the cool climate produces grapes full of organic acids. GI Hokkaido wine has set a fixed standard for the total acidity and defines this with a numerical value. Only grapes harvested in Hokkaido can be used as ingredients, and they are limited to 57 varieties including Kerner, Niagara, Yamasachi, and Pinot noir. There are also standards set for the production methods, such as production, cellaring, and bottling being done within Hokkaido. The Ikeda Town Grape and Wine Research Institute focuses particularly on grapes in their winemaking. "Wine is made without adding any water, so the quality of the grapes

influences the wine. The flavors change each year and from vineyard to vineyard, so even if you use the same variety of grapes, the characteristics of the wine change. We work every day feeling that our best and most confident product is going to be the next one."

In addition to sparkling wine that makes the most of the rich acidity, sweet ice wine is also unique to

### Purposefully covering grapevines in snow to endure midwinter

Hokkaido experiences heavy snowfall not seen in any other wine producing region in the world. One unique issue is how to best get through the winter. This is because in the winter, vines can snap under piling snow and bare vines can suffer frost damage, causing a severe impact on growth the following spring. To overcome this, grapevines are planted at an angle using a hedgerow cultivation method. After the

Hokkaido.

"When it drops below -15°C in mid-December, we harvest the grapes that are frozen on the vine and press them immediately. Doing so gives a densely sweet juice," says Mr. Sano. Each winery is working hard together to create a variety of wines that reflect the local climate of Hokkaido, their techniques and flavors in evolution.

autumn harvest, the vines are released from the hedges and laid down on the ground to get covered in snow before midwinter arrives. By purposefully burying the vines under the snow, they're able to get through winter at a constant temperature without being impacted by the temperature outside.



## Rich acidity and fruit aromas nurtured by a cool climate

© Hokkaido Wine Co., Ltd.



① Traditional Method Hokkaido Rosé  
Hokkaido Wine / 750ml



② Hokkaido Vintage White  
Tokachi Wine / 720ml

③ Yamasachi  
Tokachi Wine / 720ml

④ Bloom Rosé  
Tokachi Wine / 750ml



## Product Specification of Geographical Indication "北海道(Hokkaido)"

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (a) Characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Sensory factor

As for white wine, the color is in general nearly clear or slightly yellow. The flavor is rich and has a fruity aroma of a bright flower, green apple or orange fruit. White wine has a rich acidity. Dry wine makes drinkers clearly feel the acidity and sweet wine has a good balance of acidity and sweetness, both of which are fruity and light.

As for red wine, the color is in general light cherry red or slightly dark red purple. Some red wines have a spicy or fruity aroma, while others have a light maturing flavor (bouquet). Red wine tastes moderate or light, and has clear acidity and mild astringency, and even after a long maturation, it has a fruity aroma.

As for rose wine, the color is in general purple or orange. Rose wine has a rich fruity aroma. Sweet wine has a good balance of sweetness and acidity which makes drinkers imagine grapes used as ingredients, while dry wine makes drinkers clearly feel its acidity, both of which are fruity and crisp.

##### (2) Chemical factor

Hokkaido wine is a wine which satisfies the following requirements in terms of the alcohol content, total sulfite level, volatile acid level and total acid level, and includes sparkling wines.

(i) Alcohol content is 14.5% or less.

(ii) Total sulfite level is 350 mg/kg or less.

(iii) Volatile acid level is 1.5 g/L or less.

(iv) As a general rule, without adding acid, if grapes with fruit juice sugar content of less than 21% are used as ingredients, the total acid level shall be 5.8 g/L or more (tartaric acid conversion, and the same shall apply thereafter) for white wine and rose wine, and 5.2 g/L or more for red wine, while if grapes with fruit juice sugar content of 21% or more are used as ingredients, the total acid level shall be 5.4 g/L or more for white wine and rose wine and 4.8 g/L or more for red wine.

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factor

Compared to other grape cultivation areas in Japan, it is colder in Hokkaido and the accumulated temperature during the growing season is low. For this reason, according to the classification by Amerine & Winkler (University of California, Davis), the Hokkaido area is classified as "Region I" of the climatic division, which is rare among production areas in Japan. Therefore, it is said that the Hokkaido area is suitable for cultivation of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir of German varieties and French varieties, and in particular, the climate in Hokkaido is most suitable for European white varieties in Japan.

In grape cultivation areas in Hokkaido (major areas include Yoichi-Town in Shiribeshi, Iwamizawa-City in Sorachi, Furano-City in Kamikawa and Ikeda-Town in Tokachi), the hours of sunshine from April to October are 1,100 hours or longer and the daily range of temperature is wide, and therefore, grapes with a high sugar content can be harvested. Moreover, since average monthly temperature from April to October is 15°C or lower, grapes with a high acid content can be cultivated. Furthermore, in other domestic areas, grapes are cultivated in place at high altitudes to harvest such grapes with a high acid content, but in Hokkaido, even if the altitude is 200 m or lower, such grapes can be cultivated.

In addition, compared to other domestic grape cultivation areas, the humidity is low and the amount of precipitation from April to October is 700 mm or less, and therefore the occurrence of disease caused by mold etc. can be controlled and, in general, grapes can be harvested in a healthy condition.

The characteristics of the Hokkaido wine are formed by grapes which are cultivated in such a natural environment. Moreover, the temperature is low throughout the year and the storage temperature for wine after vinification can be maintained low in a natural state, and therefore the fruity flavor can be maintained until production rollout.

##### (2) Human factor

In Hokkaido, the American grapes were transplanted to Sapporo in 1875 and the "Budoshu Jojo-sho" was founded as a development encouragement business of the Kaitakushi (Development Commission) in 1876. The first wine was manufactured using local wild vines, but afterward the American grapes such as Concord were used. The winery was transferred to the private sector in 1887 and it continued production until the business was discontinued in 1913.

Since then, production of wines as an industry has been discontinued, but since around 1965, research was started on a variety selection of grape variety which is adaptable to cold climates, or on breeding of grapes by cross-fertilization with wild vines and wine production methods. In 1984, with the establishment of the Dosan Wine Kondankai (Hokkaido Wine Council), the exchange of information among wine makers was activated, and therefore the method of cultivation of grapes and the method of wine production has made rapid progress.

Wine production in Hokkaido has close relationship with the development of grape cultivation. In Hokkaido which has a vast area of land and where a large-scale production is possible, the hedge cultivation was mainly used for grapes for wine. However, the cold during the winter period is severe and there are areas having heavy snowfall and therefore, unique cultivation methods have been created.

For example, in heavy snowfall areas (Shiribeshi, Sorachi, etc.), it is possible to prevent branches from being broken by snowfall and also prevent vines from freezing by the heat retention effect which blocks out external air because the vines are buried in snow, and therefore the Katagawa Suihei Cordon (one-sided horizontal cordon method) in which vines are mainly slanted is adopted. Moreover, in the areas having light snowfall but having intense cold (such as Tokachi), in order to prevent from freezing, vines may be buried in the soil during the winter period to pass the winter. Such grape cultivation method adaptable to the natural environment in Hokkaido has been established by the creative efforts of wine makers and activities of the Hokkaido Wine Council. In addition to the viticultural methods for Wild Vine variety and Hybrid variety which are adaptable to the natural environment in Hokkaido, the development of cold-hardy varieties has also been actively developed.

Furthermore, because grapes with a high acid content are used as ingredients, the production method has been adopted in which, as a general rule, acid is not added, and the use of acid is limited to the case in which the pH adjustment is necessary for the purpose of stabilization of color tone, sulfite adjustment, etc., but not for the purpose of increasing the sensory acidity.

### II Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor

To use the geographical indication "Hokkaido," it is required to meet the following requirements:

#### (a) Ingredients

(1) Only grapes (limited to the varieties listed below) harvested in Hokkaido are used as fruit.

Vitis vinifera varieties (Muller Thurgau, Kerner, Bacchus, Perle, Gewurztraminer, Riesling, Morio-Muscat, Siegerrebe, Irsai Olivér, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc (Weißer Burgunder), Pinot Gris, Muscat (Muscat Ottonel), Auxerrois, Muskateller, Zweigelt, Lemberger, Trollinger, Dornfelder, Pinot-Noir (Spätburgunder), Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Harmo Noir, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Cuvée, Cabernet Mitos, Cabernet Dorsa, Acolon, Palas), Labrusca varieties (Niagara, Portland, Delaware, Tabiji, Campbell Early, New York Muscat, Concord, Red Niagara), Wild Vine varieties (Himayara, Amurensis, Coignettiae) Hybrid varieties (Seibel 91110, Seibel 52779, Seibel 10076, Seibel 13053, Kiyomi, Furano No.2, Kiyomi, Yamasachi, Hybrid of Kiyomi and Amurensis, Yama Sauvignon, Yama Fredonia, Zalagyongye, Rondo, Regent, Muscat Hamburg-Amurensis (Hokujin), Wamatsu No.5)

(2) Ingredients for the "fruit wine" stipulated in Item 13 of Article 3 of the Liquor Tax Act shall be used.

As for the flavoring stipulated in Item 13-d of Article 3 of the Act, only fruit juice or concentrated juice of grapes (both of which shall be manufactured using grapes harvested in Hokkaido as ingredients) may be used.

(3) Grapes with fruit juice sugar content of 16.0% or more for Vitis vinifera varieties, 13.0% or more for Labrusca varieties, and 15.0% or more for Wild Vine varieties and Hybrid varieties shall be used. If, however, the weather during the viticultural period is bad, as for grapes harvested in the calendar year which include the viticultural period, respective fruit juice sugar content required may be reduced by 1.0%.

(4) As a general rule, water, spirit and alcohol shall not be used. Brandy may be added to fermented wine in a container which is scheduled to be sent out, only if the wine will not be transferred to other container afterward.

#### (b) Production method

(1) Wine shall be a wine which is manufactured in Hokkaido in accordance with the production method of the "fruit wine" stipulated in Item 13 of Article 3 of the Liquor Tax Act and shall be the "Japanese wine" stipulated in Item 3 of Article 1 of the "Standards for Production Methods and Quality Indication for Fruit Wine etc." - Notification of the National Tax Agency No. 18 of October 2015.

(2) If sugars are added in accordance with the production methods stipulated in Item 13-b, 13-c or 13-d of Article 3 of the Liquor Tax Act, the total of the weight of sugars added shall be equal to or less than the weight of sugars included in fruit.

(3) If flavoring stipulated in accordance with Item 13-d of Article 3 of the Liquor Tax Act (hereinafter referred to as simply the "flavoring"), the weight of sugars contained in the flavoring added shall not exceed 10% of the weight of the fruit wine after the flavoring is added.

(4) Addition of acidity in the case of the total acid level of fruit juice with less than 7.5 g/L before adding acidity is regarded as for the purpose of increasing sensory acidity, and therefore is not permitted. Provided, however, that only if the fruit juice sugar content is 21% or more, and the total acid level of fruit juice before the addition of the acidity is 7.5 g/L or more, addition of acidity of as much as 1.0 g/L as minimally required for pH adjustment for the purpose of the quality maintenance such as the stabilization of color tone and the sulfite adjustment is permitted.

(5) Deacidification method may be used until the total acid level is reduced by as low as 2.0 g/L.

(6) If wine is stored during the production process, it shall be stored in Hokkaido.

(7) Wine shall be filled in the container in Hokkaido, which is scheduled to be delivered to consumers.

### III Matters relating to management for maintaining the characteristics of liquor

(a) To use the geographical indication "Hokkaido," sake makers, before liquors with the geographical indication are transferred (except for transfers applicable to the provisions of Paragraph 1 of Article 28 of the Liquor Tax Act) from the production site of liquors (including a site regarded as the production site with a license of production liquors under the provisions of Paragraph 6 of Article 28 or Paragraph 4 of Article 28-3 of the Liquor Tax Act - Act No. 6 of 1953), need to get confirmation based on the business application guidelines prepared by the following control body whether the liquors with the geographical indication satisfy the "Matters relating to the characteristics of liquors mainly linked with the production area of the liquors" and the "Matters relating to ingredients and production methods of liquors."

#### Name of Control Body: Geographical Indication "Hokkaido" Use Management Committee

Address: NPO corporation Wine Cluster Hokkaido, Otaru Canal Terminal, 1-12 Ironai 1-chome, Otaru City, Hokkaido Japan

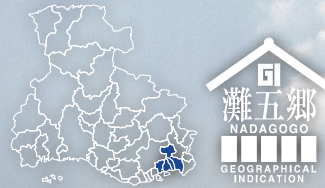
\* For the benefit of the Use Management Committee, knowledge accumulated by the Hokkaido Wine Council and ongoing support are provided.

(b) If the control body recognizes that the weather in the viticultural period is bad, it shall disclose the matter immediately in accordance with the business application guidelines.

### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Wine





Hyogo Prefecture

Japanese Sake

# Nada

## Superior sake from Japan's leading brewing region, which combines nature's gifts with the chief brewers' skills

Nada-Gogo is well-known within Japan as the leading brewing region and boasts the top production volume of sake, with its brands accounting for a quarter of sake distributed nationwide. Sake brewing in the area began here in the Muromachi period and developed much further in the Edo period. The chief brewers who have inherited the tradition are still working hard to make sake with spirit.

# Gogo

### Sake brewing that began in the Muromachi period reached its peak in the mid-Edo period

Nada-Gogo is the collective name for five area-based groups of sake breweries: Imazu-go, Nishinomiya-go, Uozaki-go, Mikage-go and Nishi-go. Today, the Nadagogo Brewers Association has 26 member breweries that are spread out across a region that runs in an east-west strip. These breweries produce brands

that have received GI certification. The records of sake brewing commencing in this region date back to the Muromachi period. Meanwhile, across the Muko River in Itami in the Settsu region, technology was developed in the early Edo period for brewing large quantities of clear sake, which is similar to today's sake. Later, during the Kan'ei era (1624-1643), Zakoya Bunemon, a sake brewer from Itami, moved to Nishinomiya and started sake

brewing. Over the next 60 years or so, many sake brewers gathered and laid the foundations of Nada-Gogo. While Itami's sake also became well known in the old city of Edo, sake from Nada, which is located on the coast of Seto Inland Sea, gained prominence from the mid-Edo period. This was because of the natural environment suited to the unique sake brewing of Nada-Gogo.

### The combination of many natural elements into sake breweries known nationwide

One of the major contributors to Nada-Gogo's sake brewing is the groundwater called Miyamizu. As seen in Munich's beer, Scotland's scotch, and China's shaoxing wine, good water is always behind the world's most famous alcoholic beverages.

