JAPANESE SPIRITS & SAKE BAR

May I offer you a glass?

A taste of Japan, one glass at a time.

2102 AZABU-TOKYO

A drink brings people together, speaks of the land and its climate, and sometimes awakens a distant memory.

Through carefully crafted whisky, gin, shochu, rum, sake and liqueurs from across Japan, we introduce the lesser-known traditions of Japanese distilling and brewing.

We choose bottles that honour craftsmanship and express the gifts of their birthplace, rather than the demands of mass production.

Beyond each glass are mountains and water, rice and barley, and the stories of the people who nurture them.

Take a sip, and savour the landscapes of Japan.

MENU / 2026.11.16

> Prices shown are current as of November 16, 2026. Prices may change without notice due to procurement costs, exchange rates or global circumstances. Thank you for your understanding.

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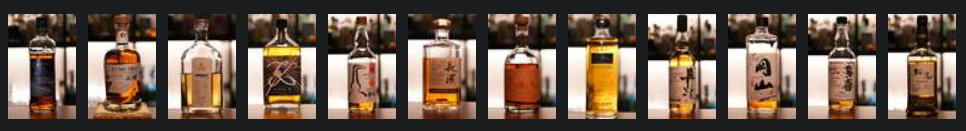
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Chubu, Kinki, Chugoku & Shikoku

Area map ›

39 producers · 18 whiskies





Mt. Fuji from Lake Kawaguchi, Yamanashi Photo: Alpsdake / CC BY-SA 4.0



Tottori Sand Dunes, Tottori Photo: Zairon / CC BY 4.0

Kyushu & Okinawa

Area map ›

42 producers · 29 whiskies





Takachiho Gorge, Miyazaki Photo: Raita Futo / CC BY 2.0



The sea of the Kerama Islands, Okinawa Photo: SteFou! / CC BY 2.0

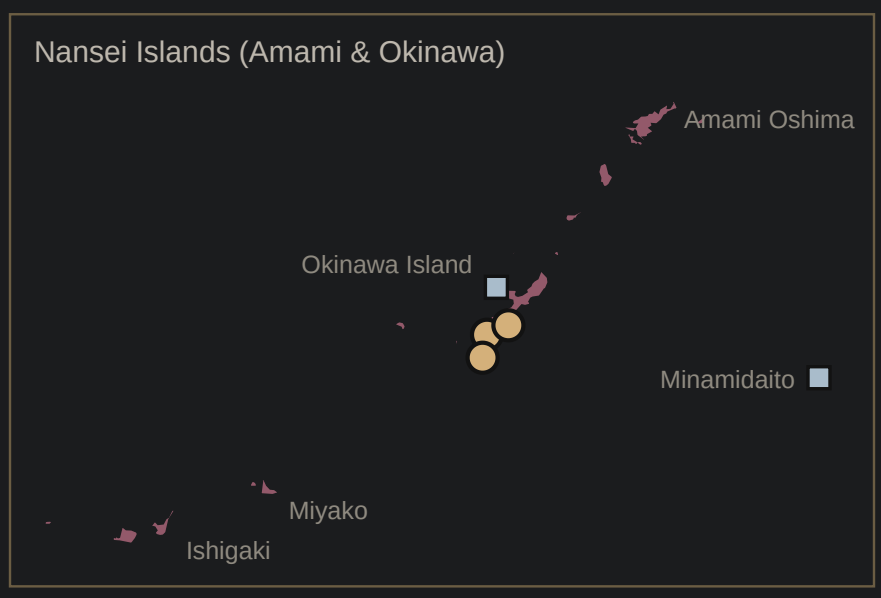
JAPAN MAP

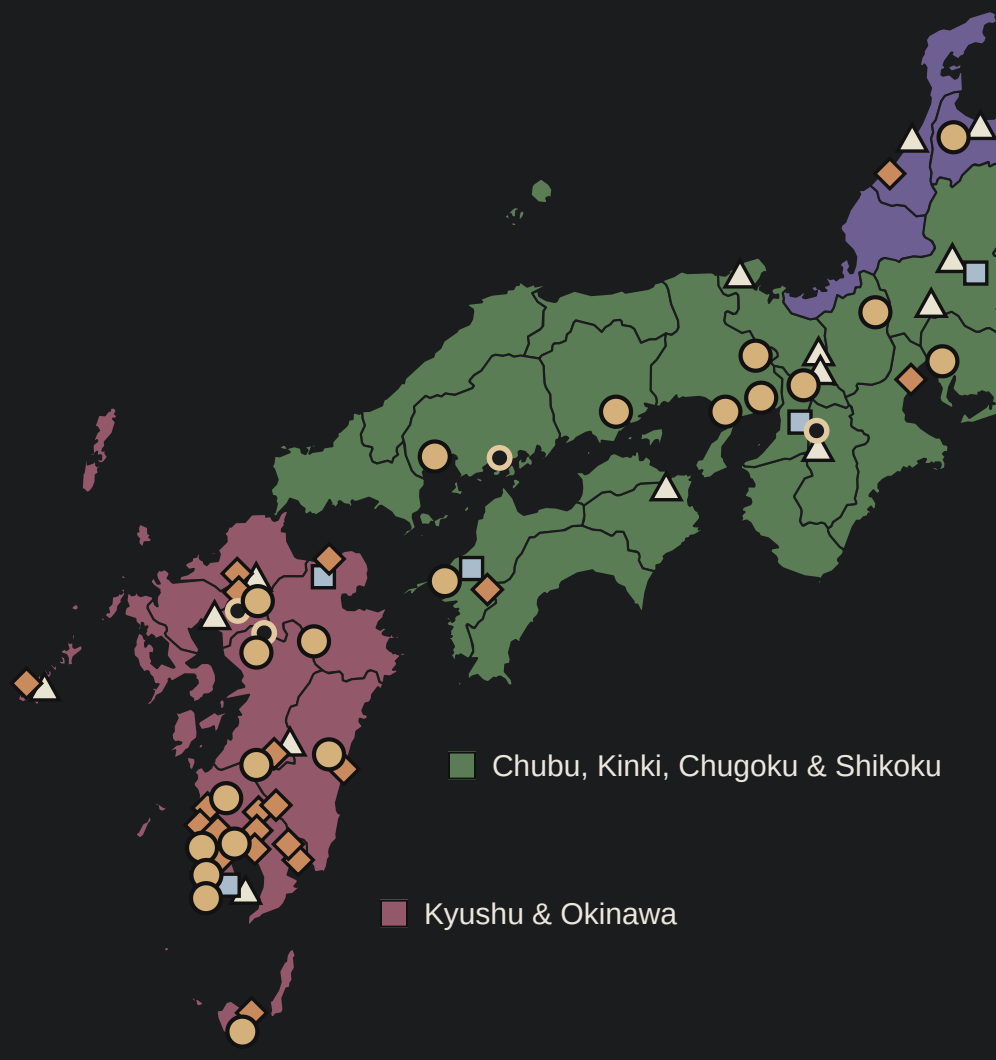
Where our drinks come from

The 131 distilleries and breweries behind our Japanese drinks, in the four areas of the whisky list. Tap a marker or a bottle for its page, or an area or a photo for the area map.

LEGEND

- Whisky 47
- Shochu 22
- Gin 32
- Rum, vodka, brandy, absinthe 10
- Sake, liqueur, beer, wine 20

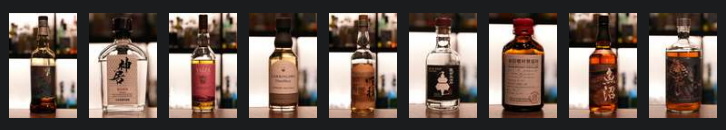




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Hokkaido, Tohoku & Niigata

27 producers · 21 whiskies



Area map ›



Shirogane Blue Pond, Biei, Hokkaido Photo: MaedaAkihiko / CC BY-SA 4.0



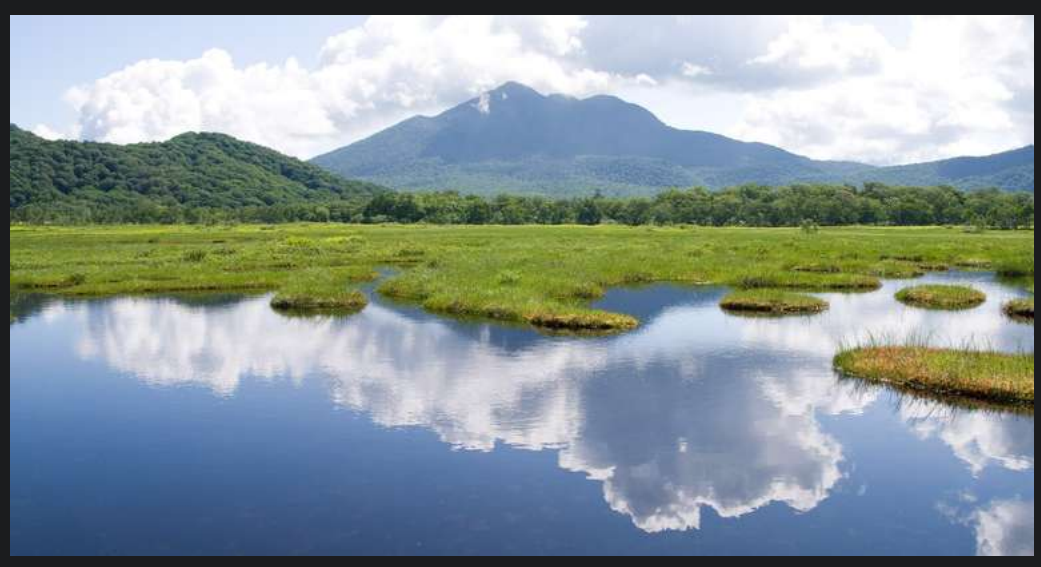
Oirase Stream, Towada, Aomori Photo: MaedaAkihiko / CC BY-SA 4.0



Hokuriku & Kanto

23 producers · 27 whiskies

Area map ›



Ozegahara marsh, Gunma Photo: Σ64 / CC BY 3.0



Mt. Tate and Mikurigaike Pond, Toyama Photo: Saigen Jiro / CC0

Map: Natural Earth (public domain)

TOKYO & KYOTO

Memories behind the cityscapes



GINZA / SEPT 1945 · Kōji Morooka



GINZA TODAY · Zetton / CADRAN

1945: from Mitsukoshi toward Shimbashi. Modern photo published Dec 2023; photo date unknown. Different viewpoints.

01 Rebuilding after the earthquake

On 1 September 1923, the Great Kantō Earthquake and the fires that followed devastated large parts of Tokyo. The city was rebuilt, but suffered widespread destruction again during World War II.

02 Tokyo: air raids and recovery

Tokyo Metropolis experienced more than 100 air raids, a total that includes the Tama area and outlying islands. In May 1945, much of the former Azabu ward was burned. Tokyo Tower was completed on 23 December 1958, becoming a symbol of postwar recovery. Today's cityscape reflects the work of rebuilding and the decades of urban development that followed.

03 Kyoto's wartime memories

Kyoto also experienced at least five air raids. Areas affected in 1945 included Umamachi in Higashiyama on 16 January, Uzumasa in Ukyō, believed to have been attacked on 16 April, and Nishijin in Kamigyō on 26 June. In Nishijin, 43 people were killed and around 300 homes were damaged. Behind Kyoto's surviving historic streets are also memories of lives and homes lost to war.

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Photo 1945 · Photo today · Cabinet Office · Air Raids Center
Minato City · Tokyo Tower · Kyoto history · Kyoto newsletter

AUTHENTIC BAR

Japan’s classic bar tradition — one glass at a time.



THE COUNTER AT 2102

In Japan, an ‘authentic bar’ generally refers to a classic bar devoted to carefully prepared drinks, skilled bartending and attentive hospitality. The term overlaps with Japan’s ‘shot bars’, where drinks are ordered one glass at a time.

An imported tradition, refined in Japan

Skills developed in hotels and on international passenger ships reached neighbourhood bars, including prewar Ginza. The Nippon Bartenders’ Association was founded in 1929. After the war, shortages demanded ingenuity: Hotel New Grand recalls a Martini made with sherry when dry vermouth was unavailable. Making the best of the ingredients at hand became part of the story.

Many ways to enjoy a drink

In the 1950s, Torys bars helped make whisky more accessible. In later decades, snack bars, karaoke and bottle keeping—storing a customer’s bottle at the bar for future visits—became familiar parts of nightlife. Cocktail, shochu and wine trends broadened tastes. Today, rum, tequila, wine and craft beer specialists coexist with classic bars.

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ICE & GLASSWARE

Craft, with room for you

Preparing ice, selecting and polishing glassware and attending to temperature; shaking or stirring to suit the ingredients and shape aroma and texture. The work also means sensing whether a guest wants conversation or a quiet moment. This combination of craftsmanship and personal attention is central to the classic bar’s appeal.

From 2102 to the next generation

Our drinks rest on the work of generations of bartenders before us. We refine that craft and explore Japanese ingredients to carry it forward. No specialist knowledge is needed. Tell us what you enjoy—or how you feel tonight.

Photos
Hotel
Bar guide
History
Association
Craft
Bar culture

The Story of 2102

It began in this building

An address, and a family history

2102 takes its name from our address: 2-10-2 Higashi-Azabu. It also pays tribute to the original bar where our founder, Sekiguchi, trained, which was named after its street number.

The building dates to 10 January 1973, when his grandfather, Niro Sekiguchi, moved his judicial scrivener's office here from Mita. His grandfather and great-grandfather ran the practice in Minato for around a century across two generations. Today, that family setting welcomes people over a glass.

2013: a small bar with something to share

Mixology Bar Source 2102 opened on the ground floor (1F) in March 2013. 'Source' expressed the idea of an origin and a place from which ideas spread. Rooted in Japanese bar craft and hospitality, we wanted this small space to share new possibilities in food and cocktails.

Fruit and coffee aromas helped shape the drinks: Irish coffee, hot mojitos, seasonal fruit cocktails and Japanese wines. The bar was non-smoking from the beginning so guests could appreciate those delicate aromas. We also kept the old judicial scrivener's sign at the entrance, in gratitude to Sekiguchi's grandfather.

Where the kitchen met the cocktail glass

Wasanbon sugar, miso, soy sauce, umeboshi and bonito flakes were part of the old bar's world, alongside wagyu and raw oysters. Respecting the people behind good ingredients, exploring their character and finding thoughtful combinations became habits that still guide 2102.

Sekiguchi brought experience in restaurants and concept development while running the bar alongside his photography work. From 2018, his days centred on photography and his evenings on the bar counter. After around eleven years on the ground floor, that chapter closed at the end of September 2024.

2013.03
Source 2102 opens on 1F

2024.09
The first chapter closes

2026.03.05
2102 begins again on 2F

Website Former bar: LINE Former bar Sister bar

CONTENTS

The Story of 2102

A sense of Japan, one glass at a time

2026: Japanese drinks take centre stage

During our years downstairs, Japan’s whisky, gin and craft spirits scene grew richer in producers, ingredients and ideas. We wanted to create a classic bar with Japanese drinks and ingredients at its heart. On 5 March 2026, that ambition became today’s 2102, on the second floor (2F) of the same building.

Hokkaido’s land, water beneath Mount Fuji, the Seto Inland Sea climate and Kyushu’s soils all offer different characters. Yuzu, sansho, hinoki, tea, sweet potato and brown sugar connect a drink to its place. Through whisky, gin, shochu, sake and Japanese liqueurs, we share the landscapes and makers behind the flavour.

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Every supporting ingredient matters

A drink is more than what comes from the bottle. Our choices include sparkling natural spring water, Hokkaido tonic water, Tokushima limes and fruit liqueurs from across Japan. We choose Japanese ingredients for our refrigerators and freezers, too, and spent two years developing our own carbonation machine.

Just as soy sauce can change fine fish, or seasoning transform meat, a cocktail depends on its combinations. The tonic’s sweetness, citrus aroma and texture of the bubbles all help shape the glass. We give these supporting ingredients the same care, looking for combinations that let their qualities come through.

From this counter to your next discovery

We hope to share ways to enjoy these drinks, as well as unfamiliar bottles. You do not need specialist knowledge: tell us what you enjoy and how you feel tonight. As we refine the craft inherited from those before us, we offer new encounters with Japanese makers, one glass at a time.

Visiting 2102

> Hours: 20:00-MIDNIGHT. The bar is entirely non-smoking. Our sister bar, Bar source241, opened in Sendai in May 2020.



OWNER BARTENDER

Hirohisa Sekiguchi

Born in Tama, Tokyo / December 17, 1974
Blood type A / Year of the Tiger / Mars (+), Japanese fortune-telling type

Google Review
Please share your experience at our bar.

From age 21 to 25, I trained at a Ginza bar renowned for its exacting standards. I then worked across a range of food and drink businesses, including the kitchen.

After serving as head bartender at a shochu bar in Azabu-Juban and helping launch Kumamoto-style ramen and horse-meat restaurants in Sendai, I returned to Tokyo. For 9 years, I worked at an izakaya group's head office on new concepts, recruitment, training, public relations and promotions. Alongside this, I began photographing food and restaurant interiors in 2001.

In March 2013, I opened Mixology Bar Source2102 on the first floor, initially alongside my day job. In November 2016, I became independent to focus on commercial photography, video production and running the bar.

The concept of Source was to be a point of origin for sharing Japan's bar traditions and food culture. Mixology Bar Source2102 closed at the end of September 2024. On March 5, 2026, I opened Japanese Spirits & SAKE Bar 2102 AZABU-TOKYO upstairs.

The bar focuses on Japanese whisky, craft gin and shochu from across Japan, and Japanese liqueurs.

Seeing the excitement around Japanese whisky, gin and craft drinks in 2021 and 2022, I felt that the time had finally come to create a classic bar using Japanese products alone. That conviction shaped this bar.

By day, I travel on photography assignments, mainly around Kanto and throughout Japan.

THE UNIFORM

Our Uniform: Kojima Denim.

A shared artisan spirit in Japanese drinks and clothing.



Sekiguchi’s uniform: a Kojima denim jacket and knitted tie.



Momotaro Jeans leather patch

Before Toyota made cars, it made looms. Inventor Sakichi Toyoda developed and patented an automatic loom that stopped when a thread broke. The money from transferring that patent to a British company became the seed capital for his eldest son Kiichiro’s carmaking venture.

Toyoda’s old shuttle looms still run in factories in Kojima and Ibara, Okayama: GL-9 looms built in 1980 and the older G3, developed in 1959. A G3 weaves only about 40 yards (37 metres) a day, far slower than modern looms. That slowness gives the cloth its irregular texture and self-finished edges, or selvedge. Today the world seeks out that character. Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Gucci and Prada source denim from Okayama, and growing numbers of overseas travellers make a special trip to Kojima Jeans Street.

We wear denim for a reason: to preserve fine craftsmanship for future generations, valuing handwork and character over mass production. The same artisan spirit behind Japan’s whisky, sake, craft gin and liqueurs lives on in its denim and clothing. In Japan, you can choose fabrics with the feel of vintage Levi’s by their weight in ounces (thickness). They also make wonderful souvenirs for guests from abroad. We invite you to discover denim made in Japan.

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DENIM IN NUMBERS

1924	Type G automatic loom. Sakichi Toyoda. Stops itself when a thread breaks.
1937	Toyota Motor Co. founded. Loom patent fees finance carmaking.
1965	Japanese jeans debut. Kojima, Kurashiki: Okayama’s “jeans capital”.
40 yd/day	What a G3 weaves in a day (about 37 m), far slower than modern looms.
GL-9 / G3	The looms of our uniform: Toyoda machines from 1980 and a 1959 design, still running.

Momotaro Jeans / KOJIMA - SINCE 2006

Founded in 2006 with the aim of becoming the world’s best from Kojima. It grew out of Collect, a fabric company founded in 1992, and handles yarn, dyeing, weaving and sewing in-house. A current favourite of Sekiguchi.

F.O.B FACTORY / KOJIMA, OKAYAMA

Based in Kojima, with every stage of production in Japan. Known for 14 oz denim woven on the rare Toyoda G3 power loom, developed in 1959, sometimes called a ‘phantom loom’. Another of Sekiguchi’s favourites.

The loom that stops itself

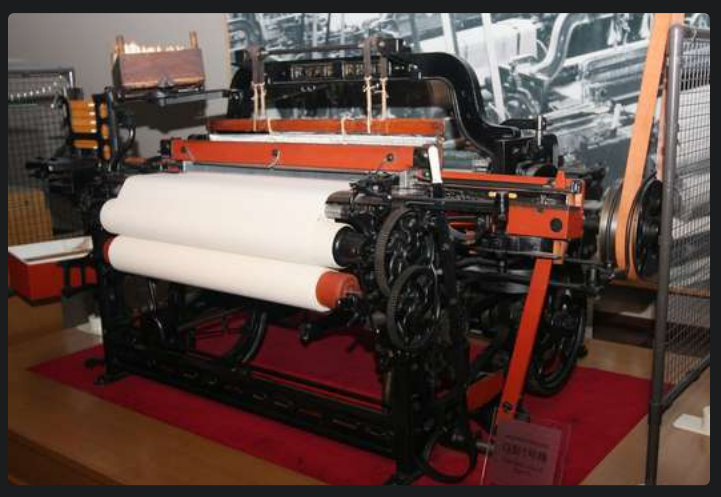
From our denim uniform to Toyota, and on to Japanese spirits: six pages on the Japanese way of making things.



Sakichi Toyoda, 1867–1930



Wooden loom, 1890



Model G loom, 1924

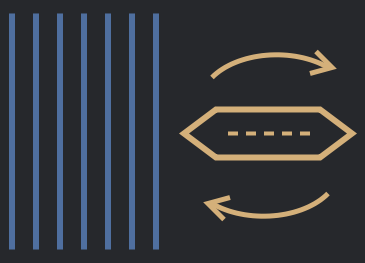
Born in 1867 in what is now Kosai, Shizuoka, Sakichi grew up helping his father, a skilled carpenter. Watching his mother work a hand loom late into the night is said to be where his wish to ease the weaver's burden began. In 1890 he spent about a month studying machines at the National Industrial Exhibition in Ueno, and that year built a wooden hand loom that needed one hand instead of two, raising output by 40–50%. At 24 he received his first patent.

In 1899 Mitsui & Co., inspecting cotton cloth for export, noticed that one mill's fabric was remarkably even. The reason was Sakichi's power loom. What earned him recognition was not his name but the cloth itself.

1924, the Model G: knowing when to keep going and when to stop

ROUTINE

Weft running low



Shuttle swapped automatically at full speed

Keep running = efficiency

ABNORMAL

A thread breaks



The loom stops itself

Stop = no defect passed on

When a machine can tell routine from trouble, no one has to watch each loom, and problems are fixed where they occur. This is the origin of jidoka, the pillar of the Toyota Production System that never passes a defect down the line. The other pillar, Just-in-Time, came from his son Kiichiro.

Photos: Sakichi Toyoda: unknown / Public domain / Wikimedia Commons Wooden loom: Yanajin33 / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons Model G loom: Morio / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

From a loom maker to a car maker

1936: the year “Toyoda” became “Toyota”



Toyoda Model AA sedan, launched 1936 (replica, Toyota Automobile Museum)

Loom patents funded the first cars

1926	Toyoda Automatic Loom Works founded; son-in-law Risaburo president, son Kiichiro managing director.
1929	Kiichiro licenses the automatic loom to Platt Brothers of England for £100,000 (about ¥1 million then).
1930	Sakichi dies on 30 October. In 1931 Kiichiro builds a working small petrol engine.
1933	An automobile department is set up inside the loom works.
1935	A1 prototype car completed; ¥3 million of new capital comes from the Toyoda spinning mill in Shanghai.
1937	Toyota Motor Co., Ltd. is founded.

目次

Why “Toyota”? Chosen from 27,000+ entries in 1936

ト 2 + ヨ 3 + タ 3 = **8**

Eight strokes in katakana; eight, which widens toward its base, is a lucky number. The contest sought a “Toyoda” mark; on 25 September a design reading “Toyota”, without the voicing marks, was chosen.

① Sound
Without the voicing, the name sounds crisper.

② Eight strokes
Eight is a lucky, ever-widening number.

③ Beyond a family
“Toyoda” is the family name; “Toyota” is a company with a duty to society.

The change is visible in the company newsletter: issue 3 (5 July) was “Toyoda News”, issue 8 (10 October) “Toyota News”. The car’s name changed first, and the company took that name the next year, which is why the early sedan is still called the Toyoda AA.

And the surname: Toyoda or Toyota?

須藤 Sudō / Sutō	浜崎 Hamazaki / Hamasaki	豊田 Toyoda / Toyota

When two words join, the second sound may become voiced (ren-daku). Both readings exist as surnames and the kanji look the same. The founding family is still “Toyoda”.

Photos: Toyoda AA: 先従隗始 / CC0 / Wikimedia Commons

Toyoda looms and Okayama denim

Machines built for evenness, tuned by craftsmen to weave character



Selvedge denim



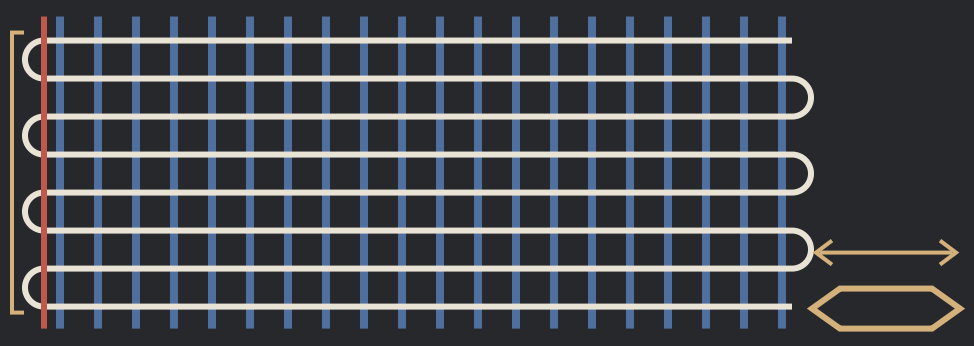
A shuttle, which carries the weft

Model G (1924) and G3 (1959) are different looms

1924 Model G	1959 G3	40 yd / day
Sakichi, Kiichiro	29 years after Sakichi	FOB's G3 cloth

In 1959 Toyoda Automatic Loom Works developed the G3, a strengthened descendant of the Model G that copes with changing warp tension and can weave heavy cloth: Sakichi's invention, carried forward by the next generation.

The G3's gift is weaving with very low warp tension: craftsmen adjust weights to slacken the warp, and the shuttle leaves a hand-woven unevenness and texture. FOB FACTORY's G3 cloth, woven in Ibara, comes off the loom at about 40 yards (36.6 m) a day. In Sakichi's time even cloth was the goal; today's craftsmen tune his machines to give cloth character.



The shuttle carries the weft to and fro

The weft turns at the edge = selvedge

The neat edge on rolled-up jeans

Photos: Selvedge: Liface / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons Shuttle: Jakub T. Jankiewicz / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

From Kojima, Ibara and Fukuyama to the world

How Japan went from sewing American denim to weaving Levi’s own revival cloth



Jeans Street, Kojima, Kurashiki



Indigo vats, Okazaki

目次

A denim timeline

c.1960	Ibara, with its cotton, indigo and heavy-cloth tradition, begins weaving denim.
1965	Maruo Clothing in Kojima (later BIG JOHN) mass-produces jeans from American denim.
1968	The pre-washed “BIG WASH” finish is born.
1973	All-Japanese jeans on Kurabo’s KD-8 denim; Kaihara of Fukuyama starts weaving for Levi’s.
2019	Levi’s Vintage Clothing 501s use denim co-developed with Kaihara.
2020	Japan Blue (Momotaro Jeans) opens its Kojima weaving mill with nine 1980 Toyoda GL9 looms.

Why Levi’s chose Japanese cloth

At the end of 2017 Cone Denim closed its White Oak mill, long the home of the 501. Looking for new cloth, LVC head Paul O’Neill remembered the reissued 1967 505 he had worn for about ten years. Its denim was Kaihara’s, and he had seen with his own eyes how it faded like a true 1960s pair.

Kuroki of Ibara has supplied Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Prada (MLIT report). Japan began making jeans from American cloth in the 1960s; today Levi’s turns to Japan to recreate its own history.

Photos: Kojima: Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Indigo: Petra Holmberg, Statens museer för världskultur / CC BY 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

The makers and the made

Sake is brewed, cars are built, cloth is woven: skilled work becoming something beautiful

SAKE



BREWER Koji room, Okuhida



FINISHED Sake bottles and cups

CARS



BUILDER Toyota Motomachi



FINISHED Toyota 2000GT, 1967

DENIM



WEAVER Looms in Kurashiki



FINISHED BIG JOHN, Kojima

Photos: Sake brewers: 杉山宣嗣 / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Sake: Culture Japon / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Toyota Motomachi: Bertel Schmitt / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons 2000GT: Coolalabright / CC BY 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Kurashiki mill: Baistone / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons Jeans: Heroeswithmetaphors / CC0 / Wikimedia Commons

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The same spirit, in every glass

Four things loom craftsmen share with sake brewers, shochu makers and distillers



Rice koji



Brewery vats, Meiji-mura



Pot stills, Nikka Yoichi

目次

1 | Start at the maker’s hands

LOOMS & DENIM

Sakichi began with his mother’s hard work at the hand loom.

SAKE, SHOCHU & WHISKY

Sake and shochu makers tend their koji by touch and temperature, even through the night.

2 | Never pass a flaw on

LOOMS & DENIM

The Model G stops itself when a thread breaks, so no defect goes further.

SAKE, SHOCHU & WHISKY

Brewers stop and act at any change in the mash; distillers judge by nose where to cut the first and last of the run.

3 | Choose the slow way

LOOMS & DENIM

G3 weavers slacken the warp for about 40 yards a day: texture over speed.

SAKE, SHOCHU & WHISKY

Pot-distilled honkaku shochu keeps the raw material’s aroma; whisky sleeps in cask for years. Time becomes flavour.

4 | Judge by the real thing

LOOMS & DENIM

Mitsui judged the cloth; Levi’s chose Kaihara after the head of LVC saw how his own jeans had faded.

SAKE, SHOCHU & WHISKY

With drink, too, the glass speaks louder than the label. Compare the makers side by side.

> The denim we wear and the drink in your glass come from the same kind of handwork. Please take your time and enjoy.

Toyota Industries
Mitsui & Sakichi
Japan Blue
Toyota 75 years
FOB FACTORY G3
Ibara denim
TCMIT museum
BIG JOHN history
MLIT report
NMNS: G3 loom
Kaihara × LVC
Rendaku study

Photos: Koji: Zenyrgarden / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Brewery: Morio / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Stills: さかおり / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

NAGI

From Tokyo



A student new to the world of food and drink.
Knowledge and experience: still at the beginning.
What NAGI brings instead:
Commitment 100
Dedication 100
How far will NAGI grow behind this counter?
We hope you will be part of NAGI’s journey.
For now, NAGI joins us early on Fridays and Saturdays.
Thank you for giving NAGI a warm welcome.

CONTENTS

SEASONAL COCKTAILS

Recommended Cocktails

Per glass / Tax included



Japanese Old Fashioned

Saemidori withered, pan-fired tea from Ijuin, Kagoshima; kuromitsu brown sugar syrup and Japanese whisky.

¥2,805



Yuzu Mojito

A refreshing mojito with Japanese yuzu citrus.

¥2,618



Japanese Negroni

Japanese gin and Japanese vermouth.

¥2,695



UMAMI Old Fashioned

Bonito flakes and the umami of Japanese vodka.

¥2,805



Japanese Gin & Tonic

Japanese gin, Hokkaido tonic water and lime from Tokushima.

¥2,178~



Kombu & Umeboshi Sour

Kombu broth and pickled Japanese plum, with your choice of spirit.

¥1,578~

目次

ORIGINAL COCKTAIL / 01

TOKYO 2102 No.1

Ume Martini



¥2,475 (tax incl.)

Japanese craft gin	45 ml
Ume syrup with Sado Island kombu dashi	15 ml
Shiso bitters	2 drops

ORIGINAL COCKTAIL / 02

Hinoki & Mizunara Old Fashioned

Enveloped in barrel smoke



目次

¥2,805 (tax incl.)

Japanese whisky	50 ml
Mizunara oak liqueur	5 ml
Hinoki cypress syrup	5 ml
Okinawan kuromitsu syrup	5 ml
Hinoki cypress bitters	2 drops

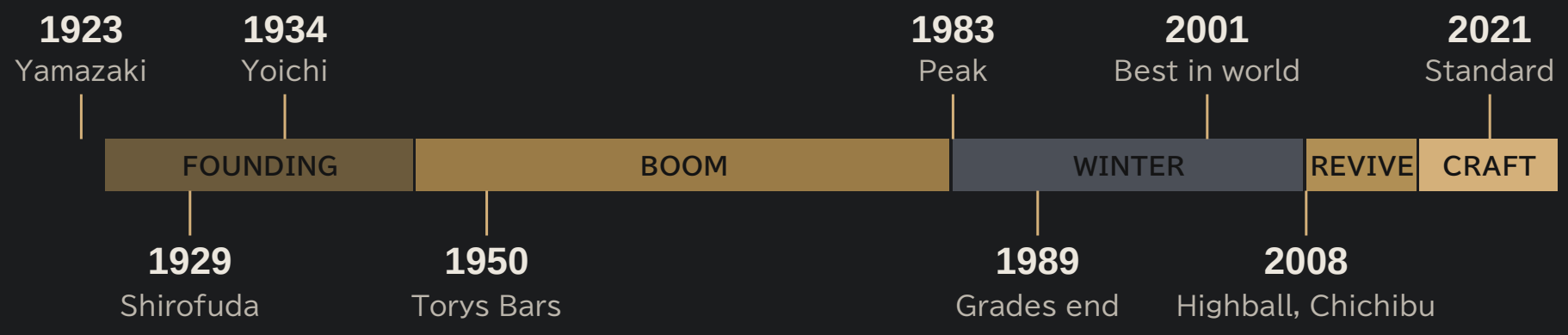
A century of Japanese whisky

1923, Yamazaki: a hundred years born of a longing for Scotland and a maker’s obsession



The whisky shelves at 2102 Azabu-Tokyo: behind every bottle, a hundred-year story

Japanese whisky is now coveted around the world. It began with a young man who crossed the sea to learn from Scotland, and a merchant who staked his dream on him.



CHAPTER 1
Two founders
Torii, Taketsuru, Rita · p23–25

CHAPTER 2
Yamazaki & Yoichi
1923 · 1934 · p26–27

CHAPTER 3
Mizunara & the boom
War to Showa peak · p28–29

CHAPTER 4
Top of the world
Awards & shortage · p30

CHAPTER 5
The next century
Craft & the standard · p31

Ten pages of people and places behind the glass. Tap a chapter to jump.

CONTENTS

The merchant and the engineer

CHAPTER 1 | Two founders



Shinjiro Torii 1879–1962

Founder of Kotobukiya (Suntory)

Apprenticed at 13 to an Osaka drug wholesaler, he learned to blend imported liquor and opened his own shop in 1899. Profits from Akadama Port Wine (1907) went, against his board's objections, into a Japanese whisky no one believed in.

> "Go ahead, give it a try."



M. Taketsuru 1894–1979

Founder of Nikka Whisky

A sake brewer's son from Takehara, Hiroshima, he was sent alone to Scotland in 1918 to learn in the distilleries. He joined Kotobukiya in 1923 to build Yamazaki, then went his own way to Yoichi, Hokkaido, in 1934.

> "I will make authentic whisky in Japan."

目次

1923: their paths meet

Torii is said to have first tried to hire an engineer from Scotland, then learned that a Japanese who had trained in Scottish distilleries was back home. He signed Taketsuru to a ten-year contract. A merchant's nerve and an engineer's knowledge: two very different men opened the door together.



Akadama Port Wine poster, 1922



Takehara, Taketsuru's home town



Masataka and Rita

Photos: Shinjiro Torii: unknown / PD / Wikimedia Commons Masataka Taketsuru: unknown / PD / Wikimedia Commons Akadama poster, 1922: KATAOKA, Toshiro (1882 - 1945) of Suntory / PD / Wikimedia Commons Takehara: Vickerman625 / PD / Wikimedia Commons The Taketsurus: unknown / PD / Wikimedia Commons

The notebook that built Japanese whisky

CHAPTER 1 | Taketsuru in Scotland, 1918–1920





University of Glasgow, where he attended chemistry lectures



Campbeltown, where he trained at Hazelburn

1918	Leaves Kobe in July; from December attends chemistry lectures at Glasgow University and the Royal Technical College.
1919	April: trains at Longmorn in Speyside; at Bo’ness he studies grain whisky from a continuous still.
1920	Marries Rita in January, trains at Hazelburn in Campbeltown, and returns to Japan with her in November.

He wrote down everything he saw, with drawings, from malt kilning to still shapes and cask handling. These reports, later called the “Taketsuru Notes”, became the foundation for building Yamazaki.

> “Fifty years ago a bright young Japanese came with a fountain pen and a notebook and took away the secrets of our whisky.” So Lord Home, visiting Japan in 1962, is said to have remarked.

Photos: Univ. of Glasgow: Colin Park / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons Campbeltown: Chris Morgan / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Rita, the Scot Yoichi took to heart

CHAPTER 1 | Rita Taketsuru (Jessie Roberta Cowan), 1896–1961



Rita Taketsuru



The Taketsuru residence, now inside Yoichi Distillery



The sea at Yoichi and Cape Shiripa

目次

1896	Born in Kirkintilloch, near Glasgow, a doctor’s daughter.
1919	Meets Masataka, who was teaching her younger brother judo.
1920	Marries in Glasgow in January; sails for Japan in November.
1934	Moves to Yoichi, learning to make even pickled plums and salted squid.
1961	Dies in Yoichi on 17 January, aged 64; she and Masataka rest together on a Yoichi hill.

Rita

“I want to support you to achieve your dream. We should go to Japan.”

Masataka

“Few foreigners embraced Japanese life as fully as my wife Rita.”

In the war she was watched as a native of an enemy nation, yet she never left Yoichi. The road from Yoichi station is now “Rita Road”, and the 2014 NHK drama “Massan” made the couple’s story known nationwide.

Photos: Rita: unknown / PD / Wikimedia Commons Taketsuru residence: さかおり / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Cape Shiripa: 我路·幌内画像倉庫 / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

1923, Yamazaki: Japan’s first malt distillery

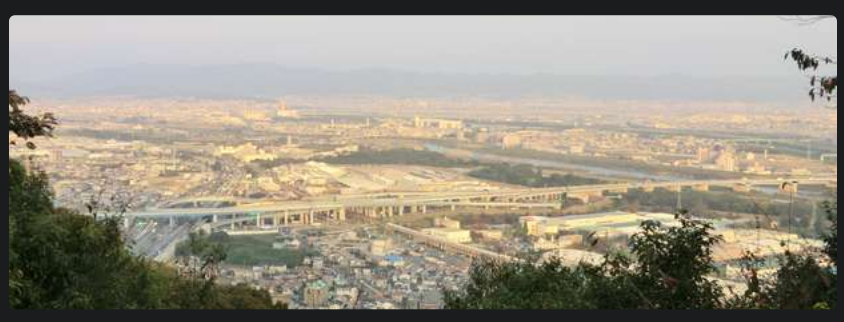
CHAPTER 2 | A misty valley where three rivers meet, between Kyoto and Osaka



Suntory Yamazaki Distillery, Shimamoto, Osaka



Pot stills of different shapes



Around Yamazaki

Why Yamazaki?

Famous water

Sen no Rikyu built his Taian tea room here; the water has long been prized.

Mist and humidity

The Katsura, Uji and Kizu rivers meet here; frequent mist suits cask maturation.

Near the cities

Between Osaka and Kyoto: easy to ship from and to visit.

1923	Construction begins, with Taketsuru in charge.
1924	Completed in November.
1929	1 April: Shirofuda, Japan’s first authentic whisky, goes on sale. Called “smoky and burnt”, it does not sell.
1937	Kakubin, blended for Japanese tastes, finally becomes a hit.
1984	Yamazaki single malt launched.

Scottish-style smokiness did not win over Japan at the time. Torii kept reworking the blend in search of a taste that suited Japanese food: the root of the delicacy Japanese whisky is known for today.

Photos: Yamazaki: Motokoka / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Yamazaki stills: mariemon / CC BY 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons View from Tennozan: Motokoka / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

1934, Yoichi: north to the ideal place

CHAPTER 2 | Cool, damp, sea air and peat: the town Taketsuru saw as Scotland



Nikka Yoichi Distillery



Coal-fired pot stills



The pagoda-roofed kiln



1934	July: founds Dainipponkaju; the Yoichi plant is finished in October.
1935	Sells apple juice from local fruit while whisky matures.
1936	Installs a still of his own design; distilling begins.
1940	First “Nikka Whisky”: Nikka from Nik-ka, short for the company name.
1952	Renamed Nikka Whisky.
1969	Miyagikyo Distillery opens near Sendai.

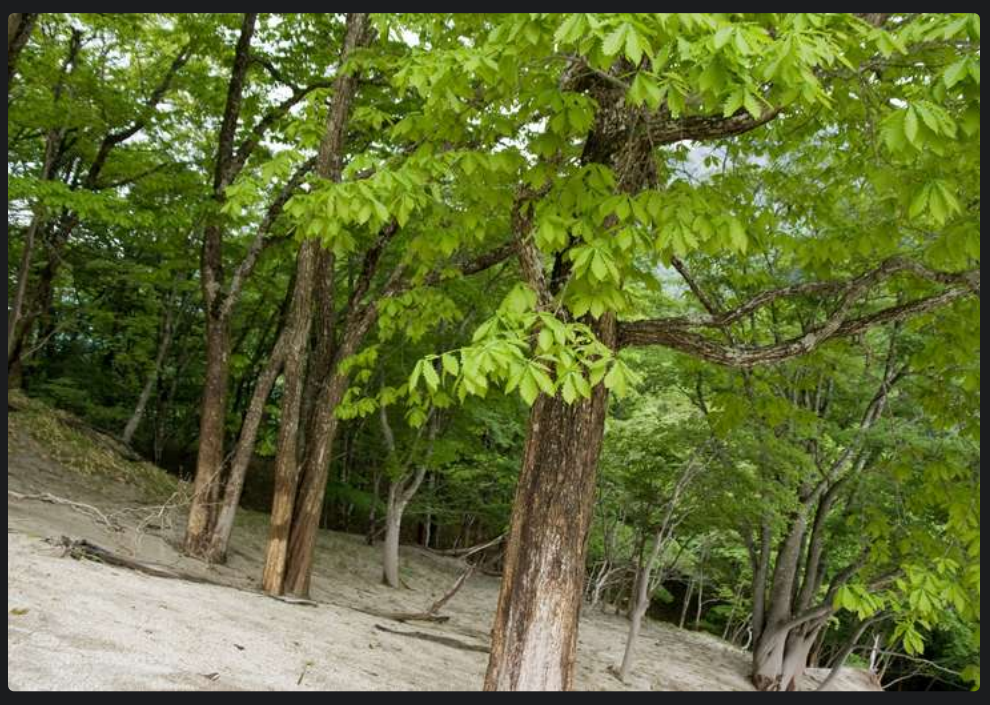
About 1,000 km north of Yamazaki, Taketsuru found the cold damp air, sea wind and nearby peat of the Scotland he had trained in. Yoichi still fires its stills directly with coal, the old way.

Photos: Yoichi: さかおり / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Coal firing: さかおり / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Kiln: さかおり / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

目次

Mizunara: a treasure born of hardship

CHAPTER 3 | The Japanese oak used when imported casks ran out



Mizunara forest, Hokkaido



Casks asleep in a warehouse

In the 1940s, when war cut off imported cask wood, casks were made from mizunara oak from Hokkaido and elsewhere. Straight trees are rare, the wood is hard to work, the casks leak, and young spirit tastes too woody: at first, a troublesome stopgap.

Aroma
Long ageing brings notes likened to kyara and sandalwood incense.

Time
The aroma opens only after many years in cask.

Today
As “Japanese oak”, it is now sought by distilleries abroad.

After the war, an amber glass



A Showa-era nightlife street

1946 ○ Torys whisky launched

1950 ○ Suntory Old launched; the first Torys Bars

1958 ○ Uncle Torys appears in advertising

1960 ○ Torys Bars spread nationwide; the highball becomes a city drink

Photos: Mizunara: Σ64 / CC BY 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons Yoichi casks: さかおり / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Ginza, 1960s: Larry Syverson / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

The Showa boom, and a long winter

CHAPTER 3 | A peak in 1983, then a fall to about a fifth in 25 years



Suntory Old, nicknamed “Daruma”

Suntory Old, 1980

12.4M cases

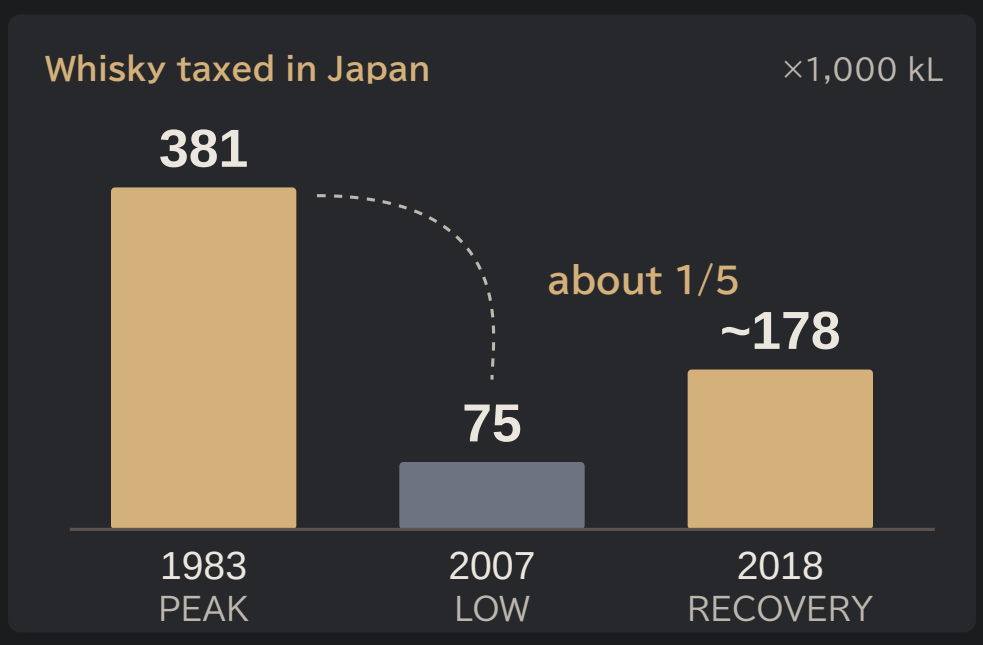
In bottles

148.8M

Per day

~400,000

opened somewhere in Japan, every day



With a shochu boom and changing tastes, consumption fell from its 1983 peak. When the 1989 tax reform abolished the special, first and second grades, cheaper imports flooded in and Japanese whisky entered a long winter.

Distilleries fell silent: Karuizawa last distilled in 2000, the year Hanyu in Saitama ran into trouble. Yet in unsold casks the spirit went on maturing. Ichiro Akuto, who rescued Hanyu’s casks, would open a new era in Chichibu.

Whisky grades and tax →

Photos: Suntory Old: Keeezawa / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

To the top of the world, and out of stock

CHAPTER 4 | From “best in the world” in 2001 to the highball and Massan booms



Hakushu, 1973



Miyagikyo, 1969



Single Cask Yoichi 10

2001	●	In Whisky Magazine’s blind “Best of the Best”, Single Cask Yoichi 10 years places first and Hibiki 21 second
2003	○	Yamazaki 12 wins Japan’s first ISC gold medal
2004	○	Hibiki 30 wins Japan’s first ISC trophy
2008	○	The Kaku Highball campaign begins; volume grows ten years running
2014	●	NHK’s “Massan” airs; in November, Jim Murray’s Whisky Bible 2015 names Yamazaki Sherry Cask 2013 world whisky of the year
2018	○	With aged stock running out, Hakushu 12 and Hibiki 17 are suspended

Because production had been cut during the winter years, aged stock ran short almost at once. Bottles that once sat on shop shelves now fetch astonishing prices at auction. In 2025 whisky exports reached about ¥49 billion: whisky first overtook sake in 2020, and in 2025 again beat sake (about ¥45.9 billion) (Ministry of Finance trade statistics).

Our highball →

Photos: Hakushu: 663highland / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Miyagikyo: くろふね / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Single Cask Yoichi 10: Nikka Whisky

CONTENTS

Craft distilleries and the next hundred years

CHAPTER 5 | More than 100 distilleries now operate (2023)



2004	Ichiro Akuto founds Venture Whisky.
2008	Chichibu starts distilling: the small distillery that showed the world what craft could do.
2016–	Akkeshi, Shizuoka, Nagahama, Kanosuke… new distilleries spring up from north to south.
Shochu	Ontake, Osuzuyama, Shindo, Kanosuke: shochu makers bring their koji and distilling know-how to whisky.



Chichibu, Saitama



Saburomaru, Toyama



Nagahama, Shiga

2021: a standard for “Japanese whisky”

Ingredients
Malted grain required; water drawn in Japan

Production
Mashing, fermentation and distillation at a distillery in Japan

Ageing
In wooden casks in Japan for at least 3 years

Bottling
In Japan, at 40% ABV or more

Set by the Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Makers Association in February 2021 and in force from April (with a transition to March 2024). A journey that began with imitation has reached the question of how to put Japan itself into the glass.

> In the amber of your glass live Yamazaki’s mist and Yoichi’s sea wind, the scent of mizunara, the pride of shochu makers, and a century of longing and resolve.

Our craft whiskies →

Nikka: founder
Taxed volume
Suntory 100 years
The winter years
Univ. of Glasgow
Exports 2025
Nikka company history
JSLMA standard

Photos: Chichibu: Ebiebi2 / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Saburomaru: Keeezawa / CC BY 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Nagahama: ヨッシーパパ / CC0 / Wikimedia Commons

OUR OWN CARBONATION SYSTEM

The Art of the Highball

Per glass from ¥1,078 / Tax included





2 years spent perfecting the bubbles themselves. Our own carbonation machine creates pure, smooth yet intensely sparkling water.

Water is fundamental to craft spirits, so we use natural spring water closer in character to the water used in their production. Compared with soda made by carbonating filtered tap water, it gives the drink gentler acidity and a more rounded sense of harmony.

Once you taste a highball made with our sparkling spring water, it is hard to go back.

Mixers & Serving Supplements / Tax included

With soda	¥132	Neat	¥0
On the rocks	¥88	Twice up (equal parts water)	¥99
With KUMI Tonic from Hokkaido	¥319	With water	¥99
Sonic (soda + tonic)	¥209	With A2 MILK	¥275
With HAKKO GINGER No.1	¥759	With IYOSHI COLA	¥759

What is in a canned highball? Ingredients and tax →

CONTENTS

WHAT IS IN THE CAN | ingredient labels and the tax-law "category"

What is a canned highball made of?

same name, three tax categories: whisky, spirits or liqueur

Some canned highballs on the market are made from whisky and soda water only; others add dietary fibre, acidulants, flavourings, sugars or another spirit. And although they all say ”highball”, under the Liquor Tax Act they fall into three categories: whisky, spirits or liqueur. What decides the category is the ingredients, the process and the extract content.



Canned chuhai and highballs on a Japanese shelf: the same shelf, different tax categories

Reading five labels the ”category” and ”ingredients” lines

Product	ABV	Category	Added ingredients (besides whisky and soda)
Star Select Highball	7%	Liqueur	indigestible dextrin, acidulant, caramel colour, flavouring
Takara Shochu Highball Dry	7%	Spirits	sugars, acidulant, flavouring, caramel colour
Suntory Kaku Highball (can)	7%	Liqueur	lemon spirit, dietary fibre, acidulant
Suntory Torys Highball (can)	7%	Liqueur	lemon spirit, lemon, sugars, acidulant, flavouring
Kirin Riku Highball (can)	6%	Whisky	grain, malt, spirits, carbonation (no additives)

All are ”sparkling”. A drink made with whisky can be a ”liqueur”, while a drink containing added spirits can still be ”whisky”. That is the point.

Extract content separates spirits from liqueur

tax categories follow ingredients, process and extract

Extract content

the non-volatile part

Sugars, fibre and other components that do not evaporate. For drinks that fit no other definition, under 2 degrees of extract means spirits, 2 or more means liqueur.

But

carbohydrate ≠ extract

The ”carbohydrate” on a nutrition label is not the same as the tax law’s ”extract”. A product’s exact extract cannot be known without the maker’s analysis, and whisky has its own separate definition.

What are the ingredients for? →

Photos: Pigment-Ink (BY-SA 4.0) / Wikimedia Commons Highball photos: 2102

INGREDIENTS | everything besides whisky and soda, and its role

What are the ingredients for?

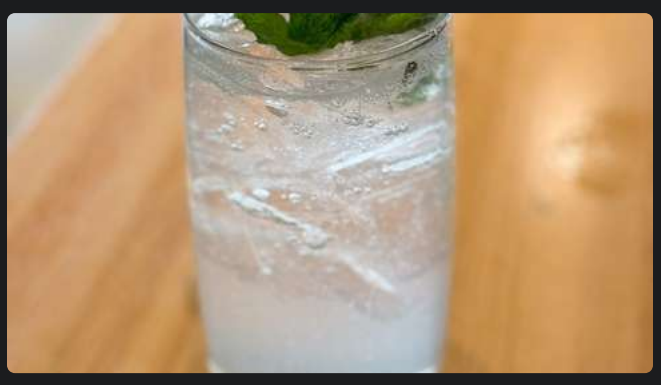
general roles; makers do not publish every purpose



Lemon: the key aroma



Cans at a discount store



Sparkling water: its strength shapes the can

Lemon spirit

Lemon aroma and freshness; balances the whole flavour

Sugars

Add sweetness and balance acidity and bitterness

Dietary fibre

Indigestible dextrin and the like; affects mouthfeel and body, and counts toward extract

Acidulants

Adjust acidity, giving freshness and definition

Flavourings

Shape the signature aroma

Caramel colour

Adjusts the colour

Spirits

Adjust the alcohol structure and flavour

Carbonation

Its strength is key to the design: for the Kaku can, carbonation and lemon aroma were the development focus

Five cans, ingredient by ingredient ● = listed on the label (all five are carbonated)

Product	Lemon spirit	Sugars	Dietary fibre	Acidulants	Flavourings	Caramel colour	Spirits	Carbonation
Star Select liqueur 7%	·	·	●	●	●	●	·	●
Takara Shochu Highball Dry spirits 7%	·	●	·	●	●	●	·	●
Suntory Kaku Highball liqueur 7%	●	·	●	●	·	·	·	●
Suntory Torys Highball liqueur 7%	●	●	·	●	●	·	·	●
Kirin Riku Highball whisky 6%	·	·	·	·	·	·	●	●

The lemon spirit in the Kaku Highball can from Suntory's R&D notes

Suntory's R&D notes say that too much lemon aroma gets in the way of Kakubin's own flavour, so a lemon spirit was chosen to add just a hint of lemon while keeping the whisky character, with the blend tuned in 0.001% steps. The April 7, 2026 product announcement again described a revised type and ratio of lemon spirit. A canned highball, in other words, is not simply whisky diluted with soda: it is a drink designed for the can.

Categories and tax → ← Reading the labels

Sources: Ministry of Finance (liquor tax materials, Oct 2026 revision), National Tax Agency (Liquor Tax Act Art. 3, interpretation notices), Consumer Affairs Agency (food labelling standards), Suntory (Kaku Highball R&D materials, Apr 7 2026 announcement; Teacher's Highball can), Kirin (Riku Highball can), Takara (Shochu Highball Dry). Research date: Nov 4, 2026

Photos: ulleo · 夢の散歩 (BY-SA 3.0) · Tony Webster (BY 2.0) / Wikimedia Commons

CONTENTS

TAX | the October 2026 tax revision and the "10% rule"

The category does not change the tax

liqueur or spirits, a canned highball pays the same

Three questions things the label makes you wonder

Q Sugars listed, yet "zero sugar"?

Takara Shochu Highball lists ”sugars” yet the can says ”zero sugar, zero sweeteners”. That is the labelling rule: sugar or sugars under 0.5 g per 100 ml may be labelled ”zero” if set conditions are met. ”Zero sweeteners” means no sweetener additives, which is separate from sugars as an ingredient. Zero sugar is not zero calories: Dry has 42 kcal per 100 ml, because alcohol itself is energy.

Q Riku contains spirits, so why "whisky"?

Under Japanese law, if the alcohol derived from qualifying whisky stock is 10% or more by the statutory calculation, alcohol or spirits may be added and the product remains ”whisky”. So Japanese ”whisky” does not always mean 100% whisky stock. Kirin says a clean spirit gives Riku a crisp finish; the exact ratio is not published, and ”whisky (made in Japan)” does not guarantee that every drop was distilled in Japan.

Q Is "liqueur" a tax dodge?

Canned highballs under 10% ABV are ”other sparkling liquors”. After the October 2026 revision, spirits and liqueur in this class pay exactly the same tax, so the liqueur category saves nothing. Replacing aged whisky stock with another spirit may change ingredient cost, but blend ratios, stock prices and production costs are not disclosed: a tax or cost motive cannot be asserted.

目次

Compare the tax

from Oct 1, 2026: other sparkling liquors pay ¥100,000 per kL

¥35	¥50	¥200	¥77.5
canned highball 350 ml	canned highball 500 ml	whisky 40%, 500 ml	beer 500 ml
was ¥28 (+¥7)	was ¥40 (+¥10)	¥400,000 per kL	¥155,000 per kL

Same pure alcohol, different tax (both 35 ml of pure alcohol)



A 500 ml can at 7% holds 35 ml of pure alcohol, the same as 87.5 ml of 40% whisky, yet the can pays more tax. Categories are taxed differently, but calling a drink ”liqueur” or ”spirits” does not make it cheaper.

How a bar highball differs → ← What the ingredients do

THE BAR | a different design idea; fewer ingredients alone does not decide quality

How a bar highball differs

whisky-and-soda-only cans exist too, but the glass built at the bar is something else

Whisky-and-soda-only cans exist too not every can has additives

> Suntory's limited-edition Teacher's Highball can (Oct 13, 2026) lists only "malt, grain / carbonation", 9% ABV, category: whisky. A canned highball made from whisky and soda alone is on the market.



Takara Shochu Highball can: category "spirits"

A bar highball is the spirit itself, lengthened a different design idea



The 2102 highball: our own carbonation system and natural spring water

A highball built at the bar from whisky and soda water alone shows the character of the spirit itself. The whisky, the pour, the ice, the quality and temperature of the soda, the glass and the way it is poured all change the taste. Some canned highballs instead add acidulants, flavourings, fibre or other spirits to design a finished drink. The two follow different ideas, and a shorter ingredient list does not by itself make one better.

Our highball →



The bar counter made famous by the Kaku Highball commercials



In short when you pick a can

1. Besides whisky and soda, many canned highballs use acidulants, flavourings, fibre, sugars or spirits
2. These mostly shape flavour and mouthfeel, but makers do not publish every purpose
3. Whisky / spirits / liqueur categories follow the tax law's definitions by ingredients, process and extract
4. Since Oct 2026, sparkling cans under 10% pay the same tax whether spirits or liqueur
5. Whisky with added spirits can still be "whisky" in Japan (10% or more from whisky stock)
6. When comparing cans, read both the category and the ingredient list, not just the name and ABV

← Categories and tax Our highball →

Sources: Ministry of Finance, National Tax Agency, Consumer Affairs Agency, makers' product pages (research date Nov 4, 2026). Tax amounts = rate × volume.

Photos: KKPCW (BY-SA 4.0) · Pigment-Ink (BY-SA 4.0) · Tatsuo Yamashita (BY 2.0) / Wikimedia Commons Highball photos: 2102

CONTENTS

JAPANESE COLLECTION

Hokkaido, Tohoku & Niigata

30 ml per glass / Tax included

HOKKAIDO

Akkeshi Rikka 2025 ›	55%	¥3,828
Akkeshi Shokan 2025 ›	55%	¥2,475
Akkeshi Hakuro 2023 ›	55%	¥4,048
Akkeshi New Born Foundations 3, Hokkaido Mizunara Cask ›	55%	¥2,695
Rishiri Island KAMUI GENSHU (New Pot) ›	58%	¥2,750

YAMAGATA

YUZA Spring in Japan 2024 ›	55%	¥2,750
YUZA 2023 ›	51%	¥2,850
YUZA Second edition 2022 ›	62%	¥3,750
GAKKOGAWA Distillery NEWBORN 2026 Edition Bourbon Cask ›	53%	¥2,200

FUKUSHIMA

YAMAZAKURA ASAKA PEATED 1st Wooden Washback ›	50%	¥1,958
YAMAZAKURA ASAKA 2025 EDITION ›	50%	¥1,958

NIIGATA

Niigata Kameda Distillery New Pot Peated ›	60%	¥2,178
Niigata Kameda Newborn Wine Cask Michibiki for WM 2023 ›	59%	¥2,242
Niigata Kameda Ohtani Pisces, The Zodiac Sign No.1 ›	50%	¥2,178
Niigata Kameda Ohtani Capricorn, The Zodiac Sign No.2 ›	50%	¥1,980
Niigata Kameda Ohtani Gemini, The Zodiac Sign No.3 ›	50%	¥1,925
Niigata Kameda Ohtani Whisky Nagoya Edition ›	55%	¥2,585
Yoshida Denzai Distillery Single Grain 1 Year 2nd ›	55%	¥1,760
Yoshida Denzai Distillery Star Delta ›	53%	¥1,760
Uonuma Rice Whisky 2025 Limited, Hakkaisan ›	52%	¥1,867
Shinobu Distillery Shinobu Mizunara Japanese Oak Finish 10y ›	43%	¥1,705

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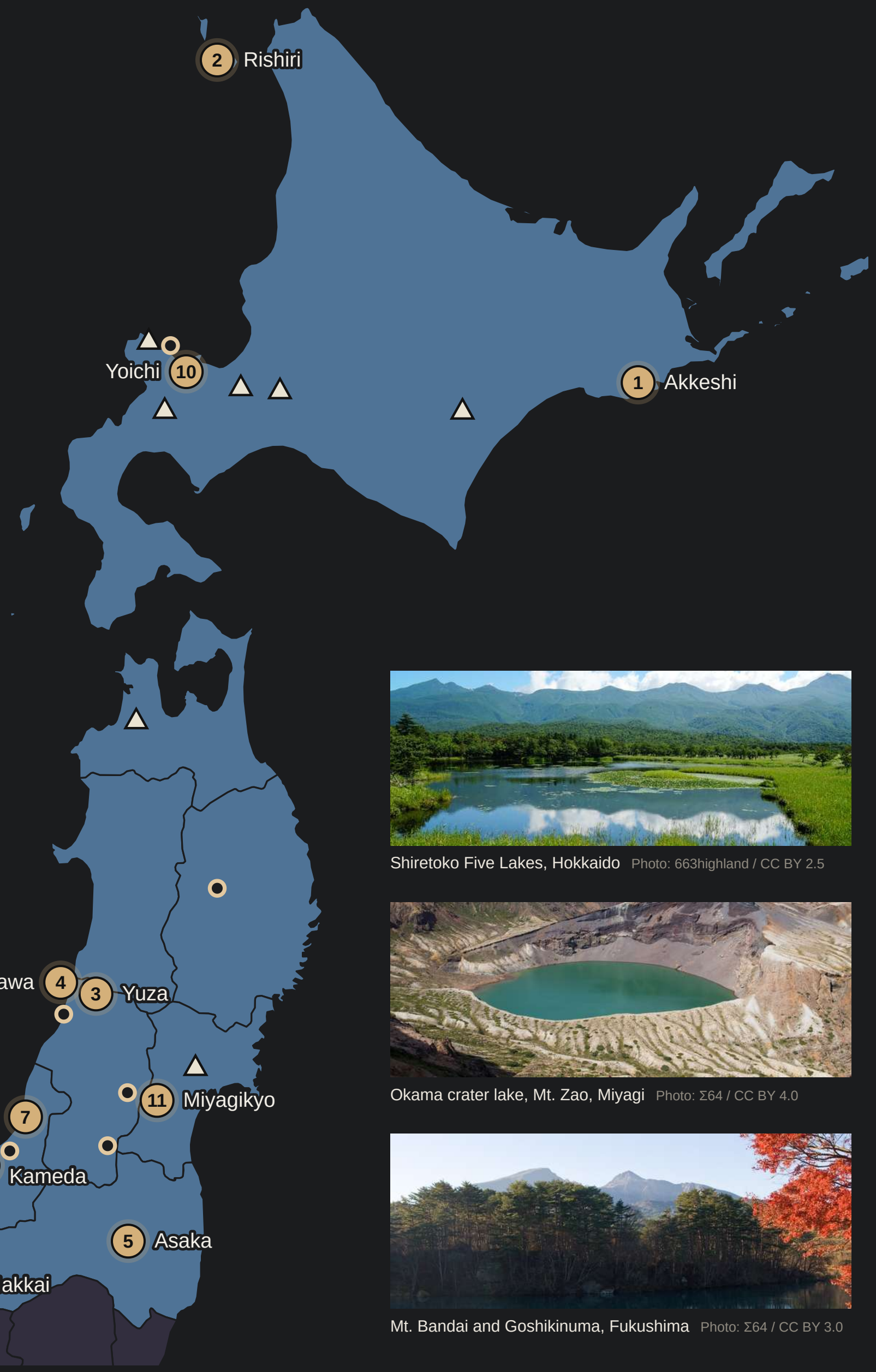
Tap a name to open its page.

AREA MAP 1 / 4

● Whisky (numbered) ◆ Shochu ▲ Gin ■ Rum, vodka etc. ○ Sake, liqueur etc.

Hokkaido, Tohoku & Niigata

Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, Fukushima, Niigata



Shiretoko Five Lakes, Hokkaido Photo: 663highland / CC BY 2.5

Okama crater lake, Mt. Zao, Miyagi Photo: Σ64 / CC BY 4.0

Mt. Bandai and Goshikinuma, Fukushima Photo: Σ64 / CC BY 3.0

CONTENTS

WHISKY · TAP A NUMBER OR A NAME TO OPEN ITS PAGE

Whisky distilleries & bottles

9 distilleries • 21 bottles



1 **Akkeshi Distillery** Hokkaido

Akkeshi Rikka 2025 / Akkeshi Shokan 2025 / Akkeshi Hakuro 2023 / Akkeshi New Born Foundations 3, Hokkaido Mizunara Cask



2 **Rishiri Distillery** Hokkaido

Rishiri Island KAMUI GENSHU (New Pot)



3 **Yuza Distillery** Yamagata

YUZA Spring in Japan 2024 / YUZA 2023 / YUZA Second edition 2022



4 **Gakkogawa Distillery** Yamagata

GAKKOGAWA Distillery NEWBORN 2026 Edition Bourbon Cask



5 **Asaka Distillery** Fukushima

YAMAZAKURA ASAKA PEATED 1st Wooden Washback / YAMAZAKURA ASAKA 2025 EDITION



6 **Niigata Kameda Distillery** Niigata

New Pot Peated / Newborn Wine Cask Michibiki for WM 2023 / Ohtani Pisces, The Zodiac Sign No.1 / Ohtani Capricorn, The Zodiac Sign No.2 / Ohtani Gemini, The Zodiac Sign No.3 / Ohtani Whisky Nagoya Edition / [gin]KAMEOW GIN “Love again”



7 **Yoshida Denzai Distillery** Niigata

Single Grain 1 Year 2nd / Star Delta



8 **Hakkai Brewery Fukasawahara Distillery** Niigata

Uonuma Rice Whisky 2025 Limited Hakkaisan



9 **Shinobu Distillery** Niigata

Shinobu Mizunara Japanese Oak Finish 10y

目次

DISTILLERIES OF THE MAJOR MAKERS

All bottles, blends included: Nikka list ›

10 **Nikka Yoichi Distillery** Hokkaido Single Malt Yoichi

11 **Nikka Miyagikyo Distillery** Miyagi Single Malt Miyagikyo / [gin]Nikka Coffey Gin / [vodka]Nikka Coffey Vodka

OTHER DRINKS FROM THIS AREA · TAP A NAME

◆ Shochu	Hokusetsu Shuzo
▲ Gin	Shakotan Spirit・Benizakura Distillery・Maoi Distillery・Niseko Distillery・Tokachi Heiya Distillery・Mohodori Distillery・MCG (Miyagi Craft Gin)・Echigo Yakusou
○ Sake etc.	Henmi Brewery・Kikusui Brewery・Akabu Brewery・Yoichi Liqueur Factory・Tatenokawa Shuzo・Yamagata Masamune・YOSHI (Takahata)

Akkeshi Distillery

AKKESHI

Akkeshi Rikka 2025

THE AKKESHI Single Malt | 24 Sekki series No.7

Akkeshi, Hokkaido | Kenten Jitsugyo



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

BOTTLED
2025
”Summer begins” · 700ml

PEATED
All-Hokkaido malt
Hokkaido barley & Mizunara casks

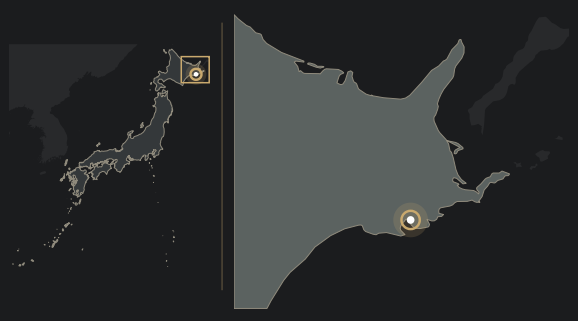


A local train crossing the Bekanbeushi wetland

7th of the 24 Sekki: ”Rikka”
the season summer begins
Non-chill-filtered, natural colour

30ml ¥3,828 tax included

Akkeshi Bay, east Hokkaido



Akkeshi Distillery

Benten Island on Lake Akkeshi



Benten Island shrine on Lake Akkeshi

Peat smoke wrapped in Japanese citrus, under an early-summer sky.

Akkeshi brought Islay-style distilling to the cool, foggy coast of eastern Hokkaido in 2016. Rikka, the seventh release in its series named after the 24 seasons of the old calendar, evokes early summer, when irises bloom by Lake Akkeshi. The key malt is all-Hokkaido: local barley matured in Hokkaido Mizunara oak. With age, the distillery’s signature peat has taken on a gentle Japanese-citrus note.

Photo: ブルーノ・プラス / CC BY-SA 4.0・ゆずかわしゅうと / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Akkeshi Distillery

AKKESHI

Akkeshi Shokan 2025

THE AKKESHI Single Malt | 24 Sekki series No.23

Akkeshi, Hokkaido | Kenten Jitsugyo



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

BOTTLED
2025
”The cold intensifies” ・
700ml

10TH WINTER
A decade of distilling
UK, NZ & Hokkaido malt



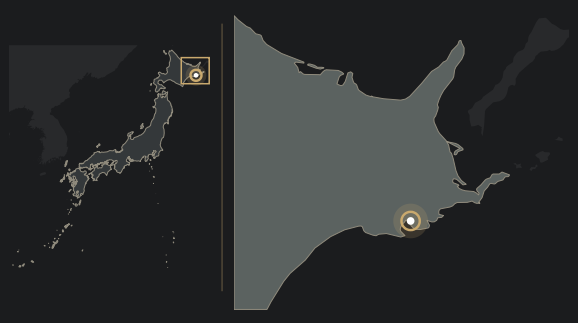
Akkeshi Ohashi bridge in snow

23rd of the 24 Sekki: ”Shokan”
when the cold deepens
Non-chill-filtered, natural colour

30ml ¥2,475 tax included

目次

Akkeshi Bay, east Hokkaido



Akkeshi Distillery

Cape Kiritappu in snow



Cape Kiritappu dusted with snow

The call of cranes across the snow: a tenth-winter dram.

When diamond dust glitters over silent snowfields and the clear call of red-crowned cranes carries across them, Akkeshi marked its tenth winter of distilling. Shokan, the 23rd release in the 24 Sekki series, was released with gratitude for that decade. Made from British, New Zealand and Hokkaido barley, it layers a clean winter sweetness over Akkeshi’s briny, maritime peat.

Photo: Highten31 / CC BY-SA 3.0 ・ Highten31 / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Akkeshi Distillery

AKKESHI

Akkeshi Hakuro 2023

THE AKKESHI Single Malt | 24 Sekki series No.15

Akkeshi, Hokkaido | Kenten Jitsugyo



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

BOTTLED
2023
”White dew” · 700ml

PEATED

In thanks for the harvest

UK & Hokkaido malt



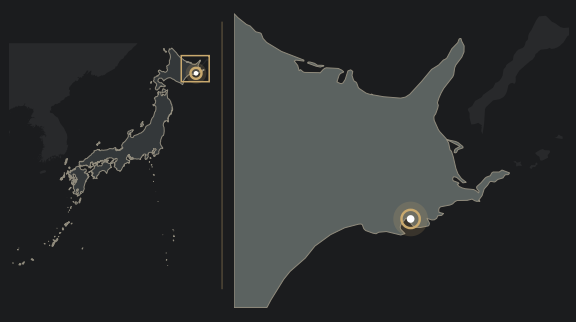
Akkeshi Bay under a wide sky

15th of the 24 Sekki: ”Hakuro”
early autumn, dew on the grass
Non-chill-filtered, natural colour

30ml ¥4,048 tax included

CONTENTS

Akkeshi Bay, east Hokkaido



Akkeshi Distillery

Kiritappu Wetland in autumn colours



Meandering channels of the Kiritappu Wetland

A toast to the harvest, as autumn cool settles over the town.

As the summer heat fades and a cool autumn air wraps around Akkeshi, the harbour fills with saury and salmon and the rowan trees turn red. Hakuro, the 15th release in the 24 Sekki series, was bottled in thanks for the autumn harvest. Made from British and Hokkaido barley, it sets a soft sweetness of ripe fruit and dandelion fluff behind Akkeshi’s characteristic smoke.

Photo: Highten31 / CC BY-SA 3.0 · A CUVE / CC BY-SA 2.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Akkeshi Distillery

AKKESHI

Akkeshi, Hokkaido | Kenten Jitsugyo

Akkeshi New Born Foundations 3

Hokkaido Mizunara cask | Non-peated | 200ml



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

BOTTLED
Jan 2019
Matured 8–23 months

HOKKAIDO MIZUNARA
Hokkaido oak casks only
A dozen-plus casks vatted

Third of the New Born series
an oriental cask aroma
of agarwood and sandalwood

30ml ¥2,695 tax included

目次

Akkeshi Bay, east Hokkaido



The bay in front of the distillery



Akkeshi Distillery

Akkeshi Bay under a wide sky

Raised only in Mizunara, fragrant beyond its years.

Third in Akkeshi’s ”New Born” series, which showed its spirit on the way to becoming whisky. Non-peated spirit, matured 8 to 23 months only in rare Hokkaido Mizunara casks, a first for the series; a dozen-plus casks vatted. Citrus, honey, coconut, dried fruit and vanilla meet Mizunara spice in a bold, youthful dram.

Photo: A_CUVE / CC BY-SA 2.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Rishiri Distillery

RISHIRI

Kamui Genshu

UNAGED SPIRIT

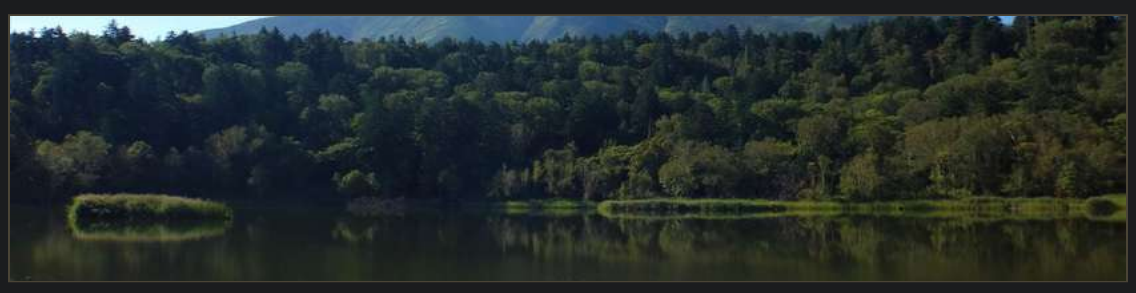
Rishiri Island, Hokkaido | Kamui Whisky



ALCOHOL
58%
ABV

BOTTLE CAPACITY
200ml
Limited release

UNAGED
Before the oak
New make spirit



Mount Rishiri mirrored in Himenuma pond

93 POINTS / GOLD
London Spirits
Competition 2026

30ml ¥2,750 tax included

Rishiri, Hokkaido



Distilled beside the sea



Rishiri Distillery

The distillery on Rishiri Island’s western shore

Rishiri, before the influence of oak.

A clear, unaged spirit from Japan’s northernmost whisky distillery. Spring water filtered through Mount Rishiri’s volcanic rock meets malt in a custom, long-necked still made in Kentucky. A clean texture, gentle sweetness and a sea-breeze-like finish reveal the distillate before oak adds its flavours. Enjoy this glimpse of Rishiri’s character with a little soft water to open the sweetness and aromas.

Award recognises spirit produced in 2025.

Photo: Kamui Whisky K.K. · Koda6029 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Kamui Whisky

CONTENTS

Yuza Distillery

YUZA

Yuza, Yamagata | Kinryu

YUZA Spring in Japan 2024

Single Malt Japanese Whisky | Limited release



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

KEY MALT
SHERRY
over first-fill bourbon spirit

SPRING
Winter gives way to spring
Distilling since 2018



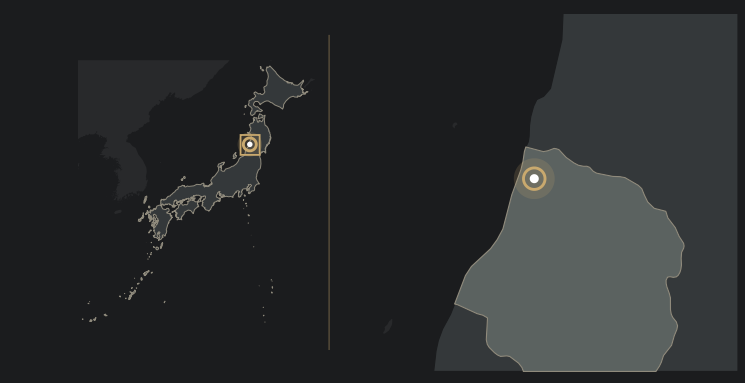
Mount Chokai over autumn fields in Yuza

Natural colour
Non-chill-filtered
700ml · limited release

30ml ¥2,750 tax included

目次

Shonai plain, below Mt Chokai



Yuza Distillery

Mount Chokai over spring paddies



Mount Chokai mirrored in spring paddies

The burst of spring after a hard snow-country winter, in a glass.

From Yuza, distilling since 2018: a limited vatting of selected first-fill bourbon casks with sherry-cask spirit as the key malt. Like spring bursting open after a harsh snow-country winter, sweet, floral aromas open up, and a smooth, fruity palate builds to a generous, comforting finish. A glimpse of how the ”Yuza style” keeps evolving.

Photo: kyohei ito / CC BY-SA 2.0 - Flickr.jpg)・あおもりくま / Public domain
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Yuza Distillery

YUZA

Yuza, Yamagata | Kinryu

YUZA 2023

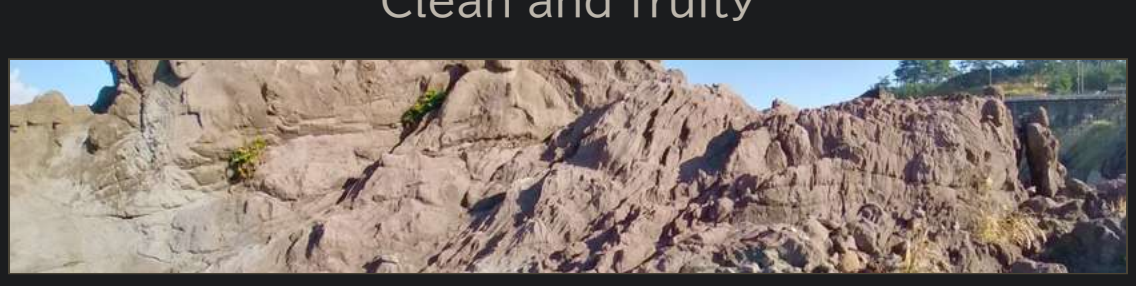
Single Malt Japanese Whisky | House style



ALCOHOL
51%
ABV

CASK
BOURBON
selected matured spirit

HOUSE STYLE
The Yuza standard
Clean and fruity

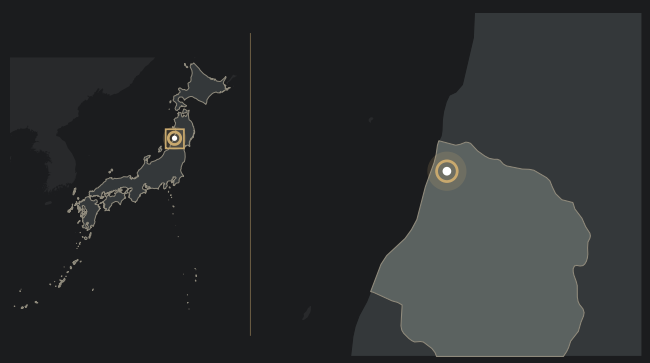


Juroku Rakan-iwa rocks at Fukura

Natural colour
Non-chill-filtered
700ml

30ml ¥2,850 tax included

Shonai plain, below Mt Chokai



Maruike-sama, pond of spring water



Yuza Distillery

Maruike-sama, a pond fed by Chokai spring water

Yuza's point of origin: clean, fruity, quietly sweet.

YUZA 2023 is the single malt that defines the distillery's house style, its point of origin. The spirit was selected from bourbon-cask maturation. Made with underground water from Mount Chokai, it is clean and fruity with a vanilla-like sweetness. As the Yuza standard, it is best met neat first.

Photo: Hiroaki Kaneko / CC BY-SA 3.0 23 Aug, 2014 - panoramio.jpg)・あおもりくま / Public domain
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Yuza Distillery

YUZA

Yuza, Yamagata | Kinryu

YUZA Second edition 2022

Single Malt | Cask Strength



ALCOHOL
62%
ABV

FIRST SEASON
2019
Casked February–July

CASK STRENGTH
Full strength
An early limited release



Mount Chokai over autumn fields in Yuza

Natural colour
Non-chill-filtered
Released October 2022

30ml ¥3,750 tax included

Yuza, Yamagata



Yuza Distillery

At the foot of Mount Chokai



Yuza Distillery amid the Shonai countryside

Generous fruit, with strength beneath.

Yuza began distilling in 2018. This limited release selects spirit casked between February and July 2019, its first season. Bottled at 62% cask strength, it captures the power of those early days: dried-fruit aromas meet lively apple and pear, while vanilla-like sweetness and a creamy texture give way to a substantial body.

Photo: Yuza Distillery・あおもりくま / Public domain
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Yuza Distillery

Gakkogawa Distillery

GAKKOGAWA

Yuza, Yamagata | Gakkogawa Distillery Co.

GAKKOGAWA Distillery NEWBORN 2026 Edition

Bourbon cask | Aged 20 months | 200ml



ALCOHOL
53%
ABV

DISTILLED
Mar 2024
Bottled Dec 2025

EX-BOURBON BARREL
20 months
Laureate malt, non-peated

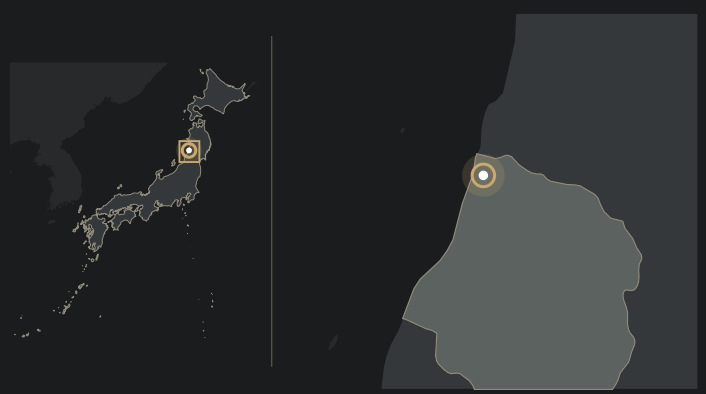


The Shonai dune coast running toward Yuza

Named after the clear Gakko River
Non-chill-filtered
A record of the pursuit

30ml ¥2,200 tax included

Yuza, by the Gakko River



Gakkogawa Distillery

The Gakko River, from Chokai to the sea



The Gakko River in Yuza

In pursuit of a drop as clear as the river's flow.

The Gakko River carries Mount Chokai’s snowmelt to the Sea of Japan, and lends its name to this young distillery in Yuza. This Newborn shows its spirit on the way: non-peated Laureate malt distilled in March 2024, matured 20 months in an ex-bourbon barrel and bottled at 53% without chill-filtration. Youthful green apple and pear meet soft bourbon-cask vanilla, a record of the pursuit so far.

Photo: げんげん from Kanagawa, Japan / CC BY 2.1 jp・Cp9asngf / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Asaka Distillery

ASAKA

Koriyama, Fukushima | Sasanokawa Shuzo

YAMAZAKURA ASAKA PEATED

1st Wooden Washback | First batch from wooden washbacks



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

PEAT
50ppm
Phenol level

WOODEN WASHBACK
Fermented in wood only
Washbacks replaced in 2019



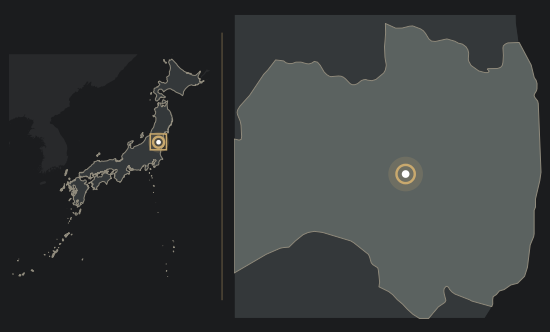
The Asaka Canal, carrying Lake Inawashiro water

Non-chill-filtered
Natural colour
700ml

30ml ¥1,958 tax included

目次

Asaka, Koriyama



Tohoku's oldest whisky maker



Asaka Distillery — Sasanokawa Shuzo in Koriyama

Smoke from Tohoku's oldest whisky house, fermented in wood.

Founded in 1765 and licensed for whisky in 1946, Sasanokawa Shuzo is the oldest surviving whisky maker in Tohoku. Distilling resumed at Asaka in 2016, and in 2019 the washbacks were replaced with wooden ones to encourage secondary fermentation. This bottling uses only spirit fermented in those wooden tubs, from malt peated to 50ppm: smoke that has melted fully into the whisky.

Photo: 藍原あおい / CC BY-SA 4.0・BehBeh at Japanese Wikipedia / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Asaka Distillery

ASAKA

Koriyama, Fukushima | Sasanokawa Shuzo

YAMAZAKURA ASAKA 2025 EDITION

Yamazakura Single Malt Japanese Whisky Asaka 2025



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

SINCE
1946
Whisky licence

BLEND OF CASKS
Selected Asaka spirit
Fresh and floral

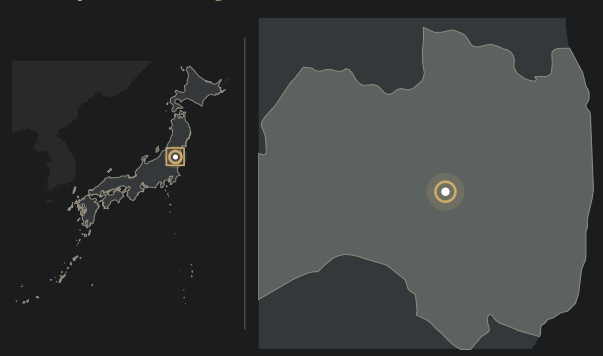


Cherry blossom by Lake Inawashiro, Mount Bandai beyond

Non-chill-filtered
Natural colour
700ml

30ml ¥1,958 tax included

Asaka, Koriyama



Lake Inawashiro and Mount Bandai



Asaka Distillery

Mount Bandai across Lake Inawashiro

A fresh, floral nose and a clean, pretty sweetness.

Founded in 1765 and licensed for whisky in 1946, Sasanokawa Shuzo is the oldest surviving whisky maker in Tohoku. This annual edition blends several carefully chosen casks distilled at its Asaka Distillery. Fresh, floral aromatics and a clean sweetness make it typically Asaka in style. To keep its character intact it is bottled non-chill-filtered and at natural colour.

Photo: Σ64 / CC BY 3.0 · Sugikats / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Niigata Kameda Distillery

NIIGATA KAMEDA Konan-ku, Niigata City | Niigata Micro Distillery

Niigata Kameda New Pot Peated

Unaged peated spirit | 200ml



ALCOHOL
60%
ABV

BOTTLE
200ml
UK-made malt

UNAGED
Before the cask
Peated



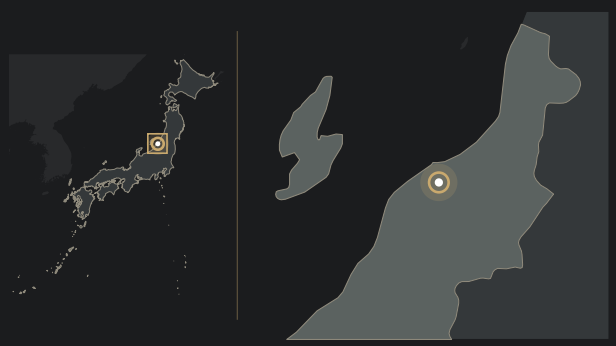
Riverside at Bandaijima Park

”I like sweet whisky
with a long finish.”
The words the distillery began with

30ml ¥2,178 tax included

目次

Niigata City, Shinano estuary



Niigata Kameda Distillery

Niigata, at the Shinano estuary



The Shinano estuary and Niigata city

Smoke unmasked: Kameda before it meets the oak.

Niigata Kameda opened in 2021 in an industrial park in Niigata City. It began when a husband lamented that the whiskies he loved were vanishing in the spirit shortage, and his wife replied, ”Then make the whisky you want to drink yourself.” This is their peated spirit straight from the still, clear and unaged: bold smoke and malt sweetness before any cask has had its say. A drop of water opens it up.

Photo: Kevinjapan (uploader; no author field) / Public domain · Drph17 / CC BY 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Niigata Kameda Distillery

NIIGATA KAMEDA Konan-ku, Niigata City | Niigata Micro Distillery

Niigata Kameda Newborn Wine Cask Michibiki

for Whisky Messe Kyoto 2023 | 200ml



ALCOHOL
59%
ABV

CASK
WINE
newborn spirit

MICHIBIKI
”Guidance”
Whisky Messe 2023 bottling

A limited bottling made for
Liquor Mountain Whisky Messe
in Kyoto, 2023

30ml ¥2,242 tax included

Niigata City, Shinano estuary



Niigata Kameda Distillery

Swans wintering at Lake Hyoko



Wintering swans on Lake Hyoko

A hawk seizing grapes: young spirit guided by a wine cask.

A newborn bottling made by Niigata Kameda for Whisky Messe in Kyoto 2023, showing its spirit part-way through maturation. Distilled from UK-made malt, rested in a wine cask and bottled at 59%. The label, a hawk clutching grapes, carries the name Michibiki, ”guidance”: the red fruit and gentle tannin of the wine cask steer the young malt’s sweetness and smoke in a new direction.

Photo: DAI-nk / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Niigata Kameda Distillery

NIIGATA KAMEDA Konan-ku, Niigata City | Niigata Micro Distillery

OHTANI ”Pisces”, The Zodiac Sign No.1

Single Malt Japanese Whisky | Zodiac series No.1



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

SERIES
No.1
Pisces

SINGLE MALT
100% Japanese-made malt
Kameda spirit only

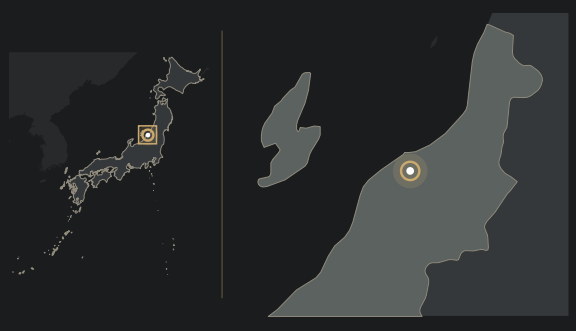


Niigata at night along the Shinano

”I like sweet whisky
with a long finish.”
The founder’s creed in a bottle

30ml ¥2,178 tax included

Niigata City, Shinano estuary



Niigata Kameda Distillery

Bandai Bridge and the Shinano River



Bandai Bridge over the Shinano River

The zodiac journey begins: sweet, with a long, lingering finish.

OHTANI is Niigata Kameda’s single malt, made entirely from its own spirit. The first release in a series depicting the twelve signs of the zodiac is Pisces. ”I like sweet whisky with a long finish, and I want to make whisky for the people who find mine delicious, and for myself,” says the founder. True to those words, honeyed sweetness leads into a long, gently smoky finish.

Photo: くろふね / CC BY 4.0・るーと16 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Niigata Kameda Distillery

NIIGATA KAMEDA Konan-ku, Niigata City | Niigata Micro Distillery

OHTANI ”Capricorn”, The Zodiac Sign No.2

Single Malt Japanese Whisky | Zodiac series No.2



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

SERIES
No.2
Capricorn

NON CHILL-FILTERED
Unfiltered
Kameda spirit only

”One in a thousand,
one in ten thousand is enough.”
The founder’s words

30ml ¥1,980 tax included

Niigata City, Shinano estuary



Niigata Kameda Distillery

The Ito mansion, Northern Culture Museum



The great hall of the Northern Culture Museum

Not for everyone: for the one person who calls it their favourite.

The second zodiac release, Capricorn, wears a label of books on a shelf. ”I am not trying to make a whisky that seven or eight out of ten people like. One in a thousand, one in ten thousand is enough; I want to make it for the person who says mine is their favourite.” Bottled without chill-filtration, it keeps its full malt body, oily texture and long, sweet finish.

Photo: Ann Lee / CC BY-SA 2.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Niigata Kameda Distillery

NIIGATA KAMEDA Konan-ku, Niigata City | Niigata Micro Distillery

OHTANI "Gemini", The Zodiac Sign No.3

Bourbon & Oloroso casks, finished in Mizunara



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

SERIES
No.3
Gemini

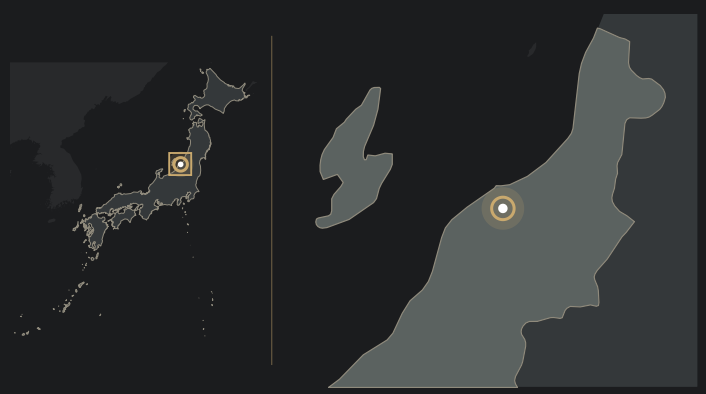
MIZUNARA FINISH
Bourbon & Oloroso spirit
Finished in Japanese oak

Non-chill-filteredThe twins' two handbags stand for the two casks

30ml ¥1,925 tax included

目次

Niigata City, Shinano estuary



Niigata Kameda Distillery

Mount Yahiko and the Echigo plain



The rice paddies of the Echigo plain from the air

Twins from two casks, united in Mizunara oak.

The third zodiac release, Gemini, pairs two "twins" of different character, bourbon-cask and Oloroso sherry-cask spirit, and finishes them together in Japanese Mizunara oak. The two handbags carried by the twins on the label stand for those two casks. Bourbon vanilla and sherried raisin are joined by Mizunara's sandalwood-like perfume, resolving into a long, sweet finish. Non-chill-filtered.

Photo: 新潟市(Niigata City) / CC BY 2.1 jp
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Niigata Kameda Distillery

NIIGATA KAMEDA Konan-ku, Niigata City | Niigata Micro Distillery

OHTANI WHISKY NAGOYA EDITION

A blend inspired by the golden shachihoko of Nagoya Castle



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

EDITION
NAGOYA
Nagoya-only release

PEAT × RICHNESS
Peat for the shachihoko
Richness and sweetness for the castle

The soaring golden shachihoko
and the elegance of
Nagoya Castle in one bottle

30ml ¥2,585 tax included

Niigata City, Shinano estuary



Niigata Kameda Distillery

Sunset over the Sea of Japan



Sunset over Mount Yahiko and the Echigo plain

Peat for the golden shachihoko, sweetness for the castle's grace.

A limited edition blended in the image of the shachihoko, the golden tiger-fish ornaments that crown Nagoya Castle. Peat expresses the creature rearing proudly over the roof, while richness and sweetness express the elegance of the castle itself. Behind the power of 55% lies a long, comfortingly sweet finish: another face of Kameda, sent from Niigata to Nagoya.

Photo: Koichi Hayakawa / CC BY-SA 2.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Yoshida Denzai Distillery

YOSHIDA DENZAI

Murakami, Niigata | Yoshida Denzai Kogyo

Yoshida Denzai Single Grain, 1 Year, 2nd

GRAIN WHISKEY DISTILLERY | Virgin oak | 250ml



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

BOTTLED
Sep 2025
1 year · 250ml

GRAIN BILL
Corn 70% + rye · barley
rye malt 15% · barley malt 15%



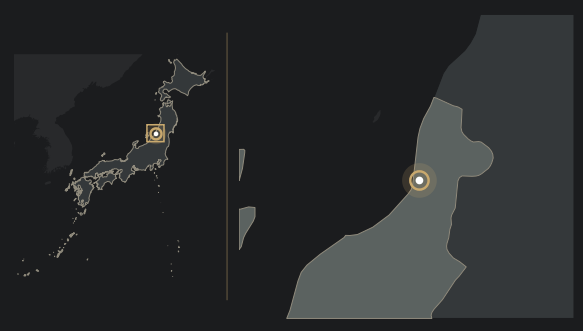
Lake Asahiko on the upper Miomote River

One year in
virgin American white oak
3-day fermentation

30ml ¥1,760 tax included

目次

Murakami, Niigata



Yoshida Denzai Distillery

The castle town of Murakami



Murakami town and the sea from the castle ruins

Japanese grain whiskey, begun in Niigata by an electrical-parts maker.