Miyamizu was discovered in the Edo period by the sixth generation Tazaemon Yamamura of Sakuramasamune brewery. While brewing sake in Nishinomiya and Uozaki, he noticed that the taste of the sake being produced differed depending on the location, and discovered that the water was responsible for the taste. Miyamizu flows up from a shallow well located about 1km from the coast in Nishinomiya City and is a miraculous hard water that contains a lot of

minerals such as phosphorus, calcium, and potassium that are nutrients for koji bacteria and yeast, but does not contain iron, which spoils the flavor. It is considered ideal for brewing full-bodied sake because it promotes the fermentation of yeast. The "Rokko Oroshi" wind that blows in winter from Mt. Rokko to the north is also worth mentioning, as the biting cold wind quickly cools the steamed rice. Keeping the temperature between 5 and 10 degrees C, which is considered optimal for rice used in the preparation, the growth of bacteria is suppressed and the quality of the sake is stabilized. The rivers that flow from the mountains are also used to power watermills that mill the rice. Rice that has a pure whiteness that could not be achieved by manpower alone has been obtained since the Edo period. In addition, Nada-Gogo faces Osaka Bay, which was optimal for the service of ships to transport barrels of sake to Edo. The elegant

and refreshing flavor of Nada sake also suited the tastes of the people of Edo, and Nada-Gogo's fame soon spread nationwide.

Nada-Gogo's sake brewing, which has expanded greatly since the Edo period due to the combination of the three elements of water, wind, and rice, is still deeply rooted in the tradition today. Hiyaoroshi, which is unique to this region, still follows the traditional method even though technology has since advanced. Sake brewed in winter is matured during spring and summer when the temperature rises, and then shipping begins from September when the flavor has mellowed. It is a seasonal delicacy enjoyed in the fall and is loved by connoisseurs of sake. The barrelled sake that was transported to Edo is today stored in barrels that are still carved by hand. Even though the times have changed into the Reiwa era, the identity of Nada-Gogo that has been passed down the generations still continues.



Courtesy of Nadagogo Brewers Association

# Sake nurtured from the trinity of water, rice and reliable technology

## Hybrid sake brewing that combines tradition and innovation

Nada-Gogo is blessed with the perfect climate for brewing sake, sandwiched between Osaka Bay to the south, which connects to the expansive Pacific Ocean, and the majestic Rokko Mountains to the north. But even when blessed with many geographical advantages, good sake cannot be produced without a brewer who can control them well. In Nada-Gogo, there is a professional group of sake brewers called the Tanba Toji, who are one of the three major groups in Japan along with the Nanbu Toji and Echigo Toji. Their advanced techniques have been handed down since the Edo period. We asked Shinya Tanaka, who is the General Manager of the Production Division at Kiku-Masamune, a company with a 360-year history, about the skills of the Toji. "Sharp, clean flavor matters when it comes to Nada-Gogo's sake. It's called "beautiful sake," but it's a flavor that can only be achieved by the Tamba Toji, who know everything about the characteristics of the climate, water, and rice. In order to consistently produce such sake, Nada-Gogo formed a group of specialists called "The

Society for Nada Sake Research" about a century ago. The aim is to provide scientific evidence that confirms the Tojis' experience and intuition, and to further improve the technology," says Mr. Tanaka. The establishment of this society contributed not only to the improvement of sake brewing technology but also to the nurturing of human resources. Now we have a variety of types including ginjo, junmai, and honjozo, with each brewery creating its own unique yeast. "Knowing more about the characteristics of yeast added more variety to the quality of sake from Nada-Gogo, allowing each brewery to store them for longer periods to further mature, or ship them when they have fresh flavor without any period of maturation." As a result, there is now a range of brands that cater to the tastes of customers, such as those who want to drink sake that is strong and sharp, as well as those who want something that tastes fruity and melts refreshingly in their mouth.

## Unsparring use of top-grade sake rice that makes other brewers jealous

Along with miyamizu water, rice is another important factor in the

ingredients of Nada-Gogo sake. A key point is that most of the brands certified as GI use Yamada Nishiki rice from Hyogo Prefecture, which is known as the king of sake rice. "Why is Yamada Nishiki the most highly regarded sake rice in Japan? This has to do with sake rice having a white, starchy component (called shinpaku) at its center. The koji bacteria that is essential for sake brewing can easily penetrate the grain, and the resulting koji is easily converted to sugar. In addition, the more the rice is polished, the more beautiful and light the sake becomes, and Yamada Nishiki is characterized by its resistance to cracking when polished, as it does not break down even when removing the outer layers of the grain that cause unwanted flavors. Miyamizu and Yamada Nishiki, are both essential ingredients when it comes to sake from Nada-Gogo. It is the fusion of these two elements that creates a superior sake," said Mr. Tanaka. In particular, the Yamada Nishiki grown on the Harima Plain, which is used by the Nada-Gogo, is characterized by its large and soft grains. Harvested from soil rich in water and nutrients, every sake brewer wants to get their hands on this rice, and it is



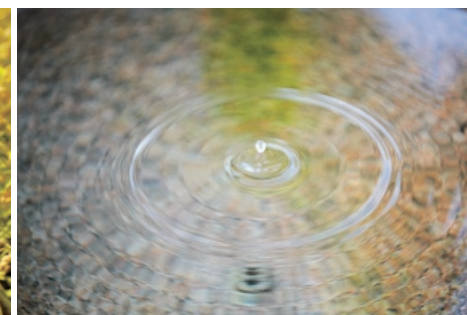
said to show its strength when used to make daiginjo, a sake replete with full-bodied umami flavor. Yamada Nishiki, the supreme sake rice, is indispensable to the brewing of such an ideal taste.

## Sake breweries dotted around an urban space in an area like no other on the globe

Blessed with the elements that make it the best sake brewery in Japan, Nada-Gogo continues to attract sake lovers of all kinds. In addition to being a multi-talented celebrity, model and reporter, Aki Yoshikawa's love for sake has led her to obtaining qualification as a Sakesho (sake master), a higher-level qualification than a sake taster or shochu taster, and also a "Sake Diploma", Japan's version of a wine

sommelier. Ms. Yoshikawa, who has visited various sake breweries in Tohoku and Hokuriku, explained the charm of Nada-Gogo from her own perspective. "It's amazing that the best sake in Japan is made in the middle of a city with high-rise condominiums and an expressway running along the coast. If we compare it to the United States, it is like producing fine wines in the middle of Manhattan. You can't find a miracle like this anywhere else in the world," says Yoshikawa. Nada-Gogo is located right in the middle between Osaka city's Umeda and Kobe city's Sannomiya, two of the major urban centers of the Kansai region. Ms. Yoshikawa said that one of the characteristics of Nada-Gogo is that it is easily accessible by train or car, and you can visit sake breweries while casually strolling through the town. "There are

many breweries that have converted old brewhouses into museums and memorials. This is unique to Nada-Gogo with its long history. For example, the Hakutsuru Sake Brewery Museum has life-sized figures that recreate the work process, and the Kiku-Masamune Sake Brewery Museum introduces the traditional kimoto method for yeast starter along with the tools that were used in the good old days of sake brewing in the Edo period. "You can get a feeling for the profound sake brewing process from up close, and you can taste freshly-pressed sake at the shop next door. "I often visit the Hakutsuru Sake Brewery Museum and the Kiku-Masamune Sake Brewery Museum for both my work and personal leisure, and recently there have been a lot of female visitors. You can feel just how much Nada Gogo's sake is loved."



1. "Nada-Gogo's sake is continually developing," explained Mr. Tanaka from Kiku-Masamune. 2. The Kiku-Masamune Sake Brewery Museum is in a reconstructed sake brewery that was built in 1659, and it passes down the history of sake brewing. 3. The Nada-Gogo is a quiet residential area surrounded by mountains and the sea, with a laid-back atmosphere in an urban setting. 4. Aki Yoshikawa's Youtube channel "Nihonshu Girls' Sake Class" is also doing very well.

## First Japan Heritage designated on the theme of "Japanese Sake"

Nada-Gogo's sake, made by the outstanding skills of the Tanba Toji and using the mineral-rich miyamizu water that promotes the fermentation of koji bacteria and yeast. Sake lovers say that the sake from this area has a sharp aftertaste. One variety is called "Akibare" or "Akiagari", which is cellar-matured until after the end of summer, further improving the quality of the sake by developing the aroma and adding to the rounded, mature flavor. The five flavors of sake, namely sweetness, dryness, sourness, bitterness, and astringency, are harmonized and evolve into a refreshing and mellow sake. It has long been known as "Nada no Ki-Ippon" and is a characteristic unique to Nada sake.

Another characteristic of Nada-Gogo is that it is combined with the

technological advances made through the establishment of the Nada Sake Research Group to produce sake that cannot be found anywhere else. Hakutsuru Sake Brewing's "Shoun Junmai Daiginjo", for example, uses an original rice called Hakutsuru Nishiki which is grown on the company's own farm. The company spent more than ten years breeding and developing this sake rice. The sake produced through the synergy of Hakutsuru's 270 years of traditional techniques and innovative technology has a one-of-a-kind taste. Junmai Daiginjo has a beautiful fruit aroma reminiscent of pineapple and peach, with an elegant, full sweetness and mild acidity that blend together perfectly. Junmai Ginjo, on the other hand, has a mild sweetness and refreshing acidity on the nose and a gentle aroma of bitter chocolate that lingers on the palate. By comparing all of the brands, you can enjoy the deep world of Nada-Gogo's

sake.

In 2020, Nada-Gogo was designed as Japan Heritage on the theme of "Japanese Sake". The sake brewing culture handed down from generation to generation is valued not only for its techniques, but also for the art, education and architecture the brewers have bestowed upon the development of the region. Examples of this include the Hakutsuru Fine Art Museum, which houses national treasures and important cultural properties, the Yodoko Guest House, which was the villa of the Sakuramasamune's Yamamura family and was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, and Nada Junior and Senior High School, which was established in 1929 through the generosity of sake brewing families. They have contributed greatly to the modernization of the city and built a sake culture that is loved around the world. You can feel it in the air as you walk through the streets of Nada.

## "Nada no Ki-Ippon", the long-loved perfect harmonization of the five flavor elements of sake



① Shoun Junmai Daiginjo Self-produced Hakutsuru Nishiki  
Hakutsuru Sake Brewing / 720ml

② Shoun Junmai Ginjo Hakutsuru Nishiki  
Hakutsuru Sake Brewing / 720ml



## Product Specification of Geographical Indication "灘五郷 (Nadagogo)"

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (a) Characteristics of liquor

Seishu (sake) in Nadagogo (literally "five villages of Nada") generally has a good harmony of elements of taste and a good aftertaste. Among them, seishu that has been stored until autumn has a good flavor and mild taste, and therefore has sake quality in which you will never get tired of drinking.

Moreover, Junmai-Ginjo-shu and Ginjo-shu have a good flavor with a combination of a fruity flavor and mild taste, and therefore has sake quality with a good aftertaste.

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factor

Nadagogo is a collective term for Nishigo, Mikagego, Uzozakigo, Nishinomiya and Imazugo. Nadagogo is a long belt-like area stretching east to west, which is located against a backdrop of the Rokko-renpo (Rokko mountain range) in the north and faces the Osaka Bay in the south. (From here on, "Nadagogo" in these Production Standards refers to Nada Ward and Higashinada Ward of Kobe City, as well as Ashiya City and Nishinomiya City of Hyogo Prefecture)

In winter, seasonal winds from west get together at the Akashi Strait, and move across a mountain, reach the top of the mountain and then come down as Rokko Oroshi (Rokko fall wind). Such land features provide a climate that is extremely suitable for Kanzukuri (cold-weather brewing).

On the steep slopes of mountains that approach seaside of Nadagogo, there are nine rapid streams within a range of 10 kilometers from east to west. In days gone by, a large amount of high-quality white rice was produced by rice polishing by waterwheel using the water power. Moreover, as the area is a maritime area, shipping was easy. Therefore the brewing industry has been developed in the area.

Furthermore, groundwater gushing through the layer in the area, as typified by Miyamizu (Miya-water), brings in hard water that contains adequate mineral such as chlorine and potassium that are necessary for yeast growth and little iron causing coloring, which is suitable for sake brewing.

By using the water as Shikomi-mizu (water used for brewing sake), strong and sound fermentation is prompted, and therefore high-quality of sake with well-harmonized elements of taste and good aftertaste has been developed. Furthermore, by putting the sake with the characteristics of Kanzukuri sake through heat by April, and allowing it to age over the spring and summer seasons, when temperatures begin to rise, the profile of the sake gains a balanced and smooth taste. This is called "Akiagari." Of the sake that has been put through the Akiagari process, those that are with temperatures close to outside temperatures and shipped straight out of the storage tank without further heat treatment are called "Hiyaoroshi." This type of sake are traditionally shipped from Nadagogo in and after September.

##### (2) Human factor

The characteristics of seishu "Nadagogo" has been strongly affected by Tamba Toji (master brewers in Tamba). Tamba Toji is one of the three most famous Toji in Japan, together with Nanbu Toji and Echigo Toji. They are technical experts for brewing sake and are very diligent. They bring the best out of the characteristics of rice by advanced brewing skills. Furthermore, they have full knowledge on weather and the characteristics of water in the Nadagogo area and, using the knowledge, they have been brewing sake with well-harmonized elements of taste and good aftertaste.

In addition to the active role played by Toji who have traditional brewing skills, many technical experts and researchers who majored fermentationology or zymurgy at universities belong to sake breweries in Nadagogo and back up the highly-advanced brewing technology of Tamba Toji by scientific knowledge, and have been advancing the technology development for further improvement. Nadashu-Kenkyukai (Society for Nada Sake Research, SNSR), a private organization where such technical experts and researchers promote exchanges of technology, has also contributed to improvement of brewing technology and human resource development of sake breweries in Nadagogo.

SNSR is composed of six study groups, i.e., Water Study Group, Rice Study Group, Brewing Study Group, Sake Quality Study Group, Management Study Group and Editing Study Group, and has been continuing a wide range of activities. In addition to the "Nadashu-Kenkyukai Newsletter," SNSR published "Nadashu" that gives a comprehensive survey of brewing technology of Nadashu in 1969 and "Nadashu, second series" in 1988 to make everyone know the brewing technology. Furthermore, SNSR established the Sake Quality Review Committee in 2010 to review and certify the quality of sake of "Nada-no-kiippon (Pure Nada sake)."

These research and technology development by the technical experts and researchers as well as technological exchanges through Nadashu-Kenkyukai have been playing a great role in preserving the characteristics of Nadagogo seishu that has well-harmonized elements of taste and good aftertaste, as well as further refining the quality.

Moreover, for the purpose of conducting an investigation of the flow path of groundwater and monitoring changes in the water quality, Nadagogo Shuzo Kuriai (Nadagogo Brewers Association) established the Nada District Groundwater Investigation Committee jointly with Kobe City in 1953 and also established the Miyamizu Preservation and Investigation Committee jointly with Nishinomiya City in 1954 to conduct the regular simultaneous analytical investigation of well water in winter and summer. Furthermore, in cooperation with Nadashu-Kenkyukai, Nadagogo Brewers Association, through the investigation and research on the influence of groundwater resulting from the building construction works, has been preserving the quality of groundwater in the area and studying on the water quality that features the characteristics of Nadagogo seishu.

Through these efforts to develop human resources and improve the brewing technology, as typified by Nadashu-Kenkyukai, in which private sector, public sector and the community come together, the characteristics of Nadagogo seishu, which has well-harmonized elements of taste and good aftertaste, have continuously come down to the present day. By introducing all-season usable brewing equipment that can reproduce temperature conditions for Kanzukuri (cold-weather brewing), etc., the characteristics of Nadagogo can be maintained throughout the year.

### II Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor

To use the geographical indication "Nadagogo," it is required to meet the following requirements:

#### (a) Ingredients

- (1) Only domestically produced rice (limited to rice with a rating of grade 3 or higher under the Agricultural Products Inspection Act—Act No. 144 of 1951) shall be used for rice and rice-koji.
- (2) Only water collected in Nadagogo shall be used.
- (3) Ingredients for "seishu (sake)" stipulated in Item 7 of Article 3 of the Liquor Tax Act shall be used. Provided, however, that among the ingredients for sake stipulated in Article 2 of the Enforcement Order of the Liquor Tax Act, ingredients other than alcohol (limited to the case in which, among ingredients, the weight of alcohol does not exceed 25% of the weight of rice, including rice for koji) shall not be used.

#### (b) Production method

- (1) Sake shall be produced in the Nadagogo area in accordance with the production method of sake stipulated in Item 7 of Article 3 of the Liquor Tax Act
- (2) If sake is stored during the production process, it shall be stored in the Nadagogo area.
- (3) Sake shall be filled in the container in the Nadagogo area, which is scheduled to be delivered to consumers.

### III Matters relating to management for maintaining the characteristics of liquor

- (a) To use the geographical indication "Nadagogo," sake makers, before liquors with the geographical indication are transferred (except for transfers applicable to the provisions of Paragraph 1 of Article 28 of the Liquor Tax Act) from the production site of liquors (including a site regarded as the production site with a license of production liquors under the provisions of Paragraph 6 of Article 28 or Paragraph 4 of Article 28-3 of the Liquor Tax Act—Act No. 6 of 1953), need to get confirmation based on the business application guidelines prepared by the following control body that the liquors with the geographical indication satisfy the "Matters relating to the characteristics of liquors mainly linked with the production area of the liquors" and the "Matters relating to ingredient and production method of liquor."

Name of Control Body:  
**Nadagogo Brewers Association**

Address: 10-11 Mikage-honmachi 5-chome, Higashinada Ward,  
Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture  
Phone: number:078-841-1101  
Website: [www.nadagogo.ne.jp/](http://www.nadagogo.ne.jp/)

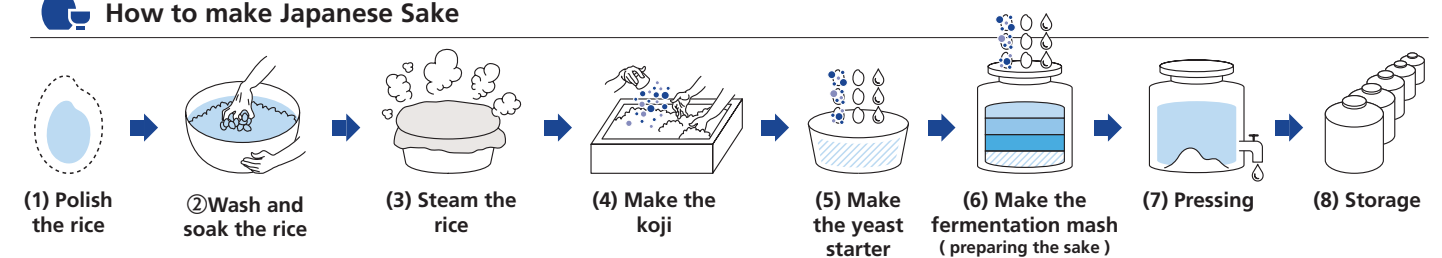
- (b) Where liquor that has been certified through the process described in (a) above intends to indicate that it is "Hiyaoroshi" together with a description signifying the geographical indication on the container or packaging of the liquor, it must be done so in accordance with the business application guidelines.

### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Seishu /sake (Article 3, Item 7 of the Liquor Tax Act)



## How to make Japanese Sake





# With roots spanning since the age of myths, the home of Japanese sake retains traditions unbroken

Himeji, Akashi, Aioi, Kakogawa, Ako, Nishiwaki, Miki, Takasago, Ono, Kasai, Shiso, Kato, Tatsuno, Taka, Inami, Harima, Ichikawa, Fukusaki, Kamikawa, Taishi, Kamigori, and Sayo. The Harima Plain, a fertile grain-growing region, is known as Japan's largest producer of Yamada Nishiki, a strain of rice befitting sake brewing.



Hyogo Prefecture  
Japanese Sake



# Harima.

**In an environment known as a microcosm of Japan, we find the region where Japanese sake first originated.**

Hyogo Prefecture, located practically in the center of the Japanese archipelago, finds itself right in the middle of the Japan Standard Time Zone. The largest of the six prefectures that make up the Kinki region of the country, to its east lie Kyoto and Osaka; to the west it borders on Okayama and Tottori; with the Sea of

Japan to the north and the Seto Inland Sea to the south. It has come to be known as a microcosm of the whole country, being blessed with oceans to the north and south as well as mountains, plains, islands, and a wealth of flora. The prefecture was once made up of five different domains: Settsu, Harima, Tajima, Tanba, and Awaji, each with their own distinct topographies, which has left behind a diverse range of cultures and customs. The area enjoys a long history,

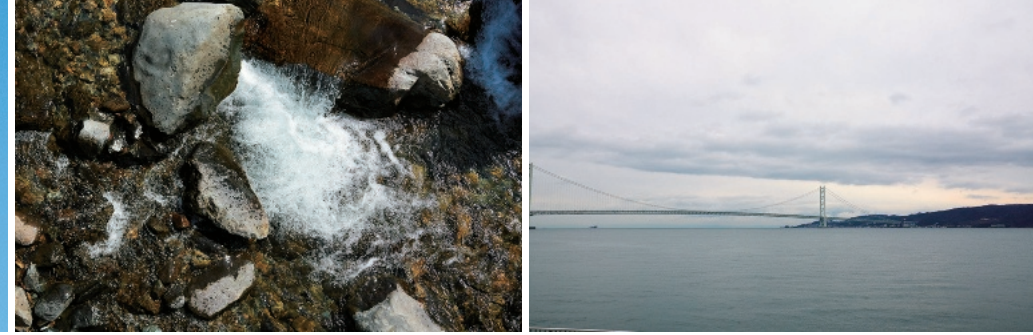
much traceable back to Japan's oldest known topography, the Harima No Kuni Fudoki. Compiled in 713, within one can find information on local produce, the land, and mythology. Within the text, we find the passage, "The esculents of the gods bedewed brought about mold. . Brewing sake, the niwazake was tendered to their divineness and a feast held, thus, people lovingly called the village that of niwazake. Even people of the day called the village that of "the sound of the garden (niwato)." The text, stating that the location spoken of here is that of Niwada Shrine in the northwestern area of Harima, has led many to call it the birthplace of Japanese sake. Hyogo Prefecture is scattered with locales all boasting their status as the place where Japanese sake first came into being as recorded in old literature. That said, precisely where and when sake brewing first appeared has yet to be explicitly discovered. While it's surmised that sake brewing began as rice cultivation promulgated throughout Japan, the Harima No Kuni Fudoki contains several descriptions of sake as well as a type of alcohol called niwazake, suggesting that sake has been popular in this region since ancient times. The reason for this lies in the environment of Harima itself. Rice and water are of the utmost importance when it comes to brewing sake. For starters, water comprises about 80 to 85% of Japanese sake. Hard water causes yeast to ferment more vigorously, while soft water

suppresses fermentation, making the sake sweeter. Water is a major factor in shaping flavor, and because sake breweries use water from the area where the brewery is located, this causes regional characteristics appear in the flavor. In Harima, there are a number of rivers that lead to the Harima-nada Sea. The five major rivers in Harima, known as the Harima Gosen, that run off from the Chugoku Mountains feature underflow water blessed with a low iron content and are one of the major factors that led to the development of the region as one for brewing.

### The three main requirements of any delicious sake: water, climate and soil

Climate and soil are just as important as water when it comes to brewing sake. Mid-mountain valleys and basins with large temperature differences between day and night are suited to growing rice for sake. The northern part of the region is mountainous with elevations of 50 to 150 meters, and because the Rokko Mountains block the warm air, the diurnal range here is in excess of 10 degrees. Its inland climate sees snowfall during the cold season, and the average temperature is one to two degrees lower than that of the south-central region. It also receives a relatively large amount of precipitation in winter, and being an area that serves as a source of water with its long rivers with spanning great

distances, this enriches the plains of the region. In contrast, the Harima Plain, which stretches to the southwest, is sandwiched between the Kako River, Ichikawa River, Yumesaki River, Ibo River and Chikusa Rivers, forming a fertile delta region. The ground in Hyogo consists of strata called the Kobe and Osaka formations that are clayey soils that can store a large amount of minerals such as lime, magnesium and potassium, and have a high retention capacity for fertilizer ingredients. Since the kind of rice used for sake production is tall, sturdy, and features large grains, this area has come to be known as optimal for such farming. Even back in the Edo period, the region was so booming that farmers even had established their own brands of rice, while in recent years, the area has become the birthplace of Yamada Nishiki, known as the "king of sake rice," and boasts the highest production volume in Japan. The south-central area along the Seto Inland Sea has a temperate "Setouchi" climate with little precipitation and more than 2,000 hours of sunshine annually. It is said that this tendency toward low rainfall has fostered the culture of "koji," which is essential for sake. The fact that such a large city, one featuring Himeji Castle, was established and that it was possible to export sake to Kyoto and Osaka, where the spirits were consumed in great quantities, also significantly advanced the art of sake brewing.



# Hyogo, home to the king of sake rice: Protecting and passing Yamada Nishiki on to the future

## How was it that Yamada Nishiki, born in Hyogo Prefecture, came to be?

In addition to the stories concerning Niwata Shrine, Hyogo Prefecture features many episodes related to the history of sake. It is said that present-day Konoike in Itami is the birthplace of sake, and in the early Edo period, the Itami and Ikeda areas prospered as sake brewing regions. In the late Edo period, Nada -- Nishinomiya and the coastal areas of Kobe City -- made a name for itself as a major sake production area. At that time, Harima played an important role as a supplier of labor and raw rice, with master brewers known as "Banshu Toji" gaining a reputation of their own, and this provided the basis for the birth of Yamada Nishiki, later to be called the king of sake rice. In general, sake rice is taller than edible rice, making it more prone to falling over and having an inferior yield. Were the rice difficult to cultivate and unprofitable, it's only natural that farmers wouldn't produce sake rice. The solution was the "village rice system," under which sake breweries contracted with specific regions to produce a stable supply of high-quality sake rice, in exchange for which the breweries would buy a certain amount of rice each year at a higher

price than they normally paid. This led to the creation of a bond between sake breweries and producers in Harima that went beyond a simple sales contract, and created an environment that nurtured diligent farmers. Back then, sake breweries in Nada often used rice produced in Hokusetsu (northern Osaka), while Harima rice didn't enjoy a good reputation. It is in this vein that the process of selective breeding of rice became more active. In 1893, the government began breeding as a kind of national undertaking. The National Agricultural Experiment Station was established, and the selection of superior strains suitable for each region began. It was during this time that Yamada Nishiki was born. In 1923, the mother strain of "Yamadabo" was artificially crossed with the father strain of "Tankan Wataribune," said breeding resulting in a new strain recognized in 1931 as "Yamawatari 50-7." In 1936, in recognition of its stable yield and suitability for sake brewing, Hyogo Prefecture named the rice Yamada Nishiki and designated it as a recommended breed. At the time, sake breweries in Nada used Hokusetsu rice, but when wartime regulations prohibited the purchase of rice from outside the prefecture, Nada adopted the locally grown Yamada Nishiki. Having tried it,

they found that it met the requirements for sake rice such as having ideally opaque core of starch (known as shinpaku among brewers) that was not too large and had a thin, linear cross-sectional shape. Along with its low levels of protein which can cause miscellaneous flavors, Yamada Nishiki was approved by the producers.

## The role of sake rice testing facilities in protecting the wellbeing of Yamada Nishiki

Eighty years after its birth, Yamada Nishiki, produced in Hyogo Prefecture, is coveted by breweries all over the country for its suitability in sake brewing, firmly establishing its position in the industry. The number of strains designated as sake rice is over 100, but what about Yamada Nishiki sets it apart? Asking around, we found that its true value lies in that of Daiginjo. Japanese sake is widely divided up by the ratio of rice that is polished when brewing it. Because the phosphorous and magnesium that reside in the surface layer of the rice lead to unfavorable taste in the sake, Daiginjo, the highest-quality sake there is, has a ratio of less than 50%, meaning that the size of the milled rice grains is half or lower. When it comes to Yamada



Nishiki, its shinpaku is able to withstand this much polishing without breaking down. Yamada Nishiki's physical characteristics, which allow it to withstand the harsh brewing necessary to bring out its flavor and aroma, are what makes it superior, and many breweries say that it is only the Harima rice that can withstand 30% polishing (cutting 70% off the rice). Higashi-Harima is the only place in Japan where there is a research organization specializing in sake rice. "In order to produce high-quality Yamada Nishiki, we conduct cultivation tests, produce breeder stock for Yamada Nishiki seeds, and breed new sake rice that is resistant to climate change and pests," says Takuma Sugimoto, a section manager at the organization. Yamada Nishiki as a strain is supported by an accumulation of steady research and ceaseless daily study.