A Tokyo maker of electrical materials opened this craft distillery, devoted entirely to grain whiskey, in Murakami, Niigata, in October 2022. A mash of 70% Hokkaido dent corn, 15% rye malt and 15% barley malt was matured for one year in virgin American white oak. Sweet bourbon-like vanilla and toasted corn meet rye spice: a gradient of flavour created from three grains and several casks.

Photo: 皓月旗 / CC BY-SA 4.0 · 河川一等兵 / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Yoshida Denzai Distillery

YOSHIDA DENZAI

Murakami, Niigata | Yoshida Denzai Kogyo

Yoshida Denzai STAR DELTA

Japanese Craft Whiskey / Newborn | 2 years in virgin oak



ALCOHOL
53%
ABV

AGED
2 YEARS
Virgin American white oak

SMALL BATCH GRAIN
Corn 70% + rye・barley
rye malt 15%・barley malt 15%・700ml

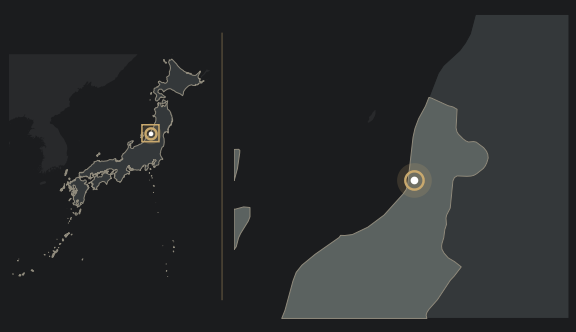


Waves on the rocks at Maoroshi

”Star-delta” is a motor
starting circuit: a name only
an electrical maker would choose

30ml ¥1,760 tax included

Murakami, Niigata



Yoshida Denzai Distillery

Sunset at Sasagawa-nagare



Sunset at Sasagawa-nagare

Two years in new oak give this grain whiskey its starlight.

Named, as befits an electrical-parts maker, after the star-delta motor starting circuit, this is Yoshida Denzai’s flagship. Grain spirit from 70% Hokkaido corn, 15% rye malt and 15% barley malt was matured for two years in virgin American white oak. Rich vanilla and caramel from the new wood, the toastiness of roasted corn and the dry spice of rye. In a highball, its sweet aroma rises straight from the glass.

Photo: Fumihiko Ueno / CC BY 3.0・Fumihiko Ueno / CC BY 3.0.jpg)
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Hakkai Brewery

HAKKAISAN Fukasawahara Distillery, Minami-Uonuma | Hakkaisan

UONUMA Single Grain Japanese Whisky 2025 LIMITED

A rare whisky distilled from rice



ALCOHOL
52%
ABV

AGED
8 YEARS
Distilling since 2016

RICE WHISKY
Japanese rice + malted barley
Sake yeast, Raiden-sama spring water



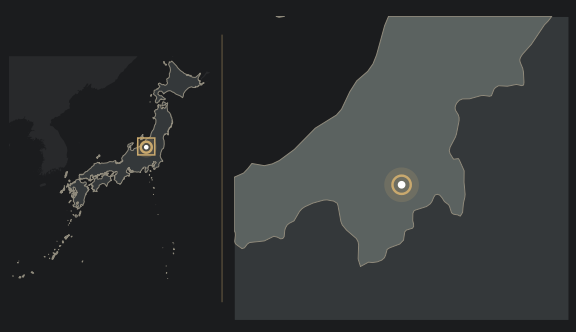
Alpenglow on Mount Hakkai

Brewed with the same
water as Hakkaisan sake

30ml ¥1,867 tax included

目次

Below Mount Hakkai



Hakkai Brewery

Winter in snow-country Uonuma



The snow-covered Uonuma basin

Hakkaisan's water and rice, turned to amber over eight years.

Hakkai Brewery, maker of Hakkaisan sake, began distilling grain whisky from Japanese rice in Uonuma in 2016, with the same Raiden-sama spring water as its sake, and sake yeast. Matured slowly for eight years, it is one of the rarest whisky styles in the world: refined amber, with a sweet nose of vanilla and flowers. Label painting by local artist Yasuo.

Photo: Koichi Hayakawa / CC BY 4.0-m.jpg)・くろふね / CC BY 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Shinobu Distillery

SHINOBU

Nishikan-ku, Niigata City | Niigata Beer Co.

THE SHINOBU PURE MALT 10 YEARS OLD

Mizunara Japanese Oak Finish



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

AGED
10 YEARS
700ml

MIZUNARA FINISH
Sherry・bourbon・hogshead
Finished in Japanese oak

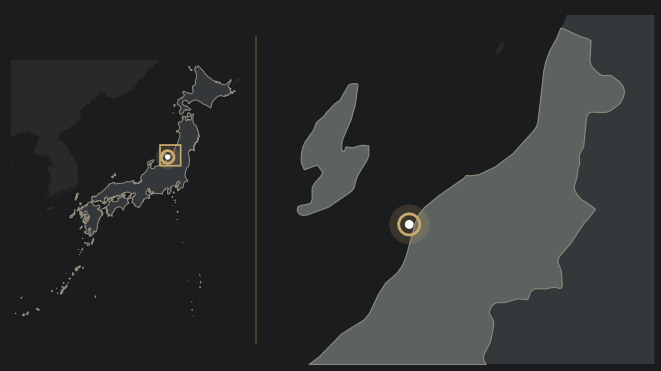


Vineyards at Kakudahama beneath Mount Kakuda

Non-coloured, additive free
Non-chill-filtered
Master blender Ken Usami

30ml ¥1,705 tax included

Echizenhama, Sea of Japan



Shinobu Distillery

Mount Kakuda and Kakudahama



Mount Kakuda from Uwasekigata Park

Ten years, finished in Mizunara, from snow country.

Shinobu stands at Echizenhama on Niigata’s Sea of Japan coast, a region famous for its ”three white treasures”: snow, rice and sake. Master blender Ken Usami blends malts aged in sherry, bourbon and hogshead casks, then finishes them in Japan’s prized Mizunara oak, which imparts rich, honeyed flavours of apples, pears, cloves and nutmeg. Non-coloured, non-chill-filtered.

Photo: Drph17 / CC BY 4.0 · Bernie Ongewe / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Hokuriku & Kanto

Part I: Toyama & Ibaraki / 30 ml

TOYAMA

Saburomaru V The Hierophant ›	48%	¥2,805
Saburomaru V Mitsukoshi Isetan Exclusive Bottle ›	59%	¥2,945
Saburomaru Distillery The Sun Final ›	48%	¥1,925
Hokuriku Whisky Sun Shine Premium ›	40%	¥1,045

IBARAKI | VISIT YASATO DISTILLERY ›

Hinomaru Whisky 2025 Edition ›	48%	¥1,815
Hinomaru Whisky 2026 Edition ›	48%	¥1,815
Hinomaru Whisky Kome ›	48%	¥1,815
Hinomaru Whisky Craft Cask Islay Cask Finish ›	48%	¥1,925
Hinomaru Craft Cask Elegant Sherry, Matured in 3 Different Casks ›	48%	¥1,925
Hinomaru Signature 1823 Small Batch Limited Edition ›	48%	¥1,977
Hinomaru Whisky Cherry Brandy Cask C-8106 ›	48%	¥1,977
Hinomaru Whisky Wine Cask Finish No.4181 ›	48%	¥1,977
Hinomaru Hitachino Sherry Cask 2026 Edition ›	48%	¥2,035
Hinomaru Hitachino Beer Cask for Mitsukoshi Isetan ›	60%	¥2,945

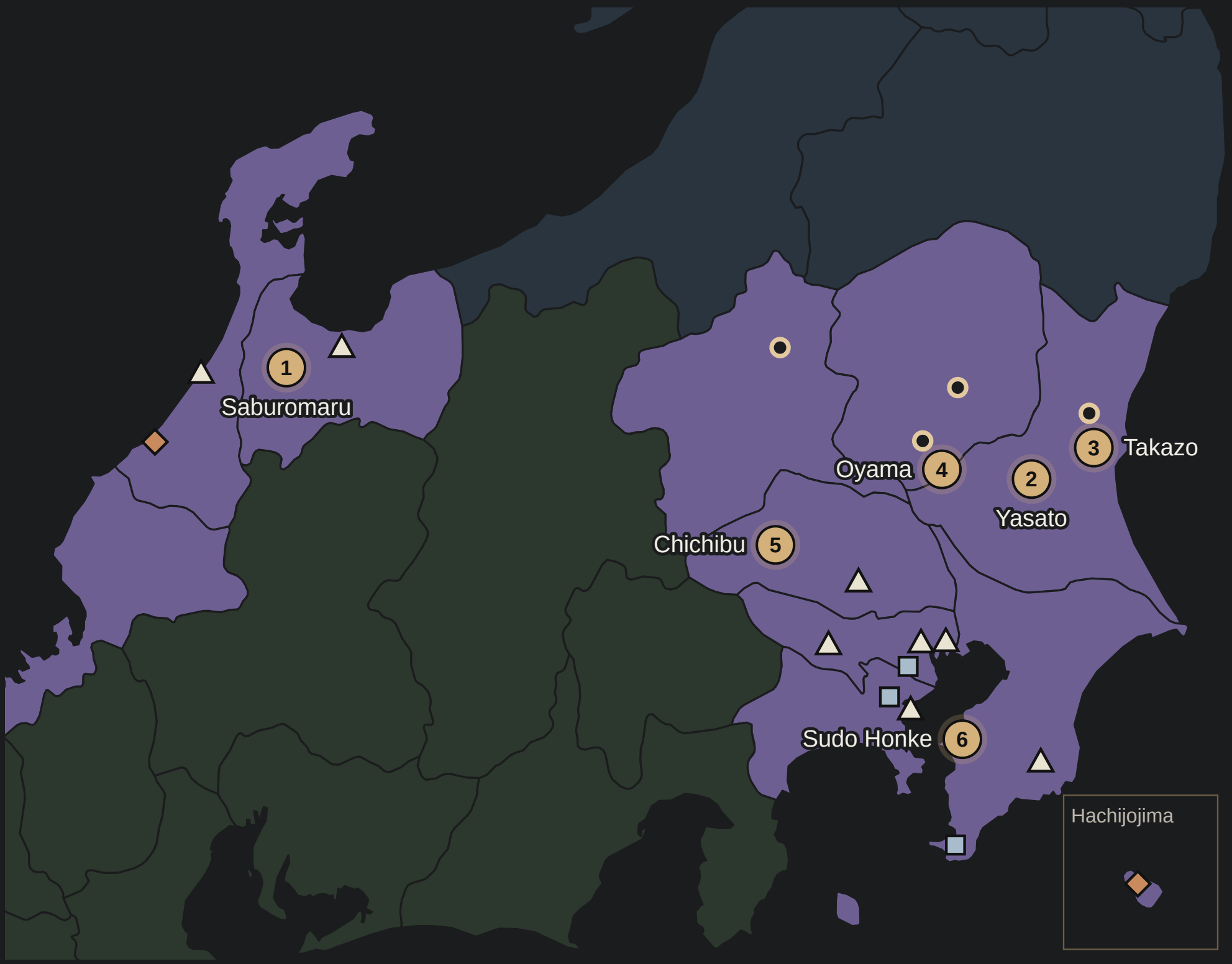
目次

AREA MAP 2 / 4

● Whisky (numbered) ◆ Shochu ▲ Gin ■ Rum, vodka etc. ○ Sake, liqueur etc.

Hokuriku & Kanto

Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa



CONTENTS



Kurobe Gorge, Toyama

Photo: Luka Peternel / CC BY-SA 4.0



Kegon Falls, Nikko, Tochigi

Photo: Jordy Meow / CC BY-SA 3.0



Tojinbo cliffs, Fukui

Photo: 雷太 / CC BY 2.0

WHISKY · TAP A NUMBER OR A NAME TO OPEN ITS PAGE

Whisky distilleries & bottles

6 distilleries • 27 bottles



1 **Saburomaru Distillery** Toyama

Saburomaru V The Hierophant / Saburomaru V Mitsukoshi Isetan Exclusive Bottle / The Sun Final / Hokuriku Whisky Sun Shine Premium



2 **Kiuchi Yasato Distillery** Ibaraki

[story]Visiting Yasato Distillery / Hinomaru 2022 3y Shangri-La 4th Release, Whisky Connoisseur Club / Hinomaru Whisky 2025 Edition / Hinomaru Whisky 2026 Edition / Hinomaru Whisky Kome / Hinomaru Whisky Craft Cask Islay Cask Finish / Hinomaru Craft Cask Elegant Sherry, Matured in 3 Different Casks / Hinomaru Signature 1823 Small Batch Limited Edition / Hinomaru Whisky Cherry Brandy Cask C-8106 / Hinomaru Whisky Wine Cask Finish No.4181 / Hinomaru Hitachino Sherry Cask 2026 Edition / Hinomaru Hitachino Beer Cask for Mitsukoshi Isetan / Hinomaru Distillery Exclusive PX Cask Strength / Hinomaru Distillery Exclusive Oloroso Cask Strength / [gin]Hinomaru Gin “Kura-fu-do”



3 **Takazo Distillery (Meiri Shurui)** Ibaraki

TAKAZO the First 2026 3y Plum Wine Cask Finish / TAKAZO PURE MALT WHISKY REBORN MIZUNARA CASK FINISH / TAKAZO PURE MALT WHISKY REBORN PLUM WINE CASK FINISH



4 **Nikko Kaido Oyama Distillery** Tochigi

Tetsu / TETSU OYAMA Edition 2025 The First



5 **Chichibu Distillery** Saitama

Ichiro's Malt Double Distilleries / Ichiro's Malt MWR Mizunara Wood Reserve / Ichiro's Malt WWR Wine Wood Reserve / Ichiro's Malt & Grain World Blended Whisky, White Label / Ichiro's Malt & Grain Classical Edition



6 **Sudo Honke** Chiba

Boso Whisky

目次

OTHER DRINKS FROM THIS AREA · TAP A NAME

◆ Shochu	Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute・Hachijo Kohatsu
▲ Gin	Shin Distillation Laboratory・Alembic Ono Distillery・Musashino Distillery・Fukagawa Distillery・Toranomon Distillery・Tokyo Hachioji Distillery・Number Eight Distillery・mitosaya Botanical Distillery
■ Spirits	Boso Oigura Distillery・Blue Rabbit Distillery・Yokohama Bay Brewing
○ Sake etc.	Tsuchida Brewery・Tochigi Liqueur・Kiuchi Brewery・Kobayashi Shuzo (Hououbiden)

Hokuriku & Kanto

Part II: Ibaraki, Tochigi, Saitama & Chiba / 30 ml

IBARAKI | VISIT YASATO DISTILLERY ›

Hinomaru 2022 3y Shangri-La 4th Release, Whisky Connoisseur Club ›	58%	¥2,585
Hinomaru Distillery Exclusive PX Cask Strength ›	61%	¥2,805
Hinomaru Distillery Exclusive Oloroso Cask Strength ›	61.6%	¥2,805
TAKAZO the First 2026 3y Plum Wine Cask Finish ›	48%	¥1,925
TAKAZO PURE MALT WHISKY REBORN MIZUNARA CASK FINISH ›	46%	¥1,815
TAKAZO PURE MALT WHISKY REBORN PLUM WINE CASK FINISH ›	46%	¥1,925

TOCHIGI

Tetsu / TETSU OYAMA Edition 2025 The First ›	52%	¥2,475

SAITAMA

Ichiro’s Malt Double Distilleries ›	46%	¥1,867
Ichiro’s Malt MWR Mizunara Wood Reserve ›	46%	¥1,815
Ichiro’s Malt WWR Wine Wood Reserve ›	46%	¥1,705
Ichiro’s Malt & Grain World Blended Whisky, White Label ›	46%	¥1,155
Ichiro’s Malt & Grain Classical Edition ›	48%	¥1,705

CHIBA

Boso Whisky ›	40%	¥1,045

CONTENTS

Saburomaru Distillery

SABUROMARU

Tonami, Toyama | Wakatsuru Shuzo

Saburomaru V THE HIEROPHANT

Single Malt Saburomaru V | Heavily peated



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

YEAST
ALE
ale + whisky yeast

ZEMON
World’s first cast pot still
Developed in 2019

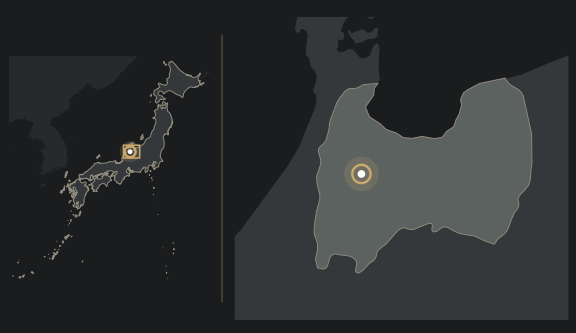


The Tonami plain in winter

Keywords: master, tradition, guidance
”A path is made
by walking it.”

30ml ¥2,805 tax included

Tonami plain, Toyama



Saburomaru Distillery

Hokuriku’s oldest whisky distillery



The entrance of Saburomaru Distillery

A seasoned yeast leads the way, and a new tradition is handed down.

Fifth in a series named after the major arcana, The Hierophant. In 2021 Saburomaru began propagating ale yeast and using it in a matured state. Aged ale yeast, combined with fresh whisky yeast, yields a rounded, full-bodied flavour, much as a whole workshop matures when a veteran craftsman leads the way, says the distillery. Heavily peated malt, distilled in the cast-metal ZEMON pot still. Non-chill-filtered.

Photo: Keeezawa / CC BY 4.0 ・ suri / CC BY-SA 2.0.jpg)
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Saburomaru Distillery

SABUROMARU

Tonami, Toyama | Wakatsuru Shuzo

Saburomaru V Mitsukoshi Isetan Exclusive Bottle

Single cask | Cask #210085 bourbon barrel | One of 230



ALCOHOL
59%
Cask strength

DISTILLED
2021
Bottled 2025 · One of 230

HEAVILY ISLAY PEATED
Heavily peated Islay malt
Distilled in ZEMON

Mitsukoshi Isetan exclusive:
the first Saburomaru
single cask for the store

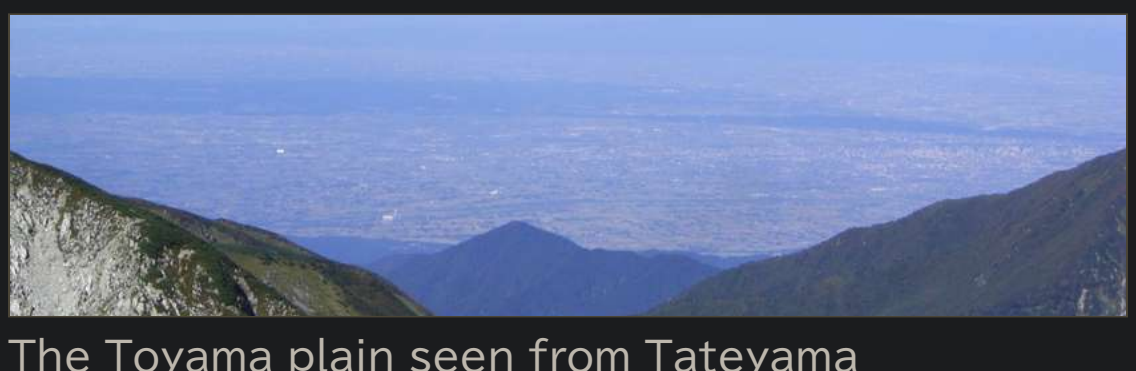
30ml ¥2,945 tax included

Tonami plain, Toyama



Saburomaru Distillery

Toyama plain and the Tateyama range



The Toyama plain seen from Tateyama

Fresh sea air, soft fruit and a toasty smoke on the finish.

Saburomaru is Hokuriku's oldest whisky distillery. Since gaining its licence in 1952 it has devoted itself to smoky whisky, mashing peated malt only, and in 2019 it developed ZEMON, the world's first cast-metal pot still. For its first Mitsukoshi Isetan exclusive it chose one bourbon barrel of heavily Islay-peated spirit: a fresh, sea-breeze nuance and soft fruit, with a fragrant smoke drifting through the finish.

Photo: (ドルチェ) / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Saburomaru Distillery

SABUROMARU

Tonami, Toyama | Wakatsuru Shuzo

Saburomaru THE SUN FINAL

Blended whisky | The finale of Saburomaru's finest blend



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

GRAIN
12+ YRS
further matured in-house

MALT × GRAIN
Led by Saburomaru malt
Mizunara-head & toasted casks

A peaty, aromatic duet of malt and grain

Non-chill-filtered

30ml ¥1,925 tax included

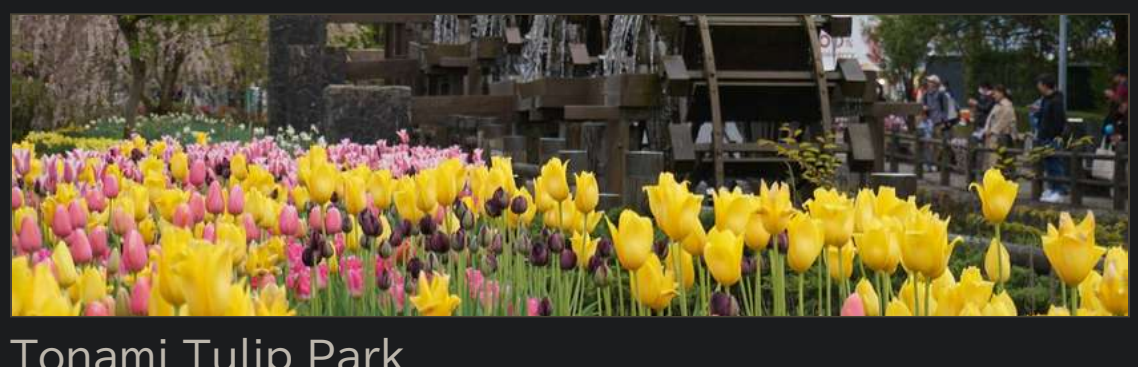
目次

Tonami plain, Toyama



Saburomaru Distillery

Tonami, home of tulips



Tonami Tulip Park

Saburomaru malt and house-aged grain, a peaty duet.

Saburomaru malt makes up more than half of the blend: mainly bourbon-cask spirit, together with whisky aged in Mizunara-headed casks made by a local cooperage and in toasted casks, giving a smoky, full yet finely woven flavour. The grain whisky, already aged over 12 years, was matured further at the distillery and wraps the powerful malt in harmony. Many layers held together as one: the finale of THE SUN, the peak of Saburomaru's blends.

Photo: 掬茶 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

HINOMARU WHISKY　日の丸ウイスキー

Yasato Distillery

八郷蒸溜所

Kiuchi Brewery
Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery, a former community hall at the eastern foot of Mt. Tsukuba

A 200-year-old brewery making Japanese whisky beneath Mt. Tsukuba.

Kiuchi Brewery was founded in 1823 in Naka, Ibaraki. Besides sake, it is known worldwide for Hitachino Nest Beer, the craft beer it launched in 1996. Kiuchi began making whisky in 2016 and in 2020 opened Yasato Distillery at the eastern foot of Mt. Tsukuba in Ishioka. The building is a former community hall restored with local Ishioka timber. Alongside malt, the distillery uses Ibaraki barley and wheat and Japanese rice, running both pot stills and a column still. Since 2023 it has malted its own barley in Ishioka, aiming for a whisky made in Ibaraki from grain to glass.

1823	1996	2016	2020
Kiuchi Brewery founded	Hitachino Nest Beer	First whisky	Yasato Distillery opens



Milling the malt mill room



Mashing stainless mash tuns



Distilling the copper pot still



Spirit every cask, its own colour



Maturing casks on red racks



Shop the visitor centre

Photos: 2102 (taken 30 Aug 2026)

Info: Hinomaru Whisky, Kiuchi Brewery (as of Nov 2026)

Why not visit the distillery yourself?

On Sunday 30 August 2026, we at 2102 joined the tour and blending workshop at Yasato Distillery. From the malty mill room through mashing, distilling and the cask warehouse to the blending table, where you pipette spirits from different casks into a whisky that exists only once: your own MY BLEND. A dram with the makers is something special.



Blending workshop: nosing and tasting to find your own recipe



Single-cask blending components (48% each)

Distillery tour

¥2,000 tax incl., pay on site

- About 60 min (35 min tour + 3 tastings)
- Daily exc. Tue, 10:45 / 14:25
- Weekends & holidays also 12:30
- 10 guests per tour

Blending workshop

¥10,000 tax incl.

- About 120 min (tour + 85 min blending)
- Sundays only, 13:00–15:00
- 16 guests, aged 20+
- Take home your labelled bottle

Book both by the day before on the official website (Japanese). Drivers get a souvenir instead of tastings.

目次

Getting there



Address	1300 Sugama, Ishioka, Ibaraki 315-0151
Hours	10:00–17:00 (closed Tue; open on holidays)
Bus	From JR Ishioka Sta. (Joban Line) east exit stop 2, about 30 min to “Yasato Jōryūsho”, then 3 min walk. Weekends & holidays only; day pass ¥1,300
Car	About 20 min from Tsuchiura-kita IC or Ishioka-Omitama Smart IC
On site	Shop with distillery-only bottles, tasting bar, Hitachino ham & sausages
Tel	+81 299-56-4411





“Yasato Jōryūsho” bus stop | Shop & tasting bar



Hinomaru whisky at 2102

2025 Edition ›	2026 Edition ›	KOME ›
Islay Cask ›	Elegant Sherry ›	Signature 1823 ›
C-8106 ›	No.4181 ›	Hitachino Sherry ›
Beer Cask ›	PX S-1086 ›	Oloroso 1135 ›
Shangri-La ›		

Also try our “MY BLEND WHISKY (30 Aug 2026)” from the workshop.

See the Hinomaru list ›

Tours and bus times may change; please check the official website.

Map: Natural Earth

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru 2022, Aged 3 Years

Shangri-La Series 4 | Togenkyo



ALCOHOL
58%
ABV

AGED
3 YEARS
Distilled 2022 / Bottled 2025

LIMITED EDITION
102
Limited to 102 bottles

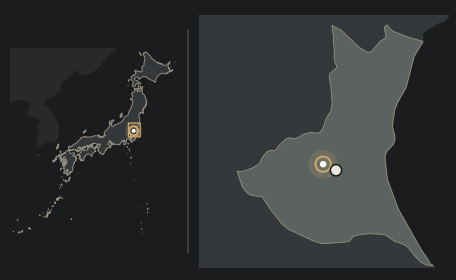
Selected by Mamoru Tsuchiya

Bourbon-cask maturation

Additional sherry maturation

30ml ¥2,585 tax included

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Hitachi Fudoki-no-Oka (●)

Thatched roofs of old Ishioka



A thatched farmhouse at Hitachi Fudoki-no-Oka, Ishioka

A journey through two casks, in 102 bottles.

Mamoru Tsuchiya selected this three-year-old single malt from Kiuchi Brewery’s Yasato Distillery. Matured in bourbon and then sherry casks, it was bottled at 58% cask strength, with just 102 bottles released. Try it neat, then add a few drops of water. The label shows Spituk Monastery in Ladakh, photographed by Tsuchiya on his travels.

Photo: Toshihiro Matsui / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Scotch Club
Bottle photo: 2102

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Whisky 2025 Edition

FOUR CASK MATURED | Single Malt Japanese Whisky



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

CASKS
4 TYPES
four cask types

AGED
3+ YEARS
at the eastern foot of Mt. Tsukuba

Bourbon, sherry,
wine and rum casks
100% malt

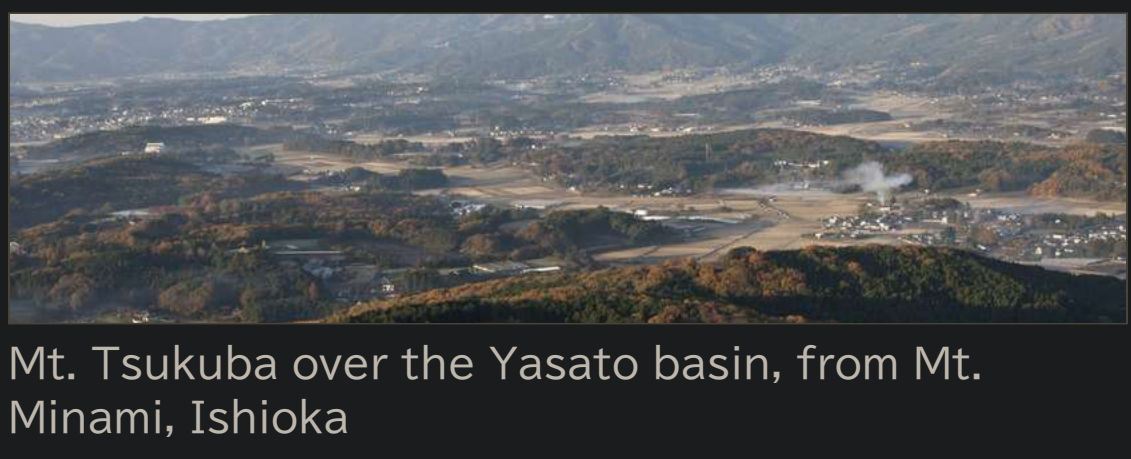
30ml ¥1,815 tax included

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Mount Tsukuba (●)

”Fuji in the west, Tsukuba in the east”



Mt. Tsukuba over the Yasato basin, from Mt. Minami, Ishioka

Four casks in harmony: a bright anniversary bottling.

Malt spirit made at Yasato Distillery was filled into bourbon, sherry, wine and rum casks and matured for at least three years at the eastern foot of Mt. Tsukuba, then blended into a balanced single malt celebrating 2025. Mt. Tsukuba, with its twin peaks Nantai and Nyotai, is one of Japan’s 100 famous mountains, long paired with Fuji in the saying ”Fuji in the west, Tsukuba in the east”.

Photo: Σ64 / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Whisky 2026 Edition

Single Malt Japanese Whisky | 2026 release



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

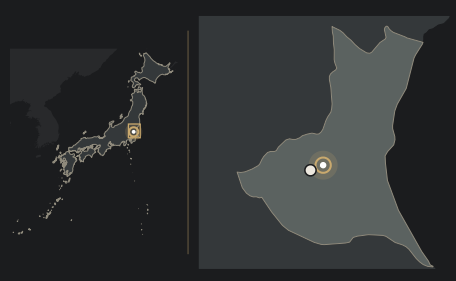
CASKS
MULTI
bourbon, sherry and more

AGED
3+ YEARS
in each cask

Malty sweetness
Bright
sherry-cask
notes
100% malt

30ml ¥1,815 tax included

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Tsukubasan Shrine (●)

A shrine whose deity is the mountain



The worship hall of Tsukubasan Shrine

Sweet and bright: this year's Hinomaru.

Only Yasato malt spirit, matured for at least three years in bourbon, sherry and other casks, then blended for balance. Malty sweetness and bright sherry notes open into complex cask flavours. Tsukubasan Shrine worships the mountain itself, with Izanagi on Mt. Nantai and Izanami on Mt. Nyotai, and is loved as a shrine for good matches.

Photo: Saigen Jiro / CC0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

CONTENTS

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Whisky KOME

HINOMARU Whisky KOME | Japanese Whisky



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

RICE
30%
sake rice in the mash, pot-still distilled

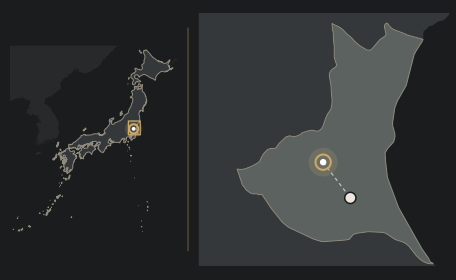
AGED
3+ YEARS
sherry and bourbon casks

A rice whisky
from a sake brewery
Rice grain x malt

30ml ¥1,815 tax included

目次

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Lake Kasumigaura (●)

Japan’s second-largest lake



Sunset on Lake Kasumigaura, Mt. Tsukuba beyond

Sake rice on the nose, from a sake brewer.

A mash with 30% sake rice was distilled in a pot still into rice grain whisky, then blended with rich malt and matured for over three years in bourbon and sherry casks. Fruity rice aromas meet layered malt. Lake Kasumigaura, second only to Lake Biwa, waters the surrounding paddies, and Ibaraki grows more lotus root than anywhere in Japan.

Photo: NJM4580 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Whisky Craft Cask Islay Cask Finish

CRAFT CASK ISLAY CASK FINISH | Single Malt



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

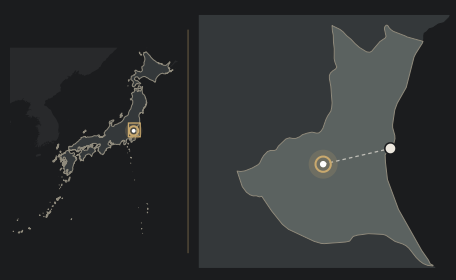
FINISH
ISLAY CASK
smoky Islay casks

BLEND
3 CASKS
Islay, sherry, bourbon

Sweet malt with
a wisp of sea and smoke
Single malt

30ml ¥1,925 tax included

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Oarai, Kamiiso Torii (●)

Where the gods came ashore



The Kamiiso Torii of Oarai Isosaki Shrine

Smoke melting into sweet malt.

The key is pot-still Yasato malt matured in bourbon casks and finished in smoky Islay casks, joined by sherry- and bourbon-cask malts. Sweet, mellow malt with smoke woven through. On the Oarai coast, the Kamiiso Torii stands on surf-beaten rocks where the gods are said to have come ashore, a famous spot for the first sunrise of the year.

Photo: Saigen Jiro / Public Domain
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

CONTENTS

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Whisky Craft Cask Elegant Sherry

CRAFT CASK ELEGANT SHERRY | Single Malt



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

CASKS
3 TYPES
bourbon, sherry, sakura

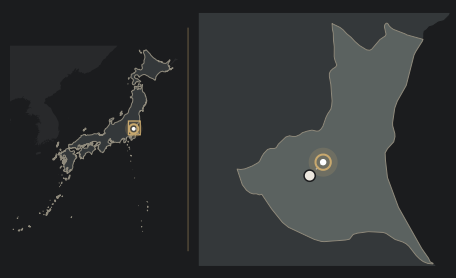
BASE
BOURBON
accents of sherry and sakura casks

Bright sherry
and Japanese cherry wood
Single malt

30ml ¥1,925 tax included

目次

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Hojo Pond, Tsukuba (●)

Cherry blossoms below Mt. Tsukuba



Cherry blossoms at Hojo Pond, Tsukuba

Three casks, one round and elegant whole.

Bourbon-cask Yasato malt forms the base, with accents of malt matured in sherry casks and Japanese cherry (sakura) wood casks. Bright sherry notes and a rounded, three-cask flavour. Below Mt. Tsukuba’s southern slopes, Hojo Pond in Tsukuba is ringed with cherry trees; in spring the blossoms and the mountain are mirrored together on the water.

Photo: Tsukuba City Office (つくば市) / CC BY 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Whisky Signature 1823

SMALL BATCH LIMITED EDITION | Single Malt



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

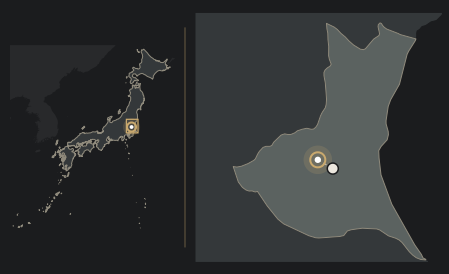
SINCE
1823
200 years of brewing

CASKS
3 TYPES
bourbon, rum, sherry

Partly made with barley
grown in Hitachino
Small batch

30ml ¥1,977 tax included

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Hitachi Kokubun-ji ruins (●)

Once the capital of Hitachi Province



The thatched gate of Hitachi Kokubun-ji, Ishioka

From local to the world: a 200-year signature.

Two hundred years of brewing, and Kiuchi's wish to fly "from local to the world". Partly made with barley grown in Hitachino, Yasato malt was matured in bourbon, rum and sherry casks and only selected spirit was blended. Ishioka was the seat of Hitachi Province's government in the Nara period; the site of its provincial temple, built on Emperor Shomu's decree, is a Special Historic Site where a temple still stands.

Photo: Saigen Jiro / CC0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

CONTENTS

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Single Cask Rice Whisky, Cherry Brandy Cask Finish

SINGLE CASK RICE WHISKY | Cask No. C-8106



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

AGED
4 YEARS
distilled May 2020

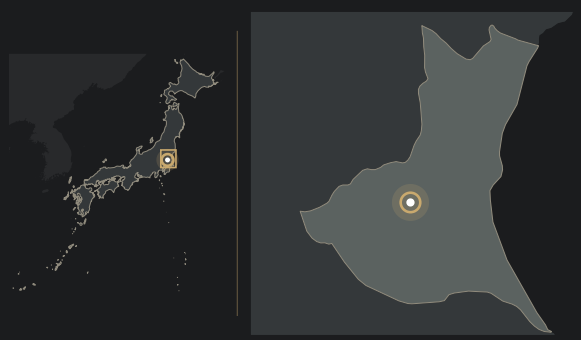
CASKS
BOURBON → CHERRY BRANDY
1st bourbon, 2nd cherry brandy

A single cask
of rice and malt
Rice whisky

30ml ¥1,977 tax included

目次

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) area

Yasato, a land of fruit



A pear orchard in blossom, Ishioka

Rice whisky with cherry-brandy fruit.

Rice whisky made from rice and malt, matured first in a bourbon cask and then in a cherry brandy cask, and bottled from a single cask. Distilled at Yasato in May 2020 and aged four years: soft rice character with cherry-like fruit. Yasato itself is fruit country, with pears, grapes, persimmons and blueberries, and busy farm stands in autumn.

Photo: Toshihiro Matsui / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Single Cask Malt Whisky, Wine Cask Finish

SINGLE CASK MALT WHISKY | Cask No. 4181



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

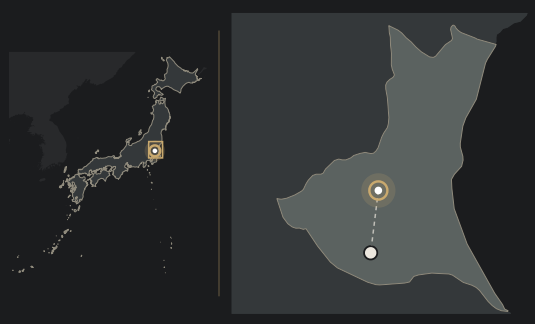
AGED
4 YEARS
distilled September 2020

CASKS
BOURBON → SAKURA → WINE
one cask, three woods

Bourbon, sakura and wine casks — Three-stagematuration

30ml ¥1,977 tax included

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Ushiku Chateau (●)

Japan’s first full-scale winery



Ushiku Chateau (Important Cultural Property)

Three casks, with a long wine finish.

Malt distilled at Yasato in September 2020, matured in a bourbon cask, then a sakura (Japanese cherry) cask, then a wine cask, and bottled from a single cask after four years. Cherry-wood perfume and red-fruit depth. Ushiku Chateau in Ibaraki, opened by Denbei Kamiya in 1903, was Japan’s first full-scale winery; its brick buildings are an Important Cultural Property.

Photo: Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

CONTENTS

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Whisky Hitachino Sherry Cask 2026 Edition

HITACHINO SHERRY CASK | Batch 02, 1 of 1,200



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

BARLEY
50%+
Japanese barley contract-grown in Ibaraki

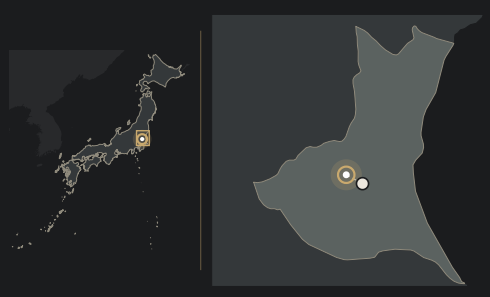
CASKS
4 SHERRY CASKS
each 3+ years

Ibaraki barley
and four sherry casks
Single malt

30ml ¥2,035 tax included

目次

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Hitachi Soja-gu (●)

One of Kanto's three great festivals



A lion-head float at the Ishioka Festival

Ibaraki barley in four sherry casks.

At least half the barley is Japanese barley contract-grown in Ibaraki. The pot-still malt was matured for three years or more in four different types of sherry cask and then blended: sweet, expansive sherry and a deep finish. The Ishioka Festival of Hitachi Soja-gu shrine is one of the three great festivals of Kanto; every September, floats and lion dancers fill the town.

Photo: katorisi / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Hitachino Beer Cask for Mitsukoshi Isetan

HITACHINO BEER CASK | Cask strength, 1 of 200



ALCOHOL
60%
ABV

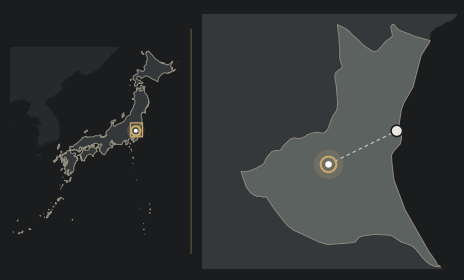
LIMITED
200
bottles, cask strength

CASKS
BEER x2 + ISLAY
two Hitachino Nest beer casks and an Islay cask

Only a brewery
could make this:
citrus aromas

30ml ¥2,945 tax included

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Hitachi Seaside Park (●)

A hill turned blue



Miharashi Hill, Hitachi Seaside Park

Citrus left behind by beer casks.

Yasato malt matured in casks that held two Hitachino Nest beers and in an Islay malt cask, then blended at cask strength. Behind the malt, citrus notes from the beer. The owl on the label is Hitachino Nest's emblem. At Hitachi Seaside Park in Hitachinaka, the hill turns blue with nemophila in spring and bright red with kochia in autumn.

Photo: Miyuki Meinaka / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

CONTENTS

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Single Cask PX Sherry Cask Finish

SINGLE CASK | No. S-1086, cask strength, distillery exclusive



ALCOHOL
61%
ABV

CASK No.
S-1086
single cask, no water added

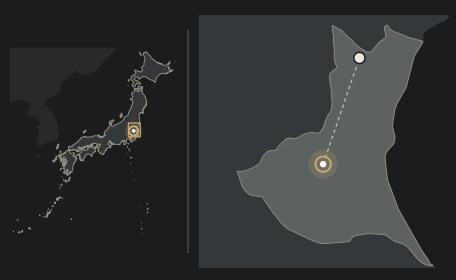
DISTILLED → BOTTLED
2021.06 → 2026.06
2 yrs bourbon + 2+ yrs PX sherry

Distillery exclusive
Deep richness
from a PX sherry cask

30ml ¥2,805 tax included

目次

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Fukuroda Falls (●)

One of Japan’s three great waterfalls



Fukuroda Falls in autumn, Daigo

Deep PX sherry, at full strength.

Pot-still Yasato malt distilled in 2021, two years in a bourbon cask, then over two years in a Pedro Ximenez sherry cask, bottled from a single cask without water. Deep, sweet richness and bright aromas; a few drops of water open it up. In northern Ibaraki, Fukuroda Falls drops 120 m over four tiers, 73 m wide: one of Japan’s three great waterfalls.

Photo: t.kunikuni / CC BY-SA 2.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

Yasato

YASATO DISTILLERY

Ishioka, Ibaraki | Kiuchi Brewery

Hinomaru Single Cask Oloroso Sherry Cask

SINGLE CASK | No. 1135, cask strength, distillery exclusive



ALCOHOL
61.6%
ABV

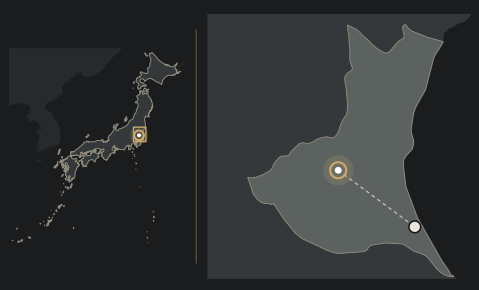
CASK No.
1135
single cask, no water added

DISTILLED → BOTTLED
2021.08 → 2026.05
4+ yrs in oloroso sherry

Distillery exclusive
One selected cask
bottled without water

30ml ¥2,805 tax included

From Ishioka, Ibaraki



Yasato Distillery (◎) and Kashima Jingu (●)

The first shrine of Hitachi Province



The vermilion Romon gate of Kashima Jingu

Depth and length from one oloroso cask.

Pot-still Yasato malt distilled in 2021 and matured for over four years in an oloroso sherry cask; one selected cask was bottled without water. Cask-strength depth, a long finish and bright aromas. Kashima Jingu, enshrining Takemikazuchi, is the first shrine of Hitachi Province, said to date from the age of Emperor Jimmu, its grounds wrapped in a deep, quiet forest.

Photo: Saigen Jiro / CC0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle labels
Bottle photo: 2102

CONTENTS

Saburomaru Distillery

SABUROMARU

Tonami, Toyama | Wakatsuru Shuzo

Hokuriku Whisky SUN SHINE PREMIUM

Sunshine Whisky Premium | since 1953



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

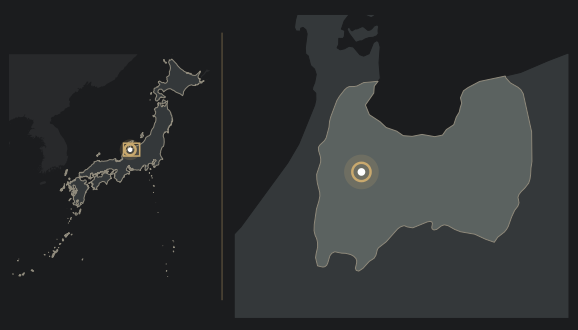
SINCE
1952
Wakatsuru's whisky licence

BLENDED
Malt + grain
The blend revisited after half a century

”Let the sun rise over Japan once more.” A post-war name, carried on

30ml ¥1,045 tax included

Tonami plain, Toyama



Saburomaru Distillery

Scattered farmsteads of the Tonami plain



Scattered farmsteads of the Tonami plain

Hokuriku's whisky of sunshine, born of water, air and light.

In 1952, amid the post-war rice shortage, Wakatsuru Shuzo obtained a whisky licence and launched Sunshine Whisky. The name came from a wish to make the sun rise over Japan again, through a spirit made of water, air and sunlight. Sunshine Premium revisits that blend for the first time in half a century as a blended whisky of malt and grain. Unpretentious, non-chill-filtered Hokuriku whisky; try it as a highball.

Photo: fitm / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Takazo Distillery

TAKAZO

Mito, Ibaraki | Meiri Shurui

Takazo the First, Aged 3 Years, Plum Wine Cask Finish

Japanese Single Malt Whisky | A one-time-only inaugural release



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

DISTILLED
2023
Bottled Aug 2026 · aged 3 years

PLUM WINE CASK
Finished in Hyakunen Umeshu casks
Ibaraki malt, own yeast

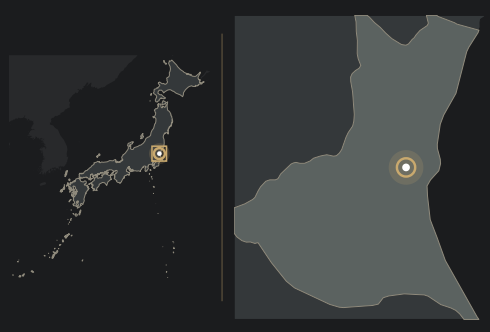


Red plum blossom above Lake Senba

Takazo Distillery, reborn
after nearly 60 years
Non-chill-filtered

30ml ¥1,925 tax included

Mito, city of plum blossom



Takazo Distillery

Plum blossom at Kairakuen



Plum blossom and Kobuntei at Kairakuen

The first bottle, finished in casks soaked with Japan's best umeshu.

Reborn after nearly 60 years, Takazo Distillery presents THE FIRST, its inaugural, one-time-only release. Finished in a cask seasoned with its award-winning Hyakunen Umeshu plum liqueur, it offers a rich, fruit-forward character. For decades to come, the distillery will pursue a singular expression of Japanese terroir through its own yeast, Ibaraki malt and plum wine casks.

Photo: SQ0 / CC BY 4.0 · LuxTonnerre / CC BY 2.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Takazo

TAKAZO DISTILLERY

Mito, Ibaraki | Meiri Shurui

TAKAZO Pure Malt Whisky REBORN

Mizunara Cask Finish



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

CASK
MIZUNARA
First fill · 700ml

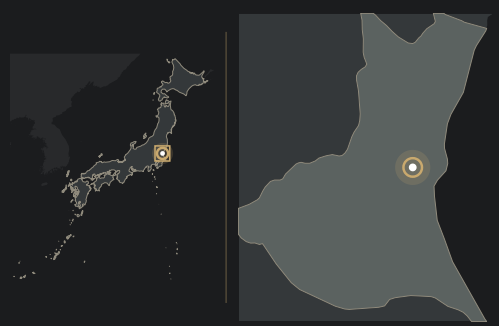
REBORN
Back after 60 years
Founded 1952, restarted 2022

A pure malt finished in the Mito climate

Non-chill-filtered

30ml ¥1,815 tax included

Mito, city of plum blossom



Takazo

Kodokan, Mito



Kodokan, the Mito domain school

Mizunara spice over a fruity sweetness.

Meiri Shurui began making whisky in 1952, but fire destroyed the distillery that same year. After a 60-year gap, Takazo Distillery rose again in 2022. REBORN is a pure malt finished in first-fill Mizunara casks, the oak that symbolises Japanese whisky, in Mito’s climate: fruity sweetness balanced with Mizunara spice.

Photo: Miyuki Meinaka / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Takazo

TAKAZO DISTILLERY

Mito, Ibaraki | Meiri Shurui

TAKAZO Pure Malt Whisky REBORN

Plum Wine Cask Finish



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

CASK
UMESHU
Hyakunen Umeshu casks · 700ml

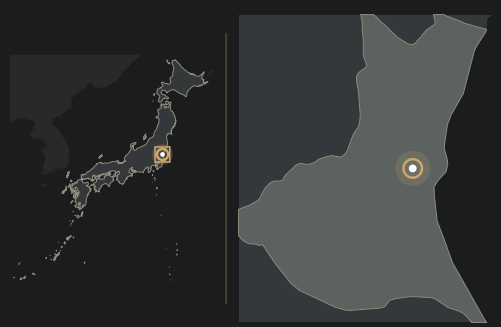
REBORN
Back after 60 years
Founded 1952, restarted 2022

Finished in casks that aged Meiri's flagship umeshu

Non-chill-filtered

30ml ¥1,925 tax included

Mito, city of plum blossom



Takazo

Lake Senba and Kairakuen



Lake Senba from Kairakuen

A Japanese kind of fruitiness, from umeshu casks.

Takazo Distillery revived Meiri Shurui's whisky in 2022, sixty years after fire ended it. This REBORN is a pure malt finished in casks that had matured Hyakunen Umeshu, the company's flagship plum liqueur. A sweet-sour, plum-like fruit settles over soft malt: a glimpse of the distillery's uniquely Japanese style.

Photo: 七巫こ / CC0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Oyama

NIKKO KAIDO OYAMA DISTILLERY

Oyama, Tochigi | Nishibori Shuzo

TETSU Oyama Edition 2025 The First

Single Malt Japanese Whisky | Oyama Edition



ALCOHOL
52%
ABV

AGED
3 YEARS
Five Western cask types・700ml

SAKE YEAST
100% sake yeast
Brewed with a sake maker’s craft



Watarase reed beds at dusk

Tochigi’s first full-scale Japanese whisky distillery
Non-chill-filtered

30ml ¥2,475 tax included

目次

Oyama, Tochigi



Oyama

Spring on the Omoi River



Cherry blossom and rapeseed along the Omoi River

Sake wisdom meets Western tradition: the starting point of a philosophy.

Sake brewer Nishibori Shuzo built Tochigi’s first full-scale Japanese whisky distillery in Oyama, an old post town on the Nikko highway. TETSU (”philosophy”) is its first single malt: fermented with 100% sake yeast, then aged three years in five types of Western casks, bourbon and sherry among them. Layered and deep.

Photo: SLIMHANNYA / CC BY-SA 4.0・うらにわ / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Chichibu

CHICHIBU DISTILLERY

Chichibu, Saitama | Venture Whisky

Ichiro’s Malt Chichibu Double Distilleries

Blended Malt Japanese Whisky



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

DISTILLERIES
2
No.1 & No.2 · 700ml

SINCE 2008
Two Chichibu distilleries
Opened 2008 and 2019

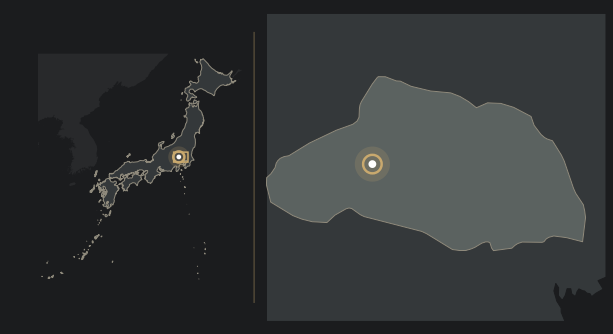


Chichibu Distillery

Two spirits with different characters, in one bottle
Non-chill-filtered, natural colour

30ml ¥1,867 tax included

Chichibu, Saitama



Chichibu

Hitsujiyama Park and Mount Buko



Moss phlox at Hitsujiyama Park, Mount Buko beyond

Two distilleries, one clear and fruity whole.

Chichibu Distillery began distilling in 2008, and a second distillery followed in 2019. This blended malt marries spirit from both, two houses with distinctly different characters: a clear, transparent fruitiness and a gentle, lingering finish that keeps changing in the glass. No chill filtration, no added colour.

Photo: 京浜にけ / CC BY-SA 3.0 · Ebiebi2 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Chichibu

CHICHIBU DISTILLERY

Chichibu, Saitama | Venture Whisky

Ichiro’s Malt MWR

Mizunara Wood Reserve | Blended Malt



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

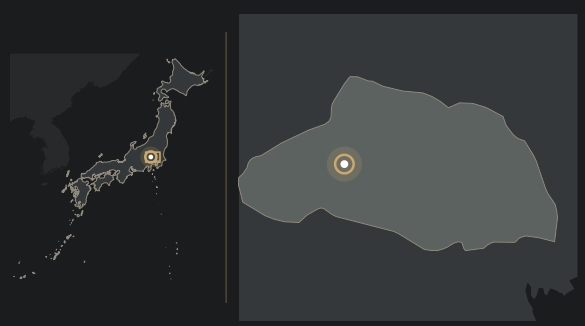
FINISH
MIZUNARA
Finished in Mizunara ・
700ml

JAPANESE OAK
Mizunara character
A broad range of malts

Each cask valued for itself,
chosen for balance,
then into Mizunara

30ml ¥1,815 tax included

Chichibu, Saitama



Chichibu

Nagatoro gorge



Nagatoro Iwadatami rocks in autumn

A rich nose with a hint of Japanese oak.

Every cask matures differently. For MWR, malts are chosen cask by cask for character and balance, then finished together in Mizunara casks. A wide range of whiskies gives a rich nose and complex palate, and the Japanese oak adds sandalwood- and incense-like notes. A core bottling from Ichiro Akuto’s Chichibu.

Photo: Guilhem Vellut from Annecy, France / CC BY 2.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Chichibu

CHICHIBU DISTILLERY

Chichibu, Saitama | Venture Whisky

Ichiro's Malt WWR

Wine Wood Reserve | Blended Malt



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

FINISH
RED WINE
Red-wine cask finish · 700ml

FRENCH OAK
Wine-cask character
100% malt

One extra step: switching casks part-waythrough

30ml ¥1,705 tax included

Chichibu, Saitama



Chichibu

Chichibu Night Festival



A float at the Chichibu Night Festival

A floral malt with the complexity of red-wine oak.

Finished in French oak casks that previously matured red wine. Moving the whisky into a new cask part-way through, an extra step, gives it a complexity ordinary ageing does not. The bright richness of an all-malt whisky gains the fruit and gentle tannin of wine wood, and a long, layered finish.

Photo: ちちびあん / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Chichibu

CHICHIBU DISTILLERY

Chichibu, Saitama | Venture Whisky

Ichiro’s Malt & Grain World Blended Whisky

White Label



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

WORLD
5
Whisky nations・700ml

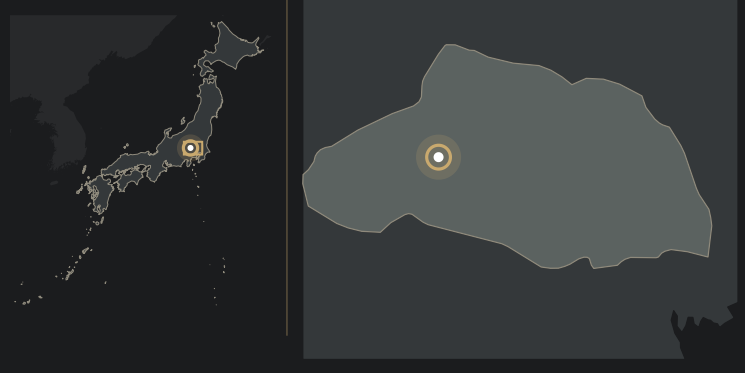
MALT & GRAIN
Blending the world
Married in Chichibu

Ireland, Scotland, the USA, Canada and Japan

Non-chill-filtered, natural colour

30ml ¥1,155 tax included

Chichibu, Saitama



Chichibu

Clouds over Chichibu



A sea of clouds from Chichibu Muse Park

The world's whiskies, brought together in Chichibu.

The map on the label tells the story: Ireland, Scotland, the USA, Canada and Japan. Malt and grain whiskies from the great whisky nations are blended in Chichibu into this ”world blended” whisky. Light and floral with a soft sweetness, lovely neat and excellent in a highball.

Photo: 秩父ミューズパーク / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Chichibu

CHICHIBU DISTILLERY

Chichibu, Saitama | Venture Whisky

Ichiro’s Malt & Grain Classical Edition

World Blended Whisky



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

MALT & GRAIN
CHICHIBU
UK & Japanese malt ·
700ml

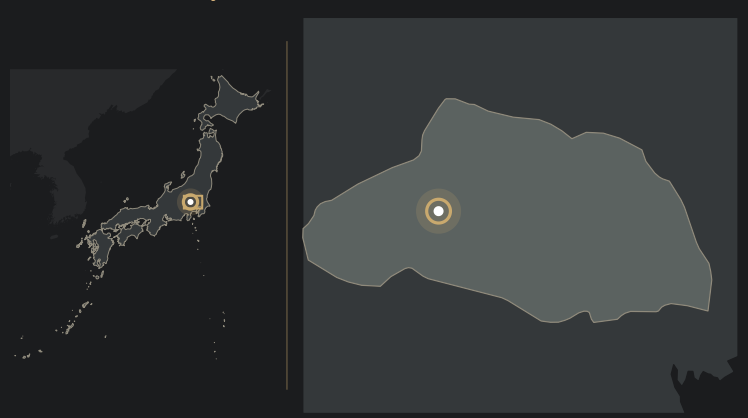
CLASSICAL
Black-and-gold label
With Chichibu malt

A world blend that includes Chichibu malt

Non-chill-filtered, natural colour

30ml ¥1,705 tax included

Chichibu, Saitama



Chichibu

Mitsumine Shrine



The stone stairway of Mitsumine Shrine

Deeper and fuller than the White Label.

The richer, black-and-gold edition of Ichiro’s world blend. Malt from the UK and Japan, including Chichibu’s own, is married with grain whiskies and bottled at 48%. Compared with the White Label it has fuller sweetness, more cask depth and a calm, lasting finish. Non-chill-filtered, natural colour.

Photo: WorldContributor / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Sudo Honke

SUDO HONKE

Kimitsu, Chiba | Sudo Honke

THE BOSO WHISKY

Japanese Whisky | Malt & Grain



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

STYLE
BLENDED
Malt + grain · 700ml

BOSO
Whisky of the Boso peninsula
Kimitsu, Chiba



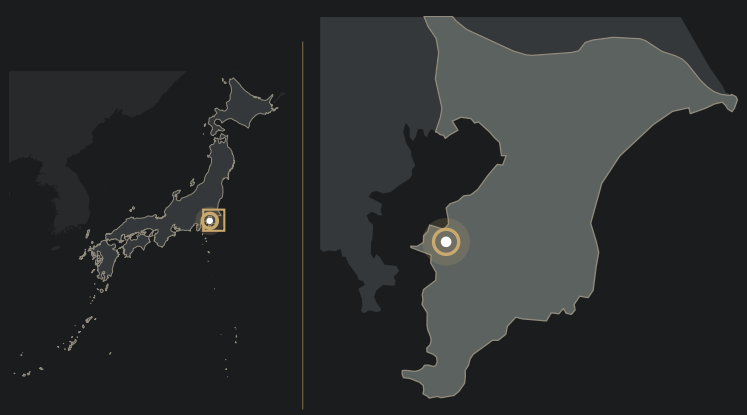
Lake Kameyama in autumn, Kimitsu

A gentle blend named
for the Boso peninsula
Great in a highball

30ml ¥1,045 tax included

目次

Kimitsu, Chiba



Nomizo Falls



Sudo Honke

Kameiwa cave and Nomizo Falls, Kimitsu

A gentle, easy-drinking blend named for Boso.

From Sudo Honke in Kimitsu, near the centre of the Boso peninsula in Chiba, comes this blend of malt and grain whiskies, marked by the gold ”Boso” characters on its deep red label. A calm sweetness and round texture make it easy to enjoy, neat or as a highball.

Photo: Tetsuji Sakakibara / CC BY-SA 2.0 · Xser21 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Chubu, Kinki, Chugoku & Shikoku

30 ml per glass / Tax included

NAGANO

Komagatake Single Malt Peated x Sherry ›	50%	¥1,977
Komagatake Single Malt IPA Cask Finish, Bottled in 2022 ›	52%	¥2,079
Komoro Distillery KOMORO ORIGIN First Release ›	48%	¥4,378

SHIZUOKA

Ikawa Distillery New Born 2024 Sherry Butt ›	60%	¥3,847
Ikawa Distillery Flora 2024 Bourbon Barrel ›	53%	¥3,077
Ikawa Distillery Flora 2025 Bourbon Barrel & Sherry Cask ›	55%	¥2,475
Ikawa Distillery Fauna 2026 Bourbon Barrel, Sherry Cask ›	50%	¥2,420
Whiskey & Co. Little K CASK STRENGTH ›	61%	¥2,035
Gaiaflow Shizuoka Pot Still W, Japanese Barley First Edition ›	55%	¥2,805
Gaiaflow Shizuoka Pot Still W, Japanese Barley 2024 Edition ›	55%	¥2,461

SHIGA

Nagahama Distillery Single Malt The Seventh Batch ›	50%	¥2,362

HYOGO

Eigashima Distillery Akashi 5y Sherry Cask, Cask Strength ›	61%	¥2,145
Eigashima Distillery Akashi [2020] 5y Mizumoto Sake Cask for Shinanoya ›	62%	¥2,178
Rokkosan Distillery Rokkosan Mizunara ›	42%	¥1,815
Kizakura Tanba Distillery Tanba Single Malt Owner's Cask BF-146 ›	60%	¥2,088

OKAYAMA

Miyashita Shuzo Okayama Triple Cask ›	43%	¥2,637

EHIME

Umebijin Shuzo Ehime Malt Whisky Taki ›	43%	¥1,925

HIROSHIMA

Sakurao Distillery Sakurao ›	43%	¥1,647

Mars Komagatake

MARS KOMAGATAKE DISTILLERY

Miyada, Nagano | Hombo Shuzo

Komagatake Single Malt Peated × Sherry

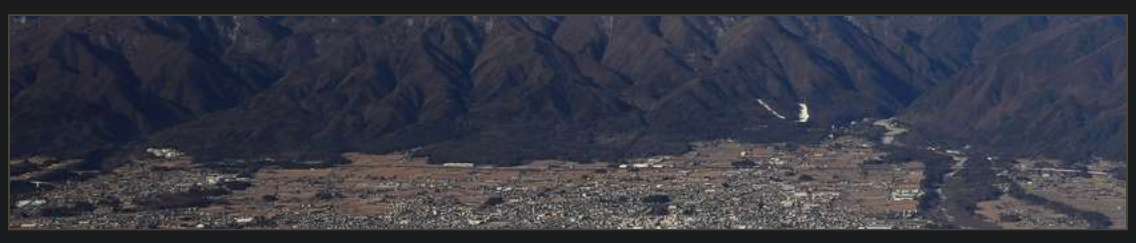
Single Malt Japanese Whisky | Limited Batch



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

CASK
SHERRY
Peated malt・700ml

CENTRAL ALPS
At the foot of the Alps
Distillery at about 800m



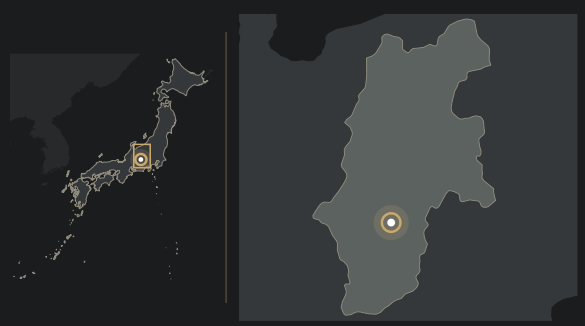
The Ina valley and the Central Alps

The label shows a Japanese serow, Nagano’s prefectural animal, in its home landscape

30ml ¥1,977 tax included

目次

Ina valley, Nagano



Mars Komagatake

Senjojiki, Central Alps



Mount Hoken and Senjojiki cirque in autumn

Orange peel, honey, peat, and a wisp of white smoke.

Mars Komagatake stands in Miyada, in the Ina valley below Mount Komagatake in the Central Alps. This limited single malt is its peated spirit matured in sherry casks: orange peel and honey opening into peat, sherry sweetness, and a refined, bittersweet wisp of smoke. The label shows a Japanese serow, Nagano’s prefectural animal.

Photo: Alpsdake / CC BY-SA 3.0 · Alpsdake / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

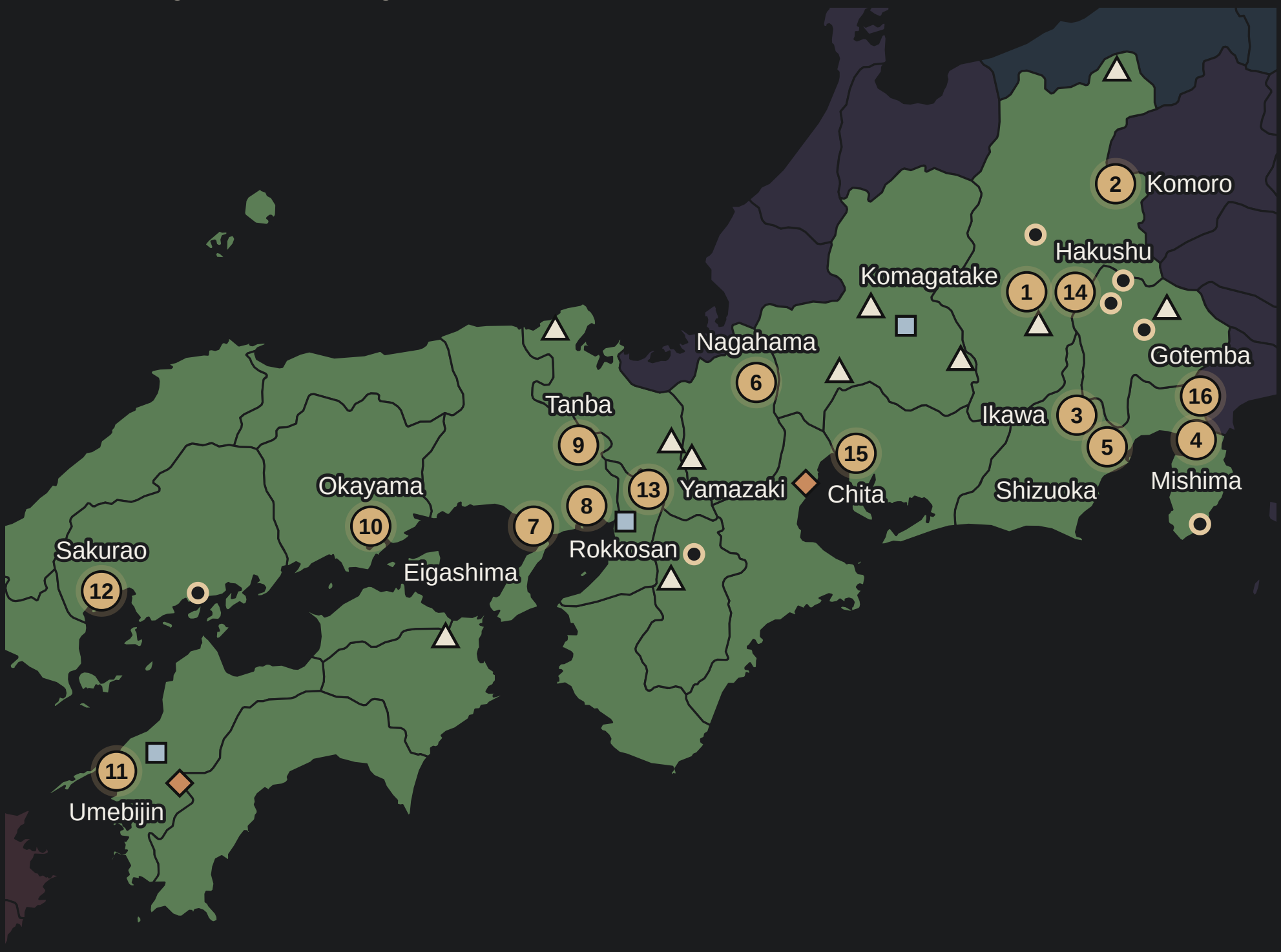
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

AREA MAP 3 / 4

● Whisky (numbered) ◆ Shochu ▲ Gin ■ Rum, vodka etc. ○ Sake, liqueur etc.

Chubu, Kinki, Chugoku & Shikoku

Yamanashi, Nagano, Gifu, Shizuoka, Aichi, Mie, Shiga, Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo, Nara, Wakayama, Tottori, Shimane, Okayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Tokushima, Kagawa, Ehime, Kochi





Kamikochi and the Hotaka range, Nagano

Photo: lumoplank / CC0



Amanohashidate, Kyoto

Photo: 663highland / CC BY 2.5



Iwama low-water bridge, Shimanto River, Kochi

Photo: Kohei Fujii / CC BY-SA 2.0

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WHISKY · TAP A NUMBER OR A NAME TO OPEN ITS PAGE

Whisky distilleries & bottles

12 distilleries • 18 bottles

目次



1 **Mars Komagatake Distillery** Nagano
Komagatake Single Malt Peated x Sherry / Komagatake Single Malt IPA Cask Finish, Bottled in 2022



2 **Komoro Distillery** Nagano
KOMORO ORIGIN First Release



3 **Ikawa Distillery** Shizuoka
New Born 2024 Sherry Butt / Flora 2024 Bourbon Barrel / Flora 2025 Bourbon Barrel & Sherry Cask / Fauna 2026 Bourbon Barrel, Sherry Cask



4 **Whiskey&Co.** Shizuoka
Whiskey&Co. Little K Cask Strength



5 **Gaiaflow Shizuoka Distillery** Shizuoka
Shizuoka Pot Still W, Japanese Barley First Edition / Shizuoka Pot Still W, Japanese Barley 2024 Edition



6 **Nagahama Distillery** Shiga
Single Malt The Seventh Batch



7 **Eigashima Distillery** Hyogo
Akashi 5y Sherry Cask, Cask Strength / Akashi [2020] 5y Mizumoto Sake Cask for Shinanoya



8 **Rokkosan Distillery** Hyogo
Rokkosan Mizunara



9 **Kizakura Tanba Distillery** Hyogo
Tanba Single Malt Owner's Cask BF-146



10 **Miyashita Okayama Distillery** Okayama
Okayama Triple Cask



11 **Umebijin Shuzo** Ehime
Ehime Malt Whisky Taki



12 **Sakurao Distillery** Hiroshima
Single Malt SAKURAO / [gin]SAKURAO GIN Original / [gin]SAKURAO GIN Limited / [gin]SAKURAO GIN Hamagou

DISTILLERIES OF THE MAJOR MAKERS

All bottles, blends included: Suntory list › · Kirin list ›

13 **Suntory Yamazaki Distillery** Osaka — Yamazaki / Yamazaki 12 Years / Smoky Batch

14 **Suntory Hakushu Distillery** Yamanashi — Hakushu / Hakushu 12 Years

15 **Suntory Chita Distillery** Aichi — The Chita Single Grain

16 **Kirin Fuji Gotemba Distillery** Shizuoka — Fuji Single Malt / Fuji Single Grain

OTHER DRINKS FROM THIS AREA · TAP A NAME

◆ Shochu	Miyazaki Honten · Himebayashi
▲ Gin	Nozawa Onsen Distillery · Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery · Yomeishu Seizo · GEEKSTILL · Kyotango Mairingen Distillery · Nakatsugawa Distillery · Nagara Shuzo (LONG GOOD) · Motoki Joken · The Kyoto Distillery · Yamato Distillery · Nissin Shurui
■ Spirits	Tenjinmura Brewery · Okuhida Shuzo · Katashimo Wine Food
○ Sake etc.	Taketsuru Brewery · Uchu Brewing · Yamanashi Meijo (Shichiken) · Umenoyado Shuzo · Izu Shimoda Distillery · Kizan Winery · Izutsu Wine

Mars Komagatake

KOMAGATAKE DISTILLERY

Miyada, Nagano | Hombo Shuzo

Single Malt Komagatake IPA Cask Finish

Bottled in 2022



ALCOHOL
52%
ABV

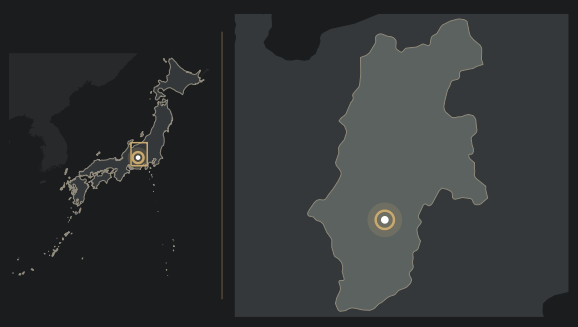
FINISH
IPA CASK
Casks that aged an IPA · 700ml

BEER CASK
Minami Shinshu Beer casks
A hoppy, amber IPA

Fresh citrus
from the hops
Superb in a highball

30ml ¥2,079 tax included

Ina valley, Nagano



Mars Komagatake

Kozenji temple, Komagane



The Sanmon gate of Kozenji, Komagane

Hoppy citrus and a bitter snap: made for a highball.

Hombo Shuzo, based in Kagoshima, runs Mars Komagatake Distillery at the foot of the Central Alps in Miyada, Nagano. Here Single Malt Komagatake was finished in casks that had matured an India Pale Ale, a richly hopped amber beer brewed by Minami Shinshu Beer's Komagatake brewery. Expect a fresh, citrusy nose from the hops, a clear palate of grapefruit and herbs, and a crisp, bitter finish. It makes a superb highball.

Photo: Qurren / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Ina Valley KOMAGANE

A valley between two Alps

Komagane, Miyada & Ina, Nagano



Komagatake Ropeway above the Ina Valley
Kohei Fujii / CC BY-SA 2.0



The Tenryu River and Kiso-Komagatake, Komagane
Tomio344456 / CC BY-SA 3.0



Cherry blossoms at Takato Castle Ruins Park, Ina
MaedaAkihiko / CC BY-SA 4.0



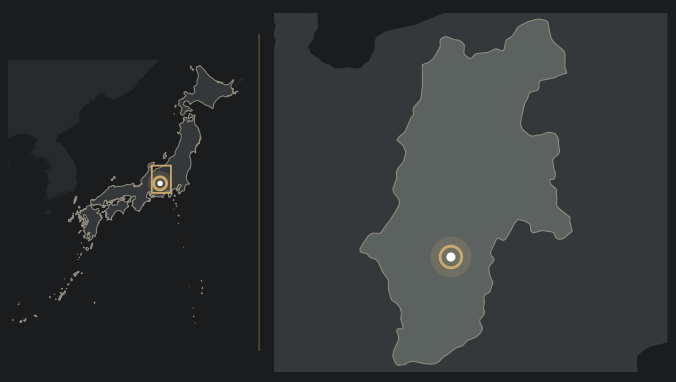
Mars Komagatake Distillery, Miyada
Opqr / CC BY-SA 4.0

目次

Snowmelt from the Central Alps waters the valley.

The Ina Valley runs south along the Tenryu River between the Central and Southern Alps. From Komagane a bus and the Komagatake Ropeway climb to Senjojiki, whose station at 2,612 m is the highest in Japan: alpine flowers in summer, blazing colour in autumn. Below lie Kozenji, an old temple with the legend of the faithful dog Hayataro, and Komagaike pond; to the north, Takato Castle Ruins Park in Ina is famed for its cherry blossoms. Try sauce katsudon, gohei-mochi and Shinshu soba. Mars Komagatake Distillery stands in Miyada, where snowmelt from the Central Alps rises as spring water.

The Ina Valley and Mars Komagatake



The Ina Valley through time

860	Kozenji temple founded (by tradition)
1582	Oda forces storm Takato Castle; its lord Nishina Morinobu falls
1875	Takato Castle ruins become a park; cherry trees planted
1967	Komagatake Ropeway opens
1985	Hombo Shuzo opens Mars Shinshu Distillery in Miyada
1992	Whisky distilling paused
2011	Distilling resumes after 19 years
2020	Renamed Mars Komagatake Distillery

Sources: Komagane city, Ina city and Hombo Shuzo public information Map: Natural Earth

KOMORO ORIGIN

小諸

Komoro, Nagano

Karuizawa Distillers Inc.

Komoro Distillery

SINGLE MALT JAPANESE WHISKY | FIRST RELEASE | 700ml



ALCOHOL
48%
700ml

FIRST RELEASE
4,000
bottles, sold 7 Nov 2026 to seminar guests only

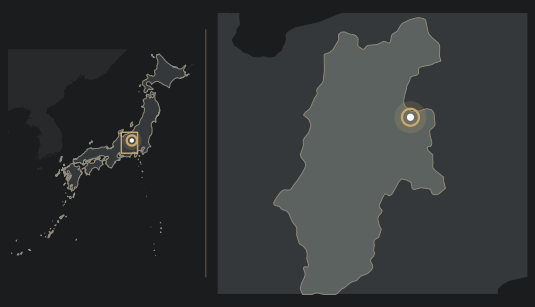
FIRST DISTILLED
20.6.2023
In the centenary year of Japanese whisky



Komoro and its hills (our photo)

30ml ¥4,378 tax included

Komoro, below Mt Asama



Komoro Distillery

The Komoro Distillery visitor centre



The visitor centre, Komoro Distillery (our photo, 8 Nov 2026)

The first single malt of Komoro Distillery: where its journey begins.

The first single malt of Komoro Distillery, built about 910 m up on the southern slopes of Mt Asama. Distilling is led by Ian Chang, formerly master blender of Taiwan's Kavalan; spirit first distilled on 20 June 2023 was bottled three years later. "Origin" marks where the distillery and its journey begin. 4,000 bottles of 700 ml, no online sales: only seminar guests at the distillery could buy it. We visited on 8 November 2026 and brought this bottle home.

Photos: our own (8 Nov 2026)
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: bottle label and box; PR TIMES (Nov 2026)
Bottle photo: our own

THE FOUNDERS | Komoro began with three people

It began with three people.

The Shimaokas of Karuizawa, and Ian Chang of Kavalan



Ian Chang at the seminar (8 Nov 2026)

> "A passion to make a whisky the world can be proud of, here. Uncompromising craftsmanship in pursuit of an ideal taste. A wish to create experiences that stay in the heart, linking people and place. Three people who had walked different paths came together in Komoro, and a distillery was born."
>
> — from the KOMORO ORIGIN box

Takashi Shimaoka
President

Over 25 years in finance and investment with global banks, including Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. A Karuizawa resident of more than 20 years and a hotel owner, he set up the company in 2019 to bring whisky-making back to Mt Asama after the old Karuizawa distillery stopped distilling in 2000

Yoshie Shimaoka
Managing Director

Co-founder with her husband, behind the idea of an open distillery built around tours, seminars and ”experiences that link people and place”

Ian Chang
Vice President / Master Distiller & Blender

Joined the launch of Kavalan (King Car Group, Taiwan) in 2005, learned under the late Dr Jim Swan and won award after award as master blender. Joined the Komoro project in 2020 and moved to Nagano in 2022

目次

From Kavalan to Komoro KAVALAN → KOMORO

KAVALAN Yilan, Taiwan
Founded 2005. Subtropical heat makes maturation fast; Ian Chang made and blended its whisky for some 16 years

KOMORO Komoro, Nagano
About 910 m up: cool, with four clear seasons. The non-subtropical climate Ian Chang was looking for



Kavalan Distillery, Yilan, Taiwan

> "Every distillery produces whisky, but I have never believed that whisky alone is what we should leave behind. A truly great distillery becomes part of its community, earning its place through dedication, integrity and time."
>
> — Ian Chang, message on the box

Sources: KOMORO ORIGIN box; PR TIMES (Nov 2026); Serai.jp (2024); Mirror Media (Sep 2024); nomunication.jp (2022); Vinfolio
Photos: lovesx-70 / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons Other photos: our own (8 Nov 2026)

DISTILLERY VISIT | Komoro, 8 November 2026

A walk through the distillery

Ian Chang's seminar and a tour of the production area

On Sunday 8 November 2026 we visited Komoro Distillery, attended Ian Chang’s seminar and toured the production area, which you can also see through glass from the visitor centre.



Stills by Forsyths of Scotland

Two: a wash still and a larger spirit still. The 5,000-litre mash tun is also by Forsyths



The pot stills and KOMORO ORIGIN

The first distillation ran here on 20 June 2023



Domed warehouses

Two of them, each holding some 3,000 casks



Inside a warehouse

Mostly bourbon and sherry casks, resting in the cool air below Mt Asama



"Casks and maturation" display

Charred staves: the cask gives the spirit its colour and much of its aroma



Casks at the distillery entrance

At the edge of the forest on the slopes of Mt Asama



Komoro water, raised by Mt Asama

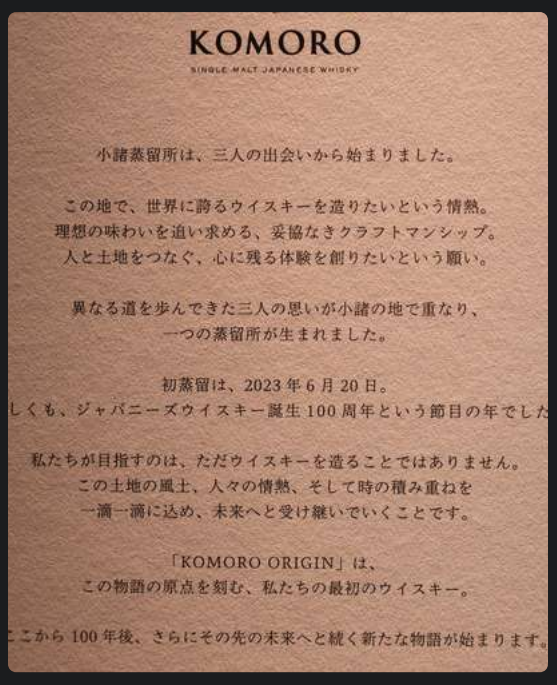
Groundwater filtered for years through Mt Asama’s land needs only sterilising to be tap water. Volcanic minerals give the city, just 9 km across, sources from hard (220 mg/L) to soft (31 mg/L).

Sources: distillery displays; Serai.jp (2024) Other photos: our own (8 Nov 2026)

KOMORO ORIGIN | Where our journey begins

The making of ORIGIN

Where Our Journey Begins



The story on the box (our photo)

The first distillation took place on 20 June 2023, by chance the centenary year of Japanese whisky. Three years on, KOMORO ORIGIN is the distillery's first whisky, marking the starting point of its story.

Komoro Distillery so far 2019 → 2026

2019.01	Karuizawa Distillers Inc. founded
2020	April: introduced to Ian Chang by the still-maker; July: he joins. At year end Komoro city offers land on Mt Asama
2021.07	Construction begins
2022.03	Ian Chang arrives in Japan as vice president
2023.06.20	First distillation; first cask filled 14 July; distillery opens in July
2026.11.07	KOMORO ORIGIN released: 4,000 x 700 ml, for seminar guests only
2026.11.08	Our visit and seminar



The Komoro violet

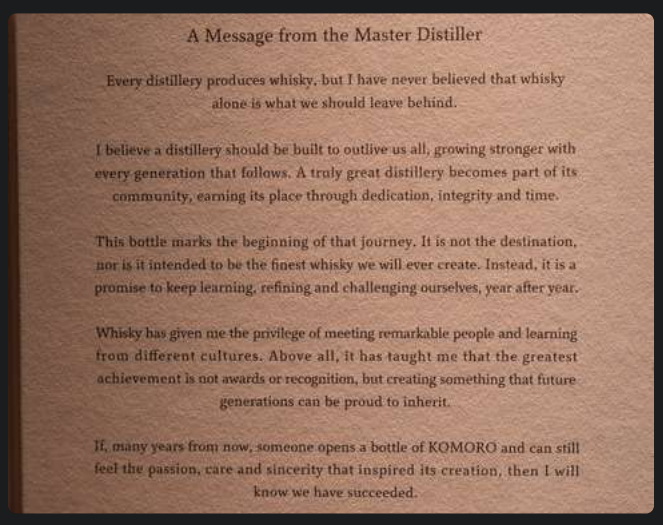
Komoro violet

A violet first found in Komoro and named after it: deep purple and double-flowered, it is the city flower. In the language of flowers it means sincerity and modest beauty. It appears on the label and box (from the box).

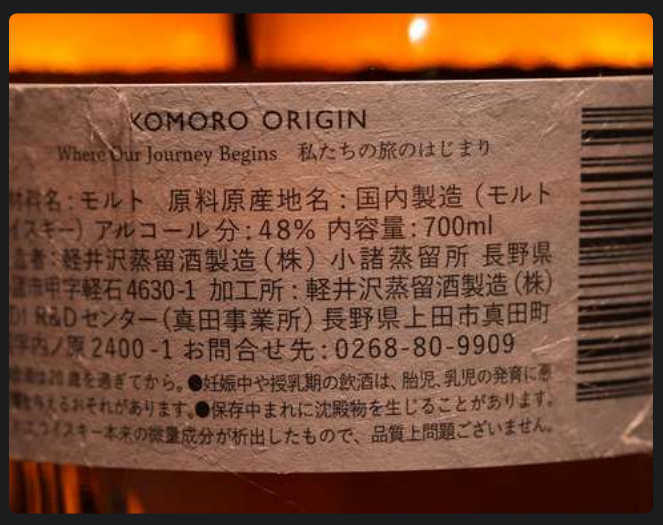
The maker's tasting notes

Nose	Flowers, peach, green apple, honey
Palate	Vanilla, cinnamon, baked apple
Finish	Caramel, a crème-brûlée sweetness

Summarised from the maker's notes in PR TIMES (Nov 2026)



Ian Chang's message (box)



Back label: "Where Our Journey Begins"



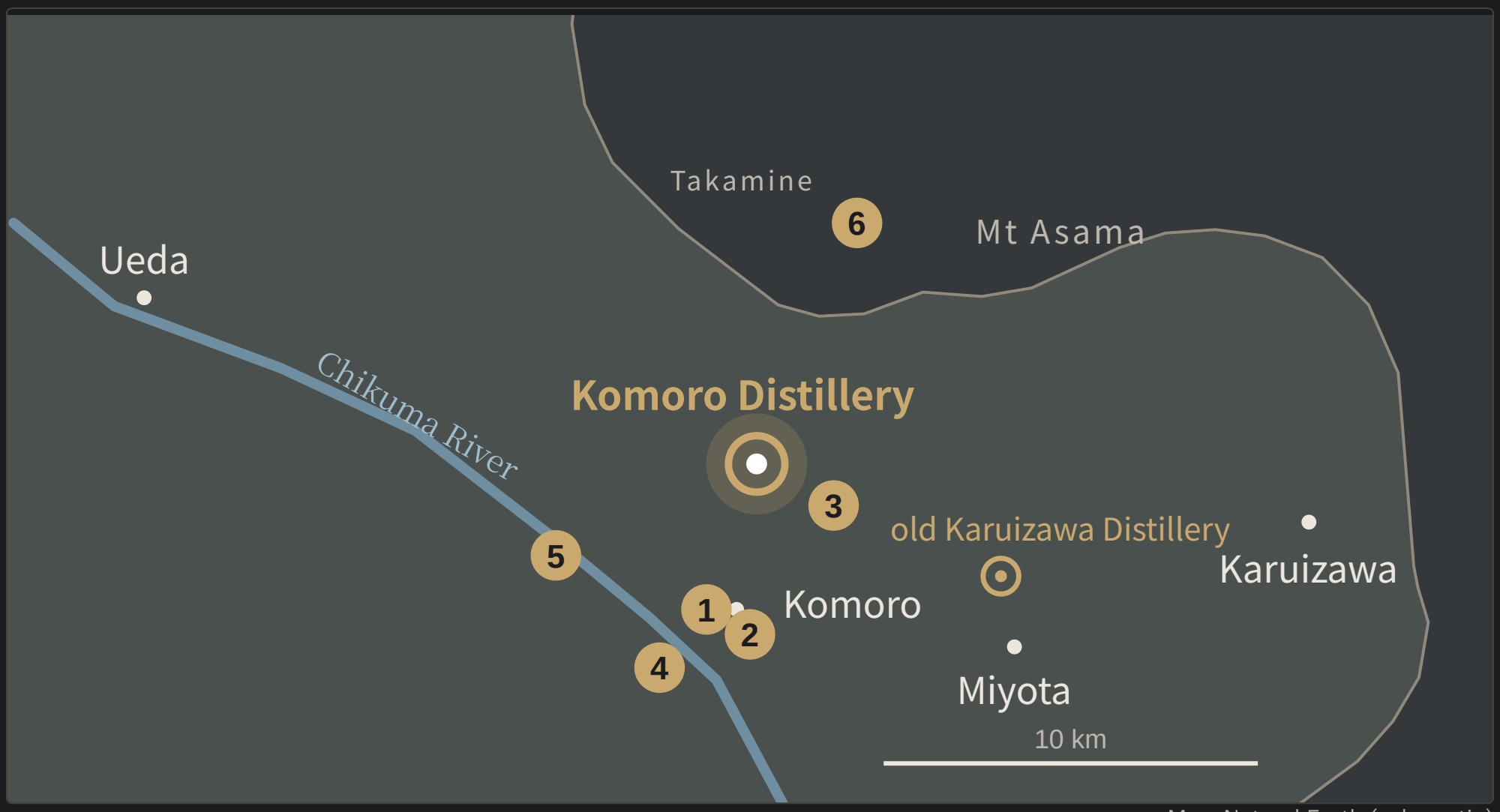
With Ian Chang after the seminar

Sources: KOMORO ORIGIN box and label; PR TIMES (Nov 2026); Mirror Media (Sep 2024); Serai.jp (2024) Photos: のぶひで / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Other photos: our own (8 Nov 2026)

KOMORO | A castle town between Mt Asama and the Chikuma

Komoro KOMORO

"By the old castle of Komoro" Komoro, Nagano



Map: Natural Earth (schematic)

A castle built lower than its own town.

Komoro spreads over the south-western foot of Mt Asama, with the Chikuma River to the west. Its castle is a rare ”pit castle”, set lower than the town around it, and in the Edo period Komoro prospered as a post town on the Hokkoku road. The poet Shimazaki Toson taught at the Komoro Gijuku school for six years and wrote the ”Chikumagawa Ryojo no Uta”, which opens ”By the old castle of Komoro”. With rich water from Mt Asama, it is also one of Shinshu’s drinking towns, home to sake breweries and wineries.



Shimazaki Toson (1872–1943)



Monument to Toson’s poem in Kaikoen



Honjin toiya of Komoro-juku, Hokkoku road

Komoro through time From Nabebuta castle to a whisky town

- 1487 Oi Mitsutada builds Nabebuta castle, said to be the start of Komoro castle
- 1554 Takeda Shingen takes Komoro and enlarges the castle
- 1590 Sengoku Hidehisa becomes lord; stone walls and the Ote gate (1612) give the castle its present form
- 1880 Former retainers enshrine Kaiko shrine on the castle site, now Kaikoen park
- 1899 Shimazaki Toson starts teaching at Komoro Gijuku; he stays until 1905
- 1954 Komoro city formed
- 2023 Komoro Distillery opens on the slopes of Mt Asama

Sources: Komoro city; Kaikoen; PR TIMES (Nov 2026) Photos: Unknown author / public domain · Komoro no kaze / CC BY-SA 4.0 · 663highland / CC BY 2.5 / Wikimedia Commons

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EXPLORE KOMORO | Castle, volcano and river

Explore Komoro

Out from the distillery



1 Kaikoen: the San-no-mon gate
Rebuilt in 1765; the entrance to the castle park, under its ”Kaikoen” plaque



2 Ote gate of Komoro castle
Main gate built by Sengoku Hidehisa in 1612; an Important Cultural Property



3 Mt Asama from Hishidaira
A 2,568 m active volcano that shapes the distillery’s water and air



4 Chikuma River from Komoro bridge
The river of Toson’s poem, flowing west of the castle



5 Nunobiki Kannon (Shakuson-ji)
A Kannon hall on a cliff; the temple of the legend ”led by a cow to Zenko-ji”



6 Ikenotaira moor, Takamine
Highlands around 2,000 m; alpine flowers in summer

After the castle town, another glass of single malt from the foot of Mt Asama.

← KOMORO ORIGIN

Photos: Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0・さかおり / CC BY-SA 4.0・Komoro no kaze / CC BY-SA 4.0・Qurren / CC BY-SA 3.0・Qurren / CC BY-SA 3.0・u7shin / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Ikawa

IKAWA DISTILLERY

Southern Alps, Shizuoka | Juzan

Ikawa Distillery NEW BORN 2024

Non-Peat Sherry Butt | Cask strength · 200ml



ALCOHOL
60%
Cask strength

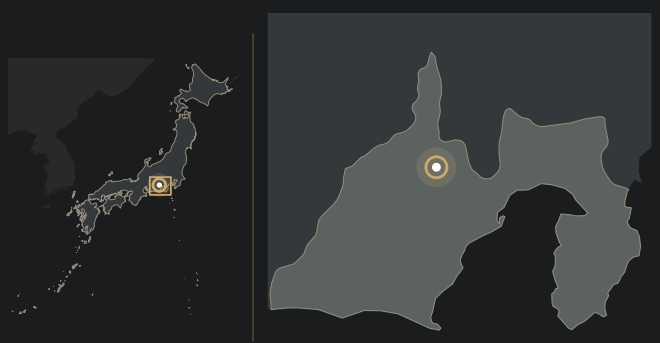
DISTILLED
Jan 2022
Bottled Apr 2024

SHERRY BUTT
Cask No.346
Non-peated · D&A yeast

Our bottle is
No.909
Lightly filtered (70μ), natural colour

30ml ¥3,847 tax included

Southern Alps, Shizuoka



Ikawa

Lake Ikawa



Lake Ikawa

A young spirit from the Southern Alps forest, unadorned.

Ikawa Distillery stands at about 1,200m in the forests of the Southern Alps. NEW BORN shares spirit on its way to maturity: this non-peated spirit was distilled in January 2022 and aged about two years in sherry butt No.346, bottled at 60% with no added colour. Dried-fruit sweetness meets the fresh vigour of a mountain spirit.

Photo: Nyao148 / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Ikawa

IKAWA DISTILLERY

Southern Alps, Shizuoka | Juzan

Dessin Series Flora 2024

Flora & Fauna of the Alps



ALCOHOL
53%
ABV

CASK
BOURBON
Bourbon barrel · 700ml

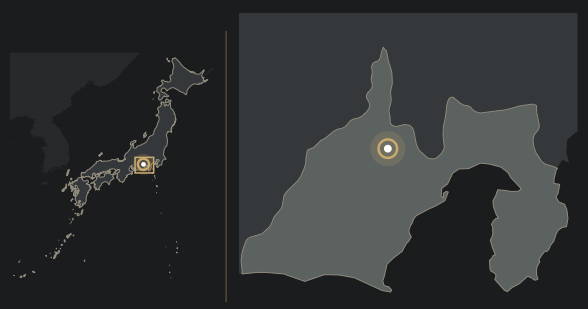
FLORA
Silene uralensis
Found in Japan only here

An endangered flower
of alpine rock fields:
Silene uralensis

30ml ¥3,077 tax included

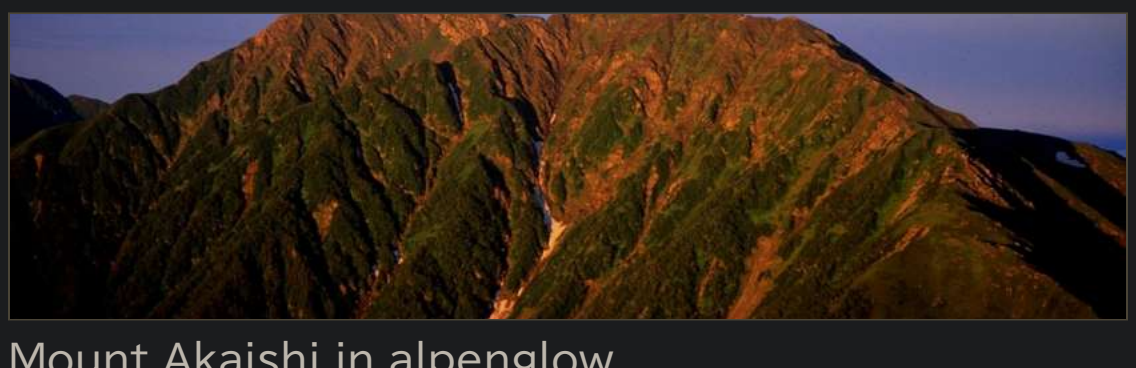
目次

Southern Alps, Shizuoka



Ikawa

Mount Akaishi, Southern Alps



Mount Akaishi in alpenglow

A bourbon-barrel dram for a tiny Alpine flower.

Ikawa's "Flora & Fauna of the Alps" series features pencil drawings of Southern Alps wildlife. Flora 2024 shows Silene uralensis, an endangered flower of alpine rock that grows across the far north of the globe, yet in Japan survives only in the Southern Alps. Bourbon-barrel matured: vanilla and honey.