## The appeal of Harima as effused by its geographical indication

Harima has developed as a supply

center for labor and raw rice for Nada-Gogo, a nearby sake production center. Since the late Edo period, many sake breweries have opened their doors there, and the region has established itself as a production center for refined sake with 22 breweries located there at present. When I visited some of them, people there informed me of their history, the differences in production methods, and news about other brewers in the area, giving a pleasant impression that all the breweries in the area shared a good relationship to one another. "There are four sake brewers' associations in the Harima area, and the Harima Sake Culture Tourism Committee was established to convey not only the history and culture of sake of but also that of Harima. In 2015, in commemoration of the 1300th anniversary of the compilation of the Harima Province Fudoki, a type of spirit dubbed "Niwa-shu" was created that is inspired by the sake of that time. These activities led to the area being designated with a geographical

indicator," says Yasuhiro Tanaka, president of the Harima Sake Study Group and Tanaka Shuzojo, who has also the leader of the GI Harima project. "Harima is the place where the earliest description of sake brewed using koji was written. As such, we've adopted the slogan that 'Harima is the home of Japanese sake.' At present, 15 breweries make GI Harima sake, but my dream is to have all of them make it eventually." Midori Oka, an enka singer who was born in Himeji City and serves as both the Himeji Tourism Ambassador and Shiso Tourism Ambassador, describes the appeal of Harima. "The area is a treasure trove of seafood, with high quality fish and shellfish being caught all year round, including our famous conger eel. GI Harima sake is made from local rice and pairs excellently with local seafood. It's the kind of culinary marriage that really helps to enrich our day-to-day lives," she says. When I visited the Eigashima Shuzo in Akashi, I asked the master brewer, Yuji Nakamura, about sake brewing. He replied that "The brewery has long made sake that goes well with local ingredients. I think everyone wants to eat and drink good food that comes from where they live. What really makes me happiest as a brewer is when I hear people say 'This is delicious.'"



1. Yasuhiro Tanaka, the sixth-generation president of the Tanaka Sake Brewery in Himeji, was instrumental in Harima's GI certification. 2. Yuji Nakamura, master brewer at the Eigashima Shuzo, checks the unfiltered sake before it is heated. 3. Okufuji Shoji, a brewery in Ako, was founded in 1601. It's not unusual for sake breweries to have a history dating back over 200 years. 4. "I'm delighted that sake from the city where I grew up is attracting people from all over the world," says Midori Oka. GI Harima hopes to spread its delicious local flavor throughout the globe in the future.

## Hyogo Prefecture's own Yamada Nishiki and its own distinct terroir

GI Harima, fifth area to receive a geographical indication certification for its Japanese sake, is made up of breweries in Higashi-Harima, Kita-Harima, Naka-Harima, and Nishi-Harima, with their refined sake meeting strict criteria such as using only Yamada Nishiki produced in Hyogo Prefecture and only water drawn locally. The fact that a only a single type of rice, Hyogo's Yamada Nishiki, is designated for sake production, means that to a certain extent, the direction the breweries pursue in terms of their product is already laid out for them. As of 2020,

there are 55 types of sake in the lineup, and by using koji made from Yamada Nishiki grown wholesomely, the sake acquires a gentle maturity to its palate; a delicate body; and a rich fullness of flavor, giving it a pleasant acidity and a light aftertaste that lingers as it goes down. Junmai Ginjo and Ginjo Sake, in particular, have a sweet, fruit-like aroma, reminiscent of apples. Niwaki-Niwazake, produced using methods bringing to mind those used in ancient times, was jointly developed in honor of Niwada Shrine, which is said to be the birthplace of Japanese sake and serves as the stage for the story of sake brewing recorded as in the Harima No Kuni Fudoki. It uses natural koji-mold

and yeast collected onsite at the shrine. It is said there were three kinds of original koji which serve as the key to sake brewing, but the kind taken from Niwada Shrine became the fourth to be officially certified. The microorganism is owned by the Himeji Sake Brewers Association and is distributed only to sake breweries in Harima. Although there are many famous breweries scattered throughout Japan, sake brewing using koji and yeast isolated from nature is a rarity, thus landing the wine it is used to produce the moniker "miracle sake." Tanaka Shuzojo, a sake brewery in Himeji City, is run by the sixth generation head of the distillery, Yasuhiro Tanaka, who also serves as the leader of the Harima Sake Study Group, an organization that was crucial in the GI Harima designation. The brewery strives toward implementing modern technologies to produce sake with a low rice-polishing ratio while also utilizing methods dating back to the Edo period such as stone-based polishing to produce a balanced finish and other processes such using traditional sake yeast mash starters. Shirasagi no Shiro (Castle of White Egrets) is a representative brand that takes its name from the motifs of Himeji Castle, a World Cultural Heritage Site and national treasure that is famous throughout the world. The long history of Harima sake, which has treaded down the path of history alongside the castle's beautiful donjon built in the Edo period, is perhaps the best companion to the spirit that one could hope to find. Perhaps enjoying a glass while reading about the exploits of some of the castle's famous samurai lords such as Shigetaka Kuroda or Terumasa Ikeda may be the best way to appreciate the wine's excellence.

## A beauty equal to that of an alabaster egret, a wine walking in tandem with the history of Japan's most famous castle



- ① Junmai Daiginjo Highest Quality Shirasagi no Shiro Enmusubi Yujiji  
Tanaka Sake Brewery, 720ml
- ② Junmai Daiginjo Shirasagi no Shiro  
Tanaka Sake Brewery, 720ml
- ③ Junmai Daiginjo Shirasagi no Shiro  
Tanaka Sake Brewery, 720ml
- ④ Junmai Ginjo Shirasagi no Shiro  
Tanaka Sake Brewery, 720ml
- ⑤ Shirasagi no Shiro Niwazake kimoto traditional yeast mash Junmai-shu Mallet-Polished Rice  
Tanaka Sake Brewery, 720ml

## Product Specification of Geographical Indication "はりま (Harima)"

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (a) Characteristics of liquor

In general, the seishu of Harima tastes smooth, mild, round and less bitter or astringent with delicate body and rich flavor. By using koji nurtured in a wholesome manner from Yamada Nishiki, sake-brewing rice, produced in Hyogo Prefecture, pleasant acidity is added to fermentation mash, resulting in light aftertaste.

Especially, Junmai-shu and Honjozo-shu taste rich and balanced between flavor and acidity and do not cloy the palate. Junmai ginjo-shu and Ginjo-shu have sweet fruity aroma like a beautiful apple, mixed with pleasant acidity, producing further smooth taste.

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factors

Hyogo Prefecture is located around the center of the Japanese Archipelago, facing the Sea of Japan on the north and the Seto Inland Sea on the south. In the center of the prefecture, the mountain area of the Chugoku region, consisting of relatively small mountains, less than 1,000 meters above sea level, stretches from east to west, and humid winds from the Sea of Japan bring sufficient precipitation to this mountainous area. The water accumulated in the mountains forms a number of rivers, including Kako River, the longest in the prefecture, Ichi River, Yumesaki River, Ibo River, and Chikusa River, providing a rich water resource to the breadbasket spreading in the foot of mountains.

Rice, an ingredient of seishu, is cultivated in this breadbasket, and Yamada Nishiki was created in this region through breeding as a seishu-brewing rice variety. In the season that rice ripens, Rokko Mountains block warm air from the south. Additionally, the climate with large differences in temperatures during the same day and clayish mineral-rich farmland give Yamada Nishiki advantages as a seishu ingredient, such as the shape of shimpaku, the white core, and less fat and protein.

Moreover, the production place of seishu of Harima is situated in the region, spreading to the west of Akashi Channel and to the south of Chugoku Mountains. The climate is mild with long sunshine hours and light precipitation. These factors create water, as a seishu ingredient, that is low in iron, which derives from Chugoku Mountains, and contains appropriate amounts of inorganic salt (such as potassium, phosphoric acid, magnesium and calcium). The water can be used as shikomimizu, water for sake-making.

##### (2) Human factors

"Harimanokuni Fudoki" (description of the culture, climate, etc. of the Harima region), compiled in the Nara period (in the eighth century), reports the first record of the sake-making that used rice koji as a saccharification agent, the so-called original form of the present-day sake-making.

Moreover, when production of sake prospered in its neighboring Nadagogo in the Edo era (from the 17th to the 19th century), Harima played a key role in supplying labor, notably Banshu toji (masters of sake brewers) and as the supplying base of sake rice. In the late Edo era, a great number of sake breweries started business by making better use of such legacy, and Harima started establishing itself as a production place of seishu.

In 1928, the "Sake-Rice Test Site of Hyogo Prefecture," the only sake rice specialized research body in Japan, was opened, where a group led by Teiji Fujikawa tested the adaptability to the production place of sake rice for many years. In 1936, Yamada Nishiki, was bred.

Afterward, to the present day, the Hyogo Prefectural Technology Center for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries retains the original seed of Yamada Nishiki (breeder seed). The quality of rice has been protected strictly by the main agricultural seed production ordinance (Hyogo prefectural ordinance No. 31), whereby Yamada Nishiki has taken root in Hyogo Prefecture.

Furthermore, in brewing technology, lessons on brewing technology are given in events, such as "Sake-brewing lectures" by officials from a regional taxation bureau and the "New sake-tasting meeting." Activities, such as exchange of brewing technology, joint research, seminars, lectures and brewery visits, are organized through the "Sake-brewing technology workshop of the Hyogo Prefectural Institute of Technology" in an effort to improve Sake brewing technology and develop human resources in the whole of the region.

In 2013, 13 cities and nine towns including Himeji-shi formed the "Harima Broad-Area

Collaborative Council," and the "Harima Sake Cultural Tourism Council" made up of four sake-brewing associations in Harima, which are promoting activities to spread sake culture through the messages of "The birthplace of Yamada Nishiki" and "Harima is home of Japanese sake."

### II Matters relating the raw materials and production method of liquor

#### (a) Ingredients

(1) The only rice and rice koji that can be used must come from the produce that was cultivated and harvested in Hyogo Prefecture from the seeds of Yamada Nishiki that were qualified by the main agricultural seed production ordinance (Hyogo prefectural ordinance No. 31).

(2) The only water that can be used must be collected within the scope of the production area.

(3) The only seishu ingredients that can be used must be the ones specified in Article 3-7 of the Liquor Tax Act. However, among ingredients of seishu specified in Article 2 of Order for Enforcement of the Liquor Tax Act, nothing other than alcohol (limited to the case that alcohol is used when the weight of alcohol does not exceed 50% of the weight of rice [including koji]) can be used.

#### (b) Production method

(1) Seishu must be brewed within the scope of the production area in the seishu brewing method, specified in Article 3-7 of the Liquor Tax Act.

(2) In the process of sake brewing, sake must be stored within the scope of the production area.

(3) Bottling shall be completed with containers planned to be delivered to consumers within the scope of production area.

### III Matters relating management to maintain the characteristic of liquor

In order to use geographical indication (GI) "Harima," the liquor that uses the GI is required to be confirmed by the following control body pursuant to guidelines for work implementation, prepared by the control body as to whether the relevant liquor satisfies "No. 1. Matters related to characteristics of liquor attributable to the production place of liquor" and "No. 2. Matters related to the ingredients and brewing methods of liquor" by the time the relevant liquor is shipped to places (excluding places subject to the provision of Article 28, paragraph 1, of the Liquor Tax Act) from its brewing place (including places deemed as brewing places with the permit to produce liquor by the provisions of Article 28, paragraph 6 or Article 28-3, paragraph 4 of the Liquor Tax Act [Act No. 6 of 1953]).

Name of Control Body:  
**Harima Sake Research Society**

Address: 246, Hojo Nagara-cho, Himeji-City, Hyogo Prefecture

Telephone: 079-222-1472

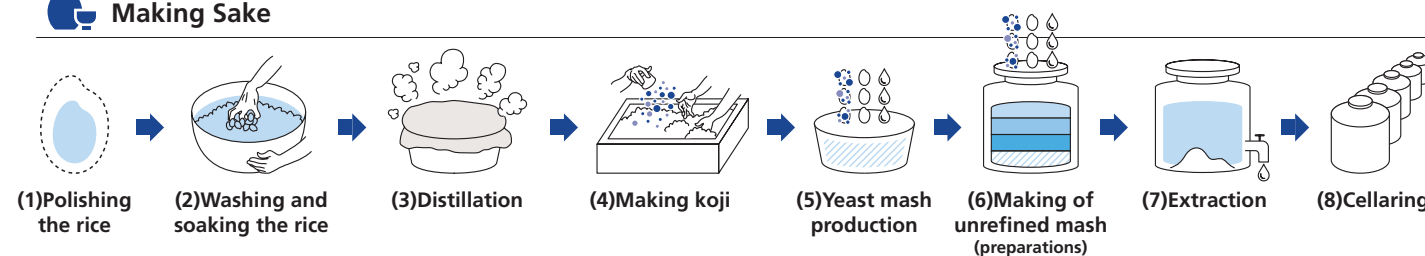
Mail address: gi.harima@gmail.com

### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Seishu / sake (Article 3, Item 7 of the Liquor Tax Act)

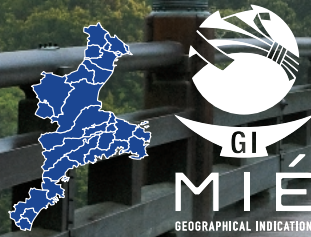


## Making Sake



# Sake brewed using pure water, nurtured, and matured in a land of antiquity

Mie Prefecture, home to the Ise Shrine, is also known for the excellent quality of its water. The subsoil water used for sake brewing is soft, and the koji gradually ferments, resulting in a mellow sake.



Mie Prefecture  
Japanese Sake

Mie



## A sake born from the moderate temperature difference and the diverse topography and famous rivers of Nagawa

Mie Prefecture is located in the center of the Japanese archipelago. The prefecture is tall and narrow from north to south, with the Ueno Basin in the west and the Shima Peninsula jutting out into the Pacific Ocean to the east, giving Mie a cross-like shape. Bordering on the Japan Median Tectonic Line, the north overlooks Ise Bay on the seaward side, while inland is lined with 700 to 800 meter tall mountains such as Yoro, Suzuka, Kasagi, and Nunobiki. The southern coast descends from the Shima Peninsula of the ria coastline to the Kumano Sea to form the Kii Peninsula. Inland, the Kii Mountain

Range includes Mt. Hidegatake, the highest mountain in the prefecture, at its center. The complex topography featuring plains, basins, and mountains fosters a variety of local characteristics, and the climate varies greatly from region to region, with the average temperature varying from 16.5 degrees in the coastal areas to 12 degrees in the inland areas, a difference of more than 4 degrees. In winter, a cold, dry wind known as "Suzuka oroshi" or "Nunobiki oroshi" blows in from the northeast across the Kii and Suzuka Mountains. The northern region (Kuwana and Yokkaichi) where the temperature can get down to around 0 degrees Celsius, the central and southern regions (Tsu, Matsusaka, and Ise), and Iga (Iga and Nabari) have an excellent climate suited to

making sake, and are dotted with breweries. In addition, the Kii Mountain Range often receives the most rainfall in the whole country. The Kuroshio Current flowing through the Kumano-Nada Sea is warm and brings about a sea breeze, causing warm, moist air to rise over the Kii Mountain Range and form clouds, in turn causing rain. The abundant subsoil water from the Miyakawa, Kushidakawa, Kumozugawa, Nabarigawa, Suzukagawa, and Mitakigawa Rivers is high-quality soft water that is used for brewing sake and produces a fine, mild-tasting finish. The sea, wind, abundant rain, rich forests that store that rainfall, and the water cycle woven by the complex geology are where the taste of Mie sake truly comes from.

# The culture, water, and breweries of Mie are all tied together through the concept of “Circulation”

## What diving to the bottom of the sea can teach us about leaving behind a better world for the next generation

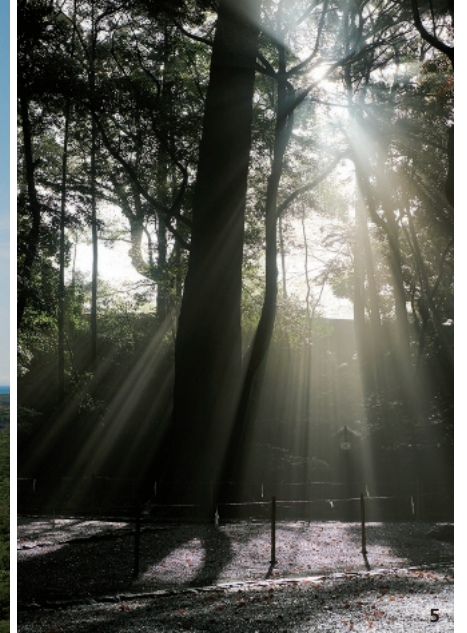
Ise Shrine is perhaps the most beloved shrine in the country. The shikinen sengu ceremony, in which the shrine buildings are rebuilt every 20 years, is a 1300 year long tradition that is something of a rarity in terms of world religious ceremonies. In recent years, the ceremony has attracted attention from the viewpoint of sustainability for its mechanism of self-sufficiency of timber, transmission of skills, and formation of communities. The primary driving force behind the shikinen sengu ceremony is an idea known as tokowaka. In Shinto terminology, it refers to something that is “constantly young and fresh” while also symbolizing the circulation of time. That spirit is deeply rooted in the region. Ms. Aiko Ono is a photographer who, after working in Tokyo, moved to Toba City five years ago and now works as a diver. She is one of many who have found the self-sufficiency of the region and the manner in which the people coexist with their environment. “As a diver, my job has me working with nature. Even if the weather is good, you can't go out to sea if the waves are too high or the wind is too strong. What we catch also changes

throughout the year: in the spring we bring in wakame seaweed and hijiki; abalone and tobiko in summer; and turban shells and sea cucumbers in winter. People of old came up with a fishing method wherein they wouldn't dive during the spawning season so that they could continue to reap the bounties of the sea indefinitely,” says Ms. Ono. Diving day in and day out, Ms. Ono says that she had a change of heart. “When it comes to this job, it takes more than your own drive and hard work to go well. In a way, luck is perhaps your biggest ally on the job. I was surprised to hear stories of people bringing in big hauls of fish like abalone on the anniversary of their grandfather or grandmother's death. When I hear such stories, it feels very strange, but at the same time, you also feel a sense of protection. Divers take good care of the sea, their ancestors, and their local deities. They have a magnificent Shinto shrine in their homes, offer sacred sake every morning, and visit their ancestors' graves. It's a very natural thing to do. Divers have been working in the sea for generations, and they live by protecting the resources that they benefit from. Seeing the way that me and my fellow divers live and being able to dive with them really makes me feel appreciation

for the sea. I hope I never forget that feeling, and I hope I can continue to keep doing this job for years to come.”

## Producing soft water suitable for sake brewing A geological study of its secrets

Speaking of the sea, Mie Prefecture includes one of the highest rainfall areas in Japan. This is due to the region's warm currents. The warm, moist winds produced by the Kuroshio Current flowing along the Kumano-Nada coast hits the Kii Mountains, where it rises rapidly and the temperature drops enough to form rain. The abundant precipitation nurtures the growth of deep forests, is filtered through the complex geology of the Japan Median Tectonic Line, passes through rivers, and then returns to the sea. The Miyakawa River, a first-class river running through the prefecture, is the best in Japan for water quality. Mie's water quality is known to be excellent all around. We asked geologist and doctor of science Kenichiro Hisada why this is so. “The geology of Japan has a very unique structure compared to other countries. On the landward side of the trench, where the oceanic plate subducts, sediments and fragments of seamounts are placed on the landward side to form



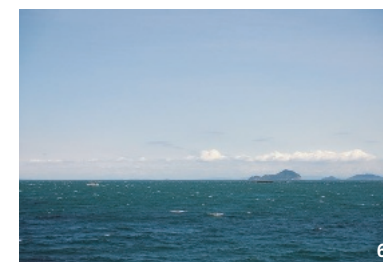
accretionary complexes. It is no exaggeration to say that Japan is a global model of accretionary complexes and that the Japanese archipelago is made up of these complexes. For example, the area around Paris in Europe is a geological feature where sedimentary rock layers were directly uplifted by limestone deposited on the sea floor. As a result, there are many lying strata, and groundwater stays in the limestone layer for a long time, resulting rather hard water. In contrast, the geology of Japan has a variety of compositions, and the strata often take a vertical form. In addition, the amount of rainfall, which is one of the highest in the world, results in soft water that is only in contact with the strata for a short period of time. It's these geological characteristics that make Japan's water appear so special to people around the world. The geology of Mie Prefecture differs greatly between the granitic geology of the northern part

and the mudstone and sandstone geology south of the Japan Median Tectonic Line. Most of Mie's sake breweries are located on the north side of the Japan Median Tectonic Line, which can be said to be characterized by its abundant and soft water.”

## The origin of sustainability in water circulation

“When I researched Mie's sake, I realized that the region has long been practicing recycling-oriented culture,” says Asako Saito (née Yano), former COO of Louis Vuitton for new business, who is currently participating in a project to introduce sake brewed in Mie to overseas markets. “The raw materials for sake are rice and water, and Mie Prefecture has many rivers flowing through it. Rice cultivation has been thriving since ancient times using the abundant and clean water. The rain that falls from the sky becomes a river,

which flows into the sea, nurturing seaweed and a variety of seafood, including lobsters and abalone. Ise Shrine stands as a symbol of this ‘sustainable symbiotic community’ that has been around since ancient times. For more than 1,500 years, the shrine has held a festivals in the morning and evenings to offer the blessings of water and nature to the gods. That's why I call the water that falls upon this land ‘celestial water.’” The circulation of water that falls from and returns to the sky is vital for Mie's water resources. All the while, it brings its blessings to animals, plants and humans equally. People borrow some of that power, and adding their own wisdom and skill, they offer their thanks to the heavens by brewing sake. This was the origin of the region's sustainability, a tradition of which has been inherited in an unbroken succession since antiquity.



1. Female Diver Aiko Ohno. 2. Geologist Kenichiro Hisada. 3. Brand consultant Asako Saito (née Yano). 4. Yokoyama Observatory where one can look out to see the Shima Peninsula. The ria coastline spreads out below. 5. The sun shines through the trees after the rain at Ise Shrine. This is a view that has remain unchanged since antiquity. The forest's pure air cleanses the heart. 6. The waters of Mie, nurtured by nutrient-rich tides, produce lobsters and abalones. Abalones have been used as offerings to the gods as they are considered to be lucky charms that bring longevity.

- ① **Junmai Daiginjo Takijiman**  
Takijiman Sake Brewing Co., 1800 ml
- ② **Mie Yamada Nishiki Junmai Ginjo Gizaemon BLACK**  
Wakaebisu Sake Brewery Co., 1800 ml
- ③ **Junmai Ginjo Tenkei**  
Limited Partnership Company  
Hayakawa Sake Brewing Department, 1800 ml



## Product Specification of Geographical Indication "三重(Mie)"

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (a) Characteristics of liquor

In general, the sake of Mie has warm taste and mellow taste. Firstly, the mouth feels deliciously smooth texture that gives rich flavor, however, both sweetness and bitterness is so mild that warm taste, regardless of the temperature of the liquid, spreads in the mouth. At the same time, fresh acidity runs into the nose calmly like waves lapping a sand beach and settles in the back of the throat with a smooth finish as if the act of swallowing is not necessary.

For instance, with low-fat and simple-taste food, such as fish and shellfish, the sake moderately highlights the taste of the food as their umami blends, and the smell of the food is neutralized by fresh acidity. Thus, the sake goes well with shellfish and crustaceans in particular.

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factors

Mie Prefecture is located in the eastern side of Kii Peninsular, which finds itself almost in the center of the Japanese archipelago, and mountains higher than 1,000 meters, including Kii Mountains and Suzuka Mountains, stretch from the north to the west. The prefecture faces Ise Bay and the Pacific Ocean from the east to the south.

While the climate is mild in summer due to the Kuroshio current flowing in the Pacific Ocean, it is cold in winter as dry and chilly winds, called the "Suzuka downdraft" and the "Nunobiki downdraft," blow from the northeast over Kii Mountains and Suzuka Mountains. Especially, Iga Basin, situated relatively inland, sees large temperature differences. In addition, snow accumulated in Suzuka Mountains during winter and rainwater that falls and stays in Kii Mountains, one of the most rainy regions in Japan, supply the entire Mie Prefecture with excellent water for brewing. These climate and rich water resource form the warm and rich quality of sake in Mie.

##### (2) Human factors

Ise Shrine is located in Mie, which has attracted a great number of worshippers from all over Japan since the Edo era as "a pilgrimage to Ise." As the sake that welcomed such worshippers, sake-making became quite popular in Mie.

Mie, facing Ise Bay and the Pacific Ocean, is blessed with diverse marine resources, and was granted the role to present mainly marine products, called "Nie (sacrifice)," to the Imperial Court from the ancient time to the Heian era (from the 8th to 12th Centuries). Especially, abalone is a marine specialty of Mie. It is said that Mie's abalone is so delicious that Yamato Hime No Mikoto, the princess of the 11th Emperor Suinin, ordered it to be offered every year. The sake of Mie has developed as a kind of sake that goes well with such rich seafood.

In recent years, research activity is vigorously ongoing, such as development of original sake yeast, in cooperation with Mie Prefecture Industrial Research Institute. Furthermore, the initiatives include development of a brewing technology suitable to the climate of Mie, information exchange among young engineers at the "Mie Prefecture Seishu Study Group" and learning the latest brewing technology by holding sake-brewing seminars in an attempt to enhance the quality of sake-making engineers, etc.

### II Matters relating the raw materials and production method of liquor

#### (a) Ingredients

- (1) Only domestically produced rice, which is limited to the grade 3 or higher rating under the Agricultural Products Inspection Act – Act No. 144 of 1951, is used for rice and rice koji.
- (2) Only water collected in Mie Prefecture is used to brew "Mie".
- (3) Only ingredients for "Sake" stipulated in Article 3-7 of the Liquor Tax Act (Act No. 6 of 1953) are used. However, among the ingredients for sake stipulated in Article 2 of the Enforcement Order of the Liquor Tax Act, ingredients other than alcohol, which is limited in the case where the weight of alcohol does not exceed 10% of the weight of rice, including rice koji, among ingredients, shall not be used.

#### (b) Production method

- (1) Sake manufactured in accordance with the production method of sake stipulated in Article 3-7 of the Liquor Tax Act in Mie Prefecture.
- (2) Sake must satisfy the requirement for manufacturing method quality specified in the right-side column of the table in paragraph 1 of the Labelling Standards of Seishu Manufacturing Method Quality (Public notice No. 8 of November 1989 from the National Tax Agency).
- (3) In the process of sake brewing, sake must be stored within Mie Prefecture.
- (4) Bottling shall be completed with containers planned to be delivered to consumers within Mie Prefecture.

### III Matters relating management to maintain the characteristic of liquor

In order to use geographical indication (GI) "Mie," the liquor that uses the GI is required to be confirmed by the following association (hereinafter referred to as "the control body") pursuant to guidelines for work implementation, prepared by the control body as to whether the relevant liquor satisfies "1. Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin" and "2. Matters relating the raw materials and production method of liquor" by the time the relevant liquor is shipped to places (excluding places subject to the provision of Article 28, paragraph 1, of the Liquor Tax Act) from its brewing place (including places deemed as brewing places with the permit to produce liquor by the provisions of Article 28, paragraph 6 or Article 28-3, paragraph 4 of the Liquor Tax Act).

**Name of Control Body:**  
**Mie Sake Brewers Association**

**Address: 141-4, Otani-cho, Tsu-shi, Mie Prefecture**  
**Telephone: 059-226-2297**  
**Website: <http://www.mie-sake.or.jp>**

### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Seishu / sake (Article 3, Item 7 of the Liquor Tax Act)

## Making a global debut at the Ise-Shima Summit, this refined sake from Mie is like no other

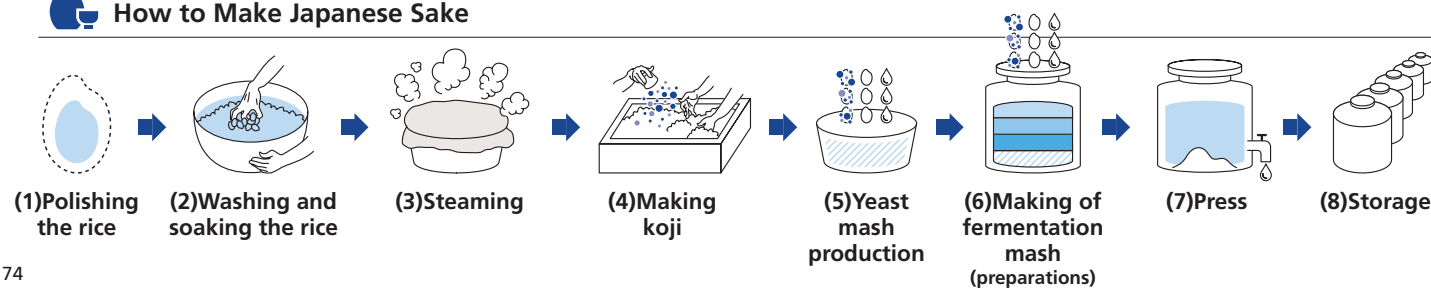
### A favorite sake of connoisseurs that has been highly evaluated in international competitions

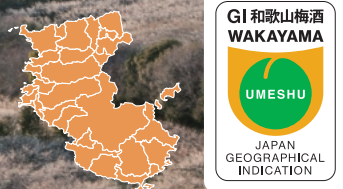
There are 35 breweries in Mie Prefecture, and as of September 2020, there are 23 breweries and 115 brands of Japanese sake certified as "GI Mie." The brewing water used for sake brewing is soft water, which slows down the fermentation of the koji, and generally has a warm, mellow quality. Takijiman, brewed with Yamada Nishiki produced locally

in Iga and pure water, is a representative sake of Japan that has won the gold medal at the International Wine Challenge, Sake Division, Junmai Daiginjo Category, several years in a row and was used as the toast to the working lunch held at the Ise-Shima Summit. Mie Yamada Nishiki Junmai Ginjo Gizaemon Black is made from 100% Mie Yamada Nishiki and is commonly known as "Giguro", only brewed once a year. Though it is a rare sake

with limited sales outlets, this sake was also served to the leaders of various nations at the Ise-Shima Summit. Junmai Ginjo Tenkei is brewed using only Yamada Nishiki rice and rice malt made from the strain produced in Mie Prefecture, along with subterranean water from the Asake River originating in the Suzuka Mountains, and features a traditional production method that brings out the flavor of the rice.