Photo: Alpsdake / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Ikawa

IKAWA DISTILLERY

Southern Alps, Shizuoka | Juzan

Dessin Series Flora 2025

Bourbon Barrel & Sherry Cask



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

SOUTHERN ALPS
1,200m
Deep in the forest

DEEP IN THE FOREST
Remote forest
Cool, misty surroundings

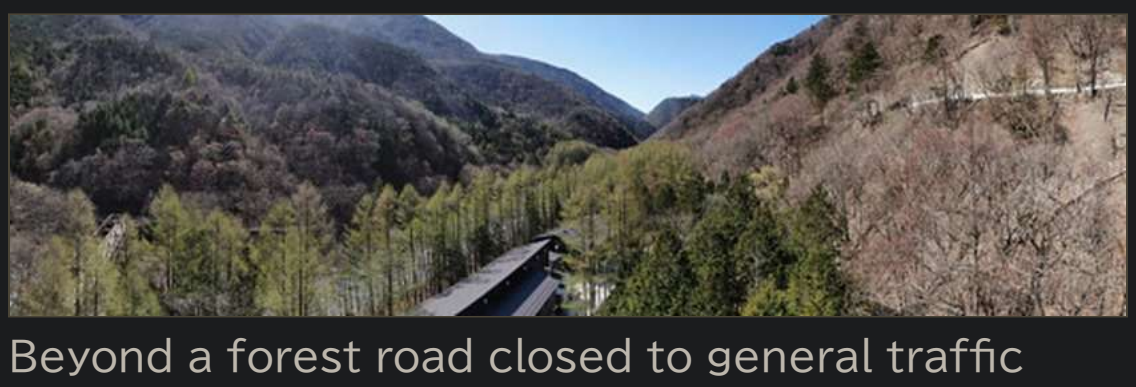
Unpeated malt
Bourbon and sherry casks
Tokusa spring water

30ml ¥2,475 tax included

Southern Alps, Shizuoka



A distillery deep in the mountains



Ikawa Distillery

Beyond a forest road closed to general traffic

A forest retreat, 1,200 metres above sea level.

Beyond a forest road closed to general traffic, Ikawa sits deep in the Southern Alps. Its cool climate and Tokusa spring water shape the spirit. Flora 2025 combines unpeated bourbon-barrel whisky with sherry-cask spirit. Wood and floral aromas meet banana- and chocolate-like sweetness. A little water gently opens the texture and the character of the casks.

Visits are limited to special tours and similar arrangements.

Photo: Juzan Co., Ltd.
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Juzan

CONTENTS

Ikawa

IKAWA DISTILLERY

Southern Alps, Shizuoka | Juzan

Dessin Series Fauna 2026

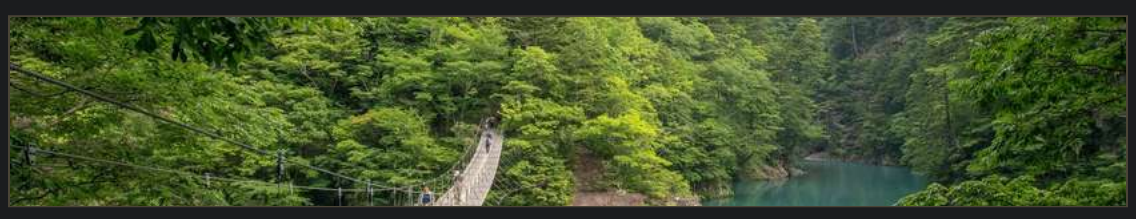
Flora & Fauna of the Alps



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

CASKS
2 TYPES
Bourbon + sherry · 700ml

FAUNA
Mountain hawk-eagle
A symbol of a rich forest



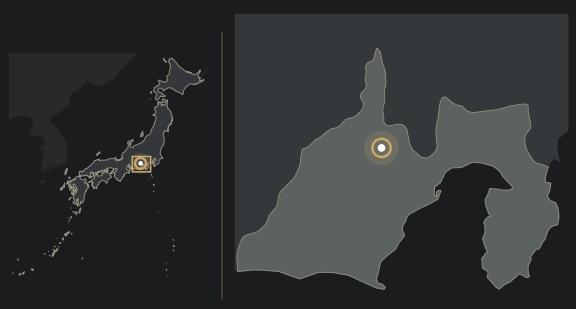
Yume no Tsuribashi bridge, Sumata gorge

It builds nests over 1m across, high in big old trees

30ml ¥2,420 tax included

目次

Southern Alps, Shizuoka



Ikawa

Lakes and forests of the upper Oi



Okuoikojo station on the Ikawa Line

Layered casks, for the lord of the forest.

Fauna 2026 portrays the mountain hawk-eagle, a large forest raptor. Its nests, over a metre across, need big trees with spreading branches, so the bird is a symbol of a healthy forest: fitting for a distillery inside Ikawa's vast private forest. Bourbon-barrel and sherry-cask whiskies are layered for sweetness and depth.

Photo: 9689tatsuya / CC BY 4.0 · Tetsuji Sakakibara from Tokyo, Japan / CC BY-SA 2.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Whiskey&Co.

WHISKEY & CO.

Mishima, Shizuoka | Whiskey&Co.

Whiskey&Co. Little K Cask Strength

Distillery Water Dragon's Whiskey From Mishima | 375ml



ALCOHOL
61%
Cask strength

GRAIN
CORN
Corn grits, rye, malt

UNDER 2 YEARS
Aged under two years
Youth, on purpose



A spring-fed stream in Shirataki Park, Mishima

Made in Mishima,
a town of Fuji spring water
Non-chill-filtered, natural colour

30ml ¥2,035 tax included

Mishima, Shizuoka



Mount Fuji from Mishima



Whiskey&Co. Mishima Skywalk and Mount Fuji

Bold grain sweetness, raised on Mishima water.

Spring water from Mount Fuji runs through the streets of Mishima, the ”water capital”. Little K is made there from Japanese corn grits with rye and malt, aged under two years and bottled at a cask strength of 61%, non-chill-filtered and uncoloured. Sweet corn, rye spice and young oak; it keeps its power over ice.

Photo: くろふね / CC BY 3.0 · Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Shizuoka

SHIZUOKA DISTILLERY

Shizuoka city | Gaiaflow

Shizuoka Pot Still W, 100% Japanese Barley First Edition

Single wash still whisky



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

JAPANESE BARLEY
100%
First bottling · 700ml

WOOD-FIRED
Direct wood-fired still W
Single wash still

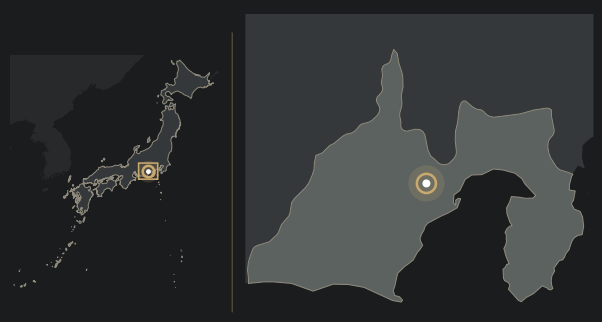


Tea fields at Mariko, Shizuoka

Aged only in ex-bourbon casks:
the first bottling of
100% Japanese barley

30ml ¥2,805 tax included

Okushizu, Shizuoka



The Abe River and Mount Fuji



The Abe River and Shizuoka at sunrise, Fuji

Shizuoka beyond

Wood fire and Japanese barley: the very first bottle.

In the mountains of Okushizu, Shizuoka Distillery has mashed Japanese barley since opening in 2016. Pot Still W uses only spirit from ”W”, its direct wood-fired wash still, and this First Edition was its first bottling of 100% Japanese barley. Ex-bourbon casks only, to keep the wood-fire roundness and light barley in focus.

Photo: Hiroto.15.0304 / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Commons user ”no” / CC BY 2.1 jp
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Shizuoka

SHIZUOKA DISTILLERY

Okushizu, Shizuoka | Gaiaflow

Shizuoka Pot Still W

100% Japanese Barley | 2024 Edition



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

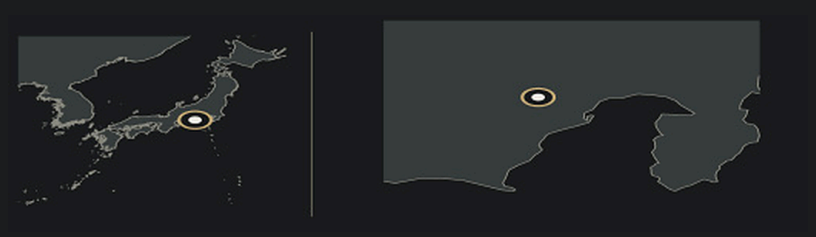
JAPANESE BARLEY
100%
Unpeated malt

WOOD-FIRED
Wood-fired
Wash still W

Stoked by hand
about every 15 minutes
5,000 bottles for Japan

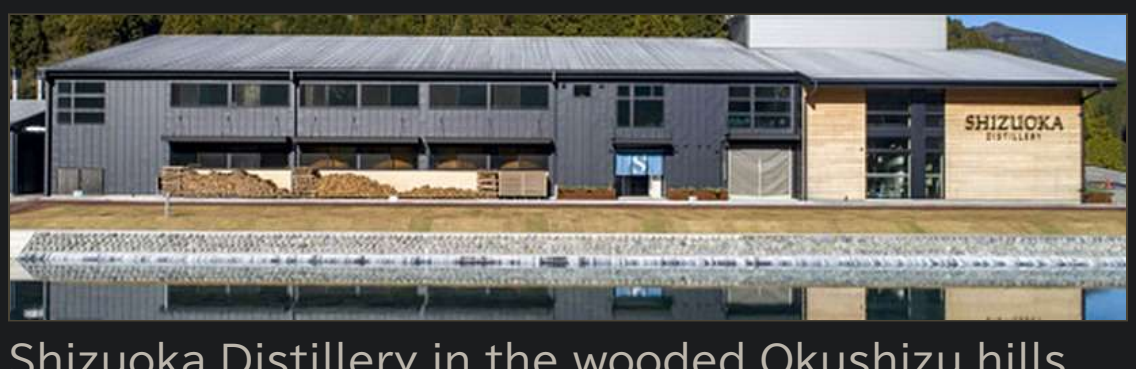
30ml ¥2,461 tax included

Okushizu, Shizuoka



Shizuoka Distillery

Wood, water and woodland



Shizuoka Distillery in the wooded Okushizu hills

Japanese barley, shaped by a wood fire.

Made from 100% Japanese barley in wood-fired wash still W. A Scottish still meets a furnace built by Japanese pizza-oven craftsmen, fuelled with local thinnings. The fire is stoked by hand about every 15 minutes, adding richness and a toasty depth to the barley's delicate character. Enjoy it neat, then explore the aromas with a few drops of water.

Photo: GAIAFLOW
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Gaiaflow

CONTENTS

Nagahama

NAGAHAMA DISTILLERY

Nagahama, Shiga | Nagahama Roman Beer

Single Malt Nagahama The Seventh Batch

Hand Craft | 500ml



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

BOTTLED
2025.10
Distilled Dec 2019–Aug 2022

4 CASKS
Four cask types
Bourbon, red wine, Sauternes, Islay

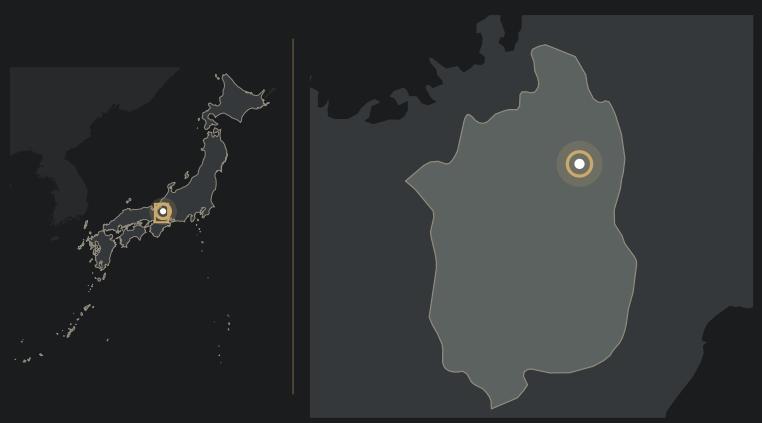


Chikubushima island in Lake Biwa

Philosophy:
”one mash, one cask”
Blender: Y. Yahisa

30ml ¥2,362 tax included

Nagahama, Lake Biwa



Nagahama

Nagahama Castle



Nagahama Castle

One mash, one cask: small-scale craft, layered.

Nagahama Distillery belongs to Nagahama Roman Beer, a craft brewery by Lake Biwa, and is one of Japan’s smallest. Its creed: ”one mash, one cask”. The seventh batch vats spirit distilled 2019–2022 from bourbon, red-wine, Sauternes and Islay quarter casks: ripe fruit with a faint salty smoke.

Photo: 663highland / CC BY 2.5 · Brakeet / CC0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Eigashima

EIGASHIMA DISTILLERY

Akashi, Hyogo | Eigashima Shuzo

Single Malt Akashi Sherry Cask PX, 5 Years

Cask Strength



ALCOHOL
61%
Cask strength

AGED
5 YEARS
PX sherry cask・500ml

LIGHT PEATED
Lightly peated malt
Sweet Pedro Ximénez cask



The turrets of Akashi Castle

Blackcurrant, raspberry
and raisin
Non-chill-filtered, natural colour

30ml ¥2,145 tax included

Akashi, Hyogo



Eigashima

Dusk on the Akashi Strait



Akashi Kaikyo Bridge at sunset

Sweet-tart berries with a whisper of peat.

On the Harima coast facing the Akashi Strait, Eigashima Shuzo makes sake, shochu and whisky. Lightly peated malt spirit spent five years in a rare Pedro Ximénez sherry cask: blackcurrant, raspberry and raisin with a faint peat smoke, and a pleasing balance of acidity and sweetness. Cask strength, 61%.

Photo: halfrain / CC BY-SA 2.0 · KishujiRapid / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Eigashima

EIGASHIMA DISTILLERY

Akashi, Hyogo | Eigashima Shuzo

Akashi 5 Years Mizumoto Sake Cask

Exclusively for Shinanoya | Cask #61922 | 500ml



ALCOHOL
62%
Cask strength

DISTILLED
Nov 2020
Bottled Nov 2025

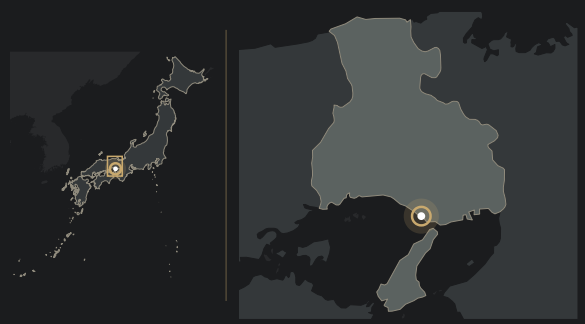
SAKE CASK
A mizumoto sake cask
Shinanoya exclusive

A single malt aged
in a sake cask, from
a sake brewery

30ml ¥2,178 tax included

目次

Akashi, Hyogo



Eigashima

Eigashima Shuzo



Eigashima Shuzo

Five Akashi years, raised in a sake cask.

Only a sake brewery could make this: single malt aged in a sake cask. Distilled in November 2020, it spent five years in cask #61922, which had held sake made by ”mizumoto”, an ancient starter method. A limited bottling for the retailer Shinanoya, with a fox-mask illustration. Soft, rice-like sweetness at 62%.

Photo: 663highland / CC BY 2.5
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Tanba Distillery

TANBA

Sasayama, Hyogo | Kizakura

Tanba Single Malt Owner’s Cask 2023

MUSASHIYA OWNER’S CASK | CASK BF-146



ALCOHOL
60%
Cask strength

BOTTLES
60
700ml

BOURBON BARREL
2023.03 → 2026.05
Distilled → bottled, single cask

Owner’s Cask Owner: Musashiya (Gen Takeuchi)

Non-chill-filtered, no colouring

30ml ¥2,088 tax included

The misty Sasayama basin



Kizakura Tanba Distillery (Tamba-Sasayama, Hyogo)

The old castle town of Sasayama



Okachi-machi samurai street in the Sasayama castle town

Only 60 bottles of Tanba, straight from the cask.

Kizakura of Fushimi, Kyoto, has distilled whisky at Tanba since 2018. Tamba-Sasayama is a misty mountain basin 200-300 m up, often likened to the Scottish Highlands. This bourbon barrel, owned by the Tokyo shop Musashiya, was bottled straight from the cask, with no blending, water, chill filtration or colouring: one of just 60 bottles.

Photo: 663highland / CC BY 2.5
Map: Natural Earth

Distillery sources: back label, Nihon Shokuryo Shimbun
Product source: Musashiya

CONTENTS

Tanba-Sasayama

TANBA-SASAYAMA

A castle town in a misty basin

Tanba-Sasayama, Hyogo



The Great Hall of Sasayama Castle (rebuilt in 2000)
先従隗始 / CC0



Gabled merchant houses of Kawaramachi
663highland / CC BY 2.5



A kiln at Tachikui, home of Tanba ware (Sue-no-sato)
663highland / CC BY 2.5



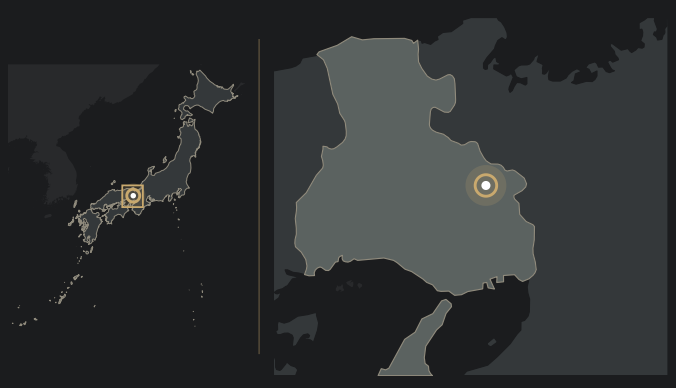
Stone walls and moat of Sasayama Castle
Saigen Jiro / CC0

目次

A castle town and an ancient pottery village in a misty basin.

Sasayama Castle was built in 1609 on Tokugawa Ieyasu’s orders, guarding the road from Kyoto to the Japan Sea. Its stone walls and moats survive, the Great Hall has been rebuilt, and samurai houses and gabled merchant houses still line the old streets. From autumn to winter morning mist fills the basin; the swing between warm days and cold nights grows black soybeans, Tanba chestnuts and yams, and winter brings boar hot pot. Tachikui to the south has made Tanba ware, one of Japan’s Six Ancient Kilns, since the 12th century.

Tanba-Sasayama and Tanba Distillery



Tanba-Sasayama through time

12th c.	Tanba ware begins, one of the Six Ancient Kilns
1609	Sasayama Castle built on Tokugawa Ieyasu’s orders
1944	The castle’s Great Hall burns down
2000	The Great Hall is rebuilt
2004	The old town becomes a preservation district
2015	The Dekansho-bushi story named Japan Heritage
2018	Kizakura starts distilling at Tanba Distillery
2019	Sasayama city renamed Tanba-Sasayama

Sources: Tanba-Sasayama city, Agency for Cultural Affairs and Kizakura public information Map: Natural Earth

Rokkosan

ROKKOSAN DISTILLERY

Kobe, Hyogo | Rokkosan Distillery

Rokkosan MIZUNARA

Pure Malt Whisky



ALCOHOL
42%
ABV

CASK
MIZUNARA
Non-peated・720ml

MT. ROKKO
Summit well water
Aged in clean forest air

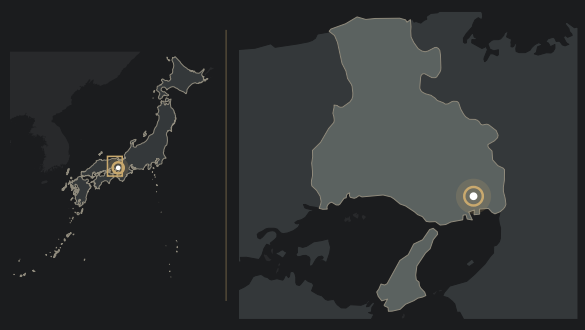


Rokko Garden Terrace

Oriental, incense-like notes from Mizunara and a fresh finish

30ml ¥1,815 tax included

Mount Rokko, Kobe



Night view from the Rokko range



Kobe at night from Mount Maya in the Rokko range

A finish like a breeze running through the trees.

Mount Rokko rises right behind Kobe. At its mountain-top distillery, selected Scottish malts mature in Mizunara casks in the clean forest air, then meet natural water from a summit well. Gentle malt sweetness, the incense-like aroma of Mizunara, and a fresh finish like wind through the trees. Non-peated.

Photo: Laitr Keiows / CC BY-SA 3.0 · 663highland / CC BY 2.5
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Okayama

OKAYAMA DISTILLERY

Okayama city | Miyashita Sake Brewery

Okayama Triple Cask

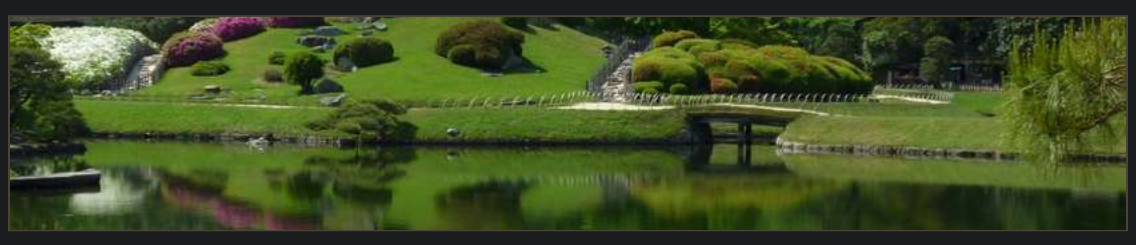
Japanese Single Malt Whisky



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

OKAYAMA BARLEY
LOCAL
Barley malt・700ml

3 CASKS
Three cask types
Brandy, sherry, Mizunara



Okayama Castle reflected at Korakuen

Distilling since 2011
Our bottle is
No.00255L

30ml ¥2,637 tax included

Okayama city



Okayama

Okayama Castle



Okayama Castle among autumn maples

Okayama barley, in three casks.

Miyashita Sake Brewery has distilled at Okayama Distillery since 2011, using barley grown in Okayama. Triple Cask is a limited vatting of spirit matured separately in brandy, sherry and Mizunara casks: the floral lift of brandy wood, the sweetness of sherry and the perfume of Japanese oak.

Photo: Martin Falbisoner / CC BY-SA 4.0 ・ Fjkelfeimvvn / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

目次

Umebijin

UMEBIJIN SHUZO

Yawatahama, Ehime | Umebijin Shuzo

Ehime Malt Whisky Taki

Blessing of well water



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

SINCE
1916
Umebijin Shuzo・700ml

WELL WATER
From 30m underground
A brewer's devotion to water



Sadamisaki lighthouse

British and Canadian malt, finished with Yawatahama water

30ml ¥1,925 tax included

Yawatahama, Ehime



Umebijin

Yawatahama harbour



Yawatahama town and harbour

Finished with the water a sake brewery treasures.

Yawatahama is a harbour town at the base of the Sadamisaki peninsula, where terraced mandarin groves run down to the sea. Umebijin Shuzo, founded in 1916, prizes its well water, drawn from 30 metres underground. Taki brings British and Canadian malt whiskies together with that water: soft and gentle.

Photo: Amake / CC BY-SA 3.0 ・ clear and sunny / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Sakurao

SAKURAO DISTILLERY

Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima | Sakurao B&D

Single Malt SAKURAO

Single Malt Japanese Whisky



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

SEASIDE
SETOUCHI
Seaside warehouse · 700ml

SETOUCHI

A breath of the Inland Sea

Aged where it all began



The Seto Inland Sea from Mount Misen

A seaside distillery
facing Miyajima
Non-chill-filtered, natural colour

30ml ¥1,647 tax included

Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima



Sakurao

Itsukushima Shrine, Miyajima



The great torii of Itsukushima at sunset

Gentle smoke, touched by the Seto Inland Sea breeze.

Matured in the seaside warehouse at Sakurao in Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima, where the company was founded, looking across to Miyajima. The casks take on a faint, calm air from the Seto Inland Sea. Pleasant smoke and oak, then a long, rich sweetness. Non-chill-filtered and naturally coloured.

Photo: Jakub Hałun / CC BY 4.0 · dconvertini / CC BY-SA 2.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Kyushu & Okinawa

Part 1 / 30 ml / Tax included

Kyushu & Okinawa distillery map ›

OITA

Kuju Distillery The First Cask Strength ›	58%	¥2,475
Kuju Distillery Tabi Cask Strength ›	53%	¥2,365

FUKUOKA

Shindo Distillery Shindo Experimental 01 ›	50%	¥2,965
Shindo Distillery New Make ›	60%	¥2,750
Shindo Distillery Shindo Experimental for Cores.02 ›	48%	¥2,475
Shindo Distillery Non Peated, The Blended 2026 ›	46%	¥1,595

MIYAZAKI

Osuzuyama Distillery Osuzu Malt American Oak Barrel, Our Local Barley ›	46%	¥2,189
Osuzuyama Distillery Osuzu Malt Chestnut Barrel Our Local Barley ›	46%	¥2,527

KUMAMOTO

Joraku Shuzo Amanohakuh Kumamoto Rice Whisky ›	43%	¥1,705
Yamaga Distillery Yamaga Peated 2026 Edition ›	55%	¥1,977

KAGOSHIMA

Kanosuke Distillery Hioki Pot Still 2024 Limited Edition ›	55%	¥2,835
Kanosuke Distillery Single Malt Peated ›	48%	¥2,178
Kanosuke Distillery Single Malt 2026 Limited Edition ›	57%	¥2,915
Kanosuke Distillery Hioki Pot Still ›	51%	¥2,365

CONTENTS

Kyushu & Okinawa

Part 2 / 30 ml / Tax included

Kyushu & Okinawa distillery map ›

目次

KAGOSHIMA

Kanosuke Distillery Single Malt ›	48%	¥1,977
Ontake Distillery Cask Number III Single Cask Japanese Whisky ›	56%	¥2,189
Ontake Distillery Ontake 2025 ›	43%	¥2,178
Ontake Distillery IMADEYA Cask No.001, A View of Sakurajima ›	56.7%	¥2,945
Ontake Distillery Owner’s Cask No.562, Tasting Market ›	59.1%	¥1,978
Nishi Shuzo Hioki, The Ontake Distillery Pure Barley Single Blended ›	40%	¥1,867
Hombo Shuzo Mars The Y.A. #03 ›	51%	¥2,079
Hombo Shuzo Single Malt Tsunuki 2023 Edition ›	50%	¥2,068
Komaki Distillery Single Malt Komaki Whisky Syuten ›	46%	¥1,868
Hinokami Distillery HINOKAMI NEW BORN #3 ›	50%	¥1,850

OKINAWA

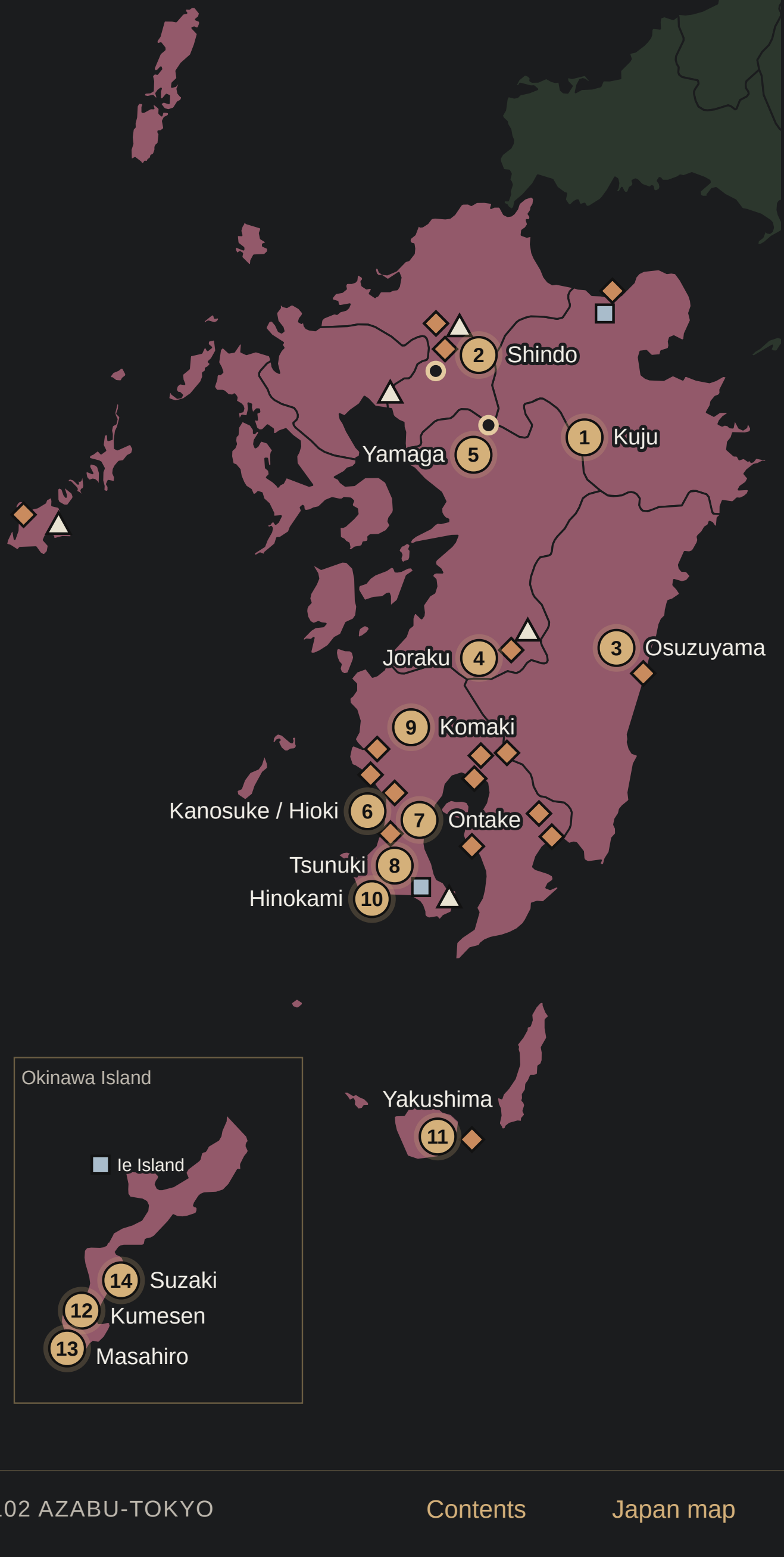
Kumesen Shuzo Okinawa Blue Rice Whisky Akashoubin ›	50%	¥1,925
Masahiro Shuzo Craft Wonder Rice Whisky Mizunara 12y ›	43%	¥1,925
Masahiro Shuzo Craft Wonder Rice Whisky Bourbon Barrel 7y ›	43%	¥1,925
Ryuka New Born 2026 ›	58%	¥2,087
Naha Distillery Single Malt Japanese Whisky ›	60%	¥2,035

AREA MAP 4 / 4

● Whisky (numbered) ◆ Shochu ▲ Gin ■ Rum, vodka etc. ○ Sake, liqueur etc.

Kyushu & Okinawa

Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Oita, Miyazaki, Kagoshima, Okinawa





Kujukushima islands, Nagasaki

Photo: Raita Futo / CC BY 2.0



Mt. Yufu, Oita

Photo: Suicasmo / CC BY-SA 4.0



Kabira Bay, Ishigaki, Okinawa

Photo: 663highland / CC BY 2.5

CONTENTS

WHISKY · TAP A NUMBER OR A NAME TO OPEN ITS PAGE

Whisky distilleries & bottles

14 distilleries • 29 bottles



1 **Kuju Distillery** Oita

The First Cask Strength / Tabi Cask Strength



2 **Shindo Distillery** Fukuoka

Shindo Experimental 01 / New Make / Shindo Experimental for Cores.02 / Non Peated, The Blended 2026



3 **Osuzuyama Distillery** Miyazaki

Osuzu Malt American Oak Barrel, Our Local Barley / Osuzu Malt Chestnut Barrel Our Local Barley / [gin]OSUZU GIN Original



4 **Joraku Shuzo** Kumamoto

Amanohakuh Kumamoto Rice Whisky



5 **Yamaga Distillery** Kumamoto

Yamaga Peated 2026 Edition



6 **Kanosuke Distillery / Hioki Distillery** Kagoshima

Kanosuke Hioki Pot Still 2024 Limited Edition / Kanosuke Single Malt Peated / Kanosuke Single Malt 2026 Limited Edition / Kanosuke Hioki Pot Still / Kanosuke Single Malt



7 **Ontake Distillery (Nishi Shuzo)** Kagoshima

Owner's Cask No.562, Tasting Market / Cask Number III Single Cask Japanese Whisky / Ontake 2025 / IMADEYA Cask No.001, A View of Sakurajima / Hioki, The Ontake Distillery Pure Barley



8 **Mars Tsunuki Distillery** Kagoshima

Single Malt Tsunuki 2023 Edition



9 **Komaki Distillery** Kagoshima

Single Malt Komaki Whisky Syuten



10 **Hinokami Distillery** Kagoshima

HINOKAMI NEW BORN #3



11 **Mars Yakushima Aging Cellar** Kagoshima

Mars The Y.A. #03



12 **Kumesen Shuzo / Naha Distillery** Okinawa

Okinawa Blue Rice Whisky Akashoubin / Naha Distillery Single Malt Japanese Whisky



13 **Masahiro Distillery** Okinawa

Craft Wonder Rice Whisky Mizunara 12y / Craft Wonder Rice Whisky Bourbon Barrel 7y



14 **Suzaki Distillery (Shinzato Shuzo)** Okinawa

Ryuka New Born 2026

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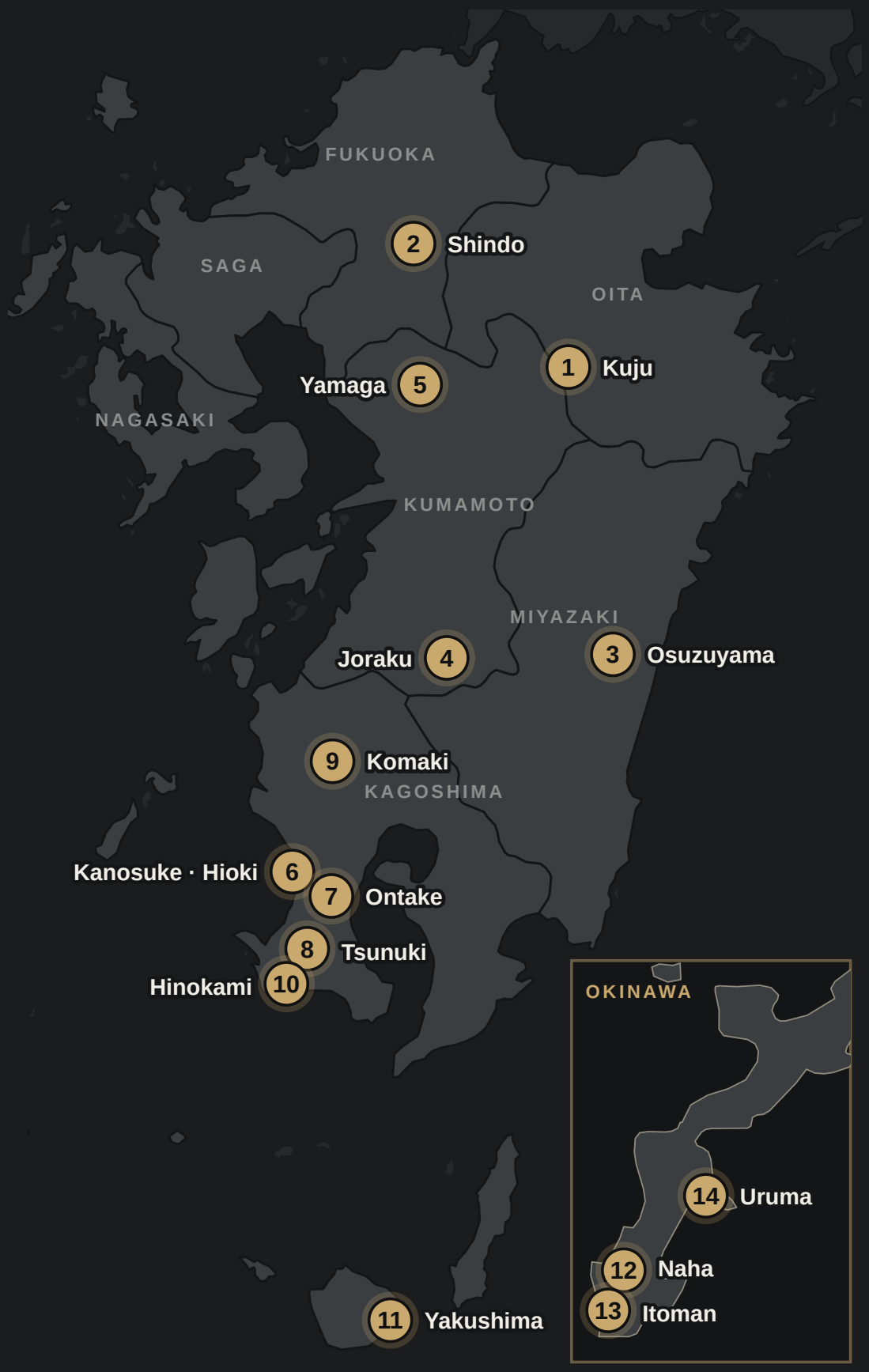
OTHER DRINKS FROM THIS AREA · TAP A NAME

◆ Shochu	Yotsuya Shuzo・Tenpai・Kenjo・Rokuchoshi Shuzo・Kuroki Honten・Goto Retto Shuzo・Murao Shuzo・Hamada Shuzo・Komasa Jyozo・Nishi Shuzo・Kokubu Shuzo・Nakamura Shuzojo・Manzen Shuzo・Moriizo Shuzo・Wakashio Shuzo・Marunishi Shuzo・Mitake Shuzo
▲ Gin	Shinozaki・Kusunohana Distillery・Goto Tsubaki Distillery・Takahashi Shuzo・Oyama Jinshichi Shoten
■ Spirits	Grace Rum・Ie Island Distillery・Sanwa Shurui・Sata Soji Shoten
○ Sake etc.	Yamaguchi Shuzojo (Uguisutomari)・Kikuka Winery

KYUSHU & OKINAWA

Distilleries of Kyushu & Okinawa

In the volcanic, forested, sea-bound south, shochu and awamori makers have turned their hands to whisky. Tap a number or a bottle to open its page.



1 **Kuju Distillery**
Taketa, Oita
The First / Tabi #01

2 **Shindo Distillery**
Asakura, Fukuoka
Experimental 01 / New Make / Cores.02 / The Blended 2026

3 **Osuzuyama Distillery**
Kijo, Miyazaki
American Oak / Chestnut

4 **Joraku Shuzo**
Nishiki, Kumamoto
Amanohakuh

5 **Yamaga Distillery**
Yamaga, Kumamoto
Peated 2026

6 **Kanosuke & Hioki (Komasa)**
Hioki, Kagoshima
Single Malt / Peated / 2026 Limited / Hioki Pot Still / Pot Still 2024

7 **Ontake Distillery (Nishi Shuzo)**
Kagoshima city
Cask Number III / Ontake 2025 / Imadeya Cask 001 / Owner's Cask / Hioki

8 **Mars Tsunuki Distillery**
Minamisatsuma, Kagoshima
Tsunuki 2023

9 **Komaki Distillery**
Satsuma, Kagoshima
Syuten

10 **Hinokami Distillery**
Makurazaki, Kagoshima
New Born #3

11 **Mars Yakushima Aging Cellar**
Yakushima, Kagoshima
The Y.A. #03

12 **Kumesen / Naha Distillery**
Naha, Okinawa
Okinawa Blue / Naha Single Malt

13 **Masahiro Distillery**
Itoman, Okinawa
Mizunara 12y / Bourbon 7y

14 **Suzaki Distillery (Shinzato)**
Uruma, Okinawa
Ryuka New Born 2026

+ Kagoshima's Hombo Shuzo also distils in Nagano: Mars Komagatake IPA Cask Finish

Map: Natural Earth (public domain)

CONTENTS

Kuju Distillery

KUJU

Taketa, Oita | Tsuzaki Shoji

Single Malt Kuju THE FIRST

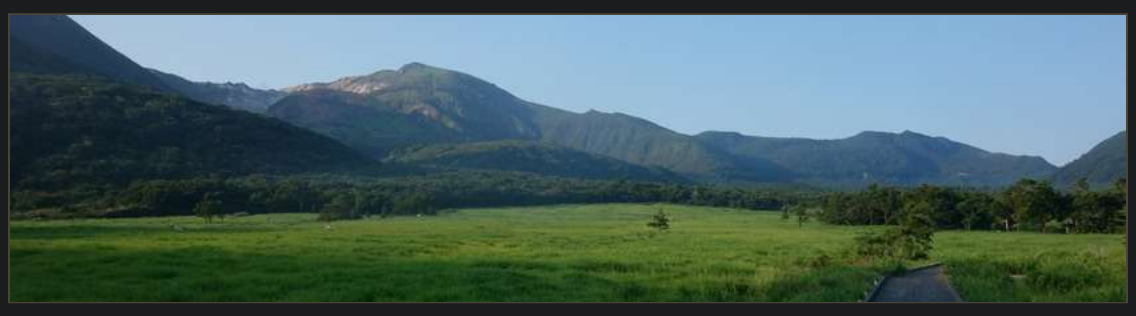
Cask Strength



ALCOHOL
58%
Cask strength

BOTTLES
11,000
In total · 700ml

ALTITUDE
~600 m
A cool highland, rare for Kyushu



Boardwalk across the Tadewara wetland

The first single malt
from Kuju Distillery
Non-chill-filtered

30ml ¥2,475 tax included

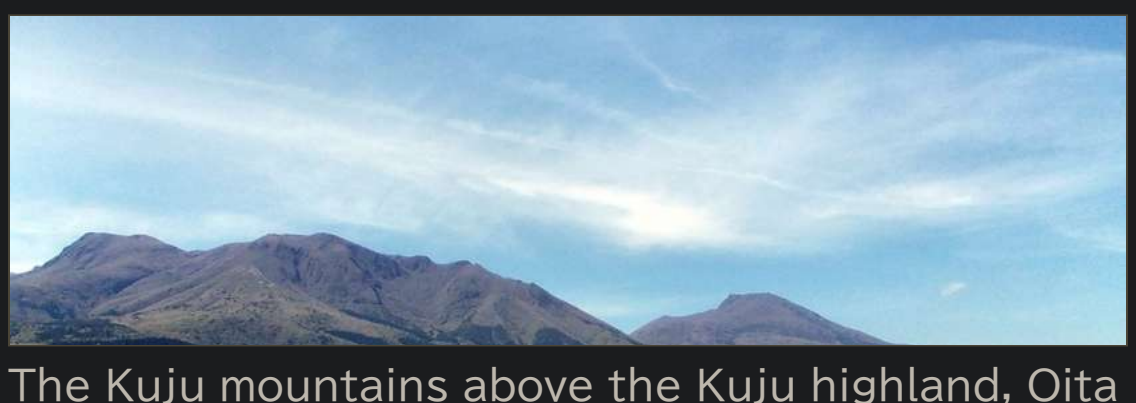
目次

Kuju highlands, Oita



Kuju Distillery

The Kuju mountains and highlands



The Kuju mountains above the Kuju highland, Oita

The first bottle from a highland 600 m up.

Kuju Distillery stands about 600 m up on the Kuju highlands in Taketa, Oita, facing the Kuju mountain range. It was built by Tsuzaki Shoji, a liquor retailer dating back to the early Taisho era, to realise a long-held dream of making its own whisky, and it is the only dedicated whisky distillery in Oita. THE FIRST is its first single malt, matured in a highland climate unusually cool for Kyushu and bottled at cask strength, 58%, without chill filtration. 11,000 bottles, released April 2025.

Photo: STA3816 / CC BY-SA 3.0 · 690 Noda / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Kuju Distillery

KUJU

Taketa, Oita | Tsuzaki Shoji

Single Malt Kuju Tabi #01

Tabi · Cask Strength



ALCOHOL
53%
ABV

RELEASE
2026.7
Tabi series No.1 · 700ml

TABI #01
A journey begins
Sweet, fruity nose



Morning fog over the Yufuin basin, Oita

Bold spirits used
with restraint, for
a balanced whole

30ml ¥2,365 tax included

Kuju highlands, Oita



Kuju Distillery

The stone walls of Oka Castle



The high stone walls of Oka Castle, Taketa

Sweet fruit, soft wood: the first step of a journey.

Tabi (”journey”) is the new series Kuju Distillery launched after THE FIRST, and this is its first edition. Strongly characterful spirits are vatted in with care, but balance comes first. Sweet fruit leads from the nose into the first sip; on the finish the fruit grows brighter, joined by soft wood. Bottled at 53% without chill filtration, released 31 July 2026: a new journey for the highland distillery.

Photo: As6673 / Public domain · Miya.m / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Shindo Distillery

SHINDO

Asakura | Shinozaki

SHINDO EXPERIMENTAL 01

Single Malt Japanese Whisky | Shindo's first single malt



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

EST.
2021
Fukuoka · 700ml

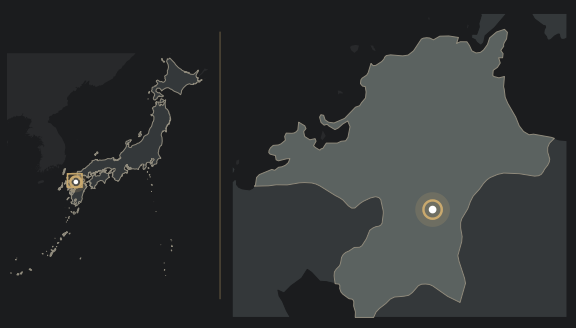
THE QUEST FOR THE ORIGINAL
Pursuing originality
The best answer so far

A tropical top note,
buttercream,
a long toffee finish

30ml ¥2,965 tax included

目次

Asakura, on the Chikugo River



Shindo Distillery

Terraced fields of the Chikugo valley



Tsuzura rice terraces, Ukiha, next to Asakura

Floral and tropical: where Shindo begins.

Shinozaki has brewed in Asakura, Fukuoka for some 200 years, and in 2021 it opened SHINDO LAB, home of Shindo Distillery. EXPERIMENTAL 01 is the distillery's first single malt: in its own words, the best answer so far in a daily quest for the spirit it wants to make. The top is floral, tropical and fruity; then comes a sweet, oriental, buttercream-like aroma, leading to a long finish of toffee and milky notes. Try it neat first, then with a drop of water.

Photo: うきは市 / CC BY 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Shindo Distillery

SHINDO

Asakura | Shinozaki

SHINDO New Make Whisky PEATED

SHINDO LAB | New make · 200ml



ALCOHOL
60%
ABV

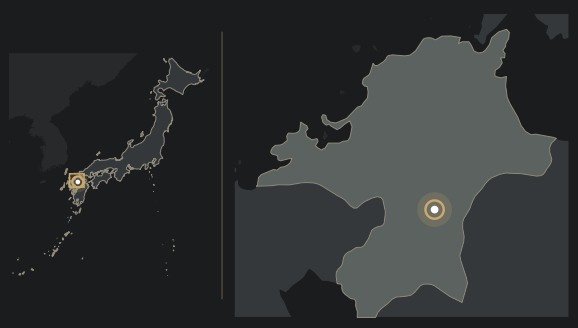
DISTILLED
2023.4
Bottled 16 June 2023

NEW MAKE
Spirit before the cask
Peated malt (UK)

1st distillation 21–27 Apr 2023
2nd distillation 24–28 Apr
clear, unaged spirit

30ml ¥2,750 tax included

Asakura, on the Chikugo River



The Chikugo River at Harazuru



Shindo Distillery The Chikugo River at Harazuru Onsen, Asakura

Shindo's spirit, bare, before the cask.

New make is freshly distilled spirit that has not yet seen a cask: clear as water. This bottling from Shindo used peated malt made in the UK; it was distilled twice in April 2023 and bottled on 16 June 2023 at 60%. Behind the peat smoke and the power of the grain sits the buttery, milky roundness said to mark Shindo’s spirit. Taste it beside the matured EXPERIMENTAL or CORES bottlings to see exactly what the cask adds.

Photo: STA3816 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Shindo Distillery

SHINDO

Asakura | Shinozaki

SHINDO EXPERIMENTAL FOR CORES.02

Single Malt Japanese Whisky | Shindo’s first peated



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

PEATED
No.02
First peated official bottling · 700ml

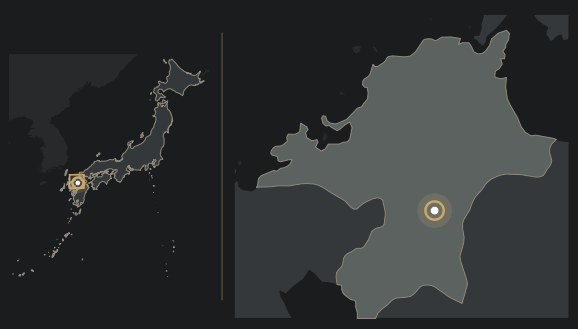
CORES SERIES
A deeper theme
Embodying ”the quest for originality”

Peat at the core,
crisp malt,
almond and berries

30ml ¥2,475 tax included

目次

Asakura, on the Chikugo River



Cherry blossoms, Sugi-no-baba



Shindo Distillery

Cherry-blossom tunnel on Sugi-no-baba, Akizuki

Peat at its core, yet light on its feet: Shindo's other face.

EXPERIMENTAL FOR CORES is the series in which Shindo explores deeper themes in pursuit of its motto, ”the quest for originality”. No.02 is the first peated style among its official bottlings. Peat is the backbone, yet the whisky stays light, vatted so that crisp malt, almond and berries come through, together with the buttery, milky character typical of Shindo’s spirit. Enjoy the way the flavours unfold layer by layer.

Photo: STA3816 / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Shindo Distillery

SHINDO

Asakura | Shinozaki

SHINDO The Blended 2026 – Non Peated

Blended Japanese Whisky | Shindo × Asakura



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

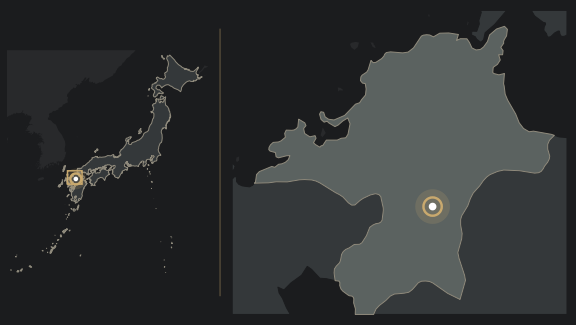
DISTILLERIES
2
Shindo malt + Asakura grain

LOCAL BARLEY
Asakura-grown barley
Even the grain is local

ISC 2026
Gold medal
Great in a highball

30ml ¥1,595 tax included

Asakura, on the Chikugo River



Shindo Distillery

The Megane Bridge, Akizuki



The Megane stone bridge, Akizuki

Two distilleries, one smooth and milky blend.

Shindo’s first blended Japanese whisky is a collaboration between the two distilleries Shinozaki runs. Malt whisky from Shindo Distillery is blended with grain whisky that Asakura Distillery made in-house from local barley grown in Asakura, Fukuoka. It is smooth and easy-going, with the milky, toffee-like (caramel) notes that come from Shindo’s new make. Lovely with water or in a highball, and rewarding neat. Released June 2026.

Photo: sk01 / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Osuzuyama Distillery

OSUZUYAMA

Kijo, Miyazaki

OSUZU MALT American Oak Barrel

Our Local Barley | Japanese Single Malt Whisky



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

CASK
OAK
American oak barrel ・
700ml

OUR LOCAL BARLEY
Barley they grow
Hand-made by box malting

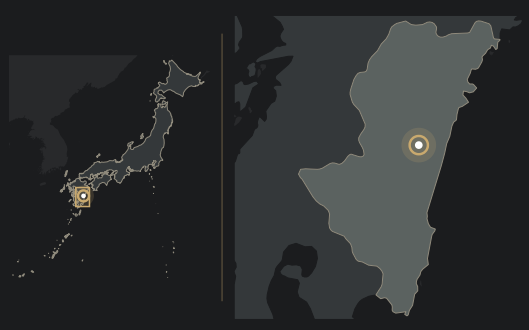


Manai Falls, Takachiho Gorge, Miyazaki

Local barley,
malted by hand on site
Non-chill-filtered

30ml ¥2,189 tax included

Foot of Mt Osuzu, Kijo



Osuzuyama Distillery

Falls in the Osuzu mountains



Jiroshiro Falls in the Osuzu mountains, Miyazaki

From field to glass: a malt raised in the Osuzu forest.

Kuroki Honten, famous for the shochu Hyakunen no Kodoku, opened Osuzuyama Distillery in the forest at the foot of Mt Osuzu in 1998, and began making whisky there in 2019. The barley is grown by the company itself in Miyazaki, then malted by hand on site using ”box malting”, in which the grain germinates in shallow boxes. Matured in American oak, this bottling pairs a gentle, rustic grain sweetness with soft, sweet notes from the cask. Non-chill-filtered.

Photo: Koda6029 / CC BY-SA 4.0 ・ The Modern Polymath / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Osuzuyama Distillery

OSUZUYAMA

Kijo, Miyazaki

OSUZU MALT Chestnut Barrel

Our Local Barley | Japanese Single Malt Whisky



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

CASK
CHESTNUT
Chestnut-wood barrel · 700ml

RARE WOOD
Chestnut cask
Unusual wood for whisky

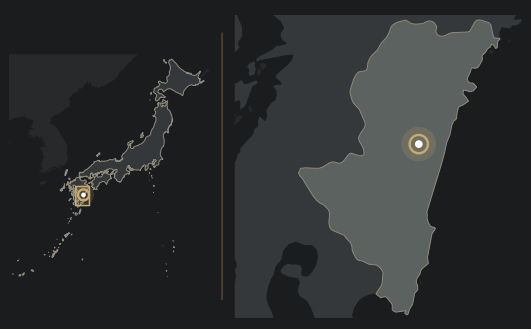


The Hyuga-nada sea from Cape Hyuga

Aged in chestnut wood
home-grown, home-malted
Non-chill-filtered

30ml ¥2,527 tax included

Foot of Mt Osuzu, Kijo



Osuzuyama Distillery

The Omaru River below Mt Osuzu



The Omaru River at Ishikawauchi, Kijo

The mellow, nutty sweetness of a chestnut cask.

Of Osuzuyama's single malts, this one is the most distinctive: matured in barrels of chestnut wood, a tannin-rich timber rarely used for whisky. The barley is the company's own, grown locally and malted by hand in boxes, and the fermentation skills of a shochu house bring out its flavour. A rustic grain sweetness meets the soft, nutty sweetness and spice of chestnut. Try it side by side with the American oak bottling.

Photo: Sanjo / Public domain · shikabane taro / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Joraku Shuzo

JORAKU

Nishiki, Kumamoto | Kuma shochu house

Amanohakuh

Kumamoto Rice Whisky



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

RICE WHISKY
RICE
Rice + German malt ・
700ml

SINCE 1912
Founded in Taisho 1
A shochu house in the Kuma basin

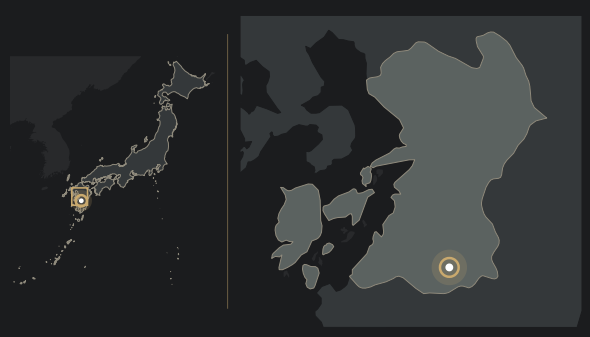


Stone walls of Hitoyoshi Castle

Blended with rice shochu
long aged in oak
Made for Japanese food

30ml ¥1,705 tax included

Kuma basin, Hitoyoshi



The Kuma River and basin



The Kuma River and Hitoyoshi from the castle ruins

The delicate, refined sweetness of rice.

Joraku Shuzo is a long-established shochu distillery founded in 1912 in the Hitoyoshi-Kuma basin of Kumamoto. Its first whisky, Amanohakuh (”white rain from the heavens”), is a rice whisky made with the brewery’s traditional skills: German malt and rice are used, and rice shochu long aged in oak is blended in as spirit. Designed as ”a whisky that flatters food”, it shows the delicate, refined sweetness of rice. Best on the rocks or with soda, alongside Japanese cuisine.

Photo: Saigen Jiro / CC0 ・ Saigen Jiro / CC0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Yamaga Distillery

YAMAGA

Kao, Yamaga, Kumamoto

YAMAGA Single Malt Peated 2026 Edition

Yamaga's first peated release



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

LIMITED
6,000
Bottles · 700ml

EST. 2021
First peated

Inspired by the lantern dance

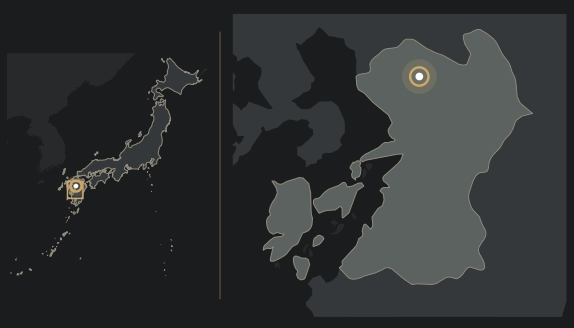


Inside the Yachiyoza theatre, Yamaga

Fruity and creamy,
pastry-like sweetness,
a smoky finish

30ml ¥1,977 tax included

Yamaga, northern Kumamoto



Yamaga Distillery

The Yamaga Lantern Festival



The thousand-lantern dance, Yamaga Toro Matsuri

The grace of the lantern dance, reflected in smoke.

Yamaga Distillery opened in 2021 in Kao, in the city of Yamaga in northern Kumamoto. Peated 2026 Edition is its first peated single malt. It sets out to express the elegance of the women of the Yamaga Toro Odori, who dance with golden paper lanterns on their heads, and is fruity and creamy, with a sweetness like French pastry and a smoky finish. Non-chill-filtered, natural colour; 6,000 bottles released in July 2026.

Photo: ノブりんご / CC BY-SA 4.0 · ノブりんご / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Hioki Distillery

HIOKI

Hioki | Komasa Jozo

Kanosuke Hioki Pot Still 2024 Limited Edition

Mellow land, mellow whisky



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

GRAIN
BARLEY
Grain whisky · barley + malt · 700ml

POT STILL WHISKY
Japanese style
Distilled in a pot still

New oak, bourbon and shochu | re-charred | casks, vatted together

30ml ¥2,835 tax included

Fukiage beach, Hioki



Hioki Distillery

The sea at Terushima, north Fukiage



Islands off the Terushima coast

Bittersweet harmony: Hioki, 2024 only.

A Japanese-style pot still whisky, made from barley and malted barley by its own method at Hioki Distillery, the shochu house of Komasa Jozo founded in 1883, and matured in Kanosuke Distillery's warehouses. Spirits aged in new American white oak, ex-bourbon and re-charred shochu casks are vatted together. The 2024 limited edition is bottled at 55%: richer and mellower, with a pleasing balance of bitterness and sweetness.

Photo: Hyppolyte de Saint-Rambert / CC BY 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Kanosuke Distillery

KANOSUKE

Hioki, Kagoshima

Kanosuke Single Malt PEATED

Single Malt Japanese Whisky



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

KEY MALT
PEATED
Shochu re-charred + bourbon casks

MELLOW PEAT
A mellow peated malt
A new challenge for an unpeated house

Soft, elegant peat

Non-chill-filtered

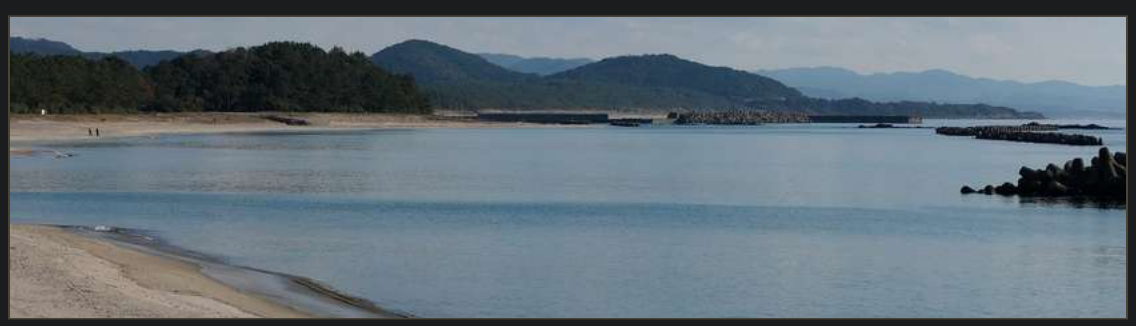
30ml ¥2,178 tax included

Fukiage beach, Hioki



Kanosuke Distillery

Terushima beach, north Fukiage



Terushima beach at the north end of Fukiage

Soft and elegant: a mellow peated malt of home.

Kanosuke is known for unpeated spirit; this soft, elegant peated single malt is its new challenge. Peated spirit matured in re-charred shochu casks and bourbon barrels is the key malt, vatted with spirits from a selection of other casks and bottled without chill filtration. Master blender Yoshitsugu Komasa calls it a ”mellow peated whisky” expressing the terroir of home: gentle smoke from a distillery within earshot of the waves of Fukiage beach.

Photo: Hyppolyte de Saint-Rambert / CC BY 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Kanosuke Distillery

KANOSUKE

Hioki, Kagoshima

Kanosuke Single Malt 2026 Limited Edition

The spring coast



ALCOHOL
57%
ABV

FINISH
2
Apple brandy & white wine casks

SPRING COAST
A spring sea breeze
Beach vitex, told through casks

Orange blossom, apple peel
vanilla, yuzu bean paste, honey
citrus and salt on the finish

30ml ¥2,915 tax included

目次

Fukiage beach, Hioki



Kanosuke Distillery

Beach vitex in bloom



Beach vitex (hamagou) in flower

A spring sea breeze in a glass: bright and fresh.

A limited edition of Kanosuke Single Malt that captures the spring coast: a gentle sea breeze and the scent of beach vitex (hamagou) on the sand. Bourbon-cask spirit finished in apple brandy casks and re-charred shochu-cask spirit finished in white wine casks were married with oloroso and cream sherry spirits and a touch of peat. Bright ”wa” sweetness, then citrus and salt. Released February 2026.

Photo: Batholith / Public domain
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Hioki Distillery

HIOKI

Hioki | Komasa Jozo

Kanosuke Hioki Pot Still

Japanese Whisky | Hioki Distillery



ALCOHOL
51%
ABV

GRAIN
BARLEY
Barley + malt · pot still · 700ml

FOUNDED IN 1883
Hioki Distillery
Whisky from a shochu house



Sunset beside Mt Kaimon, from Yadorihara

”A land where the sun
sets as if laid to rest”:
born in Hioki

30ml ¥2,365 tax included

Fukiage beach, Hioki



Hioki Distillery

Ijuin, Hioki, and its hills



Ijuin, Hioki, seen from Joyama Park

Bold yet gentle: a new Japanese whisky raised in Hioki.

Hioki, in Kagoshima, is said to be ”a land where the setting sun seems to be laid down to rest”. At Hioki Distillery, the shochu house of Komasa Jozo founded in 1883, barley and malted barley are converted and fermented by the house’s own method and distilled with care in a pot still. The spirit then matures in Kanosuke Distillery’s warehouses in new American white oak and bourbon casks. Bold yet gentle: a new Japanese whisky from shochu craftsmanship.

Photo: DaiThinh / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Sanjo / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Kanosuke Distillery

KANOSUKE

Hioki, Kagoshima

Kanosuke Single Malt

Single Malt Japanese Whisky



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

POT STILLS
3
Three pot stills・700ml

MELLOW KOZURU
Mellow Kozuru casks
Re-charred casks from aged shochu

”The most beautiful
sunset in Japan”:
a distillery by the sea

30ml ¥1,977 tax included

Fukiage beach, Hioki



Sunset over the East China Sea



Sunset over the East China Sea from Kanosuke Distillery Bandokorobana

Made slowly, by a sea of famous sunsets.

Kanosuke Komasa, grandfather of today’s master blender, said Fukiage beach in Kagoshima reflected the most beautiful sunset in Japan. Kanosuke Distillery opened on that shore in 2017. Spirits made in three different pot stills are matured in re-charred American white oak casks once used for Mellow Kozuru, the house’s barrel-aged shochu, and form the key malt of a carefully judged blend, bottled without chill filtration. The flagship, made ”like slowly finishing a painting”.

Photo: The Modern Polymath / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Ontake Distillery

ONTAKE

Kagoshima | Nishi Shuzo

The Ontake Distillery Owner’s Cask

TASTING MARKET PRIVATE BOTTLING | CASK No.562



ALCOHOL
59.1%
Cask strength

BOTTLES
621
700ml

OLOROSO SHERRY BUTT
2022.04 → 2025.07
Filled → bottled, single cask

Owner’s Cask
Owner: TASTING MARKET
A Tasting Market original bottling

30ml ¥1,978 tax included

Facing Sakurajima across Kagoshima Bay



The Ontake Distillery (Shimofukumoto, Kagoshima)

Between a volcano and the sea



Sakurajima at sunset, across Kinko Bay from Kagoshima City

A single sherry cask from Japan's volcanic south.

Nishi Shuzo, the shochu house behind Hozan, built the Ontake Distillery in the hills of Kagoshima, facing the Sakurajima volcano. For its fourth anniversary, Tasting Market chose this Oloroso sherry butt as its first Japanese whisky and bottled it at its peak. Cream sherry, fruitcake and vanilla over soft young-malt sweetness.

Photo: Kimon Berlin / CC BY-SA 2.0
Map: Natural Earth
Distillery source: Serai.jp
Tasting notes: Manabu Ito (Mixology Heritage) via Musashiya

CONTENTS

Kagoshima KAGOSHIMA

Sakurajima and the Satsuma castle town

Kagoshima city, Kagoshima



Sengan-en, the Shimazu family's villa garden
STA3816 / CC BY-SA 3.0



Shoko Shuseikan, the old Shuseikan machine works (World Heritage)
Yanajin / CC BY-SA 3.0



The city and Sakurajima from Shiroyama
Jody McIntyre / CC BY-SA 2.0



Statue of Saigo Takamori, Shiroyama-cho
Hyppolyte de Saint-Rambert / CC BY 4.0

目次

A city that looks up at a smoking volcano every day.

Kagoshima faces Sakurajima, still sending up smoke, across Kinko Bay. In the Edo period it was the castle town of the Shimazu lords; in the 1850s Shimazu Nariakira's Shuseikan works brought iron, shipbuilding and spinning to Japan ahead of its time, and Saigo Takamori and Okubo Toshimichi, leaders of the Meiji Restoration, grew up here. At Sengan-en, the Shimazu villa, the volcano and the bay are borrowed as the garden's hill and pond. Ontake Distillery sits in the hills south of the city, facing Sakurajima.

Kagoshima and Ontake Distillery



Kagoshima through time

1601	The Shimazu begin Tsurumaru (Kagoshima) Castle
1658	Shimazu Mitsuhisa builds his villa, Sengan-en
1851	Shimazu Nariakira starts the Shuseikan industrial works
1863	Anglo-Satsuma War: a British fleet shells the town
1877	Satsuma Rebellion: Saigo Takamori dies at Shiroyama
1914	Great Taisho eruption joins Sakurajima to the Osumi Peninsula
2015	Shuseikan sites become World Heritage (Meiji Industrial Revolution)
2019	Nishi Shuzo opens Ontake Distillery

Sources: Kagoshima city, Sengan-en and Nishi Shuzo public information Map: Natural Earth

Ontake Distillery

ONTAKE

Kagoshima | Nishi Shuzo

CASK Number III Single Cask

Single Cask Japanese Whisky | Oloroso sherry cask



ALCOHOL
56%
ABV

CASK
OLOROSO
Oloroso sherry cask・
700ml

OX → DRAGON
2021 → 2024
Distilled in the Ox year, bottled in the Dragon year

Bright gold;
sweet toasted barley, hay
and white grape

30ml ¥2,189 tax included

Hills above Kagoshima, facing Sakurajima



Ontake Distillery

Sengan-en and Sakurajima



Sakurajima from the Sengan-en garden

A big cask's calm, and the spirit's own character.

Nishi Shuzo opened Ontake Distillery in 2019 in the hills of Kagoshima city, facing Sakurajima. This single cask was bottled as it is: as the ox and dragon on the label tell you, distilled in the Year of the Ox (2021) and bottled in the Year of the Dragon (2024). A large oloroso cask brings calm maturity while the spirit shines through: toasty barley, hay, white grape and a light, glossy sweetness. Selected by Koichi Hasegawa.

Photo: Christophe95 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Ontake Distillery

ONTAKE

Kagoshima | Nishi Shuzo

Ontake 2025

Japanese Single Malt Whisky | First Fill



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

CASK
SHERRY
First-fill ex-sherry casks・700ml

HOUSE YEAST
Cultured in-house
Two-row barley, Kagoshima spring water



Sunset over Kinko Bay from Sakurajima

A rich nose,
deep body,
a long, sweet finish

30ml ¥2,178 tax included

Hills above Kagoshima, facing Sakurajima



Kinko Bay and Sakurajima



Ontake Distillery

Sakurajima across Kinko Bay

A rich nose, deep body and a silky texture.

Ontake 2025 is the long-awaited second release from Kagoshima's Ontake Distillery. It is made with yeast cultured in-house, the finest two-row barley, and soft, low-mineral spring water from Kagoshima's abundant nature, then carefully matured in selected first-fill ex-sherry casks. A rich nose, deep body and a smooth texture lead to a long, sweet finish that turns a glass into a small luxury. Non-chill-filtered, natural colour.

Photo: Suicasmo / CC BY-SA 4.0 ・ The Modern Polymath / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Ontake Distillery

ONTAKE

Kagoshima | Nishi Shuzo

IMADEYA CASK No.001 a view of Sakurajima

Single Cask Strength | Ontake × IMADEYA



ALCOHOL
56.7%
Cask strength

AGED
3 YEARS
A cask owned by IMADEYA・700ml

31°31′ N 130°27′ E
Facing Sakurajima
The distillery's position, on the label



Sakurajima erupting under the stars

Sakurajima as seen from the distillery, drawn on the label

30ml ¥2,945 tax included

Hills above Kagoshima, facing Sakurajima



Ontake Distillery

Sakurajima at sunrise



Sunrise beside Sakurajima, from the ferry

The many faces of Sakurajima; the face of one cask.

Sakurajima, whose peaks are called Ontake, shows a different face from every viewpoint, just as one spirit changes in every cask. The liquor shop IMADEYA has owned casks at Ontake Distillery since 2021; Cask 01 was bottled after about three years. The label shows Sakurajima as seen from the distillery, with its latitude and longitude. Cask strength, 56.7%: the face of this one cask.

Photo: The Modern Polymath / CC BY-SA 4.0 ・ Naoki Iwashita / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Nishi Shuzo

NISHI SHUZO

Fukiage, Hioki | Ontake

Hioki Pure Barley Single Blended

The Ontake Distillery | Japanese Whisky



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

PURE BARLEY
100%
Malt + grain · 700ml

EST. 1845
Nishi Shuzo
Whisky from a Fukiage shochu house



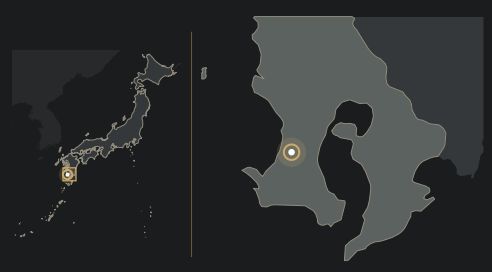
The climbing kiln of Chin Jukan, Miyama

Malt and grain
from one house
Natural colour

30ml ¥1,867 tax included

目次

Fukiage, west of the Satsuma peninsula



The shore at Fukiage beach



Nishi Shuzo

Grass and sea at Fukiage beach

One house, barley only: a blended whisky.

Nishi Shuzo, founded in 1845, is known for honkaku shochu such as Tomino Hozan and Tenshi no Yuwaku. Hioki is a ”pure barley single blended” whisky: malt spirit from its Ontake Distillery married with barley grain spirit made by Nishi Shuzo itself. Barley is the only grain, and everything from distillation to maturation and bottling happens in Kagoshima. Through the lettering on the clear bottle you see the whisky’s own, uncoloured hue. Light, and easy with food.

Photo: Y.Sakoh / CC BY 3.0 · STA3816 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Mars Yakushima

AGING CELLAR

Yakushima | Hombo Shuzo

MARS The Y.A. #03

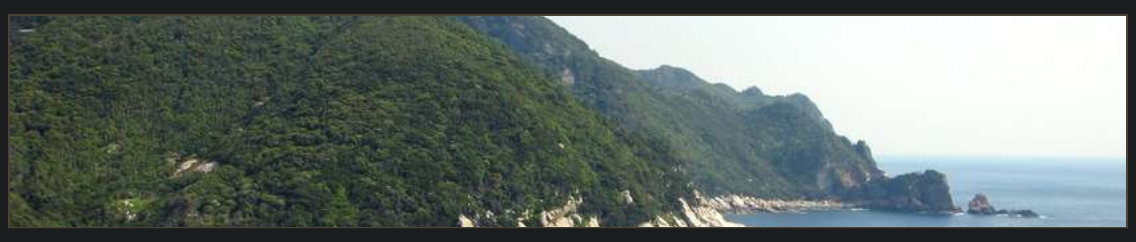
Blended Malt Japanese Whisky | Aged on Yakushima



ALCOHOL
51%
ABV

DISTILLERIES
2
Komagatake + Tsunuki ・
700ml

YAKUSHIMA
A World Heritage island
~60 km SSW of mainland Kagoshima



Mountains meeting the sea, west Yakushima

Southern citrus,
a mineral, ocean-like
roundness

30ml ¥2,079 tax included

Yakushima, a World Heritage island



Shiratani Unsuikyo, Yakushima



Mars Yakushima

Mossy forest of Shiratani Unsuikyo, Yakushima

Citrus and sea air from the island of Yakushima.

Some 60 km south-south-west of mainland Kagoshima lies Yakushima, a World Natural Heritage island of steep mountains and abundant water, home to the Mars Yakushima Aging Cellar. The Y.A. matured in this one-of-a-kind setting: malts from Hombo Shuzo’s Komagatake and Tsunuki distilleries, mostly bourbon-barrel aged, vatted together. Southern citrus, with a mineral richness that recalls the sea.

Photo: Σ64 / CC BY 4.0 ・ Chris 73 / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Mars Tsunuki

TSUNUKI DISTILLERY

Minamisatsuma | Hombo Shuzo

Single Malt Tsunuki 2023 Edition

Non Chill Filtered



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

CASK
BOURBON
Mainly bourbon barrels・
700ml

SINCE 2016
A Satsuma valley
Where Hombo Shuzo began



Tomari bay, Bonotsu, near Tsunuki

A round, generous body
with fresh
fruitiness

30ml ¥2,068 tax included

目次

Tsunuki, south-west Satsuma



The ria coast of Bonotsu



Mars Tsunuki

The ria coast of Bonotsu and the Soken rocks

Generous body and fresh fruit.

Mars Tsunuki Distillery opened in 2016 in Tsunuki, a green valley in the south-west of the Satsuma peninsula and the place where Hombo Shuzo began. The basin brings big swings between warm days and cool nights, and the Kuratayama hills give fine spring water. The 2023 Edition vats malts matured mainly in bourbon barrels along with other casks. In the blender’s words: a deep whisky in which a round, generous body and fresh fruitiness intertwine. Non-chill-filtered.

Photo: Sakoppi / CC BY-SA 4.0 ・ 690 Noda / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Single Malt Komaki Whisky Syuten

酒呑

Satsuma, Satsuma-gun, Kagoshima

Komaki Distillery Co., Ltd.

小牧醸造

SINGLE MALT JAPANESE WHISKY | Signature First Edition | 700ml



ALCOHOL
46%
700ml

KEY CASK
BOURBON
Bourbon-led, with other casks

SINCE 1909
Stone-warehouse aged
A 1918 stone store, now a Cultural Property



Lake Otsuru above Tsuruda Dam, Satsuma

Natural colour
Non-chill filtered

30ml ¥1,868 tax included

CONTENTS

North Satsuma, on the Sendai River



Komaki Distillery

The Sendai River



The Sendai River, Hokusatsu

Single malt from a century-old stone warehouse.

A single malt from Komaki, a shochu maker founded in 1909 in Satsuma town, northern Kagoshima: the First Edition of its Signature series. Its welded-tuff stone warehouse (1918) and brick chimney, where the Anagawa meets the Sendai River, became Registered Tangible Cultural Properties in 2026. Matured in that warehouse, with bourbon as the key cask; natural colour, non-chill-filtered, 46%.

Photo: shunsaku hara / CC BY-SA 3.0 · 河川一等兵 / public domain
Map: Natural Earth

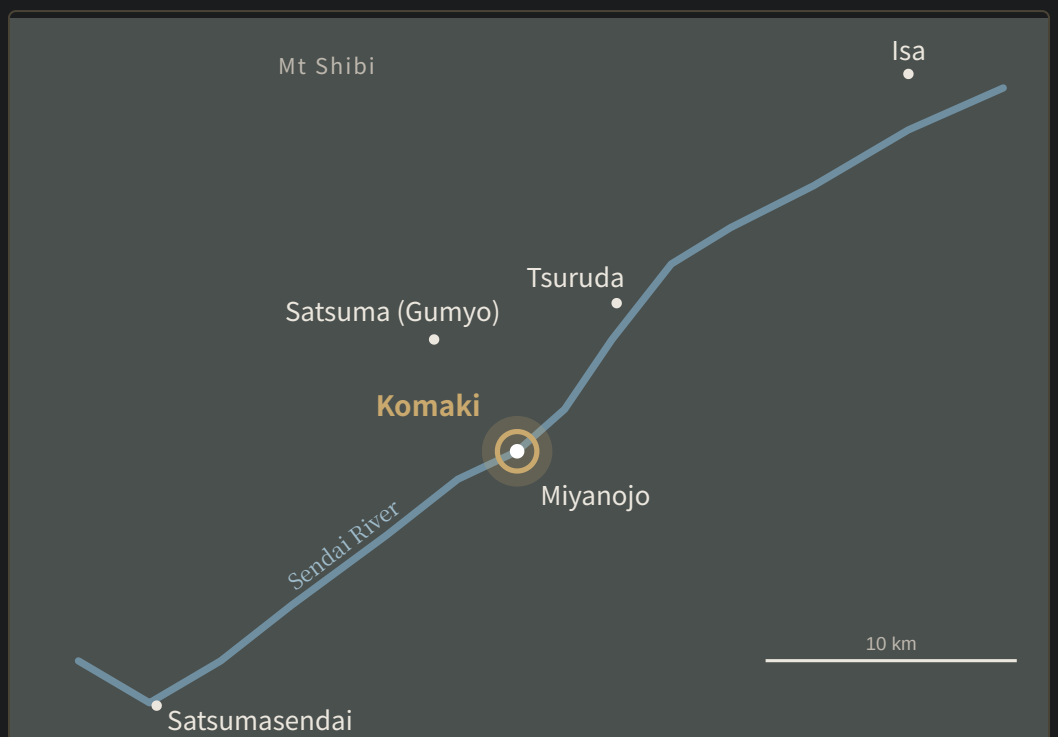
Product info: bottle labels; Cultural Heritage Online

Bottle photo: our own

SATSUMA | A river town in north Kagoshima

Satsuma and Komaki SATSUMA-CHO

The Sendai River, Mt Shibi and a stone-built distillery Satsuma-gun, Kagoshima



Map: Natural Earth (schematic)

Kyushu's second-longest river runs through the middle of town.

Satsuma town lies inland in Hokusatsu, the north-west of Kagoshima, formed in 2005 when Miyanojo, Tsuruda and Satsuma merged. The Sendai River, coming down from the Kumamoto and Miyazaki borders, cuts through the town, and Mt Shibi (1,067 m), the highest peak of the region, rises to the north. In the Edo period this was the domain of the Miyanojo Shimazu, a branch of the ruling house, and the Yamagano and Nagano gold mines helped fund the Satsuma domain. Komaki has made shochu here on the river bank since 1909.



Mt Shibi from Miyanojo
The highest peak of Hokusatsu, 1,067 m



Kami-no-yu, Shibi Onsen
Silky hot spring beside Shibi shrine



Sokoji park
Tombs of the Miyanojo Shimazu



Miyanojo railway museum
Station of the JNR Miyanojo line, closed 1987



Yamagano gold mine
Found in 1640; it helped fund the Satsuma domain



Sogi power station ruins (Isa)
Upstream on the Sendai, built in 1909, the year Komaki was founded

Komaki and Satsuma through time

From gold-mine town to a whisky stone warehouse



Back label: ”matured in the historic stone warehouse at Komaki Distillery”

- 1640 Gold found at Yamagano; it becomes a major source of revenue for the Satsuma domain
- 1909 Komaki founded
- 1918 The welded-tuff stone warehouse rebuilt after a fire (by tradition)
- 2005 Miyanojo, Tsuruda and Satsuma merge into Satsuma town
- 2006 Northern Kagoshima floods: the distillery under about 4 m of water, some 70,000 bottles and the mash lost
- 2009 Centenary: the sweet-potato shochu Issho launched
- 2026 Stone warehouse and brick chimney registered as Tangible Cultural Properties (July); Syuten whisky released

Sources: Cultural Heritage Online (Komaki stone warehouse, brick chimney); Serai.jp (2025); Komaki Distillery; Satsuma town
Photos: Sanjo / public domain · Somey / CC BY-SA 3.0 · Sakoppi / CC BY-SA 4.0 · もんじゃ / public domain · Ray go / CC BY-SA 3.0 · Sanjo / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

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Hinokami Distillery

HINOKAMI

Makurazaki

HINOKAMI NEWBORN #3 Malt

Journey 0 | 200ml



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

PEAT
20 PPM
Bourbon cask · 200ml

SOUTHERNMOST
Mainland Japan’s tip
The southernmost whisky distillery on the main islands



Tategami rock off Makurazaki

Malt peated
to 20 ppm,
in a bourbon cask

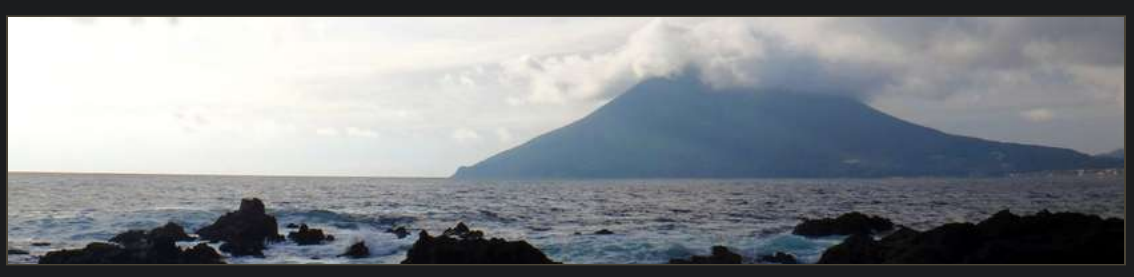
30ml ¥1,850 tax included

Makurazaki, tip of Satsuma



Hinokami Distillery

Mt Kaimon, tip of Satsuma



Mt Kaimon rising from the sea, from Cape Nagasakibana

First steps of mainland Japan's southernmost distillery.

Satsuma Shuzo, maker of the shochu Satsuma Shiranami, runs Hinokami Distillery in Makurazaki, the bonito port at the tip of the Satsuma peninsula: the southernmost whisky distillery on Japan’s main islands, with its own cooperage. NEWBORN bottles young spirit mid-maturation; No.3 is malt peated to 20 ppm, aged in a bourbon cask. A visitor centre with a bar facing Mt Kaimon opened in January 2026.

Photo: Koda6029 / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Jnn / CC BY 2.1 jp
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Okinawa OKINAWA

The Ryukyu capital and the home of awamori

Naha, Nakagusuku & Onna, Okinawa



Shureimon gate, Shuri Castle, Naha
663highland / CC BY 2.5



Shikina-en, the royal villa garden (World Heritage)
CEphoto, Uwe Aranas / CC BY-SA 3.0



Clay jars for ageing awamori, Onna
Yuet Man Lee / CC BY-SA 4.0



Stone walls of Nakagusuku Castle (World Heritage)
663highland / CC BY 2.5

目次

Castles of a kingdom, and spirit aged in clay jars.

United in the 15th century, the Ryukyu Kingdom grew rich on trade between China, Japan and Southeast Asia, and built its capital at Shuri, where the Shureimon gate still greets visitors. Distilling, said to have come from Siam (Thailand), became awamori, made from Thai rice with black koji; under the kingdom it could be made only in three licensed districts of Shuri. Awamori aged for years in clay jars, called kusu, is an island treasure. The royal garden of Shikina-en and stone-walled gusuku castles such as Nakagusuku are World Heritage. Okinawa's whiskies are born in these awamori distilleries.

Okinawa Island and three distilleries



Okinawa through time

1429	Sho Hashi unites the island: the Ryukyu Kingdom
15th c.	Distilling said to arrive from Siam (Thailand)
1609	The Shimazu of Satsuma invade Ryukyu
1799	The royal villa garden, Shikina-en, is built
1879	The kingdom ends; Okinawa Prefecture is created
1972	Okinawa returns to Japan
1995	"Ryukyu" becomes a geographical indication for awamori
2000	Shuri, Shikina-en and Nakagusuku: World Heritage

Sources: Okinawa Prefecture, Naha city and National Tax Agency public information Map: Natural Earth

Kumesen Shuzo

KUMESEN

Naha, Okinawa

OKINAWA BLUE Rice Whisky AKASHOUBIN

Ken’s Choice NATURE | Ruddy kingfisher



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

LIMITED
300
Bottles · 700ml

RICE WHISKY
Thai rice and malt
Matured in subtropical Okinawa

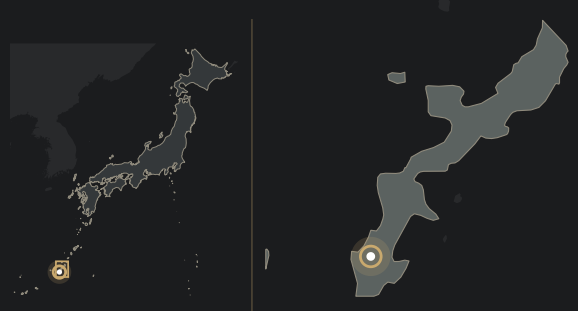


An old pottery shop, Tsuboya Yachimun street

On the label:
the red bird of
Okinawan summers

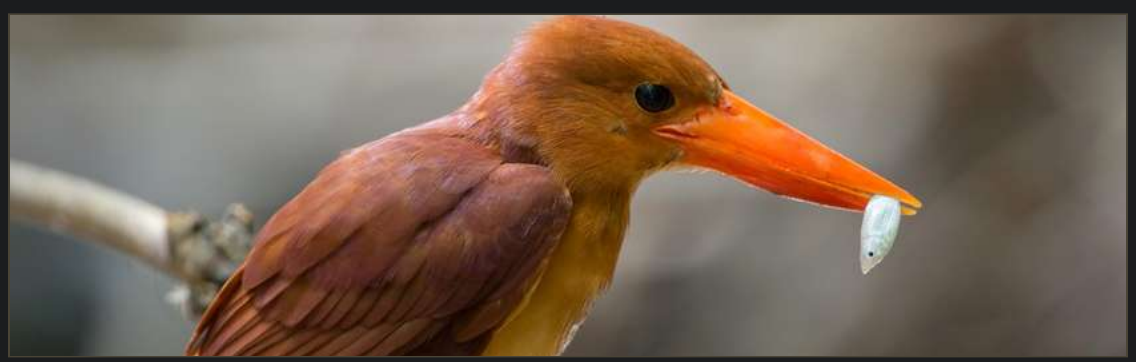
30ml ¥1,925 tax included

Naha, southern Okinawa



Kumesen Shuzo

The ruddy kingfisher



Ruddy kingfisher (photographed in Thailand)

Okinawan rice whisky, matured in the subtropics.

Made by Kumesen Shuzo, an awamori distillery in Nakaima, Naha, from Thai rice (as used for awamori) and malt distilled in-house, then matured in Okinawa’s subtropical climate. The Ken’s Choice NATURE series, created with bourbon pioneer Ken Matsuyama, is named after Okinawan nature; this one after the akashoubin, the ruddy kingfisher that visits each summer. One of 300 bottles.

Photo: Jason Thompson / CC BY 2.0 · 663highland / CC BY 2.5
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Masahiro Distillery

MASAHIRO

Itoman, Okinawa

Rice Whisky WONDER Mizunara, Aged 12 Years

CRAFT WONDER | Rice whisky



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

AGED
12 YEARS
Incl. 3 years in Mizunara

SINCE 1883
143 years
Old spirit from an awamori house

The mellowness of rice,
oriental, refined
and deep

30ml ¥1,925 tax included

目次

Itoman, southern tip of Okinawa



The coast from Cape Kyan



Masahiro Distillery

The southern Okinawa coast from Cape Kyan

Old awamori-house spirit, finished in Mizunara.

Founded in Okinawa in 1883, Masahiro Distillery has 143 years of history. Rare old spirit from its cellars spent three more years in Mizunara casks, which mature quickly in the subtropical climate, and was blended with the house's long-honed skill into a rice whisky: the mellowness of rice with an oriental, refined depth. Part of CRAFT WONDER, a brand made with Japan's small craft distilleries.

Photo: ぺ有家音 / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Masahiro Distillery

MASAHIRO

Itoman, Okinawa

Rice Whisky WONDER Bourbon Barrel, Aged 7 Years

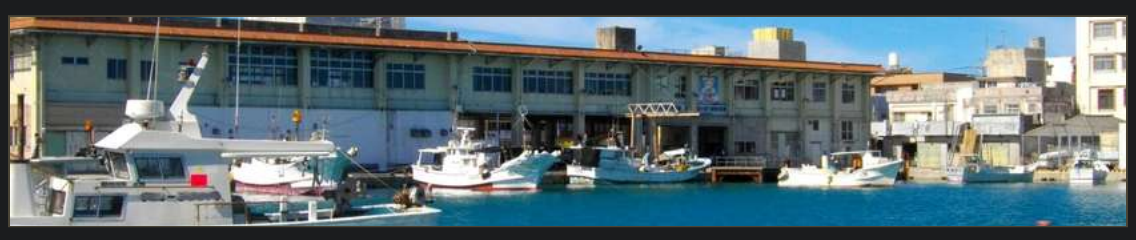
CRAFT WONDER | Rice whisky



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

AGED
7 YEARS
Incl. 5 years in bourbon barrels

SUBTROPICAL
Subtropical ageing
Fast, deep maturation

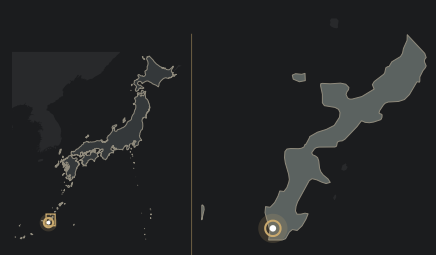


Fishing boats in Itoman port

The mellowness of rice,
vanilla sweetness,
a full body

30ml ¥1,925 tax included

Itoman, southern tip of Okinawa



Masahiro Distillery

The sea at Itoman



Kitanashiro Beach, Itoman

Vanilla sweetness and a generous body.

Rare old spirit from the cellars of Masahiro Distillery in Itoman, Okinawa, matured for five years in bourbon barrels. The cask-aged spirits, which mature quickly in the subtropical climate, were blended with skills honed over the house's 143 years. The mellowness of rice meets vanilla-like sweetness from the bourbon wood and a satisfying body. Taste it beside the Mizunara (12 years) to see how much the cask changes the whisky.

Photo: TomazVajngerl / CC BY-SA 3.0 · Abasaa / Public domain
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Suzaki Distillery

SUZAKI

Uruma | Shinzato Shuzo

RYUKA New Born 2026

Single Malt Whisky | Suzaki Distillery



ALCOHOL
58%
ABV

DISTILLED
2024.11
Bottled 2026.05 · 700ml

SINCE 1846
Okinawa’s oldest
Making whisky since 2020



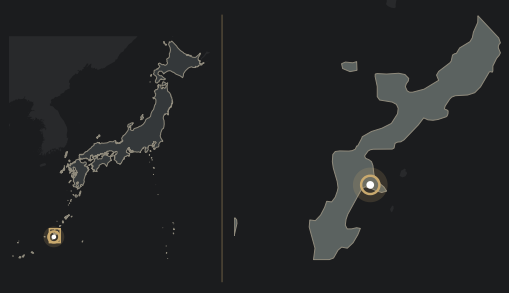
The Kaichu-doro causeway, Uruma

First-fill oloroso
and bourbon casks,
virgin Spanish oak

30ml ¥2,087 tax included

目次

Uruma, central Okinawa



Suzaki Distillery

Katsuren Castle ruins



The curving walls of Katsuren Castle, Uruma

"A spirit to be told of for generations."

Founded in 1846 with a licence from the Ryukyu court, Shinzato Shuzo is Okinawa’s oldest surviving distillery. Since 2020 it has made whisky in new copper pot stills at its Suzaki Distillery in Uruma. Ryuka are Okinawan poems sung to the sanshin: the whisky is the song, the makers the sanshin. Distilled November 2024: nikkei (Okinawan cinnamon) bark, green apple, orange peel and a cool oriental spice.

Photo: kanegen / CC BY 2.0 · N / Public domain
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: back label
Bottle photos: our own

Naha Distillery

NAHA

Naha, Okinawa | Kumesen

Single Malt Japanese Whisky

Cask Strength | Limited to 300 Bottles



ALCOHOL
60%
ABV

JAPANESE BARLEY
100%
Barley grown in Tochigi

OUR BOTTLE
No.100
Our bottle: 100 of 300

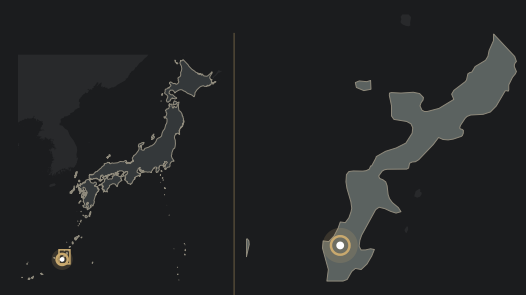
Distilled October 2023

Red-wine-cask finish

60% cask strength

30ml ¥2,035 tax included

Naha, Okinawa



Naha Distillery

Okinawa's distilling heritage



Kumesen's Naha Distillery in Nakaima, Naha

Three casks, layers of fruit and sweetness.

Made from 100% Tochigi-grown barley, the spirit passes through sherry and refill-bourbon casks before a red-wine-cask finish. Prune and ripe-pear notes meet white-chocolate-like sweetness, with cocoa and wood on the finish. Just 300 bottles were prepared for the 50th Okinawa Industry Festival. Our bottle is number 100.

Photo: Kumesen Shuzo
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Kumesen Shuzo

Suntory Whisky

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Suntory Whisky Kakubin, Current Release	40%	**¥1,078**
Suntory Liqueur Whisky Kakubin, Reissue	43%	**¥1,155**
Suntory Whisky Kakubin White, Clear & Smooth / Heisei era	40%	**¥1,815**
Suntory Whisky Kakubin Black, Special Quality / Heisei era	40%	**¥1,925**
Yamazaki Distillery The Yamazaki Smoky Batch	43%	**¥4,268**
Yamazaki Distillery The Yamazaki 12 Year Old	43%	**¥2,805**
Yamazaki Distillery The Yamazaki	43%	**¥1,977**
Hakushu Distillery The Hakushu 12 Year Old	43%	**¥2,638**
Hakushu Distillery The Hakushu	43%	**¥1,925**
HIBIKI JAPANESE HARMONY	43%	**¥2,078**
Suntory Whisky Crest 12y / Showa era	43%	**¥2,145**
Chita Distillery The Chita Single Grain	43%	**¥1,695**
Suntory Royal Blended Whisky	43%	**¥1,925**
Suntory Whisky Royal SR / Showa era	43%	**¥2,145**
Suntory Special Reserve 10y, Married in Sherry Cask / Heisei era	40%	**¥2,255**
Suntory Special Reserve / Heisei era	43%	**¥1,867**
Suntory Special Reserve / Reiwa era	40%	**¥1,375**
Suntory Old Whisky / Showa era	43%	**¥1,925**
Suntory Old Whisky (Mild and Smooth) / Heisei era	40%	**¥1,705**
Suntory Old Whisky (Special Quality) / Reiwa era	43%	**¥1,265**
Suntory Whisky White	40%	**¥968**

目次

SUNTORY | BLENDED WHISKY

Crest 12 Years

SUNTORY WHISKY CREST 12 YEARS





Sean Connery in a Suntory Crest TV ad, 1990s

Time does not pass.
It accumulates.

Translated ad copy: Akira Akiyama / Suntory

Sean Connery and the pleasure of maturity

Sean Connery appeared in Crest 12 commercials during the 1990s. His quiet presence with a glass, alongside words about time accumulating, gave the whisky an evocative story. The actor's maturity echoes the years spent by the spirit in wood: an invitation to slow down and savour.

Twelve years, brought into harmony

Launched in 1989, Crest 12 was described in period product literature as a blend of malt and grain whiskies aged for at least 12 years, with an expressive bouquet and a rounded, full body. Try it neat first, then add a few drops of water to explore its aromas and texture.

Sources: Broadcast Library, TCC, JWIC and period product literature — Checked 27 Oct 2026

CM (1992) · Copy (TCC) · JWIC timeline · Period description · Image: Bond Lifestyle

30ml per glass / 43%

¥2,145 tax incl.

CONTENTS

JAPANESE COLLECTION

Nikka Whisky

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Nikka Whisky From The Barrel ›	51.4%	**¥1,815**
The Nikka Tailored	43%	**¥1,977**
Taketsuru Pure Malt	43%	**¥1,867**
Single Malt Yoichi	45%	**¥1,867**
Single Malt Miyagikyo	45%	**¥1,867**
Pure Malt Black / Yoichi Distillery Exclusive	43%	**¥1,867**
Pure Malt Red / Yoichi Distillery Exclusive	43%	**¥1,867**
Nikka Coffey Malt Whisky	45%	**¥1,867**
Nikka Coffey Grain Whisky	45%	**¥1,867**
Hi Nikka	39%	**¥968**
Super Nikka	43%	**¥1,595**
Nikka Frontier	48%	**¥1,485**
Black Nikka Special	42%	**¥1,089**
Black Nikka Deluxe	42%	**¥1,867**
Black Nikka Rich Blend	40%	**¥1,188**
Black Nikka Deep Blend	45%	**¥1,375**
Nikka All Malt	43%	**¥2,068**
Kingsland Nikka Whisky Premier	43%	**¥2,035**

Masataka Taketsuru and the story of the Coffey still → 162

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FROM A SAKE BREWERY TO JAPANESE WHISKY

Masataka Taketsuru

THE FOUNDER OF NIKKA WHISKY / 1894-1979



Founder of Nikka Whisky Portrait: Nikka Whisky official

His story began in a sake brewery.