### How to Make Japanese Sake





Wakayama Prefecture

Umeshu  
(plum wine)

# Umeshu Wakayama

Plums, one of nature's rich blessings, are brewed into alcohol to be savored.

In 2020, Wakayama Umeshu was the first liqueur that has acquired geographical indication. Plums imbued with the memory of the year's climate serve as an essence for producing the liquor. Making sake is like listening to nature. Sake is adorned in the rustic charm of fresh produce.

Photo: Wakayama Tourism Federation

**A paradise-like natural environment that nurtures the fruit that will become the star of our piece: ume plums.**

In February, adorable white flowers are the first to announce the arrival of spring. "It is the first month of spring, and the wind is blowing softly. The plum blossoms powder themselves before the mirror, and the orchids give off the aroma of clashing steel."The current Japanese imperial reign takes its name from this poem in the ancient collection known as the Man'yōshū. Flowers teach

us about the four different seasons of Japan as well as its fluctuating natural landscape. It reminds us that the Japanese people have lived with the beauty of flowers since antiquity. Since the Heian period (794-1185), cherry blossoms have been the most popular spring flower, but like the people of the Nara period (710-794), there are still people who ring in the joy of spring the beauty of the plum blossoms. These are the people of Wakayama. In particular, the mountains of Minabe and Tanabe, famous for their plums, all carry the

scent of the white blossoms.

Wakayama Prefecture is located on the west side of the Kii Peninsula, facing the open waters to the west via the Seto Inland Sea to the Pacific Ocean. Blessed with an abundance of sea and rivers, the Kii Mountain Range has pilgrimage routes that lead to the sacred sites of Kumano Sanzan and Koyasan, both of which are registered as World Heritage sites. This pilgrimage, known as the Kumano Kodo, attracts many worshippers and tourists. Wakayama's appeal cannot be described without mentioning its rich natural environment. The people of Wakayama have long lived alongside nature, and it is in this context that Wakayama Plum Wine was born.

Eighty percent of the prefecture is made up of mountains. Influenced by the Kuroshio Current that flows into the Kii Channel, the climate is mild with little change in temperature throughout the year. In addition, the southern part of the Kii Peninsula receives a large amount of precipitation during the rainy season which includes typhoons, and has more than 200 sunny days and enjoys long hours of sunlight over the course of the year, making the weather conditions suitable for growing plants. As a result, the cultivation of fruit trees has flourished in the region, with produce such as plums, mandarin oranges and persimmons grown here since ancient times. A local specialty that has gone on to corner 65% of the national market. The reason that the region's plums have become so popular in the world of

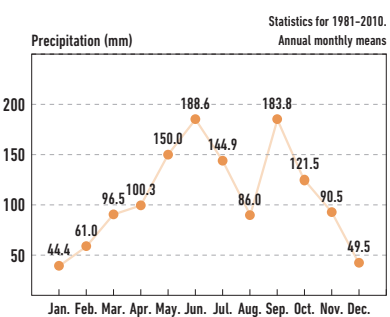
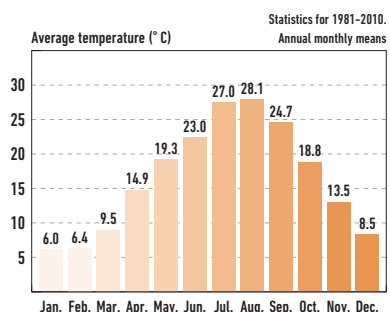
produce production has to do with geological formations. Most of the strata in Minabe are included in what is known as the Otonashigawa Group, and the plum-growing area, including the Nanbu Plum Grove, is situated on a black mudstone layer called the Uridani formation, which produces the famous Urikei Stone. Uridani fieldstone is mainly made up of calcium carbonate, and it is the neutral nature of the soil that contains this compound that helps in the cultivation of such high-quality plums.

**Originally born on a wilting piece of land ume plums have returned from the precipice**

Plum trees were popular as spring flowers until the Heian Period (794-1185) when they came to be prized as nutritious food in the form of dried plums. It is said that ume cultivation started in Minabe during the Edo period. Eighty percent of Wakayama prefecture is made up of mountains. In other words, there was little flat land and many places were not suited to rice cultivation. This led to the area's peasants suffering whenever the time came for them to pay tribute. It was then that the lord of the Tanabe clan planted plum trees, known for being sturdy and vigorous, on the barren land and mountain slopes of the region instead of rice. His efforts were successful and led to a reduction in the annual tribute. In the meantime, plum cultivation began to spread mainly in the area from Minabe to Tanabe due to how efficiently they

could be grown on infertile land. They were also favorable as they could be harvested in June before the typhoon season, and the area's plentiful rainfall allows them to grow plump.

However, the origin of umeshu plum wine itself is not clearly known, though a document with a recipe for the libation written during the Edo period has been discovered. In addition to fermented foods such as Kinzanji miso and Yuasa soy sauce, Wakayama has long been active in the production of alcoholic beverages. While the ume industry, which is primarily based in processing, was looking for other uses of the fruit, they hit upon the idea of producing umeshu as they could harvest during the off season for sake production. It seemed like a natural fit. After this, ume cultivation in Wakayama was further improved so as to be better equipped to handle processing of the plums.



# Plums are Wakayama's treasure

## The wisdom of life accompanies agriculture

**Nanko plums, a top-quality variety, really show their quality upon being processed.**

Nanko plums are probably the most famous plums all of in Wakayama. More than 80% of the plums grown in Minabe, a town based around the industry, are Nanko plums. We visited Arimoto Farm, one of the farms that grows Nanko plums.

"Nanko plums have a lot of flesh, large grains and thin skin. This is the best variety when it comes to making dried plums as well as for processing. Besides, Minabe's plum cultivation is characterized by the fact that we handle everything, from cultivation to processing, ourselves. We also make plum wine, and Nanko plums can be processed in a wide range of ways depending on their ripeness: from green plums to those that are fully ripe. I've been growing plums for about 55 years and there is no better variety. I think it's an enjoyable variety for the growers and processors, too. In Minabe, most of the ume farmers harvest their plums and dry them in the traditional way by rinsing them in water and soaking them in salt. They can also serve as ingredients for pickled plums when processed in this fashion. For this reason, Nanko plums are raised from the moment their seed is sewn to be

plums of excellent quality. Cultivation is only possible when you know how to process. And processing is only possible when you know how to cultivate. It's this kind of connection that is so important when it comes to Nanko ume. Arimoto Farm also started producing plum wine in 2013. "It's an exciting time to be creating new products. From planting ume plums to brewing liqueur and delivering it to consumers, everything about the process feels directly connected to what is so enjoyable about farming."

Mr. Arimoto says that the hardest and most enjoyable part of plum cultivation is the harvest. "It's the most tense part of the process. There's no time to rest, it rains a lot, but every day really feels like a major harvest. It's the culmination of a whole year's work, so there's really a lot to enjoy when that time of year comes around." The plum blossoms bloom with the arrival of early spring, and bees pollinate the flowers by shifting pollen, not by human hands. The plum harvest peaks between May and July.

### The "Ume System" in Minabe and Tanabe is recognized as a World Agricultural Heritage System

Many varieties of plum trees cannot self-pollinate, so pollinating trees are

planted nearby whereupon they are pollinated and fruited by Japanese honeybees. The Minabe and Tanabe areas, where the land was barren, were also famous for producing Kishu-binchotan, which serves as the raw material for firewood and charcoal. It is customary not to turn the entire mountain into a plum grove in order to preserve the "wood and charcoal forests," which produces timber. This allows charcoal burners to selectively cut down trees, which prevents landslides and leads to the water sources being replenished. Through the management and maintenance of charcoal makers, moisture and nutrients are distributed to the plum groves, which in turn nurtures the rich plum trees. These and other sustainable agricultural systems were recognized as a World Agricultural Heritage System in 2015. While producing high quality plums, the entire area's sustainable environment has been preserved by preventing soil collapse and flowage. In other words, it was recognized as a method for preserving and passing on ecosystems to future generations.

Minabe can be said to be at the core of Wakayama's ume industry. Of course, there are about 1,300 ume farmers in the region, but the strength of the region lies in the enthusiasm for agriculture that has been handed down over the years, as exemplified by the improvement of the Nanko ume strain. Minabe Town Office even has its own "Plum Department," and research facilities such as the Wakayama Prefecture Plum Research Institute and



the Plum Promotion Center are fully equipped centers for research. Farmers, processors, and the government all work together as one here in Minabe.

### Wakayama's plums are made into liqueur, spreading joy throughout the world

In the city of Iwade, Wakayama, there is a restaurant that only takes reservations for 10 patrons a day. The restaurant's name is "villa aida." The restaurant has its own farm, but no proper menu. The chef, Mr. Kobayashi, simply takes vegetables he picks that day from the farm and creates dishes from there. We asked Chef Kobayashi about plum wine pairings.

"Umeshu goes well with broth and egg. For example, this barrel-brewed plum wine has a deep, brandy-like flavor. I thought it would be good to

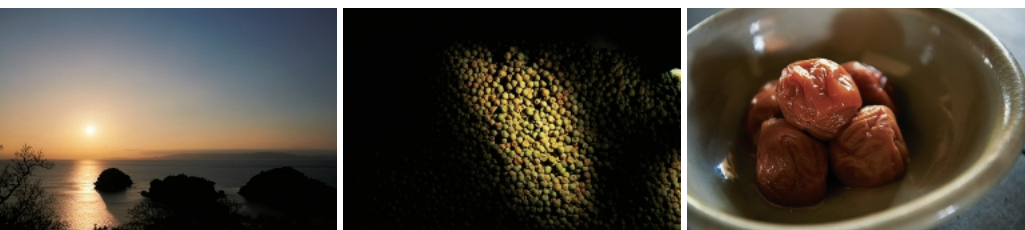
use a concentrated flavor to help add some layers and complexity to my dishes," he says. He served up a dish of helmeted guineafowl liver, rich with its multiple layers of both flavor and texture, which was spread with green tomato confiture and tamarind puree that lingered with a delicious aftertaste. "Umeshu is great for pairing, but I think it's also good to use umeshu itself in cooking. You can simmer it down to a sauce, or pickle it to make it more fragrant, or use it in desserts, or ice cream, or any number of things you can think of." Mr. Kobayashi told us that because the wine has the extract of plum locked deep within it, it can be used in a variety of ways.

We also talked to the chairman of Nakano BC, an established processor and liquor maker, about GI Wakayama Plum Wine. "The allure of umeshu

plum wine can be found in the fact that its taste changes completely depending on the ratios of plums, alcohol, and sugar when it is produced. It also changes depending on the type of liquor or the alcohol content used. That's what I find so interesting about umeshu. I am convinced that plum wine come to make a name for itself overseas in the future. Plums are Wakayama's treasure. The GI designation will help increase the value of the product as a local specialty. Like Dom Pérignon in the Champagne region of France, we hope that the GI certification will help plum wine develop into a globally recognizable term. Umeshu is also beloved by women here in Japan. I think that all of those points will help provide an impetus for it to start being recognized outside of Japan as well."



1. Mr. Yukio Nakano, chairman of Nakano BC, says, "Umeshu will make a name for itself on the world stage." 2. Mr. Yohei Arimoto of Arimoto Farm. The interview with Mr. Arimoto was conducted after pollination had been completed. 3. Chef Kanji Kobayashi at villa aida. After training in Italy, Mr. Kobayashi first went into business for himself at the age of 25. He was awarded the Silver Prize in 2013 by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Cooking Masters), a system Japan uses to honor chefs who maintain the link between food and agriculture. 4. Helmeted guineafowl liver, Brussels sprouts and Shadow Queen with sweet potato flakes and Amazon honey.







① Long-term matured umeshu Chokyu Nakano BC, 720 ml  
 ② Nakano Umeshu Nakano BC, 720 ml  
 ③ Kishu Plum Wine Beni Nanko Nakano BC, 720 ml



## All you need are plums, sake, and sugar. It's the simplicity of the beverage that is so interesting.

**Who knows what the plum wine will taste like this year? The joy one can only find in something born of the splendor of nature.**

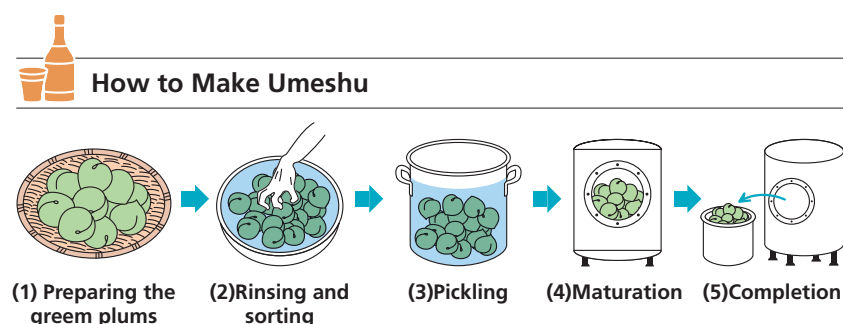
Umeshu uses both green plums as well as fully ripened plums in its production. As the name suggests, green plums are plums that are still green. As they are still attached to the trees, they must be harvested by hand. A fully ripe plum, on the other hand, is a green plum that has since ripened yellow. Netting is placed around the tree to protect the plums' soft skin as it ripens and falls. As you can imagine, the taste of the green plums is fresh and crisp. Fully ripe plums, however, are mellow and fruity. GI Wakayama Umeshu must also be made only from fresh green plums or fully ripened plums harvested within the prefecture itself. In

addition, breweries have established detailed regulations that require the use of at least 300 kilograms of ume plums per kiloliter of liquor as well as maintaining that the wine be stored in Wakayama. Only plum wine grown in Wakayama's natural environment can be certified as GI.

Nakano BC says that all of their wine sits for at least six months. General Manager Yamamoto, who is a toji (brewer), says, "Anyone can make plum wine. It's very approachable. It's supposed to be easy. But as you want

to get the flavor different each year, that's where things get more difficult. It's a crop, so it naturally has its own personality. I've been brewing liquor for 17 years now, and you just can't do it unless you really love it," says Mr. Yamamoto with a smile.

Umeshu is a drink that is easy to pair or mix. It goes with tea; it goes with food; and it's perfect out and about or in the comfort of one's home. Inside umeshu, you'll find all the love of brewers and farmers distilled down to perfection.



### Product Specification of Geographical Indication "和歌山梅酒 (Wakayama Umeshu)"

#### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

##### (a) Characteristics of liquor

###### (1) Sensory factor

"Umeshu" is a liquor made by steeping ume (plum) fruit in liquor to extract the essence of the fruit and adding saccharides, etc. to adjust the flavor. Wakayama Umeshu, a umeshu brand, has a rich, thick aroma of fresh unripe green ume or fully ripened ume picked within Wakayama Prefecture, which wraps the piquant aroma of alcohol in liquor and spreads in the mouth as a refreshing flavor. The full bodied essence of ume melted into alcohol harmonizes with the sweetness and taste of liquor, allowing a complex and strong flavor to be felt. The relatively long-lasting pleasing aftertaste thanks to the moderate sweet taste of saccharides and the sourness of ume tunes the sense of taste and smell and thus complements the flavor of the next food to eat, which is also perfect as an aperitif.

###### (2) Chemical factors

Wakayama Umeshu meets the following requirements in terms of alcoholic content, total acid level, and extracted component and also includes one with effervescence.

- (i) Alcoholic content of 10.0% to less than 35.0%
- (ii) Total acid level of at least 3.5 g/L
- (iii) Extracted component of at least 100 g/L

#### (b) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### (1) Natural factors

Wakayama Prefecture is located in the west side of Kii Peninsula, with mountains accounting for approximately 80% of the area. The prefecture faces the sea on its west side, from the Inland Sea of Japan (the Seto Naikai) to the Pacific Ocean, while the Kii Mountains extending from the north to the south on the east side of the prefecture have many areas where the sea is close at hand, forming strata rich in minerals, which is suitable for growing quality ume across the mountainous area.

Wakayama Prefecture also has a warm climate due to warm winds from the sea, along with a heavy annual rainfall, frequently landed typhoons during summer, as well as little flat terrain, which leaves many areas unsuitable for rice cultivation and therefore people have actively been engaged in fruit growing. In particular, ume grows efficiently even in poor land with many slopes, can be picked around June before the typhoon season, and requires heavy rainfall as an essential factor for the ume fruit to grow larger, which led the growing of ume to spread mainly in Tanabe City and Minabe Town as a right fruit tree for the prefecture.

##### (2) Human factors

Wakayama Prefecture is also a great place for producing fermented food, such as Kinzanji-miso and Yuasa soy-sauce, since old times and has many manufacturers of liquor including seishu. Following a rice crop, a sake ingredient, sake manufacturers are busy from winter to spring with low temperatures which is suited for brewing sake, but are not busy from spring to summer and thus needed to secure sources of income and improve productivity during this period.

In addition, although ume picked in Wakayama Prefecture was previously processed and eaten as umeboshi (pickled ume) as the main use, the demand for umeboshi decreased due to a shift in consumers' tastes, which made the development of a new use of ume necessary.

In such a circumstance, Wakayama Prefecture, the largest production center of ume fruit in Japan, came up with an idea of producing umeshu made from ume, which can be picked during the time sake manufacturers are not busy; the idea solved the issues of both ume fruit producers and sake manufacturers, resulting in active manufacture of umeshu in the prefecture while inventing ume growing methods assuming that it will be used as a umeshu ingredient and ume processed food, improving ume quality, and so on.

With the establishment of the "Minabe-Tanabe Ume System" (enhanced pollination of honey bees, improved training and pruning techniques, use of a harvesting net, etc.), which was certified as the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) in 2015, and other initiatives, the prefecture has also been developing and accumulating cultivation techniques for stably growing quality ume as a umeshu ingredient.

In addition, Wakayama Prefecture has been developing the manufacture of umeshu across the entire region, including Tanabe City and Minabe Town, which were designated as a special deregulation zones in 2008, and striving to improve the techniques including umeshu manufacturing and storage methods through technical guidance provided by official appraisers from Taxation Bureaus.

In this way, Wakayama Prefecture, which has stably producing ume, has been maintaining and forming the characteristics of "Wakayama Umeshu" through advancing umeshu-related research and initiatives as a united effort of umeshu manufacturers, ume farmers, and the prefecture.

#### II Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor

##### (a) Ingredients

- (1) Only fresh unripe green ume or fully ripened ume picked within Wakayama Prefecture must be used as the ume fruit steeped in liquor.  
 (Note 1) Fresh unripe green ume refers to ume fruit that has been thinned out from ume trees (not including one with fractures or cut or one that was squeezed or condensed) and has the fruit skin with tone and luster and with a color of blue-green to yellowish green (including one in purple and red depending on the breed).  
 (Note 2) Fully ripened ume refers to one with the softened flesh and yellow- to orange-colored fruit skin (including one in purple and red depending on the breed).
- (2) The only seishu, continuous distilled shochu, single distilled shochu, whisky, brandy, material alcohol, or sprits, specified in Article 3-7, 3-9, 3-10, 3-15, 3-16, 3-17, or 3-20 of the Liquor Tax Act respectively (including a mix of these liquor) must be used as the liquor in which ume fruit is steeped.
- (3) The only ingredients other than the liquor and ume fruit must be the ones listed below: Ume flesh, ume juice, saccharides, saccharated matter (excluding synthetic sweeteners), and carbonic acid

##### (b) Production Method

- (1) At least 300 kg of ume fruit must be used for each 1 kl of liquor in which to steep.
- (2) Ume fruit must be steeped into liquor within Wakayama Prefecture.
- (3) Ume fruit must be steeped into liquor for at least 90 days.
- (4) Ume fruit must not intentionally be crushed or squeezed in the liquor in which it is steeped.
- (5) Ume fruit taken out from the liquor in which it has been steeped must not be used for making umeshu again.
- (6) In the process of sake brewing, sake must be stored within Wakayama Prefecture.
- (7) Bottling shall be completed with containers planned to be delivered to consumers within Wakayama Prefecture.

#### III Matters relating to management for maintaining the characteristics of liquor

##### (a) Requirements for Use of Geographical Indication "和歌山梅酒 (Wakayama Umeshu)"

In order to use geographical indication (GI) "Wakayama Umeshu," the liquor that uses the GI is required to be confirmed by the following control body pursuant to guidelines for work implementation, prepared by the control body as to whether the relevant liquor satisfies "1. Matters related to characteristics of liquor attributable to the geographical origin of liquor" and "2. Matters relating the ingredients and production method of liquor" by the time the relevant liquor is shipped to places (excluding places subject to the provision of Article 28, paragraph 1, of the Liquor Tax Act) from its brewing place (including places deemed as brewing places with the permit to produce liquor by the provisions of Article 28, paragraph 6 or Article 28-3, paragraph 4 of the Liquor Tax Act [Act No. 6 of 1953])

**Name of Control Body:**  
**GI Wakayama Umeshu Management Committee**

**Name of representative: Yukio Nakano**  
**Address: 16 Saikayamachi, Wakayama**  
**Contact: Telephone: 073-431-8689**  
**Mail address: gi.wakayama.umeshu@gmail.com**

##### (c) Requirements for Use of Term, "長期熟成 (Matured or Long Aged)"

In order to use the term "matured or long aged" together with the use of geographical indication "Wakayama Umeshu," the umeshu must be the one that has been aged for at least seven years pursuant to guidelines for work implementation and must be certified by the control body in advance.

Note that when blending multiple umeshu, the least aged one must meet the requirements.

#### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Liqueur(Article 3, Item 21 of the Liquor Tax Act)





Gunma Prefecture  
Japanese Sake

# Tone Numata

## A town producing fresh water as if specifically for brewing sake

Tone Numata is the sixth sake to be certified with GI. The brewers, who fell in love with the clean, rich water produced by Japan's 100 most famous mountains and decided to move to the area, have produced sake that makes full use of the blessings of the lush green countryside. The sake made here using rice with accumulated flavor and fresh water embodies the charm of this land.

### A land of mountains, scenic beauty and clear water, woven by fresh river terraces

In spring, when the snows that can pile up to heights exceeding that of man melt, the sound of water brimming with life can be heard all over the region. Tone Numata, also known as "the place where the water originates", is located in the headwaters basin of the Tone River between the Akagi and Asama mountain lines, located at the southern end of the Mikuni

mountain belt which centers on Mt. Hotaka and Mt. Tanigawa. When it comes to Tone Numata, the area is famous for its river terraces, which are said to be the most beautiful in Japan. The rainwater that pours down on the mountains slowly flows through the earth, in what one could call a kind of natural filtration system, and changes into soft water with a slightly sweet aftertaste. Such unique topography brings about abundant water and fertility, which is then tied into the birth of the

region's sake.

The river terrace, which was created along the path of the river, has been utilized for the development of sericulture, which uses the poor water retention of the farmland area, and complex agriculture of the paddy fields. The Harugoma Festival, designated as a cultural property by Gunma Prefecture, is a festival in which young men dressed as women perform songs and dances in groups of four and go from house to house to pray for a good harvest from the silkworms. In addition to this, Kashozan Ryugein Mirokugokuzen Temple--where a large Tengu mask, said to be the largest in Japan has been dedicated--is said to be home to the guardian deity of sericulture. Fruits such as apples and blueberries are cultivated in the current farmland area, and has developed into a region aimed at tourism. Combined farming, which makes the most of the rich soil and water, has been handed down from generation to generation, albeit in different forms.

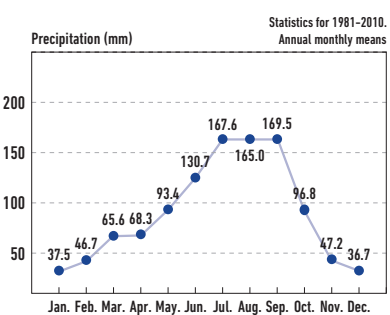
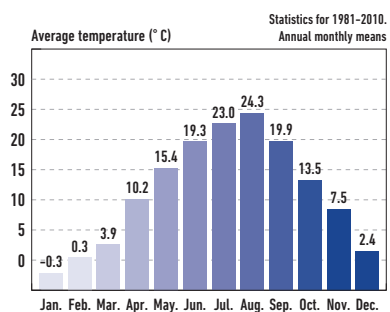
Rice is grown in terraced paddy fields at an altitude of 400 to 600 meters, and in recent years the farms have been focusing on growing locally produced brand-name rice strains such as Yukihotaka. In the past, the altitude made people hesitant to say it was ideal for growing rice, but ironically, the recent global warming has led to a climate suitable for rice cultivation. It has since become a rare locale where all the conditions necessary for growing good quality rice are now met.

On the other hand, the cold and snowy winters, another aspect of Tone Numata, paint the region in a completely different light from its fertile season. The freezing cold weather is harsh for the brewers, but

### Sake cannot be mentioned without speaking of the four seasons of Tone Numata

the clean air and temperature are perfect for the yeast. Spring snowmelt fills the terraced rice paddies with water, and ears of rice bathed in summer sunshine are ready

for harvest once autumn rolls around. When winter approaches, they are transformed into sake by human hands. If even one element of the region's environment were lacking, Tone Numata wouldn't be able to produce the sake it does. Looking at it from a different perspective, it can be said that sake brewing has naturally developed in this area precisely because it seems to exist for that very purpose.



# Both beginning and ending with water: such is the story of Tone Numata Japanese sake

## The origin of the Tone Numata's character lies in its coexistence with nature

Sake brewing in Tone Numata is said to have started in the Edo period to make use of the region's surplus annual tribute rice. Many of the brewers at the time came from Niigata and Nagano Prefectures to work, and the breweries that make up GI Tone Numata, Nagai Honke, Nagai Sake Inc., Otone Shuzo, and Tsuchida Sake Brewery, of course fall into this category.

"After the first generation of brewers fell in love with the water here and moved to the area, they gradually bought up the forest to the north of the breweries. They thought that if they could simply protect the forest, that would secure their wellbeing," said workers at Nagai

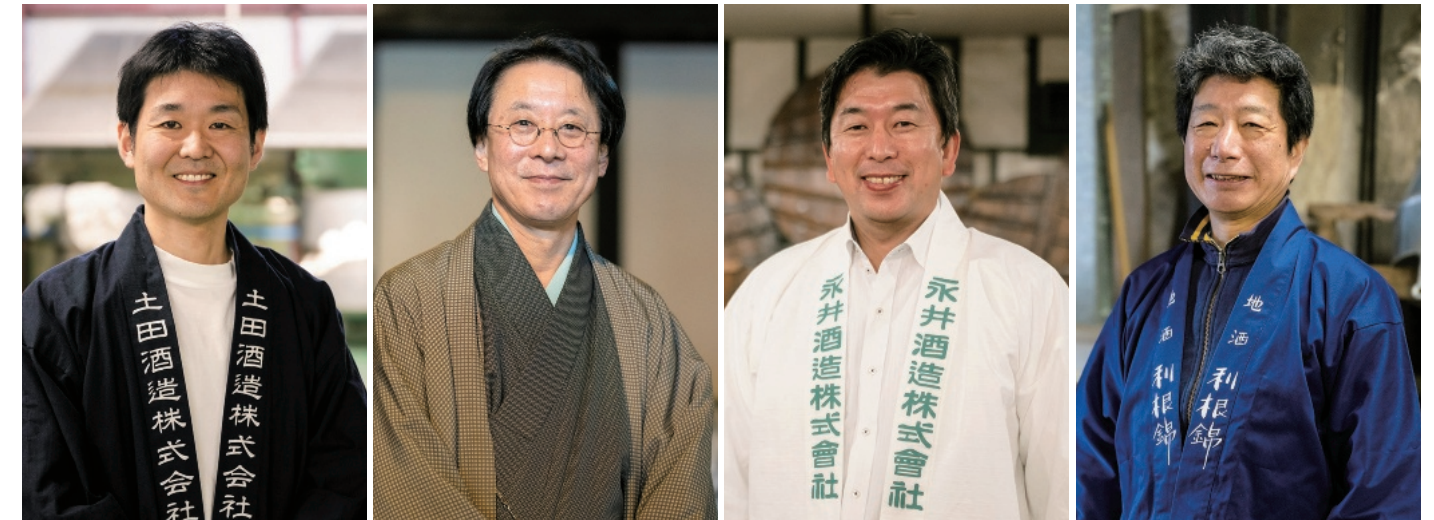
Shuzo, showing us the company's forest where the water source is located. Nagai Honke workers also took us to the source of the water, "Kowashimizu no Taki" (the Strong and Pure Waterfall), which is about a 20-minute drive from the brewery. Here it was easy to see just how rich and pure the water is that serves as the key to brewing the sake of Tone Numata.