Born in 1894 into the Taketsuru sake-brewing family in Takehara, Hiroshima, he went to Scotland in 1918 to study malt and grain whisky. He married Rita and returned to Japan in 1920. In 1923, he joined Kotobukiya, working with Shinjiro Torii to build Yamazaki Distillery.

Seeking the ideal climate, he founded his own distillery in Yoichi, Hokkaido, in 1934. After the spirits matured, Nikka's first whisky followed in 1940.

Back to Scotland. A belief in the Coffey still.

With support from Asahi Breweries, he returned to Scotland with his adopted son Takeshi around 1962-63. They visited the Glasgow manufacturer and imported a Coffey still. Installed at Nishinomiya in 1963, it began operating in November 1964.

Developed by Aeneas Coffey around 1830, this older system retains the grain's aromas, sweetness and body. Taketsuru chose it to realise his ideal blend. Its grain whisky brings out the character of the malts and helps give Nikka its mellow finish.

In 1969, Miyagikyo expanded his palette of spirits. He died in 1979, aged 85. We serve three sakes from his family brewery.

History: Nikka Family brewery: JTA Coffey still: Nikka

NIKKA WHISKY | BLENDED WHISKY

From the Barrel

NIKKA WHISKY FROM THE BARREL



A small square bottle. A richly layered dram.

Together again, in the cask

Mature malt and grain whiskies are blended, then returned to cask for several months of marrying. Their different characters settle together, bringing rounded harmony to the power of 51.4%.

Launched	1985
Character	Rich body; oaky aromas

目次

Taketsuru's spirit, carried forward

In 1934, Masataka Taketsuru laid Nikka's foundations in Yoichi, Hokkaido. Later generations carried his dedication to quality forward, creating From the Barrel in 1985: a chance to enjoy the richness familiar to blenders tasting beside a cask. In 2015, it won the top trophy in the ISC's International Blended Whisky category.

Sweet aromas, a bittersweet finish

Vanilla and chocolate aromas mingle with orange peel and toasted grain. A sweet, viscous opening gives way to oak tannins, depth and a woody, bittersweet finish. Start with small sips neat; a few drops of water invite you to explore another side of the aroma. A richly layered dram for an unhurried evening.

Sources: Nikka / Asahi (history, production, tasting notes and award) Checked 27 Oct 2026

Product & tasting Nikka history ISC 2015

30ml per glass / 51.4% ¥1,815 tax incl.

WHISKY FROM JAPAN

Kirin Whisky

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Fuji Gotemba Distillery Fuji Single Malt ›	46%	**¥1,977**
Fuji Gotemba Distillery Fuji Single Grain	46%	**¥1,867**
Kirin-Seagram Emblem Premium Whisky / Heisei era	43%	**¥1,925**

Prices & Service

Prices & charges

All listed food, wine, drink and mixer prices include tax.

Consumption tax	**10%**
Service charge	**from 12%**
Kitchen gratuity	**from ¥275**
Seating charge	**from ¥550**

After midnight, an additional ¥275 is charged per 30 minutes.

Payment

We do not split individual bills. If you would like to divide payment between groups, please let us know at the beginning of your visit.

Respect for other guests

Disruptive behaviour, broken glassware, sexual harassment and other nuisance behaviour are subject to a ¥22,000 charge per incident.

CONTENTS

GOTEMBA, SHIZUOKA | KIRIN FUJI GOTEMBA DISTILLERY

Single Malt Fuji

SINGLE MALT JAPANESE WHISKY FUJI



From the foot of Fuji, fruit notes that linger.

Water, land and mist

Rain and snow from Mount Fuji are slowly filtered through the land into underground water. The whisky is made with this water, then matured in cool, misty Gotemba. Discover the landscape in your glass.

Distillery opened	1973
This whisky launched	2023

目次

Half a century of craft at Mount Fuji

Following the founding of Kirin-Seagram in 1972, Fuji Gotemba Distillery began operating in 1973. It has pursued flavours rooted in Japan’s climate and food culture ever since. This Single Malt Fuji arrived in 2023, the distillery’s 50th anniversary year, bringing together diverse malt whiskies from one distillery in a richly fruity expression.

White peach and a long, sweet finish

Ripe apple and crème brûlée aromas lead into a smooth palate, with notes of white peach and fruit tart. Complex sweetness lingers in a long finish. Try it neat, adding a few drops of water if you like. For those drawn to fragrant, fruit-forward whisky: another way to encounter Mount Fuji.

Sources: Kirin (history, release, environment and tasting notes) Checked 27 Oct 2026

2023 release
Water & landscape
Official tasting notes

30ml per glass / 46%

¥1,977 tax incl.

JAPANESE COLLECTION

Japanese Vintage Whisky

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Suntory Whisky Royal SR / Showa era	43%	**¥2,145**
Suntory Whisky Crest 12y / Showa era ›	43%	**¥2,145**
Suntory Special Reserve / Showa era	43%	**¥2,178**
Suntory Special Reserve 10y, Married in Sherry Cask / Heisei era	40%	**¥2,255**
Suntory Special Reserve / Heisei era	43%	**¥1,867**
Suntory Old Whisky / Showa era	43%	**¥1,925**
Suntory Old Whisky (Mild and Smooth) / Heisei era	40%	**¥1,705**
Suntory Whisky Kakubin White, Clear & Smooth / Heisei era	40%	**¥1,815**
Suntory Whisky Kakubin Black, Special Quality / Heisei era	40%	**¥1,925**
Kirin-Seagram Emblem Premium Whisky / Heisei era	43%	**¥1,925**
Kingsland Nikka Whisky Premier / Showa era	43%	**¥2,035**
Black Nikka Deluxe / Showa era	42%	**¥1,867**
Nikka All Malt / Heisei era	43%	**¥2,068**

JAPANESE COLLECTION

Shochu 1: sweet potato

30 ml per glass (45 ml under 30% ABV) / tax incl. · tap a name to open its page

Sweet-potato shochu (imo)

Kokubu Shuzo Jun Imo › 34% **¥1,595**
Sweet potato, potato koji (no rice) | Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Kokubu Shuzo Tsurunashi Genji › 34% **¥1,595**
Tsurunashi Genji heritage potato, rice koji | Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Kokubu Shuzo Tsurunashi Genji › 45ml 26% **¥1,265**
Tsurunashi Genji heritage potato, rice koji | Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Kokubu Shuzo Yasuda, Tsurunashi Genji › 45ml 26% **¥1,265**
Tsurunashi Genji, potato koji (100% potato) | Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Kokubu Shuzo Yasuda, Hamakomachi › 45ml 26% **¥1,265**
Hamakomachi potato (southern Kyushu), potato koji | Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Kokubu Shuzo Flamingo Orange › 45ml 26% **¥1,375**
Satsumamasari potato, potato koji, aroma yeast No.1 | Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Kokubu Shuzo Sunny Cream › 45ml 27% **¥1,375**
Sweet potato, koji, aroma yeast | Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Kokubu Shuzo Cool Mint Green › 45ml 26% **¥1,375**
Satsumamasari potato, rice koji | Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Kokubu Shuzo Kikoji-gura Genshu › 37% **¥1,428**
Sweet potato, yellow koji, undiluted | Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Hamada Shuzo Daiyame › 45ml 25% **¥968**
Kojuku-imo matured sweet potato, rice koji | Ichikikushikino, Kagoshima

More sweet-potato shochu → next page

Shochu 2: sweet potato (continued)

30 ml per glass (45 ml under 30% ABV) / tax incl. · tap a name to open its page

Sweet-potato shochu (continued)

Nakamura Shuzojo Flare 2024 [+innovative] › — 40% — **¥1,867**
Fukumurasaki purple potato, three-koji blend, wild yeast | Kokubu-Minato, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Wakashio Shuzo GLOW EP05 Ride the Waves › — 45ml 25% — **¥1,265**
Sweet potato, rice koji (aromatic) | Shibushi, Kagoshima

Manzen Shuzo Manzen › — 45ml 25% — **¥1,265**
Koganesengan potato, black koji, clay jars, wooden still | Kirishima, Kagoshima

Murao Shuzo Murao › — 45ml 25% — **¥1,867**
Sweet potato, rice koji, clay-jar fermentation | Satsumasendai, Kagoshima

Moriizo Shuzo Gokujo Moriizo (Gokujo no Itteki) › — 45ml 25% — **¥1,977**
Sweet potato, rice koji, long clay-jar ageing | Ushine, Tarumizu, Kagoshima

Marunishi Shuzo Kanji › — 45ml 25% — **¥1,265**
Kagoshima sweet potato, rice koji, hand-made in clay jars | Ariake, Shibushi, Kagoshima

Mitake Shuzo Mitake › — 45ml 25% — **¥1,045**
Sweet potato, rice koji | Anbo, Yakushima, Kagoshima

Hombo Shuzo Genshu Yakusugi › — 37% — **¥1,318**
Sweet potato, rice koji, handmade in clay jars, undiluted | Anbo, Yakushima, Kagoshima

Goto Retto Shuzo Goto Imo 40 › — 40% — **¥1,595**
Goto sweet potato, rice koji from Goto rice | Fukue Island, Goto, Nagasaki

Nishi Shuzo Tenshi no Yuwaku › — 40% — **¥1,648**
Sweet potato (kogane-sengan), rice koji, 10 years in sherry casks | Fukiage, Hioki, Kagoshima

Barley shochu → next page

JAPANESE COLLECTION

Shochu 3: barley

30 ml per glass (45 ml under 30% ABV) / tax incl. · tap a name to open its page

Barley shochu (mugi)

Tenpai Craftsman Tada “Spanish Orange” -2024DY- › 44% **¥1,537**
Barley, barley koji, distilled twice | Chikuzen, Fukuoka

Tenpai SPIRITS of TENPAI - With SCARLET - › 44% **¥1,867**
Barley, barley koji, undiluted honkaku shochu | Chikuzen, Fukuoka

Kenjo Fukuro long-aged limited edition › 40% **¥1,307**
Barley (Australia), barley & rice koji, long oak ageing | Tachiarai, Fukuoka

Beniotome Shuzo Beniotome Taru French Oak › 40% **¥1,375**
Japanese barley, rice koji, built on spirit aged 3+ years in French oak | Tanushimaru, Kurume, Fukuoka

Kuroki Honten Hyakunen no Kodoku › 40% **¥1,648**
Barley, barley koji (Kyushu), long aged in wooden casks | Takanabe, Koyu, Miyazaki

Toyonaga Shuzo Mugishiru Unfiltered › 45ml 25% **¥1,078**
Japanese naked barley, barley koji, unfiltered | Yunomae, Kuma, Kumamoto

Hamada Shuzo CHILL GREEN Spicy & Citrus › 45ml 25% **¥1,265**
Australian barley, barley koji, maqaw pepper | Ichikikushikino, Kagoshima

Hamada Shuzo CHILL GREEN Bitter & Tropical › 45ml 25% **¥1,265**
Barley (Australia & Japan), barley koji, Galaxy hops | Ichikikushikino, Kagoshima

Yotsuya Shuzo Kanehachi › 45ml 25% **¥1,265**
Japanese naked barley, barley koji, atmospheric still | Nagasu, Usa, Oita

Ikinokura Shuzo Muichibutsu Genshu › 42% **¥1,485**
2/3 barley, 1/3 rice koji, 5 years in oak, GI Iki | Ashibe, Iki, Nagasaki

Hachijo Kohatsu Bakkan Nasakejima › 45ml 25% **¥968**
Australian barley, barley koji, GI Tokyo Shimazake | Hachijojima, Tokyo

Barrel-aged barley shochu liqueur

Shinozaki Asakura › 40% **¥1,307**
Barley shochu aged 8+ years in oak, dietary fibre | Asakura, Fukuoka

Jotokuya Shuzojo JAPANESE MONKEY GOLD › 38% **¥1,538**
Barley shochu (about 13 years in tank + 2 in old casks), dietary fibre | Yokkaichi, Usa, Oita

Rice, kokuto, lees, chestnut, sesame, korui, ginseng → next page

Shochu 4: rice & kokuto

30 ml per glass (45 ml under 30% ABV) / tax incl. · tap a name to open its page

Rice shochu

Komasa Jyozo Mellowed Kozuru Excellence › 41% **¥1,595**
Rice, rice koji, long oak ageing | Hioki, Kagoshima

Rokuchoshi Shuzo The Rokuchoshi SP 10YEARS › 40% **¥1,428**
Rice, rice koji, 10+ years in oak, spirits category | Nishiki, Kuma, Kumamoto

Rokuchoshi Shuzo Kodai Ikko › 38% **¥1,648**
Rice, rice koji, 100% aged (30-, 13- and 11-year-old blend) | Nishiki, Kuma, Kumamoto

Kokuto shochu (Amami islands)

Amami Oshima Kaiun Shuzo Beni Sango › 40% **¥1,485**
Kokuto sugar, rice koji, long aged in cask | Uken, Amami Oshima, Kagoshima

Machida Shuzo Sato no Akebono Genshu › 43% **¥1,318**
Kokuto sugar, rice koji, vacuum still, aged 3 years, undiluted | Tatsugo, Amami Oshima, Kagoshima

Tomita Shuzojo Rankan 2011 › 43% **¥1,265**
Kokuto sugar, rice koji, fermented in clay jars | Naze, Amami Oshima, Kagoshima

Tomita Shuzojo Kohaku Ryugu 2018 › 40% **¥1,318**
Okinawan kokuto sugar, rice koji, black koji, clay jars | Naze, Amami Oshima, Kagoshima

What is kokuto shochu? Rum, history and how it is made, in 8 pages ›

Lees, chestnut, sesame, korui, ginseng → next page

CONTENTS

Shochu 5: lees, chestnut, sesame & more

30 ml per glass (45 ml under 30% ABV) / tax incl. · tap a name to open its page

目次

Sake-lees shochu

Hokusetsu Shuzo Hokusetsu Tsunburi › — 45ml · 25% — **¥1,595**
Sake lees (kasutori), pot still | Akadomari, Sado, Niigata

Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute SHOCHU › — 38% — **¥1,595**
Sake lees, vacuum still, undiluted | Kanagaso, Komatsu, Ishikawa

Chestnut shochu

Himebayashi PREMIUM Okuri-Okura › — 45ml · 25% — **¥1,867**
Roasted Ehime chestnuts, rice koji, black koji | Shirokawa, Seiyo, Ehime

Sesame shochu & sesame spirit

Beniotome Shuzo Beniotome Premium 38 › — 38% — **¥1,428**
Japanese barley, rice koji, 20%+ sesame; a blend of long-aged spirits | Tanushimaru, Kurume, Fukuoka

Beniotome Shuzo Barrel Aged Sesame Spirits Prototype 02 › — 40% — **¥1,375**
Shochu, sesame, juniper; 8 months in new oak | Tanushimaru, Kurume, Fukuoka

Korui (column-still) shochu

Miyazaki Honten Kinmiya (Kikkomiya) › — 45ml · 25% — **¥767**
Cane molasses, column still (korui) | Kusu, Yokkaichi, Mie

Korean ginseng spirit

Geumsan Insamju Geum Susam 23 (Korea) › — 45ml · 23% — **¥1,265**
Distilled ginseng-and-rice yakju, fresh root inside | Geumsan, Chungcheongnam-do, Korea

Shochu distillery map (next spread) ›

Barley shochu vs whisky: what is the difference? ›

Takamine’s koji & the Meiji liquor tax ›

SHOCHU DISTILLERIES

Where our shochu is made

From sake-lees shochu on Sado to the kokuto shochu of Amami Oshima: the 31 makers behind our 42 shochu and 4 cask-aged liqueurs and spirits, plus a ginseng spirit from Geumsan, Korea. Tap a number or a name to open its page. A: 4 Fukuoka makers, B: 10 in Kagoshima and C: 3 on Amami Oshima are enlarged on the facing page.



1 **Hokusetsu Shuzo** Sado, Niigata
Tsunburi

2 **Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute** Komatsu, Ishikawa
SHOCHU (sake lees)

3 **Miyazaki Honten** Yokkaichi, Mie
Kinmiya

4 **Yotsuya Shuzo** Usa, Oita
Kanehachi

5 **Jotokuya Shuzojo** Yokkaichi, Usa, Oita
Japanese Monkey Gold

10 **Himebayashi** Shirokawa, Seiyo, Ehime
Okuri-Okura

11 **Hachijo Kohatsu** Hachijojima, Tokyo
Bakkan Nasakejima

12 **Ikinokura Shuzo Co., Ltd.** Ashibe, Iki, Nagasaki
Muichibutsu Genshu

13 **Goto Retto Shuzo** Goto, Nagasaki
Goto Imo 40

14 **Rokuchoshi Shuzo Co., Ltd.** Nishiki, Kuma, Kumamoto
The Rokuchoshi SP 10YEARS / Kodai Ikko

15 **Toyonaga Shuzo** Yunomae, Kuma, Kumamoto
Mugishiru Unfiltered

16 **Kuroki Honten Co., Ltd.** Takanabe, Koyu, Miyazaki
Hyakunen no Kodoku

27 **Mitake Shuzo** Yakushima, Kagoshima
Mitake

28 **Hombo Shuzo Densho-gura** Anbo, Yakushima, Kagoshima
Genshu Yakusugi

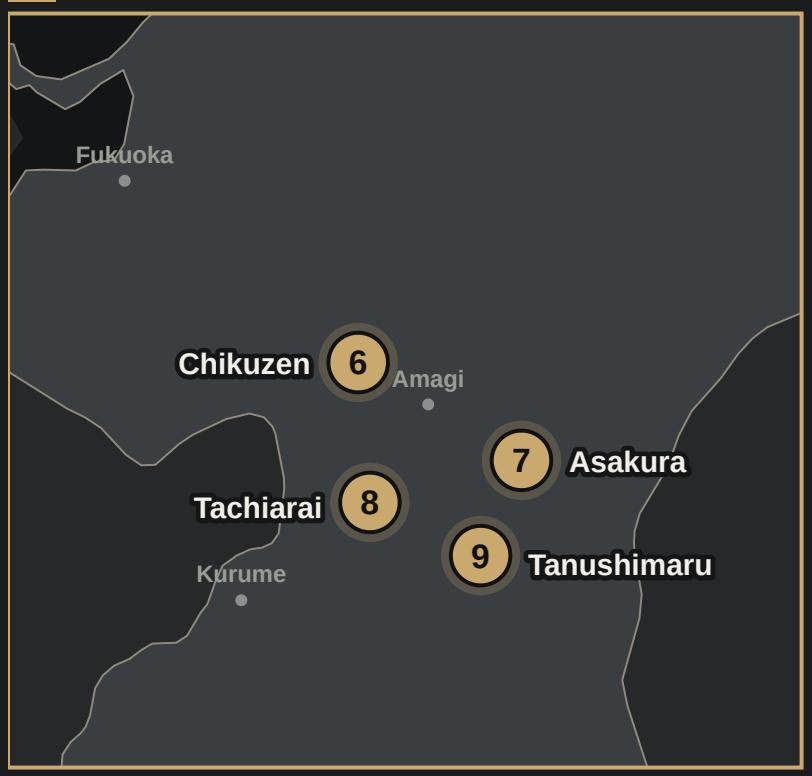
32 **Geumsan Insamju** Geumsan, Chungcheongnam-do, Korea
Geum Susam 23

Map: Natural Earth (public domain)

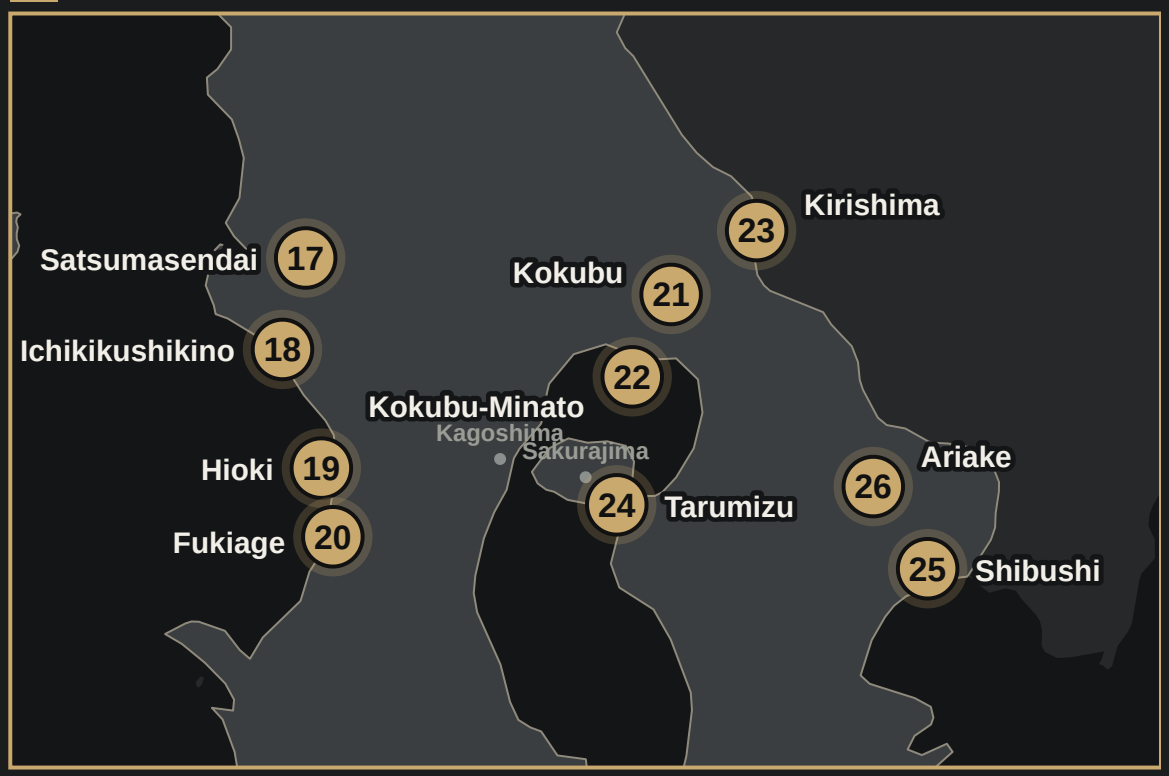
ENLARGED | FUKUOKA, KAGOSHIMA & AMAMI OSHIMA

4 makers in Fukuoka, 10 in Kagoshima, 3 on Amami

A FUKUOKA (enlarged)



B KAGOSHIMA (enlarged)



目次

A FUKUOKA

6 Tenpai Chikuzen, Fukuoka
Craftsman Tada / SPIRITS of TENPAI

7 Shinozaki Co., Ltd. Hiramatsu, Asakura, Fukuoka
Asakura (barley-shochu liqueur)

8 Kenjo Co., Ltd. Tachiarai, Mii, Fukuoka
Fukuro

9 Beniotome Shuzo Co., Ltd. Tanushimaru, Kurume, Fukuoka
Beniotome Premium 38 / Beniotome Taru French Oak / Barrel Aged Sesame Spirits

B KAGOSHIMA

17 Murao Shuzo Satsumasendai, Kagoshima
Murao

18 Hamada Shuzo Ichikikushikino, Kagoshima
CHILL GREEN Spicy / CHILL GREEN Bitter / Daiyame

19 Komasa Jyozo Hioki, Kagoshima
Mellowed Kozuru

20 Nishi Shuzo Fukiage, Hioki, Kagoshima
Tenshi no Yuwaku

21 Kokubu Shuzo Kokubu, Kirishima
Jun-imo / Tsurunashi Genji 34% / Tsurunashi Genji 26% / Yasuda / Yasuda Hamakomachi / Flamingo Orange / Sunny Cream / Cool Mint Green / Kikoji-gura Genshu

22 Nakamura Shuzojo Kokubu-Minato, Kirishima
Flare 2024

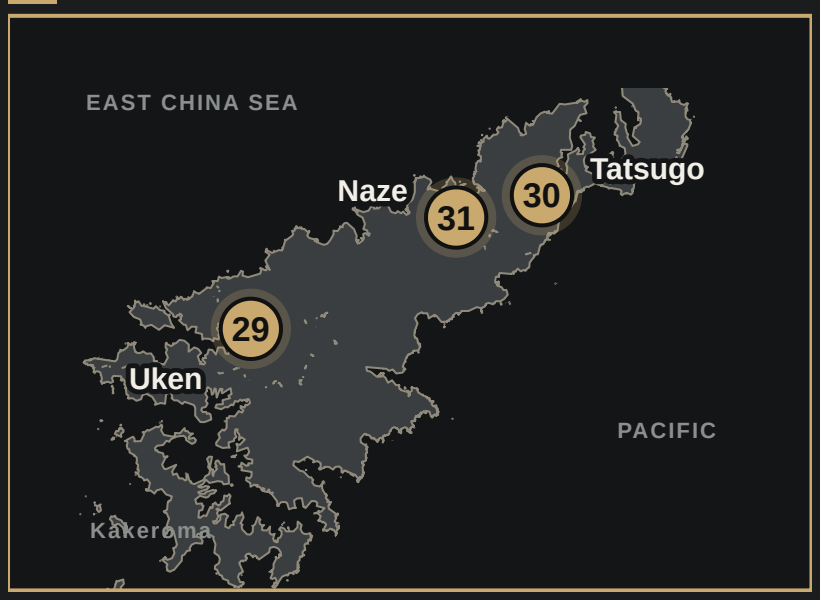
23 Manzen Shuzo Kirishima, Kagoshima
Manzen

24 Moriizo Shuzo Tarumizu, Kagoshima
Gokujo Moriizo

25 Wakashio Shuzo Shibushi, Kagoshima
GLOW EP05

26 Marunishi Shuzo Ariake, Shibushi, Kagoshima
Kanji

C AMAMI OSHIMA (enlarged)



C AMAMI OSHIMA (KAGOSHIMA)

29 Amami Oshima Kaiun Shuzo Uken, Amami Oshima, Kagoshima
Beni Sango

30 Machida Shuzo Co., Ltd. Tatsugo, Amami Oshima, Kagoshima
Sato no Akebono Genshu

31 Tomita Shuzojo Naze, Amami, Kagoshima
Rankan 2011 / Kohaku Ryugu 2018

Map: Natural Earth (public domain); MLIT National Land Numerical Information (administrative areas), processed

TWO SPIRITS BORN FROM BARLEY

Barley Shochu & Whisky

what sets them apart?



Barley shochu starts in a barley field (two-row barley, Saga); brewed with koji, distilled once, rested in jars or tanks

VS



Whisky is brewed from malt, distilled in copper pot stills and matured in oak (Yamazaki Distillery)

Both start from barley. The biggest difference comes at the very first step, saccharification: does malt make the sugar with its own enzymes, or does koji mould lend its enzymes?

1 Sugar — the decisive step

Shochu koji mould makes the sugar — a uniquely Japanese culture

Whisky malt saccharifies itself: no koji, just malt and yeast

Read more on the next spread ›

2 Distillation

Shochu one pot run as a rule; keeps the grain aroma

Whisky usually twice in pot stills, to about 70%

3 Ageing & colour

Shochu ageing optional, but colour is capped

Whisky matured in wood, turning amber

Continued: What the law says →

Sources: NTA Liquor Tax notices · JSLMA · NTA geographical indications
Photos: Pekachu (BY-SA 4.0) · AleGranholm (BY 2.0) / Wikimedia Commons

CONTENTS

TWO SPIRITS BORN FROM BARLEY

What the law says

Liquor Tax Act & industry standard (as of Nov 2026)



Sakyobana, Iki: the island behind the GI “Iki”



Charred oak casks: where colour and aroma come from



Spirit sleeping in cask; shochu has a legal colour ceiling

目次

	Barley shochu single-distilled shochu (honkaku)	Whisky malt, grain & blended
Tax category	”Shochu”, single-distilled type (called otsu-rui until 2006)	”Whisky”
Ingredients	Barley, barley (or rice) koji and water. Using malted grain disqualifies it as shochu	Malted grain and water are required; grain whisky also uses corn and other cereals
Distillation	Single (pot) distillation; bottled at 45% ABV or less	Distilled to under 95% ABV (column stills allowed)
Ageing	Not required. Cask ageing is allowed, but colour is capped (absorbance ≤ 0.080); darker spirit cannot be sold as shochu → details	Not required by Japanese tax law; the Japanese Whisky standard requires 3+ years in wood in Japan
Additives	Only water may be added to be labelled ”honkaku shochu”	Caramel colouring is permitted
Bottling ABV	Usually about 25% after adding water (spirit off the still 40–44%)	40% or more (Japanese Whisky standard)
Origin rules	GI ”Iki” (1995): 2/3 barley, 1/3 rice koji, Iki island groundwater, distilled and bottled on the island	”Japanese Whisky” standard (JSLMA, set 2021, fully applied April 2024): mashed, fermented and distilled in Japan, Japanese water, bottled in Japan

* Under the Liquor Tax Act (Art. 3), spirits made from malted grain, or filtered through birch charcoal (treated as vodka), are excluded from shochu. The colour cap comes from the National Tax Agency’s interpretation notice; darker products fall into other categories such as ”spirits”.

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How they are made, and where they came from

Ingredients & process two ways to brew barley

SHOCHU



1 **Polishing**
Barley (two-row, six-row or naked) is polished and steamed



2 **Koji**
White or black koji mould is grown on steamed barley or rice



3 **Brewing**
Koji + water + yeast, then steamed barley is added (about 2 weeks)



4 **One distillation**
Atmospheric = rich and toasty; vacuum = light and fruity



5 **Resting**
Rested in tanks or clay jars, cut with water to about 25%

WHISKY



1 **Malting**
Barley is steeped, sprouted and dried; peat smoke adds smokiness



2 **Mashing & fermenting**
Ground malt in hot water makes sweet wort; yeast ferments it 2–4 days



3 **Two distillations**
Twice through copper pot stills, to about 70% clear new make



4 **Casks**
Oak casks, charred inside to create the flavours to come



5 **Cask ageing**
Years in the warehouse bring amber colour and sweetness

> Fermentation Shochu, like sake, uses parallel fermentation: koji makes sugar while yeast ferments it in the same vessel. Whisky, like beer, makes sugar first and ferments afterwards.

Continued: History →

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History

the art of distilling crossed the sea

Barley shochu





Left: farmland on Iki, birthplace of barley shochu. Right: an Edo-period ceramic ranbiki still (Nakatsu, Oita)

- 16th c. Distilling reaches Japan; barley shochu on Iki is said to date from this time
- 1559 Graffiti at Koriyama Hachiman Shrine, Kagoshima, mentions ”shochu” — the oldest surviving record
- 1970s Vacuum distillation spreads, creating light, clean barley shochu
- 1979 Iichiko barley shochu launched in Oita; the 1980s shochu boom follows
- 1995 ”Iki” becomes a geographical indication for barley shochu
- 2006 Tax reform renames it ”single-distilled shochu”

Whisky





Left: kiln pagodas at Ardbeg, Islay. Right: old pot stills at Dallas Dhu, Scotland

- 1494 Scottish records list malt for ”aqua vitae”, the water of life
- 1831 Aeneas Coffey patents the continuous still
- 1923 Work begins on Yamazaki, Japan’s first malt whisky distillery
- 1929 Shirofuda, the first genuine Japanese whisky, is released
- 2010s– Craft distilleries open all over Japan, many run by shochu makers
- 2021 The ”Japanese Whisky” labelling standard is adopted

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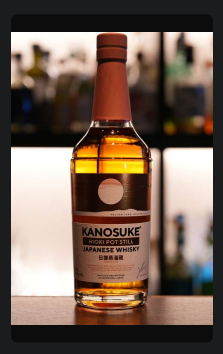
Taste them side by side at 2102

shochu know-how, in whisky | 30 ml per glass, tax incl.

Barley + koji vs barley + malt



Tenpai Craftsman Tada
¥1,537
barley shochu | barley & barley koji, cask strength 44%

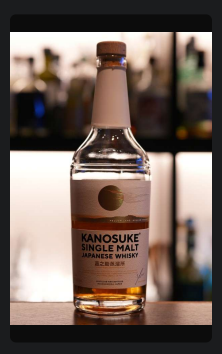


Kanosuke Hioki Pot Still
¥2,365
whisky from a shochu maker’s pot stills 51%

Shochu cask × whisky



Komasa Mellowed Kozuru Excellence
¥1,595
rice & rice koji, oak-rested 41%



Kanosuke Single Malt
¥1,977
aged in re-charred casks of that shochu 48%

Whisky from shochu makers
Kanosuke Komasa · Ontake Nishi Shuzo · Tsunuki Hombo · Osuzu Kuroki Honten · Shindo Shinozaki · Amanohakuh Joraku · Hinokami Satsuma Shuzo

Kyushu & Okinawa map ›

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THE DECISIVE DIFFERENCE | SACCHARIFICATION

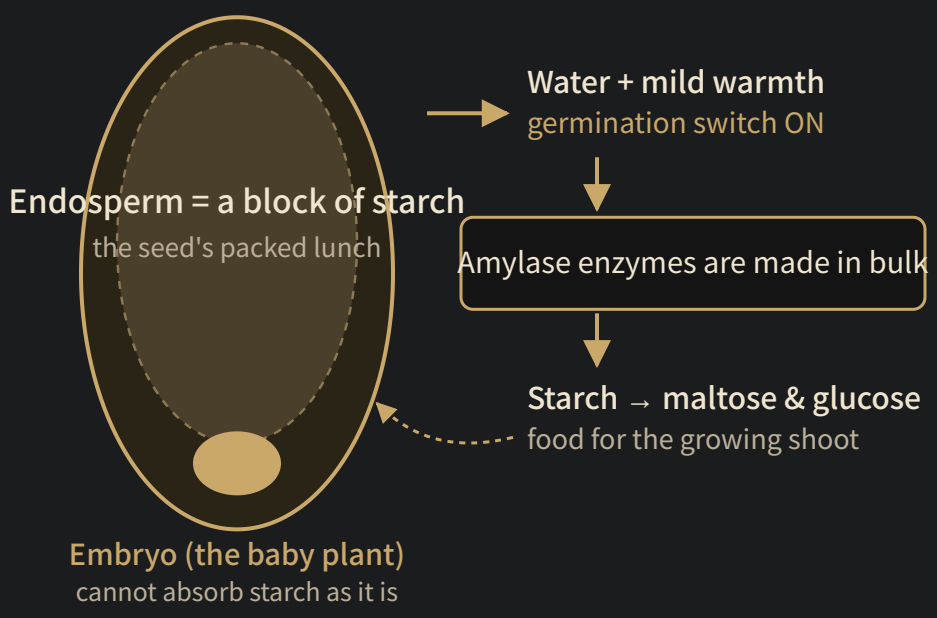
It all turns on sugar

malt or koji: who turns the starch into sugar?

The biggest difference between shochu and whisky comes at the very start: saccharification, turning the grain's starch into sugar, and fermentation, turning that sugar into alcohol. Whisky uses the enzymes barley makes by itself when it sprouts. Shochu grows koji mould on steamed barley or rice and borrows the mould's enzymes. In both, it is yeast that turns sugar into alcohol.

Why can barley saccharify itself?

a plant's survival strategy, hijacked by people



1 What the plant intends

Most of a barley grain is hard starch (the endosperm). When germination starts, the grain makes large amounts of amylase and other enzymes that dissolve that starch into small, absorbable sugars to feed the shoot.

2 The human trick

Just when the enzymes have peaked but the shoot has not yet eaten the sugar, hot air (or peat smoke) is applied to stop germination.

3 The result is malt

A block of starch packed with enzymes — so powerful it can also saccharify corn or wheat starch added later.



Malt: barley that has been sprouted and dried. It still looks like barley, but is full of enzymes



Traditional floor malting: germinating barley is spread on the floor and turned by hand (Scotland)

Continued: Four steps from malt to alcohol →

Photos: Pierre-alain dorange (BY-SA 3.0) · Braveheart (BY-SA 4.0) · Theo Crazzolara (BY 2.0) / Wikimedia Commons

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THE DECISIVE DIFFERENCE | SACCHARIFICATION

Four steps from malt to alcohol

shared by whisky and beer



Pagoda roof of a kiln: peat smoke flavours the malt (Islay)



The mill that cracks the malt before mashing (Yasato Distillery)

目次

1 Malting

sprout → dry

Barley is steeped and sprouted; once enough α- and β-amylase has formed it is dried with warm air or peat smoke. Almost no starch has become sugar yet.

2 Mashing

63–65 ℃

Ground malt meets water at this temperature — the "golden range" where barley enzymes work hardest. The dormant enzymes wake at once and within hours turn the starch into sweet wort.

3 Lautering

wort only

The husks and solids are removed and only the clear, sweet wort goes on (grain whisky and bourbon often skip this and ferment on the grain).

4 Fermenting

7–8 %

Yeast is added to the cooled wort. Barley cannot make alcohol by itself: yeast eats the sugar and gives alcohol, CO_2 and fruity aromas — a beer-like wash.

THE POINT

Whisky

malt + water + yeast no koji

Malt saccharifies itself, so no koji is needed. The only microbe is yeast — which is why whisky could be made in Scotland, where koji was unknown.

Barley shochu

barley + koji + water + yeast two microbes

Unsprouted barley starch is saccharified by koji mould enzymes, then fermented by yeast. Handing saccharification to a mould is a culture unique to Japan and East Asia.

Using koji is a uniquely Japanese culture. Whisky needs no koji: because malt does its own saccharifying, it can be made from malt and yeast alone. Barley shochu entrusts that same step to Japan's national fungus, koji — two cultures born from the same grain.

Photos: Bjarne Henning Kvaal (BY-SA 3.0) / Wikimedia Commons Yasato Distillery: 2102

Why rice and sweet potato need koji

the other road: enzymes from a mould — and how the finished drink is classified

Saccharifying power when sprouted

Grain	Saccharifying power when sprouted (enzymes)	How it is used in brewing
Barley	▬▬ Extremely strong — in a class of its own. It makes so much enzyme (especially β-amylase) that it can also saccharify corn or wheat starch added alongside it	Sprouted barley — malt — saccharifies 100% by itself → whisky, beer
Rice	▬ Weak. Even when sprouted it makes little amylase and cannot produce sugar fast or dense enough for brewing. Polishing removes the germ, so it will not sprout at all	A mould packed with enzymes, koji, is grown on it and does the saccharifying → sake, rice shochu
Sweet potato	• Not sprouted. Rich in starch, but its own enzymes cannot saccharify it	Saccharified with rice koji (or sweet-potato koji) → imo shochu
Barley (shochu)	▬▬ It could sprout — but using sprouted grain means it is no longer ”shochu” under the Liquor Tax Act	Steamed without sprouting and saccharified by barley koji (rice koji on Iki) → barley shochu

Two shapes of fermentation

sugar first, then alcohol — or both at the same time

Whisky sequential	Malt	Mashing 63–65°C, a few hours	Sweet wort	Fermenting yeast, 2–4 days	Wash 7–8% a beer-like liquid	Distilled twice new make ~70%
Barley shochu parallel	Koji + water + yeast first moromi, about a week	Steamed barley added second moromi	Sugar and alcohol made at once same vessel, about 2 weeks	Moromi 17–20% high alcohol	Distilled once spirit ~37–44%	

Parallel fermentation is the same mechanism as sake: yeast turns sugar into alcohol as fast as koji makes it, so sugar never builds up and the mash reaches some of the highest alcohol levels of any brewed drink.

Climate chose the road — koji is Japan’s own culture In cool, dry Scotland koji mould could not be grown reliably, so the path using barley’s own sprouting power — malt — developed. In hot, humid Japan and East Asia mould grows readily on steamed grain, so the koji path developed (Aspergillus oryzae was named Japan’s ”national fungus” in 2006).

Continued: One more fork, at the finished product →

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One more fork, at the finished product

shochu, spirits or liqueur?



Casks outside a warehouse (Isle of Jura): colour and aroma grow inside

目次



Amber from long years in wood. This depth of colour is the line a drink cannot cross and still be called shochu

The tax authority's interpretation notice caps the colour of shochu (absorbance 0.080 or less). Spirit that has turned deep amber after long years in wood cannot be shipped as "honkaku shochu" as it is. Whisky has no colour cap, and caramel colouring is allowed.

Long cask ageing deep amber spirit = absorbance above 0.080

A

Strip the colour with activated-carbon filtration

Honkaku shochu

Umami and aroma are stripped away together with the colour

B

Add a trace of flavour-neutral dietary fibre (e.g. indigestible dextrin) or sugar

Liqueur

The rich cask-strength flavour and amber colour reach the glass as they are

C

File it as "spirits"

Spirits

A looser colour cap (absorbance 0.190). Cask colour and flavour intact — but no malt, so it cannot be called whisky

Some makers deliberately choose the spirits or liqueur category to keep the cask colour and flavour untouched. Why the colour rule exists: a history of the tax.

← Shochu vs whisky: what the law says
Shochu list
A century of Japanese whisky
Fermenting & distilling, illustrated →

Photos: Pierre-alain dorange (BY-SA 3.0) · Braveheart (BY-SA 4.0) · Theo Crazzolara (BY 2.0) · Bjarne Henning Kvaal (BY-SA 3.0) / Wikimedia Commons

FERMENTATION | 17% vs 7–8% in the mash

Twice as strong before distilling

whisky pays up front; shochu serves sugar like wanko-soba

In both drinks it is yeast that turns sugar into alcohol. What differs is how the sugar is handed to the yeast. As a result the fermented mash reaches only about 7–8% alcohol for whisky, but about 17–20% for barley shochu. That gap of more than double decides how many times each is distilled — and shapes the backbone of its flavour.



Koji-making: steamed rice is spread out in the koji room to grow koji mould. Shochu fermentation starts here (Okuhida Shuzo, Gifu)

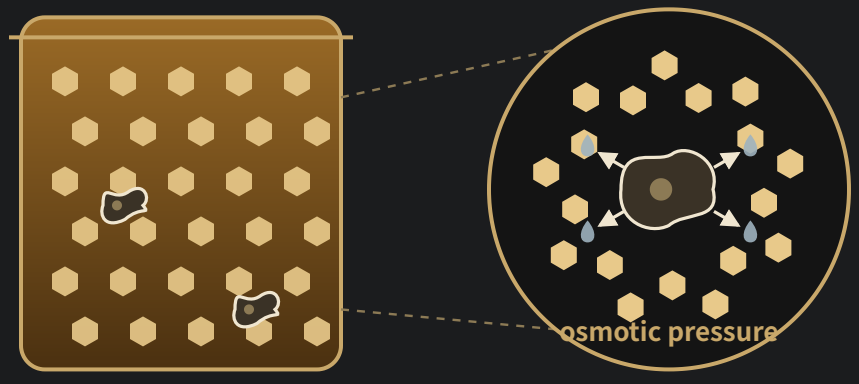
Two ways to feed the yeast

the same yeast, in very different conditions

WHISKY sequential
"pay everything up front"

BARLEY SHOCHU parallel
"wanko-soba" — little by little

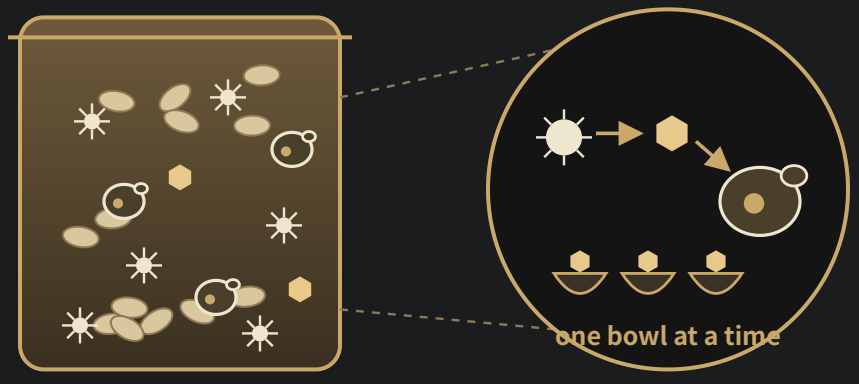
All the sugar, handed over at once



Sweet wort
all sugar made before yeast

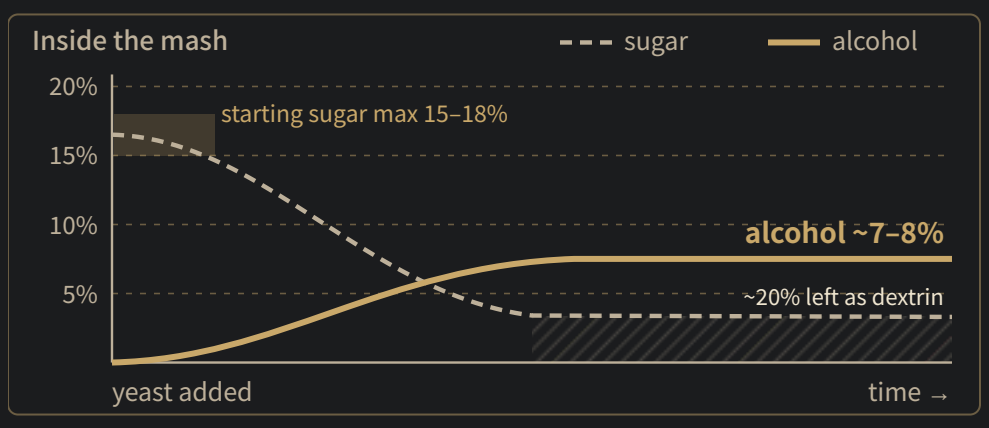
Yeast loses its water
→ start sugar capped at 15–18%

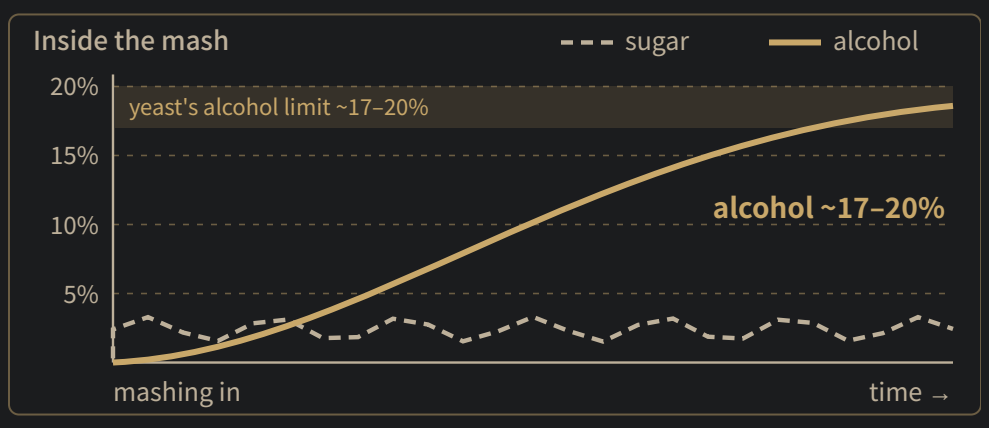
Sugar handed over as soon as it is made



Koji, barley, water, yeast
sugar and alcohol made at once

Each glucose eaten at once
→ sugar always stays low





Wash ~7–8% → distilled twice

Moromi ~17–20% → distilled once

Continued: Fermentation, from the yeast's point of view →

Photos: 杉山宣嗣 (BY-SA 4.0) / Wikimedia Commons

FERMENTATION | 17% vs 7–8% in the mash

Fermentation, from the yeast's point of view

three keywords: osmotic pressure, dextrin, glucoamylase

Osmotic pressure

too much sugar dries the yeast out

If the sugar is too concentrated, osmotic pressure draws water out of the yeast cells and they stop working. So whisky wort can start at no more than 15–18% sugar.

Dextrin

sugar the yeast cannot eat

Malt enzymes leave about 20% of the sugar as dextrin, which yeast cannot ferment. That part never becomes alcohol, so the wash stops at about 7–8%.

Glucoamylase

koji turns almost 100% into glucose

Koji's enzyme glucoamylase breaks starch down to glucose almost completely. Yeast eats it the moment it appears, so there is no osmotic stress and fermentation runs on to the yeast's own limit, about 17–20%.

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The gap decides the distillation. Barley shochu, at about 17%, reaches its strength in one distillation as a rule; whisky, at 7–8%, needs two. Some houses, such as Asakura and Craftsman Tada, choose to distil twice.

← How sugar is made

Barley shochu on our shelf

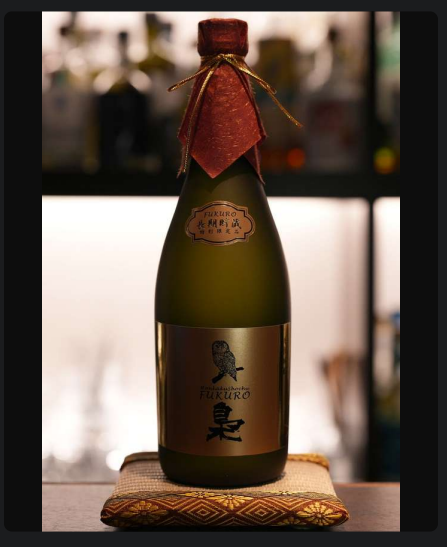
all saccharified by koji; one pot run as a rule



Kanehachi
Yotsuya Shuzo



Bakkan Nasakejima
Hachijo Kohatsu



Kenjo Co., Ltd.
Fukuro



Craftsman Tada
"Spanish Orange" undiluted -2024DY-
two pot runs

DISTILLATION | once vs twice · atmospheric vs vacuum

Shochu once, whisky twice

the number of runs, and the pressure in the still, build the backbone

Distilling means warming the mash, drawing off alcohol and aroma as vapour, and cooling it back into liquid. Barley shochu, from a mash of about 17%, gets there in one run as a rule; whisky, from 7–8%, needs two (malt: two or three runs in pot stills; grain: column stills). Barley shochu also has a second choice: distilling at normal or reduced pressure. A few houses, Asakura and Craftsman Tada among them, distil twice.

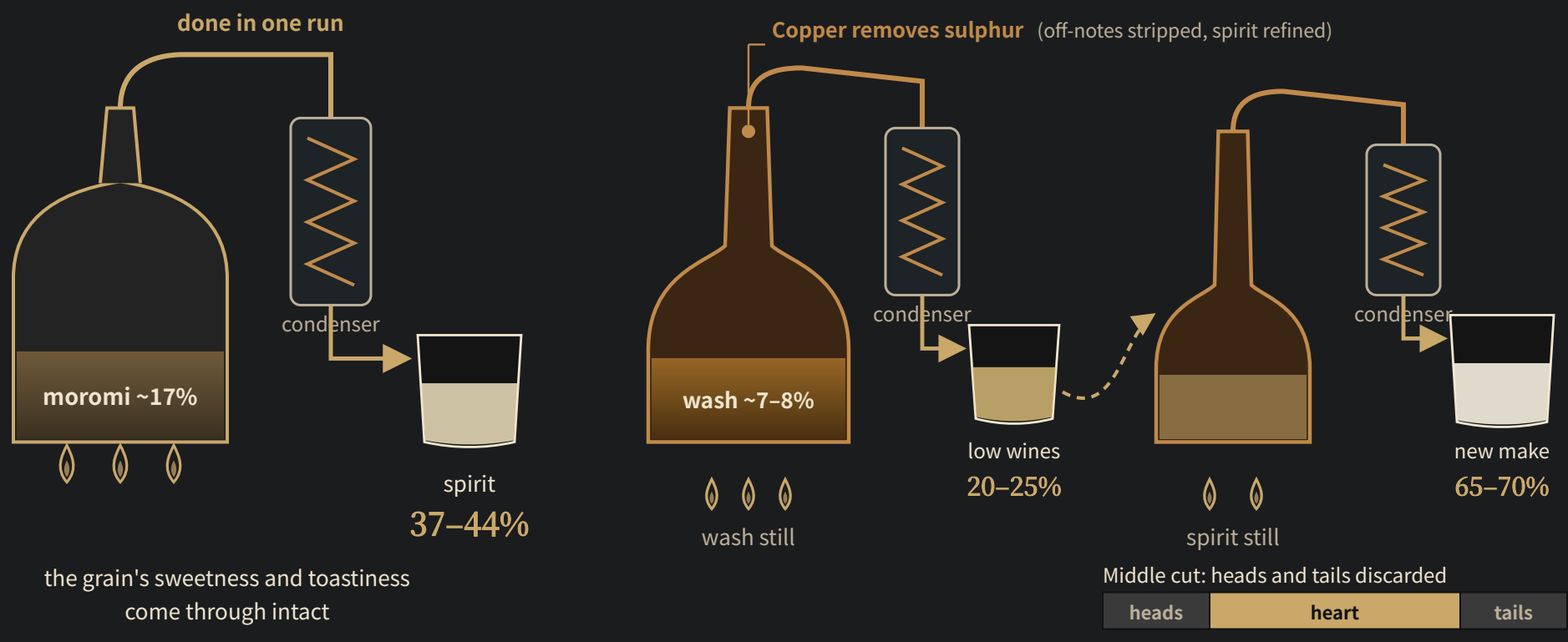


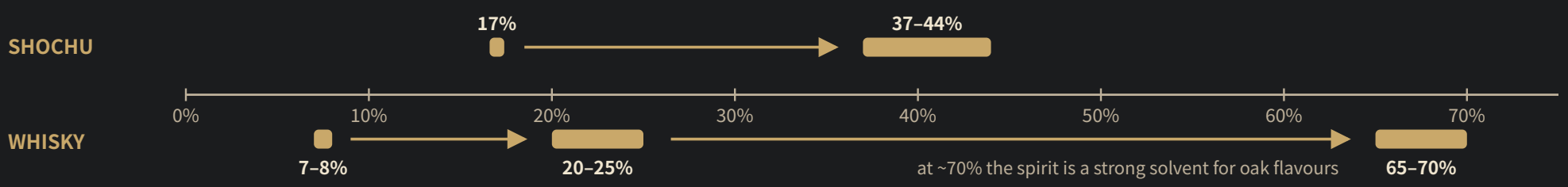
Copper pot stills. The copper strips out whisky's sulphury off-notes (a Japanese whisky distillery)

Once or twice shochu keeps, whisky polishes

BARLEY SHOCHU single distillation

WHISKY pot stills, twice (or 3×)





Continued: Atmospheric vs vacuum →

Photos: hirotomo t (BY-SA 2.0) / Wikimedia Commons

DISTILLATION | once vs twice · atmospheric vs vacuum

Atmospheric vs vacuum

barley shochu: change the pressure, change the aroma



Atmospheric

1 atm | boils at 90–100°C

Long, hot boiling sets off Maillard reactions and thermal breakdown, creating toasty aromas; heavy, oily compounds with high boiling points come over too.

- Furfural toasted, caramel-like
- Pyrazines malt chocolate, nuts
- Fatty-acid ethyl esters oiliness, body

With cask ageing

A big backbone that stands up to the strong tannins of oak: by far the best for long ageing — 5 to 10+ years, or new casks.



Vacuum

about 1/10 atm | boils at 40–50°C

Boiling at low temperature gives no scorched notes or oil — only the light, fruity esters come over, cleanly.

- Isoamyl acetate banana
- Ethyl caproate apple

With cask ageing

With nothing harsh in the way, even 1–3 years in cask lets the vanilla shine through: elegant, and made for highballs.

目次

In the blending room, atmospheric spirit often plays the malt role and vacuum spirit the grain role.

Aroma →

Taste the still from our shochu list



Kanehachi
atmospheric



Craftsman Tada “Spanish Orange” undiluted -2024DY-
atmospheric, twice



Bakkan Nasakejima
Hachijo Kohatsu



MELLOWED KOZURU EXCELLENCE
rice shochu, cask-aged

AROMA | where the differences in aroma and taste come from

The same cask aromas. Grain, koji, still and cask differ

cask-aged barley shochu and whisky, compound by compound

Aroma map cask notes are shared; grain and craft differ



Four forks in the road where the same barley parts ways

1 Grain

Barley shochu

Barley – polished barley, saccharified by koji enzymes

Whisky

Malt – sprouted barley, saccharified by its own enzymes

2 Koji or malt

Barley shochu

Koji – citric acid guards the mash; ferulic acid becomes sweet smoke

Whisky

Peat & kiln – smoke phenols and Maillard browning make the malty notes

3 Distillation

Barley shochu

Once, as a rule – spirit at 37–44%: oils and roastiness stay

Whisky

Twice – polished to about 70%; heads and tails cut away

4 Cask

Barley shochu

At spirit strength – colour capped at 0.080: light cask notes, grain up front

Whisky

Filled at 63.5% – no colour cap: dense vanilla and tannin

> The citric acid koji makes protects the mash from bacteria and does not survive distillation. Shochu's "crispness" is not acidity: it is the after-taste of light cask extract balanced by oils and roastiness.

Continued: Barley, koji and the aroma of shochu →

CONTENTS

AROMA | where barley shochu's aroma is born

Barley, koji and the aroma of shochu

grain, koji, yeast and the heat of the still – four layers

Four layers of aroma

taking pot-distilled barley shochu as the example

The aroma of barley shochu is a stack of compounds made by the barley, by the koji that saccharifies it, by the yeast and by the heat of the still. The stars are trace compounds, about 0.2% of the whole. Against whisky from the same barley, the mix shifts by the koji and by how it is distilled.



Terraced fields in Usa, Oita: barley-shochu country

目次

The roast of the barley

2-furanmethanethiol

Nut, cocoa and coffee. Its detection threshold is a mere 0.0016 mg/L; it is abundant in pot-distilled barley shochu and barely registers in vacuum-distilled spirit. Caramel-like furfural also forms when the mash, acidified by koji's citric acid, is heated at atmospheric pressure.

Sweet smoke, unlocked by koji

4-vinylguaiacol

Koji enzymes (ferulic acid esterase) free the ferulic acid in barley; the heat of the still turns it into 4-vinylguaiacol, clove-like and sweetly smoky. Awamori research shows it can go on to become vanillin in ageing: vanilla from koji, by a different route from the cask.

Fruit from yeast, flowers from koji

isoamyl acetate, β-phenethyl alcohol

Banana-like isoamyl acetate and apple-like ethyl caproate are made by the yeast. From the amino acids koji enzymes release from barley protein come rose-like β-phenethyl alcohol and isoamyl alcohol, the source of heat and bitterness.

Roundness from the oils

fatty-acid ethyl esters

Ethyl palmitate, ethyl linoleate and other oils stay in a single-run spirit and carry roundness and sweetness. Aroma compounds dissolve in them, so over-filtering strips aroma too; oxidised, they turn rancid, so chill-filtering and ion exchange set the level – the distiller's craft.

Continued: Four sources of whisky aroma →

Photos: sk01 (BY-SA 3.0) / Wikimedia Commons

AROMA | where whisky's aroma is born

Four sources of whisky aroma

malt, peat, lactic bacteria and copper

Peat smoke

phenols

Drying malt over burning peat leaves phenols such as guaiacol and cresols on the grain: smoky, medicinal. Most Japanese whisky uses lightly peated malt; barley for shochu is never smoked, so as a rule there is none.

Malt and the kiln

furfural, pyrazines, diacetyl

Kilning the sprouted barley drives Maillard reactions: almond-like furfural, roasty pyrazines, buttery diacetyl. This is the source of the cereal notes called "malty".

Lactic bacteria and wooden washbacks

lactones, lactic acid

Whisky wort is not boiled, so lactic bacteria survive. As lactic acid rises, floral and fruity notes emerge in distillation, and the bacteria also make lactones, sweet and creamy. Bacteria living in the grain of wooden washbacks raise an aromatic spirit.

Copper and direct fire

removing sulphur

Copper pot stills strip the sulphury off-notes of fermentation, and the still's shape decides how much heavy matter falls back. Direct firing gives roasty weight; steam, a lighter spirit. The second run cuts heads and tails, and only the heart goes to cask.



A peat bank in Scotland

Peat is half-carbonised plant matter built up in bogs over thousands of years. Burnt to dry the malt, its smoke leaves phenols on the grain. Barley for shochu is never smoked over peat, so even cask-aged shochu has, as a rule, no smoky notes.

Next: strength and cask, the backbone of taste →

Photos: david glass (BY-SA 2.0) / Wikimedia Commons

STRENGTH & CASK | how strength and cask set the backbone

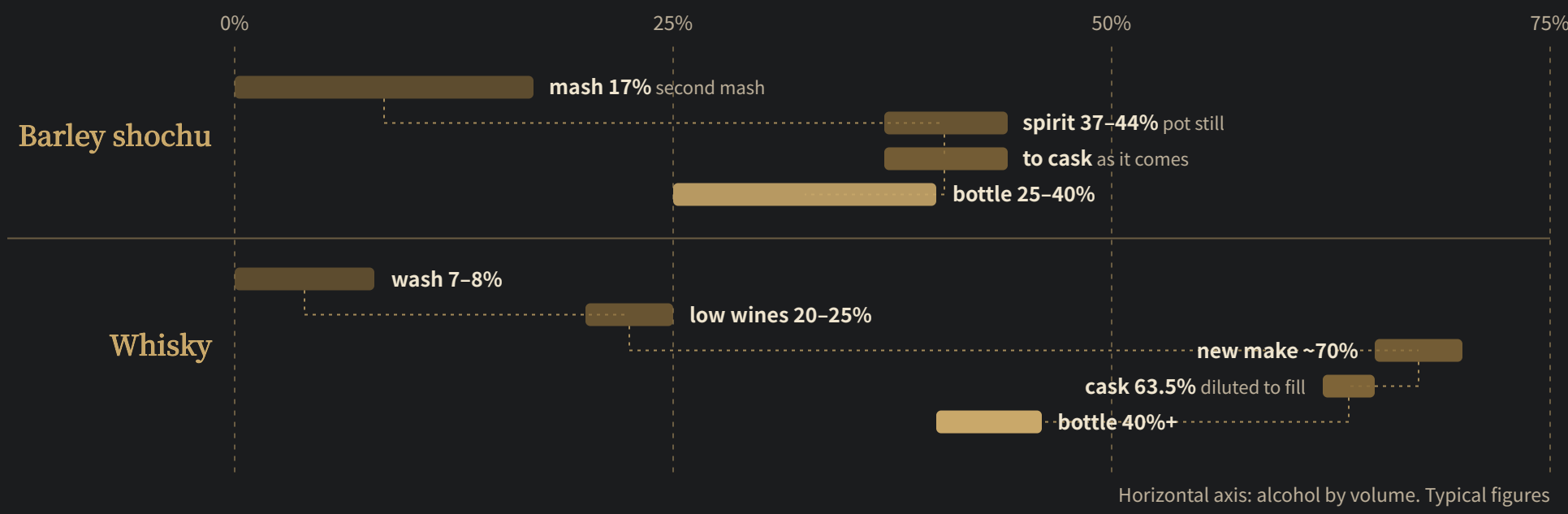
Into the cask at 37–44%, or at 63.5%

spirit strength, filling strength, colour cap, years – the backbone in numbers

The backbone in numbers

strength and age decide what the cask gives

	Cask-aged barley shochu	Whisky
Distillation	one pot run as a rule (some houses run twice)	two pot runs (up to three)
Spirit strength	about 37–44% (atmospheric)	about 70% (new make)
Filling strength	as it comes, down to about 40%	63.5% is the Scotch standard
What the cask gives	lower strength favours water-soluble tannins and sugars	higher strength favours vanillin and lactones
Colour	absorbance 0.080 or less (430 & 480 nm): filtered or blended with clear spirit to fit	no cap; caramel colouring allowed
Years	no minimum; ”long-aged” means spirit aged 3+ years is over 50% of the alcohol	3 years minimum (Japan, Scotch); 2–4% a year evaporates and concentrates
Bottle strength	25% is the norm; spirit around 40%	40% or more, diluted for bottling
Filtering	chill-filtered or ion-exchanged to set the oils	chill-filtered (some houses skip it)



Why the cask weighs so differently. Whisky goes in strong, stays long and has no colour cap. Barley shochu goes in at spirit strength, stays shorter and must come out under 0.080 – so the cask notes are light and the grain and koji lead.

Continued: The difference in the glass →

IN THE GLASS | aroma, taste and finish, in words

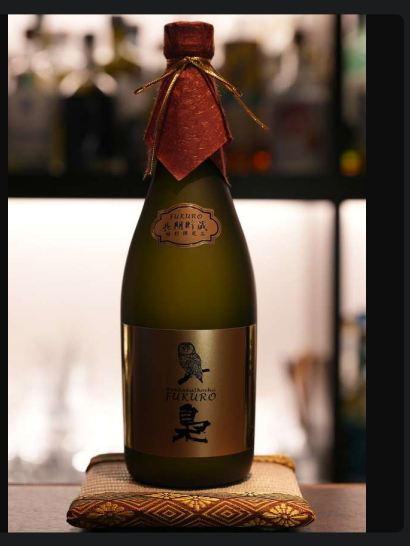
The difference in the glass

aroma, taste, finish, serve

	Cask-aged barley shochu	Whisky
Aroma	roasted barley, sweet smoke (4-VG), banana, light vanilla	peat smoke, malt, fruit, dense vanilla and coconut
Taste	roundness from the oils and barley sweetness; little astringency	tannic grip, cask sweetness, heavy body
Finish	shorter and crisp; at home with food	long, the cask lingering
Serve	hot water, rocks, highball; at 25% with a meal	neat, a splash of water, highball

Shared – vanillin, whisky lactone, furfural: what the cask gives is common to both. Different – how much of it, plus the roasted barley that koji and the pot still leave behind, and the peat smoke.

Taste it at our bar cask-aged shochu and cask-strength spirit



Kenjo Co., Ltd.
Fukuro
oak, long-aged, 40%



Shinozaki Co., Ltd.
Asakura
oak 8+ years, distilled twice, 40%



MELLOWED KOZURU EXCELLENCE
new oak, rice shochu, 41%



Craftsman Tada "Spanish Orange" undiluted -2024DY-
two pot runs, cask strength 44%

Next: three lines drawn by law →

Sources: NRIB ”Aromas of honkaku shochu & awamori and their origins” (2023) and ”Whisky” (Sake no Hanashi); Oishi et al., J. Brew. Soc. Japan 108(2) 2013; J. Brew. Soc. Japan ”Flavour compounds and deliciousness of honkaku shochu”; Okinawa Industrial Technology Center, vanillin in awamori (2003); NTA interpretive circular (wood-stored shochu, absorbance 0.080); honkaku shochu labelling standard (long-aged); Whiskipedia ”Filling strength” (Diageo, C. Wallace); Honkaku Shochu & Awamori guide (atmospheric / vacuum).

LAW | the decisive lines drawn by Japan's Liquor Tax Act

Three lines drawn by law

the decisive differences under Japan's Liquor Tax Act

1 Saccharifying agent

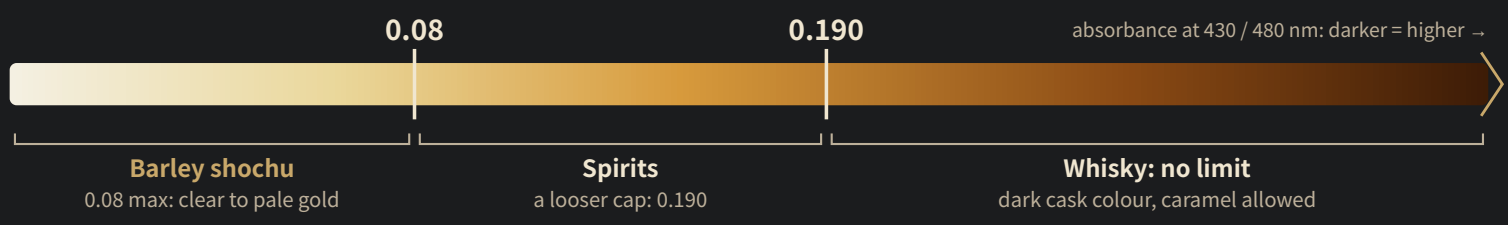
what makes a whisky

Whisky
Must, by law, be saccharified by the enzymes (amylase) of the sprouted grain itself — malt. Anything made with koji cannot be called whisky, in Japan or abroad.

Barley shochu
Saccharified by the enzymes of koji mould (white koji, black koji and others).

2 Colour

the absorbance rule



Single-distilled barley shochu has a strict colour cap: absorbance 0.08 or less at 430 nm and 480 nm — deep amber is not allowed. Whisky has no colour limit: dark cask colour and caramel colouring are both permitted.

3 Strength & distillation

caps and runs

Barley shochu
45% ABV or less under the Liquor Tax Act (usually a single pot distillation).

Whisky
No upper limit on strength (malt: 2–3 runs in pot stills; grain: column stills).

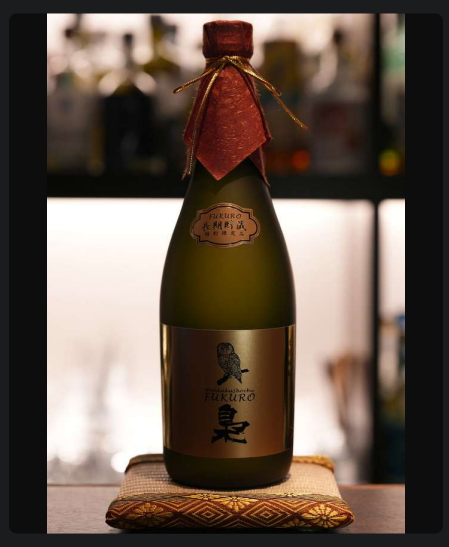
目次

Why does only shochu have a colour cap? The answer lies in the history of Japan's liquor tax.

Tax history →

Cask-aged, yet different categories

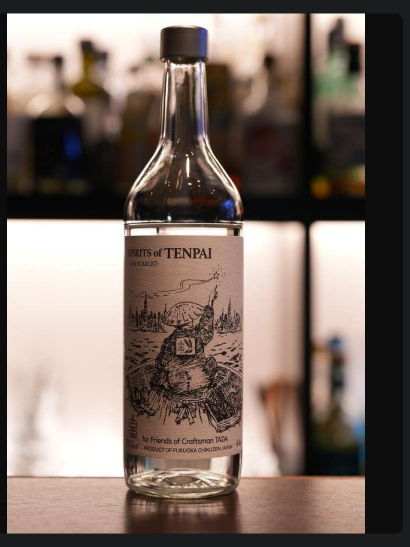
compare the category line on each label



Kenjo Co., Ltd.
Fukuro
honkaku shochu, 40%



Shinozaki Co., Ltd.
Asakura
liqueur, 40%



SPIRITS of TENPAI - With SCARLET -
spirits, 44%



MELLOWED KOZURU EXCELLENCE
rice shochu, 41%

TAX & HISTORY | why the colour cap exists, and the rates from October 2026

Where did the colour cap come from?

a story of shochu that looked too much like whisky

Under the Showa-era grading system, special-grade whisky carried up to some 20 times or more the tax of shochu. To stop cheap cask-aged shochu flowing onto the market in amber and taking whisky's place — a way round the tax — and under outside pressure such as the UK (Scotch industry) complaint to GATT in 1987, the 1989 reform tightened the absorbance rule: a dark spirit that could be mistaken for whisky is not shochu.

How many times shochu's tax did whisky pay?





A Showa-era liquor shop with sake banners; sake grades were abolished in 1992



A liquor shop in Tachikawa, Tokyo: liquor tax is built into the shelf price

Continued: Liquor tax rates today →

Photos: Asturio Cantabrio (BY-SA 4.0) · Real Estate Japan (BY 2.0) / Wikimedia Commons

TAX & HISTORY | why the colour cap exists, and the rates from October 2026

Liquor tax rates today

after the October 2026 reform, per kL (1,000 L)

1% alcohol = ¥10,000 per kL
(¥10 per degree per litre) — identical for shochu, whisky, spirits (37%+) and strong liqueurs



At 40% in a 720 ml bottle, shochu, whisky, liqueur and spirits all carry ¥288 tax — the same to the last yen.

Category	Rate per kL	Per bottle / can
Shochu	¥200,000 at 20% + ¥10,000 per extra degree	25%, 720 ml = ¥180 40%, 720 ml = ¥288
Whisky	¥370,000 at 37% + ¥10,000 per extra degree	40%, 700 ml = ¥280 40%, 720 ml = ¥288
Spirits	flat ¥370,000 under 37% 37% and over: + ¥10,000 per degree	
Liqueur	¥120,000 at 12% + ¥10,000 per extra degree	40%, 720 ml = ¥288
Sake	flat ¥100,000 brewed drinks are favoured	720 ml = ¥72
Beer-type drinks	flat ¥155,000 beer, happoshu and "new genre" unified in Oct 2026	350 ml can = ¥54.25 the heaviest burden of all
Low-alcohol sparkling	flat ¥100,000 canned chu-hi & highballs under 10%	350 ml can = ¥35

目次

Q. Why is long cask-aged shochu sold as "liqueur" or "spirits"?

At 40%, shochu, whisky, liqueur and spirits pay exactly the same tax, to the yen — it is not about saving tax. It is to deliver the cask's amber colour and aroma unfiltered, instead of stripping colour and flavour with activated carbon: a trace of dietary fibre makes it a "liqueur", or it ships as "spirits", whose absorbance cap is looser (0.190).

← The A·B·C fork Someone tried this before →

At 40%, the tax is the same whatever the category

¥400 per litre: ¥288 per 720 ml, ¥280 per 700 ml



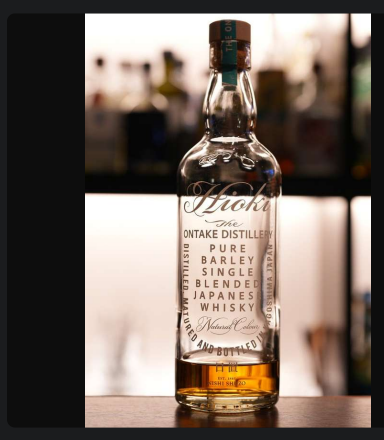
Kenjo Co., Ltd.
Fukuro
honkaku shochu 40%, 720 ml



Shinozaki Co., Ltd.
Asakura
liqueur 40%, 500 ml



Flare 2024 [+innovative]
sweet-potato shochu 40%, 550 ml



Hioki Pure Barley Single Blended
whisky 40%, 700 ml

GRADES | special, first and second grade (1943–1989)

When whisky came in grades

the share of whisky stock (malt and grain) and the strength set the tax

Until March 1989 Japanese whisky was sold as special, first or second grade, and the liquor tax differed enormously by grade. The grade was decided not by taste but by the share of whisky stock (malt and grain) and the strength; the rest could be neutral alcohol and water, and until 1968 second grade had no minimum at all. A ”特級 (special grade)” label is a relic of that era.



”ウイスキー特級” on a label marks a bottle sold before April 1989

Grade criteria: whisky content and strength

the content minimums rose at almost every revision

1978 minimum whisky content and strength and liquor tax per bottle (1987)



Special — whisky 27%+ · 43% abv+ · tax ¥1,595

1st — whisky 17%+ · 40% abv+ · tax ¥728

2nd — whisky 10%+ · 37% base · tax ¥190

Year	Event	Special	1st	2nd
1943	Whisky graded 1–3 as ”miscellaneous liquor”: stock ratio and strength (3rd grade 40%+ abv)	—	30%+ 43% abv	under 30% 43% abv
1949	2nd grade lowered (3rd grade: the rest)	—	30%+ 43% abv	5%+ 40% abv
1953	Renamed special / 1st / 2nd; minimum-age rule dropped	30%+ 43% abv	5%+ 40% abv	the rest
1962	Whisky leaves ”miscellaneous liquor”; ad valorem tax on special grade	20%+ 43% abv	10%+ 40% abv	no minimum (37% base)
1968	First content minimum for 2nd grade	23%+ 43% abv	13%+ 40% abv	7%+ (37% base)
1978	Final standard	27%+ 43% abv	17%+ 40% abv	10%+ (37% base)
1989.4	Grades abolished; one definition: 10%+ of alcohol from whisky stock			

Upper line: minimum share of the product’s alcohol that comes from whisky stock (the rest could be neutral alcohol and water); lower line: minimum strength. Special grade had to be **43% abv or more**, 1st grade **40% or more**. 2nd grade had no strength floor, but its tax was based on 37%, which is why so many 37% bottles exist.



Super Nikka (once special grade)



Kakubin (once 1st grade)



Torys (once 2nd grade)

How different was the tax? →

Photos: Mikael Leppä (BY 2.0) · Kentin (BY-SA 4.0) · Kuha455405 (BY-SA 3.0) · Kentin (BY-SA 3.0) / Wikimedia Commons

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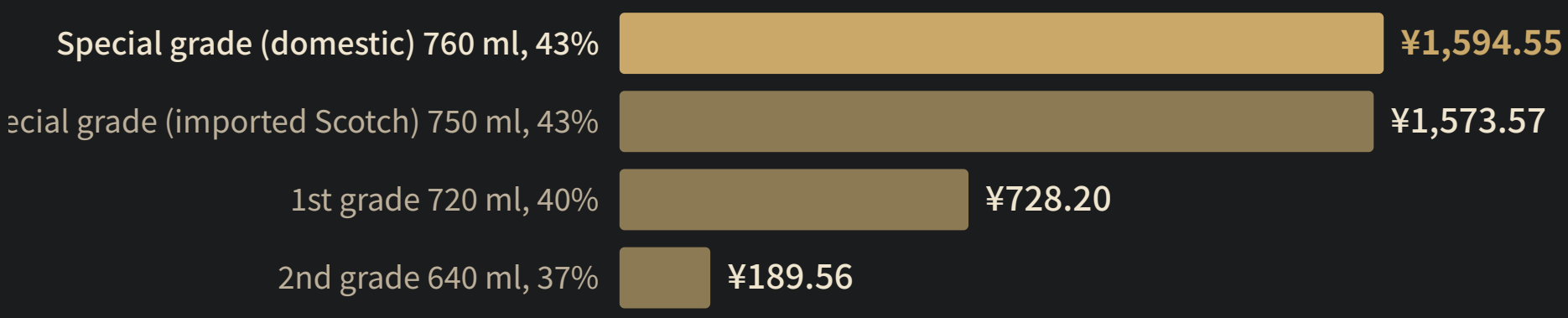
GRADES & MALT CONTENT | liquor tax per bottle in 1987

How different was the tax?

special grade paid about 7× second grade, and imported Scotch paid ad valorem tax on top

Liquor tax per bottle (1987)

volume-based + ad valorem; Japanese government data in the GATT panel report

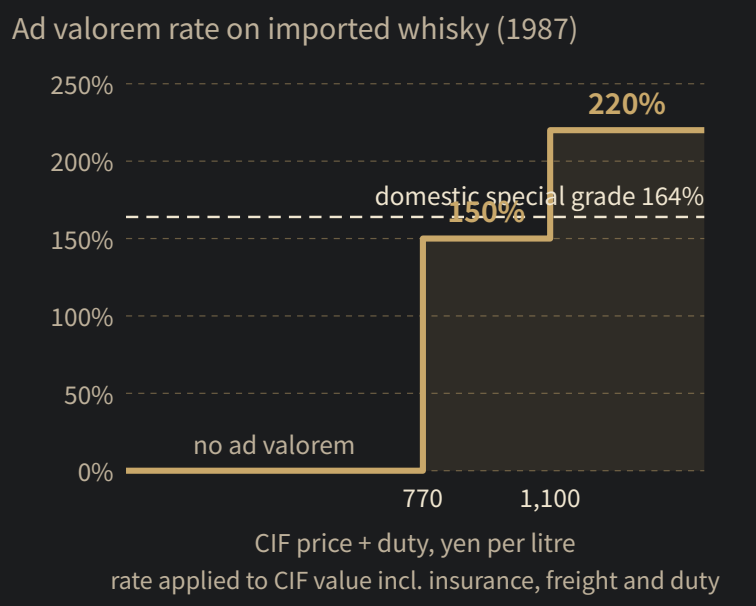


Volume-based rates per kL: special ¥2,098,100, 1st ¥1,011,400, 2nd ¥296,200: special grade paid about 7 times 2nd grade. Per litre, special-grade whisky paid about 41 times the tax on shochu B and 26 times shochu A (EC estimate).

Ad valorem tax: the dearer the bottle, the heavier

introduced in 1962 for special-grade sake and whisky

For imported whisky, if CIF price plus duty was **¥770–1,100 per litre the rate was 150%**, and **above ¥1,100, 220%** (¥586–836 / over ¥836 per 760 ml bottle). Domestic special grade paid an intermediate 164%. The taxable value included insurance, freight and duty, which the importers' association recorded as "extremely expensive". Standard Scotch sat at 150%, deluxe at 220%: one reason a bottle of Johnnie Walker Black sold for **about ¥7,000** in the 1980s.





Johnnie Walker Black Label: imported deluxe Scotch carried 220% ad valorem tax



Grand Old Parr 12: a popular imported Scotch in Japan



A liquor-store shelf: ad valorem tax weighed heaviest on the dearest bottles

"Special grade" was never a mark of quality but a tax bracket. On April 1, 1989, the day the 3% consumption tax arrived, both the grades and the ad valorem tax disappeared.

1989: the day the grades vanished →

← Grades and malt content

Photos: Iceman7840 (BY-SA 3.0) · Amitbalani · Paul Sableman (BY 2.0) / Wikimedia Commons

1989 AND AFTER | from the GATT complaint to equal rates

1989: the day the grades vanished

outside pressure met domestic tax reform

The road to abolition from 1986 to 2026

- **Feb 1986** — The EC demands a single rate based on alcohol content; in July it requests GATT consultations
- **Feb 1987** — A GATT panel is established
- **Nov 10, 1987** — Panel report adopted: Japan's liquor tax breaches GATT Article III:2 (national treatment)
- **Dec 24, 1988** — Tax reform law passed
- **Apr 1, 1989** — Whisky grades and ad valorem tax abolished; tax on ex-special grade roughly halved, 2nd grade raised. Same day: 3% consumption tax
- **1992** — Sake grades abolished too
- **Nov 1996** — Japan loses at the WTO Appellate Body: narrow the shochu–whisky gap
- **Oct 1997 – Oct 2000** — Whisky cut and shochu raised in stages
- **May 2006** — Distilled liquors: one rate per degree of alcohol
- **Oct 2026** — Current revision complete (beer included)



Centre William Rappard, Geneva: home of GATT and now the WTO, where the 1987 panel and the 1996 appeal were decided

What the grades left behind light and shadow

A yardstick for quality

In the post-war years, when black-market liquor laced with methanol circulated, a minimum whisky content was one reassurance for drinkers.

The "stock plus spirits" design

Second grade could be 0% whisky stock until 1968, and blending whisky stock with spirits became an accepted design. Today's rule that 10% or more from whisky stock makes a "whisky" carries that idea on. The canned-highball 10% rule →

Special grade became a dream

Heavy tax plus ad valorem made special-grade and imported Scotch expensive and aspirational. After the 1989 cut, imports grew and the domestic 2nd-grade market shrank; in the 1990s Japanese whisky entered its long winter. A century of Japanese whisky →

Bottles from that era are on our shelf too: Kaku Revival, Kaku White / Black (Heisei), Yamazaki, Hakushu →

Whisky, shochu and sake: how the tax converged → ← How different was the tax?

Photos: Jérémy Toma (BY-SA 4.0) · Kakidai (BY-SA 4.0) / Wikimedia Commons

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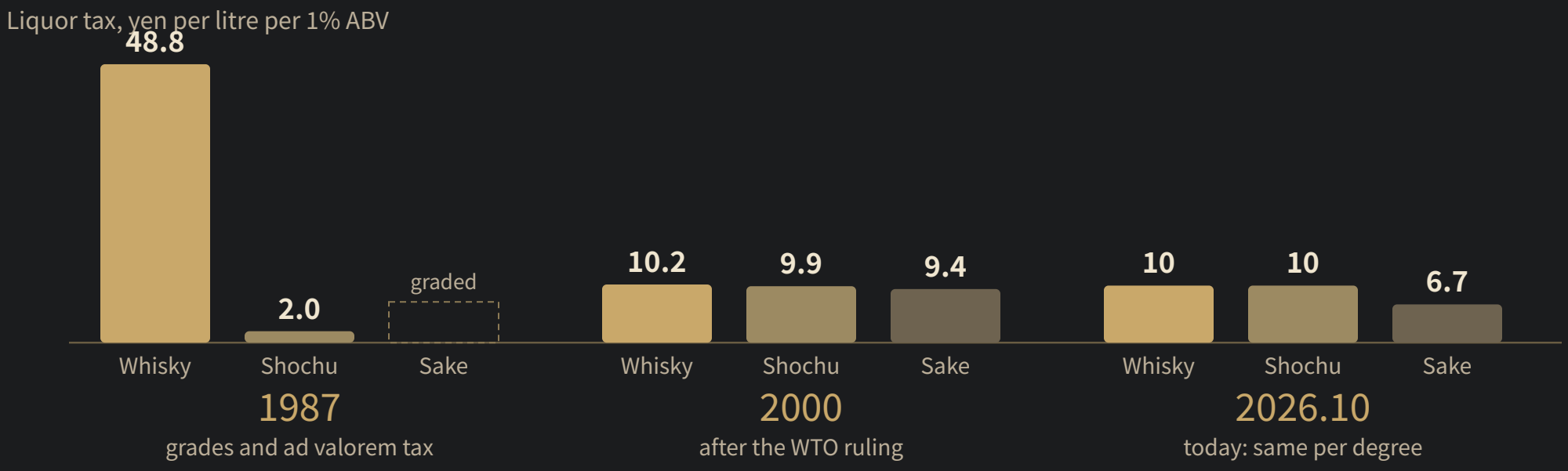
WHISKY · SHOCHU · SAKE | three taxes on one scale

Whisky, shochu and sake: how the tax converged

from about 41× in the age of grades to the same yen per degree

Compared per litre, per 1% of alcohol

one scale that evens out the difference in strength



1987 shochu = shochu B (EC estimate: about 1/41 of special-grade whisky). Sake also had special / 1st / 2nd grades then, so no figure is shown. 2000 figures are from just after the revision (shochu B reached shochu A's rate in Oct 2000).

目次

1987 Grade system

about 41×

special-grade whisky vs shochu B, per litre

Special grade ¥2,098,100 per kL. Shochu B paid about 1/41 of that per litre, shochu A about 1/26 (EC estimate). Sake, too, had special / 1st / 2nd grades.

2000 After the WTO

almost equal per degree

per kL, per 1% of alcohol

Whisky ¥10,225 (40%: ¥409,000/kL), shochu A ¥9,924, shochu B ¥7,976 → ¥9,924 from Oct 2000, sake ¥9,367 (15%: ¥140,500/kL).

Oct 2026 – Today

¥10 = ¥10

per litre per degree: whisky = shochu

Distilled liquors: ¥200,000/kL at 20% plus ¥10,000 per degree, so whisky and shochu pay the same per degree. Sake is a flat ¥100,000/kL (about ¥6,667 per degree at 15%), a little lighter as a brewed drink.

Today's tax, bottle by bottle

from Oct 1, 2026; rate × volume

Drink	ABV	Size	Tax	Per litre
Whisky	40%	720 ml	**¥288**	¥400
Shochu (barley / imo)	40%	720 ml	**¥288**	¥400
Shochu (barley / imo)	25%	720 ml	¥180	¥250
Sake	15%	720 ml	¥72	¥100
Beer	5%	500 ml	¥77.5	¥155
Canned highball	7%	350 ml	¥35	¥100



Whisky and shochu at 40% in a 720 ml bottle both carry ¥288. At lower strength, shochu 25% carries ¥180 and sake 15% carries ¥72. Per litre, the heaviest of all is beer.

Q. And a century earlier, a Japanese chemist tried to make whisky with koji.

Takamine's koji and the Meiji liquor tax → ← 1989: the day the grades vanished

Sources: GATT panel report L/6216 (1987), Japan Western Liquor Importers Association 50-year history, MOF fiscal history (1989–2000), Cabinet Office tax commission data (2000), NTA "Sake no Shiori" and the Liquor Tax Act. Tax amounts = rate × volume.

A CHALLENGER FROM THE PAST | Someone tried this before

Takamine's koji, and the liquor tax that funded Meiji Japan

A chemist who tried to make whiskey with koji, and the drink that funded Meiji Japan

Barley shochu turns starch into sugar with koji; malt whisky does it with malt. In the Meiji era, one Japanese man set out to bring the power of koji to whiskey-making: the chemist Jokichi Takamine. In 1891 a Chicago newspaper reported that he was trying to improve whiskey production using koji. At home, liquor tax was holding up the national finances; by fiscal 1899, liquor-tax revenue was about ten times income-tax revenue.


VOLUME LII.—NO. 305. WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1893—TWENTY-FOUR PAGES.—WITH SOUVENIR SUPPLEMENT PRICE TWO CENTS.

LOOK UPON HIS FACE

Thousands of People View the Remains of the Mayor.

AS THEY LIE IN STATE.

Crowds Struggle All Day to Get Into the City Hall.

HARD WORK FOR THE POLICE

Women Faint After Standing for Hours in the Throng.

TOUCHING SCENES AT THE BIER.

PALMER'S FINE GIFT.

BULLETIN OF The Daily Tribune

LAST EDITION.

PAGEANT OF GRIEF.

Obsequies of Mr. Harrison to Be Solemnly Imposing.

VAST PARADE PROMISED.

Thousands to Pay a Last Solemn Tribute to the Dead.

ROUTE OF THE PROCESSION.

Across the ocean

A fermentation technology

1891

A Chicago paper reports Takamine's plan to improve whiskey-making with koji



At home in Japan

A pillar of state revenue

FY1899

Liquor tax brings in about 10× the income tax



Left: a Chicago Tribune front page (1893). Right: Meiji Tokyo, the Imperial College of Engineering

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What comes next

From the koji challenge to Meiji taxes, then to shochu today

1 Who was Jokichi Takamine? — From a Kaga doctor's son to a chemist abroad ›
2 Malt and koji, the same job — Koji whiskey in Chicago and Peoria ›
3 32 years before Yamazaki — Taka-Diastase, adrenaline, the Washington cherries ›
4 When liquor tax beat income tax — Two taxes, and income tax in 1887 ›
5 Liquor tax ≈ 10× income tax — From FY1899 to today's reversal ›
6 Shochu today, and our suggestion — Barrel-aged shochu, a grown-up pleasure ›

Watch more (in Japanese) ▸ Jokichi Takamine: light and shadow of a chemist in America ▸ Why do barley shochu and malt whisky differ?

Abroad, a fermentation technology; at home, state revenue. In Meiji Japan, drink had two faces.

← The differences, again Who was Takamine? →

Photos: Chicago Tribune (PD) · Unknown photographer (CC0) / Wikimedia Commons

JOKICHI TAKAMINE | Born in Takaoka, 1854

Who was Jokichi Takamine?

From medicine to chemistry, and across the ocean



Jokichi Takamine (1854–1922)

Jokichi Takamine was born in 1854 in what is now Takaoka, Toyama, the son of a Kaga-domain physician. He spent his early childhood in Kanazawa and studied in Nagasaki and elsewhere from boyhood. He first aimed at medicine, but changed course after studying chemical analysis. He graduated from the Imperial College of Engineering in 1879 and went to study in Britain. In 1884 he first went to America as a Japanese commissioner to the New Orleans World's Fair. Back home he studied improving sake-making and also worked on founding an artificial-fertiliser company.

Takamine in dates Events in this chapter

目次

- **1854** — Born in today's Takaoka, son of a Kaga-domain physician
- **Boyhood** — Childhood in Kanazawa; studies in Nagasaki and elsewhere. Medicine → chemistry
- **1879** — Graduates from the Imperial College of Engineering; studies in Britain
- **1884** — First visit to America: Japanese commissioner, New Orleans World's Fair
- **Back home** — Studies sake-making; works on founding a fertiliser company
- **1890** — Invited by an American whiskey company; moves to the US with his family
- **1894** — US patent No. 525,823 for an enzyme-making process
- **1900** — Crystallises adrenaline with Keizo Uenaka
- **1912** — Pays for the saplings of the ˜3,000 cherry trees Tokyo gives Washington
- **1913** — First president of Sankyo (a forerunner of today's Daiichi Sankyo)



Hometown: Takaoka, Toyama



Kanazawa, his childhood home (Kenrokuen)



First graduates of the Imperial College of Engineering (1880), Takamine among them



1884 New Orleans World's Fair (Harper's Weekly)

Takamine was a chemist who crossed the ocean carrying Japanese koji.

Malt and koji →

Photos: Unknown author (PD) · 柑橘類 (BY-SA 3.0) · shiro524 (BY-SA 3.0) · Unknown (PD) · John Durkin (PD) / Wikimedia Commons

MALT & KOJI | What Takamine noticed

Malt and koji do the same job in different ways

Who turns starch into sugar

To make alcohol from grain starch, the starch must first be turned into sugar that yeast can use: saccharification. In traditional malt whisky, the malt's own enzymes do this. In barley shochu, enzymes made by the koji mould create the sugar, and yeast turns it into alcohol. When both jobs run at the same time in the mash, it is called parallel multiple fermentation. What Takamine proposed in America was to apply koji's saccharifying power to corn and other grains.



Rice koji: koji mould grown on rice

Starch (grain) → *Saccharification* (starch → sugar) → **Sugar** (usable by yeast) → *Fermentation* (yeast: sugar → alcohol) → **Alcohol** (the drink)

Malt whisky (traditional method)	malt enzymes saccharify	
Barley shochu (koji-based)	enzymes made by koji mould create sugar	
Takamine's idea (USA, 1890s)	koji's power applied to corn and other grains	

saccharification + fermentation at once = parallel multiple fermentation

1890: to Chicago and Peoria — Invited by an American whiskey company

In 1890 Takamine was invited by an American whiskey company and moved to the US with his wife Caroline and their two children. He ran repeated tests in Chicago and worked on large-scale use in Peoria, Illinois.



State Street, Chicago (1893)



Peoria today, on the site of a former whiskey distillery

Chicago Tribune, 20 February 1891

15–25%

lower production cost

The paper said the same amount of corn could be used more efficiently, with the possibility of cutting production costs by 15–25% compared with the old method.

That figure was a forecast at the time. Even so, the reports show that Japanese koji was expected by the US distilling trade to be a commercial technology.

Saccharify with koji enzymes instead of malt: Takamine set out to use that power for corn whiskey.

← How saccharification works · 32 years before Yamazaki →

Photos: Rand, McNally & Co. (PD) · Joe K Gage (BY-SA 2.0) · Forrest O. (BY-SA 2.0) / Wikimedia Commons

32 YEARS BEFORE YAMAZAKI | From brewing enzymes to medicine

A challenge 32 years before Yamazaki was built

The stage: 1890s America



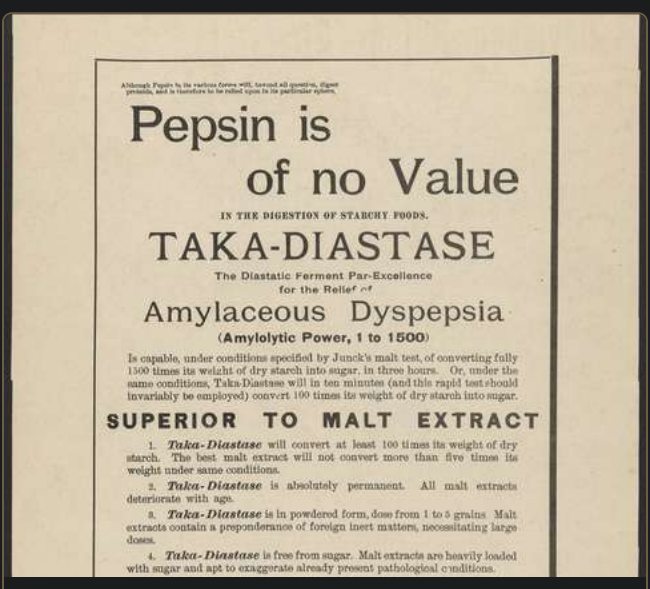
Looking back at serious whisky-making in Japan, a key milestone is 1923, when Shinjiro Torii began building a distillery at Yamazaki. Takamine's stage, by contrast, was 1890s America.

> Sources quoting Takamine's own recollections record that the test facility was hit by a fire during the work. However, the cause of the fire, or any claim that someone set it, cannot be confirmed.



Yamazaki Distillery, Osaka

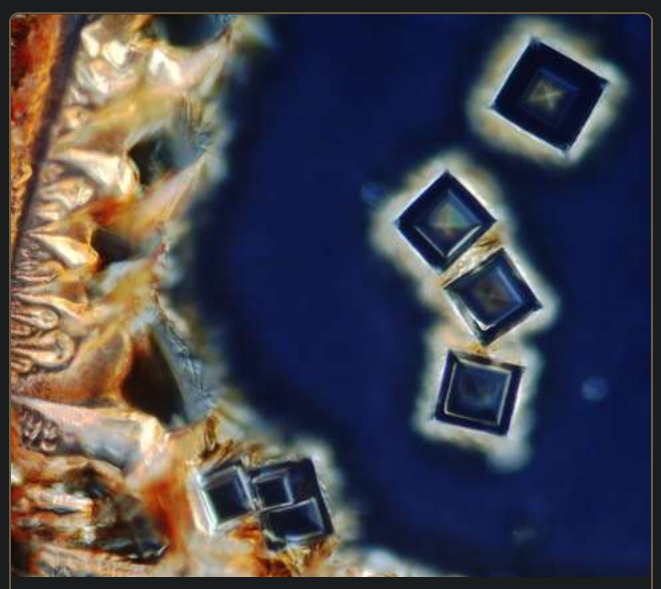
Enzymes became medicine and cherry trees


Pepsin is of no Value
IN THE DIGESTION OF STARCHY FOODS.
TAKA-DIASTASE
The Diastatic Ferment Par-Excellence for the Relief of
Amylaceous Dyspepsia
(Amylolytic Power, 1 to 1500)
Is capable, under conditions specified by Junck's malt test, of converting fully 1500 times its weight of dry starch into sugar, in three hours. Or, under the same conditions, Taka-Diastase will in ten minutes (and this rapid test should invariably be employed) convert 100 times its weight of dry starch into sugar.
SUPERIOR TO MALT EXTRACT
1. Taka-Diastase will convert at least 100 times its weight of dry starch. The best malt extract will not convert more than five times its weight under same conditions.
2. Taka-Diastase is absolutely permanent. All malt extracts deteriorate with age.
3. Taka-Diastase is in powdered form, dose from 1 to 5 grains. Malt extracts contain a preponderance of foreign inert matters, necessitating large doses.
4. Taka-Diastase is free from sugar. Malt extracts are heavily loaded with sugar and apt to exaggerate already present pathological conditions.