## Sake brewers in Tone Numata, bonded by respect and love

There is a record relating the formation of a "sake brewer's group" in the area, suggesting that the breweries have been in close contact with each other since the Edo period. In fact, it seems that the connection between them was very straightforward. It was almost as if

they were simply a group of friends brewing sake at home in their spare time, and that stance of theirs remains today. When the new sake is ready, everyone goes around to each of the breweries. "Even if we know what we're doing, we can never imitate each other, and we can never make the same thing." One of the best points in the brewers of GI Tone Numata's favor is their close cooperation born out of mutual respect for one another. In addition to exchanging information, it is surprising to learn that each brewery knows exactly how to brew each other's sake and exactly where to find tools in each other's workshops.

Based on the common understanding that all of the brewers take water from the land, Tsuchida Shuzo brews sake without cutting



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down on edible rice and focuses on naturally grown rice that does not place an environmental burden on the rice paddies. Another characteristic of Tone Numata is that everyone works together to preserve the charm of the land by saving water and using returnable bottles.

## Aiming to build a sake brewing village that prospers as a tourist attraction

Since 2013, Tone Numata has been holding events allowing visitors to experience their sake and local culture. They call it, "Tone Numata Sake Brewery Tourism." Two days after we heard about the idea of sake brewery tourism at a meeting of the Sake Promotion Council, four breweries gathered together and

held a meeting of our own," say workers at Otone Shuzo. Even more surprising is that after a mere 3 days of discussion, the number had grown to seven breweries, including some wineries also, and they had solidified their plans. The reason they were all able to find an equal footing is because they all love their home and love brewing sake.

Mr. Nagai of Nagai Shuzo started sake brewery tourism with the idea of creating an even more prosperous future for the area, but later when he visited Napa Valley, the famous wine production area in California where many gather to engage in wine tourism, he was impressed at the high esteem in which the wineries there were held thanks to their dedication to their local

communities. "Based on the idea that sake breweries are responsible for connecting people, places and culture through their wine, I thought it would be interesting if Tone Numata could develop in the same way as Napa. Gunma itself doesn't have a terribly large reputation for sake, but I think that by using local rice, water and yeast and by brewing our sake in the classic style, the deliciousness of our rice should shine through when people come to taste it for themselves. I hope people come to notice the quality of Tone Numata's environment, such as its clean air and water, after they've tasted our wares," says Mr. Nagai as he looks forward to working with the rest of his local brewers to provide the region a bright future.



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1. Mr. Yuji Tsuchida, president of Tsuchida Shuzo (top left), Mr. Michinori Abe, president of Otone Shuzo (top right), Mr. Noriyoshi Nagai, president of Nagai Shuzo (bottom left), and Mr. Hiroyuki Nagai, president of Nagai Honke (bottom right). 2. With a faintly bitter aftertaste, the sake pairs perfectly with locally grown spring vegetables that share the same flavor. 3. The taste is as if you were eating rice, with a fresh, crisp, savory finish.

① **Tonenishiki Junmai Sake**

Nagai Honke, 720 ml

② **Shin Tschida**

Tsuchida Sake Brewery, 720 ml

③ **Sadaijin Junmai Sake**

Otone Shuzo, 720 ml

④ **Mizubasho Junmaiginjo**

Nagai Sake, 720 ml



\*Each pictured here are the main brands for each brewery. GI label products are available from autumn 2021

# Producing a complex chemical reaction: opulent country meets the history of breweries

## The passion and difficulty of confronting that which cannot be seen

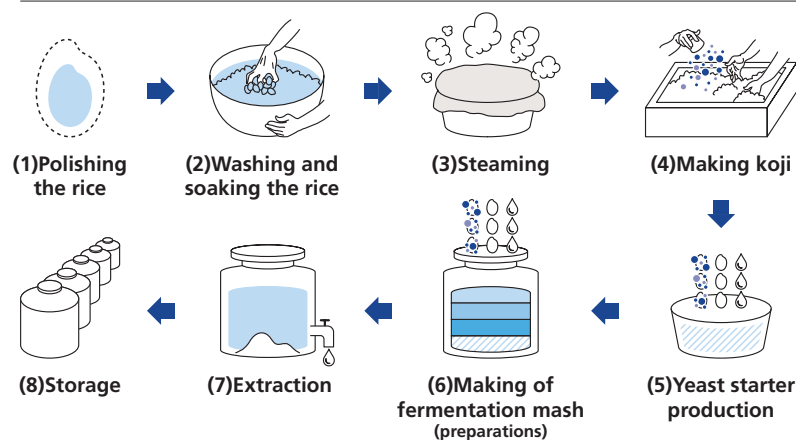
Sake brewing is done during the harsh winter season. At Nagai Honke and Otone Shuzo breweries, the work is carried out in picturesque storehouses that have existed since the Meiji era. The storehouses themselves are even colder than the outside. On the other hand, Nagai Sake and Tsuchida Sake Brewery are characterized by their modernized breweries, though the personal touch is essential in several key areas. Although the architecture of the breweries may be different, the fact is that all the breweries follow the same tried and true methods of old to brew their wares.

GI Tone Numata uses locally produced Yukihotaka, Gohyakumangoku, and Koshihikari rice strains, two of which are edible strains and produce a rich taste similar to what one would expect dining on a

bowl of the stuff. And when it comes to brewing sake, we must not forget about the yeast, which greatly affects the taste. Gunma Kaze Yeast produces a luxurious, fruity sake, while the Gunma G2 Yeast produces a more mild sake. In addition to these two types of cultured yeast, brewers add their own habits and idiosyncratic methods formed over many years to the mix, causing a complex chemical reaction that results in sake with flavors that differ brewery to brewery

despite using the same ingredients. At Tsuchida Sake Brewery, brewers challenge themselves to work with only a single type of yeast for their whole operation, the most traditional style of brewing, and the GI label to be released in the fall of 2021 will read, "Sake made from local ingredients by local people." We're certain that the delicious tastes of the four seasons of Tone Numata one can find in their wide range of different sakes will become world famous soon enough.

## How to Make Japanese Sake



## Product Specification of Geographical Indication "利根沼田 (Tone Numata)"

### I Matters relating the characteristics of liquor which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin

#### (1) Characteristics of liquor

Seishu of Tone Numata has the quality of a sake that gives a moderate level of umami (the fifth taste alongside sweet, sour, bitter and salty) in generally clear flavor. The sake tastes a bit bitter, which brings out refreshing sourness and body with umami, then mellow umami and sweetness, unique to the rice variety harvested in this region, spread on the palate. The flavor can be said to be fresh with a light alcoholic taste that neutralizes the alcoholic feeling despite its alcohol content. The aftertaste is slightly bitter, which highlights its flavor, in addition to pure umami and sweetness. This sake goes well with food ingredients that bring out bitterness, umami and sourness. The sake not only smells of fruits, such as grapefruit, white peach, yellow apple, banana, melon and litchi, which is generated by yeast, but also tastes like almond jelly, in addition to the fragrance of freshly pounded rice cakes that comes from rice. Furthermore, combining with the delicious aftertaste, the fragrance that evokes green grass and fresh verdure can be felt. The color is generally like crystal and is clear with a touch of light gold. The bitter aftertaste evokes spring vegetables. This sake goes well with the bitterness of mountain vegetables, such as butterbur shoots and aralia sprouts, and green crop, which are harvested in this region. Moreover, the amino acid from seishu of Tone Numata brings out the flavor of meals in combination with the umami derived from the animal protein in meals that use livestock products (pork, beef and poultry) that are specialties of this region.

#### (2) Essential attribution of its geographical origin to characteristics of liquor

##### i. Natural factors

###### (i) Water quality

The Tone Numata region, which is within the scope of its geographical origin, is in the north of Gunma Prefecture and is located in a region wedged between lines formed by the Mikuni Mountains centering on Mt. Hotaka and Mt. Tanigawadake in the north, and volcanos of Mt. Nikko-Shirane, Mt. Akagisan, Mt. Asama, etc. in the south. The region is characterized by a river terrace that was formed by sand deposited in Lake Konumata, which existed about 150,000 years ago. Rainwater that falls in mountains, such as Mt. Hotaka and Mt. Tanigawadake, runs through sandy and muddy grave layers accumulated at the bottom of "Lake Konumata," ending up bringing rich river water and underground water to this region. Water that goes through these sandy and muddy grave layers turns to soft water, becoming a factor that gives seishu of Tone Numata clear flavor and color.

###### (ii) Climate

This region belongs to the climate zone of the Sea of Japan (the Hokuriku and Sanin type). In winter, it often snows and rains with a monsoon and is very cold in this region. This region has a larger amount of precipitation and also enjoys longer hours of sunlight during rice-growing months than other regions in Gunma Prefecture. Also, the temperature difference is wide in a day. Whereas the daytime highest temperature sometimes exceeds 30°C in August, the daytime lowest temperature goes below 20°C in the same month. Due to these factors, it is said that starch that is generated by daytime photosynthesis is stored effectively in the night-time, whereby this region can harvest rich and well ripened rice that is suitable to sake making. Additionally, temperatures in rice paddies can be kept constant by using rich river water and ground water, which is said to be effective for preventing damage from high temperatures on scorching days. Thus, it can be expected that rice of high quality can be reaped stably. Furthermore, harsh coldness in winter is also highly appropriate as an environment for sake brewing.

##### ii. Human factors

It is said that seishu making was commenced on a full scale in the Tone Numata region in the Edo era. The record shows that there were 26 sake makers in 1809, suggesting that regional brewers made close interactions around this time, such as forming "brewer groups" to make arrangements to comply with regulations on brewing, sales and other basic matters, which have been handed down to today. In the old days, sake was made under the leadership of groups of chief brewers, named Echigo Toji. Their brewing technique remained within a group and was rarely shared with other ones. Nowadays, however, all breweries have shifted to a system in which there are owners of breweries doubling as chief brewers, and employed chief brewers. Under this system, regular exchange of information, etc. and research have been made among chief brewers in the region as part of close interactions among breweries, which is a tradition since the establishment of brewer groups. It can be said that the characteristics of seishu in Tone Numata have been made more distinctive by this activity. Brewers there have made efforts to maintain and improve the quality of sake, unique to this region, especially through development of yeast that originates in this region, research and accumulation of expertise in rice making and sake brewing, suitable to the yeast. Additionally, all breweries in this region are active in making efforts to preserve the environment in the belief that preservation of natural environment in this region is crucial to maintaining the quality of sake. Moreover, breweries are also engaged in revitalizing the region by leveraging sake making as its pivot, which has materialized as activities of the "Liaison Council for Tone Numata Sakagura Tourism," which wineries and beer breweries too belong to.

### II Matters relating to ingredients and production method of liquor

#### (1) Ingredients

- i Rice and rice koji for use must be chosen from the following trademarks and rice varieties harvested within the scope of its geographical origin.
  - Yuki Hotaka (When Yuki Hotaka Co., Ltd. attaches the trademark "Yuki Hotaka," rice for use must be one that fulfills the standards, etc., set forth by the company and that is labeled with the trademark "Yuki Hotaka.")
  - Gohyakumangoku
  - Koshihikari
- ii Only water for use must be collected within the scope of its geographical origin and one that has not gone through physical or chemical processes other than sediment and filtration.
- iii Only yeast for fermentation must be the following.
  - Gunma KAZE yeast
  - Gunma G2 yeast
  - Yeast that was collected and cultured within the scope of its geographical origin (yeast from a brewery)
- iv Regarding the ingredients of "seishu" provided in Article 3, item 7-b of the Liquor Tax Act, no ingredients other than "seishu" must be used.
- v In the case of using seishu instead of water, only seishu produced from ingredients in i, ii, and iii above must be used.

#### (2) Production method

- (i) Sake must be one that was produced by the production methods of seishu stipulated by Article 3, item 7-a and b of the Liquor Tax Act and within the scope of its geographical origin.
- (ii) When sake is store in the process of sake brewing, it must be stored within the scope of its geographical origin.
- (iii) Bottling must be completed with containers planned to be delivered to consumers within the scope of its geographical origin.

### III Matters relating to management for maintaining the characteristics of liquor

#### (1) Roles and Location of "Control Body"

In order to use geographical indication (GI) "Tone Numata," the liquor that uses the GI is required to be confirmed by the following control body pursuant to guidelines for work implementation, prepared by the control body as to whether the relevant liquor satisfies "1. Matters related to characteristics of liquor attributable to the geographical origin of liquor" and "2. Matters relating to the ingredients and production method of liquor" by the time the relevant liquor is shipped to places (excluding places subject to the provision of Article 28, paragraph 1, of the Liquor Tax Act) from its brewing place (including places deemed as brewing places with the permit to produce liquor by the provisions of Article 28, paragraph 6 or Article 28-3, paragraph 4 of the Liquor Tax Act [Act No. 6 of 1953])

**Name of Control Body:**  
**GI Tone Numata Meeting**

**Address:** 1306-2, Takahira, Shirasawa-cho, Numata-shi, Gunma Prefecture  
**Contact:** Telephone number: 0278-53-2334 (direct to Otone Shuzo)  
**Fax:** 0278-53-2335

#### (2) Management of "Yeast used for fermentation"

"Yeast used for fermentation," stipulated as an ingredient of GI Tone Numata, shall be managed by the control body in accordance with the guidelines for work implementation to prevent its characteristics from altering.

#### (3) Indication of "Brewing Year"

In the case of displaying similar indications, such as "Brewing Year (BY)" and "Vintage," together with the use of GI "Tone Numata," they shall be indicated in accordance with the guidelines for work implementation.

### IV Matters relating liquor classes

Seishu/sake (Article 3, Item 7 of the Liquor Tax Act)



Hokkaido



Yamagata



Tone Numata



Yamanashi

GI Yamanashi

Hakusan



Mie



Wakayama



Harima



Nada Gogo



Iki



Kuma



Satsuma



Ryukyu



For further information regarding the lists of the Geographical Indications (GI) system for alcohol, please visit our website, [www.nta.go.jp](http://www.nta.go.jp), run by National Tax Agency Japan  
Information for Taxpayers > Information on Liquor Administration > Geographical Indication (GI)