Taka-Diastase

US patent No. 525,823 (1894)

In brewing, koji enzymes break down grain starch; the same action helps digest the starch we eat. Takamine extracted the enzymes made by koji mould and turned them into a digestive aid. In 1913 he became the first president of Sankyo; in 1914 its Shinagawa factory began making it in Japan.



Adrenaline

Crystallised with Keizo Uenaka (1900)

It was already known that the adrenal gland held something acting on blood pressure. In 1900 Takamine and Keizo Uenaka extracted that substance from cattle adrenal glands and crystallised it; Uenaka's lab notes survive. Takamine announced it in the US in 1901, and a clinical-use report followed that July.



Washington cherries

~3,000 trees from Tokyo (1912)

Later in life he worked for Japan–US exchange. When Tokyo City gave Washington about 3,000 cherry trees in 1912, he paid for the saplings.

From left: a Taka-Diastase advertisement (1895, US pharmacy journal) / adrenaline crystals (polarised light) / cherry blossoms in Washington, D.C.

While Takamine worked on koji in America, back in Japan, drink was holding up the state finances.

The liquor tax of Meiji →

Photos: Motokoka (BY-SA 4.0) · Parke, Davis & Company (PD) · Doc. RNDr. Josef Reischig, CSc. (BY 3.0) · Uberlemur (BY-SA 3.0) / Wikimedia Commons

LIQUOR TAX IN MEIJI | Two taxes, two different things

"Liquor tax used to beat income tax" — true?

Yes, in terms of the revenue the state collected each year

Liquor tax a tax on drink



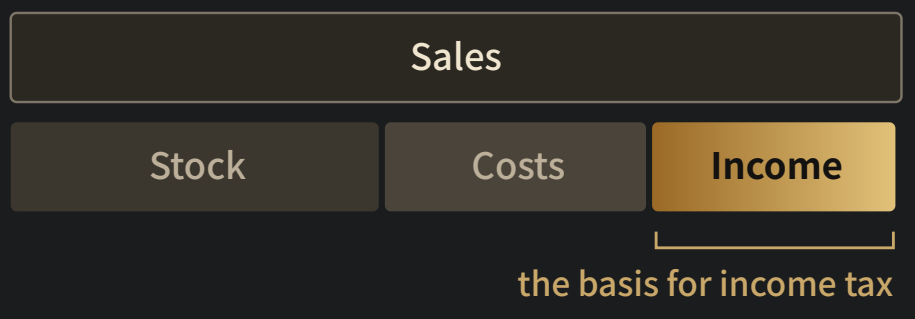
Producer pays as it leaves the site

Price the tax is built in

Consumer bears it via the price

Income tax on a person's yearly income

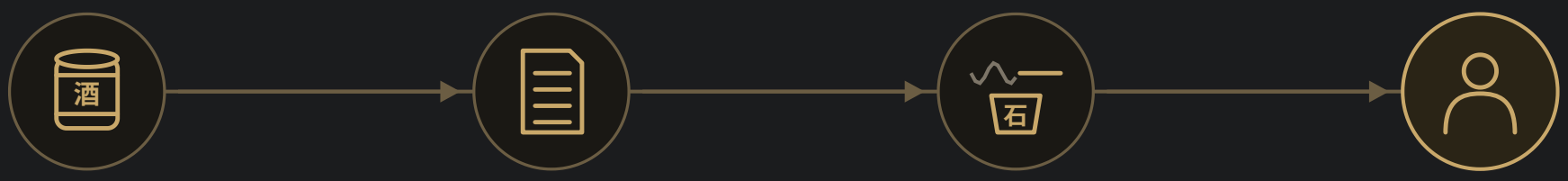
a sole-owner bar



Sales − purchases − expenses = business income

In a bar, the price of a Japanese whisky we buy already includes liquor tax.

Why Meiji relied on it A nationwide way to collect it was in place early



Edo period sake-making was already taxed

1871 nationwide liquor-tax rules

1878 from price basis to volume made (koku)

1887 income tax begins

Sake prices vary by region and season; taxing by volume keeps revenue from swinging with prices. Today's system looks at the volume leaving the production site.

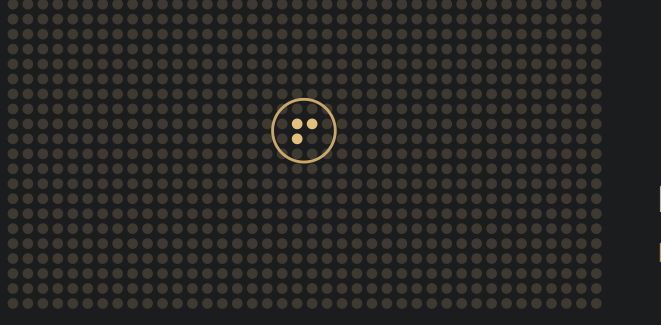
1887: income tax begins Only about 0.3% of the people paid it

0.3%

3 in 1,000 people

Who	income of ¥300+ a year
Payers	about 120,000
Companies	not covered at first

Revenue in the year income tax began ≈ 25×



Even people without enough income to pay income tax added to liquor-tax revenue whenever they bought a drink.



Vats of a Meiji-era sake brewery (Museum Meiji-mura)



The Meiji Ministry of Finance



An early Meiji one-yen note (front and back)

And by fiscal 1899, liquor tax was about 10× income tax. From 1899 to today →

Photos: Morio (BY-SA 4.0) · Unknown author (PD) · PHGCOM (BY-SA 3.0) / Wikimedia Commons

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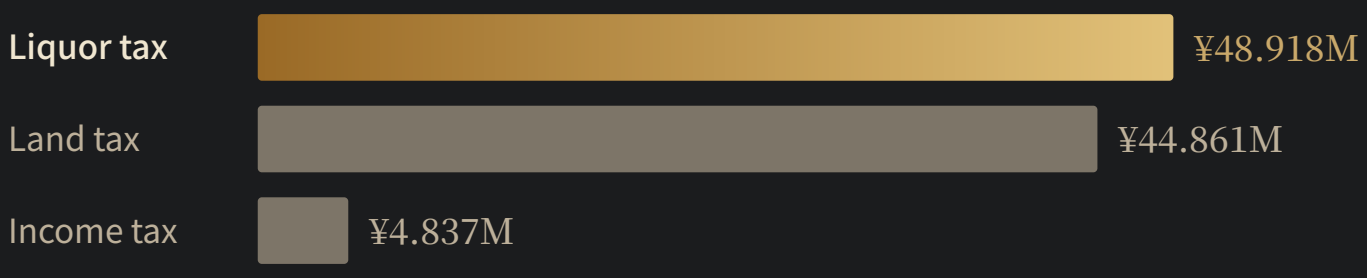
1899 – 2025 | Drink was the state's top earner

Liquor tax ≈ 10× income tax. Today, the reverse

From after the Sino-Japanese War to after the Russo-Japanese War, drink was vital revenue

Main tax revenue, FY1899

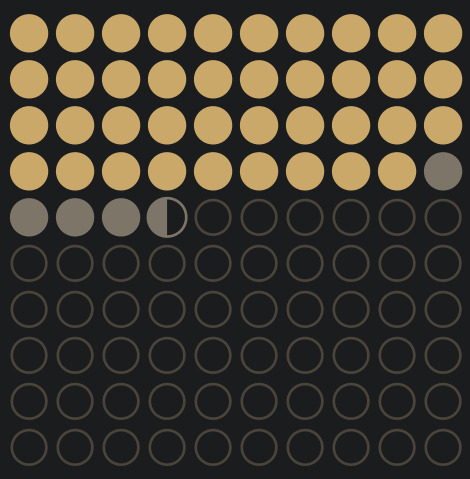
Liquor tax ≈ 10× income tax, and more than the land tax



6×
liquor-tax rate rises
in the 13 years
1896–1908

FY1902: of every ¥100 in tax

Share of tax and stamp revenue

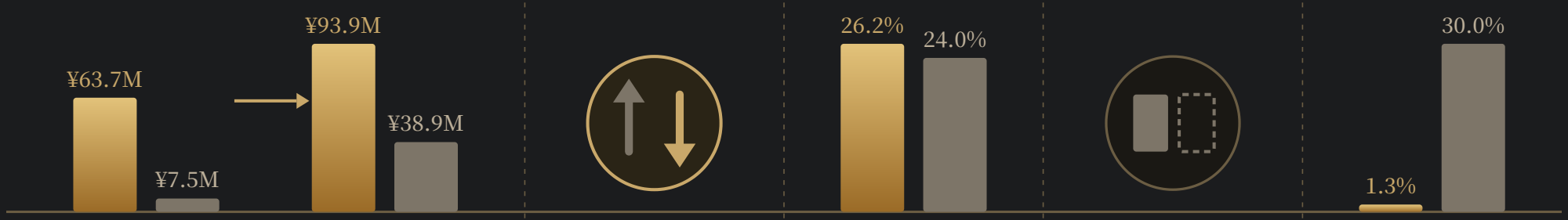


- **≈ ¥39** from drink (liquor tax 38.6%)
- **¥4.50** from income tax (4.5%)

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The reversal

Gold = liquor tax, grey = income tax (scaled per year)



FY1902 — liquor ≈ ¥63.74M → ¥93.86M; income ≈ ¥7.46M → ¥38.93M, growing even faster

FY1912

FY1918 — income tax becomes the top national tax, after strong WWI growth

1930 — the ranking did not stay fixed

1940 — made separate; earlier "income tax" included it

FY2025 — liquor ≈ ¥1.11 tn income ≈ ¥25.26 tn

The 1899 tax reform made company income subject to income tax. FY2025: Ministry of Finance general-account receipts; shares are of all tax and stamp revenue.



FY1899

Liquor tax ≈ 10× income tax

The temporary Imperial Diet building (1891 print)



FY2025

Income tax ≈ 23× liquor tax

The Ministry of Finance today, Kasumigaseki

This contrast shows how heavily Meiji Japan relied on drink for its revenue.

Q. And where does shochu, the spirit Japan raised, stand today?

Shochu today →

Photos: Unknown artist (PD) · Kakidai (BY-SA 4.0) / Wikimedia Commons

SHOCHU, A JAPANESE CULTURE | the grown-up's guide

Shochu: the spirit Japan raised

500 years of history, and where it stands today

> Whisky is the star of the moment. But if you were born in Japan and live here, knowing the story of our traditional shochu — where it came from, where it stands today, how it is made, taxed and defined by law — matters for the culture to keep growing. It is part of being a cultured adult. And we want the whole world to know shochu far better.
>
> 2102 AZABU-TOKYO | Japanese Spirits Bar

500 years of shochu from across the sea to Japan's own spirit

- **c. 1400s** Distilling reaches Ryukyu (Okinawa) from Southeast Asia — said to be the start of awamori
- **1500s** Barley shochu-making is said to begin on Iki island
- **1559** Graffiti at Koriyama Hachiman Shrine, Kagoshima, mentions "shochu" — the oldest surviving record
- **1705** Maeda Riemon is said to bring sweet potatoes from Ryukyu to Satsuma — the root of imo shochu
- **1910s–20s** Kawachi Gen'ichiro spreads awamori's black koji to shochu-making, then finds white koji
- **1970s** Vacuum distillation spreads; light barley shochu goes nationwide, leading to the 1980s boom
- **2006** Renamed "single-distilled shochu" in the tax law; koji mould named Japan's "national fungus"
- **2024** "Traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making with koji mold in Japan" inscribed by UNESCO (December) — shochu and awamori included



Iki, said to be the birthplace of barley shochu: Saruiwa rock



A barley shochu maker in Hiji, Oita (Nikaido Shuzo)

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Continued: Shochu today →

Photos: ぱちょぴ (BY-SA 3.0) · Razgrad (BY-SA 4.0) / Wikimedia Commons. Map: Natural Earth

SHOCHU, A JAPANESE CULTURE | the grown-up's guide

Shochu today

places become names: state-recognised GIs



1. **Iki** barley shochu (1995)
   The barley shochu island: 2/3 barley, 1/3 rice koji
2. **Kuma** rice shochu (1995)
   Rice shochu of the Hitoyoshi-Kuma area, Kumamoto
3. **Ryukyu** awamori (1995)
   Okinawa's spirit, made with black koji
4. **Satsuma** sweet-potato shochu (2005)
   Kagoshima sweet potatoes, made in the prefecture (outside Amami)
5. **Tokyo Shimazake** Izu islands shochu (2024)
   Shochu of the Izu islands — including our Bakkan Nasakejima from Hachijojima ›

目次

Shochu is a spirit raised by Japan's climate and koji. Just like whisky, it rewards choosing by place and by maker.

Shochu list →

GI shochu on our shelf

sweet-potato shochu from Kagoshima, barley shochu from Hachijojima



Gokujo Moriizo ("Gokujo no Itteki")
GI Satsuma



Murao
GI Satsuma



Manzen
GI Satsuma

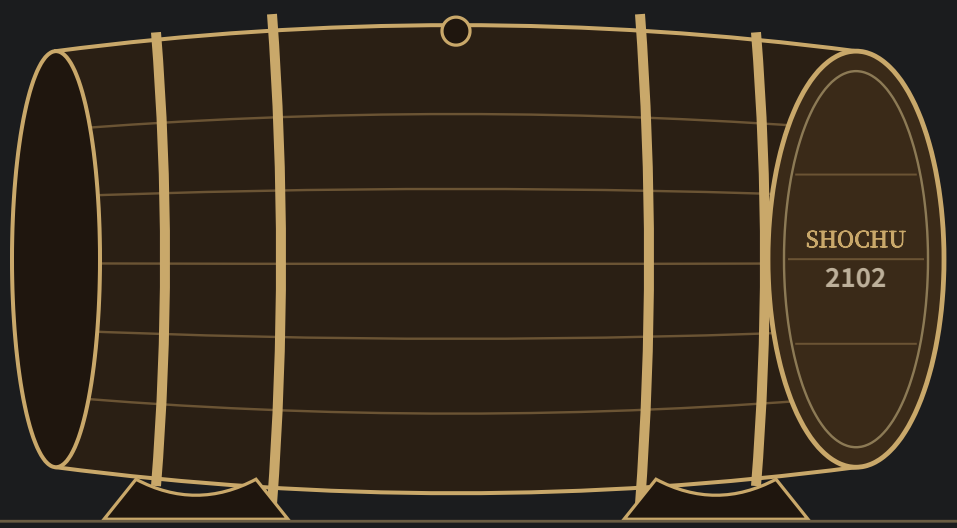


Bakkan Nasakejima
GI Tokyo Island Sake

AN INVITATION FROM 2102 | from a Japanese Spirits Bar

Beyond whisky: Japan's cask-aged shochu

for whisky lovers above all — shochu that has slept in wood



Same cask, different character

koji's aroma, or peat smoke



cask-aged shochu & whisky

The vanilla and caramel of the cask are the same as in whisky. But the aromas that koji and the raw grain bring, and the honest sweetness of barley or rice with no peat smoke in the way, open up a world of cask ageing that is not quite whisky. Japan's own spirit, at the same table as whisky.

A tasting flight at 2102

raw spirit → shochu rested in oak → whisky from shochu casks

1 Meet the backbone



Tenpai Craftsman Tada "Spanish Orange" -2024DY-

barley shochu | barley & barley koji | atmospheric, distilled twice | 44%

Barley shochu as it is before any cask: the big backbone of atmospheric distillation.

¥1,537 More ›

2 Shochu rested in oak



Komasa Jozo MELLOWED KOZURU EXCELLENCE

rice shochu | rice & rice koji | long-aged in new oak | 41%

Heir to Mellow Kozuru (1957), the first shochu ever stored in oak casks in Japan.

¥1,595 More ›

3 Whisky from shochu casks



Kanosuke Distillery Kanosuke Single Malt

single malt | 48%

Aged in re-charred casks that once held Mellow Kozuru: a whisky born of a shochu house.

¥1,977 More ›

30 ml per glass, tax incl.

Continued: Whisky from shochu distilleries →

Bottles: 2102 (Sony α7R V)

CONTENTS

AN INVITATION FROM 2102 | from a Japanese Spirits Bar

Whisky from shochu distilleries

A few whiskies into which shochu makers have poured the skills honed over their long history of shochu-making.



Kanosuke Single Malt
Kanosuke Distillery



Ontake 2025
Ontake Distillery



Single Malt Tsunuki 2023 Edition
Mars Tsunuki



OSUZU MALT American Oak Barrel
Osuzuyama Distillery



SHINDO EXPERIMENTAL 01
Shindo Distillery

目次

Whisky from shochu makers, too Kanosuke Ontake Tsunuki Osuzu Shindo Amanohakuh Hinokami

Beyond whisky — why not discover Japan's cask-aged shochu, too?

2102 AZABU-TOKYO is a Japanese Spirits Bar. Taking shochu to the world.

← The difference (first page)　Shochu list　Distillery map



Highball: carbonation opens up the cask aroma



On the rocks: slow dilution gradually opens the aroma

Photos: Ttsuchitori (BY-SA 3.0) · Cleiton Andrade Andrade / Wikimedia Commons

Hokusetsu Shuzo

HOKUSETSU

Tokuwa (Akadomari), Sado Island, Niigata

Hokusetsu Tsunburi

Single-distilled sake-lees shochu



ALCOHOL
25%
ABV

MATERIAL
Sake lees
From Hokusetsu's own sake

STILL
Pot still
Kasutori (sake-lees) shochu



The town of Akadomari, Sado

A shochu from a sake brewery freshly pressed lees, distilled with a trace of ginjo aroma

45ml ¥1,595 tax included

Akadomari, Sado Island



Hokusetsu brewery, Tokuwa, Sado



The Hokusetsu brewery at Tokuwa, near Akadomari on Sado's south coast

A Sado sake brewery's shochu, made from its own lees.

Hokusetsu has brewed sake since 1872 at Akadomari on the southern tip of Sado Island, and supplies the NOBU restaurants worldwide. Tsunburi is its shochu, distilled in a state-of-the-art pot still from the lees left after pressing its sake. A floral, ginjo-like aroma and the soft sweetness of a rice spirit; with hot water the lees aroma blooms. Koji turns rice to sugar, the sake is pressed, and even the lees are distilled: a shochu only a sake country could make.

Photo: 皓月旗 / CC BY 4.0・皓月旗 / CC BY 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute

NOGUCHI NAOHIKO

Kanagaso, Komatsu, Ishikawa

Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute SHOCHU

Sake-lees shochu from the brewery of the “god of sake brewing”



ALCOHOL
38%
ABV

MATERIAL
Sake lees
Freshly pressed, top-grade lees

STILL
Vacuum distillation
Bottled undiluted



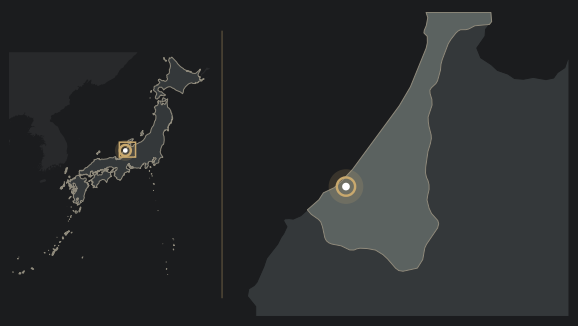
The approach to Natadera temple, founded in the Nara period

The brewery of toji Naohiko Noguchi
founded 2017 in Komatsu
over 70 years of brewing

30ml ¥1,595 tax included

目次

Komatsu, Kaga region



Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute

Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute, Kanagaso



The Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute in snow, built in 2017 in the hills of Kanagaso

A master brewer’s sake lees, turned into shochu.

The Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute was founded in 2017 in the hills of Kanagaso, Komatsu, to pass on the craft of Naohiko Noguchi, the toji known as the “god of sake brewing”. Its freshly pressed, top-grade sake lees are distilled under vacuum in deep winter and bottled undiluted. A floral nose like ripe pear, a clean and elegant palate. Neat first, for its sake-like aroma and acidity; then on the rocks or with water alongside food.

Photo: Izsat / CC BY-SA 4.0 · 663highland / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Miyazaki Honten

MIYAZAKI HONTEN

Kusu, Yokkaichi, Mie

Kinmiya Shochu (Kikko-miya)

Continuous-still shochu (korui) | the supporting actor of Tokyo's old-town bars



ALCOHOL
25%
ABV

MATERIAL
Molasses
Sugar-cane molasses · column still · 600 ml

WATER
Suzuka mountain water
Soft water, column still

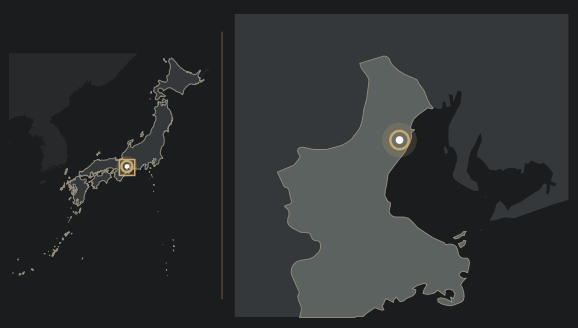


Mt Kama and Mt Gozaisho in the Suzuka range, whose groundwater makes Kinmiya

The spirit behind Tokyo's shitamachi chu-hai culture
the partner of Hoppy

45ml ¥767 tax included

Yokkaichi, on Ise Bay



Miyazaki Honten

Miyazaki Honten's street of kura, Kusu



Miyazaki Honten's kura line both sides of the street in Kusu, Yokkaichi

Clean and neutral: the old-town bar's supporting actor.

Miyazaki Honten was founded in 1846 at Kusu in Yokkaichi, Mie. Kinmiya, brewed with soft water from the Suzuka mountains, was born in 1930 when the company installed a continuous still, making it a korui shochu. After the 1923 earthquake it sent relief to the Tokyo liquor shops it supplied, and became the base of chu-hai and Hoppy in the capital's old-town bars. Repeated distillation leaves a clear spirit that lets the mixer shine. The other face of shochu: try it in a Hoppy or a lemon sour.

Photo: 運動会プロテインパワー / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Alpsdake / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Yotsuya Shuzo

YOTSUYA

Nagasu, Usa, Oita

Kanehachi

Honkaku barley shochu | naked barley, atmospheric distillation



ALCOHOL
25%
ABV

MATERIAL
Barley (Japan)
Barley koji · naked barley · 1,800 ml

STILL
Atmospheric
Toasty, like malted-milk chocolate

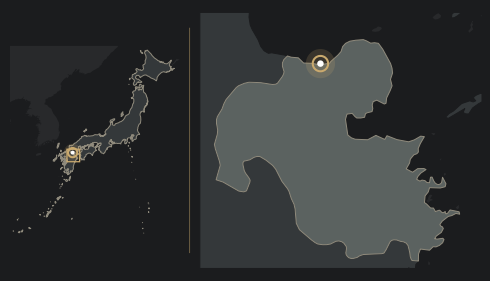
Founded 1919
named after founder
Kanehachi Yotsuya
Oita's most

sought-after

barley
shochu

45ml ¥1,265 tax included

Usa, at the foot of the Kunisaki Peninsula



Kurehashi bridge, Usa Shrine



Kurehashi bridge and the west torii of Usa Shrine, head of all Hachiman shrines

Toasted barley: the other face of barley shochu.

Yotsuya Shuzo was founded in 1919 in Nagasu, a fishing town in Usa, Oita, on the Suo-nada sea. Kanehachi carries the founder's name and is made from hadaka-mugi, naked barley, rather than two-row barley, and distilled at atmospheric pressure. Where vacuum-distilled barley shochu is light, Kanehachi is toasty and full, with aromas of barley chocolate and roasted grain. On the rocks or with hot water. The same grain as whisky, saccharified by barley koji instead of malt: an ideal bottle for tasting the difference.

Photo: そらみみ (Soramimi) / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

JAPANESE MONKEY GOLD

ジャパニーズモンキー ゴールド

Yokkaichi, Usa, Oita

Jotokuya Shuzojo

有限会社常徳屋酒造場

Barley Craft Spirits | Finished in Cask | Aged 15 Years | 500 ml



ALCOHOL
38%
500 ml

AGED
15 years
about 13 in tank + 2 in old casks

SINCE 1907
Labelled a liqueur
Barley shochu, dietary fibre



Back label: ”15 years in total”

30ml ¥1,538 tax included

Yokkaichi, on the Usa plain



Barley and wheat on the Usa plain



the plain is the main granary of Oita; near JR Usa station

Thirteen years in enamel tanks, two in cask: a 15-year-old barley spirit.

A long-aged barley shochu from Jotokuya, founded in 1907 in Yokkaichi, Usa. The spirit, made with koji suited to ageing and vacuum distillation, rests about 13 years in enamel-lined tanks, then about two more in old wooden casks: 15 years in all. The back label describes it as ”sweet, smooth and long”. Honkaku shochu has a legal cap on cask colour, so this one adds dietary fibre and is labelled a liqueur, keeping its amber colour.

Photo: そらみみ / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

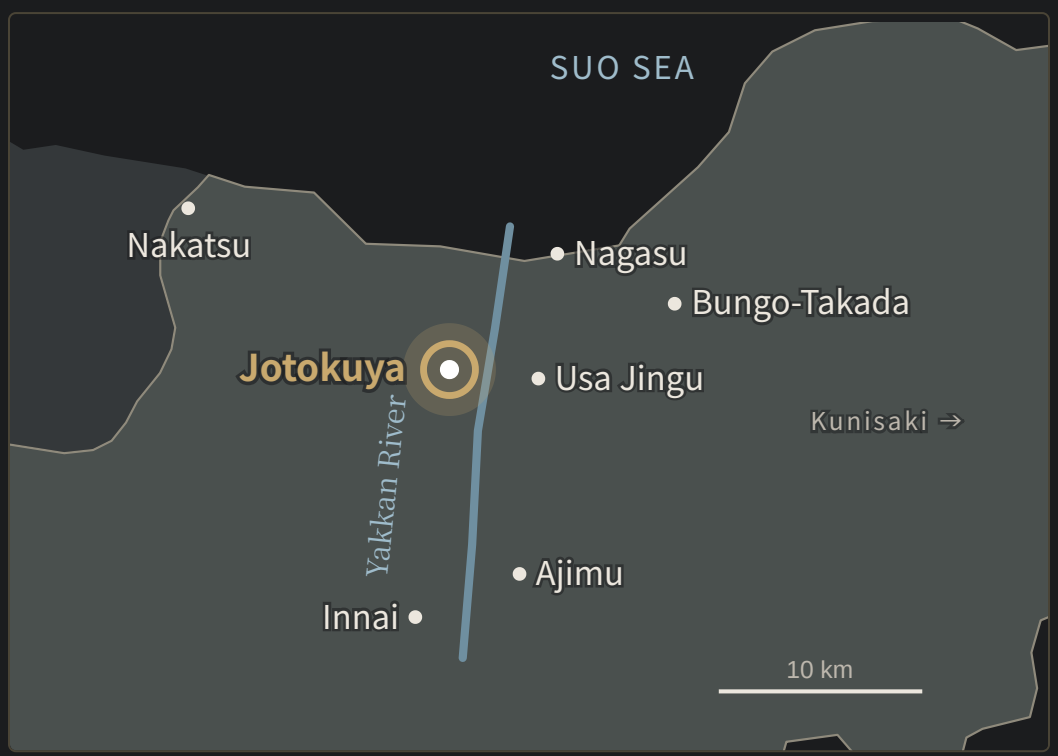
Product info: bottle label; JETRO Oita
Bottle and label photos: our own

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USA | Northern Oita, on the Suo Sea

Usa and Jotokuya 宇佐

The head shrine of Hachiman and a plain of barley Usa, Oita



Map: Natural Earth (schematic)

Where Japan's 40,000-odd Hachiman shrines began.

Usa faces the Suo Sea in northern Oita. The Usa plain, at the base of the Kunisaki peninsula, is the prefecture's main granary and grows much of the barley behind Oita's barley shochu. The town grew up before Usa Jingu, head of more than 40,000 Hachiman shrines. Yokkaichi, home of Jotokuya, was the seat of a shogunate magistrate in the Edo period and has branch temples of both Hongan-ji. Ajimu, to the south, is known for grapes and soft-shelled turtle.



Usa Jingu, the upper shrine
head of all Hachiman shrines: the vermilion Minami-churomon gate before the National Treasure main halls



Kurehashi, Usa Jingu
the roofed bridge on the west approach, opened only for the imperial envoy's festival once every ten years



The 500 Rakan of Toko-ji
begun in 1859 by a priest praying for relief from drought; a mason carved more than 500 figures over some twenty years



Joi No.1 aircraft shelter
a bunker for warplanes; about ten survive at the Usa naval air base, opened in 1939



The stone bridges of Innai
Innai keeps 75 stone bridges, more than anywhere in Japan; this is the three-arched Bunji bridge



Nishi-shiiya Falls
an 86 m drop on the border of Innai and Kusu; one of Japan's 100 best waterfalls

Usa and Jotokuya through time From Hachiman faith to barley shochu



Front label: "Finished in Cask / Aged 15 Years"

725	The first hall of Usa Jingu is built
769	The Usa oracle incident: Wake no Kiyomaro is sent to Usa
Edo period	A shogunate magistrate's office in Yokkaichi governs the area
1907	Jotokuya founded in Yokkaichi
1912	The sumo grand champion Futabayama, later winner of 69 straight bouts, is born in Usa
1967	Usa becomes a city
2005	Usa, Ajimu and Innai merge

Sources: Usa city; Usa Jingu; JETRO Oita; Jotokuya Photos: そらみみ / CC BY-SA 4.0・そらみみ / CC BY-SA 4.0・STA3816 / CC BY-SA 3.0・sk01 / CC BY-SA 3.0・sk01 / CC BY-SA 3.0・sk01 / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

Tenpai

TENPAI

Moriyama, Chikuzen, Fukuoka | the Tada family

Craftsman Tada “Spanish Orange” undiluted -2024DY-

Honkaku barley shochu, undiluted | barley & barley koji | distilled 2024 · 720 ml



ALCOHOL
44%
Undiluted

MATERIAL
Barley 100%
Barley koji, no rice koji

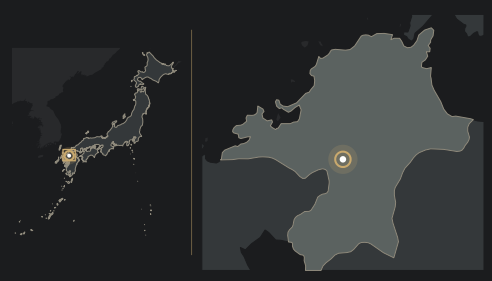
STILL
Atmospheric, twice
House-built stills, Chikushi-plain two-row barley

Founded 1898
a family distillery devoted to barley shochu
about 400 koku a year

30ml ¥1,537 tax included

CONTENTS

Chikuzen, on the Chikushi plain



Cherry trees along the Kusaba River, Chikuzen



Cherry blossom and rapeseed along the Kusaba River: spring on the Chikushi plain

Barley and barley koji only, with a hint of orange.

Tenpai has made only barley shochu since 1898 at Moriyama in Chikuzen, on the Chikushi plain, one of Japan’s great barley regions. Barley and barley koji are fermented cool with sake yeast and distilled twice at atmospheric pressure. Craftsman Tada is the undiluted series named for the family who run the distillery; this bottling is 2024 distillate (DY) at a full 44%. True to its name, Spanish Orange, a bright orange-peel note hides behind the toasted barley. Neat or on the rocks, like a whisky.

Photo: 水だらけのプール / CC0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Tenpai

TENPAI

Moriyama, Chikuzen, Fukuoka | the Tada family

SPIRITS of TENPAI - With SCARLET -

Honkaku barley shochu, undiluted | barley & barley koji | made for the bar



ALCOHOL
44%
Undiluted · 700 ml

CATEGORY
Honkaku shochu
Barley & barley koji (per label)

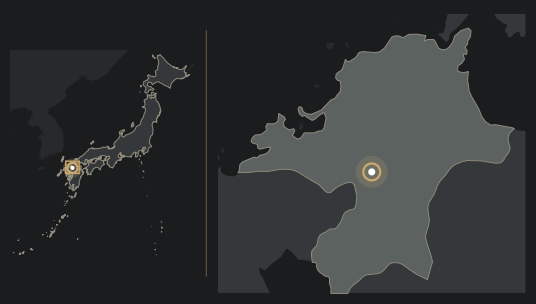
FOR BARS
“Shochu goes to the bar”
Base of KIZASHI AMARO TENPAI EDITION

An undiluted barley shochu
made for the bar counter
poured in New York too

30ml ¥1,867 tax included

目次

Chikuzen, on the Chikushi plain



Goroyama burial mound, Chikuzen



Goroyama, a sixth-century decorated tomb on a hill in Chikuzen

Shochu goes to the bar: Tenpai’s spirit for the counter.

“Shochu goes from here to the bar.” Tenpai made this barley spirit for bartenders. Brewed from barley and barley koji and distilled twice at atmospheric pressure like Craftsman Tada, it is bottled undiluted at 44%. It became the base of the craft amaro KIZASHI AMARO TENPAI EDITION and has been poured in New York bars. Toasted barley, grain sweetness and a firm body make it a cocktail base as much as a sipping spirit. Taste how a koji-saccharified barley spirit differs from whisky.

Photo: Saigen Jiro / CC0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Asakura

ASAKURA

Hiramatsu, Asakura, Fukuoka

Shinozaki Co., Ltd.

Liqueur | barley shochu (made in Japan) & dietary fibre | 500 ml



ALCOHOL
40%
500ml

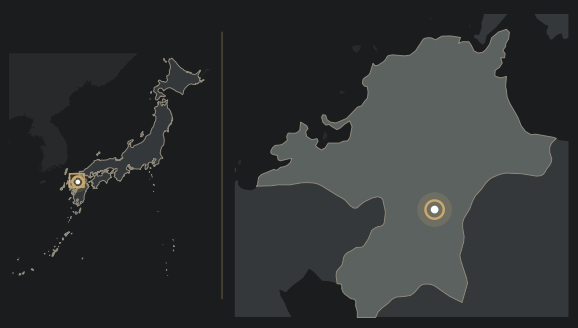
MATERIAL
Barley shochu
Made in Japan, dietary fibre

CASK
8 years +
American white oak, pot-distilled twice

Inspired by
Dr Jokichi Takamine
(back label)

30ml ¥1,307 tax included

Asakura, on the Chikugo River



The Hishino triple waterwheels



The triple waterwheels at Hishino, Asakura, lifting Chikugo River water to the fields

Takamine's dream, revived by a koji house.

About a century ago Dr Jokichi Takamine tried to make whiskey with koji in America. Inspired by that attempt, Shinozaki of Asakura, Fukuoka made this spirit: barley shochu made with koji, distilled twice in a pot still and aged at least 8 years in American white oak. The label says it revives ”the dream of a great Japanese” with the best of modern craft. Its category is liqueur (barley shochu with dietary fibre).

Photo: 切干大根 / BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

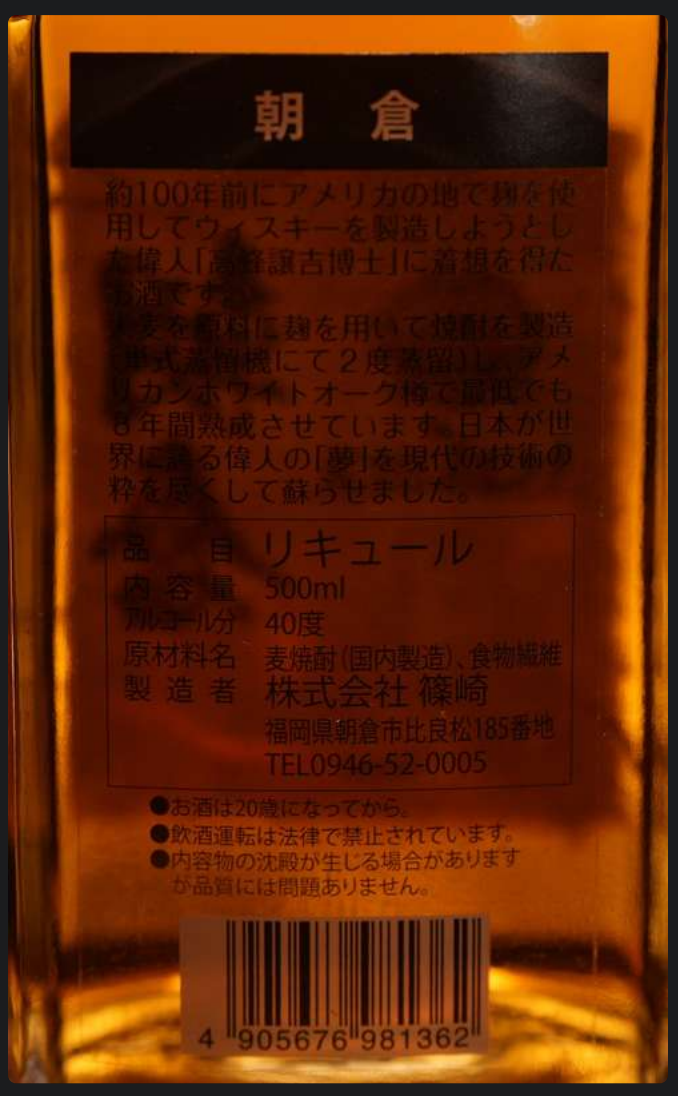
Product info: label & box
Bottle photos: our own

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TAKAMINE'S DREAM | Inspired by his koji whiskey

Another whisky dream, made with koji

Shinozaki's Asakura and Jokichi Takamine



Asakura back label (our photo)

What Takamine attempted in 1890s America was to make whiskey with the power of koji instead of malt. Shinozaki, brewing in Asakura, Fukuoka, took that attempt as its inspiration for Asakura: barley shochu aged 8 years or more in American white oak.

The story on the box In Shinozaki's own words

> Many extraordinary feats in the world have not gained the respect they deserve. This story is one of its kind.
>
> More than a century ago, a Japanese man sailed across the Pacific to pursue his dream in the land of possibilities. His name is Dr. Jokichi Takamine. As he acquired a deep understanding of koji used in the sake production in Japan, he attempted to make a whiskey using koji instead of malt in America.
>
> Reportedly, Takamine's whiskey was excellent in its quality. (...) In the end, Takamine's whiskey could not take hold in America. We, at the Shinozaki brewery and distillery, have been making koji for sake brewing and shochu production for over two centuries.
>
> — from the Asakura box (excerpt)

Why a "liqueur"? Cask colour and the shochu rules

Asakura is labelled a liqueur, made from barley shochu (made in Japan) and dietary fibre. To be sold as shochu, a cask-aged spirit must stay under a colour limit. Which category a barrel-aged shochu ends up in is explained on the ”three routes” page of this chapter.



Cask ageing: charred oak barrels in a barrel room (illustration)

Read also Takamine’s koji whiskey · Three routes A・B・C · Shinozaki’s Shindo Distillery

Compare it with another barrel-aged barley spirit from Fukuoka: the honkaku shochu Fukuro. → Fukuro

Photos: our photo・Asewer24 / BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

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Fukuro

FUKURO

Sakaeda, Tachiarai, Mii, Fukuoka

Kenjo Co., Ltd.

Honkaku barley shochu | long-aged limited edition | 720 ml



ALCOHOL
40%
720ml

MATERIAL
Barley
Australian; barley & rice koji

CASK
Long-aged in oak
Roasted-barley shochu, slowly matured

”A drink of time itself”
(back label)

30ml ¥1,307 tax included

Tachiarai, Chikugo plain



Kenjo Co., Ltd.

Tachiarai Peace Memorial Museum



The Tachiarai Peace Memorial Museum (in neighbouring Chikuzen)

Asleep in an oak nest: a drink of time.

A honkaku barley shochu made by long storage: ”roasted barley shochu” left to mature slowly in oak casks, soaking up their aroma. The back label calls it a shochu that ”slept long in a nest of oak”, its deep taste and gentle amber ”a gift of the strange power of time”. Australian barley with barley koji and Japanese-rice koji; a special limited edition from Kenjo of Tachiarai, Fukuoka.

Photo: そらみみ / BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

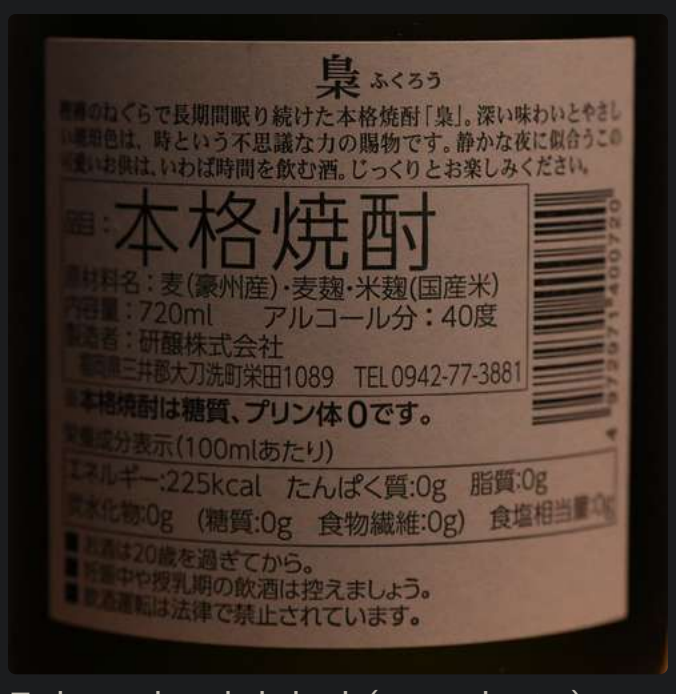
Product info: label & box
Bottle photos: our own

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TWO ANSWERS FROM FUKUOKA | Two routes for barrel-aged barley shochu

Barrel-aged barley shochu, two answers

Asakura the liqueur, Fukuro the honkaku shochu



Fukuro back label (our photo)

Both are barley shochu aged long in casks by Fukuoka makers. Yet Asakura is a liqueur and Fukuro a honkaku shochu. Which category a cask-aged shochu is sold in depends on the colour rules and on the maker's choice.

> Its deep taste and gentle amber are a gift of the strange power of time. A charming companion for a quiet night: a drink of time itself. Enjoy it slowly.
>
> — Fukuro back label

Side by side From the labels

	Asakura ›	Fukuro
Category	Liqueur	Honkaku shochu
Ingredients	barley shochu (made in Japan), dietary fibre	barley (Australia), barley koji, rice koji (Japan)
Spirit	barley & koji, pot-distilled twice	roasted-barley shochu
Ageing	at least 8 years, American white oak	long storage in oak casks
ABV / size	40% · 500 ml	40% · 720 ml
Maker	Shinozaki Co., Ltd. (Asakura, Fukuoka)	Kenjo Co., Ltd. (Tachiarai, Fukuoka)
Story	Takamine's koji whiskey	"a drink of time"



Cask ageing (a Swedish distillery warehouse; illustration)

Why the same cask ageing leads to different categories: see the three routes.

Three routes A · B · C →

Read also Takamine's koji & Meiji liquor tax · Our suggestion · Shochu list

Photos: our photo · Lars Ragnå / BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Beniotome Taru French Oak

紅乙女 樽

Tanushimaru, Kurume, Fukuoka

Beniotome Shuzo Co., Ltd.

株式会社紅乙女酒造

Barley shochu | French-oak-aged blend | Long Term Storage



ALCOHOL
40%
720 ml

CASK
FRENCH OAK
Three years or more in French oak

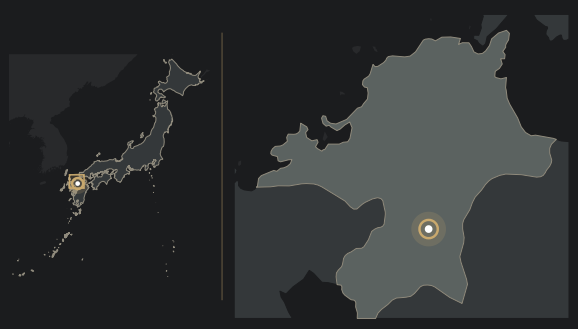
AWARD
TWSC 2026 Superior Gold
Tokyo Whisky & Spirits Competition



Box: ”Superior Gold, TWSC 2026”

30ml ¥1,375 tax included

Tanushimaru, Mino foothills



Beniotome Mino Distillery

The Mino range



the distillery lies at the foot of these hills; seen from Esonoshuku bridge over the Chikugo

Three years and more in French oak, at the foot of the Mino hills.

Barley shochu from Beniotome, the maker known for sesame shochu, distilled at the foot of the Mino mountains from Japanese barley and rice koji. Spirit aged three years or more in French oak casks is the base, blended with tank-aged barley shochu. The distillery keeps eight warehouses of casks, tanks and clay jars. The box carries the Superior Gold mark of the Tokyo Whisky & Spirits Competition 2026.

Photo: そらみみ / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

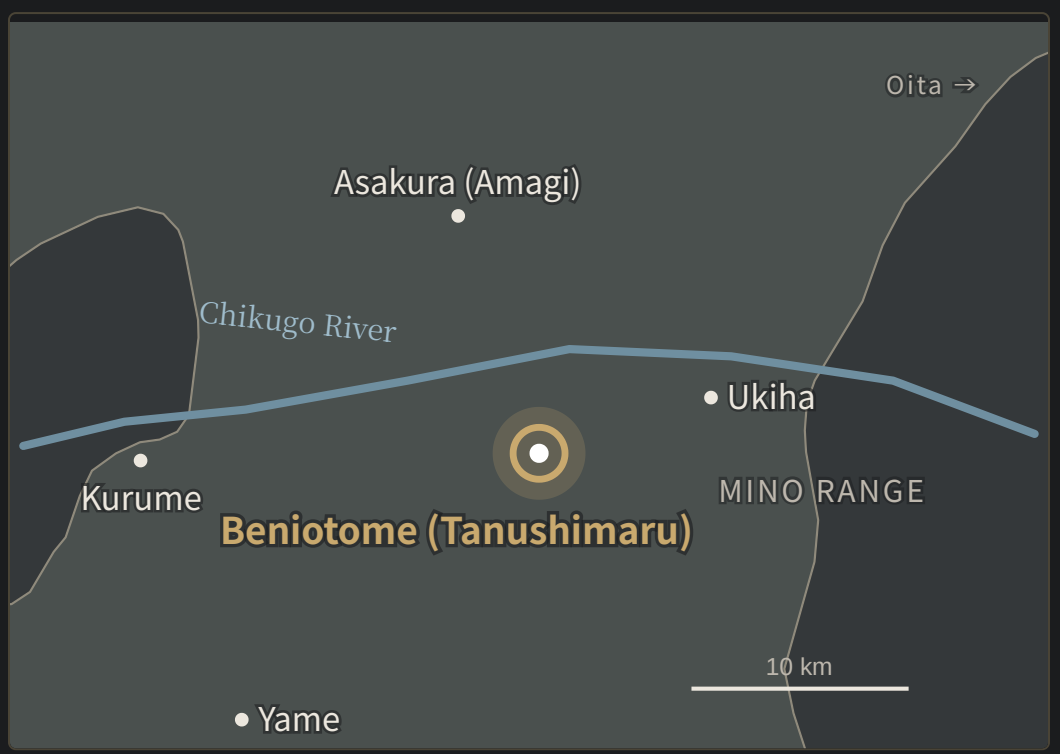
Product info: bottle label and box; Crossroad Fukuoka
Bottle and label photos: our own

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TANUSHIMARU | East of the Chikugo plain

Tanushimaru and Beniotome 田主丸

The Mino hills, the Chikugo River, kappa and fruit Kurume, Fukuoka



Map: Natural Earth (schematic)

The town's name comes from "born to enjoy".

Tanushimaru lies between the Mino range, running east to west like a folding screen, and the Chikugo, Kyushu's greatest river. It is known as the birthplace of Kyoho grape growing and pick-your-own vineyards, and for persimmons and nursery trees. Legends of kappa water sprites cling to the river, and even the JR station is shaped like one. Beniotome Shuzo, founded in 1978, runs its Mino Distillery at the foot of the hills, ageing spirit in casks, tanks and clay jars across eight warehouses.


The Chikugo and the Mino range
Kyushu's longest river, about 143 km, nicknamed "Tsukushi Jiro"


Tanushimaru station
on the JR Kyudai line; the kappa-shaped building dates from 1992


Tsukuyomi Shrine
Tanushimaru's "San'ya-sama", prayed to for healthy eyes


From Kora Taisha
the chief shrine of old Chikugo, on Mt Kora at the west end of the range, looks over the plain


The Chikugo at Kurume
seen from Suitengu, head of Japan's Suitengu shrines


Ishibashi Cultural Center
given to his home town of Kurume in 1956 by Shojiro Ishibashi, founder of Bridgestone

目次

Tanushimaru and Beniotome through time Kappa, sesame and oak



Back label: "based on spirit aged three years or more in French oak"

- 1614 Kikuchi Tango founds the town (by tradition), its name from a phrase meaning "born to enjoy"
- 1957 Kyoho grapes first grown in Tanushimaru, later the first pick-your-own vineyards
- 1978 Beniotome Shuzo founded, with Japan's first sesame shochu
- 1992 The kappa-shaped Tanushimaru station building completed
- 2005 Tanushimaru merges into Kurume
- 2026 Beniotome Taru French Oak wins TWSC Superior Gold; Barrel Aged Sesame Spirits Prototype 02 released

Sources: Kurume city; Tanushimaru tourism association; Beniotome Shuzo; Crossroad Fukuoka Photos: そらみみ / CC BY-SA 4.0・Anilsoi11 / CC BY-SA 4.0・水だらけのプール / CC0・ブルーノ・プラス / CC BY-SA 4.0・STA3816 / CC BY-SA 4.0・Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

Beniotome Barrel Aged Sesame Spirits Prototype 02

紅乙女 樽熟成ごまスピリッツ

Tanushimaru, Kurume, Fukuoka

Beniotome Shuzo Co., Ltd.

株式会社紅乙女酒造

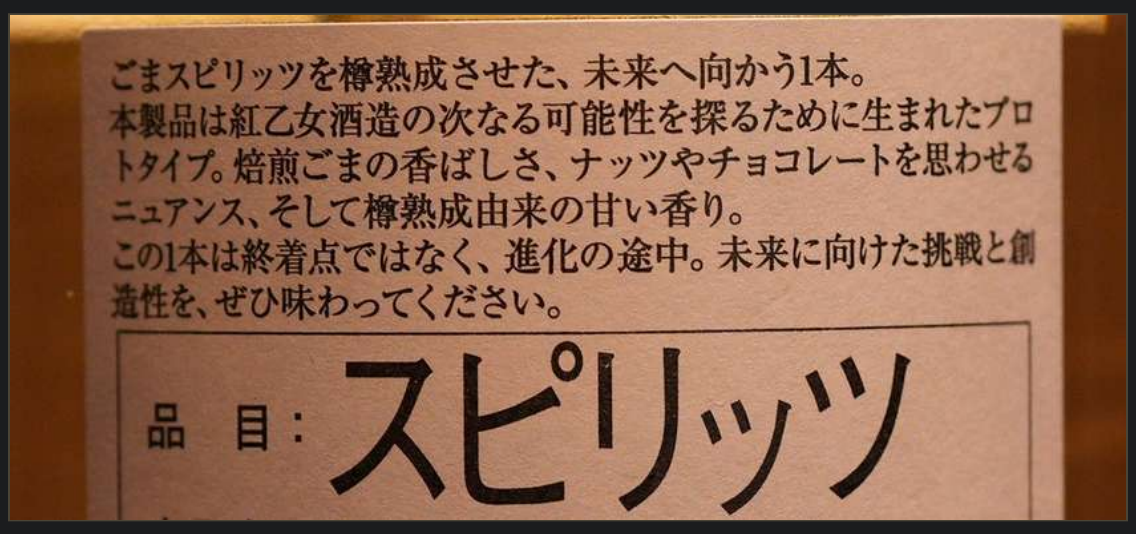
BARREL AGED SESAME SPIRITS | LIMITED EDITION | 500 ml



ALCOHOL
40%
500 ml

CASK
New oak, 8 months
One American oak barrel

LIMITED
500 bottles
Released July 2026, second prototype



Back label: ”still evolving”

30ml ¥1,375 tax included

Tanushimaru, Mino foothills

Beniotome Mino Distillery

The Mino range across the plain

the hills stand like a folding screen east of the Tsukushi plain (from Kanzaki, Saga)

Toasted sesame, put to sleep in new oak: a prototype.

The next step from Beniotome, the first maker of sesame shochu in Japan. Sesame is steeped in shochu and distilled in a Charentais alembic the company brought from France at its founding, then aged eight months in a single new American oak barrel: 500 bottles, the second prototype. The back label notes ”toasted sesame, hints of nuts and chocolate, and sweet aromas from the cask”. Made from pot-distilled shochu, sesame and juniper berries, it is classed as a spirit.

Photo: Pekachu / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle label; Beniotome press release (2026)
Bottle and label photos: our own

CONTENTS

SESAME | Japan's first sesame shochu

Sesame shochu and Mino

Catching the toastiness of sesame in a spirit



A sesame field in summer pale pink flowers open from the bottom of the stem upward, and the seeds ripen in the pods (Hidaka, Saitama)



Sesame seeds about 3 mm each; roughly half their weight is oil, and roasting brings out the toasty aroma

Barley, rice koji and sesame: a new shochu born in Tanushimaru in 1978.

Beniotome is where the founder, Hayashida Haruno, first brought sesame shochu to market. Its flagship, Goma Shochu Beniotome, is a honkaku shochu mashed from barley and rice koji with sesame, which makes up a tenth or more of the materials. At the distillery below the Mino hills stands a copper Charentais alembic brought from France at the founding and still used for limited releases: the type of still used for Cognac. Eight warehouses hold spirit for three, five and eight years in glass-lined tanks, oak casks and unglazed Okinawan jars.

目次

How the barrel-aged sesame spirit is made Prototype 02

1 Steep sesame in shochu	2 Distil in the alembic	3 Eight months in new oak	4 Bottle 500
pot-distilled shochu as the base	a copper Charentais still	a single American oak barrel	40%, 500 ml



A Charentais alembic
the copper still of Cognac (Cherves-de-Cognac, France); Mino Distillery has one of the same type



Prototype 02
Front label: ”Barrel Aged Sesame Spirits”



Beniotome Taru French Oak
Front label: ”French oak, cask-aged barley shochu blend”

The distillery is open to visitors Mino Distillery offers tours and tastings, and a restaurant in a thatched farmhouse of the Azuchi-Momoyama period moved to the grounds. About three minutes by car from JR Tanushimaru station.

Sources: Beniotome Shuzo (press releases 2012, 2026; labels); Crossroad Fukuoka. Label photos: our own Photos: 京浜にけ / CC BY-SA 3.0・Sanjay ach / CC BY-SA 3.0・Sémhur / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Beniotome Premium 38

紅乙女 PREMIUM 38

Tanushimaru, Kurume, Fukuoka

Beniotome Shuzo Co., Ltd.

株式会社紅乙女酒造

Honkaku shochu | Sesame shochu | Goma Sesame × Mugi | Long Term Storage



ALCOHOL
38%
720 ml

SESAME
20% or more
with barley and rice koji

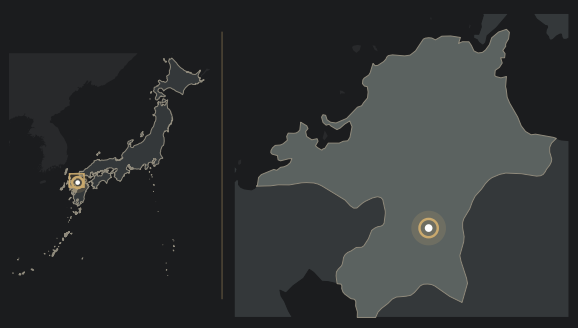
AWARD
TWSC 2026 Gold
Tokyo Whisky & Spirits Competition



Box seal: ”Gold, awarded”

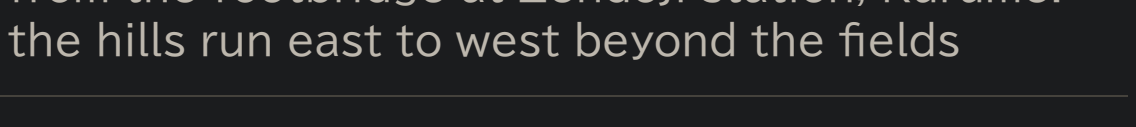
30ml ¥1,428 tax included

Tanushimaru, Mino foothills



Beniotome Mino Distillery

The Mino range



from the footbridge at Zendoji station, Kurume: the hills run east to west beyond the fields

The flagship of sesame shochu, a blend of long-aged spirits.

The top bottling of Beniotome, the maker of Japan’s first sesame shochu: Japanese barley, rice koji and sesame, which is 20% or more of the materials, in a blend of various long-aged spirits. The card in the box speaks of ”the rich aroma of sesame and of age, with a deep, mellow taste”. Awarded Gold at TWSC 2026.

Photo: そらみみ / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle label, box and box card
Bottle and label photos: our own

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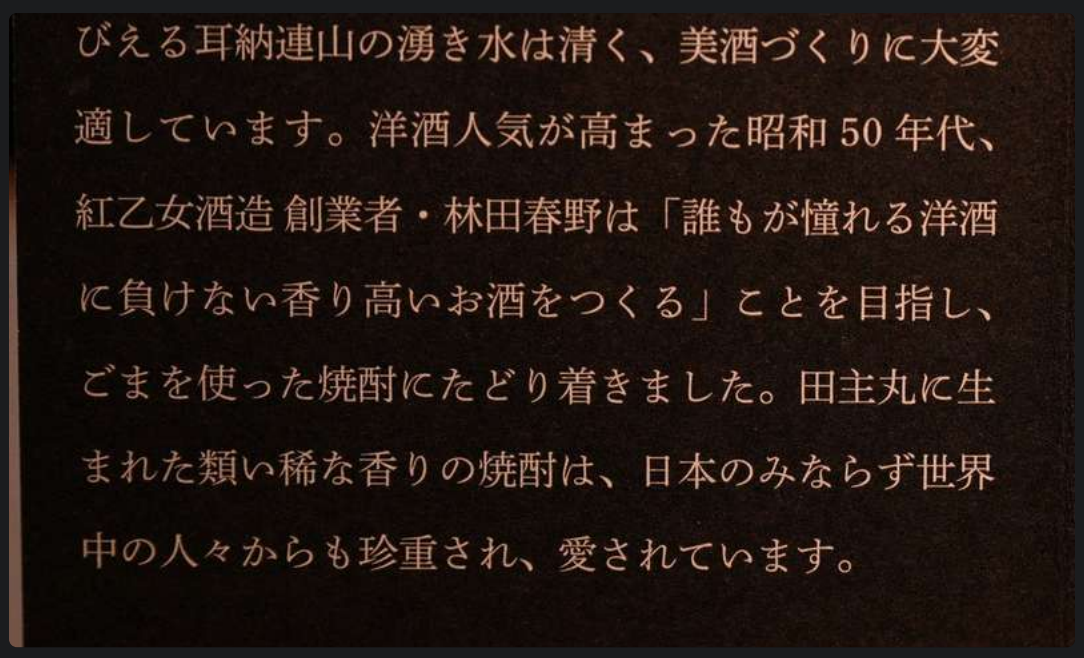
FLAGSHIP | The top of the Beniotome range

As fragrant as any Western spirit

What the founder Haruno Hayashida set out to make, and a blend of long-aged spirits



The box
”Long Term Storage” in gold



The card in the box
”to make a spirit as fragrant as the Western liquors everyone longed for”



Back label
”sesame (20% or more)”

In the late 1970s, as Western spirits grew popular, the answer was sesame.

In the late 1970s (Showa 50s), when Western spirits were in fashion, Beniotome’s founder Haruno Hayashida set out ”to make a spirit as fragrant as the Western liquors everyone longed for”, and arrived at a shochu made with sesame (from the card in the box). Premium 38 stands at the top of that line. The standard Goma Shochu Beniotome uses sesame for a tenth or more of its materials; this one uses a fifth or more, and is a blend of various long-aged spirits. The water is spring water from the Mino range that rises behind the distillery.

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How to drink it five ways suggested on the card

1	2	3	4	5
On the rocks	With water	With hot water	With soda	As a cocktail base

Tanushimaru: fruit and water the ”fruit town” of the card



Kyoho grapes
Kyoho growing began in Tanushimaru in 1957; the town started Japan’s pick-your-own grape tours



Persimmons
autumn is persimmon season; with nursery trees, a speciality of the town



Mino spring water
the Kiyomizu spring at the foot of the range, Ukiha



Kappa town
Tanushimaru keeps the kappa legends of the Chikugo; kappa statues stand all over town

Sources: Beniotome Shuzo (bottle label, box, box card; press release 2012). Label photos: our own Photos: GGGLS / CC BY-SA 4.0 · harum.koh / CC BY-SA 2.0 · Muyo / CC BY-SA 3.0 · Anilsoi11 / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

The Rokuchoshi SP 10YEARS

ROKUCHOSHI

Nishiki, Kuma, Kumamoto

Rokuchoshi Shuzo Co., Ltd.

Spirits | pot-distilled shochu (Japan: rice, rice koji) | 720 ml | Limited



ALCOHOL
40%
720ml

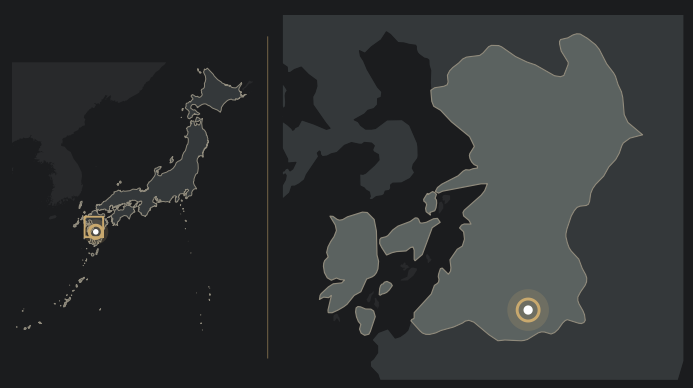
AGED
10 yrs +
Oak-cask long-aged blend

NOT COLOURED
Not decolourised
No colouring or other additives

Kuma rice shochu
10+ years in oak
colour left as it is

30ml ¥1,428 tax included

Nishiki, east of Hitoyoshi



The Kuma River at Nishiki



The Kuma River at Nishiki, home of the distillery. Its water and the basin’s rice become Kuma shochu

Rice shochu asleep in oak, bottled with its colour.

Rokuchoshi Shuzo was founded in 1923 in Nishiki, on the Kuma River in the Hitoyoshi-Kuma basin of Kumamoto. It distils rice shochu at atmospheric pressure and has always aged it long in casks. This bottling blends honkaku shochu made only from rice and rice koji, aged ten years or more in oak. As shochu it could not be sold without stripping out the cask colour, so the maker released it as ”spirits” for tax purposes. No colouring or other additives. Enjoy the long-aged shochu as it is, neat or on the rocks.

Photo: shunsaku hara / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: label & box
Bottle photo: our own

CONTENTS

NOT DECOLOURISED | Keeping the colour of the cask

Bottled with the colour the cask gave it

Rokuchoshi Shuzo and the "spirits" answer



Back label: category spirits, made from pot-distilled shochu (rice, rice koji) (our photo)

Shochu laid down in oak takes on an amber colour from the wood. Yet to be sold as ”shochu”, that colour has to be thinned out. To bottle it without decolourising, Rokuchoshi Shuzo obtained a spirits licence and released this whisky-coloured shochu under that category.

> Honkaku shochu made only from rice and rice koji, aged ten years or more in oak casks and blended.
>
> To offer it without removing the colour, it is classed as spirits under the liquor tax law. No colouring or other additives.
>
> Enjoy the taste of long-aged shochu just as it is.
>
> — from the gift box

Why "spirits"? The colour rule for shochu

目次

Shochu colour limit Absorbance ≤ 0.08
About a tenth of whisky; cask colour is stripped with charcoal

The Rokuchoshi SP Not decolourised
The colour of 10+ years in oak, no colouring added

Whisky (reference) No colour limit
The cask colour becomes its amber

Colours are illustrative. Absorbance measured at 430 nm and 480 nm (per Rokuchoshi Shuzo).

Adding 2% or more sugars to make a ”liqueur” was another way out, but the maker wanted the spirit untouched. Its tax category is spirits; ”ウオッカ” (vodka) on the front label is its item name.

The Rokuchoshi way In the maker’s words

Atmospheric distillation

A 500-year-old way of distilling that keeps the character of the rice, then time in wood.

Long ageing

Since its founding the house has aged its shochu for an average of 12 years, rare for shochu.

Warehouse

Temperature and humidity are set to follow the climate of the Scottish Highlands.



The gorge of the Kawabe River, a tributary of the Kuma, below Itsuki; the forests of the Kyushu mountains feed the basin’s water

Read also Three routes A · B · C | Asakura (liqueur) | Amanohakuh

Compare it with Amanohakuh, the rice whisky of Joraku Shuzo, also in Nishiki. Explore Kuma →

Sources: label and box; Rokuchoshi Shuzo (Makuake 2024, @Press Nov 2024) Photos: Sanjo / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Kodai Ikko

古代一壺

Nishiki, Kuma, Kumamoto

Rokuchoshi Shuzo Co., Ltd.

Honkaku shochu (Kuma shochu) | rice, rice koji | 720 ml | 100% aged spirit



ALCOHOL
38%
720ml

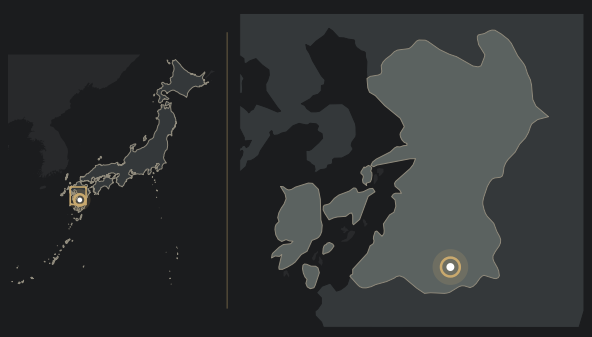
AGED
100% koshu
Blend of 30-, 13- and 11-year-old spirit only

DISTILLED
Atmospheric
The 500-year-old way; long storage turns roughness into depth

Koshu only:
30-, 13- and
11-year-old

30ml ¥1,648 tax included

Nishiki, east of Hitoyoshi



Shinguji temple, Nishiki



Shinguji temple in Nishiki-Nishi, the distillery's own district, known for its six Kannon of the Sagara pilgrimage

Not a drop of new spirit: koshu alone.

Kuma rice shochu from Rokuchoshi Shuzo in Nishiki, blended only from spirit aged 30, 13 and 11 years. By law a shochu may be called koshu, ”aged”, when half of it has rested three years or more; but young spirit makes the whole young again, so this house uses aged stock alone. Distilled at atmospheric pressure and rested for decades in a temperature-controlled warehouse, it has a rich bouquet and a round, full flavour. At 38%, take it slowly, neat or on the rocks.

Photo: 運動会プロテインパワー / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: label, hang tag, maker leaflet
Bottle photo: our own

100% KOSHU | The all-aged rule

The balance only time can build

Rokuchoshi Shuzo and "100% koshu"



Hang tag: 30-, 13- and 11-year-old (our photo)

Under the liquor tax law a shochu may be labelled koshu, ”aged”, if half of it has been stored three years or more. But blend in nearly half new spirit and the whole becomes young again. Rokuchoshi Shuzo fills this bottle with aged spirit only.

> Today a shochu may be labelled koshu if 50% of it has been stored for three years or more. But blend in nearly half new spirit and it becomes young again.
>
> The taste and aroma peculiar to aged spirit are badly spoiled, and the harmony and balance that only time can build are broken.
>
> So koshu must be 100%. That is the secret of its rich bouquet and full, mellow taste.
>
> — from the hang tag ”The appeal of 100% koshu”

Three ages, one jar What is in the blend

- **30 years** oldest — About thirty years since distillation; the oldest spirit in the blend
- **13 years** — About thirteen years old
- **11 years** youngest — About eleven years, still far beyond the three-year koshu threshold

Ages as printed on the hang tag; the ratio is not disclosed. Colours are illustrative.

Since 1923 Rokuchoshi Shuzo has chosen quality over volume and long ageing: an average of twelve years, rare for shochu, under the motto ”make shochu a fine spirit again”. Kodai Ikko exists only because of that stock of aged spirit.

The Rokuchoshi way From the maker’s leaflet

Atmospheric distillation

A method with 500 years of history. Long years in storage turn its sharp edge into a rich bouquet and its roughness into breadth and depth.

24-hour temperature control

Aged spirit cannot simply be left alone: an insulated, air-conditioned warehouse keeps temperature swings small.

A proud stock of koshu

Long-stored spirit has always been prized here as koshu; a stock built since the founding makes an all-aged blend possible.



The Kuma and Kawabe rivers meet at Nishiki; the basin’s water becomes rice shochu

Read also The Rokuchoshi SP 10YEARS · Explore Kuma · Three routes A・B・C

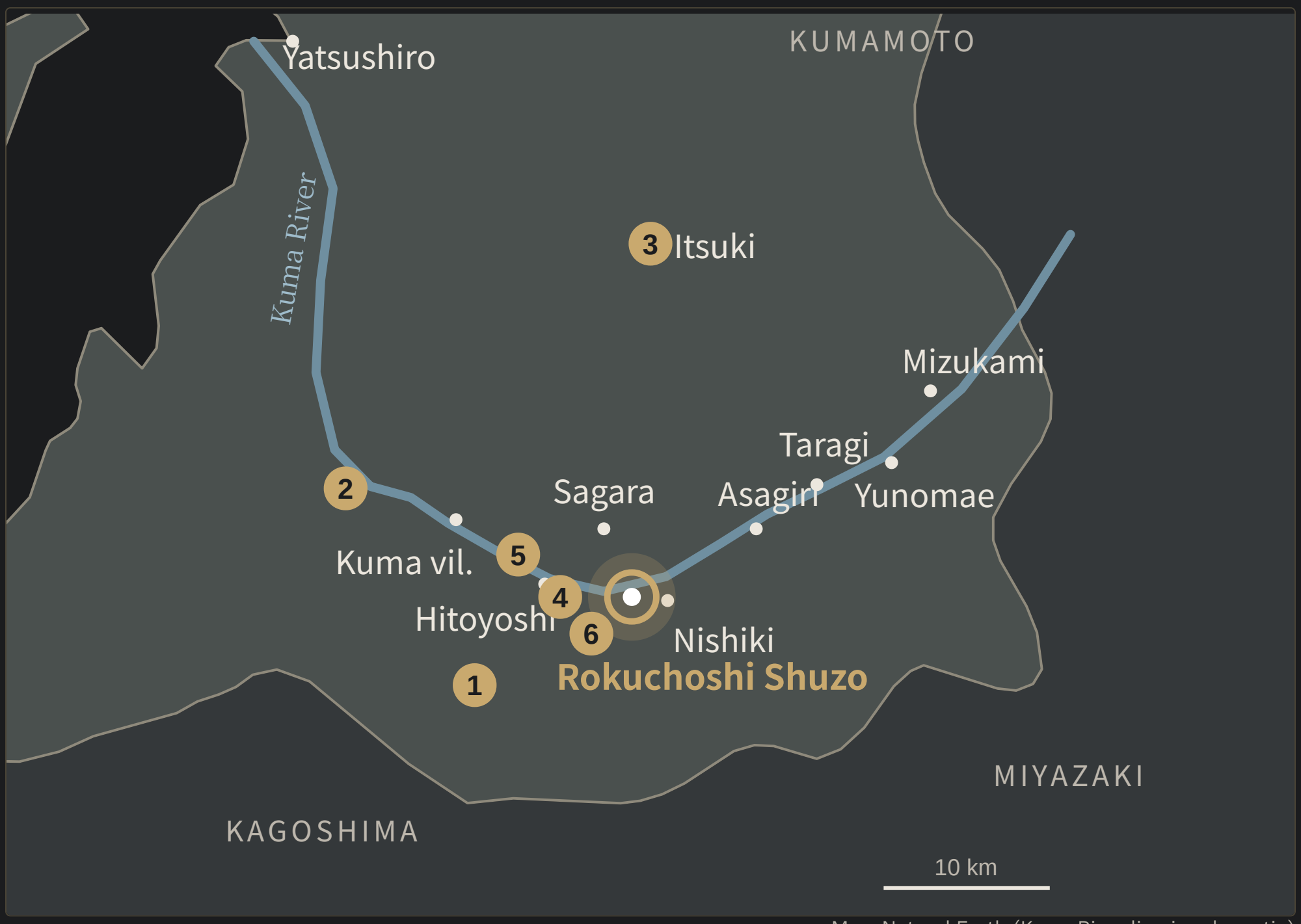
Compare it with The Rokuchoshi, the same house’s cask-aged spirit, for colour and nose. Kuma →

Sources: label, hang tag, maker leaflet; Rokuchoshi Shuzo (Makuake 2024–2025) Photos: MK Products / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

KUMA | The Hitoyoshi-Kuma basin

Kuma KUMA

"Japan's richest hidden village" Hitoyoshi & Kuma, Kumamoto



Map: Natural Earth (Kuma River line is schematic)

A basin in the Kyushu mountains, making rice shochu for 500 years.

In the south of Kumamoto, the Hitoyoshi-Kuma basin is ringed by the Kyushu mountains. The Kuma River, one of Japan’s three great rapid rivers, runs east to west, and its plain is among the best rice country in the prefecture. The Sagara clan ruled here for some 700 years, from the Kamakura period to the Meiji Restoration, and its temples, Buddhist statues and festivals survive; the area is a Japan Heritage site. Kuma shochu, rice shochu made with the water of the Kuma River system, became a geographical indication in 1995.

Kuma through time From the Sagara era to today

1198	Sagara Nagayori becomes steward of Hitoyoshi; Sagara rule begins
1233	Nagayori founds Ganjoji temple
1871	Domains abolished; some 700 years of Sagara rule end
1923	Rokuchoshi Shuzo founded in Nishiki
1943	Hitoyoshi Naval Air Base built in Nishiki and Sagara
1995	”Kuma” becomes a geographical indication for spirits
2015	Hitoyoshi-Kuma named a Japan Heritage area
2018	The ”Secret Base Museum” opens in Nishiki

Sources: National Tax Agency GI list, Kumamoto Japan Heritage materials, Nishiki Secret Base Museum, Rokuchoshi Shuzo

CONTENTS

EXPLORE KUMA | Out from Nishiki

Explore Kuma

River, forest and 700 years of culture



1 Kanome Falls (Hitoyoshi)
One of Japan’s 100 best waterfalls: the 36 m Odaki and two sister falls drop into the forest



2 Kyusendo Cave (Kuma village)
One of the largest limestone caves in Kyushu, on the Kuma River; found in 1973, about 4.8 km long



3 Itsuki village: the great ginkgo
Home of the Itsuki lullaby, a mountain village in the Kawabe River gorge; the Miyazono ginkgo in autumn



4 Hitoyoshi Castle ruins (Hitoyoshi)
Seat of the Sagara clan for 700 years, a national historic site with the Kuma River as its moat



5 Eikokuji temple (Hitoyoshi)
The ”ghost temple”, known for its ghost scroll; Saigo Takamori’s headquarters in the 1877 rebellion



6 Secret Base Museum (Nishiki)
Tours of the tunnels of the 1943 Hitoyoshi Naval Air Base (opened 2018); shown: a full-size replica of a Type 93 trainer

After a walk in the basin, another glass of Kuma rice spirit. ← The Rokuchoshi

Photos: アラツク / CC BY-SA 4.0・Babi Hijau / public domain・Sanjo / CC BY-SA 4.0・Saigen Jiro / CC0・円周率3パーセント / CC BY-SA 4.0・Yagyu8 / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Mugishiru Unfiltered

無濾過 麦汁

Yunomae, Kuma-gun, Kumamoto

Toyonaga Shuzo

合名会社豊永酒造

Barley shochu | 100% Japanese naked barley | Unfiltered | 720 ml



ALCOHOL
25%
Unfiltered

MATERIAL
Naked barley
Japanese barley, barley koji

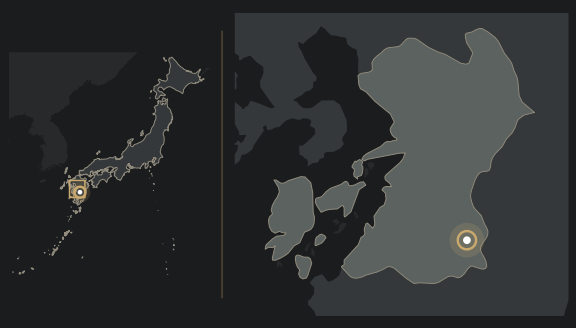
AWARD
Kura Master 2026
Platinum, Honkaku Shochu & Awamori



Neck tag: Platinum, category winner (Jury Prize)

45ml ¥1,078 tax included

Yunomae, upper Kuma basin



Toyonaga Shuzo

Mt Ichifusa and the Hitotsuse River



the mountain east of the distillery, seen from Nishimera on the Miyazaki side

Unfiltered barley shochu that calls itself "the juice of barley".

Toyonaga has made shochu since 1894 in Yunomae, at the far end of the Kuma basin, home of rice-based Kuma shochu. This is its barley shochu, made only from Japanese naked barley. To keep the grain’s full flavour it is bottled without filtering; the back label promises ”a toasty aroma and rich barley taste like the juice of barley”. It may turn hazy or throw a sediment, which is flavour compounds crystallising. Platinum at Kura Master 2026 in Paris.

Photo: Koda6029 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle label and neck tag; MAFF Kyushu
Bottle and label photos: our own

CONTENTS

YUNOMAE | The head of the Kuma basin

Yunomae and Toyonaga 湯前町

Below Mt Ichifusa, at the end of the Kumagawa Railway Kuma-gun, Kumamoto



Map: Natural Earth (schematic)

Where the Kuma River leaves the mountains and the basin begins.

Yunomae, near the Miyazaki border in south-east Kumamoto, is the easternmost town of the Hitoyoshi-Kuma basin and the last stop of the Kumagawa Railway from Hitoyoshi. Mt Ichifusa (1,721 m) rises to the east, and the Kuma River comes out of the mountains here to run west. The Sagara clan ruled this basin for some 700 years, from the Kamakura period to 1868, and it is the home of rice-based Kuma shochu. Toyonaga, founded in 1894, has used organically grown rice since 1986; its own and its contract fields are all certified organic.

目次



Mt Ichifusa
1,721 m, rising east of the Kuma basin and long held sacred



Yunomae station
the wooden building of 1924 is still in use; a registered cultural property



Kumagawa Railway
a ”Den-en Symphony” railcar at the Yunomae terminus



Hitoyoshi from the castle
the old castle town seen from the ruins; the Kuma, one of Japan’s three great rapids, runs through it



Hitoyoshi Castle ruins
seat of the Sagara for some 700 years, moated by the Kuma and Mune rivers; a national historic site



Aoi Aso Shrine
guardian shrine of Hitoyoshi-Kuma, said to date from 806; its thatched halls became a National Treasure in 2008

Yunomae and Toyonaga through time Rice and barley in the basin of the Sagara



Back label: ”left unfiltered to keep the true flavour of barley shochu”

Kamakura period The Amida hall of Josen-ji is built, the oldest wooden building in Kumamoto

1894 Toyonaga Shuzo founded

1924 The Yunomae line opens, with Yunomae station

1986 Toyonaga starts making shochu from organic rice

1992 Yunomae Manga Museum opens, honouring the cartoonist Nasu Ryosuke

1995 ”Kuma” becomes a geographical indication for shochu

2026 Mugishiru wins Platinum at Kura Master

Sources: Yunomae town; MAFF Kyushu; Kumamoto Prefecture; Kura Master Photos: Koda6029 / CC BY-SA 4.0 · MaedaAkihiko / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Olegushka / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Saigen Jiro / CC0 · Saigen Jiro / CC0 · Shochudanji / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

Tenshi no Yuwaku

天使の誘惑

Fukiage, Hioki, Kagoshima

Nishi Shuzo Co., Ltd.

Honkaku shochu (sweet potato) | sweet potato, rice koji | 720 ml | Reserve



ALCOHOL
40%
720ml

AGED
10 yrs sherry
Full-strength spirit matured in sherry casks

POTATO
Kogane-sengan
Kagoshima sweet potato, rice koji (Japanese rice)

”Distilled, matured,
marked by the years.”
— from the label

30ml ¥1,648 tax included

CONTENTS

Fukiage, west Satsuma



Fukiage-hama



Fukiage-hama west of the distillery: one of Japan’s three great dune coasts, some 47 km of sand on the East China Sea

Ten years in cask. The angels take their share.

Nishi Shuzo was founded in 1845 at Fukiage on the west coast of the Satsuma Peninsula. Its reserve, Tenshi no Yuwaku (”the angels’ temptation”), is sweet-potato shochu from Kagoshima kogane-sengan and rice koji, matured at full strength for ten years in sherry casks. The label likens the spirit lost to evaporation in cask to the angels’ temptation. Vanilla-like sweetness from the cask, the potato kept quiet. Top gold and ”Best of the Best” among sweet-potato shochu at the Tokyo Whisky & Spirits Competition 2025.

Photo: Snap55 / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: label & box
Bottle photo: our own

ANGELS' SHARE | What the angels take

What vanishes from the cask deepens what remains

Nishi Shuzo and ten years in sherry wood



Back label: reserve spirit, stamped ”made 2025” (our photo)

Spirit left long in wood loses a few per cent a year to evaporation, what the whisky world calls the angels’ share. Nishi Shuzo filled sherry casks with full-strength sweet-potato shochu and waited ten years.

> Distilled, matured again and again, marked by the years.
> Strange: as the spirit ripens into a rare, rich and mellow liquor, it evaporates.
> As if the angels were tempting it away…
>
> — from the front label

Sweet-potato shochu, ten years in cask How the reserve is made

Kogane-sengan Kagoshima
The classic shochu potato: starchy, with a gentle aroma

Ranbiki pot still
The label’s word for distilling comes from the ranbiki, the Edo-period alembic

Sherry cask 10 years
Filled at full strength; pale amber and a vanilla-like nose from the wood

Ageing per Nishi Shuzo (June 2025). Colours are illustrative.

At TWSC 2025 (Tokyo Whisky & Spirits Competition) it won the top gold in the shochu & awamori division and ”Best of the Best” among sweet-potato shochu. The judges noted ”floral and fruity notes with vanilla” and ”a long finish that stays sweet to the end”. In 2026 Nishi Shuzo was named the competition’s best sweet-potato shochu distillery.

The Nishi way From the ”roofless brewery”

Fukiage, 1845
Founded in the second year of Koka. Its motto: ”rooted in the land, bound by nothing”. Besides shochu it makes Tenbu sake and whisky at the Ontake Distillery.

A roofless brewery
On its own test farm the house grows more than 30 potato varieties: farming from January to August, brewing from September to December.

Sealed reserve
The neck band is a seal: each bottle of the ten-year reserve, cask-aged at full strength, is sealed and sent out one by one.



Sunset on Fukiage-hama; the East China Sea lies west of the distillery

Read also Ontake Distillery · Hioki (Nishi Shuzo whisky) · Shochu vs whisky

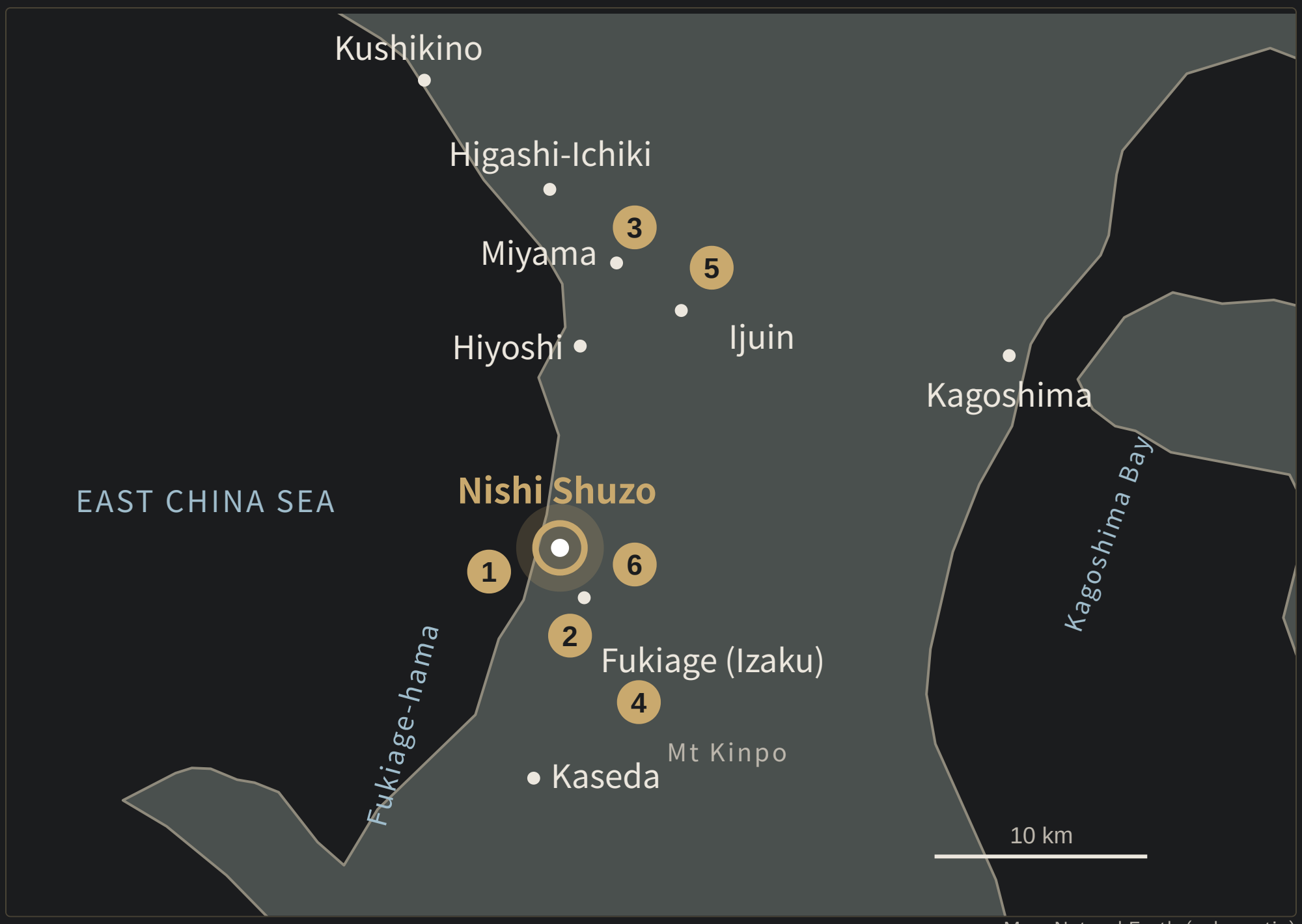
Compare the cask notes with the single malt of Nishi Shuzo’s own Ontake Distillery. Hioki →

Sources: label and box; Nishi Shuzo (@Press June 2025, website); TWSC 2025 & 2026 Photos: Hirase / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

HIOKI | The west coast of Satsuma

Hioki HIOKI · FUKIAGE

Dunes, Satsuma ware and the Shimazu Hioki, Kagoshima



Map: Natural Earth (schematic)

A 47 km beach facing the East China Sea.

Hioki lies just west of Kagoshima city on the west coast of the Satsuma Peninsula, formed in 2005 when the four towns of Higashi-Ichiki, Ijuin, Hiyoshi and Fukiage merged. Along its shore runs Fukiage-hama, one of Japan's three great dune coasts, some 47 km of sand and pine woods with the East China Sea beyond. Inland, Miyama is the home of Satsuma ware, where potters brought from Korea in 1598 have kept their kilns burning for over 400 years. Izaku castle at Fukiage is the birthplace of Shimazu Tadayoshi, ancestor of the lords of Satsuma. Nishi Shuzo has made its spirits here at Fukiage since 1845.

Hioki through time From Lord Nisshin to today

1492	Shimazu Tadayoshi (Lord Nisshin) born at Izaku castle
1598	Korean potters brought to Satsuma; Miyama later becomes the home of Satsuma ware
1600	Shimazu Yoshihiro's retreat from Sekigahara, remembered in the Myoenji pilgrimage at Ijuin
1845	Nishi Shuzo founded at Fukiage
2005	Higashi-Ichiki, Ijuin, Hiyoshi and Fukiage merge into Hioki city
2019	Nishi Shuzo opens the Ontake Distillery in Kagoshima city
2025	Tenshi no Yuwaku wins top gold and "Best of the Best" at TWSC

Sources: Hioki city, Kagoshima tourism, Nishi Shuzo

CONTENTS

EXPLORE HIOKI | Out from Fukiage

Explore Hioki

Beach, hot springs and the pottery village



1 Fukiage-hama (Fukiage)
One of Japan's three great dune coasts: 47 km of pines and sand, with a cycling road along the dunes



2 Fukiage Onsen (Fukiage)
An old spa town below Izaku castle, the hot springs of the dune country



3 Miyama pottery village (Higashi-Ichiki)
Home of Satsuma ware for over 400 years: climbing kilns and workshops to walk between



4 Onamuchi shrine (Fukiage)
An ancient shrine with the Senbon-kusu, a grove of giant camphor trees, beside its approach



5 Tokushige shrine, Myoenji pilgrimage (Ijuin)
Dedicated to Shimazu Yoshihiro; the goal of the Myoenji pilgrimage, walked from Kagoshima in memory of his retreat from Sekigahara



6 Izaku castle ruins (Fukiage)
Hilltop birthplace of Shimazu Tadayoshi and Takahisa, also called Kamemaru castle

After the beach, another glass of Fukiage sweet-potato shochu. ← Tenshi no Yuwaku

Photos: shunsaku hara / CC BY-SA 3.0 · Totti / CC BY 4.0 · Sakoppi / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Sakoppi / CC BY 3.0 · Sakoppi / CC BY 3.0 · 柴錬アワー / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Hyakunen no Kodoku

百年の孤独

Takanabe, Koyu, Miyazaki

Kuroki Honten Co., Ltd.

Honkaku shochu (barley) | barley, barley koji | 720 ml | Long-aged



ALCOHOL
40%
720ml

AGED
In wood
Barley shochu stored long in wooden casks

SINCE
1985
Made for the house's 100th year (founded 1885)

"The amber is the mark of its long sleep."
— from the box

30ml ¥1,648 tax included

Takanabe, Hyuga-nada coast



Kuroki Honten

The Omaru River



Down from the Osuzu hills through Takanabe to the Hyuga-nada sea; Kuroki Honten stands near its mouth (seen here upstream at Kijo)

An amber barley shochu, born in the hundredth year.

Kuroki Honten of Takanabe, Miyazaki, was founded in 1885. In 1985, its hundredth year, it released Hyakunen no Kodoku, "one hundred years of solitude": a barley shochu aged in wood when few shochu were. Pot-distilled from hand-made koji and selected barley, then a long, quiet sleep in wooden casks. The amber is the mark of that sleep; only the excess colour is gently filtered out. The owner, a lover of Garcia Marquez's novel, named it as a homage to the poet Terayama Shuji and to the centenary. Neat, on the rocks, or half and half with water.

Photo: Sanjo / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: label, box, wrapper
Bottle photo: our own

CONTENTS

ONE HUNDRED YEARS | A name for a century

"When you hear music, after it's over, it's gone in the air"

Kuroki Honten and the name "One Hundred Years of Solitude"



Wrapper: words of the jazz musician Eric Dolphy (our photo)

The wrapper carries the words of the jazz musician Eric Dolphy: ”When you hear music, after it’s over, it’s gone in the air. You can never capture it again.” Words that suit a long-slept spirit tasted one glass at a time.

Hyakunen no Kodoku is an exquisite honkaku shochu made by storing and maturing barley shochu for a long time.

The barley spirit laid down is made with the traditional skills handed down since the founding in 1885: hand-made koji, selected barley only, the house's own cultured yeast, traditional mashing and single pot-still distillation.

Its amber colour comes from the maturation that soaked in during its long sleep.

— from the box

The name A novel, a stage and a century

1967 Garcia Marquez
The Colombian writer publishes One Hundred Years of Solitude; Nobel Prize in 1982

1981 Terayama Shuji
His theatre troupe Tenjo Sajiki stages One Hundred Years of Solitude; the film version, disputed by the author, is released as Farewell to the Ark

1985 Kuroki Honten
The centenary: the owner registers the name as a homage to Terayama and to the hundred years

The naming story is from Kuroki Toshiyuki, chairman of Kuroki Honten. Colours are illustrative.

The house was struggling then, and this was a last throw. Unsold shochu was rethought as ”stock in storage”: ten oak casks were bought in Kansai and filled with barley spirit. The amber of the cask, 40% full strength, the paper-wrapped bottle and the name: four differences that brought the idea of ageing into shochu.

The Kuroki way Shochu that begins with farming

Yomigaeru Daichi no Kai

The house’s own farm company grows sweet potato, barley and rice without pesticides on about 40 ha, returning the distillation lees to the soil as fertiliser.

Hand-made koji, wooden vats

Koji is made by hand in wooden trays; the grain is steamed in a wooden koshiki and the second mash ferments in vats of Miyazaki obi-sugi cedar.

Osuzuyama Distillery

A sister distillery built in 1998 in a valley of Mt Osuzu: Yamaneko and Yamazaru shochu, and the OSUZU whiskies.



The Somegaoka sunflower fields, Takanabe: first sown in 2010 as green manure and a sign of recovery after the foot-and-mouth outbreak, reaching 80 ha and 11 million blooms at their peak

Read also OSUZU MALT (Osuzuyama Distillery) Barley shochu vs whisky Asakura & Fukuro (cask-aged barley)

Compare the barley notes with OSUZU MALT from Kuroki Honten’s own Osuzuyama Distillery.

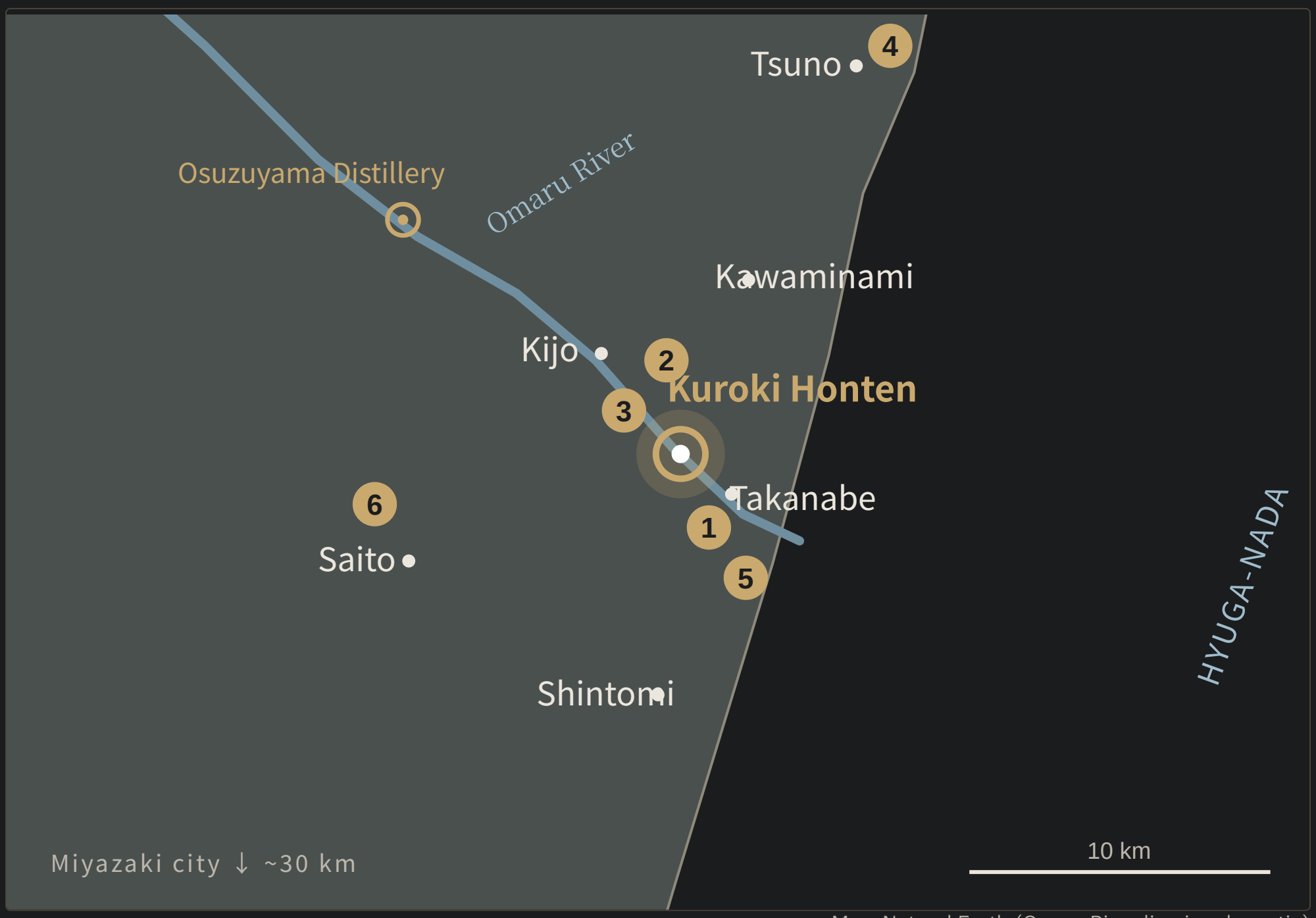
Takanabe →

Sources: label, box and wrapper; Kuroki Honten; Daily Shincho (Kuroki Toshiyuki); Serai.jp 2025; Haveleo; MAFF (Somegaoka)
Photos: Sanjo / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

TAKANABE | The Hyuga-nada sea and the Omaru River

Takanabe TAKANABE

A castle town of scholars and shochu Koyu, Miyazaki



Map: Natural Earth (Omaru River line is schematic)

A 27,000-koku castle town open to the Hyuga-nada sea.

Takanabe lies about 30 km north of Miyazaki city at the mouth of the Omaru River. In the Edo period it was the castle town of the Akizuki lords' 27,000-koku domain; the domain school Meirindo, opened in 1778 by the seventh lord Akizuki Taneshige, produced many scholars, among them Uesugi Yozan (Taneshige's brother), the famed reforming lord of Yonezawa, and the town was the birthplace of Ishii Juji, founder of the Okayama orphanage. To the west rise the Osuzu mountains, to the east the Hyuga-nada sea. Kuroki Honten has made nothing but shochu here since 1885, and in 1998 opened its sister Osuzuyama Distillery in a valley of Mt Osuzu.

Takanabe through time From the Akizuki castle town to today

1604 Akizuki Tanenaga moves his seat to Takarabe, later Takanabe: the domain begins
1751 Harunori, later Uesugi Yozan, born the second son of lord Akizuki Tanemitsu
1778 The seventh lord Akizuki Taneshige founds the domain school Meirindo
1865 Ishii Juji born in Takanabe (founds the Okayama orphanage in 1887)
1885 Kuroki Honten founded in Takanabe
1933 Iwaoka Yasukichi begins the Takanabe Daishi statues beside the Mochida tombs
1985 The centenary: Hyakunen no Kodoku is born
1998 Osuzuyama Distillery opens

Sources: Kotobank (Takanabe domain), Takanabe town, tabi-mag, Nihon Rekishi Chimei Taikei (Enpuku-ji), Kuroki Honten

CONTENTS

EXPLORE TAKANABE | Out from Takanabe

Explore Takanabe

Castle, tombs and the Hyuga-nada sea



1 Maizuru shrine, Takanabe castle (Takanabe)
The Akizuki castle site is now Maizuru Park: a shrine on the keep, cherry blossom in spring, a lantern festival in summer



2 Takanabe Daishi (Takanabe)
Over 700 stone statues begun in 1933 by Iwaoka Yasukichi to mourn the looted tombs nearby; the largest 7 m tall



3 Mochida tombs (Takanabe)
85 burial mounds of the 4th to 6th centuries; tomb no. 1 is among the largest keyhole tombs in Kyushu



4 Tsuno shrine (Tsuno)
The first shrine of old Hyuga province, 15 km north of Takanabe: a great torii and a grove of camphor trees



5 Enpuku-ji temple (Takanabe)
Jodo-shu temple said to date from the Oei era (1394–1428); in the Edo period the Akizuki lords of Takanabe granted it audience and sake-cup privileges



6 Saitobaru tombs (Saito)
A plateau of more than 300 burial mounds, carpeted with rape blossom in spring and cosmos in autumn

After the walk, another glass of cask-slept barley shochu.

← Hyakunen no Kodoku

Photos: Sanjo / public domain・原田純児 / CC BY-SA 4.0・MChew / CC BY-SA 4.0・Saigen Jiro / CC0・運動会プロテインパワー / CC BY-SA 4.0・Sanjo / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Himebayashi

HIMEBAYASHI

Uonashi, Shirokawa, Seiyo, Ehime

PREMIUM Okuri-Okura

Chestnut shochu, pot-distilled | 100% Ehime chestnuts, roasted・black koji



ALCOHOL
25%
720 ml

MATERIAL
Chestnut (Ehime)
Roasted chestnuts・rice koji

KOJI
Black koji
Roasted-chestnut nose, black-koji depth

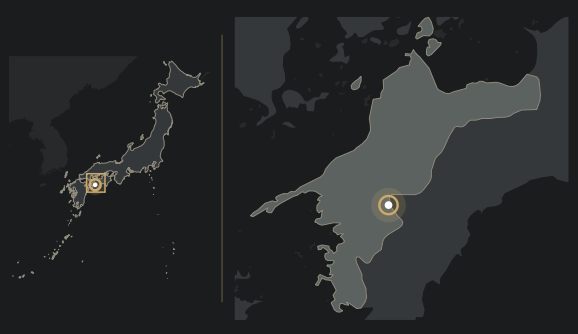


Terraced fields of Karihama above the Uwa Sea, Seiyo

A mountain village in Shikoku
local chestnuts, roasted and brewed
the chestnut shochu distillery

45ml ¥1,867 tax included

Shirokawa, Seiyo, Ehime



Himebayashi

Onogahara highland, Seiyo



The Onogahara highland of the Shikoku karst, Seiyo: the same mountains as Shirokawa

Roasted chestnuts, koji and a still: the scent of autumn.

Shirokawa in Seiyo, south-western Ehime, lies deep in the Shikoku mountains and is known for its chestnuts. Himebayashi has long made chestnut shochu there from local nuts alone; Okuri-Okura is its premium bottling. Ehime chestnuts are roasted before mashing, their starch turned to sugar by black-koji rice koji, fermented and distilled in a pot still. Chestnuts cannot saccharify themselves, so koji does the work. Warm roasted-chestnut aromas and black-koji depth. On the rocks or with a splash of water.

Photo: As6022014 / Public domain・Indiana jo / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Hachijo Kohatsu

HACHIJO KOHATSU

Mitsune, Hachijo, Hachijojima, Tokyo

Bakkan Nasakejima

Honkaku barley shochu | GI Tokyo Shimazake | barley & barley koji



ALCOHOL
25%
700 ml

MATERIAL
Barley & barley koji
Slight-vacuum distillation

GI
Tokyo Shimazake
Island shochu of the Izu Islands, registered 2024



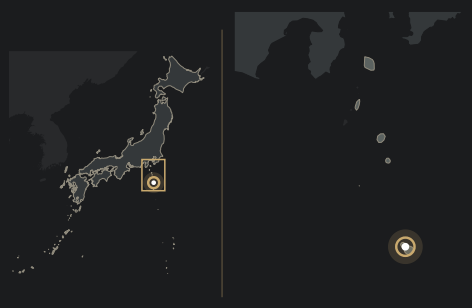
Hachijo-Kojima across the lava shore

“From the sea it looked a demon’s isle;
ashore, Hachijo is an isle of kindness”
from the island song Shome-bushi

45ml ¥968 tax included

目次

Hachijojima, Izu Islands



Hachijo Kohatsu

Hachijo-Fuji from the Noboryo pass



Mt Hachijo-Fuji and Hachijo-Kojima from the Noboryo pass

A demon’s isle from the sea, an isle of kindness ashore.

Hachijojima floats in the Kuroshio current some 290 km south of Tokyo. Since 1853, when Tansō Shōemon, a Satsuma merchant exiled to the island, taught the islanders to distil sweet-potato shochu, the island has made shochu. Bakkan Nasakejima, from Hachijo Kohatsu, is brewed from barley and barley koji and distilled under a slight vacuum, keeping the toastiness of barley while staying light and clean. The name comes from an island song: “seen from the sea, a demon’s isle; come ashore, Hachijo is an isle of kindness.”

Photo: hirohiro akabane / CC BY-SA 2.0 · Seiya Ishibashi / CC BY 2.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Muichibutsu Genshu

無一物 原酒

Ashibe, Iki, Nagasaki

Ikinokura Shuzo Co., Ltd.

壱岐の蔵酒造

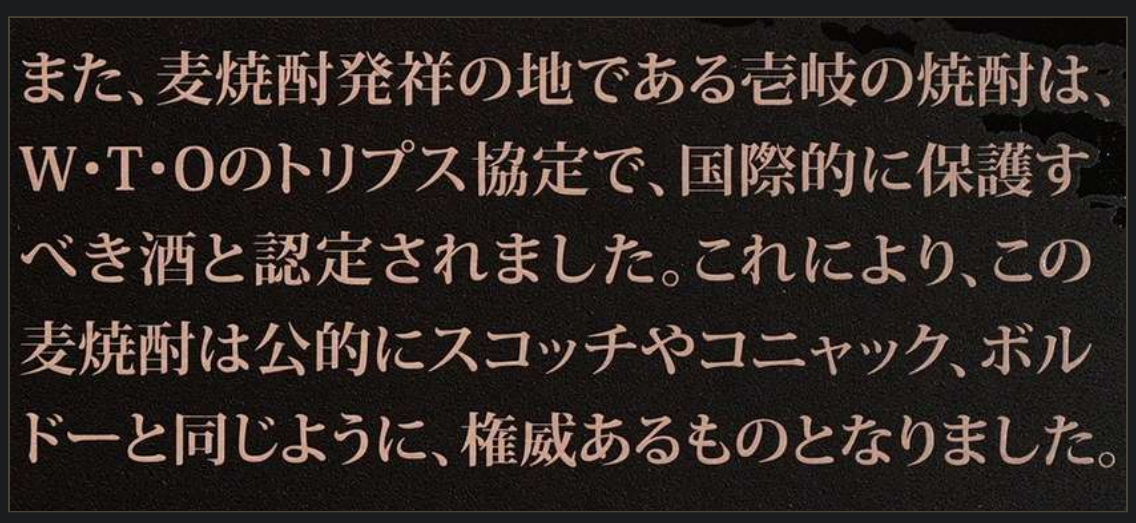
Iki shochu | Barley | Five years in oak | Undiluted, 720 ml



ALCOHOL
42%
Genshu (undiluted)

AGED
5 years
Matured in oak casks

GI IKI
Iki shochu
2/3 barley, 1/3 rice koji



Box: protected under the WTO TRIPS agreement

30ml ¥1,485 tax included

Iki, in the Genkai Sea



Ikinokura Shuzo

Ashibe port



where the jetfoil from Hakata calls, on the east coast; the distillery is in the same town

Five years in oak, undiluted, from the island where barley shochu began.

Muichibutsu is a Zen word for a state free of all worldly desire. On Iki, held to be the birthplace of barley shochu, it is made to the island's traditional ratio of two parts barley to one part rice koji, aged five years in oak and bottled undiluted at 42%. The box speaks of "the mellow aroma of barley and the rich taste of rice koji". Iki shochu became a geographical indication under the WTO TRIPS agreement in 1995, its name protected like Scotch, Cognac or Bordeaux.

Photo: Tsuyoshi chiba / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth; MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed

Product info: bottle label and box
Bottle and label photos: our own

CONTENTS

IKI | An island in the Genkai Sea

Iki and Ikinokura Shuzo 壱岐

The "Iki-koku" of the Wei chronicle, birthplace of barley shochu Iki city, Nagasaki



Map: MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed

Barley shochu was born on an island of shrines, tombs and barley fields.

About an hour by jetfoil from Hakata, Iki is a gently rolling island some 17 km north to south and 15 km east to west. It appears in the third-century Chinese Wei chronicle as ”Iki-koku”; the Harunotsuji site, thought to be its capital, is a Special Historic Site. Rice and barley ripen on Fukae-tabaru, the second-largest plain in Nagasaki. With their rice taken as tax, islanders are said to have made spirits from barley: the start of barley shochu. Seven distilleries work on the island; Ikinokura was formed by six of them in 1984.

目次



Harunotsuji and the Fukae-tabaru plain
the Yayoi-period site thought to be the capital of Iki-koku, amid the island’s widest plain



The main ritual hall, rebuilt
a raised-floor building at Harunotsuji, thought to have been used for rites



Saruiwa, ”Monkey Rock”
a basalt stack about 45 m high, the image of a monkey looking away



Kojima Shrine
an islet in Uchime Bay; the path to it appears only at low tide



Iki Kagura
sacred dance and music handed down by shrine priests alone for some 700 years; an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property



Yunomoto hot spring
rust-coloured water in the west of the island, linked by legend to Empress Jingu

Iki and its shochu through time From Iki-koku to a protected appellation



Back label: ”Geographical Indication Iki Shochu”

3rd c.	”Iki-koku” recorded in the Chinese Wei chronicle
1274, 1281	The Mongol invasions strike Iki twice
c. 16th c.	Distilling arrives from the continent; barley shochu is said to begin
1984	Six island distilleries form the Iki Shochu cooperative
1995	”Iki” becomes a geographical indication for shochu, with Kuma and Ryukyu
2010	The company is renamed Ikinokura Shuzo
2015	”Border islands Iki, Tsushima and Goto” named Japan Heritage

Sources: Iki city; National Tax Agency; Ikinokura Shuzo; Agency for Cultural Affairs Photos: Saigen Jiro / CC0 · Saigen Jiro / CC0 · Asanagi / CC0 · irisgazer / public domain · Hiroi Yamaguchi / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Totti / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

Goto Retto Shuzo

GOTO RETTO

Miiraku, Goto city (Fukue Island), Nagasaki

Goto Imo 40

Honkaku sweet-potato shochu | Goto sweet potatoes, rice koji from Goto rice



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

MATERIAL
Sweet potato
Goto potatoes・koji from Goto rice

WATER
Spring water of the Nanatsudake range
Island distillery founded 2008

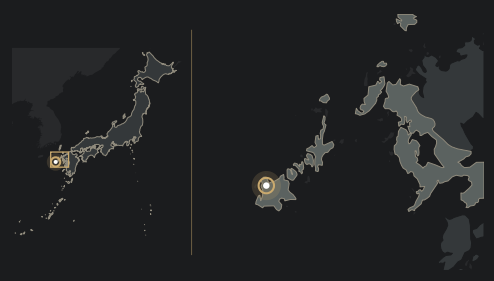


Ondake, the grass-covered volcano that is Fukue Island's landmark

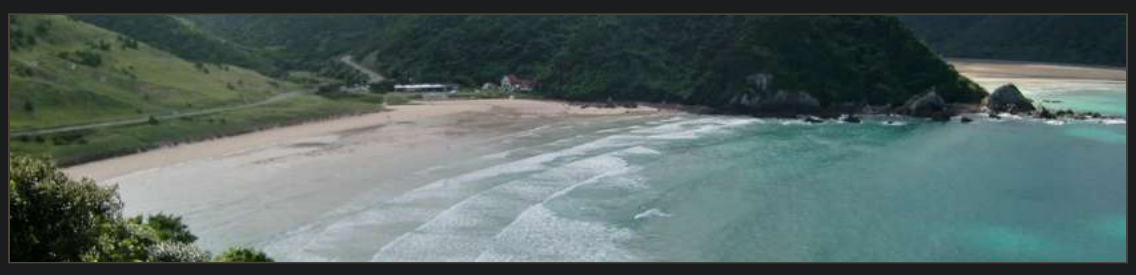
Everything grown on the islands
a shochu that tastes of Goto
serve as a partial shot

30ml ¥1,595 tax included

Fukue Island, Goto archipelago



Takahama beach, Miiraku



Takahama beach at Miiraku, the distillery's home town

Island potato, island rice, island water.

The Goto Islands lie in the sea west of Kyushu. Goto Retto Shuzo was founded in 2008 at Miiraku on Fukue Island with one idea: use only island ingredients, so the shochu tastes of Goto itself. Its sweet potatoes and koji rice are island-grown, and the water rises from springs in the Nanatsudake mountains. Goto Imo 40 is lightly diluted, concentrating the potato's rich sweetness. The distillery's suggestion: chill it in the freezer and sip it thick, as a "partial shot".

Photo: Kotaro 6 at Japanese Wikipedia / CC BY 3.0 ・ Hisenv / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Murao Shuzo

MURAO

Yonaru, Satsumasendai, Kagoshima

Murao

Kame-tsubo shochu | honkaku sweet-potato shochu



ALCOHOL
25%
ABV

MATERIAL
Sweet potato
Rice koji

METHOD
Clay-jar fermentation
One man, from mash to still



Lake Imuta, a Ramsar wetland in Satsumasendai

Founded 1902
one of the “3M”
a tiny hand-made output

45ml ¥1,867 tax included

目次

Satsumasendai, on the Sendai River



River mist on the Sendai River



On a cold morning river mist drifts down the Sendai River to the sea

Murao Shuzo

One distiller, clay jars, a legend in a bottle.

Murao Shuzo sits in the hills of Yonaru in Satsumasendai, Kagoshima, and dates from 1902. Third-generation owner Toshihiko Murao does almost everything alone, from buying the potatoes and making koji to fermenting in clay jars, distilling and bottling. The mashes ferment slowly in kame jars sunk into the earth before a single pot distillation. With Moriizo and Mao it forms the famous “3M”, yet its character is quiet: natural potato sweetness, the roundness of jar fermentation, a clean finish. Best with hot water.

Photo: 松若隆幸 / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Ray go / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Hamada Shuzo, Denzoin-gura

HAMADA

Ichikikushikino, Kagoshima | founded 1868

CHILL GREEN SPICY & CITRUS

Botanical barley shochu | with maqaw, a rare Taiwanese spice



ALCOHOL
25%
Otsurui shochu · Australian barley · barley koji

BOTANICAL
Maqaw
Taiwanese mountain pepper: citrus & spice

MATERIAL
Barley & barley koji
Released Feb 2023 · 720ml

“Chill out” × “green”
a new genre: botanical shochu
as a chill highball or chill tonic

45ml ¥1,265 tax included

CONTENTS

Ichikikushikino, west coast of the Satsuma Peninsula



Mt Kanmuri, Ichikikushikino



Mt Kanmuri (Nishidake), the sacred peak of the Xu Fu legend

Hamada Shuzo, Denzoin-gura

Barley shochu with a breeze of spice: as free as a gin.

Hamada Shuzo, founded in 1868 in Ichikikushikino, Kagoshima, opened up the market for aromatic shochu with DAIYAME. In 2023 it proposed a new genre: botanical shochu. CHILL GREEN SPICY & CITRUS starts from a barley shochu and dresses it in maqaw, a rare Taiwanese mountain pepper: lemongrass-like citrus with a sansho spiciness on the finish. The distillery suggests a “chill highball” with soda or a “chill tonic”. Even the wine-style bottle invites a new way of drinking shochu.

Photo: Ray_go / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Hamada Shuzo, Denzoin-gura

HAMADA

Ichikikushikino, Kagoshima | founded 1868

CHILL GREEN BITTER & TROPICAL

Botanical barley shochu | with rare Galaxy hops



ALCOHOL

25%

Otsurui shochu・barley (Australia & Japan)・barley koji

BOTANICAL

Galaxy hops

Pink grapefruit and a pleasant bitterness

MATERIAL

Barley & barley koji

720ml

Beer hops in a shochu
tropical aromas and
a gently bitter finish

45ml ¥1,265 tax included

Ichikikushikino, west coast of the Satsuma Peninsula



Kushikino fishing port



Hamada Shuzo, Denzoin-gura

Kushikino port, home of a tuna fleet

A barley shochu wrapped in hops.

The other CHILL GREEN uses the rare Galaxy hop. Tropical notes of pink grapefruit and passion fruit and the pleasant bitterness only hops can give lie over the gentle umami of a barley shochu. Hops give beer its aroma and bitterness; using them to perfume a spirit is an idea close to the botanicals of gin. The distillery recommends a “chill tonic”, one part shochu to two of tonic; on a hot day, soda works too.

Photo: Ray go / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Hamada Shuzo, Denzoin-gura

HAMADA

Ichikikushikino, Kagoshima | founded 1868

Daiyame

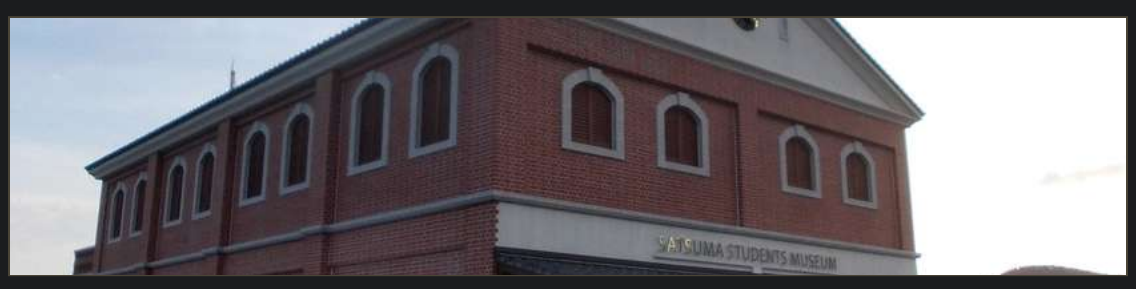
Aromatic honkaku sweet-potato shochu | a lychee-like nose



ALCOHOL
25%
ABV

MATERIAL
Kojuku-imo
Specially matured sweet potato・rice koji

RELEASE
Sept 2018
The spark of the aromatic-shochu boom



The Satsuma Students Museum at Hashima

"Daiyame" is Kagoshima dialect for
an evening drink that melts the day away
lychee aromas, best with soda

45ml ¥968 tax included

Ichikikushikino, west coast of the Satsuma Peninsula



Hamada Shuzo, Denzoin-gura

Hamada's Satsuma Kinzangura, inside the old gold mine



Hamada's Satsuma Kinzangura: clay jars in a tunnel of the old Kushikino gold mine

Lychee from a sweet potato, for the evening drink.

In Kagoshima dialect, daiyame is the evening drink that washes away the day's tiredness. Released in 2018 by Hamada's Denzoin-gura, this shochu is brewed from kojuku-imo, sweet potatoes matured by the distillery's own method, and draws out a floral, lychee-like aroma unheard of in imo shochu. Potato, koji and yeast decide the aroma: rice-koji enzymes make the sugar, the yeast creates the perfume. The distillery recommends it with soda; on the rocks the aroma stands out. A good first shochu.

Photo: メルビル / CC BY-SA 4.0 ・ STA3816 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Komasa Jyozo

KOMASA

Hiyoshi, Hioki, Kagoshima | founded 1883

MELLOWED KOZURU EXCELLENCE

Oak-aged honkaku rice shochu



ALCOHOL
41%
ABV

MATERIAL
Rice & rice koji
Aged in new oak casks

SINCE
1957
Heir to Japan’s first cask-aged shochu, Mellowed Kozuru

Where the idea of ageing
shochu in oak began
the parent of Kanosuke Distillery

30ml ¥1,595 tax included

目次

Hioki, Satsuma Peninsula



Komasa Jyozo

The old samurai street of Yoshitoshi, Hioki



The fumoto samurai quarter of Yoshitoshi, Hioki, with its stone walls and hedges

Oak-aged shochu that gave birth to a whisky distillery.

Komasa Jyozo, founded in 1883, released Mellowed Kozuru in 1957, the first Japanese shochu matured in oak. Excellence is the top of that line: a rice shochu brewed with rice and rice koji, aged for years in new oak and bottled at 41%. Vanilla, clove and caramelised banana from the cask over the softness of a rice spirit. On the rocks, with soda, or in an Old Fashioned. After half a century of cask-aged shochu, Komasa opened Kanosuke Distillery in 2017, and its old shochu casks live on, re-charred, as whisky casks.

Photo: Sakoppi / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Kikoji-gura Genshu

黄麹蔵 原酒

Kokubu-Kawahara, Kirishima, Kagoshima

Kokubu Shuzo Co., Ltd.

国分酒造

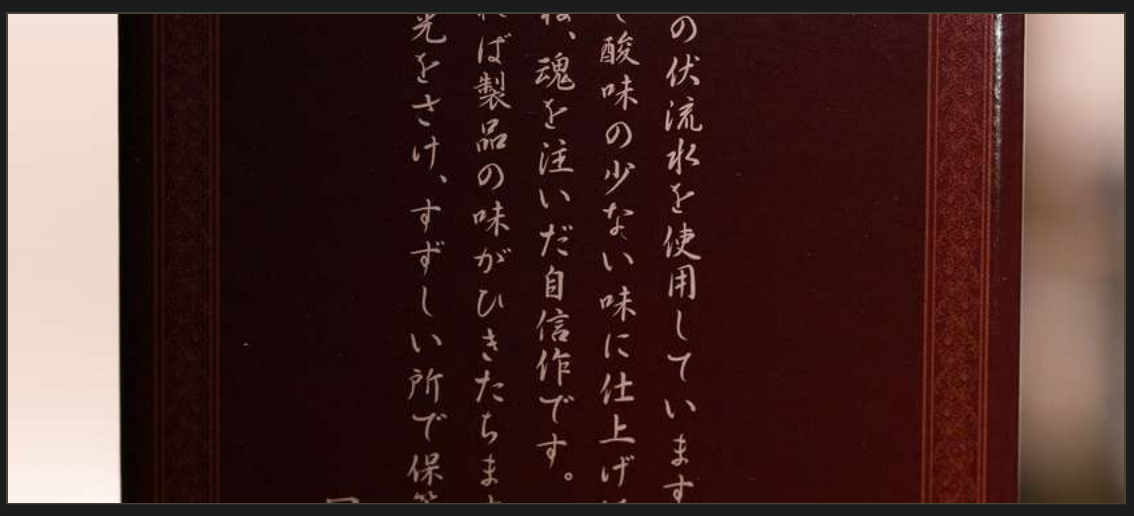
Sweet-potato shochu | Yellow koji | Undiluted, 37%



ALCOHOL
37%
Genshu (undiluted)

KOJI
Yellow
The koji of sake brewing

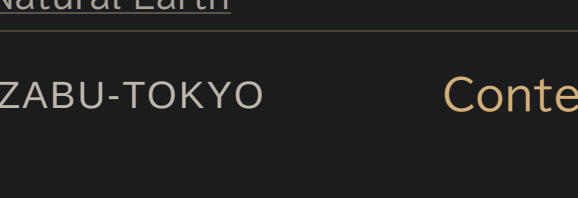
WATER
Kirishima groundwater
Master distiller Nobuhisa Yasuda



From the box: ”a work we are proud of”

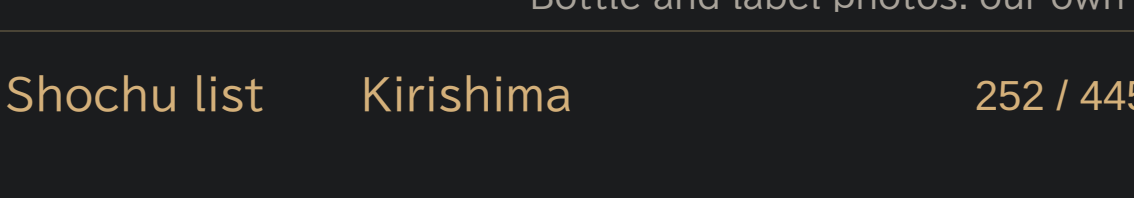
30ml ¥1,428 tax included

Kokubu, Kirishima foothills



Kokubu Shuzo

Onami-ike



a crater lake in the Kirishima mountains, whose groundwater the distillery brews with

Sweet-potato shochu made with sake's yellow koji, bottled undiluted at 37%.

Most sweet-potato shochu is made with black or white koji; this one uses yellow koji, the mould of sake brewing. The box says it ”brings out the aroma and umami unique to yellow koji, with little acidity”. The brewing water is groundwater from the Kirishima mountains. Master distiller Nobuhisa Yasuda calls it a work of long study, and it is bottled undiluted at 37%. The distillery suggests it on the rocks or with water.

Photo: Raita Futo / CC BY 2.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle label and box
Bottle and label photos: our own

CONTENTS

KIRISHIMA | Between the volcanoes and Kinko Bay

Kirishima and Kokubu Shuzo 霧島・国分

A chain of volcanoes and the plain of the Amori River Kirishima, Kagoshima



Map: Natural Earth (schematic)

The mountains of Japan's first national park are the source of the water.

Kirishima city, formed in 2005 from Kokubu and six towns, is the second most populous in Kagoshima. To the north run the Kirishima mountains, a chain of more than twenty volcanoes; to the south lie Kinko Bay and Sakurajima. Kirishima became one of Japan’s first national parks in 1934. Kokubu takes its name from the provincial temple of ancient Osumi, whose capital stood here. Kokubu Shuzo makes sweet-potato shochu in the hamlet of Kawahara, north of the plain, with groundwater from the Kirishima range.

目次



Kirishima Jingu
shrine of the god Ninigi; its halls of 1715 became a National Treasure in 2022



Shinmoedake and Takachiho-no-mine
Shinmoedake, which erupted in 2011, and behind it the 1,574 m peak of the ”descent from heaven” myth



Maruo Falls
a 23 m waterfall of warm water from the Kirishima hot springs



Inukai Falls
36 m high. Sakamoto Ryoma, here with his wife Oryo in 1866, wrote that it seemed ”out of this world”



Hayato-zuka
stone pagodas and guardian kings thought to date from the late Heian period; a national historic site



Uenohara site
an early-Jomon settlement found on the Kokubu upland; a national historic site

Kirishima and Kokubu Shuzo through time Old capital, new shochu



Label: ”a drop with the master distiller’s soul in it”, 37%

- 713 Osumi province is split from Hyuga; its capital and provincial temple later stand at Kokubu
- 1604 Shimazu Yoshihisa builds Maizuru castle at Kokubu and lays out the town
- 1934 Kirishima becomes one of Japan’s first national parks
- 1992 Nobuhisa Yasuda becomes master distiller at Kokubu Shuzo
- 1997 He releases a sweet-potato shochu made with potato koji and no rice at all
- 2005 Kirishima city formed by merger
- 2022 The main halls of Kirishima Jingu become a National Treasure

Sources: Kirishima city; Ministry of the Environment; Agency for Cultural Affairs; Kokubu Shuzo Photos: MaedaAkihiko / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Motamota / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Naokijp / CC BY-SA 4.0 · The Modern Polymath / CC BY-SA 4.0 · そらみみ / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Masahiko OHKUBO / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

Kokubu Shuzo

KOKUBU Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima | toji Nobuhisa Yasuda

Jun-imo

100% sweet-potato shochu | sweet-potato koji



ALCOHOL
34%
ABV

MATERIAL
Sweet potato
Southern Kyushu・no rice at all

KOJI
Potato koji (yellow)
Unfiltered, unadjusted

The first distillery to make a 100% sweet-potato shochu

no rice koji at all

30ml ¥1,595 tax included

Kokubu, below the Kirishima mountains



Kokubu plain and Kinko Bay



The Kokubu plain and Kinko Bay from the Kokubu Hi-Tech observation deck

Even the koji is potato: not a grain of rice.

Most sweet-potato shochu saccharifies the steamed potato with enzymes from rice koji. Kokubu Shuzo perfected koji grown on sweet potato itself and was the first to release a 100% sweet-potato shochu with no rice at all. Jun-imo, from the Kokubu distillery led by toji Nobuhisa Yasuda, is made from potato koji and potato alone, bottled at 34%. Without the sweetness of rice, the aroma and umami of the potato rise straight from the glass, with a faintly fruity edge. Change what the koji grows on and the spirit changes: saccharification, in a glass.

Photo: Ray go / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Kokubu Shuzo

KOKUBU Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima | toji Nobuhisa Yasuda

Tsurunashi Genji 34%

Honkaku sweet-potato shochu | a Meiji-era potato revived



ALCOHOL
34%
ABV

MATERIAL
Tsurunashi Genji
Rice koji from Kirishima Yumetoiro · aged koji

HISTORY
c. 1907
A heritage variety revived in Kirishima

A potato that had vanished,
regrown from a handful of plants
by local farmers and the distillery

30ml ¥1,595 tax included

目次

Kokubu, below the Kirishima mountains



Uenohara Jomon-no-Mori, Kokubu



Uenohara Jomon-no-Mori, a reconstructed settlement of 9,500 years ago

Kokubu Shuzo

A Meiji-era potato, back after a century. Concentrated.

Tsurunashi Genji spread around 1907 and vanished when the high-yielding Koganesengan arrived. In 2003 farmer Hidetoki Taniyama of Kareigawa, Fukuyama, raised it again from ten seedlings propagated by Kokubu Chuo High School, and with Kokubu Shuzo brought it back. This 34% bottling is lightly diluted so the potato's character stays dense: steamed Tsurunashi Genji, saccharified and fermented with aged koji grown on Kirishima Yumetoiro rice, then distilled once. A sticky sweetness and an old-fashioned potato aroma that Koganesengan lacks. Neat or on the rocks.

Photo: Ray go / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Kokubu Shuzo

KOKUBU Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima | toji Nobuhisa Yasuda

Tsurunashi Genji 26%

Honkaku sweet-potato shochu | the everyday bottling of the revived potato



ALCOHOL
26%
ABV

MATERIAL
Tsurunashi Genji
Rice koji from Kirishima
Yumetoiro・aged koji

STYLE
Round sweetness
Opens up with hot water

potato grown
AMeiji-eraby Kirishima farmers for Kokubu
for the daily glass

45ml ¥1,265 tax included

CONTENTS

Kokubu, below the Kirishima mountains



Kokubu Shuzo

Great torii of Kagoshima Shrine, Hayato



The great torii of Kagoshima Shrine at Hayato

The revived Meiji potato, at everyday strength.

Kokubu’s signature shochu is made only from Tsurunashi Genji, the heritage potato it revived from ten seedlings with Kirishima farmers; this is the standard 26% bottling. Steamed potato is saccharified by aged koji grown on Kirishima Yumetoiro rice while yeast turns the sugar to alcohol in the same vessel, the parallel fermentation typical of shochu, then distilled once. Round sweetness and a soft potato aroma that open up with hot water. Try it the Kagoshima way, oyuwari: hot water first, then the shochu.

Photo: Saigen Jiro / CC0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Kokubu Shuzo

KOKUBU Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima | toji Nobuhisa Yasuda

Yasuda

100% sweet-potato shochu | Tsurunashi Genji, potato koji



ALCOHOL
26%
ABV

KOJI
Potato koji (Tsurunashi Genji)
No rice at all

AROMA
Lychee, peach, strawberry
Released 2013

Named after toji Nobuhisa Yasuda
made from potato alone,
it smelled of fruit

45ml ¥1,265 tax included

目次

Kokubu, below the Kirishima mountains



Mt Karakuni and Byakushi pond



Mt Karakuni and Byakushi pond in the Kirishima range

Brewed from potato alone, it smelled of lychee.

Tsurunashi Genji brewed with koji grown on the same potato and not a grain of rice: a 100% potato shochu named after Nobuhisa Yasuda, toji since 1992, who in 1997 released the first imo shochu made with potato koji. It began by accident: a batch of damaged Tsurunashi Genji was brewed anyway, and after half a year in storage an unexpected fruit aroma emerged. Lychee, peach and strawberry on the nose, potato sweetness and a hint of dark chocolate. Well chilled and neat, or on the rocks.

Photo: Peter Chovanec / CC BY 2.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Kokubu Shuzo

KOKUBU Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima | toji Nobuhisa Yasuda

Yasuda Hamakomachi

100% sweet-potato shochu | an orange-fleshed potato



ALCOHOL
26%
ABV

MATERIAL
Hamakomachi
Southern Kyushu・potato koji

VARIETY
Orange flesh, rich in carotene
Tropical-fruit aromas

The Yasuda series,
a different variety
Hamakomachi 100%

45ml ¥1,265 tax included

Kokubu, below the Kirishima mountains



Sakurajima from the Kirishima hot springs



Sakurajima seen from Hayashida Onsen in the Kokubu Shuzo Kirishima hot-spring belt

Tropical aromas from an orange-fleshed potato.

A varietal sibling of Yasuda. Hamakomachi, an orange-fleshed sweet potato rich in carotene, is gathered from fields across southern Kyushu and brewed with potato koji into a 100% potato shochu. Orange potatoes smell sweet, like carrot or pumpkin; distilled, they turn towards mango and apricot. Where the Tsurunashi Genji Yasuda is lychee, this one is tropical. The variety of potato becomes the aroma of the spirit. Chilled and neat, or with soda.

Photo: 663highland / CC BY 2.5
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Kokubu Shuzo

KOKUBU Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima | toji Nobuhisa Yasuda

Flamingo Orange

Honkaku sweet-potato shochu | the pioneer of aromatic shochu



ALCOHOL
26%
ABV

MATERIAL
Satsumamasari
Potato koji・100% potato
・aroma yeast No.1

STILL
Low-temperature distillation
Released June 2018

Anorange-like citrus aroma from monoterpene alcohols, the same compounds found in wine and grappa

45ml ¥1,375 tax included

目次

Kokubu, below the Kirishima mountains



The Kokubu plain below the Kirishima range



The Kokubu plain and Kinko Bay at the foot of the Kirishima range

A potato shochu that smells of orange.

In June 2018 this bottle changed what a sweet-potato shochu could be. Satsumamasari potatoes are brewed with potato koji, fermented with Kagoshima aroma yeast No.1, a strain developed by the prefecture, and distilled at low temperature. What rises from the glass is a bold orange-peel aroma, from monoterpene alcohols, the compounds also found in wine and grappa, created here by potato, koji and yeast together. On the rocks, with soda, or in a wine glass.

Photo: Ray_go / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Kokubu Shuzo

KOKUBU Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima | toji Nobuhisa Yasuda

Sunny Cream

Honkaku sweet-potato shochu | the aromatic series



ALCOHOL
27%
ABV

KOJI
Potato koji
Fermented with an aroma yeast

AROMA
Sweet and creamy
Vanilla, ripe fruit

Kokubu's aromatic series,
the one after Flamingo Orange
a dessert in a glass

45ml ¥1,375 tax included

Kokubu, below the Kirishima mountains



Sakurajima from the Kirishima heights



Sakurajima across Kinko Bay from the Kirishima heights

Cream in the sunshine: a sweet-scented potato shochu.

Having opened the door to aromatic shochu with Flamingo Orange, Kokubu changed the combination of potato, koji and yeast to create this one. As the name promises, the aroma is round and sweet, like vanilla cream and ripe fruit. Sweet-smelling, yet sugar-free: everything in the nose comes from the yeast's work in fermentation and from the potato and koji. On the rocks the sweetness unfolds slowly; with soda it turns light, like a cream soda. A glass for after dinner, in place of dessert.

Photo: 663highland / CC BY 2.5
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Kokubu Shuzo

KOKUBU Kokubu, Kirishima, Kagoshima | toji Nobuhisa Yasuda

Cool Mint Green

Honkaku sweet-potato shochu | aromatic series No.2



ALCOHOL
26%
ABV

MATERIAL
Satsumamasari
Rice koji・aroma yeast

AROMA
Mint-like, herbal
A touch of bitterness and coolness

notes like a gin
Green-herbcooling when cut with water
no mint added

45ml ¥1,375 tax included

目次

Kokubu, below the Kirishima mountains



Great torii of Kagoshima Shrine, Hayato



Kagoshima Shrine’s great torii at Hayato, ten minutes from the distillery

No mint inside, yet it tastes of mint.

The second release in Kokubu’s aromatic series. A herbal, mint-like aroma and a faint bitterness are drawn out purely from potato, koji, yeast and distillation; no mint or herbs are added. After a green, gin-like herbal impression comes a soft, peach-like sweetness. Cut with water the coolness spreads; it also suits soda or tonic. Gin perfumes its spirit with botanicals; shochu creates its aromas in fermentation. The same “herbal” note, born in completely different ways.

Photo: Saigen Jiro / CC0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Nakamura Shuzojo

NAKAMURA Kokubu-Minato, Kirishima, Kagoshima | founded 1888

Flare 2024 [+innovative]

Honkaku sweet-potato shochu | Fukumurasaki · three-koji blend · wild house yeast



ALCOHOL
40%
550 ml

MATERIAL
Fukumurasaki
Purple potato · white, black & yellow koji

YEAST
No yeast added
House wild yeast · hand-made koji

On ice: raspberry, rose, passion fruit · warm: rosehip (the maker's words)

30ml ¥1,867 tax included

Kokubu-Minato, Kirishima



Kokubu plain and Kinko Bay



The Kokubu plain on Kinko Bay; Nakamura Shuzojo stands at Kokubu-Minato on the shore

Purple potato, three kojis, house yeast: imo shochu at the frontier.

Nakamura Shuzojo, founded in 1888 at Kokubu-Minato in Kirishima, releases its boldest ideas under the [+innovative] label. Flare 2024 is brewed from Fukumurasaki, a naturally grown purple sweet potato, with hand-made white, black and yellow koji and only the brewery's own wild yeast. Chilled: raspberry, rose, passion fruit; warm: rosehip.

Photo: Ray go / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Manzen Shuzo

MANZEN Nagamizu, Kirishima, Kagoshima | owner Toshihiro Manzen

Manzen

Honkaku sweet-potato shochu | black koji, clay-jar mash, wooden still



ALCOHOL
25%
ABV

MATERIAL
Koganesengan
Koji rice Hitomebore from Mitane, Akita

KOJI
Black koji (Kawachi NK)
Hand-made koji · clay jars · wooden still

Revived in 1999 in the Kirishima hills the 1922 distillery's third generation, Toshihiro Manzen

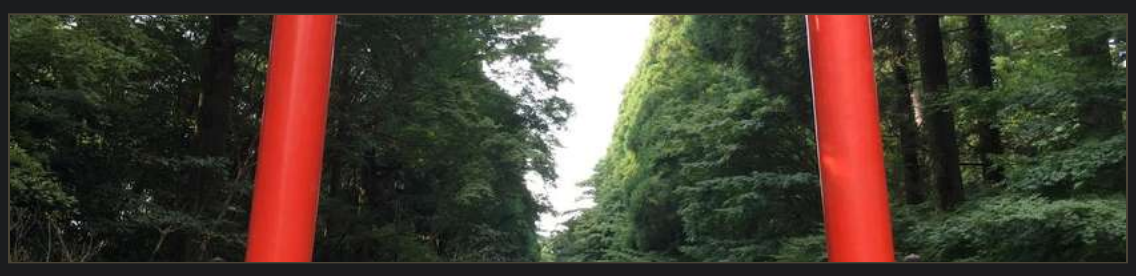
45ml ¥1,265 tax included

目次

Below Kirishima Shrine



Approach to Kirishima Shrine



The torii on the approach to Kirishima Shrine; the distillery stands in these woods

From a wooden still: the scent of the Kirishima forest.

Manzen Shuzo was founded in 1922, fell silent, and was revived in 1999 when third-generation Toshihiro Manzen built a new distillery in the cedar woods near Kirishima Shrine. Hand-made black koji (Kawachi NK strain), Koganesengan potatoes, koji rice Hitomebore from Mitane in Akita and Kirishima spring water are fermented in clay jars and distilled once in a wooden pot still. Wood heats more gently than copper and is said to give a rounded spirit touched with cedar. Black-koji depth, gentle potato sweetness. Best with hot water.

Photo: 矢野弘幸 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Moriizo Shuzo

MORIIZO Ushine-sakai, Tarumizu, Kagoshima | founded 1885

Gokujo Moriizo (“Gokujo no Itteki”)

Long-aged clay-jar shochu | honkaku sweet-potato shochu



ALCOHOL
25%
ABV

AGED
3 years
In clay jars, in the cave beneath the distillery

METHOD
Clay-jar fermentation
Sweet potato · rice koji · 720 ml



Sakurajima from the Tarumizu ferry

Clay-jar mashes since 1885
sold only by lottery
the first of the “3M”

45ml ¥1,977 tax included

Tarumizu, Osumi Peninsula, across from Sakurajima



Moriizo Shuzo

Ushine shore and Shinjima, Tarumizu



Kinko Bay and Shinjima from Michi-no-Eki Tarumizu at Ushine, the distillery’s shore

Three years in clay jars, in a cave facing Sakurajima.

Ushine-sakai in Tarumizu looks across Kinko Bay to Sakurajima. Moriizo Shuzo, founded there in 1885, has fermented its mashes in Japanese clay jars from the start, uses contract-grown sweet potatoes, and makes so little that bottles are sold by telephone lottery. Gokujo Moriizo, formerly Gokujo no Itteki (“the finest drop”), rests Moriizo spirit for three years in clay jars in a cave beneath the distillery. The edges soften, the sweetness clears, the texture turns silken. Neat at room temperature, or with warm water.

Photo: Sanjo / CC BY-SA 4.0 · The Modern Polymath / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Wakashio Shuzo

WAKASHIO

Shibushi, Kagoshima | founded 1968

GLOW EP05 Ride the waves

Aromatic honkaku sweet-potato shochu | GLOW series, episode 5



ALCOHOL
25%
ABV

SERIES
GLOW
A limited series, reinvented every year since 2018

AWARD
Shochu Grand Prix chosen by liquor shops
Imo category winner 3 years running, Hall of Fame

From a distillery on Shibushi Bay
an imo shochu “devoted to aroma”
method undisclosed

45ml ¥1,265 tax included

目次

Shibushi Bay, Osumi Peninsula



Wakashio Shuzo

Shibushi Bay from Mt Jingaku



Shibushi Bay from Mt Jingaku

Ride the waves: episode five, bursting with fruit.

Wakashio Shuzo, founded in 1968 on Shibushi Bay, has released GLOW since 2018: a sweet-potato shochu devoted to aroma, in limited editions whose theme, contents and design change every year. Episode 5, “Ride the waves”, appeared in 2022 and won the imo-shochu category of the Shochu Grand Prix chosen by Japan’s liquor shops three years running, entering its hall of fame. A bright fruitiness from the potato itself; the method is the distillery’s secret. The maker’s serve: one part shochu to three of soda.

Photo: Sanjo / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Marunishi Shuzo

MARUNISHI

Futsuhara, Ariake, Shibushi, Kagoshima

Kanji

Honkaku sweet-potato shochu | hand-made, jar-fermented | GI Satsuma



ALCOHOL
25%
1,800 ml

MATERIAL
Sweet potato
Kagoshima potatoes・rice koji

METHOD
Hand-made, clay jars
Fresh potatoes, trimmed by hand

"Kanji is a shochu for those who love it with hot water" from the back label

45ml ¥1,265 tax included

Ariake, Shibushi, Osumi Peninsula



Shibushi Bay and Biro Island



Biro Island in Shibushi Bay, a national natural monument for its subtropical forest

Marunishi Shuzo

A tareyama shochu, for those who love it with hot water.

Marunishi Shuzo distils at Futsuhara in Ariake, Shibushi, on the Osumi Peninsula. Its back label reads: "The tareyama shochu our elders loved. Kanji is a shochu for people who love it with hot water." Tareyama (dareyame) is Kagoshima dialect for the evening drink that heals the day. Fresh potatoes are trimmed by hand, so the spirit is never showy; warmed, it gives a soft chestnut-like aroma. Hand-made in clay jars, for everyday evenings.

Photo: Sanjo / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Mitake Shuzo

MITAKE

Anbo, Yakushima, Kagoshima

Mitake

Honkaku sweet-potato shochu | made on Yakushima | World Heritage island water



ALCOHOL
25%
1,800 ml

MATERIAL
Sweet potato
Japanese potatoes・rice koji (Thai & Japanese rice)

WATER
Yakushima spring water
One of Japan's 100 famous waters



The town of Anbo, home of Mitake Shuzo, below the mountains

Maker's serve: equal parts shochu and hot water served body-warm

45ml ¥1,045 tax included

目次

Anbo, Yakushima



Mitake Shuzo

Moss forest of Shiratani Unsuikyo



The moss forest of Shiratani Unsuikyo

Brewed with the water of a rain-soaked island.

Yakushima became Japan's first natural World Heritage site in 1993. The rain that feeds its ancient cedar forests is said to fall "35 days a month", and the soft spring water from its granite mountains suits shochu-making. Mitake Shuzo has distilled at Anbo since 1958; Mitake, brewed from Japanese sweet potatoes with rice koji, is the everyday shochu of the island. A modest, gentle potato aroma and the softness of the water. The maker's serve: equal parts shochu and hot water.

Photo: MaedaAkihiko / CC0 · lumoplank / CC0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

Genshu Yakusugi

原酒 屋久杉

Anbo, Yakushima, Kagoshima

Hombo Shuzo Co., Ltd., Yakushima

本坊酒造 屋久島工場

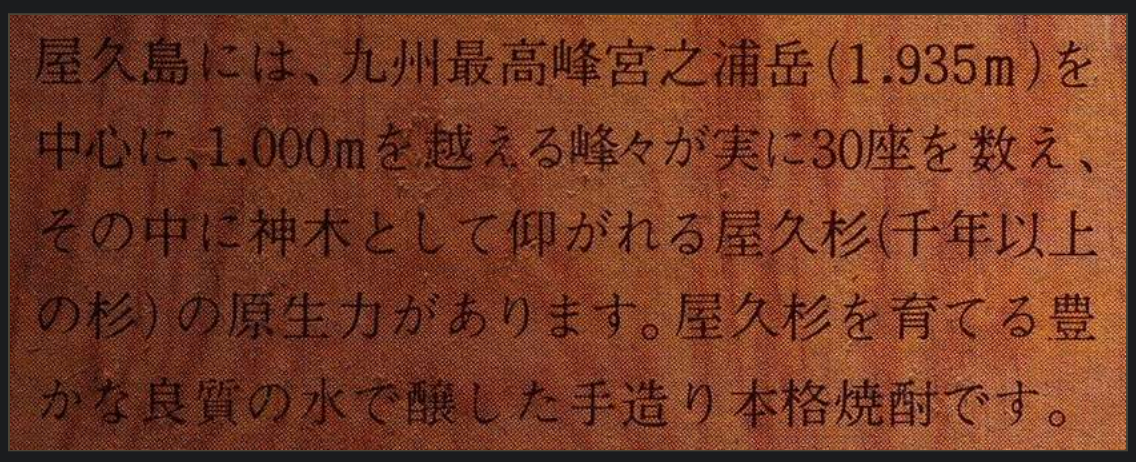
Sweet-potato shochu | Handmade | Undiluted | Ceramic bottle, 720 ml



ALCOHOL
37%
Genshu (undiluted)

MATERIAL
Sweet potato
Sweet potato, rice koji

SINCE 1960
Handmade in clay jars
Yakushima Densho-gura, Anbo



From the box: ”brewed with the water that raises the Yakusugi cedars”

30ml ¥1,318 tax included

Anbo, eastern Yakushima



Hombo Shuzo Yakushima Densho-gura

Anbo, the distillery’s home port



the mouth of the Anbo River, with the island’s mountains behind

A handmade, undiluted shochu from the water that grows thousand-year cedars.

On the World Heritage island of Yakushima, Hombo Shuzo has made shochu in the port town of Anbo since 1960, fermenting in clay jars more than a century old and making its koji by hand. Rain running off the granite island picks up few minerals and stays very soft. The box calls this ”handmade shochu brewed with the rich, good water that raises the Yakusugi cedars”. It is bottled undiluted at 37% in a rough ceramic flask ringed like a cedar trunk.

Photo: jillllybean / CC BY-SA 2.0 Product info: bottle label and box; Chikyu-no-arukikata (2022)
Map: Natural Earth; MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed Bottle and label photos: our own

CONTENTS

YAKUSHIMA | The Alps on the ocean

Yakushima and Densho-gura 屋久島

A World Heritage island of rain, cedar and granite Yakushima, Kagoshima



Map: MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed

The island where it is said to rain "thirty-five days a month".

A nearly round island some 130 km around, about 60 km south of Kyushu. Mt Miyanoura (1,936 m), the highest peak in Kyushu, and a mass of summits over 1,000 m earn it the name ”Alps on the ocean”. Wet sea winds hit the mountains and drop more than 8,000 mm of rain a year in places. Only cedars over 1,000 years old are called Yakusugi, and in 1993 the island became one of Japan’s first World Natural Heritage sites. Anbo, where Hombo Shuzo distils, is the port at the foot of the forest railway that once carried the cedar out.



Jomon Sugi
the stoutest Yakusugi of all, 16.4 m round, in forest at about 1,300 m



Mt Miyanoura
at 1,936 m, the highest peak in Kyushu



Senpiro Falls
a drop of about 60 m beside one vast slab of granite



Yakusugi Land
about 40 minutes by car from Anbo: trails and suspension bridges through cedar forest above 1,000 m



Yakushika
the small sika deer of Yakushima



Yakushima macaque
found only here. ”20,000 people, 20,000 deer, 20,000 monkeys”, the saying went

Yakushima and Hombo Shuzo through time Clay jars on the island of cedars



Box top: ”undiluted sweet-potato shochu, handmade in clay jars with Yakushima water”

c. 1640	On the advice of the scholar Tomari Jochiku, cedar felling begins in earnest; roof shingles become the island’s tax
1923	The Anbo forest railway opens to Kosugidani
1960	Hombo Shuzo begins making shochu on Yakushima
1966	The Jomon Sugi is found
1993	Listed with Shirakami-Sanchi as Japan’s first World Natural Heritage
2016	Hombo adds a whisky ageing cellar at the distillery

Sources: Yakushima town; Ministry of the Environment; Forestry Agency; Hombo Shuzo; Chikyu-no-arukikata (2022) Photos: Raita Futo / CC BY 2.0 · Raita Futo / CC BY 2.0 · Makoto Kaneda / CC BY 3.0 · Grendelkhan / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Chris 73 / CC BY-SA 3.0 · Grendelkhan / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

KOKUTO SHOCHU | Made only in the Amami islands

Kokuto shochu 黒糖焼酎

A spirit of the sugarcane islands, made nowhere else



Cane fields on Kikaijima sugarcane covers the flat island of raised coral

Brown sugar and rice koji: a pairing the law allows only in the Amami islands.

1 Amami only
It can be made only in the Amami islands of Kagoshima; made the same way elsewhere it is ”spirits”

2 Kokuto + rice koji
Brown sugar boiled down from cane juice, always with rice koji: the fork in the road from rum

3 Distilled once, no sugar
One pass through a pot still. The sweet aroma stays; the sugar does not



The Amami islands lie between Kagoshima and Okinawa and have made brown sugar since the Edo period. Spirits from that sugar spread after the war, when rice was short and sugar could not be sold. When the islands returned to Japan in 1953, the spirit was recognised as shochu, for Amami alone, on condition that rice koji be used. Born of the same cane as rum, it is a Japanese shochu with the savour of koji. We pour four, from three distilleries on Amami Oshima.

In this chapter tap to jump

2 How is it different from rum? ›
3 Four centuries of sugar ›
4 1953: reversion and an exception ›
5 Why only Amami? The law ›
6 How kokuto shochu is made ›
7 The islands (map) ›
8 How to drink it; our four ›
◆ The four bottles and Amami Oshima ›

Map: Natural Earth; MLIT National Land Numerical Information (administrative areas), processed Photos: tsuda / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

KOKUTO vs RUM | From the same cane

How is it different from rum?

The fork: solid brown sugar, rice koji and a single distillation



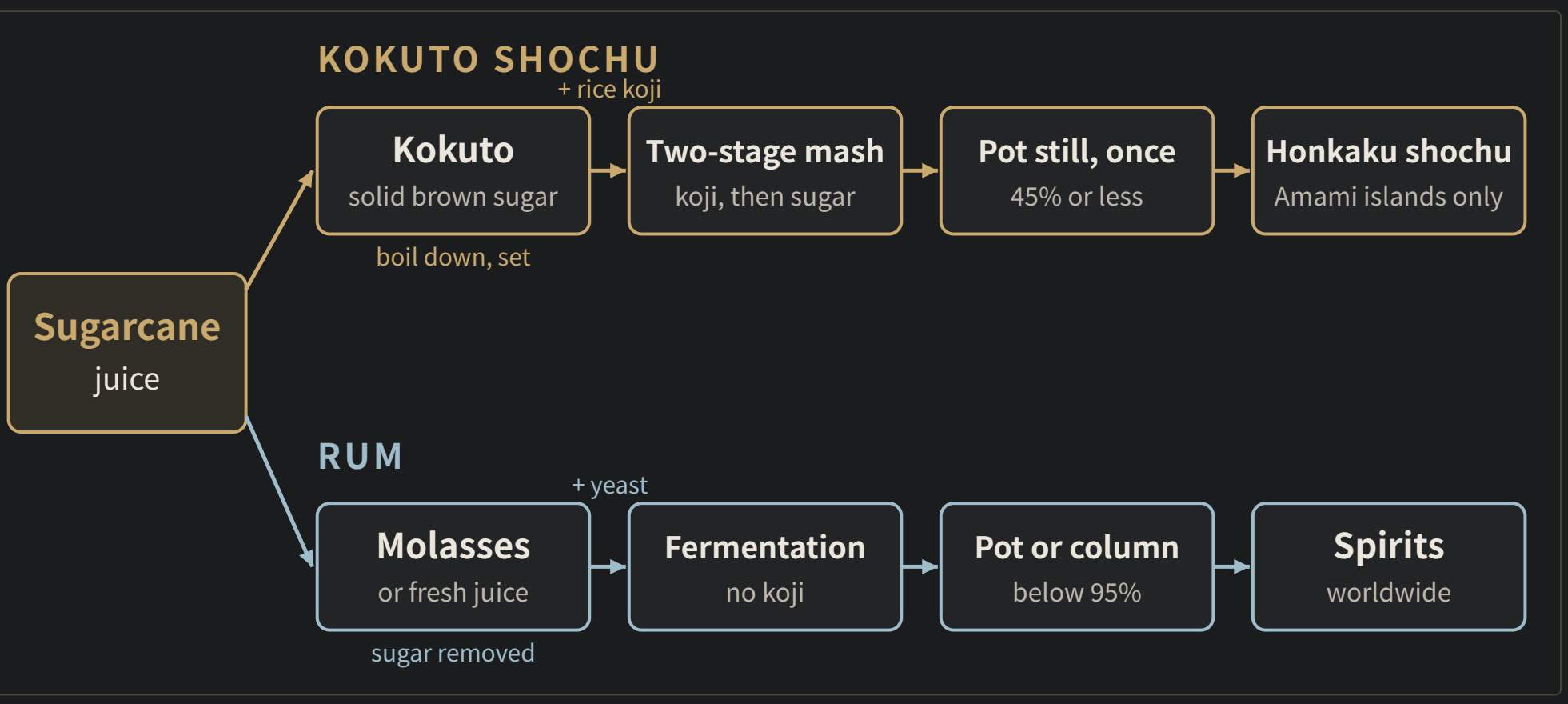
VS



Kokuto: cane juice boiled down whole and set (Kikaijima)

Molasses: the syrup left once the sugar crystals are taken out

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	Kokuto shochu	Rum
Raw material	Kokuto: cane juice boiled down whole and set (non-centrifugal sugar)	Mostly molasses, what is left after sugar is taken out; some from fresh juice
Koji	Rice koji is required; the first mash is koji alone	None: yeast ferments the sugar directly
Distillation	Once, in a pot still; 45% ABV or less	Pot or column still; below 95%
Additions	Honkaku shochu adds nothing but water	Some are spiced or sweetened
Where	The Amami islands only	Anywhere in the world
Japanese tax law	Pot-distilled shochu (honkaku shochu)	Spirits

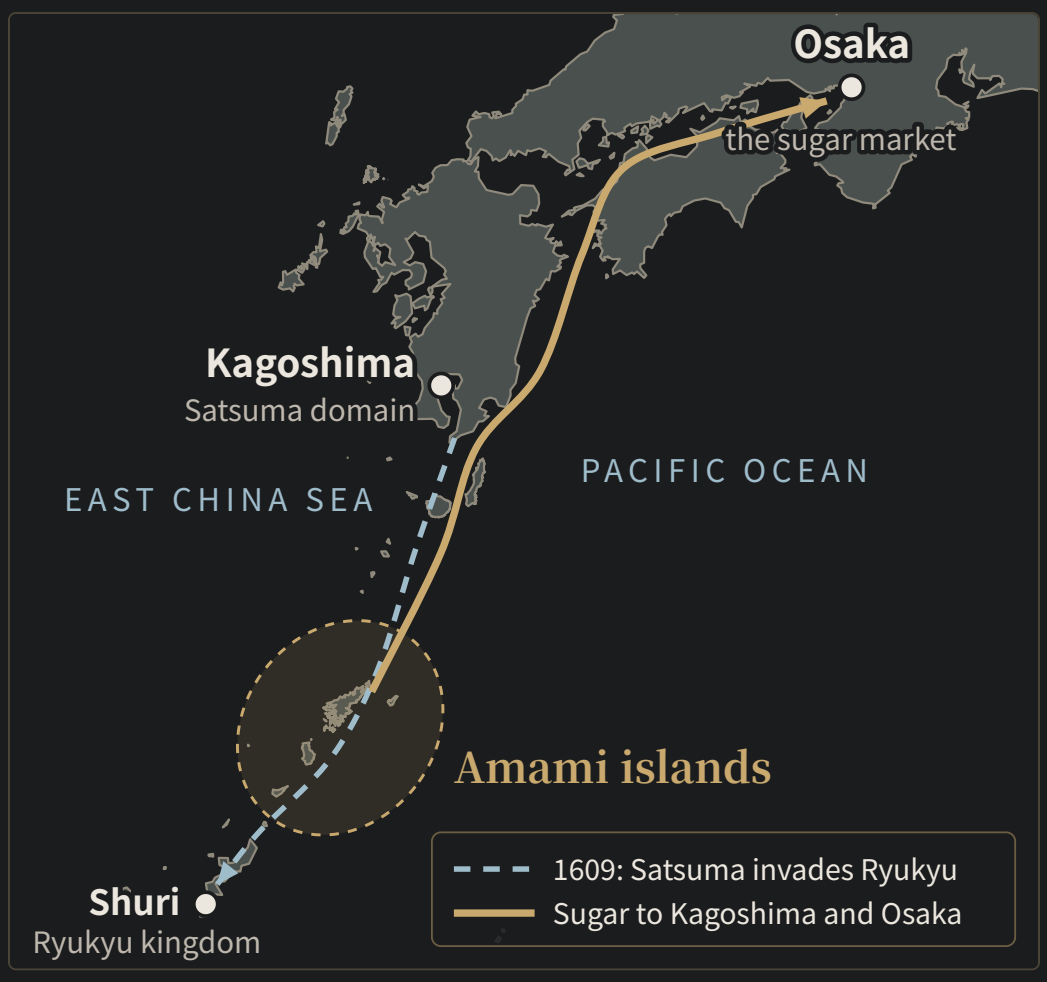
> And in the glass? Mashed with koji and distilled once, kokuto shochu layers the soft sweetness of brown sugar over the savoury note of koji. No sugar survives distillation, so neither spirit contains any.

Sources: Liquor Tax Act art. 3; Kagoshima University; ALIC Sugar Information; Suntory rum guide Photos: Takeshi Kuboki / CC BY 2.0 · Badagnani / CC BY 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

HISTORY 1 | The cane arrives

Four centuries of sugar

Brown sugar was the islands' treasure, and their burden





An ox-driven cane press
An ox walked the beam round to turn the rollers: how island sugar was once made (this one stands on Ishigaki, Okinawa)

Sugarcane
the jointed stalks hold the sweet juice; pressed and boiled down, it becomes kokuto

The Amami islands came under the Ryukyu kingdom around the fifteenth century and, after Satsuma invaded Ryukyu in 1609, under direct Satsuma rule. The domain saw its chance in the cane that grew on these subtropical islands: brown sugar sold dear in Osaka and became the key to repairing its ruined finances. Islanders paid their tax in sugar instead of rice, and in time the domain bought every block they made. The years when they were forbidden even to taste their own sugar are remembered as the ”brown-sugar hell”.

1609	Satsuma invades Ryukyu; the Amami islands come under its direct rule
c. 1610	By tradition, Sunao Kawachi of Yamato village brings cane seedlings home from China
1690s	Sugar making spreads as an island industry (the view now favoured by historians)
1745	Tax is to be paid in sugar instead of rice
1777	The domain begins compulsory purchase of all sugar
1830	Under the reforms of Zusho Hirosato the monopoly is tightened; trade within the islands is banned
1850s	The exiled samurai Nagoya Sagenta records a spirit made from cane juice in his Nanto Zatsuwa
1870s	Islanders rise to demand free trade in sugar as the monopoly lingers into the Meiji era

> And what did islanders drink? Nanto Zatsuwa shows spirits made from chinquapin nuts, cycad, millet and sugarcane. But sugar was the domain’s revenue, and turning it into drink was not officially allowed.

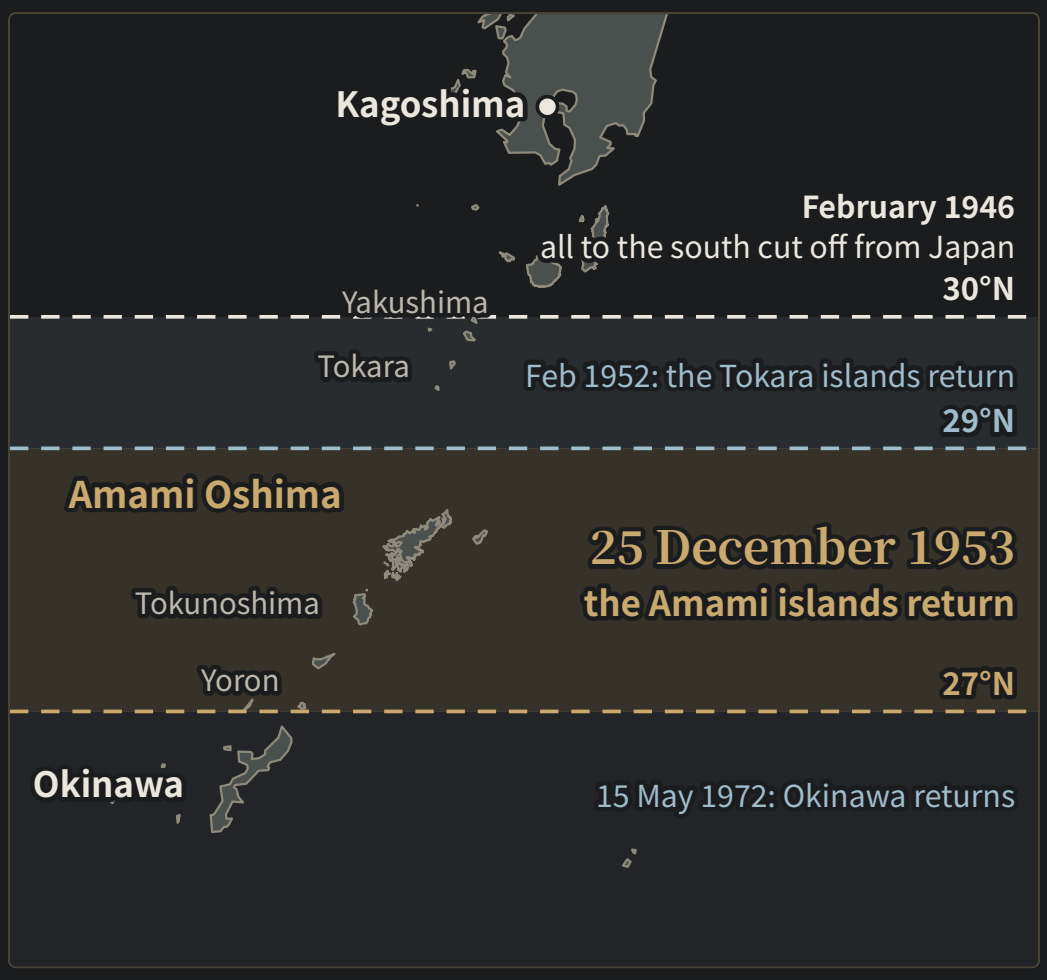
Sources: Kagoshima Prefecture; MAFF; Japan Tourism Agency multilingual commentary; Nagoya Sagenta, Nanto Zatsuwa. Map: Natural Earth; MLIT National Land Numerical Information (administrative areas), processed Photos: Ryan McBride / CC BY 2.0 · Sarah and Jason / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

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HISTORY 2 | 25 December 1953

A Christmas return, and an exception

How a brown-sugar spirit came to be called shochu





The Kagoshima-Amami ferry

Amami from the deck; while the islands were cut off, free travel to the mainland stopped



An old cane truck on Tokunoshima

Before the war Amami made mainly awamori and rice shochu. In 1946 the islands were cut off from Japan and placed under US military government. With traffic to the mainland stopped, rice ran short and unsold brown sugar piled up; spirits made with that sugar spread. On 25 December 1953 the islands returned to Japan, but under the tax law of the day a sugar spirit was not shochu: like rum, it fell into a more heavily taxed class. To protect a drink that had taken root in island life, the state recognised it as shochu, for Amami alone, on condition that rice koji be used.

1946	Islands south of 30°N are separated from Japan under US military government
1953	25 December: the Amami islands return to Japan. There were 33 distilleries at the time
1954	May: the tax regulations first allow brown sugar as a raw material for shochu (the Act applies to Amami from June)
1959	25 December: a National Tax Agency notice limits it to the Oshima Tax Office area, and requires rice koji
c. 1976	Shipments beyond Kagoshima Prefecture begin
2003	In the shochu boom, output peaks at 10,965 kilolitres
2009	”Amami Kokuto Shochu” is registered as a regional collective trademark

33
distilleries in Amami at the 1953 reversion

5
islands with distilleries: Amami Oshima, Kikai, Tokunoshima, Okinoerabu, Yoron

5.9 • 10
9 and 10 May are Amami Kokuto Shochu Day: ko-ku-tou reads 5-9-10

> Why rice koji? Two reasons: that was how Amami had been making it before the return, and it drew a clear line between this spirit and rum.

Sources: Kagoshima University (Newsletter no. 17); Japan Tourism Agency; Japan Patent Office; Amami Oshima brewers’ association. Map: Natural Earth; MLIT National Land Numerical Information (administrative areas), processed Photos: tsuda / CC BY-SA 2.0 • tsuda / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

THE LAW | Reading the rules

Why only Amami?

Three layers of rules protect kokuto shochu

Liquor Tax Act, art. 3 (10)

Definition of pot-distilled shochu

Among the permitted materials: ”sugar (limited to that specified by Cabinet Order), rice koji and water”. Sugar counts as a shochu material only together with rice koji.

Enforcement Order, art. 4 (2)

Which sugar?

Cane juice boiled down without separating the molasses (non-centrifugal sugar), that is, kokuto. Refined white sugar and molasses do not qualify.

National Tax Agency notice

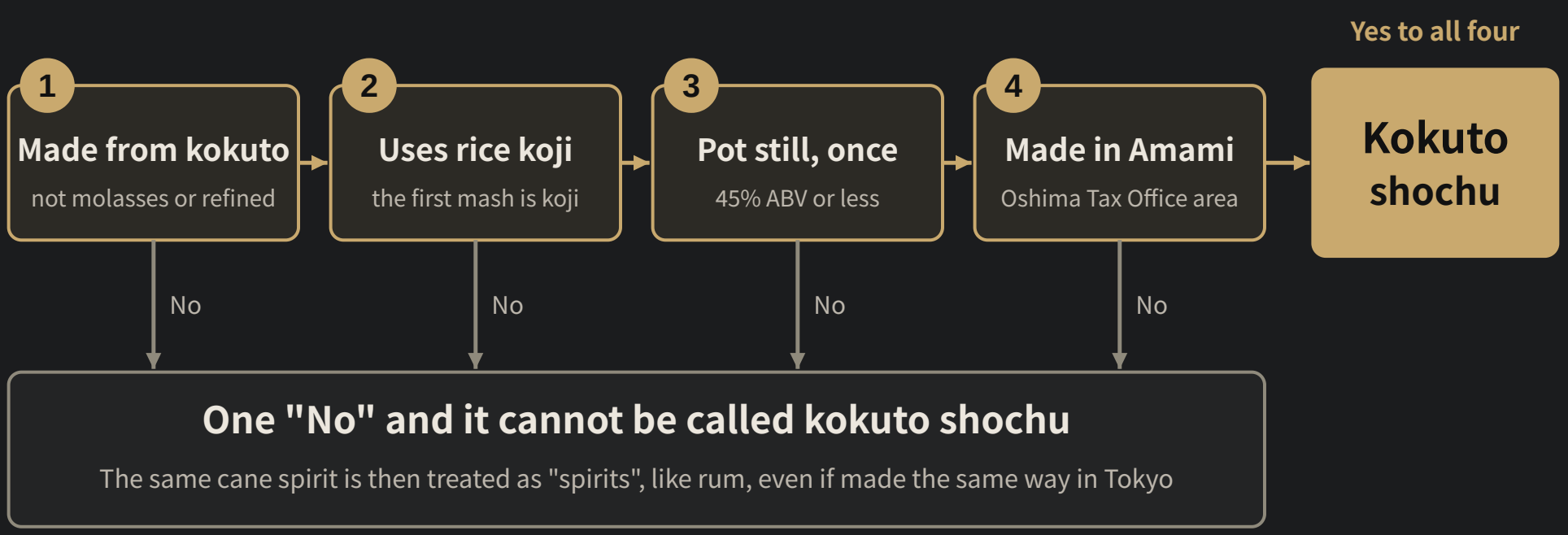
Where it may be made

Shochu from kokuto and rice koji is allowed only when made within the Oshima Tax Office area (the Amami islands), a rule dating from the notice of 25 December 1959.

Six classes of distilled liquor Liquor Tax Act, arts 2 and 3

Continuous-still shochu under 36%	**Pot-still shochu** honkaku shochu; 45% or less **Kokuto shochu**	**Whisky** from malted grain	**Brandy** from fruit	**Neutral alcohol** over 45%	**Spirits** none of the others **Rum, gin, vodka**

Four gates to the name how the tax law sorts a cane spirit





A sugar mill on Tokunoshima; the chimney reads ”sugarcane protects the island”

Can a new distillery open? New licences for kokuto shochu are understood to be unobtainable today; the makers are those that existed at the reversion and their successors.

Is it a geographical indication? Shochu has four GIs: Iki, Kuma, Ryukyu and Satsuma. Amami kokuto shochu is protected instead by the tax-law exception and by a regional collective trademark registered in 2009.

Sources: Liquor Tax Act, Enforcement Order and NTA interpretive notices; Kagoshima University; ALIC; Japan Patent Office Photos: Indiana jo / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

HOW IT IS MADE

How kokuto shochu is made

First the sugar, then a koji mash, then a single distillation

Making kokuto cut, press, boil, set



1 Cut
Harvest runs from winter to spring; cut cane goes straight to the mill (Tokunoshima)



2 Boil
The juice is skimmed and boiled down in open pans



3 Set
The thick syrup is stirred, poured into moulds and left to cool

From sugar to shochu six steps

目次



Brown sugar will ferment on its own, but kokuto shochu starts with a first mash of rice koji, water and yeast. Sugar dissolved in hot water and cooled is added, and the mash ferments for ten days to two weeks, reaching about 14–16% alcohol. It is distilled once in a pot still. Atmospheric distillation, boiling at around 90°C, gives a richer spirit; vacuum distillation, boiling at around 50°C under reduced pressure, gives a lighter one.

Three distilleries, three ways behind our four bottles

Tomita Shuzojo
Clay jars, black koji

Both mashes in the same 540-litre jars, with the black koji of awamori

see the bottle ›

Machida Shuzo
Vacuum still, ageing

First in kokuto shochu to use vacuum distillation; long storage underpins its top bottlings see the bottle ›

Kaiun Shuzo
Atmospheric still, cask

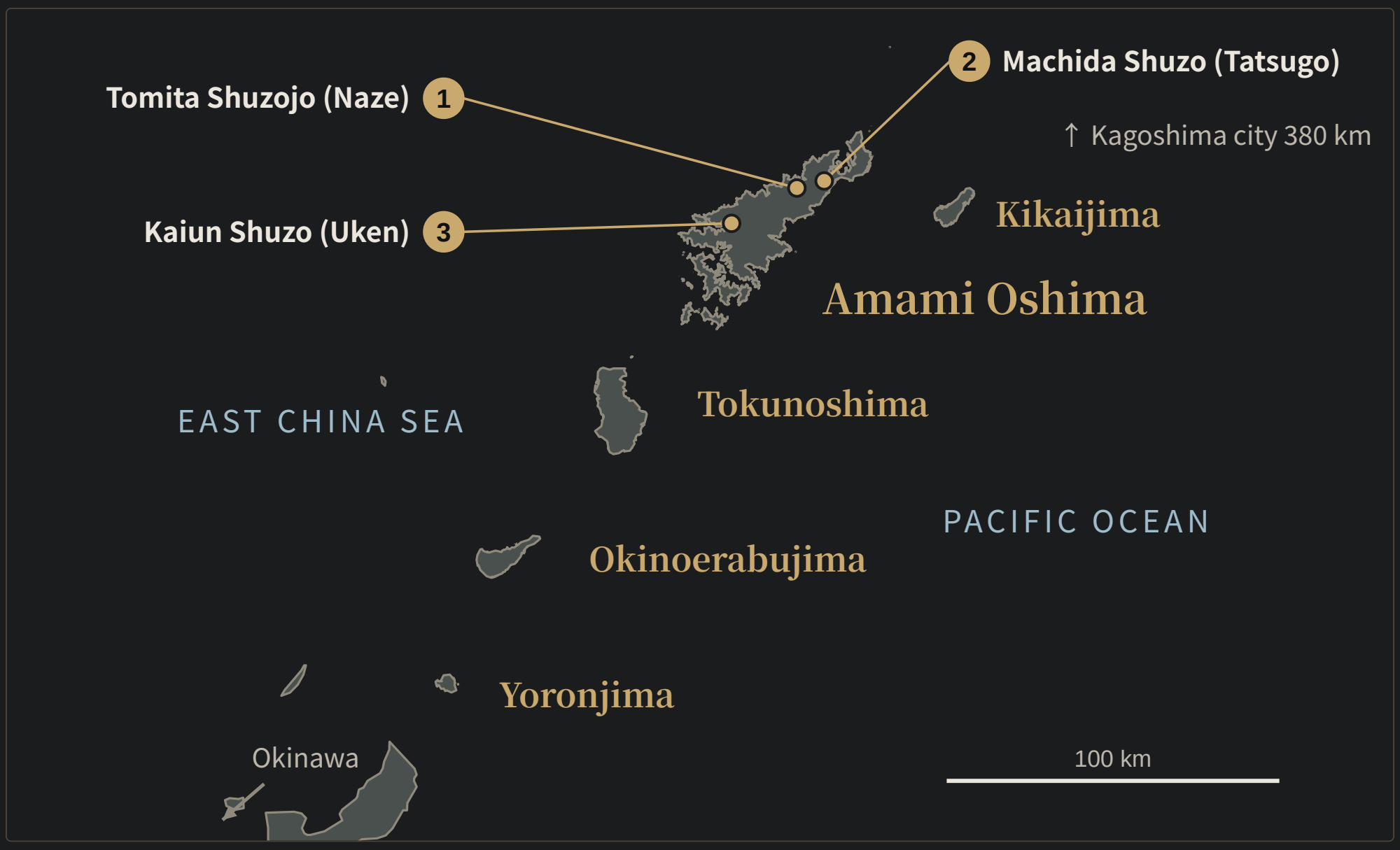
Mt Yuwan water, atmospheric distillation; Beni Sango is aged long in cask see the bottle ›

Sources: ALIC; Japan Tourism Agency; Waraku web (2024); SME Agency (2020); labels and leaflets. Photos 2 and 3 show non-centrifugal sugar being made in Brazil by the same boil-and-set method as kokuto Photos: Indiana jo / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Jonathan Wilkins / CC BY-SA 3.0 · Jonathan Wilkins / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

THE ISLANDS | Between Kagoshima and Okinawa

The kokuto shochu islands

Distilleries on five islands; our four bottles all come from Amami Oshima



Amami Oshima
712km²
The largest island: forest and inlets, and about ten distilleries

Kikaijima
57km²
A flat island of raised coral, covered in cane fields

Tokunoshima
248km²
Island of bull sumo and long life; the biggest cane grower

Okinoerabujima
94km²
Caves and flowers; known for its lily bulbs

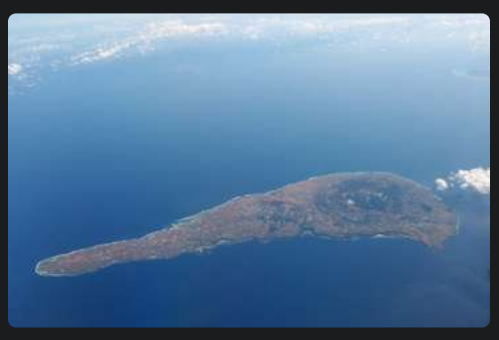
Yoronjima
21km²
A small coral island within sight of Okinawa



Hyakunodai, Kikaijima
from a plateau of raised coral, down over fields and sea



Innojofuta, Tokunoshima
about a kilometre of cliffs cut by the waves from raised coral reef



Okinoerabujima
an island of raised coral, from the air



Yoronjima
ringed by its coral reef, from the air

> Where does the sugar come from? Today much of it is Okinawan as well as Amami-grown: about 90% at Tomita Shuzojo, and the Kohaku Ryugu label reads ”kokuto (Okinawa)”. Some makers, such as Kaiun Shuzo, run their own sugar mill.

Sources: GSI; Japan Tourism Agency; Waraku web (2024); Kaiun Shuzo. Map: Natural Earth; MLIT National Land Numerical Information (administrative areas), processed Photos: tsuda / CC BY-SA 2.0・ブルーノ・プラス / CC BY 4.0・Paipateroma / CC BY-SA 4.0・Goki / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

CONTENTS

HOW TO DRINK

Drinking kokuto shochu

Our four bottles, and how we suggest drinking them



Beni Sango
Kaiun Shuzo
Amber, long in cask
¥1,485 40% · 30ml



Sato no Akebono Genshu
Machida Shuzo
Vacuum-distilled, three years, undiluted
¥1,318 43% · 30ml



Rankan 2011
Tomita Shuzojo
Jar-fermented; ”2011” on the label
¥1,265 43% · 30ml



Kohaku Ryugu 2018
Tomita Shuzojo
Black koji, made in 2018
¥1,318 40% · 30ml

Prices per 30 ml glass, tax included. Tap a bottle for its page

目次

How to drink them all four are 40% or more

Neat
Start here: the sweet scent of brown sugar and each maker’s style show most clearly. With water on the side

On the rocks
As the ice melts the aroma opens and the texture softens. For cask-aged Beni Sango

With soda
Popular on the islands too: the brown-sugar aroma rises with the bubbles. For Sato no Akebono



Rum asleep in cask: the same cane, a different road

If you like rum Same cane, but the savour of koji and the weight of a single distillation belong to kokuto shochu alone. Tasting them side by side shows the difference.

Sweet on the nose, no sugar As a distilled spirit it keeps no sugar; the Sato no Akebono label lists 0 g on its nutrition panel.

Next: the four bottles, and Amami Oshima. Beni Sango →

Bottle photos: our own Photos: MAClarke21 / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Beni Sango

紅さんご

Yuwan, Uken, Amami Oshima, Kagoshima

Amami Oshima Kaiun Shuzo Co., Ltd.

奄美大島開運酒造

Amami kokuto shochu | Long aged | Cask matured | 720 ml



ALCOHOL
40%
Long aged

CASK
Cask aged
Pot-distilled spirit, long in cask

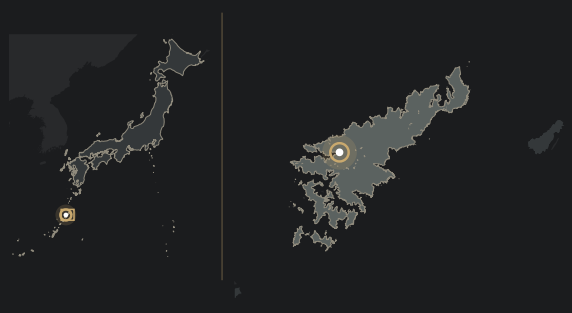
AWARD
TWSC Superior Gold
Shochu, 2021 and 2022; Best of the Best 2022



Box: ”awarded two years running”

30ml ¥1,485 tax included

Uken, south-west Amami



Amami Oshima Kaiun Shuzo

The inlet at Ashiken



one of the hamlets on Yakeuchi Bay; the distillery stands at the head of the bay, in Yuwan

Amber kokuto shochu, aged in cask and nothing else.

Uken lies in the south-west of Amami Oshima, below Mt Yuwan (694 m), the highest peak of the Amami islands, whose water the distillery uses. The atmospheric-distilled spirit is aged long in casks; the leaflet says it is ”finished 100% in cask, with nothing added”. Soft brown-sugar sweetness meets oak. The name, ”red coral”, was given by Chin Jukan XIV, the Satsuma-ware potter, likening the coral of Amami’s deep sea to a graceful woman.

Photo: Waka77 / public domain
Map: Natural Earth; MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed
Product info: bottle label, box and leaflet
Bottle and label photos: our own

CONTENTS

UKEN | South-west Amami Oshima

Uken and Kaiun Shuzo 宇検村

Mt Yuwan, Yakeuchi Bay and Amami's deepest forest Oshima-gun, Kagoshima



Map: MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed

The highest mountain of the Amami islands supplies the water.

Uken is a village of about 1,600 people in the south-west of Amami Oshima. Fourteen hamlets ring Yakeuchi Bay, cut deep like a fjord, under Mt Yuwan (694 m), the highest peak of the Amami islands. Its forest, home to the Amami rabbit and other endemic species, is a core zone of the World Natural Heritage site listed in 2021. Amami Oshima Kaiun Shuzo, set up in 1996, has its distillery and its own brown-sugar mill here. Its best-known shochu, Lento, is aged with music vibrating through the tanks.



Yakeuchi Bay
the fjord-like inlet seen from Mt Yuwan



Uken hamlet
a village of hills and still water around the bay



Ukeyuri lily
a white lily found wild only on rock faces in the Amami islands; a prefectural Natural Monument (on Mt Yuwan)



Lidth's jay
a lapis-blue jay found only in the Amami forests; a national Natural Monument and the bird of Kagoshima Prefecture



Boregura granaries
five thatched raised granaries at Yamatohama, north of Mt Yuwan, grouped at the edge of the hamlet to keep the grain safe from fire

Uken and Kaiun Shuzo through time From Satsuma rule to a World Heritage forest



Leaflet: "made with the cool natural water of Mt Yuwan"

1609	Satsuma invades Ryukyu; the Amami islands come under direct Satsuma rule
1953	25 December: the Amami islands return to Japan
1996	Amami Oshima Kaiun Shuzo established
2017	Amamigunto National Park created, including Mt Yuwan
2021	Amami Oshima, Tokunoshima, northern Okinawa and Iriomote listed as World Natural Heritage
2021–22	Beni Sango wins Superior Gold for shochu at TWSC two years running
2025	The long-aged kokuto shochu Amami Sashiba released

Sources: Uken village; Ministry of the Environment; Amami Oshima Kaiun Shuzo (leaflet, press release); Serai.jp Photos: Waka77 / public domain · Waka77 / public domain · Mmsmr / CC0 · Wich'yanan / CC BY 4.0 · tsuda / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

Sato no Akebono Genshu

里の曙 原酒

Ogachi, Tatsugo, Amami Oshima, Kagoshima

Machida Shuzo Co., Ltd.

町田酒造

Amami kokuto shochu | Undiluted, 43% | Aged three years | 720 ml



ALCOHOL
43%
Genshu (undiluted)

AGED
3 years
Three-year storage

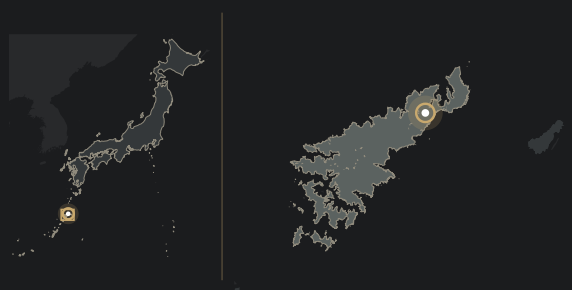
DISTILLATION
Vacuum
The first kokuto shochu maker to use it



Seal: ”aged three years”

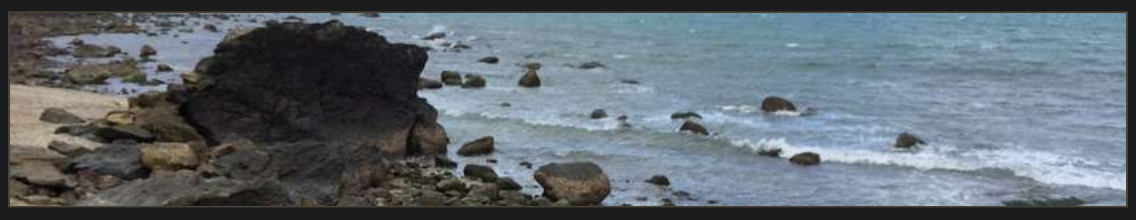
30ml ¥1,318 tax included

Tatsugo, northern Amami



Machida Shuzo

The shore at Akina



on Tatsugo’s East China Sea coast, where the Hirase Mankai rite calls the rice spirit from the rocks each autumn

Clean vacuum-distilled kokuto shochu, aged three years and left undiluted.

Machida Shuzo, in Tatsugo in the north of Amami Oshima, was the first kokuto shochu maker to adopt vacuum distillation, opening up a lighter style. Its flagship Sato no Akebono is aged three years and bottled undiluted at 43% in a square black bottle, from brown sugar and koji of Japanese rice. The box carries a gold from the IWSC in London. As the nutrition panel shows, it contains no sugar.

Photo: tsuda / CC BY-SA 2.0 Product info: bottle label and box; SME Agency (2020)
Map: Natural Earth; MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed Bottle and label photos: our own

CONTENTS

TATSUGO | Northern Amami Oshima

Tatsugo and Machida Shuzo 龍郷町

Oshima tsumugi silk, Saigo Takamori and a town between two seas Oshima-gun, Kagoshima



Map: MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed

The island town where Saigo Takamori lived for some three years.

Tatsugo lies in the north of Amami Oshima, between the airport and Naze, with the Pacific to the east, the East China Sea to the west and deep Tatsugo Bay between. It is the home of the ”Tatsugo pattern” of Oshima tsumugi silk, whose threads are still dyed with boiled sharinbai bark and iron-rich mud. Saigo Takamori lived here in hiding for about three years from 1859 and married an island woman, Aikana. Machida Shuzo moved to Ogachi in 1991, where it makes Sato no Akebono.



Tatsugo Bay
the ”Shima no Blues” song monument above the bay



Oshima tsumugi, Tatsugo pattern
said to be drawn from cycad leaves and the back of the habu snake



Mud dyeing
thread dyed with sharinbai bark is worked in iron-rich mud to a deep black



A pre-war postcard
”Dyeing the thread for Oshima tsumugi”: then as now, done by hand



Kasuri thread
unbinding the dyed thread reveals the white resist spots

Tatsugo and Machida Shuzo through time From silk village to vacuum still



Box: IWSC Gold, shochu category

- 1720 Satsuma forbids islanders to wear tsumugi silk; it becomes tribute to the domain
- 1859 Saigo Takamori arrives in Tatsugo, staying until 1862
- 1953 The Amami islands return to Japan
- 1975 Tatsugo village becomes a town
- 1983 The distillery starts, taking over the licence of Ishihara Shuzo of Sumiyo
- 1991 Moves to Ogachi as Machida Shuzo, known as the first kokuto shochu maker to use vacuum distillation
- 2021 Amami Oshima listed as World Natural Heritage

Sources: Tatsugo town; SME Agency (2020); Authentic Amami Oshima Tsumugi Association Photos: tsuda / CC BY-SA 2.0 · Markmcnbowe97 / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Madame / CC BY-SA 4.0 · Unknown photographer / public domain · Markmcnbowe97 / CC0 / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

目次

Rankan 2011

らんかん

Naze, Amami, Kagoshima

Tomita Shuzojo

有限会社富田酒造場

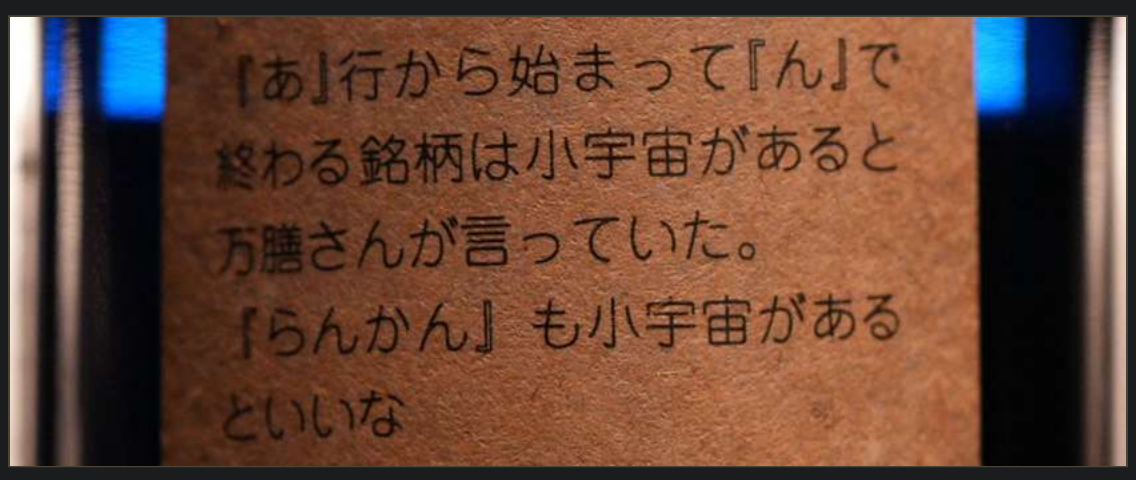
Amami kokuto shochu | ”2011” on the label | 720 ml



ALCOHOL
43%
720 ml

VINTAGE
2011
The year on the label

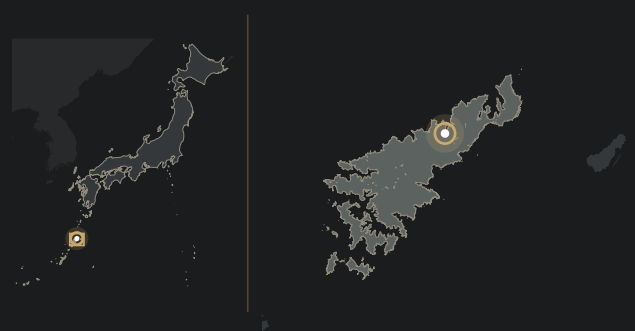
SINCE 1951
Clay-jar ferment
Both stages in the same jar



Back label: ”may Rankan hold a small universe too”

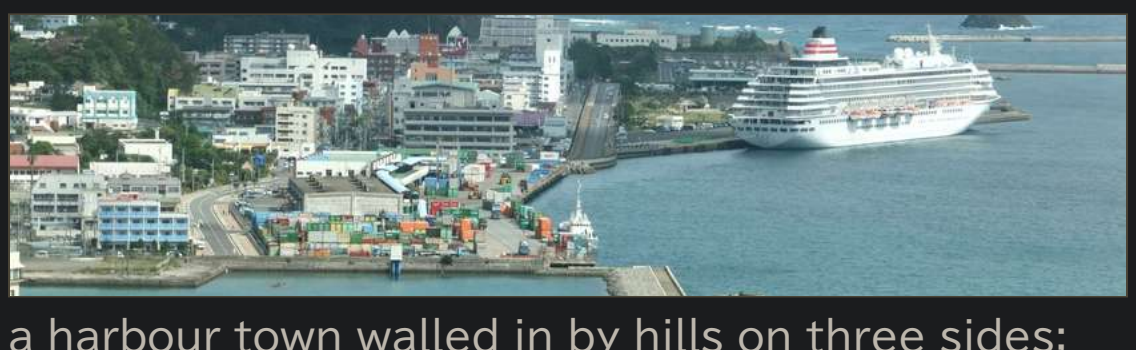
30ml ¥1,265 tax included

Naze, the heart of Amami



Tomita Shuzojo

Naze, town and port



a harbour town walled in by hills on three sides; the distillery is in Irifune-cho, in the middle of it

Named after the hill behind the distillery: jar-fermented, 43%.

Tomita Shuzojo, a family distillery founded in 1951, stands beside Yanigawa street, the nightlife quarter of Naze. Both fermentations take place in the same 32 clay jars of 540 litres, in use for over seventy years, with the black koji of awamori. The hill behind is Mt Rankan. The back label muses that, as the distiller Manzen said, a brand that begins with ”a” and ends with ”n” holds a small universe, ”and I hope Rankan does too”. Brown sugar and koji of Japanese rice, 43%.

Photo: Vanquish0 / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth; MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed
Product info: bottle label; Waraku web (2024)
Bottle and label photos: our own

CONTENTS

Kohaku Ryugu 2018

琥珀 龍宮

Naze, Amami, Kagoshima

Tomita Shuzojo

有限会社富田酒造場

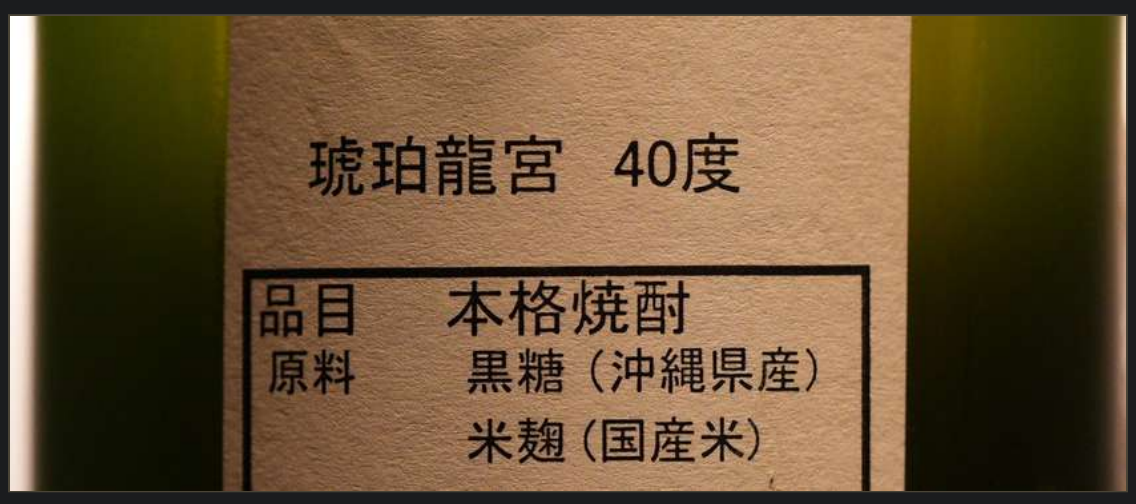
Amami kokuto shochu | Black koji | Made in 2018 | 720 ml



ALCOHOL
40%
720 ml

VINTAGE
2018
Made in 2018

KOJI
Black
Okinawan brown sugar, Japanese rice koji

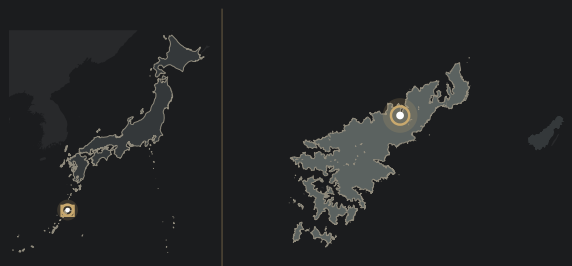


Back label: Kohaku Ryugu, 40%

30ml ¥1,318 tax included

目次

Naze, the heart of Amami



Tomita Shuzojo

Ohama seaside park



about 20 minutes by car from the town, a beach known for sunsets over the East China Sea

From the black-koji Ryugu line: the 2018 make.

Ryugu, the flagship of Tomita Shuzojo, is made with black koji, rare for kokuto shochu: the koji of awamori, giving a weightier character. Kohaku (”amber”) Ryugu is the bottling whose neck tag reads ”made in 2018, 40%”, from Okinawan brown sugar and koji of Japanese rice. Each of the distillery’s jars holds 540 litres, and the still is heated gently by steam. No sugar passes through distillation, so the sweetness is all aroma. Try it neat, or over one cube of ice.

Photo: Ubuhouse / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth; MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed
Product info: bottle label; Waraku web (2024)
Bottle and label photos: our own

NAZE | The main town of the Amami islands

Naze and Tomita Shuzojo 名瀬

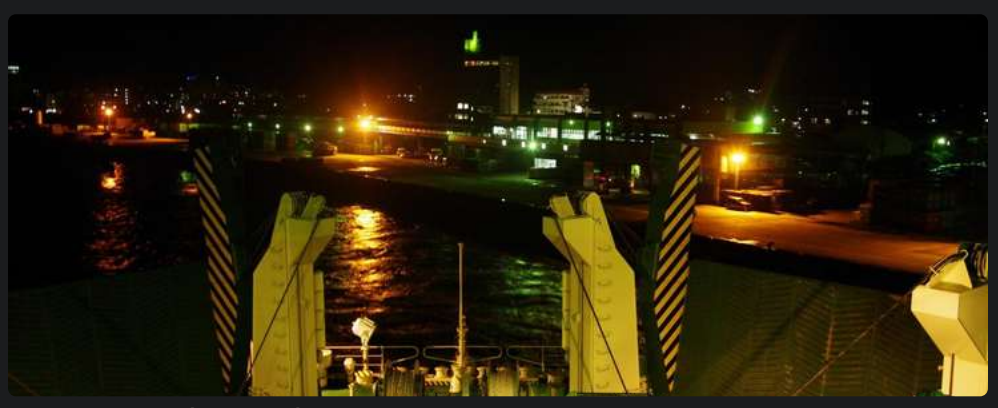
Clay jars at the foot of Mt Rankan, beside the nightlife street Amami city, Kagoshima



Map: MLIT National Land Numerical Information, processed

Jars ferment a few steps from the island's busiest street.

Naze, in Amami city, is the largest town of the Amami islands, a port ringed by hills on three sides and the centre of the movement for return to Japan in 1953. Yanigawa street, ”Yango” to islanders, is its quarter of bars and restaurants. Tomita Shuzojo was founded beside it in 1951, at the foot of Mt Rankan, while the islands were still under US military rule. Its 32 clay jars have been in use for more than seventy years, and three family members keep up the old method of doing both fermentations in the same jar.



Naze port by night
the island’s gateway, where the Kagoshima-Okinawa ferries call



Keihan
rice topped with shredded chicken and egg, with chicken broth poured over; said to have begun as a dish for visiting Satsuma officials



Kinsakubaru forest
subtropical forest of tree ferns, visited with a certified guide



Ayamaru Point
a headland at Kasari, in the north of Amami City, looking out over the reef



Takakura granary
a raised storehouse for grain, once a familiar sight in Amami’s hamlets

Naze and Tomita Shuzojo through time From military rule to World Heritage



Front label of Rankan, with a hand-torn paper neck tag

- 1946 Islands south of 30°N are separated from Japan under US military government
- 1951 Tomita Shuzojo founded in Naze
- 1953 25 December: the Amami islands return to Japan; Naze led the movement
- 1959 A National Tax Agency notice allows brown-sugar shochu with rice koji, in Amami only
- 2006 Naze, Sumiyo and Kasari merge to form Amami city
- 2009 ”Amami Kokuto Shochu” registered as a regional collective trademark
- 2021 Amami Oshima listed as World Natural Heritage

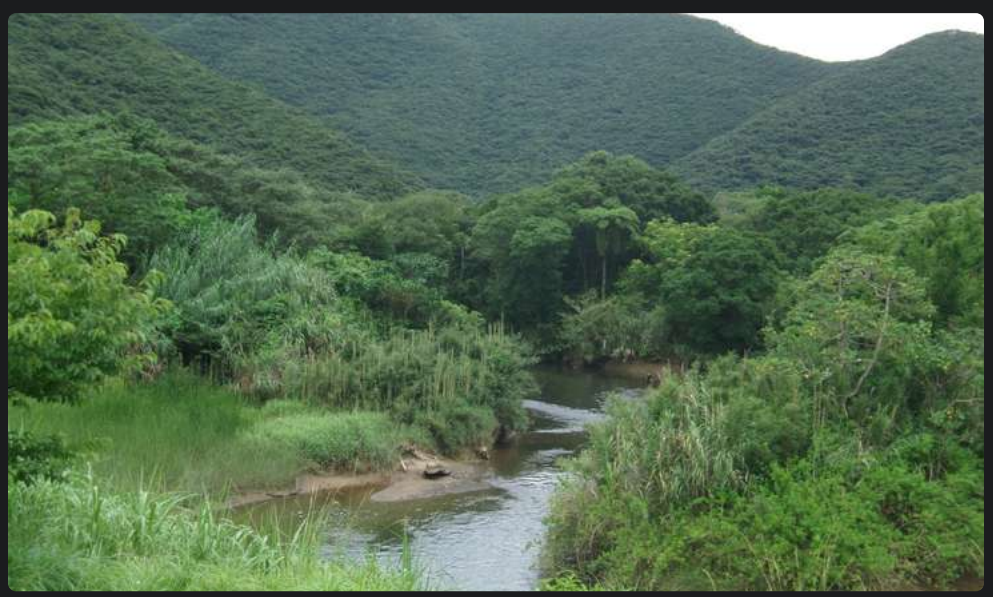
Sources: Amami city; Waraku web (2024); Kagoshima University; Japan Patent Office Photos: tsuda / CC BY-SA 2.0 · Si-take. / CC BY-SA 3.0 · Asset utilitist / CC0 · tinbotu / CC BY-SA 3.0 · ウィキ太郎 / public domain / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

EXPLORE AMAMI | A World Natural Heritage island

Explore Amami Oshima

Subtropical forest, coral sea and silk villages

At 712 km², Amami Oshima is the largest of Japan's outlying islands after Okinawa and Sado (the Northern Territories aside). Forest covers more than 80% of it, home to creatures found nowhere else, such as the Amami rabbit and Lidth's jay.



Sumiyo mangroves
Japan's second-largest mangrove forest, explored by canoe



Amami rabbit
found only on Amami Oshima and Tokunoshima; a Special Natural Monument



Tomori beach
the clear water of Kasari, nicknamed "Blue Angel"



Amami Park
a centre for island nature and culture on the old airport site



Tanaka Isson Memorial Museum
works of the painter of Amami's nature, in halls shaped like island granaries



An Amami inlet
drowned valleys cut the coast all round the island

After the forest and the sea, kokuto shochu for the evening.

← About kokuto shochu

Photos: Indiana jo / CC BY-SA 4.0・Mmsmr / CC0・投稿者自身による撮影 / public domain・Ozizo / CC0・Ozizo / public domain・TANAKA Juuyoh / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Geumsan Insamju

GEUMSAN INSAMJU Geumsan, Chungcheongnam-do, Korea | master Kim Chang-soo

Geum Susam 23

Korean ginseng spirit | distilled ginseng yakju, with a whole fresh root



ALCOHOL
23%
720 ml

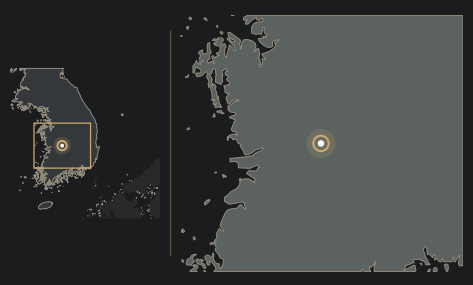
GINSENG
3.097%
Korean ginseng & Korean rice

MASTER
Food Master No.2
Traditional Food Master・Intangible Cultural Property No.19・Kim Chang-soo

Ginseng and rice, fermented then pot-distilled a ginseng root in every bottle

45ml ¥1,265 tax included

Geumsan, Korea: the home of ginseng



Geumsan Insamju

Daedunsan, Geumsan



The rocky ridges of Daedunsan, Geumsan’s mountain, in autumn colour

From Korea’s ginseng country: a distilled yakju with a root inside.

Geumsan has grown ginseng for some 1,500 years and is Korea’s ginseng capital. Geum Susam 23 is distilled the traditional way from a yakju of Korean ginseng and rice by Kim Chang-soo, Intangible Cultural Property No.19 and Traditional Food Master No.2. A whole ginseng root stands in every bottle: earthy, gently bitter ginseng and the clean sweetness of a distilled spirit, a cousin of shochu.

Photo: Tung Thanh Dang / CC BY-SA 3.0
Map: Natural Earth
Product info: maker & label
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Japanese Brandy

Per glass / 30 ml / Tax included

Suntory Brandy X.O. Deluxe › 40% **¥1,925**
Launched 1990 (Heisei 2) · spirit of French origin

Nikka Brandy V.O › 43% **¥1,977**
Showa era (“tokkyu” grade label)

Shirayuri Winery Mephisto › 40% **¥1,318**
Koshu-grape grappa | Katsunuma, Yamanashi

Katashimo Wine Food Budouka › 35% **¥1,977**

Suntory

SUNTORY

Suntory Ltd. | making brandy since 1935

Suntory Brandy X·O Deluxe

Launched 1990 · Suntory's long-selling X·O



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

SINCE
1935
Suntory's brandy business

ORIGIN
French spirit
Label: "origin France" · 700 ml

Shinjiro Torii's dream of
a nation of Western spirits
90 years of brandy

30ml ¥1,925 tax included

HISTORY | Suntory and brandy

1899 Shinjiro Torii opens Torii Shoten in Osaka, selling wine
1907 Akadama Port Wine, the sweet wine that funded the company
1923 Work starts on Yamazaki, Japan's first malt whisky distillery
1935 Brandy business begins at the Domyoji plant, Osaka
1938 Hermes Brandy, forerunner of Suntory Brandy, goes on sale
1953 Full post-war sales resume as Suntory Brandy V.S.O.P
1962 Hermes V.O / V.S.O.P bring brandy into Japanese homes
1969 Suntory Brandy X·O launched for the 70th anniversary
1990 X·O Deluxe launched: the bottle on our shelf
2015 80 years of brandy; relaunch as X·O Superior and V.S.O.P Elegance

Suntory's long-selling X·O: a taste of Showa Japan.

Kotobukiya, today's Suntory, began making brandy in 1935 and, from Hermes Brandy on, brought the spirit into Japanese homes. X·O Deluxe, launched in 1990, blends French spirit (the label reads "origin France"): raisin, honey and vanilla, with the rounded sweetness of long ageing. Neat or on the rocks.

Sources: Suntory official site, Wikipedia
Bottle photos: our own

Product info: bottle label

CONTENTS

Nikka Whisky

NIKKA The Nikka Whisky Distilling Co. | a Showa-era “tokkyu” bottle

Nikka Brandy V.O

“Tokkyu” (special grade): a label abolished in 1989



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

GRADE
Tokkyu
Showa-era liquor-tax grade

ORIGIN
Born from apples
Dai Nippon Kaju, Yoichi

Masataka Taketsuru’s Yoichi
a brandy born from
unsold apple juice

30ml ¥1,977 tax included

目次

HISTORY | Nikka and brandy

1934 Masataka Taketsuru founds Dai Nippon Kaju in Yoichi, Hokkaido
1935 Nikka apple juice goes on sale; unsold juice is turned into brandy
1936 Licences to distil brandy and whisky
1938 Nikka Apple Wine launched
1940 Nikka Brandy launched alongside the first Nikka whisky
1960 Hirosaki plant, Aomori, opens as the home of Nikka’s apple products
1965 Apple brandy and other apple products move from Yoichi to Hirosaki
1978 Nikka Apple Wine wins a Monde Selection gold medal
1989 Liquor-tax grades abolished; Nikka buys the Dompierre distillery in France

A “tokkyu” label: Nikka brandy from the Showa era.

“Tokkyu”, special grade, is a liquor-tax label abolished in 1989, so this bottle was filled in the Showa era. Nikka itself began with brandy: Masataka Taketsuru distilled unsold apple juice at Yoichi while his whisky matured. Decades in the bottle have left it calm and mellow, with soft oak sweetness and dried fruit. Serve neat.

Sources: Nikka official site, Wikipedia
Bottle photos: our own
Product info: bottle label

Mephisto

メフィスト

Shirayuri Winery

白百合醸造株式会社

Grape spirit | Koshu grape pomace | 350 ml

Todoroki, Katsunuma, Koshu, Yamanashi



ALCOHOL
40%
350 ml

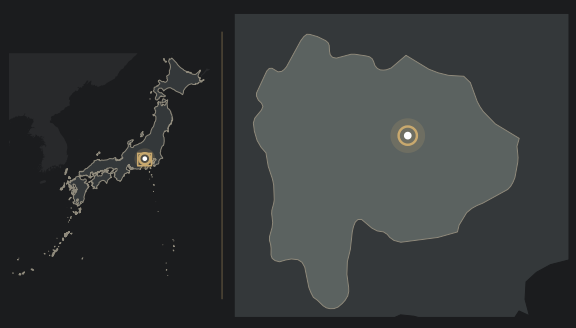
MATERIAL
Koshu
Pomace of Koshu grapes

SINCE 1938
Grappa
Classed as brandy

Label: ”this devil’s name is Mephisto”

30ml ¥1,318 tax included

Katsunuma, Kofu basin



Shirayuri Winery (L’Orient)

Vineyards at Katsunuma



pergolas cover the slopes; beyond, the mountains around the Kofu basin

A Koshu grappa from Katsunuma, named after the devil.

A grappa from Katsunuma that takes its name from the devil in Goethe’s Faust. Shirayuri Winery, founded in 1938 and known for its L’Orient wines, distils the pomace of Koshu grapes harvested around Katsunuma. Grappa gathers the aromas left in the skins after the wine has been pressed. The label says a sip ”opens a sweet and sensual world, like the life of Faust, who traded his soul to have his wishes granted”.

Photo: Aw1805 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: bottle label and box; Yamanashi Prefecture
Bottle and label photos: our own

CONTENTS

KATSUNUMA | East edge of the Kofu basin

Katsunuma and Shirayuri 勝沼

Pergola vineyards over the hills: the home of Japanese wine Koshu, Yamanashi



Map: Natural Earth (schematic)

A thousand years and more with the Koshu grape.

At the east edge of the Kofu basin, pergola vineyards cover the alluvial slopes of Katsunuma. Two legends tell of Japan's native Koshu grape: that the monk Gyoki founded Daizen-ji in 718 after carving a Buddha holding grapes, and that Amemiya Kageyu found and raised an unusual vine in 1186. Japan's first private wine company was set up here in 1877 and sent two young men to France to learn winemaking. More than thirty wineries work here today; Shirayuri has been in the hamlet of Todoroki since 1938.



Jinroku cherry trees
at Katsunuma-budokyo station, tended by local growers; the Kofu basin lies beyond



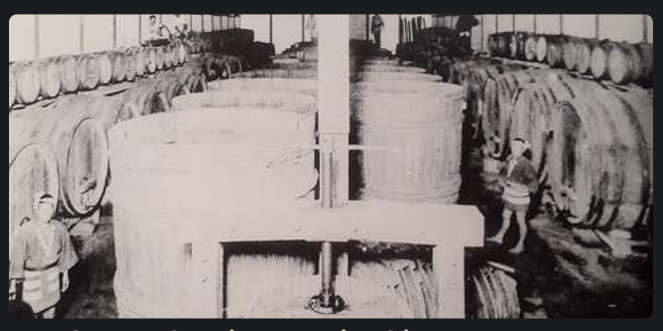
Koshu grapes
pink-violet bunches hang from the pergola (a Katsunuma winery, September)



Daizen-ji, the "grape temple"
the bell tower. The Kamakura-period main hall is a National Treasure and the oldest building in Yamanashi



Miyakoen
the winery and visitor vineyard of the wine pioneer Miyazaki Kotaro, now a museum

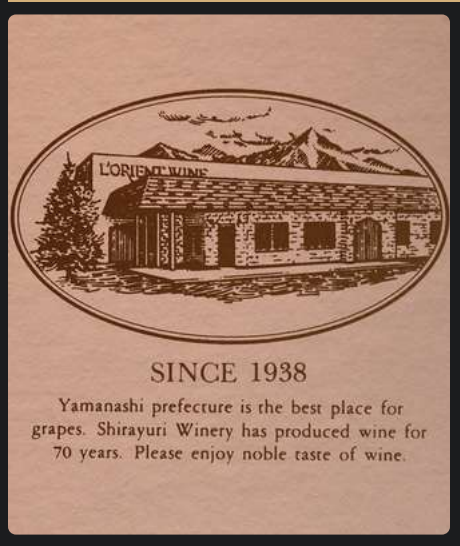


A winery in the early Showa years
Miyazaki's second winery (later Miyakoen), with its press and great wooden vats



Grape pomace
the skins and pips left after pressing; distilled, they become grappa (red-wine grapes shown)

Katsunuma and Shirayuri through time Even the pomace is distilled



Box: "Since 1938"

718	Gyoki is said to found Daizen-ji, the "grape temple"
1186	Amemiya Kageyu is said to discover the Koshu grape
1877	The Dai-Nihon Yamanashi Wine Company is founded; Takano Masanari and Tsuchiya Ryuken leave for France
1903	The Chuo line reaches Kofu, carrying grapes and wine to Tokyo
1938	Uchida Kunitaro forms the Shirayuri wine cooperative with neighbouring growers
2005	Enzan, Katsunuma and Yamato merge as Koshu city
2013	"Yamanashi" becomes a geographical indication for wine
2018	The vineyard landscape named Japan Heritage

Sources: Koshu city; Yamanashi Prefecture; National Tax Agency; Agency for Cultural Affairs Photos: くろふね / CC BY-SA 4.0・江戸村のとくぞう / CC BY-SA 4.0・江戸村のとくぞう / CC BY-SA 4.0・Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0・Unknown photographer / public domain・Adrian J. Hunter / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons Label photo: our own

Katashimo Wine Food

KATASHIMO

Taiheiji, Kashiwara, Osaka (Katashimo Winery)

Budoka

A brandy from the skins of Japanese grapes · Limousin-oak aged



ALCOHOL
35%
ABV

MATERIAL
Grape skins
Japanese grapes · wine pomace, distilled

CASK
Limousin French oak
500 ml · no chemical treatment · minimal filtering

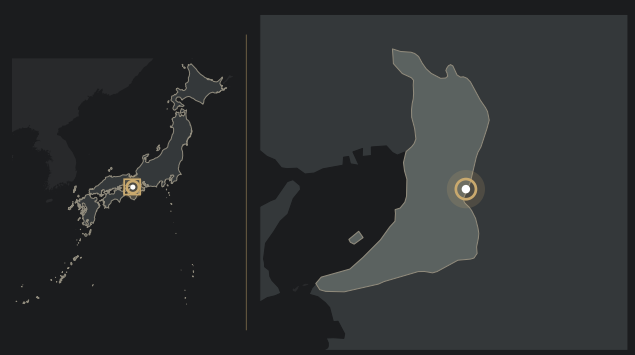


The Yamato River and the Ikoma hills; Kashiwara's vineyards climb these slopes

Founded 1914 · the oldest working winery in western Japan

30ml ¥1,977 tax included

Kashiwara, Osaka (Kawachi)



Katashimo Wine Food

Katashimo's vineyards below the Ikoma hills, and the Yamato River



The Katashimo winery at Taiheiji, Kashiwara

Osaka grape skins, turned into an amber spirit with a honeyed nose.

Kashiwara lies where Osaka meets Nara. In early Meiji, Risaburo Takai planted vines on the Katashimo slopes; by early Showa, Osaka led Japan in grapes. Katashimo, founded in 1914 by his son Sakujiro, is western Japan's oldest working winery, and its Taisho-era cellar is a registered cultural property. Budoka is distilled from the skins of Japanese grapes and aged in Limousin oak: a honeyed nose and soft tannin. Neat, or on a large ice cube.

Photo: Popbeans / CC0 · Kansai explorer / CC BY 3.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product info: back label, Katashimo Wine Food
Bottle photos: our own

CONTENTS

Japanese Gin

MENU / 2026.11.04

From Hokkaido in the north to Kyushu in the south

ALC. 30 ml, tax incl.

HOKKAIDO

HONOHO BOUQUET Shakotan Spirit Shakotan, Hokkaido	45%	¥1,925
9148 #0101 STANDARD Benizakura Distillery Sapporo, Hokkaido	45%	¥1,815
9148 #0103 YUKI (Birch) Benizakura Distillery Sapporo, Hokkaido	40%	¥1,815
9148 #0104 HAMANASU Benizakura Distillery Sapporo, Hokkaido	45%	¥1,815
9148 #0303 Triple-Sec Benizakura Distillery Sapporo, Hokkaido	57%	¥1,925
MYAOI Gin “can you celebrate?” Maoi Distillery Naganuma, Hokkaido	46%	¥1,977
MYAOI Gin “hanabi” Maoi Distillery Naganuma, Hokkaido	43%	¥1,977
ohoro GIN Niseko Distillery Niseko, Hokkaido	47%	¥1,815
Tokachi Craft Gin AKATOKI [TANZANITE] Tokachi Heiya Distillery Makubetsu, Hokkaido	47%	¥1,867

目次

Tap a name to open its page.

	ALC.	30 ml, tax incl.

TOHOKU

Aomori-ken Gin 02 APPLE Mohodori Distillery Goshogawara, Aomori	40%	¥1,757
MEI Budo Sansho MCG (Miyagi Craft Gin) Osaki, Miyagi	46%	¥1,757
Nikka Coffey Gin Nikka Whisky Miyagikyo, Sendai	47%	¥1,868

HOKURIKU / KOSHINETSU / KITA-KANTO

KAMEOW GIN “Love again” Niigata Kameda Distillery Niigata City, Niigata	42%	¥1,815
THE HERBALIST YASO GIN YUZU Echigo Yakusou Joetsu, Niigata	45%	¥1,977
Cacao Gin Echigo Yakusou Joetsu, Niigata	48%	¥1,977
OBUSE GIN Nozawa Onsen Distillery Nozawa Onsen, Nagano	45%	¥1,867
No.7 High Juniper Gin Shin Distillation Laboratory Toyama City, Toyama	47%	¥1,867
Alembic Dry Gin HACHIBAN Alembic Ono Distillery Kanazawa, Ishikawa	47%	¥1,867
Hinomaru Gin “Kura-fu-do” Kiuchi Yasato Distillery Ishioka, Ibaraki	47%	¥1,815

CONTENTS

Tap a name to open its page.

	ALC.	30 ml, tax incl.

KANTO / CHUBU

TOGEDAMA Musashino Distillery Kawagoe, Saitama	47%	¥1,705
LiO Craft Gin Musashino Distillery Kawagoe, Saitama	47%	¥1,977
First Essence 8th Anniversary “symbol of INNAKI” Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery Gujo, Gifu	47%	¥1,977
First Essence 9th Anniversary “Fascination of INNAKI” Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery Gujo, Gifu	47%	¥2,087
KANOMORI Yomeishu Seizo Komagane, Nagano	47%	¥1,705
AMRTA GIN Limited Edition 10 (Osmanthus) GEEKSTILL Koshu, Yamanashi	40%	¥1,815
GIN FUEKI Fukagawa Distillery Koto City, Tokyo	47%	¥1,867
COMMON GIN Toranomon Distillery Minato City, Tokyo	45%	¥1,705
TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS Tokyo Osmanthus Toranomon Distillery Minato City, Tokyo	47%	¥1,705
TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS Lavender Toranomon Distillery Minato City, Tokyo	45%	¥1,705

目次

Tap a name to open its page.

KANTO / CHUBU

	ALC.	30 ml, tax incl.
TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS Mint (Hakka) Toranomon Distillery Minato City, Tokyo	45%	¥1,705
TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS Chamomile Toranomon Distillery Minato City, Tokyo	45%	¥1,705
SUI-AI wet Gin Tokyo Hachioji Distillery Hachioji, Tokyo	40%	¥1,977
Mairingen Fresh Craft Gin (Original) Kyotango Mairingen Distillery Kyotango, Kyoto	47%	¥1,925
NAKATSU GIN Yuzu-kosho (3rd batch) Nakatsugawa Distillery Nakatsugawa, Gifu	50%	¥1,925
NAKATSU GIN Earl Grey (5th batch) Nakatsugawa Distillery Nakatsugawa, Gifu	50%	¥1,925
GIN NATURE Parfumothèque Nagara Shuzo (LONG GOOD) Gifu City, Gifu	45%	¥1,977
NUMBER EIGHT GIN Yokohama Dry Gin Number Eight Distillery Yokohama, Kanagawa	46%	¥1,650
NUMBER EIGHT GIN Double Botanical Number Eight Distillery Yokohama, Kanagawa	46%	¥1,705
MINT TRICOLOR #105 mitosaya Botanical Distillery Otaki, Chiba	42%	¥1,867

Tap a name to open its page.

CONTENTS

	ALC.	30 ml, tax incl.

KANSAI / HIROSHIMA

yumarrest Industrial Gin Ordinary KING Motoki Joken Distillery Lab Kamigyo, Kyoto	45%	¥1,977
yumarrest Industrial Gin Ordinary DANGER Motoki Joken Distillery Lab Kamigyo, Kyoto	80%	¥1,867
yumarrest Ramune Gin Motoki Joken Distillery Lab Kamigyo, Kyoto	45%	¥1,867
yumarrest Flavored Spirits Geisha Coffee Motoki Joken Distillery Lab Kamigyo, Kyoto	37%	¥1,867
yumarrest Flavored Spirits Kyoto Uji Gyokuro Motoki Joken Distillery Lab Kamigyo, Kyoto	42%	¥1,867
KI NO BI Kyoto Dry Gin The Kyoto Distillery Kyoto	45%	¥1,845
KI NO TEA The Kyoto Distillery Kyoto	45%	¥1,925
KI NO BI Edition K, Kilchoman Bourbon Cask The Kyoto Distillery Kyoto	48%	¥1,925
KI NO TOU Kyoto Old Tom Gin The Kyoto Distillery Kyoto	47%	¥1,925
KI NO BI SEI The Kyoto Distillery Kyoto	54%	¥1,925

目次

Tap a name to open its page.

	ALC.	30 ml, tax incl.

KANSAI / HIROSHIMA

KIKKA GIN First Edition Yamato Distillery Gose, Nara	59%	¥2,035
SAKURAO GIN Original Sakurao Distillery Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima	47%	¥1,595
SAKURAO GIN Limited Sakurao Distillery Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima	47%	¥1,650
SAKURAO GIN Hamagou Sakurao Distillery Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima	47%	¥1,650

SHIKOKU / KYUSHU

AWA GIN Nissin Shurui Kamiita, Tokushima	45%	¥1,650
ASAKURA CRAFT GIN Jin40 Shinozaki Asakura, Fukuoka	45%	¥1,705
STILLDAM GIN Perilla Plum Kusunohana Distillery Saga City, Saga	45%	¥1,925
GOTOGIN the cacao Goto Tsubaki Distillery Goto, Nagasaki	47%	¥1,977
BEAR'S BOOK Takahashi Shuzo Taragi, Kumamoto	45%	¥1,538
OSUZU GIN Original Osuzuyama Distillery Kijo, Miyazaki	45%	¥1,867
JIN7 Series 00 Oyama Jinshichi Shoten Ibusuki, Kagoshima	47%	¥1,815

CONTENTS

Tap a name to open its page.

Shakotan Spirit

Shakotan Spirit Co.

Shakotan, Hokkaido

HONOHO BOUQUET

HOKKAIDO SHAKOTAN GIN



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Flowers
From its own herb farm

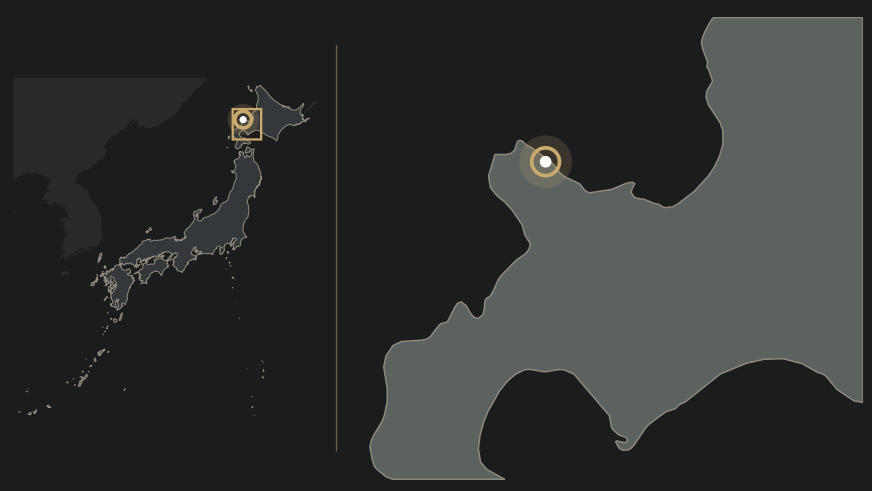
TASTE PROFILE
Floral
Bright and soft

Distillery	Founded 2018 at the tip of the Shakotan Peninsula
Farm	About 80 herbs grown on its own 5 ha farm
Method	Each botanical vacuum-distilled on its own
Size/ABV	500 ml / 45%

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

目次

Shakotan Peninsula, Hokkaido



Shakotan Spirit, Shakotan Peninsula

Around the distillery



Cape Kamui and the ”Shakotan blue” sea, Shakotan

A bouquet from a Hokkaido herb farm.

At the tip of the Shakotan Peninsula, Shakotan Spirit grows about 80 herbs on its own farm and does everything from planting to distilling. The name HONOHO comes from local stories of fire, sea and wind. BOUQUET captures the flowers, soil and air of the farm in bloom: a gin for special moments.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Wild flowers, honeyed sweetness	Soft and floral	Neat or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, Shakotan Spirit Photo: 663highland / CC BY 2.5 Map: Natural Earth

Benizakura Distillery

Hokkaido Liberty Whisky

Sapporo, Hokkaido

9148 #0101 STANDARD

#0101 CRAFT GIN STANDARD



ALCOHOL	RECIPE
45%	#0101
ABV	The house recipe

TASTE PROFILE

Dry

Juniper and umami

Distillery	Opened 2018 in Benizakura Park, Sapporo; Hokkaido’s first craft gin distillery
Name	“9148” flips each pair of digits in “1984” (Orwell): a wish for freedom
Botanicals	14, incl. Hidaka kombu, dried shiitake, dried daikon, blueberry and lavender from Hokkaido
Size/ABV	700 ml / 45%

30 ml ¥1,815 tax incl.

Minami Ward, Sapporo



Benizakura Distillery, in Benizakura Park

Around the distillery



The pond and autumn leaves in Benizakura Park, Sapporo

The house gin, with a taste of Hokkaido umami.

Benizakura Distillery, hidden in the woods of Benizakura Park in south Sapporo, opened in 2018 as Hokkaido’s first craft gin distillery. The series name 9148 stands for a free world, free ideas and free values, and each label carries two numbers: the distilling date and the recipe number. #0101 is the standard: dry and punchy with juniper, held together by Hokkaido umami from Hidaka kombu, dried shiitake and dried daikon. Juniper and lavender come first, then sweet blueberry.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Juniper, lavender, blueberry	Dry and punchy, umami sweetness	Gin & tonic, Martini, ice-cold neat

Source: bottle label, Benizakura Distillery Photo: t-konno / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Benizakura Distillery

Hokkaido Liberty Whisky

Sapporo, Hokkaido

9148 #0103 YUKI (Birch)

#0103 YUKI CRAFT GIN



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

BOTANICALS
2
Juniper and cacao nibs

TASTE PROFILE
Winter only
Berry chocolate

Distillery	Opened 2018 in Benizakura Park, Sapporo; Hokkaido’s first craft gin distillery
Name	“9148” flips each pair of digits in “1984” (Orwell): a wish for freedom
Spirit	The most aromatic cuts from a year of distilling, redistilled once a year in winter
Birch	Birch sap from Benizakura Park added before bottling for a gentle sweetness

30 ml ¥1,815 tax incl.

目次

Minami Ward, Sapporo



Benizakura Distillery, in Benizakura Park

Around the distillery



The Toyohira River through snowy Jozankei, Minami Ward

Snow-white, like berry chocolate.

Benizakura Distillery, hidden in the woods of Benizakura Park in south Sapporo, opened in 2018 as Hokkaido’s first craft gin distillery. The series name 9148 stands for a free world, free ideas and free values, and each label carries two numbers: the distilling date and the recipe number. #0103 YUKI (“snow”) is a winter-only release: the most aromatic cuts saved over a year are redistilled, flavoured only with juniper and cacao nibs, and softened with birch sap from the park. It turns cloudy white when chilled.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Juniper, cacao	Rich and slightly bitter	On the rocks, or floated on hot milk or a latte

Source: bottle label, Benizakura Distillery Photo: Ch1pabeck / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Benizakura Distillery

Hokkaido Liberty Whisky

Sapporo, Hokkaido

9148 #0104 HAMANASU

#0104 HAMANASU CRAFT GIN



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

FLOWER
Hamanasu
Hokkaido’s flower

TASTE PROFILE
Summer only
A floral blue gin

Distillery	Opened 2018 in Benizakura Park, Sapporo; Hokkaido’s first craft gin distillery
Name	“9148” flips each pair of digits in “1984” (Orwell): a wish for freedom
Botanicals	12, incl. hamanasu rose, cassis, lemon balm, Rishiri kombu and ashitaba
Colour	Butterfly pea blue; turns pink with tonic or lemon

30 ml ¥1,815 tax incl.

Minami Ward, Sapporo



Benizakura Distillery, in Benizakura Park

Around the distillery



Takino Suzuran Hillside Park, Minami Ward

Hokkaido’s flower, in a blue gin.

Benizakura Distillery, hidden in the woods of Benizakura Park in south Sapporo, opened in 2018 as Hokkaido’s first craft gin distillery. The series name 9148 stands for a free world, free ideas and free values, and each label carries two numbers: the distilling date and the recipe number. #0104 is a summer release built on hamanasu, the beach rose that is Hokkaido’s flower, with Rishiri kombu from the coasts where it blooms. Butterfly pea gives the cool blue, which turns pink when tonic or lemon is added.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Beach rose, cassis	Floral and cool	Gin mist, or a gin & tonic to watch it change colour

Source: bottle label, Benizakura Distillery Photo: MIKI Yoshihito / CC BY 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Benizakura Distillery

Hokkaido Liberty Whisky

Sapporo, Hokkaido

9148 #0303 Triple-Sec

#0303 TRIPLE-SEC CRAFT GIN



ALCOHOL
57%
ABV

STRENGTH
×3
Three times the botanicals

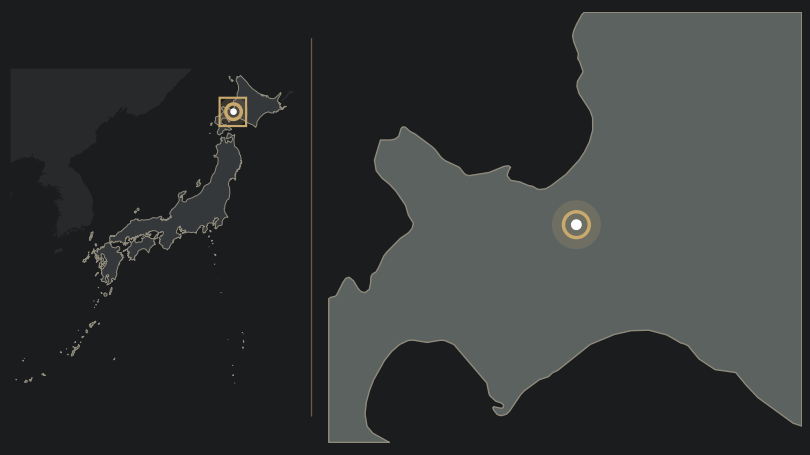
TASTE PROFILE
Bold
Navy strength

Distillery	Opened 2018 in Benizakura Park, Sapporo; Hokkaido's first craft gin distillery
Name	"9148" flips each pair of digits in "1984" (Orwell): a wish for freedom
Recipe	The #0101 standard with more than three times the botanicals
Size/ABV	700 ml / 57% (navy strength)

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

目次

Minami Ward, Sapporo



Benizakura Distillery, in Benizakura Park

Around the distillery



Sapporo at night from Mt. Moiwa, Minami Ward

Three times the botanicals, at 57%.

Benizakura Distillery, hidden in the woods of Benizakura Park in south Sapporo, opened in 2018 as Hokkaido's first craft gin distillery. The series name 9148 stands for a free world, free ideas and free values, and each label carries two numbers: the distilling date and the recipe number. #0303 takes the #0101 recipe and uses more than three times the botanicals, bottled at 57% navy strength: dry, juniper-heavy and powerful, with deeper umami from kombu and shiitake.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Juniper, spice	Dry and powerful	Gin & tonic, Martini, Negroni

Source: bottle label, Benizakura Distillery Photo: 掬茶 / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Maoi Distillery

MAOI Co.

Naganuma, Hokkaido

MYAOI Gin “can you celebrate?”

A STORY-DRIVEN GIN SERIES



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

SERIES
MYAOI
Each bottle tells a story

TASTE PROFILE
Celebration
Sweet and bright

Distillery	On the Maoi Hills above the Ishikari Plain; began as a winery in 2006
Stills	A hybrid still also used for whisky and brandy
Series	A horse and a cat on the label, a story told in flavour
ABV	46%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

Naganuma, Hokkaido



Around the distillery



Maoi Distillery, Maoi Hills

View over the Ishikari Plain from the Maoi Hills, Naganuma

A toast from a small hilltop distillery.

Maoi Distillery stands on the Maoi Hills in Naganuma, looking out over the Ishikari Plain. It began with vines and wine, and now also makes whisky and gin. Each MYAOI Gin tells a chapter of a story starring the horse and cat on the label. “can you celebrate?” is the one to raise with someone special.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Sweet fruit, flowers	Bright, gentle sweetness	With soda or tonic

Source: bottle label, Maoi Distillery and retailers Photo: t-konno / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Maoi Distillery

MAOI Co.

Naganuma, Hokkaido

MYAOI Gin “hanabi”

HANABI = FIREWORKS



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Mango
With milk and jasmine tea

TASTE PROFILE
Sweet-tart
Mango and yoghurt

Botanicals	Milk, mango, juniper, orange peel, jasmine tea, cinnamon
Story	A summer fireworks night, watched hand in hand
Series	The sixth MYAOI Gin
Size/ABV	500 ml / 43%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

目次

Naganuma, Hokkaido



Maoi Distillery, Maoi Hills

Around the distillery



Golden wheat fields, Naganuma

A summer night you wish would never end.

The sixth MYAOI Gin is about fireworks: two people who have just confessed their feelings, watching the sky hand in hand on a summer night, beautiful and a little bittersweet. Rich mango sweetness meets a soft, yoghurt-like tang. Lovely with tonic, a lightly sweet soda, or even milk.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Ripe mango	Sweet-tart and creamy	With tonic, or with milk

Source: bottle label, Maoi Distillery and retailers Photo: t-konno / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

Niseko Distillery

Niseko Distillery (Hakkaisan)

Niseko, Hokkaido

ohoro GIN

JAPAN'S DISTINCTIVE CRAFT GIN



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

NAME
ohoro
"To continue" in Ainu

TASTE PROFILE
Fresh
Crisp and clear

Distillery	Below Mt. Yotei, founded by Hakkai Brewery of Niigata
Name	ohoro means "to continue" in the Ainu language
Label	Mt. Yotei and the Niseko forest
Size/ABV	720 ml / 47%

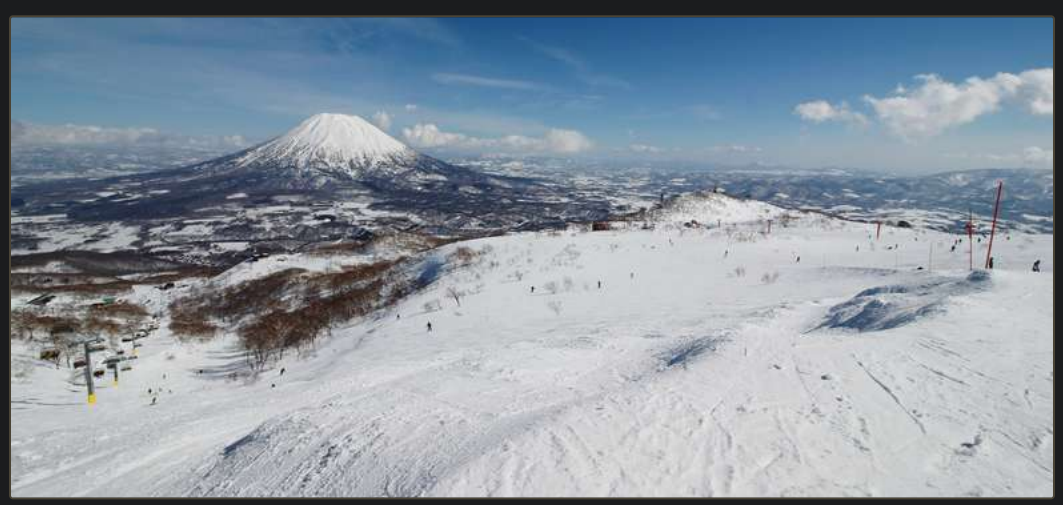
30 ml ¥1,815 tax incl.

Niseko, Hokkaido



Niseko Distillery, below Mt. Yotei

Around the distillery



Mt. Yotei seen from Niseko Annupuri

A Niseko gin whose name means "to continue".

Hakkai Brewery, the Niigata maker of Hakkaisan sake, opened this distillery in Niseko within sight of Mt. Yotei. The label explains: ohoro means "to continue" in Ainu, the language of Hokkaido's indigenous people, a wish that the gin will be enjoyed for generations. Crisp and clear, like the Niseko air.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Conifer, citrus	Clean and refreshing	Gin & tonic, or with soda

Source: bottle label, Niseko Distillery Photo: MIKI Yoshihito / CC BY 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Tokachi Heiya Distillery

Tokachi Heiya Distillery

Makubetsu, Hokkaido

Tokachi Craft Gin AKATOKI [TANZANITE]

TOKACHI CRAFT GIN, FROM THE TOKACHI PLAIN, HOKKAIDO



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

COLOR
Blue
Butterfly pea flower

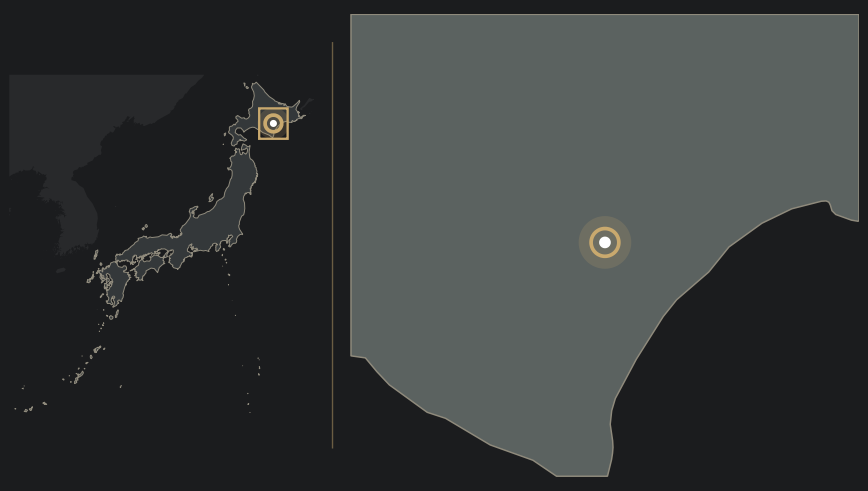
TASTE PROFILE
Citrus
Bright and elegant

Distillery	In Makubetsu, in the middle of the Tokachi Plain
Motif	Tanzanite, a deep, clear blue gemstone
Botanical	A generous amount of Hiroshima bergamot peel
Size/ABV	500 ml / 47%

30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

目次

Tokachi Plain, Hokkaido



Tokachi Heiya Distillery, Makubetsu

Around the distillery



The Tokachi Plain near Obihiro and the Hidaka Mountains, from the air

A Tokachi gin dressed in tanzanite blue.

AKATOKI (“daybreak”) is made by Tokachi Heiya Distillery in Makubetsu, on Hokkaido’s Tokachi Plain. Its motif is tanzanite, a deep, clear blue gemstone with many faces, and its colour comes from butterfly pea flowers. Plenty of Hiroshima bergamot peel gives an elegant, bright citrus aroma. Add tonic and the blue softens to violet.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Bergamot, flowers	Bright and elegant	Gin & tonic, and watch the colour change

Source: bottle label, Tokachi Heiya Distillery Photo: T.Kiya / CC BY-SA 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

Mohodori Distillery

Mohodori Distillery Lab

Goshogawara, Aomori

Aomori-ken Gin 02 APPLE

ONE GIN FOR EACH OF JAPAN'S 47 PREFECTURES



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Apple
Aomori apples

TASTE PROFILE
Apple
Fragrant and clean

Maker	A Goshogawara distillery known for apple brandy
Project	"Ken Gin": one gin for each of the 47 prefectures
02	Aomori's prefecture code
ABV	40%

30 ml ¥1,757 tax incl.

Goshogawara, Aomori



Mohodori Distillery, Tsugaru Plain

Around the distillery



Golden rice fields of the Tsugaru Plain and Mt. Iwaki

No. 02 in the prefecture gin series, from apple country.

The "Ken Gin" project is making one gin for each of Japan's 47 prefectures, and 02 is Aomori's prefecture code. It is made in Goshogawara by Mohodori Distillery, which distils apple brandy from Aomori apples. Pour a glass and a clear apple aroma rises right away.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Green and honeyed apple	Clean, lightly sweet	With soda or tonic

Source: bottle label, Ken Gin project (agataJapan / Starmark) Photo: 掬茶 / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

MCG (Miyagi Craft Gin)

MCG Co.

Osaki, Miyagi

MEI Budo Sansho

JAPANESE CRAFT GIN, DISTILLED IN MIYAGI



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Sansho
Budo (grape) sansho pepper

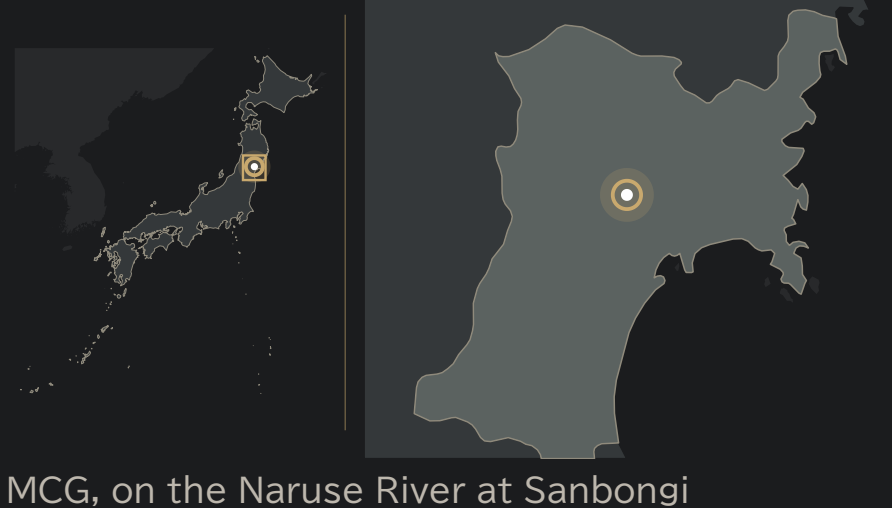
TASTE PROFILE
Zesty
Citrus and tingling pepper

Star	Rare budo sansho from Aridagawa, Wakayama
Japanese	Sansho, yuzu peel, seri (water dropwort), grape skin, tea
Name	From the Naruse River, sometimes gentle, sometimes wild
ABV	46%

30 ml ¥1,757 tax incl.

目次

Osaki, Miyagi



MCG, on the Naruse River at Sanbongi

Around the distillery



The Naruse River and Mt. Funagata, Miyagi

A sansho gin born beside a singing river.

The Naruse River runs past the distillery, calm on some days and roaring on others; its first character, 鳴 (“mei”, to sound), names this gin. The star is budo sansho, a rare Japanese pepper that grows in grape-like clusters. With yuzu, seri and tea, it has a lively tingle that loves yakitori, eel and Chinese food.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Sansho, yuzu	Zesty, numbing finish	With soda, alongside food

Source: bottle label, retailer information Photo: hidekun2006 / CC BY 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

Nikka Whisky

Nikka Whisky Distilling

Miyagikyo, Sendai

Nikka Coffey Gin

BASED ON COFFEY-STILL SPIRIT



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

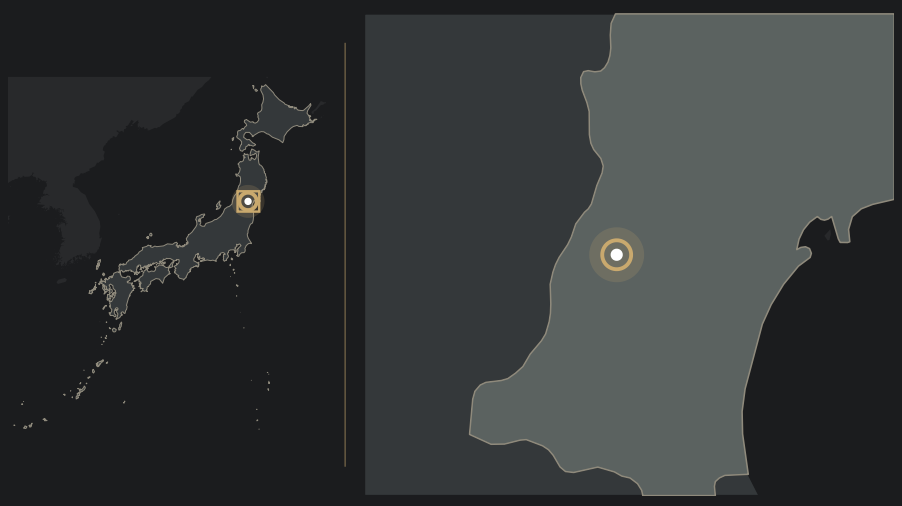
STILL
Coffey
Traditional column still

TASTE PROFILE
Citrus
Sansho, yuzu, apple

Base	Spirit from Nikka's Coffey still
Japanese	Yuzu, amanatsu, kabosu, shikuwasa, apple, sansho
Launched	2017, alongside Coffey Vodka
Size/ABV	700 ml / 47%

30 ml ¥1,868 tax incl.

Distilled in Sendai, Miyagi



Miyagikyo Distillery, home of the Coffey still

Miyagikyo Distillery



Copper pot stills at Miyagikyo

A citrus and sansho gin from a whisky still.

Nikka still runs the Coffey still at its Miyagikyo distillery, an old column still that keeps the character of the grain. Its spirit is the base here, with Japanese citrus (yuzu, amanatsu, kabosu, shikuwasa), apple and sansho pepper. Fresh citrus up front, then a gentle peppery spice.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Yuzu, sansho	Round and fresh	Gin & tonic, or with soda

Source: bottle label, Nikka Whisky Photo: くろふね / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

The Coffey Still & Gin

A 19th-century column still

Nikka Whisky, Miyagikyo

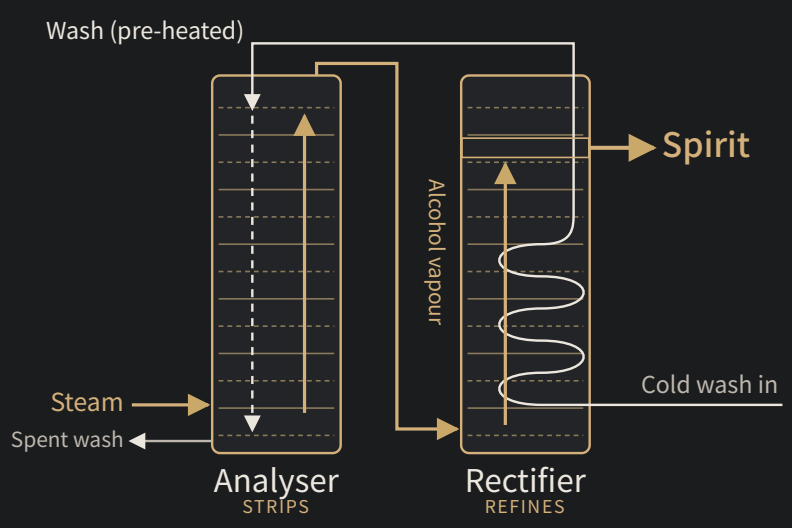


A portrait said to be Aeneas Coffey (19th century)



Inside the Coffey still (left) and the Coffey still house at Miyagikyo (right). Photos: Nikka Whisky official material

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1 Pre-heat

Cold wash runs through a pipe inside the rectifier, warms up, and enters the top of the analyser.

2 Strip

Wash falls over the plates of the analyser while steam rises from below, carrying the alcohol away as vapour.

3 Refine

The vapour climbs the rectifier and is refined; spirit is drawn off from a plate near the top.

An old, flavour-keeping still gives the gin its body.

The continuous still was perfected by Aeneas Coffey, a former excise officer in Ireland, who patented it around 1830. Newer, more efficient stills have since replaced it almost everywhere, but the Coffey still keeps more of the grain's sweetness and body. Nikka Coffey Gin starts from Coffey-still spirit made from corn and malted barley, then layers on Japanese citrus and sansho, so it tastes rounder and fuller than a lean, neutral gin.

c. 1830	Aeneas Coffey patents his continuous still
1963	Nikka imports one from Scotland to its Nishinomiya plant
1999	Moved to the Miyagikyo distillery, Sendai
2017	Nikka Coffey Gin, based on Coffey-still spirit, is launched

Sources: Nikka Whisky official site (history, Coffey still) / bottle label. Diagram drawn by 2102.

Niigata Kameda Distillery

Niigata Kameda Distillery

Niigata City, Niigata

KAMEOW GIN “Love again”

A LE LECTIER PEAR GIN



ALCOHOL
42%
ABV

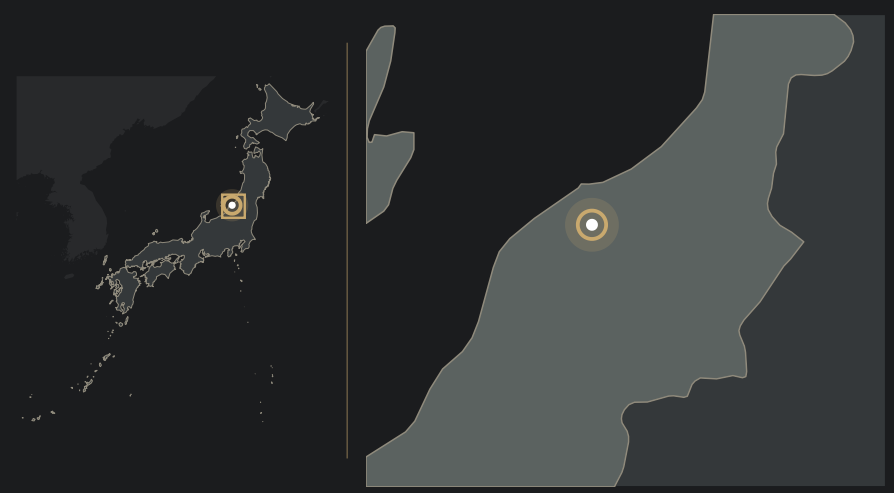
BOTANICAL
Pear
Le Lectier

TASTE PROFILE
Fruity
Light and elegant

Star	Le Lectier, Niigata’s prized European pear
Botanicals	Juniper, coconut, rose, cardamom, mint, Koshihikari rice and more
Name	When a scent brings back a forgotten feeling
Size/ABV	500 ml / 42%

30 ml ¥1,815 tax incl.

Niigata City, Niigata



Niigata Kameda Distillery

Around the distillery



Northern Culture Museum (Ito family estate), Konan-ku, Niigata

Fall in love again, with a Niigata pear.

The first craft gin from a distillery in Kameda, Niigata City, built around Le Lectier, the European pear that defines a Niigata winter. “Love again” is the moment a scent brings back a feeling you had forgotten. The white bottle with its cat holds a juicy, elegant pear aroma.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Ripe pear, rose	Light and fruity	With soda, or sweet cider

Source: bottle label, retailer information Photo: Drph17 / CC BY 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Echigo Yakusou

Echigo Yakusou Co.

Joetsu, Niigata

THE HERBALIST YASO GIN YUZU

80 WILD PLANTS + 9 GIN BOTANICALS



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Yuzu
80 wild plants + yuzu

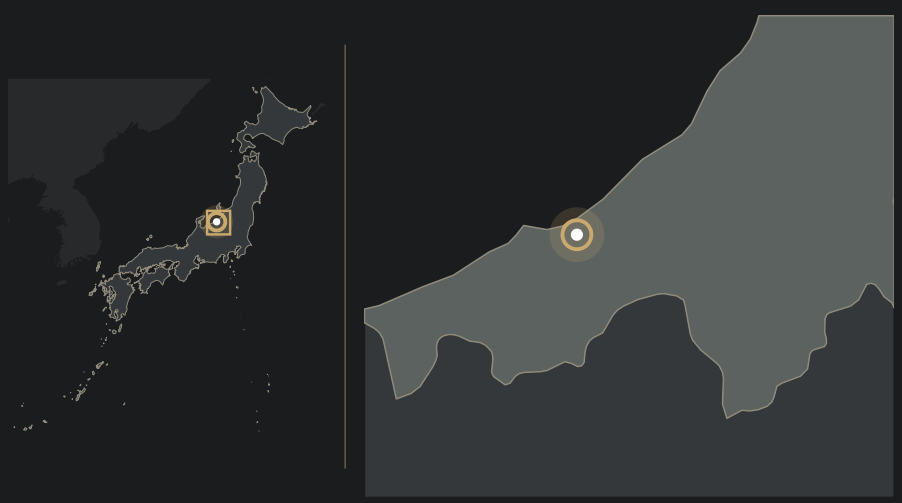
TASTE PROFILE
Yuzu
Fresh and herbal

Maker	A Joetsu company known for fermented wild-herb drinks
Label	80 wild plants and 9 gin botanicals
Award	Country Winner, World Gin Awards 2026
Size/ABV	700 ml / 45%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

目次

Joetsu, Niigata



Echigo Yakusou, Joetsu

The distillery



Echigo Yakuso Distillery building, Joetsu

Eighty wild plants and a ray of yuzu.

Echigo Yakusou in Joetsu has long made health drinks by fermenting wild herbs. The HERBALIST YASO gins put that knowledge into a bottle: 80 wild plants plus the classic gin botanicals. This yuzu edition was named Japan’s Country Winner at the World Gin Awards 2026.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Yuzu peel, green herbs	Fresh and herbal	Gin & tonic, or with soda

Source: bottle label, Echigo Yakusou Photo: Keeezawa / CC0 Map: Natural Earth

Echigo Yakusou

Echigo Yakusou Co.

Joetsu, Niigata

Cacao Gin

CACAO GIN



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

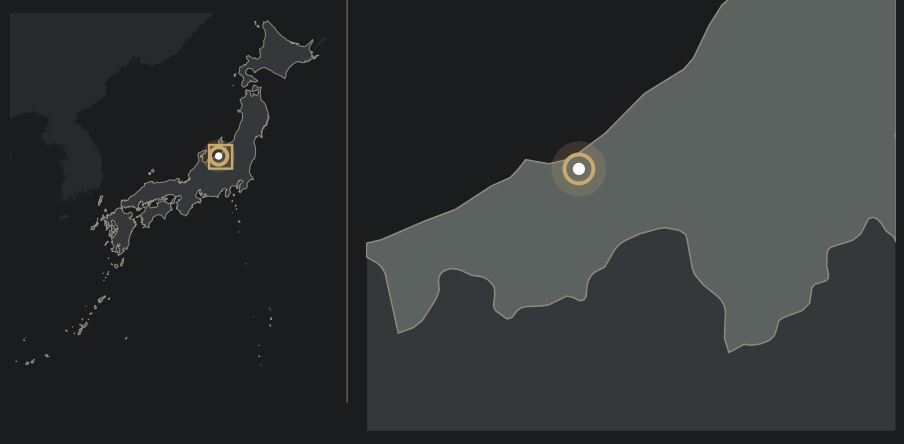
BOTANICAL
Cacao
Chocolate-like aroma

TASTE PROFILE
Cacao
Bittersweet

Maker	A Joetsu company known for fermented wild-herb drinks
Star	Cacao
Label	Soft watercolour tones
ABV	48%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

Joetsu, Niigata



Around the distillery



Echigo Yakusou, Joetsu

Takada Castle turret and cherry blossom, Joetsu

A cacao gin from a wild-herb house.

From the Joetsu maker of the YASO herbal gins, a gin built around cacao. A bittersweet, chocolate-like aroma rises from the glass. Sip it slowly after dinner, neat or on the rocks, or try it with milk or coffee.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Cacao, nuts	Bittersweet and round	Neat or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, menu Photo: Saigen Jiro / CC0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Nozawa Onsen Distillery

Nozawa Onsen Distillery

Nozawa Onsen, Nagano

OBUSE GIN

NOZAWA ONSEN DISTILLERY



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

PLACE
Shinshu
Northern Nagano

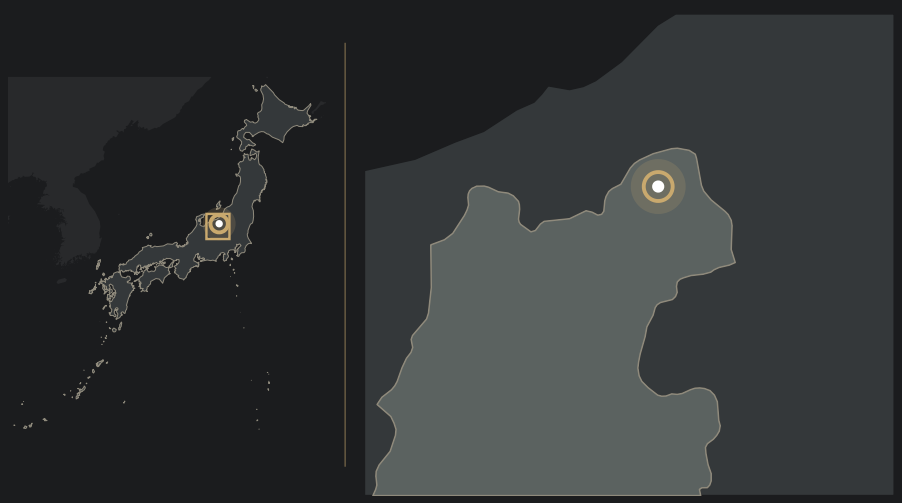
TASTE PROFILE
Fruity
Soft and bright

Distillery	In Nozawa Onsen, a village of ski slopes and hot springs
Name	After Obuse, the town of chestnuts and Hokusai
Label	Red, with a tree-ring pattern
ABV	45%

30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

目次

Nozawa Onsen, Nagano



Nozawa Onsen Distillery

Around the distillery



Nozawa Onsen village below Mt. Kenashi

A hot-spring village salutes its neighbour, Obuse.

Nozawa Onsen is a ski and hot-spring village in northern Nagano. Its distillery named this gin after nearby Obuse, a town famous for chestnuts and for the painter Hokusai. The label's tree-ring pattern is striking; inside is a soft, bright gin that tastes of northern Shinshu.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Fruit, herbs	Soft and bright	With soda, or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, menu Photo: Hideyuki KAMON / CC BY-SA 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

Shin Distillation Laboratory

Shin Joryu Kenkyujo

Toyama City, Toyama

No.7 High Juniper Gin

A STUDY OF JUNIPER



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

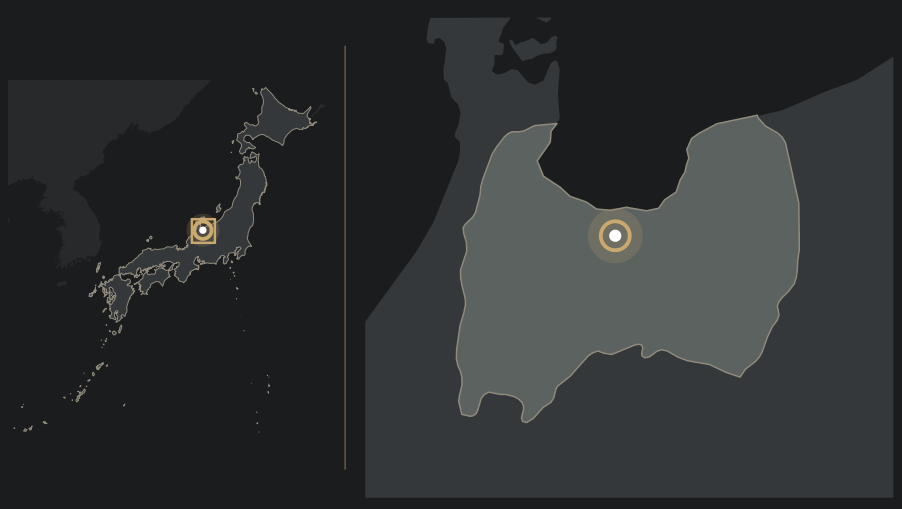
BOTANICAL
Juniper
About twice the usual

TASTE PROFILE
Dry
Piney and bold

Maker	A lab-like distillery rooted in Toyama’s pharmaceutical tradition
Question	Why does gin use juniper?
Recipe	About twice the juniper of a typical gin
Size/ABV	500 ml / 47%

30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

Toyama City, Toyama



Shin Distillation Laboratory

Around the distillery



Toyama city and the Tateyama range from Mt. Kureha

Juniper, front and centre.

Toyama has been Japan’s medicine town for centuries, and this distillery studies aroma the way a pharmacist would. No.7 came out of one question, “why juniper?”, and uses nearly twice the juniper of a typical gin. Cool pine, a touch of citrus, dry and bold.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Juniper, pine	Dry and bold	Gin & tonic, Martini

Source: bottle label, retailer information Photo: 名古屋太郎 / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Alembic Ono Distillery

Alembic

Kanazawa, Ishikawa

Alembic Dry Gin HACHIBAN

HACHIBAN = “NUMBER EIGHT”



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

NAME
No. 8
The eighth trial recipe

TASTE PROFILE
Spiced
Cacao and kuromoji

Distillery	Kanazawa’s first spirits distillery, in the soy-sauce port of Ono
Botanicals	Eight, incl. juniper, cacao nibs, fresh lemon, kuromoji from Mt. Hakusan
Water	Mt. Hakusan spring water
Awards	IWSC 2023 Trophy; SFWSC 2023 Double Gold

30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

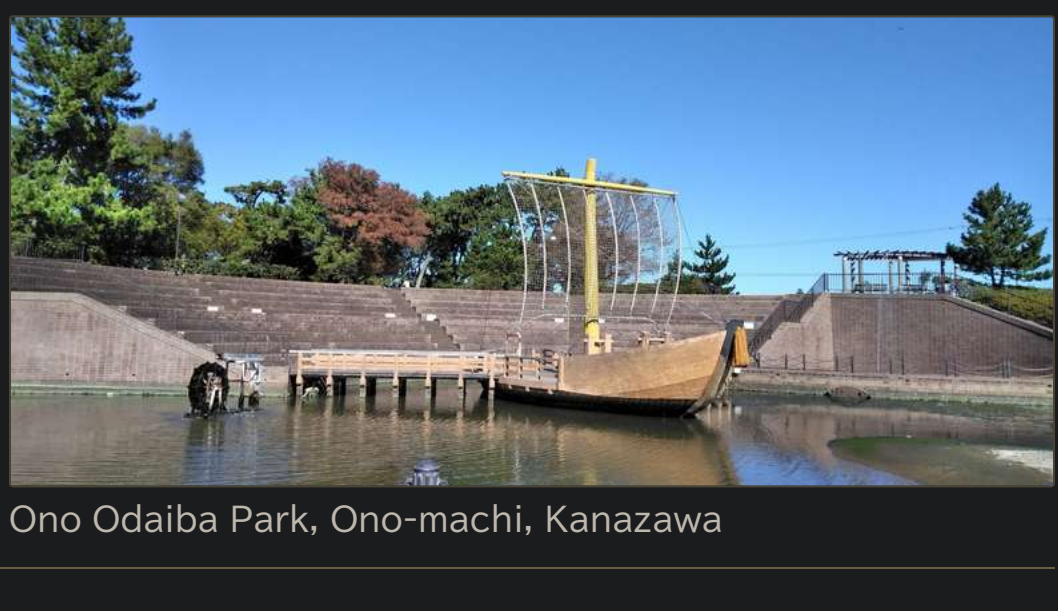
目次

Kanazawa, Ishikawa



Alembic Ono Distillery, Ono port town

Around the distillery



Ono Odaiba Park, Ono-machi, Kanazawa

A black bottle, a white “8”: recipe number eight.

Alembic is Kanazawa’s first spirits distillery, in Ono, a port lined with soy-sauce breweries. HACHIBAN means “number eight”: the eighth trial recipe. Eight botanicals, including cacao nibs, fresh lemon peel and kuromoji spicewood from the foot of Mt. Hakusan, are cut with Hakusan water. A multi-award winner.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Kuromoji, cacao, lemon	Dry and spicy	Gin & tonic, or neat

Source: bottle label, Alembic Photo: Kinstone / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Kiuchi Yasato Distillery

Kiuchi Brewery

Ishioka, Ibaraki

Hinomaru Gin “Kura-fu-do”

HINOMARU GIN CRAFT



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

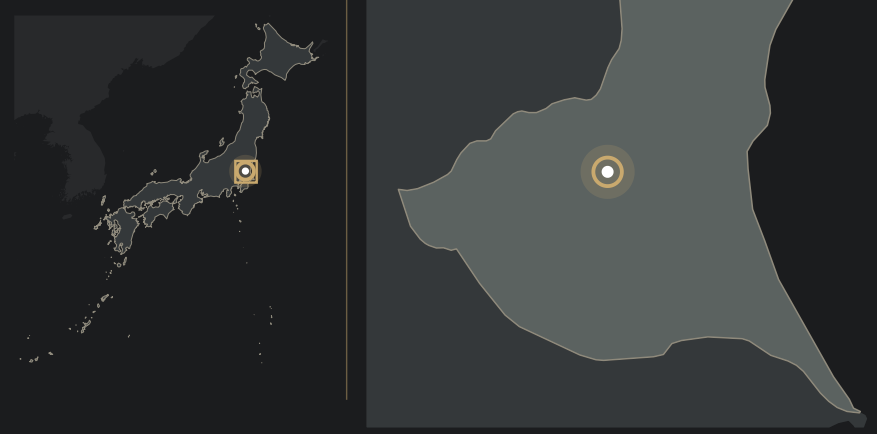
NAME
Kura-fu-do
A pun on “craft”

TASTE PROFILE
Japanese
Clean, gentle grain

Maker	Kiuchi Brewery, known for Hitachino Nest Beer
Distillery	Yasato Distillery (2020), east of Mt. Tsukuba
Name	蔵風土 reads “kura-fu-do”: brewery, climate, soil
ABV	47%

30 ml ¥1,815 tax incl.

Ishioka, Ibaraki



Kiuchi Yasato Distillery, east of Mt. Tsukuba

Around the distillery



Mt. Tsukuba from the Yasato basin, Ishioka

A rising-sun gin from a sake and beer brewery.

Kiuchi Brewery in Ibaraki makes sake and the well-known Hitachino Nest Beer. In 2020 it opened Yasato Distillery at the eastern foot of Mt. Tsukuba, where it makes Hinomaru Whisky and this gin. The name 蔵風土 is a pun on “craft”: brewery (kura), wind (fu) and land (do).

Nose	Palate	Try it
Citrus, grain	Clean, lightly sweet	With soda, or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, Kiuchi Brewery Photo: Σ64 / CC BY 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Musashino Distillery

Matsuzaki Co.

Kawagoe, Saitama

TOGEDAMA

TOGEDAMA = “THORNY BALLS”



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

NAME
Togedama
The maker’s word for juniper

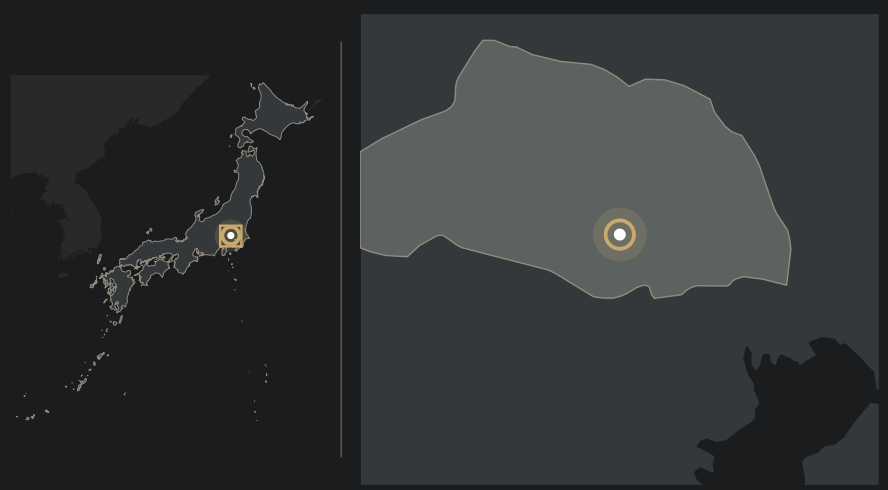
TASTE PROFILE
Green
Clean and delicate

Distillery	A former charcoal store in the Kawagoe countryside
Botanicals	Juniper with Saitama yuzu, sansho, ginger and tea
Name	Juniper’s spiky leaves and round berries
Award	Japan Country Winner, World Gin Awards 2023

30 ml ¥1,705 tax incl.

目次

Kawagoe, Saitama



Musashino Distillery, Nakafuku

Around the distillery



Kawagoe old town and the Toki no Kane bell tower

Spiky leaves, round berries.

Musashino Distillery sits among fields and woodland in Nakafuku, on the edge of old Kawagoe. Togedama, “thorny balls”, is the founder’s father’s name for juniper, with its spiky leaves and round berries. Juniper is steeped slowly at winter temperature, then joined by Saitama yuzu, sansho, ginger and tea.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Juniper, yuzu, green tea	Delicate and clean	Gin & tonic

Source: bottle label, Musashino Distillery, press Photo: Zairon / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Musashino Distillery

Matsuzaki Co.

Kawagoe, Saitama

LiO Craft Gin

AROMA OF FORESTS



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

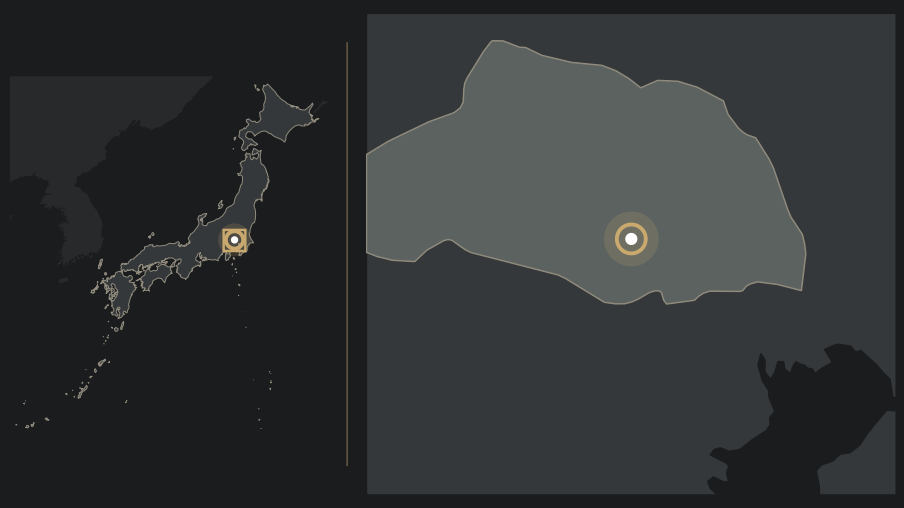
THEME
Forest
Aroma of Forests

TASTE PROFILE
Forest
Crisp conifer

Theme	“Aroma of Forests”
Name	LiO, written 凛桜 (“dignified cherry”)
Distillery	Musashino Distillery, run by Matsuzaki, in Nakafuku, Kawagoe
ABV	47%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

Kawagoe, Saitama



Musashino Distillery, Nakafuku

Around the distillery



The wind-chime tunnel at Kawagoe Hikawa Shrine

A crisp gin that smells like a forest walk.

A snowy peak, blue forest and the words “Aroma of Forests” on the label. LiO is an all-Japanese craft gin made at Musashino Distillery, run by Matsuzaki in the satoyama of Nakafuku, Kawagoe. Its name is written 凛桜, “dignified cherry blossom”. Crisp conifer notes, like a walk in the woods.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Conifer, forest air	Crisp and clear	Gin & tonic, or neat

Source: bottle label, Musashino Distillery, menu Photo: Japanwikisan / CC BY 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery

Alchemiae

Gujo, Gifu

First Essence 8th Anniversary “symbol of INNAKI”

FIRST ESSENCE 8TH ANNIVERSARY



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

BOTANICALS
99
Ninety-nine botanicals

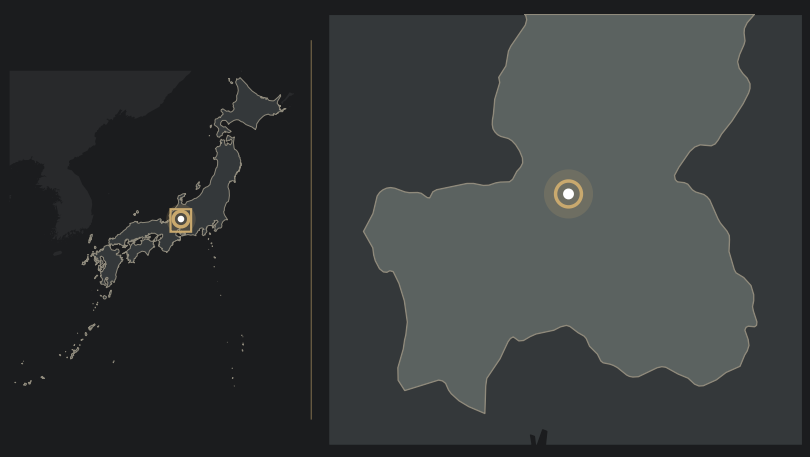
TASTE PROFILE
8th year
Layered aromas

Distillery	A one-man distillery opened in 2017 in the Innaki valley, Gujo-Hachiman
Maker	Shohei Tatsumi, who uses ingredients from growers he knows
Edition	8th anniversary; distilled and bottled 2025, 950 bottles
Base	Six spirits incl. rice shochu, kasutori, chicory shochu and grappa

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

目次

Gujo, Gifu



Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery, Gujo-Hachiman

Around the distillery



Gujo Hachiman town seen from the castle

Year eight, distilled to its essence.

In the Innaki valley above Gujo-Hachiman, Shohei Tatsumi runs Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery on his own. Alchemiae means “the alchemists”, and the hands scooping water on his labels stand for a single drop made possible by many people. The 8th-anniversary First Essence gathers a year of distilling botanicals one by one to capture their essence: 99 of them, from juniper, lavender and yuzu to green tea and bergamot, layered over rice shochu, kasutori, grappa and more. The bottle art is titled “symbol of INNAKI”.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Citrus, herbs, tea, flowers	Many-layered, long finish	Neat

Source: bottle label, Tatsumi Distillery notes via WAITER Photo: Roniius / CC BY 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery

Alchemiae

Gujo, Gifu

First Essence 9th Anniversary “Fascination of INNAKI”

FIRST ESSENCE 9TH ANNIVERSARY



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

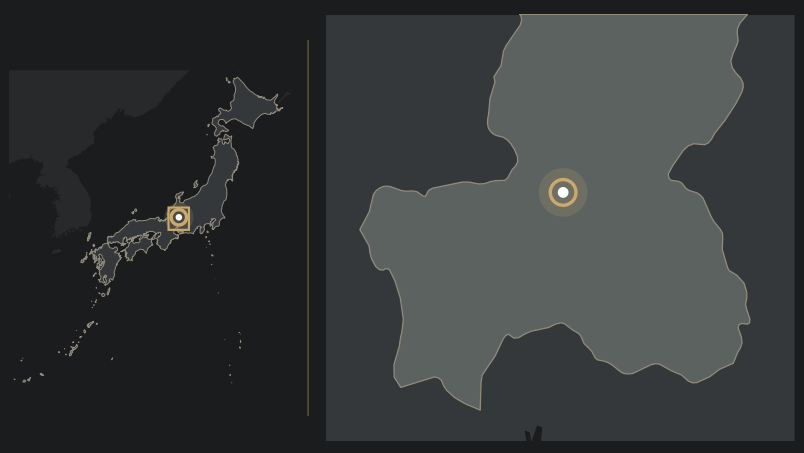
BOTANICALS
80
Eighty botanicals

TASTE PROFILE
9th year
Long, beautiful finish

Distillery	A one-man distillery opened in 2017 in the Innaki valley, Gujo-Hachiman
Maker	Shohei Tatsumi, who uses ingredients from growers he knows
Edition	9th anniversary, 952 bottles
Base	Nine spirits incl. rice and barley shochu, kasutori, date shochu, grappa and MAWSIM

30 ml ¥2,087 tax incl.

Gujo, Gifu



Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery, Gujo-Hachiman

Around the distillery



The Yoshida River through Gujo-Hachiman

Year nine: eighty aromas in one glass.

In the Innaki valley above Gujo-Hachiman, Shohei Tatsumi runs Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery on his own. Alchemiae means “the alchemists”, and the hands scooping water on his labels stand for a single drop made possible by many people. The 9th-anniversary First Essence crowns a year of distilling botanicals one at a time: 80 aromas, from sudachi, osmanthus and tea flowers to Yamato tachibana, wasabi and maqaw, layered over nine base spirits. The finish is long and beautiful and will mature further over the years. The bottle art is titled “Fascination of INNAKI”.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Citrus, flowers, tea, spice	Many-layered, long finish	Neat

Source: bottle label, Musashiya Photo: Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Yomeishu Seizo

Yomeishu Seizo Co.

Komagane, Nagano

KANOMORI

CRAFT GIN INFUSED WITH KUROMOJI



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Kuromoji
Japanese spicewood

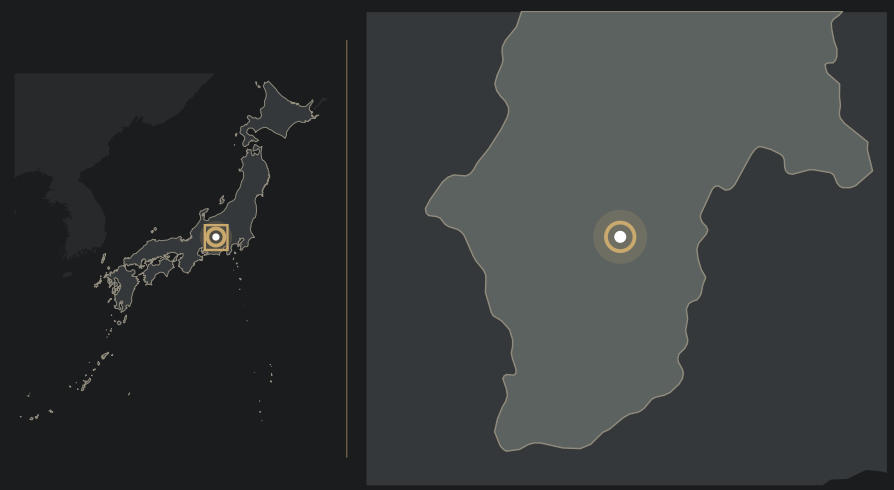
TASTE PROFILE
Woody
Fresh forest air

Maker	Yomeishu, maker of a famous herbal tonic
Distilled	At its Komagane plant below the Central Alps
Star	Kuromoji, a fragrant Japanese spicewood
Size/ABV	700 ml / 47%

30 ml ¥1,705 tax incl.

目次

Komagane, Nagano



Yomeishu Komagane, below the Central Alps

Around the distillery



Senjojiki Cirque and Mt. Hoken, Central Alps, Komagane

Kuromoji from the forests of the Central Alps.

Kuromoji is a fragrant spicewood used for the little picks served with Japanese sweets, and a key herb in Yomeishu's century-old tonic. Yomeishu distils this gin at its Komagane plant below the Central Alps. KANOMORI means "forest of fragrance": clean, calm, woodland air.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Kuromoji, forest	Fresh and soft	With soda, or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, Yomeishu Seizo Photo: sota from Tokyo, Japan / CC BY-SA 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

GEEKSTILL

GEEKSTILL Co.

Koshu, Yamanashi

AMRTA GIN Limited Edition 10 (Osmanthus)

AMRTA GIN LIMITED EDITION 10



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

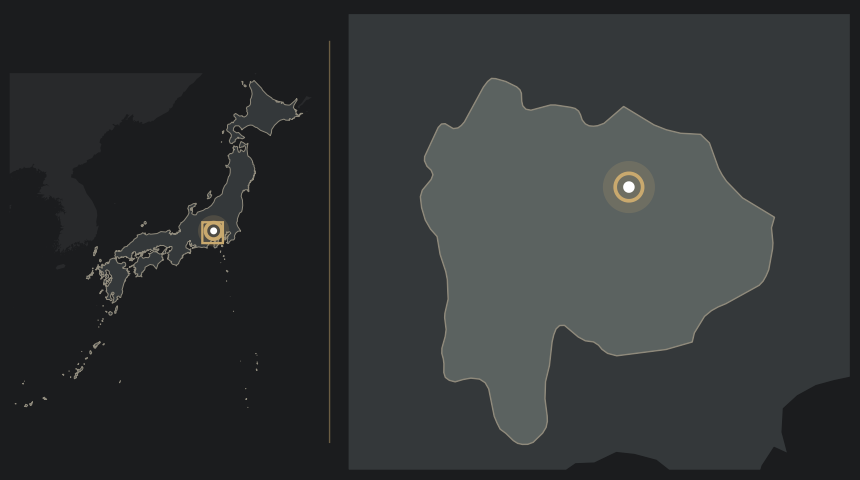
NAME
AMRTA
Sanskrit for “elixir of immortality”

TASTE PROFILE
Osmanthus
Kinmokusei takes the lead

Distillery	Founded 2020, Yamanashi’s first craft gin distillery
Botanicals	Wild plants the team forages themselves
Edition	The 10th Limited Edition, built around osmanthus
Size/ABV	500 ml / 40%, distilled 2023

30 ml ¥1,815 tax incl.

Koshu, Yamanashi



GEEKSTILL, Enzan

Around the distillery



Main gate of Erin-ji temple, Enzan, Koshu

Osmanthus, undiluted.

GEEKSTILL opened in 2020 in Enzan, Koshu, in the heart of Yamanashi’s grape and wine country, as the prefecture’s first craft gin distillery. AMRTA is Sanskrit for the elixir of immortality. For this 10th Limited Edition, the team put osmanthus (kinmokusei) up front. They had long held it back because its scent was so strong, but this time left it undiluted, so the gin smells like an autumn garden in bloom.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Osmanthus	Sweet and floral	Neat, or with soda

Source: bottle label, GEEKSTILL online shop Photo: さかおり / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Fukagawa Distillery

Rikashitsu

Koto City, Tokyo

GIN FUEKI

PRODUCT OF FUKAGAWA



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

NAME
Fueki
From Basho's "fueki ryuko"

TASTE PROFILE
Food gin
Shiso and hiba wood

Distillery	Opened 2023 in Kiyosumi-Shirakawa
Botanicals	Aomori hiba wood, vetiver, green shiso, juniper, citrus, steamed Kochi ginger
Name	Basho's ideal of the unchanging and the ever-new
Size/ABV	500 ml / 47%

30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

目次

Koto City, Tokyo



Fukagawa Distillery, Kiyosumi-Shirakawa

Around the distillery



Kiyosumi Garden, Koto-ku, Tokyo

A gin for Japanese food, from Basho's Fukagawa.

Fukagawa Distillery was opened in Kiyosumi-Shirakawa in 2023 by Rikashitsu, a lab-glass company, together with a gin bar team. They set out to make a gin for Japanese food, with hiba wood, green shiso and steamed ginger. FUEKI, "the unchanging", comes from the poet Basho, who lived in Fukagawa.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Hiba wood, shiso, ginger	Dry and clean	With soda, with Japanese food

Source: bottle label, press Photo: Guilhem Vellut from Annecy, France / CC BY 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

Toranomon Distillery

Shushokudo Toranomon Distillery

Minato City, Tokyo

COMMON GIN

SMALL BATCH, LOCAL INGREDIENTS



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

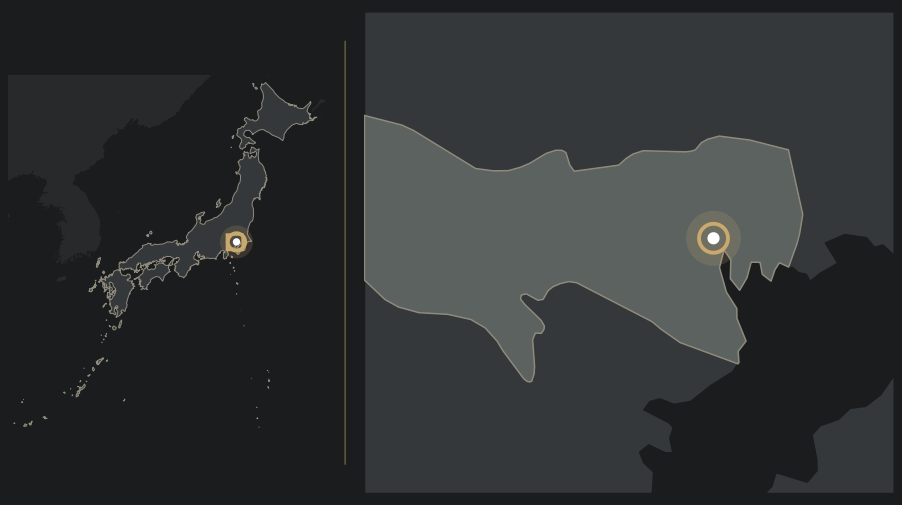
BOTANICAL
Chicory
Juniper + chicory

TASTE PROFILE
Dry
Clean, lightly roasted

Distillery	Inside a pub in Toranomon Yokocho
Base	Barley shochu from Hachijo Island
Water	Okutama spring water (Sawanoi)
Size/ABV	500 ml / 45%

30 ml ¥1,705 tax incl.

Minato City, Tokyo



Toranomon Distillery, Toranomon Yokocho

Around the distillery



Toranomon Hills towers, Minato, Tokyo

Toranomon's everyday gin, from Tokyo's islands and mountains.

Toranomon Distillery is a pub with a still, tucked into a food hall in Tokyo' s office district. COMMON is beautifully simple: barley shochu from Hachijo Island, distilled with just juniper and chicory root, and cut with spring water from Okutama, the mountains of western Tokyo.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Juniper, roasted chicory	Dry and toasty	Gin & tonic, or with soda

Source: bottle label, Toranomon Distillery Photo: Syced / CC0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Toranomon Distillery

Tokyo Local Spirits

Minato City, Tokyo

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS Tokyo Osmanthus

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Osmanthus
Grown in Tokyo

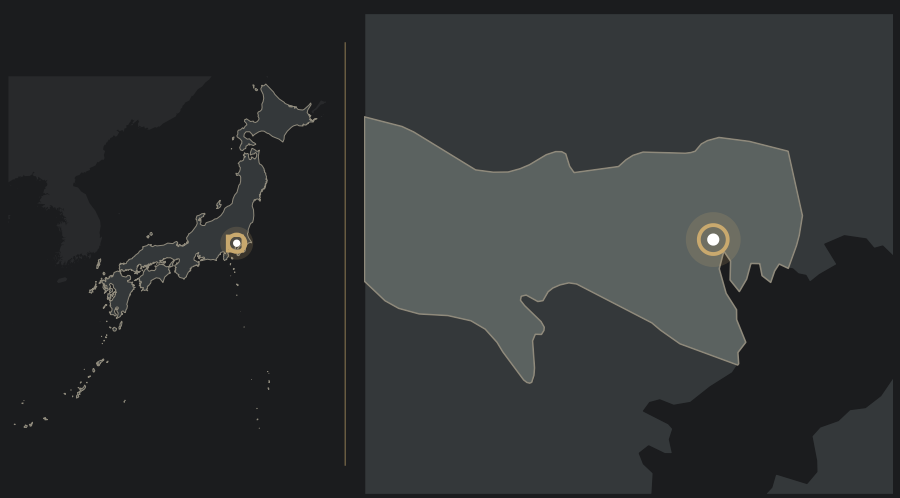
TASTE PROFILE
Sweet flower
Autumn in the city

Distillery	Toranomon Distillery, Toranomon Yokocho
Series	TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS: Tokyo-grown ingredients
Star	Osmanthus
ABV	47%

30 ml ¥1,705 tax incl.

目次

Minato City, Tokyo



Toranomon Distillery, Toranomon Yokocho

Around the distillery



Shiba Park and Tokyo Tower

Tokyo osmanthus, in a glass.

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS is Toranomon Distillery’s series that bottles one Tokyo-grown aroma at a time. Every autumn, osmanthus trees fill Tokyo’s streets with a sweet, apricot-like scent. The flowers for this gin were picked around the city: autumn in Tokyo, in a glass.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Osmanthus, apricot	Sweet and floral	With soda, or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, Toranomon Distillery Photo: Dick Thomas Johnson from Tokyo, Japan / CC BY 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

Toranomon Distillery

Tokyo Local Spirits

Minato City, Tokyo

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS Lavender

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

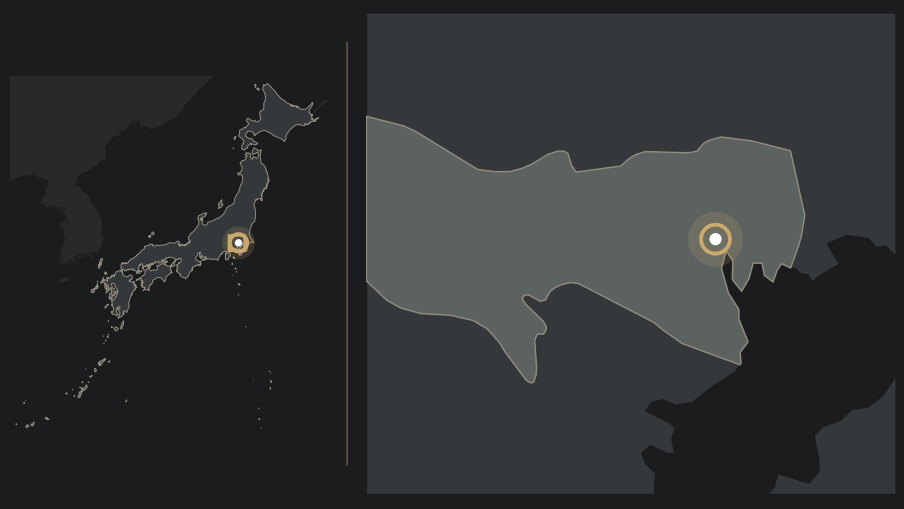
BOTANICAL
Lavender
Grown in Tokyo

TASTE PROFILE
Herbal
Calm floral

Distillery	Toranomon Distillery, Toranomon Yokocho
Series	TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS: Tokyo-grown ingredients
Star	Lavender
ABV	45%

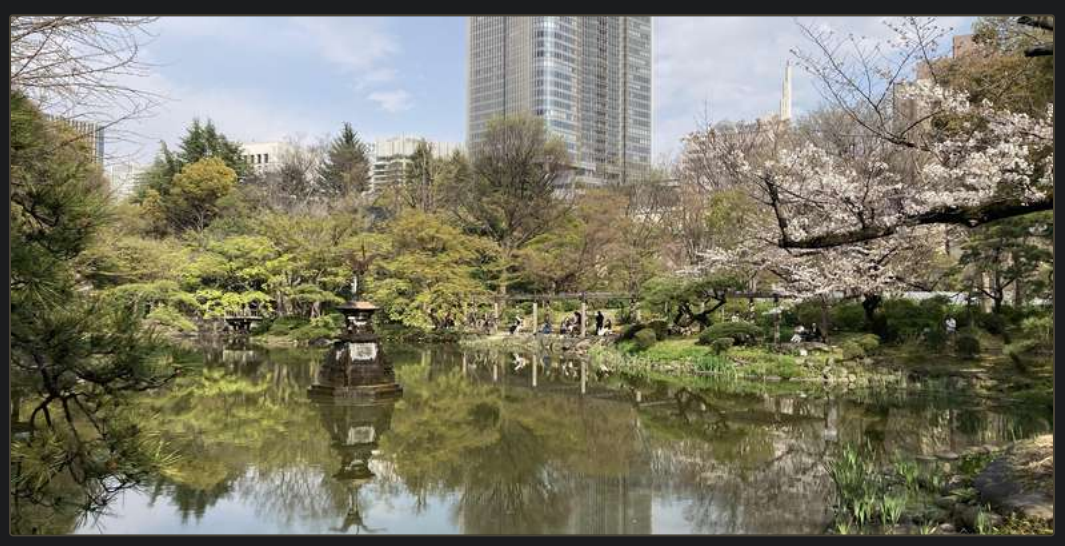
30 ml ¥1,705 tax incl.

Minato City, Tokyo



Toranomon Distillery, Toranomon Yokocho

Around the distillery



Cherry blossom by the pond, Hibiya Park

Tokyo lavender, in a glass.

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS is Toranomon Distillery’s series that bottles one Tokyo-grown aroma at a time. Lavender leads here, calm and relaxing. A lovely last drink of the night.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Lavender	Calm and gentle	With soda or tonic

Source: bottle label, Toranomon Distillery Photo: Paul Vaurie / CC0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Toranomon Distillery

Tokyo Local Spirits

Minato City, Tokyo

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS Mint (Hakka)

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Mint
Grown in Tokyo

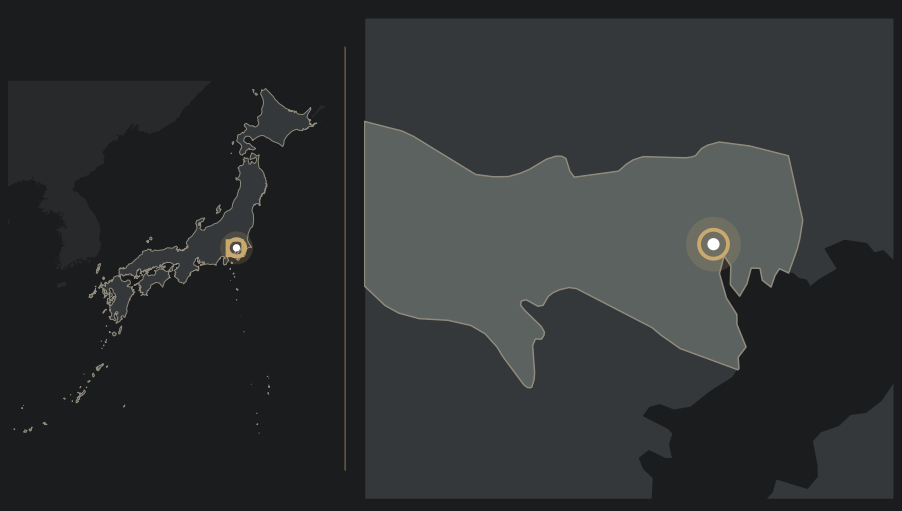
TASTE PROFILE
Cool
Fresh and minty

Distillery	Toranomon Distillery, Toranomon Yokocho
Series	TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS: Tokyo-grown ingredients
Star	Mint
ABV	45%

30 ml ¥1,705 tax incl.

目次

Minato City, Tokyo



Toranomon Distillery, Toranomon Yokocho

Around the distillery



The ”Steps of Success” at Atago Shrine, Minato

Tokyo mint, in a glass.

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS is Toranomon Distillery’s series that bottles one Tokyo-grown aroma at a time. Japanese mint, hakka, has long been loved here for its cooling bite. Perfect with soda on a warm day.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Mint, green herbs	Cool and fresh	With soda or tonic

Source: bottle label, Toranomon Distillery Photo: Suicasmo / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Toranomon Distillery

Tokyo Local Spirits

Minato City, Tokyo

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS Chamomile

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

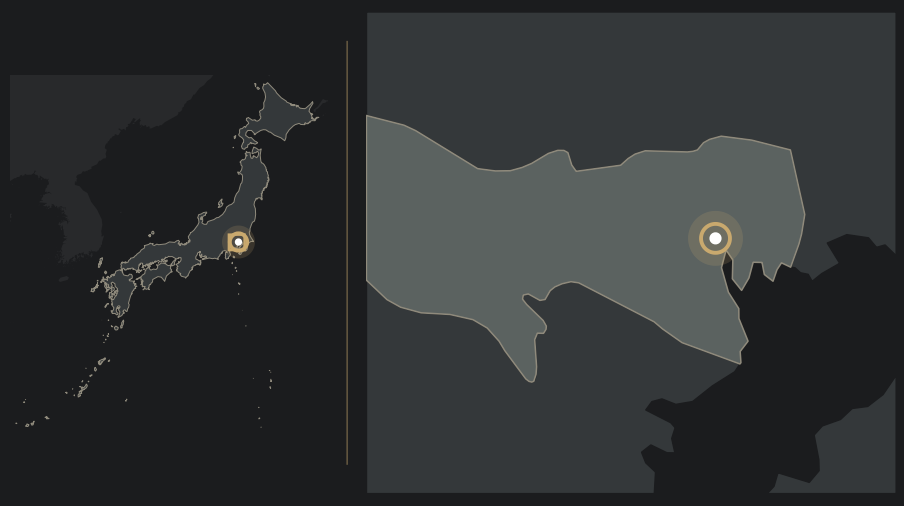
BOTANICAL
Chamomile
Grown in Tokyo

TASTE PROFILE
Soft
Apple-like flowers

Distillery	Toranomon Distillery, Toranomon Yokocho
Series	TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS: Tokyo-grown ingredients
Star	Chamomile
ABV	45%

30 ml ¥1,705 tax incl.

Minato City, Tokyo



Toranomon Distillery, Toranomon Yokocho

Around the distillery



Tokyo Tower above Minato City

Tokyo chamomile, in a glass.

TOKYO LOCAL SPIRITS is Toranomon Distillery’s series that bottles one Tokyo-grown aroma at a time. Chamomile has a sweet, apple-like scent. Soft and soothing, like a cup of herbal tea.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Chamomile, apple	Soft and round	With soda, or hot water

Source: bottle label, Toranomon Distillery Photo: Daniel L. Lu (user:dllu) / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Tokyo Hachioji Distillery

Tokyo Hachioji Distillery

Hachioji, Tokyo

SUI-AI wet Gin

“× DRY GIN ○ WET GIN LITTLE SMOKY”



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

STYLE
Wet
Not dry: “wet”

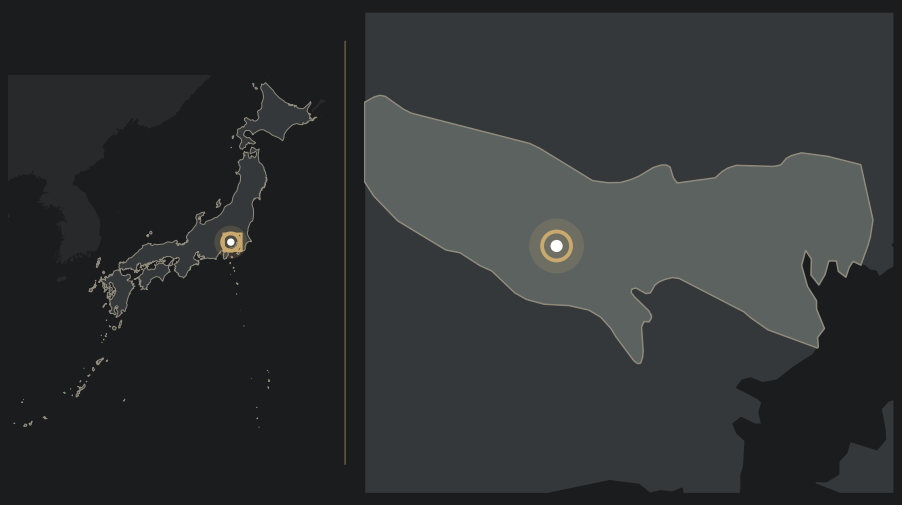
TASTE PROFILE
Smoky
Silky, a little smoke

Distillery	Opened 2022, the first distillery in the Tama area
Style	The label crosses out “dry”, circles “wet”
Name	Sui-ai: green haze on the mountains
Size/ABV	500 ml / 40%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

目次

Hachioji, Tokyo



Tokyo Hachioji Distillery, Tama area

Around the distillery



Autumn view of Hachioji from Mt. Takao

Not a dry gin: a silky, “wet” one.

Tokyo Hachioji Distillery opened in 2022 near Mt. Takao, the first distillery in Tokyo’s Tama area. The label says it plainly: dry gin crossed out, wet gin circled, “little smoky”. Sui-ai means the green haze that drifts over the hills. Amber, silky and lightly smoky.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Light smoke, wood	Silky and round	Neat or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, press Photo: Raita Futo / CC BY 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

Kyotango Mairingen Distillery

Mairingen Distillery

Kyotango, Kyoto

Mairingen Fresh Craft Gin (Original)

DISTILLED AND BOTTLED IN KYOTO



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

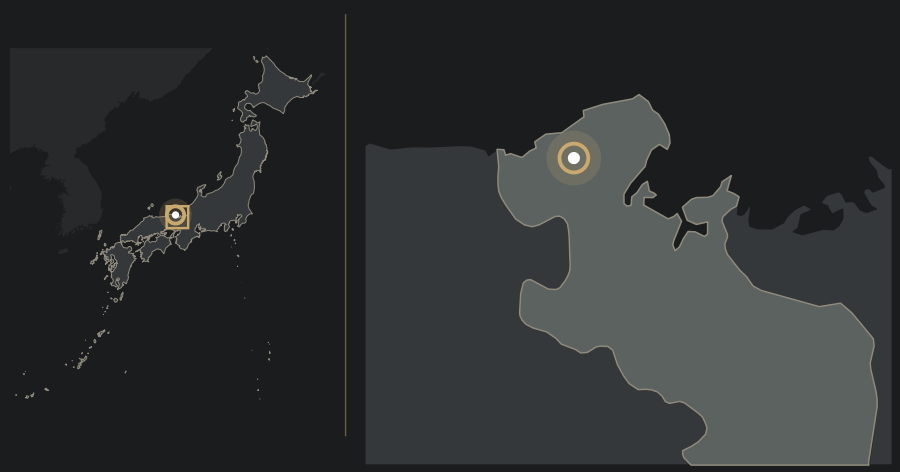
BOTANICAL
Forest
Herbs picked at dawn

TASTE PROFILE
Fresh
Green forest

Distillery	In a national-park forest on the Tango Peninsula; est. 2023
Botanicals	A forest with 300+ wild herbs and medicinal trees
Method	Hand-picked in the morning, distilled fresh
ABV	47%

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

Kyotango, Kyoto



Mairingen Distillery, Tango Peninsula

Around the distillery



Cherry blossoms at Omiya Shrine, Nonaka, Yasaka, Kyotango

Morning in the Tango forest, freshly picked.

Mairingen stands in a forest in the Tango Amanohashidate Oeyama park in northern Kyoto, surrounded by more than 300 wild herbs and medicinal trees. Plants are picked by hand in the morning and distilled while still fresh. The theme is simple: the scent of the forest.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Fresh-cut greens	Juicy and clean	Neat, or with soda

Source: bottle label, Kyotango tourism Photo: Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Nakatsugawa Distillery

Salad Cosmo

Nakatsugawa, Gifu

NAKATSU GIN Yuzu-kosho (3rd batch)

NAKATSU GIN 3RD BATCH



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Yuzu-kosho
Green yuzu + local chilli

TASTE PROFILE
Zesty-hot
Green yuzu, chilli

Maker	Salad Cosmo, a sprout grower in Nakatsugawa
Base	Pisco (grape spirit)
Star	Green yuzu and ajime-kosho, a local Nakatsugawa chilli
ABV	50%

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

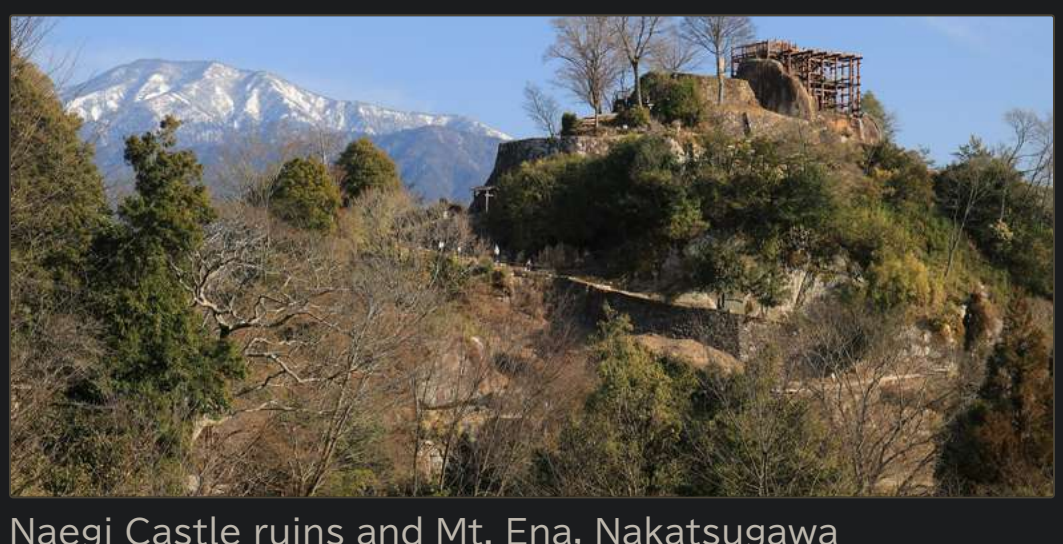
目次

Nakatsugawa, Gifu



Nakatsugawa Distillery (Salad Cosmo)

Around the distillery



Naegi Castle ruins and Mt. Ena, Nakatsugawa

Nakatsugawa's yuzu-kosho, as a gin.

Salad Cosmo grows sprouts in Nakatsugawa, Gifu, and runs a small distillery there. Each NAKATSU GIN uses pisco as its base and one star botanical, plus only juniper and a touch of chicory. Batch 3 stars green yuzu and ajime-kosho, a chilli grown only around Nakatsugawa, like the yuzu-chilli paste yuzu-kosho.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Green yuzu, chilli	Zesty with a little heat	With soda, or a Rickey

Source: bottle label, Salad Cosmo, menu Photo: Alpsdake / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Nakatsugawa Distillery

Salad Cosmo

Nakatsugawa, Gifu

NAKATSU GIN Earl Grey (5th batch)

NAKATSU GIN 5TH BATCH



ALCOHOL
50%
ABV

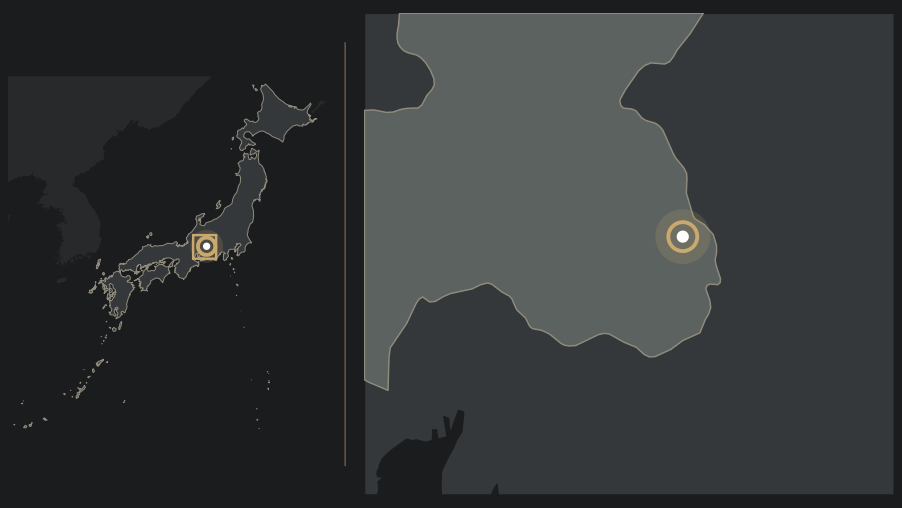
BOTANICAL
Earl Grey
Black tea + bergamot

TASTE PROFILE
Tea
Bergamot-scented

Maker	Salad Cosmo, a sprout grower in Nakatsugawa
Base	Pisco (grape spirit)
Star	Black tea and bergamot (Earl Grey)
ABV	50%

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

Nakatsugawa, Gifu



Nakatsugawa Distillery (Salad Cosmo)

Around the distillery



The stone-paved slope of Magome-juku, Nakatsugawa

Earl Grey, as a gin.

Salad Cosmo grows sprouts in Nakatsugawa, Gifu, and runs a small distillery there. Each NAKATSU GIN uses pisco as its base and one star botanical, plus only juniper and a touch of chicory. Batch 5 stars black tea and bergamot; the Earl Grey perfume sits softly on the grape spirit.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Bergamot, black tea	Fragrant and gentle	With soda or tonic

Source: bottle label, Salad Cosmo, menu Photo: Chensiyuan / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Nagara Shuzo (LONG GOOD)

LONG GOOD

Gifu City, Gifu

GIN NATURE Parfumothèque

AN ARCHIVE OF SCENTS



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

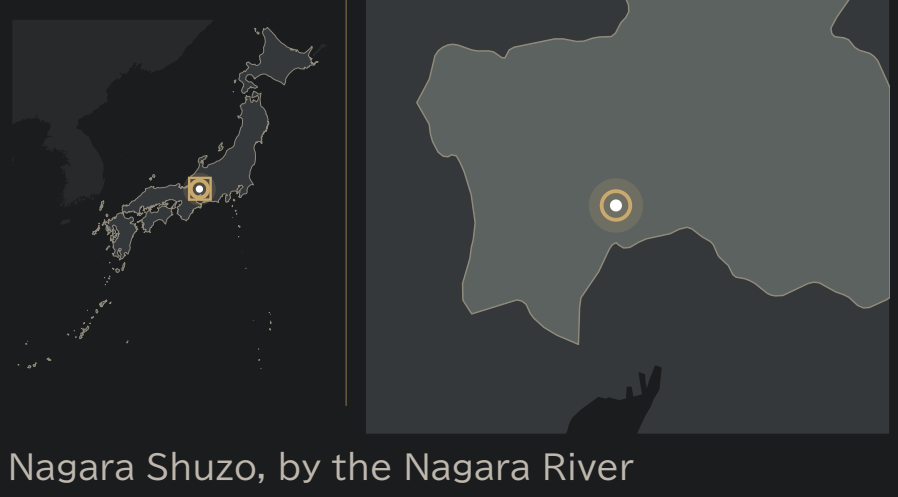
NAME
Scent archive
Parfumothèque

TASTE PROFILE
Perfumed
Layered flowers and citrus

Botanicals	Juniper, Hiroshima bergamot, Gifu osmanthus, ume plum and rose geranium, timur pepper, orris and more (8)
Idea	Stack like with like: citrus on citrus, flower on flower
Series	GIN NATURE no. 8; 500 bottles
Size/ABV	400 ml / 45%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

Gifu City, Gifu



Nagara Shuzo, by the Nagara River

Around the distillery



The Nagara River and Mt. Kinka with Gifu Castle, Gifu

Layer upon layer, like a perfume.

LONG GOOD is made by Nagara Shuzo beside the Nagara River in Gifu. The eighth GIN NATURE, “Parfumothèque” (an archive of scents), stacks botanicals of the same family to multiply them. Osmanthus, ume plum and rose geranium unfold in layers like a fine perfume.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Osmanthus, bergamot	Floral and layered	Neat, or with soda

Source: bottle label, retailer information Photo: そらみみ / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

Number Eight Distillery

HUGE Inc.

Yokohama, Kanagawa

NUMBER EIGHT GIN Yokohama Dry Gin

YOKOHAMA DRY GIN



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

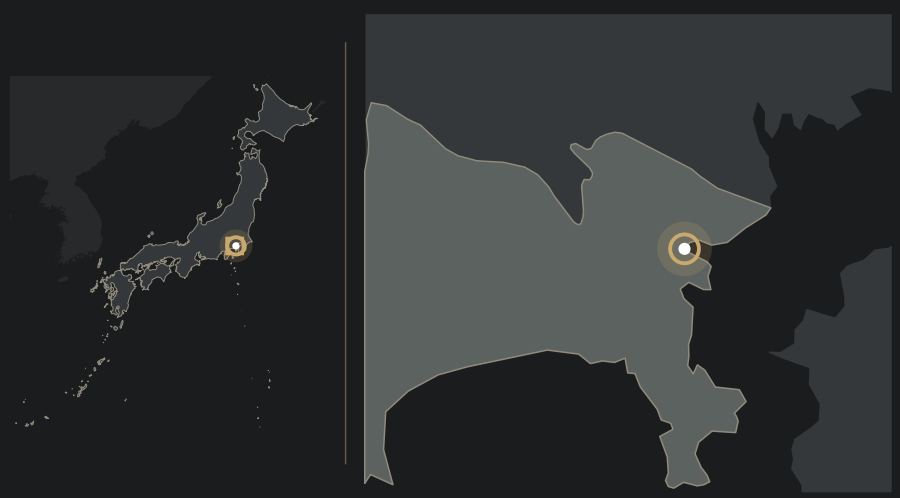
NAME
8
Pier No. 8, eight botanicals

TASTE PROFILE
Fresh
Mint and citrus

Distillery	On Shinko Pier No. 8 at Yokohama Hammerhead, “on the sea”
Base	Ginjo sake-lees shochu
Botanicals	Juniper, yerba buena, lemon verbena, Kanagawa mikan, lemon, fresh hops, coffee, avocado seed
Size/ABV	750 ml / 46%

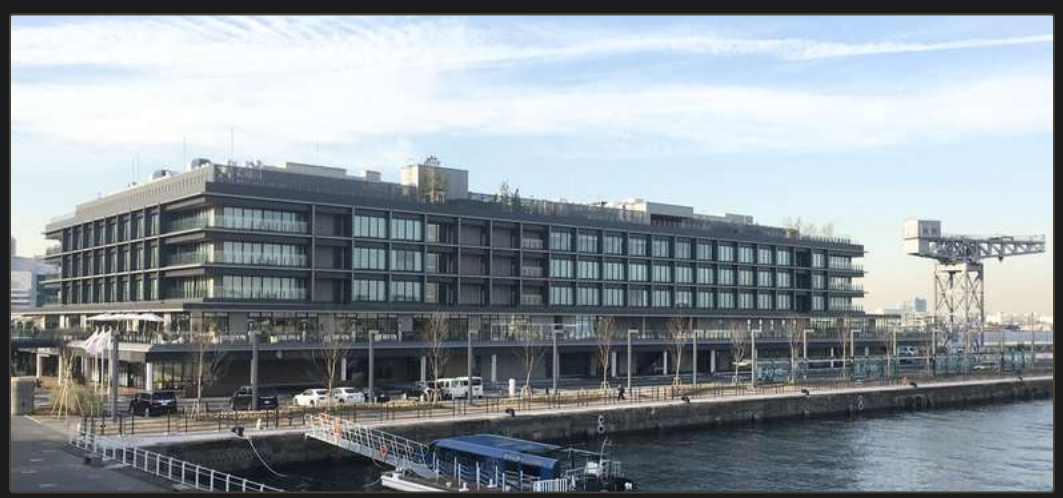
30 ml ¥1,650 tax incl.

Yokohama, Kanagawa



Number Eight Distillery, Shinko Pier 8

Around the distillery



Yokohama Hammerhead and the historic hammerhead crane

Eight botanicals, from Pier No. 8.

This distillery sits “on the sea” inside a restaurant at Yokohama Hammerhead, on Shinko Pier No. 8 in Minato Mirai. On a base of ginjo sake-lees shochu go eight botanicals, from Cuban yerba buena mint and Kanagawa mikan to fresh hops, coffee beans and avocado seed.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Mint, citrus	Fresh and clear	Gin & tonic, Rickey

Source: bottle label, HUGE Inc. Photo: NEO-NEED / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Number Eight Distillery

HUGE Inc.

Yokohama, Kanagawa

NUMBER EIGHT GIN Double Botanical

DOUBLE BOTANICAL



ALCOHOL
46%
ABV

BOTANICAL
×2
Twice the botanicals

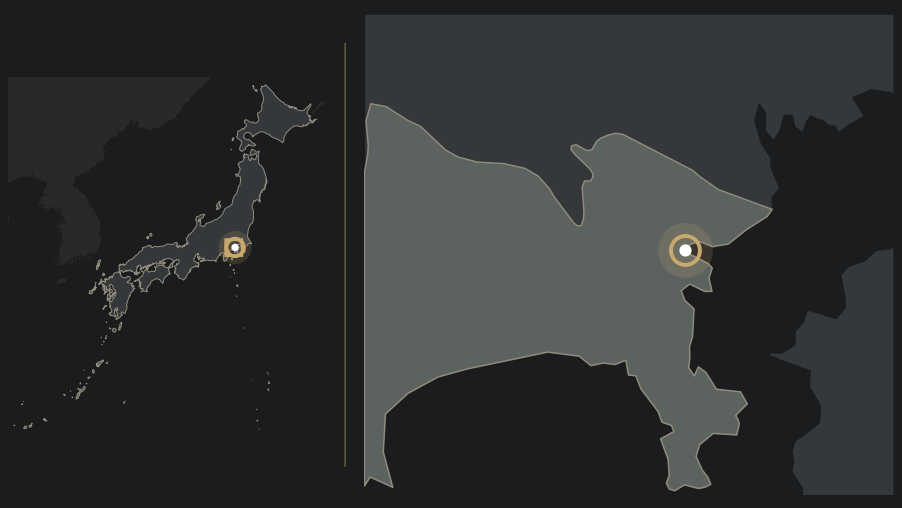
TASTE PROFILE
Rich
Intensely aromatic

Distillery	On Shinko Pier No. 8 at Yokohama Hammerhead, “on the sea”
Base	Ginjo sake-lees shochu
Botanicals	Juniper, yerba buena, lemon verbena, Kanagawa mikan, lemon, fresh hops, coffee, avocado seed
Difference	Twice the botanicals; first made for the 1st anniversary

30 ml ¥1,705 tax incl.

目次

Yokohama, Kanagawa



Number Eight Distillery, Shinko Pier 8

Around the distillery



Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse

Number Eight, with twice the botanicals.

First made to celebrate the Yokohama distillery’s first anniversary, Double Botanical uses the same eight botanicals at twice the dose. Mint, citrus and coffee come through deeper and richer.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Mint, citrus, coffee	Dense and rich	On the rocks, Gin & tonic

Source: bottle label, HUGE Inc. Photo: Kakidai / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

mitosaya Botanical Distillery

mitosaya

Otaki, Chiba

MINT TRICOLOR #105

EAU DE VIE, 2022



ALCOHOL
42%
ABV

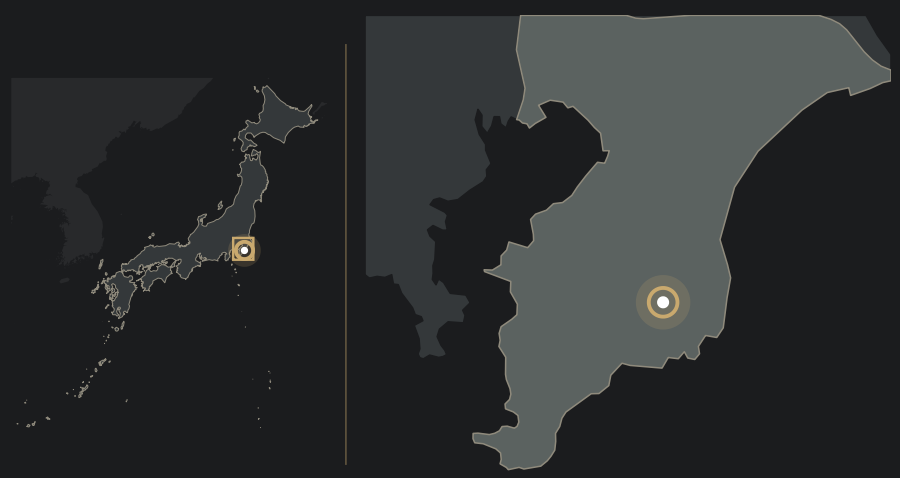
BOTANICAL
Mint
Three kinds of mint

TASTE PROFILE
Cool
Three shades of mint

Distillery	A former prefectural herb garden in Chiba
Botanicals	Yerba buena, orange mint, chocolate mint
Type	Not a gin but an eau de vie (plant spirit)
ABV	42%, no. 105 / 2022

30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

Otaki, Chiba



mitosaya, a former botanical garden

Around the distillery



Otaki Castle with cherry blossoms

Three mints from an old herb garden.

mitosaya turned a former prefectural herb garden in Otaki, Chiba into a distillery. It distils plants from the garden and local fruit one at a time into eaux de vie. No. 105 layers three mints: yerba buena, orange mint and chocolate mint. A cousin of gin, served alongside them.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Mint, citrus, cacao	Cool and gentle	Neat, or with soda

Source: bottle label, mitosaya Photo: Σ64 / CC BY 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Motoki Joken Distillery Lab

Motoki Joken

Kamigyo, Kyoto

yumarrest Industrial Gin Ordinary KING

INDUSTRIAL GIN, KYOTO



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

BOTANICAL
×2
Re-steeped, re-distilled

TASTE PROFILE
Rich
Hinoki, tea, sansho

Distillery	A spirits-only distillery in a Kyoto row house, Kamigyo
Maker	Yoichi Motoki, a distiller who worked in Scotland
Method	The Ordinary gin re-steeped with the same botanicals and re-distilled
Botanicals	Juniper, Kyoto hinoki, cherry leaf, Yame tea, Onomichi lemon, sansho, gold leaf

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

目次

Kamigyo, Kyoto



Motoki Joken, in a converted row house

Around the distillery



Nijo Castle, near the distillery in Kamigyo-ku

Ordinary, distilled twice and crowned.

Motoki Joken is a tiny spirits-only distillery in a converted row house in Kamigyo, Kyoto. Yoichi Motoki, who worked as a stillman in Scotland, designs his “Industrial GIN” like a precision instrument. Yumarrest = “yum” + “arrest”: guiltily delicious. KING takes the Ordinary gin, steeps the same botanicals in it again and re-distils it: deeper, richer, finished with gold leaf.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Hinoki, green tea, lemon	Dense and smooth	Neat or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, retailers Photo: Ewong17 / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Motoki Joken Distillery Lab

Motoki Joken

Kamigyo, Kyoto

yumarrest Industrial Gin Ordinary DANGER

INDUSTRIAL GIN, KYOTO



ALCOHOL
80%
ABV

ALCOHOL
80%
Handle with care

TASTE PROFILE
Intense
An aroma explosion

Distillery	A spirits-only distillery in a Kyoto row house, Kamigyo
Maker	Yoichi Motoki, a distiller who worked in Scotland
Strength	80%, with a yellow-and-black warning label
Serve	A small sip, or a few drops to lift a drink

30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

Kamigyo, Kyoto



Motoki Joken, in a converted row house

Around the distillery



Machiya townhouses in Nishijin, Kamigyo

Eighty percent. Handle with care.

Motoki Joken is a tiny spirits-only distillery in a converted row house in Kamigyo, Kyoto. Yoichi Motoki, who worked as a stillman in Scotland, designs his “Industrial GIN” like a precision instrument. Yumarrest = “yum” + “arrest”: guiltily delicious. DANGER lives up to its name at 80% ABV, with a hazard-stripe label. A tiny pour releases a rush of hinoki and citrus.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Hinoki, citrus	Fierce, bursting aroma	A tiny sip, or with water

Source: bottle label, retailers Photo: At by At / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Motoki Joken Distillery Lab

Motoki Joken

Kamigyo, Kyoto

yumarrest Ramune Gin

INDUSTRIAL GIN, KYOTO



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

FLAVOR
Ramune
Japanese lemonade soda

TASTE PROFILE
Fizzy
Lemon and candy

Distillery	A spirits-only distillery in a Kyoto row house, Kamigyo
Maker	Yoichi Motoki, a distiller who worked in Scotland
Theme	Ramune, Japan’s summer lemonade soda
Label	Sky-blue polka dots, “LEMONADE”

30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

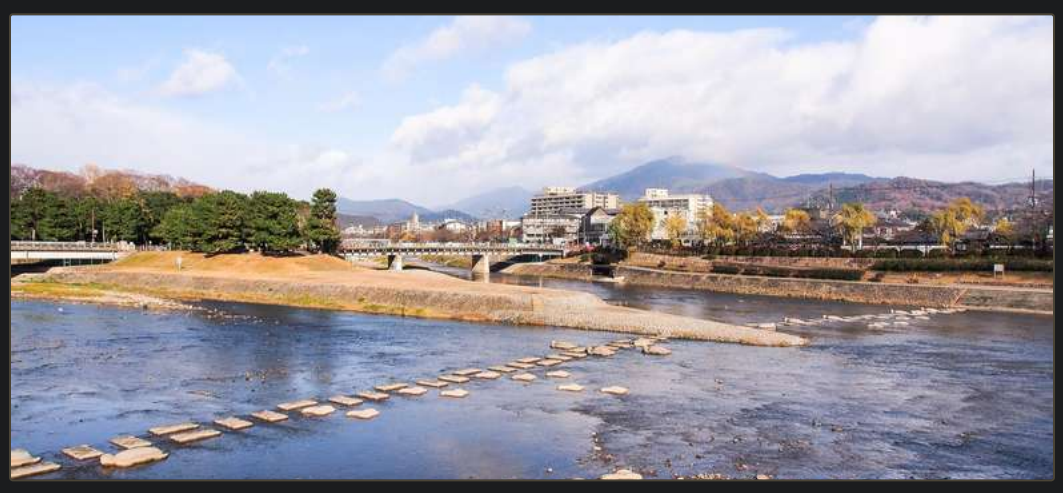
目次

Kamigyo, Kyoto



Motoki Joken, in a converted row house

Around the distillery



Stepping stones on the Kamo River delta, Demachiyanagi

Summer-festival ramune, as a gin.

Motoki Joken is a tiny spirits-only distillery in a converted row house in Kamigyo, Kyoto. Yoichi Motoki, who worked as a stillman in Scotland, designs his “Industrial GIN” like a precision instrument. Yumarrest = “yum” + “arrest”: guiltily delicious. Ramune GIN captures the sweet, fizzy-lemon smell of ramune, the marble-stoppered soda of Japanese summer festivals.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Ramune soda, lemon	Sweet and refreshing	With soda

Source: bottle label, retailers Photo: minoir / CC BY 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

Motoki Joken Distillery Lab

Motoki Joken

Kamigyo, Kyoto

yumarrest Flavored Spirits Geisha Coffee

INDUSTRIAL GIN, KYOTO



ALCOHOL
37%
ABV

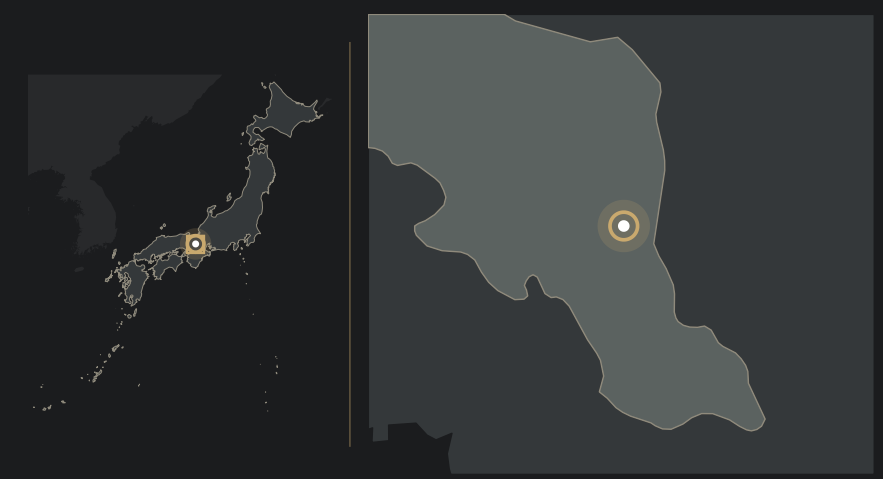
BOTANICAL
Coffee
Geisha variety

TASTE PROFILE
Fruity
Floral coffee

Distillery	A spirits-only distillery in a Kyoto row house, Kamigyo
Maker	Yoichi Motoki, a distiller who worked in Scotland
Star	Ethiopian Geisha coffee, roasted by KONAYA coffee
Method	Several beans trialled; lightly roasted Geisha chosen

30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

Kamigyo, Kyoto



Motoki Joken, in a converted row house

Around the distillery



Plum blossom at Kitano Tenmangu, Kamigyo

Geisha coffee, distilled.

Motoki Joken is a tiny spirits-only distillery in a converted row house in Kamigyo, Kyoto. Yoichi Motoki, who worked as a stillman in Scotland, designs his “Industrial GIN” like a precision instrument. Yumarrest = “yum” + “arrest”: guiltily delicious. GEISHA COFFEE distils lightly roasted Ethiopian Geisha coffee: fruity and floral, with a gently bitter finish.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Coffee, berries	Floral, gently bitter	Neat, or with tonic

Source: bottle label, retailers Photo: Tmv / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Motoki Joken Distillery Lab

Motoki Joken

Kamigyo, Kyoto

yumarrest Flavored Spirits Kyoto Uji Gyokuro

INDUSTRIAL GIN, KYOTO



ALCOHOL
42%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Gyokuro
From Uji, Kyoto

TASTE PROFILE
Umami
Sweet and round

Distillery	A spirits-only distillery in a Kyoto row house, Kamigyo
Maker	Yoichi Motoki, a distiller who worked in Scotland
Star	Gyokuro tea from Uji, Kyoto
Aroma	Delicate sweetness and bitterness, a white-chocolate roundness

30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

目次

Kamigyo, Kyoto



Motoki Joken, in a converted row house

Around the distillery



Cherry blossom in Kyoto Gyoen, Kamigyo

Uji gyokuro, as a spirit.

Motoki Joken is a tiny spirits-only distillery in a converted row house in Kamigyo, Kyoto. Yoichi Motoki, who worked as a stillman in Scotland, designs his “Industrial GIN” like a precision instrument. Yumarrest = “yum” + “arrest”: guiltily delicious. Uji Gyokuro holds the delicate sweetness and bitterness of Kyoto’s finest shade-grown tea, with a white-chocolate roundness.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Gyokuro, umami	Round sweetness	Neat, or with soda

Source: bottle label, retailers Photo: 加茂川の民 / CC0 Map: Natural Earth

The Kyoto Distillery

The Kyoto Distillery

Kyoto

KI NO BI Kyoto Dry Gin

KYOTO DRY GIN



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

BOTANICAL
11
In six groups

TASTE PROFILE
Japanese
Yuzu, gyokuro, sansho

Distillery	Japan’s first gin-only distillery, opened 2015 in Kyoto
Base	Rice spirit, cut with Fushimi water
Botanicals	11, incl. gyokuro, yuzu, hinoki, sansho, red shiso, ginger
Size/ABV	700 ml / 45%

30 ml ¥1,845 tax incl.

Minami Ward, Kyoto



The Kyoto Distillery

Kyoto’s seasons: spring



To-ji five-storied pagoda and weeping cherry

Kyoto’s seasons in a glass: where Japanese craft gin began.

The Kyoto Distillery opened in 2015 as Japan’s first distillery devoted to gin. It uses rice spirit, Kyoto botanicals such as Uji gyokuro, yuzu, hinoki and sansho, and the soft water of Fushimi. KI NO BI, “the beauty of the seasons”, distils 11 botanicals in six separate groups and blends them. The original Japanese craft gin.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Yuzu, gyokuro, sansho	Soft and delicate	Gin & tonic, or with soda

Source: bottle label, The Kyoto Distillery Photo: Nakai_Chan / CC BY 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

The Kyoto Distillery

The Kyoto Distillery

Kyoto

KI NO TEA

KYOTO DRY GIN



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Tea
Uji gyokuro and tencha

TASTE PROFILE
Tea
Green-tea umami

Distillery	Japan’s first gin-only distillery, opened 2015 in Kyoto
Base	Rice spirit, cut with Fushimi water
Star	Gyokuro and tencha from a historic Uji tea farm
Size/ABV	700 ml / 45%

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

目次

Minami Ward, Kyoto



The Kyoto Distillery

Kyoto’s tea country



Ishidera tea fields, Wazuka, Kyoto

A tea gin from Japan’s tea capital.

The Kyoto Distillery opened in 2015 as Japan’s first distillery devoted to gin. It uses rice spirit, Kyoto botanicals such as Uji gyokuro, yuzu, hinoki and sansho, and the soft water of Fushimi. KI NO TEA puts tea first: Uji gyokuro and tencha, the leaf ground into matcha, give a clear green-tea aroma and umami.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Green tea, yuzu	Umami, gentle	With soda, or neat

Source: bottle label, The Kyoto Distillery Photo: Saigen Jiro / CC0 Map: Natural Earth

The Kyoto Distillery

The Kyoto Distillery

Kyoto

KI NO BI Edition K, Kilchoman Bourbon Cask

KYOTO DRY GIN



ALCOHOL
48%
ABV

CASK
K
Kilchoman cask

TASTE PROFILE
Smoky
Botanicals meet peat

Distillery	Japan’s first gin-only distillery, opened 2015 in Kyoto
Base	Rice spirit, cut with Fushimi water
Cask	Bourbon casks that held Kilchoman whisky, from Islay
Size/ABV	700 ml / 48%

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

Minami Ward, Kyoto



The Kyoto Distillery

Kyoto’s seasons: autumn



Autumn leaves at Tsutenkyo Bridge, Tofuku-ji

CONTENTS

KI NO BI, rested in a smoky Islay cask.

The Kyoto Distillery opened in 2015 as Japan’s first distillery devoted to gin. It uses rice spirit, Kyoto botanicals such as Uji gyokuro, yuzu, hinoki and sansho, and the soft water of Fushimi. The K stands for Kilchoman, the Islay distillery known for smoky single malt. Made together with Kilchoman, it rests KI NO BI in bourbon casks that held their whisky, with the time in cask tuned by tasting, so the Kyoto botanicals meet a gentle peat smoke.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Yuzu, hinoki, peat smoke	Cask sweetness and smoke	Ginger highball, Smoky Negroni

Source: bottle label, The Kyoto Distillery Photo: lumoplank / CC0 Map: Natural Earth

The Kyoto Distillery

The Kyoto Distillery

Kyoto

KI NO TOU Kyoto Old Tom Gin

KYOTO DRY GIN



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

STYLE
Old Tom
Lightly sweetened

TASTE PROFILE
Sweet
Round

Distillery	Japan’s first gin-only distillery, opened 2015 in Kyoto
Base	Rice spirit, cut with Fushimi water
Style	Old Tom, the lightly sweet gin of 18th-century London
ABV	47%

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

目次

Minami Ward, Kyoto



The Kyoto Distillery

Kyoto’s seasons: winter



Kinkaku-ji in the snow

A Kyoto take on sweet Old Tom.

The Kyoto Distillery opened in 2015 as Japan’s first distillery devoted to gin. It uses rice spirit, Kyoto botanicals such as Uji gyokuro, yuzu, hinoki and sansho, and the soft water of Fushimi. KI NO TOU is a Kyoto take on Old Tom, the gently sweet gin of 18th-century London. Its rounded sweetness shines in cocktails.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Citrus, honey	Round sweetness	On the rocks, Martinez

Source: bottle label, The Kyoto Distillery Photo: Takeshi Kuboki from Amagasaki, Japan / CC BY 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

The Kyoto Distillery

The Kyoto Distillery

Kyoto

KI NO BI SEI

KYOTO DRY GIN



ALCOHOL
54%
ABV

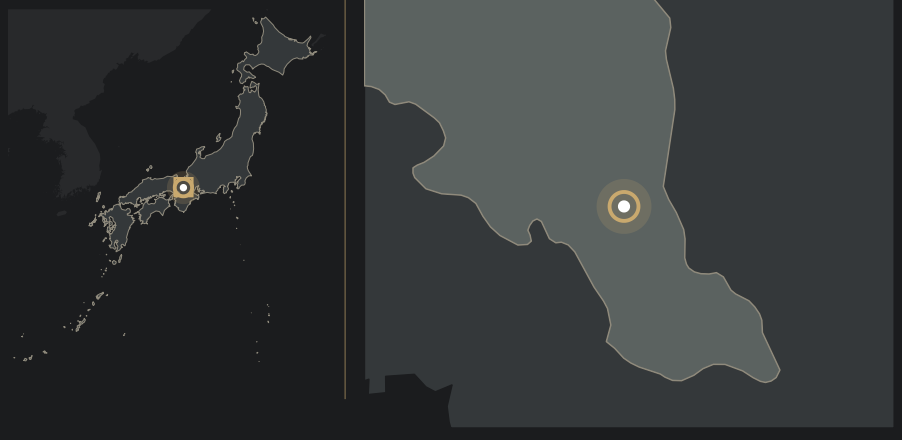
ALCOHOL
54%
Navy strength

TASTE PROFILE
Bold
Concentrated

Distillery	Japan’s first gin-only distillery, opened 2015 in Kyoto
Base	Rice spirit, cut with Fushimi water
Type	KI NO BI bottled strong at 54%
Name	SEI = vigour, momentum

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

Minami Ward, Kyoto



The Kyoto Distillery

Kyoto’s seasons: summer



Riverside dining platforms (kawadoko) at Kibune

KI NO BI, at full strength.

The Kyoto Distillery opened in 2015 as Japan’s first distillery devoted to gin. It uses rice spirit, Kyoto botanicals such as Uji gyokuro, yuzu, hinoki and sansho, and the soft water of Fushimi. SEI, “vigour”, bottles KI NO BI at 54%. The aromas are concentrated and hold their shape even in a gin & tonic.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Yuzu, sansho, ginger	Bold and concentrated	Gin & tonic, Martini

Source: bottle label, The Kyoto Distillery Photo: 663highland / CC BY 2.5 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Yamato Distillery

Yucho Shuzo

Gose, Nara

KIKKA GIN First Edition

DISTILLED IN NARA



ALCOHOL
59%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Yamato-tachibana
An ancient native citrus

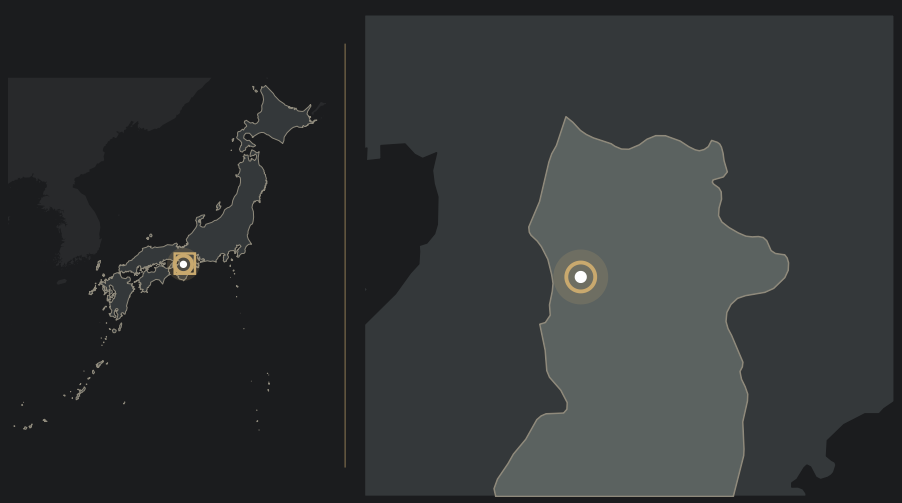
TASTE PROFILE
Powerful
Citrus and herbs

Maker	Yucho Shuzo of Gose, known for Kaze no Mori sake
Base	Rice spirit
Botanicals	Juniper, Yamato-tachibana citrus, Yamato-toki (Nara angelica root)
ABV	59%

30 ml ¥2,035 tax incl.

目次

Gose, Nara



Yamato Distillery (Yucho Shuzo)

Around the distillery



Katsuragi ropeway through fresh greenery, Gose

An ancient Japanese citrus, at 59%.

Yucho Shuzo, the Nara brewer of Kaze no Mori sake, makes KIKKA at its Yamato Distillery. Rice spirit meets Yamato-tachibana, a native citrus named in Japan’s oldest chronicle and now near-threatened, and Yamato-toki, a traditional Nara medicinal root. Strong at 59%, yet remarkably easy to sip.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Tachibana citrus, herbs	Powerful yet smooth	Neat, or Gin & tonic

Source: bottle label, press Photo: 663highland / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Sakurao Distillery

Sakurao Distillery

Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima

SAKURAO GIN Original

JAPANESE DRY GIN, DISTILLED IN HIROSHIMA



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

BOTANICAL
9
Fresh from Hiroshima

TASTE PROFILE
Citrus
Fresh and bright

Distillery	Sakurao Distillery (Chugoku Jozo), across from Miyajima
Botanicals	Nine fresh Hiroshima botanicals, incl. citrus and herbs
Label	“Made with 9 fresh botanicals from Hiroshima”
Size/ABV	700 ml / 47%

30 ml ¥1,595 tax incl.

Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima



Sakurao Distillery, across from Miyajima

Around the distillery



The great torii of Itsukushima Shrine, Miyajima

Hiroshima’s classic gin, from across the water from Miyajima.

Sakurao Distillery stands in Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima, looking across to Miyajima. It is run by Chugoku Jozo (founded 1918) and uses fresh Hiroshima citrus and herbs. ORIGINAL uses nine fresh Hiroshima botanicals, led by local citrus: fresh, bright and easy to love.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Lemon, yuzu	Fresh and bright	Gin & tonic, or with soda

Source: bottle label, Sakurao Distillery Photo: Balon Greyjoy / CC0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Sakurao Distillery

Sakurao Distillery

Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima

SAKURAO GIN Limited

JAPANESE DRY GIN, DISTILLED IN HIROSHIMA



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

BOTANICAL
17
All from Hiroshima

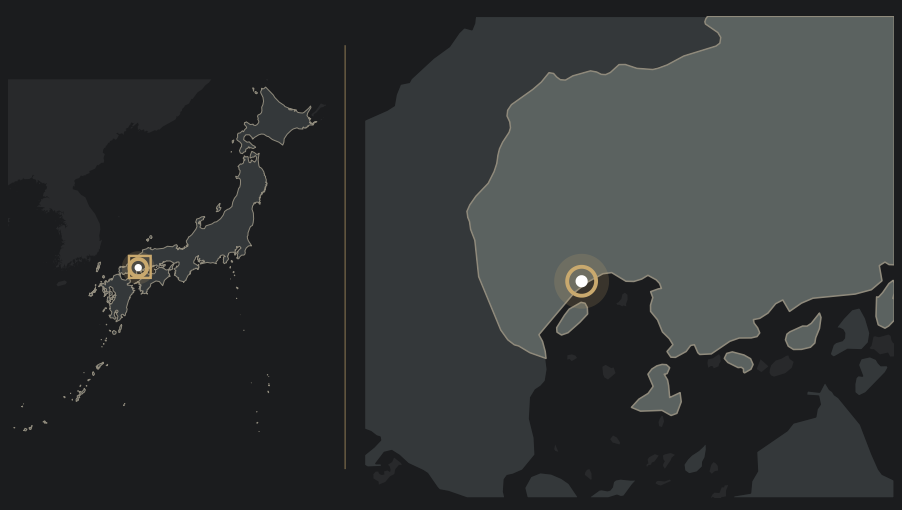
TASTE PROFILE
Complex
Layers of citrus and herbs

Distillery	Sakurao Distillery (Chugoku Jozo), across from Miyajima
Botanicals	17, all grown in Hiroshima
Bottle	Pale pink glass
Size/ABV	700 ml / 47%

30 ml ¥1,650 tax incl.

目次

Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima



Sakurao Distillery, across from Miyajima

Around the distillery



Hiroshima Bay and its islands from Mt. Misen, Miyajima

Seventeen botanicals, all from Hiroshima.

Sakurao Distillery stands in Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima, looking across to Miyajima. It is run by Chugoku Jozo (founded 1918) and uses fresh Hiroshima citrus and herbs. LIMITED is made only with 17 botanicals grown in Hiroshima: citrus, herbs and spice in many layers.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Citrus, hinoki, herbs	Complex and deep	Neat or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, Sakurao Distillery Photo: redlegsfan21 / CC BY-SA 2.0 Map: Natural Earth

Sakurao Distillery

Sakurao Distillery

Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima

SAKURAO GIN Hamagou

JAPANESE DRY GIN, DISTILLED IN HIROSHIMA



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

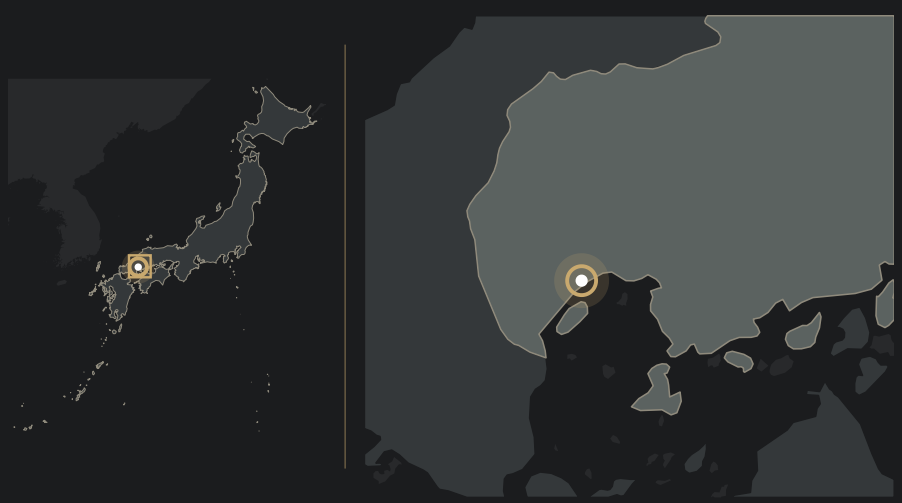
BOTANICAL
Hamagou
A Miyajima seaside plant

TASTE PROFILE
Coastal
Herbal and fresh

Distillery	Sakurao Distillery (Chugoku Jozo), across from Miyajima
Star	Hamagou (beach vitex) hand-picked on Miyajima’s shore
Bottle	Sea-blue glass, 2024 edition
Size/ABV	700 ml / 47%

30 ml ¥1,650 tax incl.

Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima



Sakurao Distillery, across from Miyajima

Hamagou, the name



Beach vitex (hamagou) in flower on a Japanese shore

Beach vitex from the shores of Miyajima.

Sakurao Distillery stands in Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima, looking across to Miyajima. It is run by Chugoku Jozo (founded 1918) and uses fresh Hiroshima citrus and herbs. HAMAGOU stars beach vitex hand-picked on Miyajima’s shore, a purple-flowered seaside plant with a fresh, herbal scent, in sea-blue glass.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Beach vitex, herbs	Fresh and herbal	Gin & tonic, or with soda

Source: bottle label, Sakurao Distillery Photo: Batholith / Public domain Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Nissin Shurui

Nissin Shurui Co.

Kamiita, Tokushima

AWA GIN

TOKUSHIMA CRAFT GIN



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Sudachi
Tokushima citrus and Awa bancha

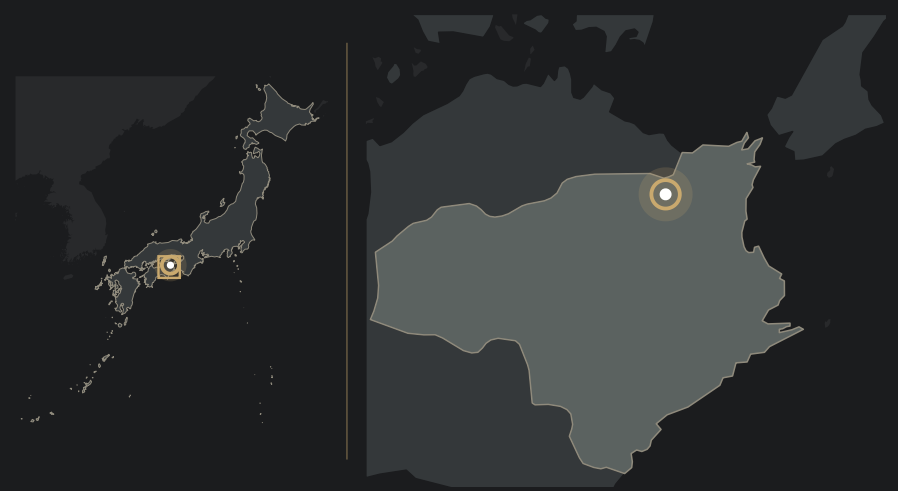
TASTE PROFILE
Japanese
Citrus and fermented tea

Maker	A Tokushima sake brewery founded in 1948
Base	Rice spirit from Yamada-nishiki rice and Tokushima koji
Botanicals	Sudachi, Kito yuzu, Awa bancha, sansho
ABV	45%

30 ml ¥1,650 tax incl.

目次

Kamiita, Tokushima



Nissin Shurui, north bank of the Yoshino

Around the distillery



Anraku-ji pagoda in autumn colours, Kamiita

Shikoku's first gin, tasting of Awa.

Nissin Shurui spent more than two years developing what is thought to be Shikoku's first gin. On a rice-spirit base go Tokushima flavours: sudachi, Kito yuzu and Awa bancha, a rare lactic-fermented tea. Awa is Tokushima's old name, and the label recalls its famous indigo dyeing.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Sudachi, yuzu	Fresh, lightly tart	With soda, or Gin & tonic

Source: bottle label, press Photo: Dokudami / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Shinozaki

Shinozaki Co.

Asakura, Fukuoka

ASAKURA CRAFT GIN Jin40

THE FINEST INGREDIENTS FROM FUKUOKA



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

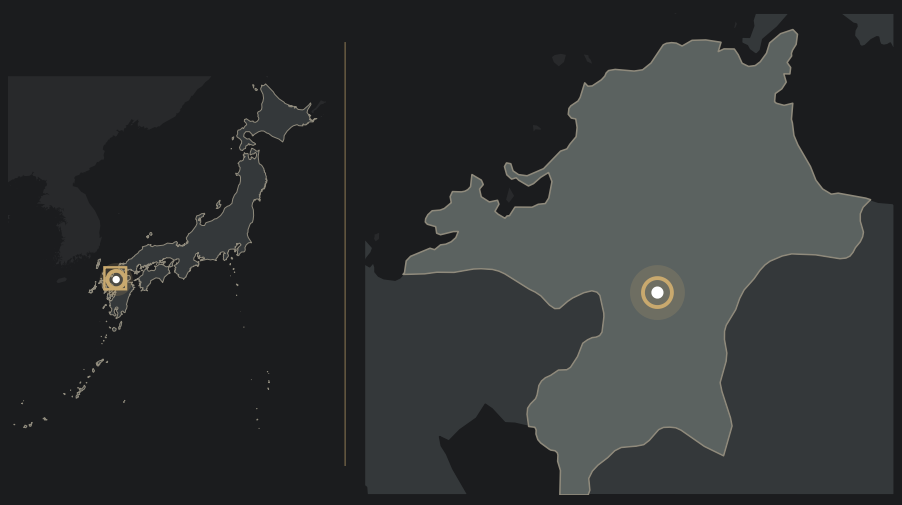
BOTANICAL
Sencha
With lemongrass and mint

TASTE PROFILE
Herbal
Clean, tea-scented

Maker	A shochu and sake brewer from the late Edo period
Base	Barley shochu
Botanicals	Juniper, lemongrass, peppermint, sencha
Size/ABV	750 ml / 45%

30 ml ¥1,705 tax incl.

Asakura, Fukuoka



Shinozaki, Asakura

Around the distillery



The Hishino three-wheel waterwheels, Asakura

Herbs and tea on an Asakura barley shochu.

Shinozaki in Asakura, Fukuoka has brewed shochu and sake since the late Edo period. Its gin is beautifully simple: barley shochu with juniper, lemongrass, peppermint and sencha green tea, and deliberately no yuzu. Clean herbs and tea.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Lemongrass, sencha	Clean and herbal	With soda, or Gin & tonic

Source: bottle label, press Photo: 切干大根 / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Kusunohana Distillery

Kusunohana Distillery

Saga City, Saga

STILLDAM GIN Perilla Plum

STILLDAM GIN SHISO-UME



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Shiso-ume
Shiso and ume plum

TASTE PROFILE
Japanese
Sweet-tart shiso and plum

Distillery	Morodomi, Saga; founded 2019, distilling since 2020
Base	Junmai shochu made from Saga junmai sake
Name	STILL: the still, and calm confidence
Size/ABV	500 ml / 45%

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

目次

Saga City, Saga



Kusunohana Distillery, Morodomi

Around the distillery



Chikugo River Lift Bridge seen from Morodomi, Saga

Shiso and plum on a Saga sake spirit.

Kusunohana Distillery in Morodomi, Saga makes STILLDAM on a base of junmai shochu distilled from Saga sake. Shiso-ume, shiso leaf with ume plum, is a classic Japanese pairing. Look for the “STILLDAM GIRL” in kimono on the label. Sweet-tart and refreshing.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Shiso, ume plum	Sweet-tart and fresh	With soda or tonic

Source: bottle label, press Photo: Pekachu / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Goto Tsubaki Distillery

Goto Tsubaki Distillery

Goto, Nagasaki

GOTOGIN the cacao

GOTOGIN THE CACAO



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

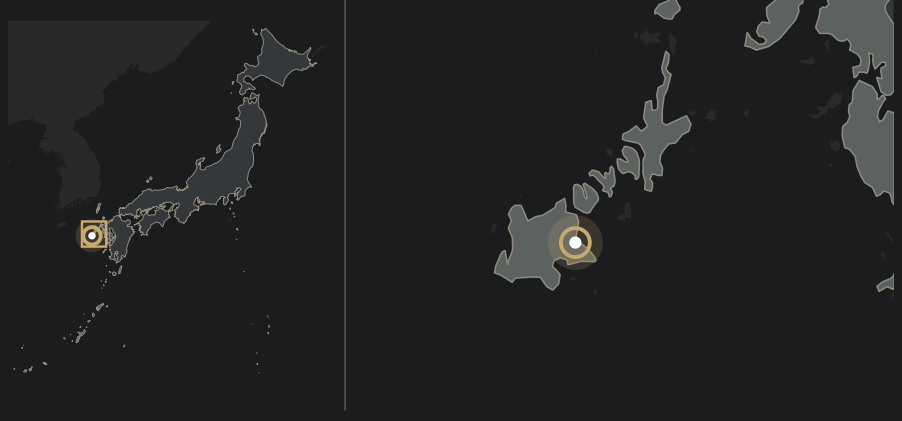
BOTANICAL
Cacao
Peruvian criollo

TASTE PROFILE
Cacao
Chocolate aroma

Distillery	On Fukue Island in the Goto Islands, an island of camellias
Star	Rare Peruvian criollo cacao beans and nibs
Bottle	Wave-patterned glass
Size/ABV	500 ml / 47%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

Goto, Nagasaki



Goto Tsubaki Distillery, Fukue Island

Around the distillery



Takahama Beach, Goto Islands

The joy of chocolate, as a gin.

Goto Tsubaki Distillery is on Fukue Island in Nagasaki’s Goto archipelago, famous for its camellias. “the cacao” is a limited release that turns the pleasure of chocolate into gin, using rare Peruvian criollo cacao for fruity aromas. Have it instead of dessert.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Cacao, berries	Bittersweet, gentle	Neat or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, Goto Tsubaki Distillery Photo: Ubuhouse / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

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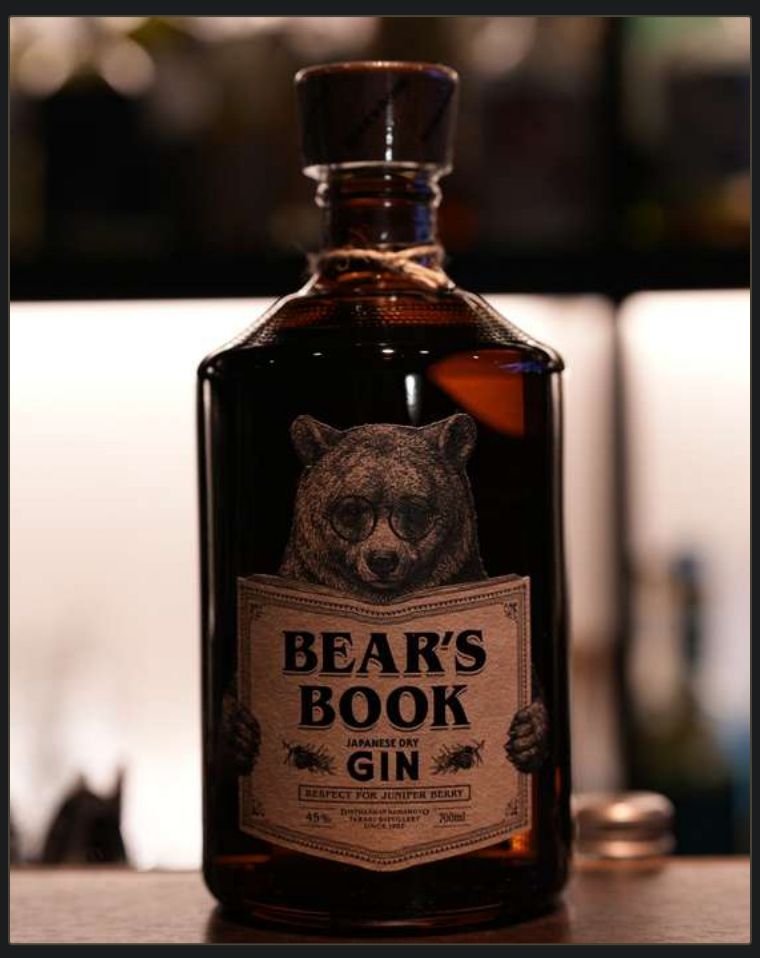
Takahashi Shuzo

Takahashi Shuzo

Taragi, Kumamoto

BEAR'S BOOK

JAPANESE DRY GIN RESPECT FOR JUNIPER BERRY



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

BOTANICAL
Kumamoto
Local citrus and tea

TASTE PROFILE
Dry
Juniper, Japanese citrus

Maker	Founded 1900; the house behind Hakutake Kuma shochu
Recipe	Juniper first, with Kumamoto citrus and tea, ginger, sansho and rice husks
Method	Steeping combined with vapour infusion
Award	Gold, SFWSC 2026 · 700 ml / 45%

30 ml ¥1,538 tax incl.

目次

Taragi, Kumamoto



Takahashi Shuzo's distillery, upper Kuma basin

The Kuma mountains and basin



The Kuma basin from Mt. Ichifusa, above Taragi

Respect for juniper, from Kumamoto.

Takahashi Shuzo, best known for Hakutake Kuma shochu, spent four years developing this classic dry gin. Its motto is on the label: "Respect for Juniper Berry". Juniper leads, layered with Kumamoto citrus and tea leaves, ginger and sansho as Japanese spice, and rice husks for depth. Fresh and woody, like a walk in the forest.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Juniper, Japanese citrus, forest wood	Dry and fresh, light spice	Gin & tonic, or with soda

Source: bottle label, Takahashi Shuzo (PR TIMES), Nihon Shokuryo Shimbun Photo: Koda6029 / CC BY-SA 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Kuma & Taragi

Where BEAR’S BOOK is made

Taragi, Kumamoto



The Hyakutaro waterway, an Edo-period irrigation canal, and rice fields (Taragi)



The Kuma River near Meihata Bridge (Taragi)

A shochu house makes gin in a rice basin ringed by mountains.

The Hitoyoshi (Kuma) basin, ringed by the Kyushu mountains, is rice country, with the Kuma River, one of Japan’s three great rapid rivers, running east to west. Edo-period canals such as the Hyakutaro waterway still feed its fields, and the rice becomes Kuma shochu, a rice spirit said to have some 500 years of history. Takahashi Shuzo distils in Taragi, at the upper end of the basin, and has turned its shochu skills to a dry gin scented with forest and citrus.

1900	Takahashi Shuzo founded in Hitoyoshi (“Since 1900” on the label)
1995	Kuma shochu becomes an international geographical indication
2015	Hitoyoshi-Kuma named a Japan Heritage area
2016	The Kono and Hyakutaro waterways listed as World Heritage Irrigation Structures
2025	BEAR’S BOOK goes on sale nationwide
2026	Gold medal, San Francisco World Spirits Competition

Sources: Takahashi Shuzo (PR TIMES), Nihon Shokuryo Shimbun, public information on Hitoyoshi-Kuma. Photos: shunsaku hara (r265) / CC BY-SA 3.0 (both)

CONTENTS

Hitoyoshi

A castle town and spa on the Kuma River

Hitoyoshi, Kumamoto



The thatched gate of Aoi Aso Shrine (National Treasure)
Photo: そらみみ / CC BY-SA 4.0



Misogi Bridge over the lotus pond, Aoi Aso Shrine
Photo: JoshBerglund19 / CC BY 2.0

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The Kuma River through the spa town of Hitoyoshi
Photo: そらみみ / CC BY-SA 4.0



Dusk at Moto-yu, a public bath of Hitoyoshi Onsen
Photo: Sanjo / CC BY-SA 4.0

A thatched national treasure, and steam rising by the river.

Downstream on the Kuma River, Hitoyoshi was ruled by the Sagara family for about 700 years, from the Kamakura period to the Meiji era. Aoi Aso Shrine, famous for its thatched gate, has buildings designated National Treasures. Hot springs rise along the river, and old public baths are still part of daily life. The town is also home to many Kuma shochu makers.

Kuma River & Railways

Through mountains and rice fields

Hitoyoshi-Kuma, Kumamoto



The Kumagawa Railway “Den-en Symphony” mirrored in rice paddies

Photo: MaedaAkihiko / CC BY-SA 4.0



The red Kumagawa Railway bridge over the Kuma River

Photo: STA3816 / CC BY-SA 4.0



“SL Hitoyoshi” at Isshochi Station on the Kuma River (2011)

Photo: Tanuki / Public domain



Mt. Ichifusa above the upper Kuma River, Mizukami

Photo: Sanjo / Public domain

CONTENTS

From mountain springs, through rice fields, to the rapids.

The Kuma River rises near Mt. Ichifusa around Mizukami village, waters the rice fields of the Hitoyoshi basin as it flows west, and becomes mountain rapids on its way to the Yatsushiro Sea. The Kumagawa Railway runs through the basin’s paddies between Hitoyoshi and Yunomae, and the steam train “SL Hitoyoshi” once carried travellers along the river on the Hisatsu Line.

Osuzuyama Distillery

Osuzuyama Distillery

Kijo, Miyazaki

OSUZU GIN Original

A CRAFT GIN MADE FROM HANDCRAFTED SHOCHU



ALCOHOL
45%
ABV

BASE
Shochu
Its own handmade shochu

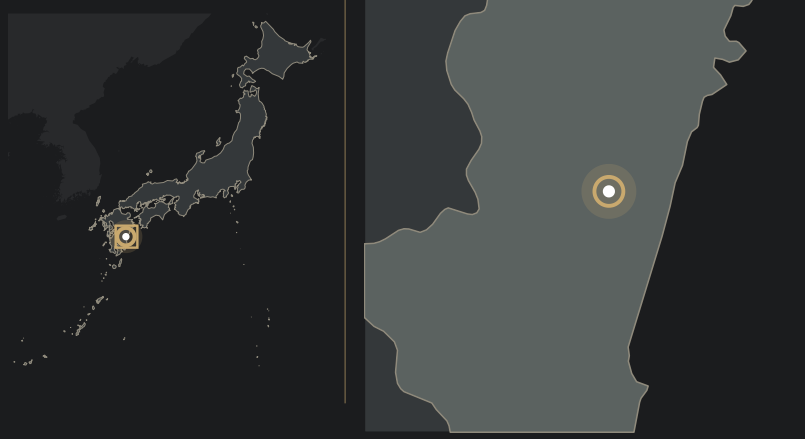
TASTE PROFILE
Japanese
Sansho, citrus, umami

Distillery	Deep in the Osuzu mountain forest, by a renowned shochu house
Base	Traditionally handcrafted shochu
Botanicals	Juniper, sansho, local citrus, ginger, sakaki, “umami”
Size/ABV	700 ml / 45%

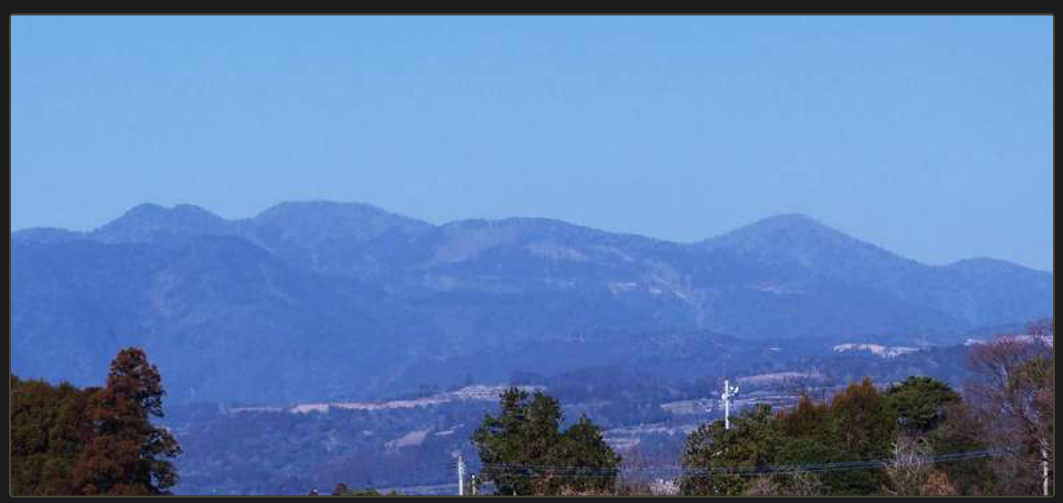
30 ml ¥1,867 tax incl.

目次

Kijo, Miyazaki



Around the distillery



Osuzuyama Distillery, in the Osuzu forest

The Osuzu mountain range, Miyazaki

A gin of its forest, from a shochu house.

Osuzuyama Distillery sits deep in the forest of Mt. Osuzu in Miyazaki. Its makers infuse local botanicals into their own traditionally handcrafted shochu. The label lists juniper, sansho, local citrus, ginger, sakaki (a sacred Shinto tree) and, simply, “umami”.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Sansho, citrus, sakaki	Savoury and soft	With soda, or on the rocks

Source: bottle label, Osuzuyama Distillery Photo: アラツク / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Oyama Jinshichi Shoten

Oyama Jinshichi Shoten

Ibusuki, Kagoshima

JIN7 Series 00

JAPANESE CRAFT GIN, IBUSUKI



ALCOHOL
47%
ABV

BOTANICAL
11
From its own herb garden

TASTE PROFILE
Herbal
Flowers and spice

Maker	An Ibusuki shochu house founded in 1875
Base	Sweet-potato shochu
Botanicals	11, incl. juniper, rose geranium, lemongrass, Chiran tea, Kito yuzu, camphor leaf
Size/ABV	700 ml / 47%

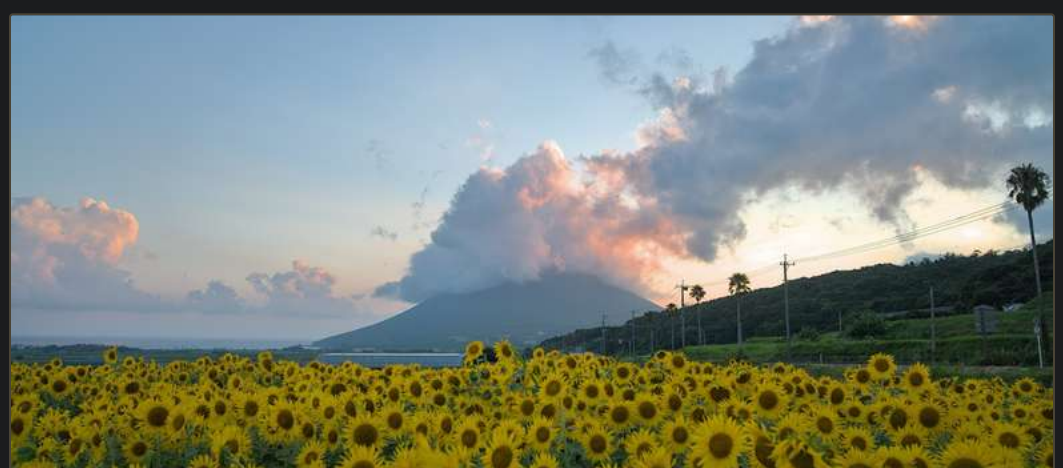
30 ml ¥1,815 tax incl.

Satsuma Peninsula, Kagoshima



Oyama Jinshichi Shoten, Ibusuki

At the foot of Mt. Kaimon



Mt. Kaimon behind a sunflower field, Ibusuki

A shochu house's gin, from its own herb garden.

Oyama Jinshichi Shoten has made shochu in Ibusuki, Kagoshima since 1875. Eleven botanicals, many grown in its own herb garden (rose geranium, lemongrass, local Chiran tea, camphor leaf), meet its sweet-potato shochu. The garden is small, so Series 00 is made only once a year.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Geranium, lemongrass	Floral and spicy	With soda, or Gin & tonic

Source: bottle label, retailer information Photo: The Modern Polymath / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

JAPANESE COLLECTION

Japanese Rum & Vodka

30 ml per glass / Tax included

JAPANESE RUM

Grace Rum Cor Cor Okinawan Rum ›	40%	**¥1,977**
Tenjinmura Brewery Aohara White Rum ›	42%	**¥1,977**
Tenjinmura Brewery Botanical Rhum ›	42%	**¥1,977**
Tenjinmura Brewery SPICED RHUM ›	42%	**¥1,977**
Iejima Distillery Santa Maria Voyage ›	43%	**¥2,035**
Iejima Distillery Santa Maria Cask Strength ›	62%	**¥2,087**
ACOU SPIRITS ACOU RUM Silver ›	40%	**¥1,977**
Boso Whisky / Sudo Honke Boso Rhum Traditionnel Fleur ›	40%	**¥1,845**
BOSO Rhum Agricole Blanc Soleil ›	59%	**¥2,035**

JAPANESE VODKA

Nikka Whisky Nikka Coffey Vodka ›	40%	**¥1,845**
Okuhida Shuzo Okuhida Vodka ›	55%	**¥1,925**
BLUE RABBIT Yuzu-Infused Vodka ›	43%	**¥1,848**
Sanwa Shurui TUMUGI Wapirits Koji ›	40%	**¥1,484**
Sanwa Shurui TUMUGI Buntan ›	43%	**¥1,484**

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Tap a name to open its page.

Boso Oigura Distillery

Distillerie Boso-Oigura

Minamiboso, Chiba

BOSO Rhum Traditionnel — Fleur

“FLEUR” MEANS FLOWER



ALCOHOL	STYLE
40%	BLANC
ABV	Unaged white rum

RUM PROFILE

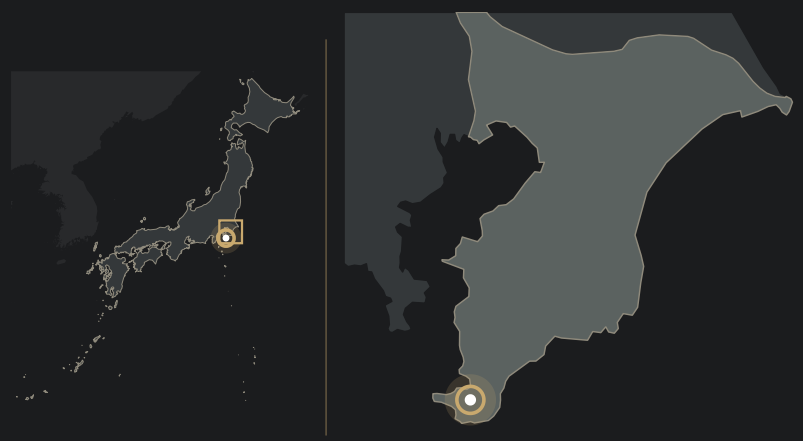
Floral

Light and fragrant

Distillery	Penache Boso’s Boso Oigura Distillery, est. 2022
Cane	Grown in Minamiboso on fields once used for flowers
Stills	Two on site: a hybrid still and an original pot still
Size/ABV	700 ml / 40%

30 ml ¥1,845 tax incl.

Boso Peninsula, Chiba



Boso Oigura Distillery, Minamiboso

The sea at the tip of the Boso Peninsula



The Pacific from Nojimazaki Lighthouse, Minamiboso

From the flower fields at sugarcane’s northern edge.

Mild southern Boso is said to be the northernmost place in Japan where sugarcane will grow. Cane was farmed here after the war, and in 2022 the Boso Oigura Distillery brought it back, planting on fields that once grew flowers. “Fleur” keeps that memory in its name. It is the distillery’s everyday white rum.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Green cane, white flowers	Light, gentle sweetness	With soda, or in a Mojito

Sources: Penache Boso / Minamiboso City press material (2024) Photo: 掬茶 / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Boso Oigura Distillery

Distillerie Boso-Oigura

Minamiboso, Chiba

BOSO Rhum Agricole Blanc — Soleil

“SOLEIL” MEANS SUN · ÉDITION LIMITÉE 2024



ALCOHOL
59%
ABV

IWSC
97 pts
Award seal on bottle

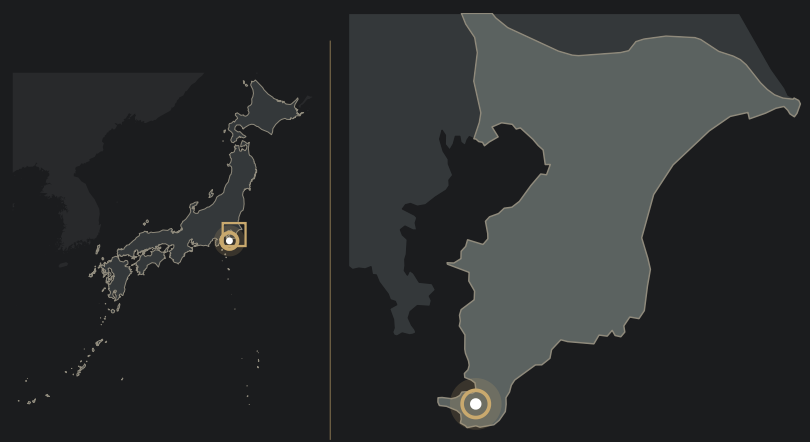
RUM PROFILE
Sunlit
Bold and dense

Method	Agricole: fresh cane juice, fermented and distilled
Cane	Grown in Minamiboso
Edition	Limited edition 2024 / unaged
Size/ABV	700 ml / 59%

30 ml ¥2,035 tax incl.

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Boso Peninsula, Chiba



Boso Oigura Distillery, Minamiboso

The sea at the tip of the Boso Peninsula



The Pacific from Nojimazaki Lighthouse, Minamiboso

Fresh-pressed cane, bottled at 59%.

A limited release made the agricole way: fresh-pressed cane juice is fermented and distilled. The green, sweet character of cane grown in the Boso sun is bottled at a high 59%. This bottle carries a 97-point score from the IWSC. Start with a small neat pour, then add a few drops of water and let the aroma open up.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Fresh-cut grass, citrus	Rich sweetness, real power	Neat, then a drop of water

Sources: Penache Boso / Minamiboso City press material (2024) / bottle label Photo: 掬茶 / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

Tenjinmura Brewery

Tenjinmura Jozosho

Uchiko, Ehime

Aohara White Rum

碧原 “BLUE FIELD”



ALCOHOL
42%
ABV

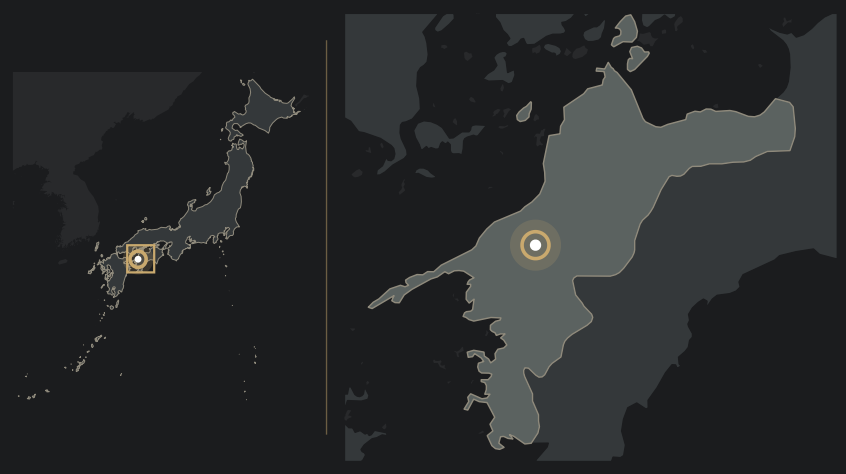
YEAST
SAKE
Sake yeast

RUM PROFILE
Fruity
Green apple, banana

Brewery	A tiny distillery run alone by Shoko Kameoka, since 2020
Base	Molasses and juice from Ehime-grown cane
Ferment	Sake yeast, a long 2–3 weeks
Size/ABV	700 ml / 42%, IWSC Silver

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

Uchiko, Ehime (Shikoku)



Tenjinmura Brewery, Uchiko

Uchiko, an old merchant town



The Yokaichi-Gokoku historic street, Uchiko

A sake brewer’s rum, full of fruit.

Uchiko is a small mountain town in Ehime, on the island of Shikoku. Shoko Kameoka brewed sake at a family brewery founded in 1716, then set up Tenjinmura Brewery on her own in 2020. She ferments Ehime-grown cane for two to three weeks with the sake yeast she knows best. The result smells of green apple, banana and pineapple, and has a fruitiness close to fine sake.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Green apple, banana	Sweet, with fresh acidity	On the rocks, or with soda

Sources: Tenjinmura Brewery profile / retailer notes (Shinanoya and others) Photo: Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Tenjinmura Brewery

Tenjinmura Jozosho

Uchiko, Ehime

Aohara Botanical Rhum

碧原 BOTANICAL



ALCOHOL
42%
ABV

IWSC 2024
BRONZE
Bronze medal

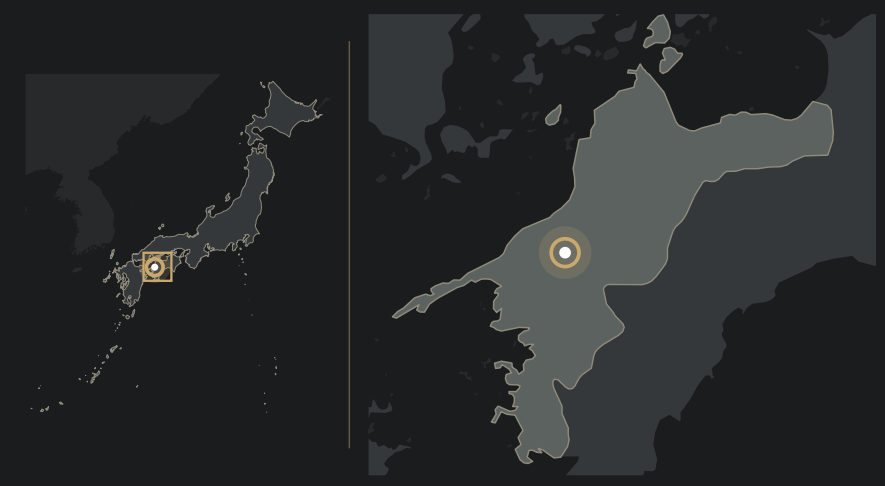
RUM PROFILE
Citrus
Peel and herbs

Base	Aohara rum fermented with sake yeast
Botanicals	Local citrus peel and aromatic herbs
Award	IWSC 2024 Bronze
Size/ABV	700 ml / 42%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

目次

Uchiko, Ehime (Shikoku)



Tenjinmura Brewery, Uchiko

Uchiko, an old merchant town



The Yokaichi-Gokoku historic street, Uchiko

Ehime’s citrus, layered into rum.

Ehime is famous across Japan for its citrus. This botanical rum takes Aohara’ s rum and adds local citrus peel and fragrant herbs. Fresh citrus and herbal depth sit on top of the fruity notes from the sake yeast. It won Bronze at the IWSC in 2024. With tonic or soda the aroma comes forward even more.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Citrus peel, herbs	Fresh, lightly bitter	With tonic, or on the rocks

Sources: Tenjinmura Brewery profile / bottle label (IWSC 2024) Photo: Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Tenjinmura Brewery

Tenjinmura Jozosho

Uchiko, Ehime

Aohara Spiced Rhum

碧原 SPICED



ALCOHOL	SPICES
42%	3
ABV	Cinnamon, clove, pepper

RUM PROFILE

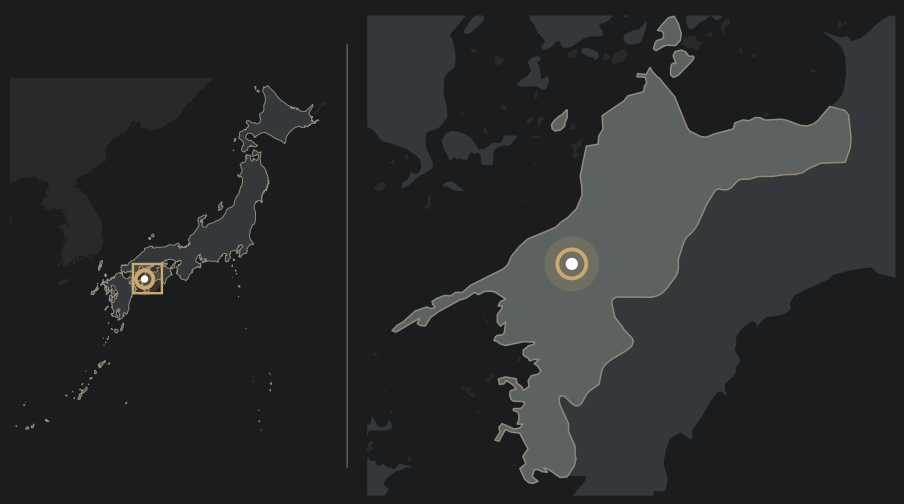
Warm

A spiced finish

Base	Aohara rum fermented with sake yeast
Spices	Cinnamon, clove and pepper
Colour	Deep red amber
Size/ABV	700 ml / 42%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

Uchiko, Ehime (Shikoku)



Tenjinmura Brewery, Uchiko

Uchiko, an old merchant town



The Yokaichi-Gokoku historic street, Uchiko

A rising red sun, and warm spice.

The third Aohara is a spiced rum made with cinnamon, clove and pepper. Like the red sun on its label, it pours a deep red amber. Warm spice and a long, gentle finish sit on Aohara’s fruity base. We recommend it with craft cola, whose spices suit the rum well. It is also lovely slowly on the rocks after dinner.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Cinnamon, clove	Sweet, softly spiced	With craft cola

Sources: Tenjinmura Brewery profile / bottle label Photo: Asturio Cantabrio / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Oyama Jinshichi Shoten

Oyama Jinshichi Shoten

Ibusuki, Kagoshima

ACOU Rum — Silver

NAMED AFTER A GIANT FIG TREE



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

SINCE
1875
Shochu distiller founded

RUM PROFILE
Kokuto
Mineral, dry finish

Distiller	Oyama Jinshichi Shoten, a shochu house in Ibusuki, founded 1875
Base	Kagoshima molasses plus molasses made from kokuto brown sugar
Water	Ibusuki spring water
Size/ABV	700 ml / 40%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

目次

Satsuma Peninsula, Kagoshima



Oyama Jinshichi Shoten, Ibusuki

At the foot of Mt. Kaimon



Mt. Kaimon behind a sunflower field, Ibusuki

The first rum from mainland Kagoshima.

Oyama Jinshichi Shoten has made shochu in Ibusuki, at the southern tip of the Satsuma Peninsula, for nearly 150 years. ACOU is its rum, and the first ever made on the Kagoshima mainland. The name comes from the giant acou fig tree at Miyagahama. Kagoshima molasses and kokuto molasses are brewed with local spring water. Expect pear and grape fruit and a dry, clove-like finish.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Pear, grape, flowers	Mellow, a little spicy	Highball, 1 : 4 soda

Sources: Oyama Jinshichi Shoten / importer notes (Ginza Berlin, Umami Mart) Photo: The Modern Polymath / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Grace Rum

Grace Rum Co., Ltd.

Minamidaito, Okinawa

Cor Cor Okinawan Rum — Green

AGRICOLE FROM SOUTH BORODINO ISLAND



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

METHOD
AGRICOLE
From fresh cane juice

RUM PROFILE
Grassy
Green and peppery

Distillery	Grace Rum, founded 2004
Cane	Grown on Minamidaito; made only in harvest season
Method	Agricole / unaged / no additives
Size/ABV	700 ml / 40%

30 ml ¥1,977 tax incl.

Minamidaito Island, Okinawa



About 360 km east of Okinawa Island

A sugarcane island in the Pacific



The coast of Minamidaito Island

From a sugarcane island in the open Pacific.

Minamidaito lies about 360 km east of Naha, alone in the Pacific, and most of the island is sugarcane. Grace Rum was founded here in 2004. The green label is an agricole made from fresh-pressed cane juice. It can only be made at harvest time, so very little is produced. It is wild and grassy, with lime zest and white pepper.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Grass, kiwi, lime	Dry, with a peppery bite	Neat, or as a Ti’ Punch

Sources: Grace Rum / The Fat Rum Pirate review Photo: 衛兵隊衛士 / CC BY-SA 3.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Ie Island Distillery

Iejima Jouryujo

Ie Island, Okinawa

Ie Rum Santa Maria Voyage #01

AGED IN WINE CASK



ALCOHOL	AGED
43.5%	4y 7m
ABV	In wine casks

RUM PROFILE

Vinous

Grape and oak grip

Base	Agricole from 100% Ie Island sugarcane
Aging	4 years 7 months in wine casks
Bottle	Blended 1 Nov 2021 / bottled 18 Jan 2022
Edition	1,518 bottles, ours is No. 671, 750 ml

30 ml ¥2,035 tax incl.

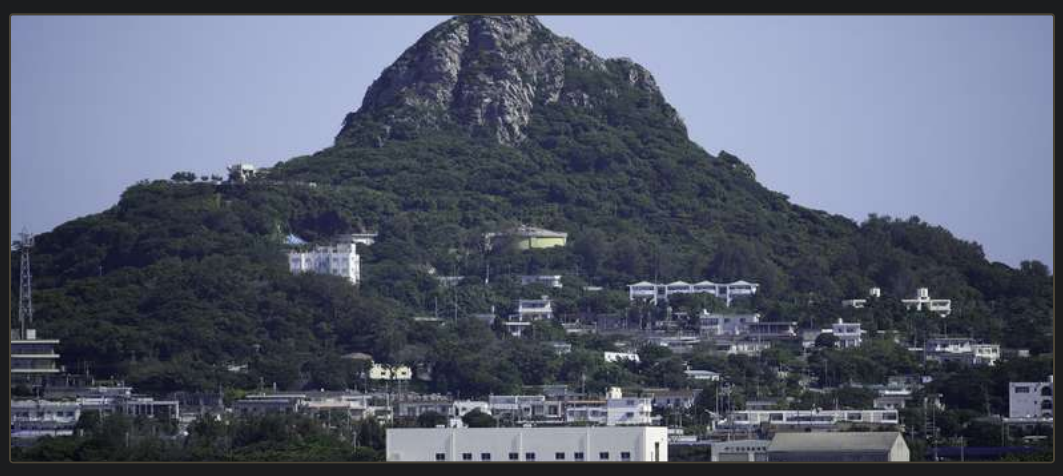
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Ie Island, Okinawa



About 5 km off the Motobu Peninsula

Gusukuyama, the island's landmark



Mt. Gusuku (Tatchu) on Ie Island, from the sea

Ie Island cane, on a voyage in wine casks.

Ie Island sits off the Motobu Peninsula in northern Okinawa. Its distillery makes agricole rum from the juice of 100% island-grown cane. Voyage #01, the first in the series, spent 4 years and 7 months in wine casks and was limited to 1,518 bottles. Under the grape and tannin there is still the bright, floral side of agricole.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Grape, wood	Fruit with firm tannin	Neat

Sources: Ie Island Distillery / bottle label / RumX Photo: Kugel / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Ie Island Distillery

Iejima Jouryujo

Ie Island, Okinawa

Ie Rum Santa Maria — Distillery Limited

100% PURE AGRICOLE RUM



ALCOHOL	ONLY
62%	546
ABV	Ours is No. 86

RUM PROFILE

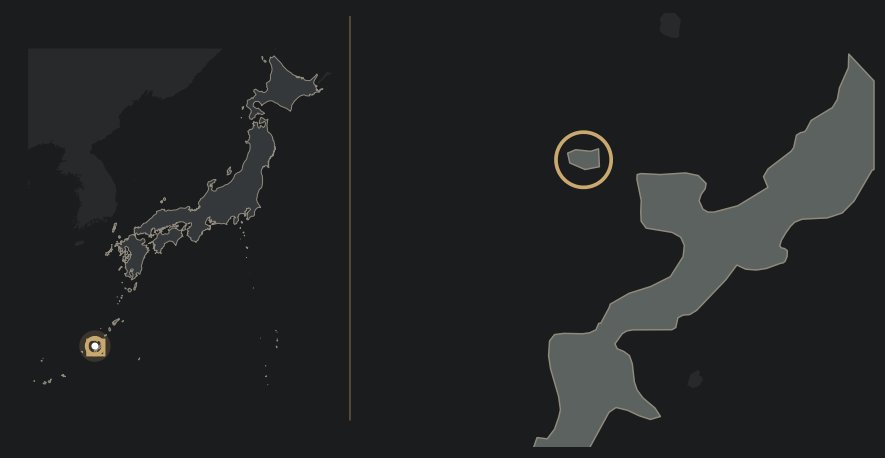
Raw cane

Pure, full power

Sold	Only at the distillery on Ie Island
Aging	About 3 years in stainless steel, no wood
Dates	Distilled 5 Mar 2021 / filled 2 Jun 2021 / bottled 13 Aug 2024
ABV	62%, cask strength

30 ml ¥2,087 tax incl.

Ie Island, Okinawa



About 5 km off the Motobu Peninsula

Gusukuyama, the island’s landmark



Mt. Gusuku (Tatchu) on Ie Island, from the sea

62% rum you can only buy on the island.

This bottle is sold only to visitors at the Ie Island Distillery. Agricole rum distilled in March 2021 rested for about three years in stainless steel instead of wood, and was bottled at a full 62% with no water added. With no colour or flavour from a cask, the sweetness and greenness of Ie Island cane come straight through. The hand-written label reads No. 86 of 546.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Fresh cane, grass	Powerful and pure	Neat, then with water

Sources: Ie Island Distillery / bottle label Photo: Kugel / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Japanese Vodka

Five Japanese vodkas and white spirits

	ALC.	30 ml, tax incl.
Nikka Coffey Vodka Nikka Whisky Kashiwa, Chiba	40%	¥1,845
Blue Rabbit Yuzu-Infused Vodka Blue Rabbit Distillery Ota-ku, Tokyo	43%	¥1,848
Okuhida Vodka Okuhida Shuzo Gero, Gifu	55%	¥1,925
TUMUGI Wapirits Koji Sanwa Shurui Usa, Oita	40%	¥1,484
TUMUGI Buntan Sanwa Shurui Usa, Oita	43%	¥1,484

目次

Tap a name to open its page.

Nikka Whisky

Nikka Whisky Distilling

Kashiwa, Chiba

Nikka Coffey Vodka

MADE ONLY FROM COFFEY-STILL SPIRIT



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

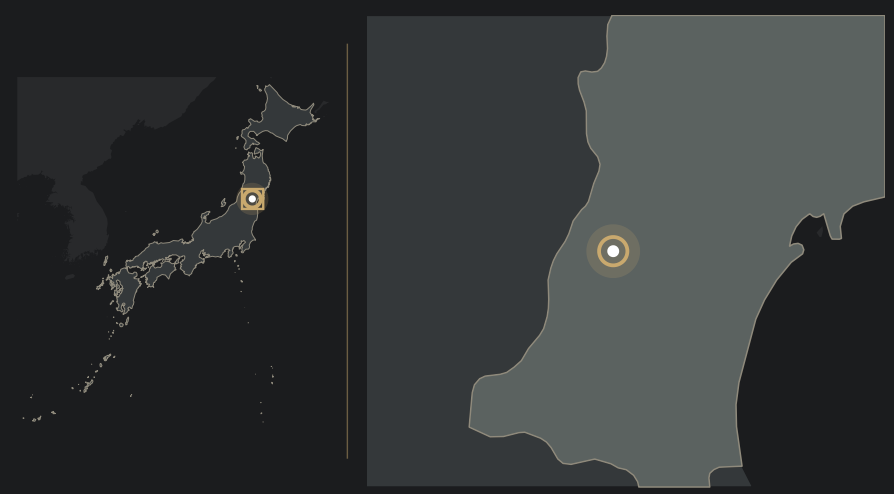
STILL
Coffey
Traditional column still

TASTE PROFILE
Floral
Soft and round

Base	Malted barley and corn
Still	Distilled only in Nikka’s Coffey still
Bottled	Nikka Whisky, Kashiwa plant
Size/ABV	700 ml / 40%

30 ml ¥1,845 tax incl.

Distilled in Sendai, Miyagi



Miyagikyo Distillery, home of the Coffey still (bottled in Kashiwa)

Miyagikyo Distillery



Copper pot stills at Miyagikyo

A sweet vodka from a whisky maker’s still.

Nikka still runs the Coffey still, an old type of column still that keeps more of the raw material’s character than modern stills do. This vodka uses only spirit from that still. The malt gives a floral note like white flowers, and the corn adds a rich, caramel-like sweetness. Soft, rounded sweetness and a smooth texture.

Nose	Palate	Try it
White flowers, caramel	Round, sweet, smooth	Neat or on the rocks

Source: bottle label (Nikka Whisky / Asahi Breweries) Photo: くろふね / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

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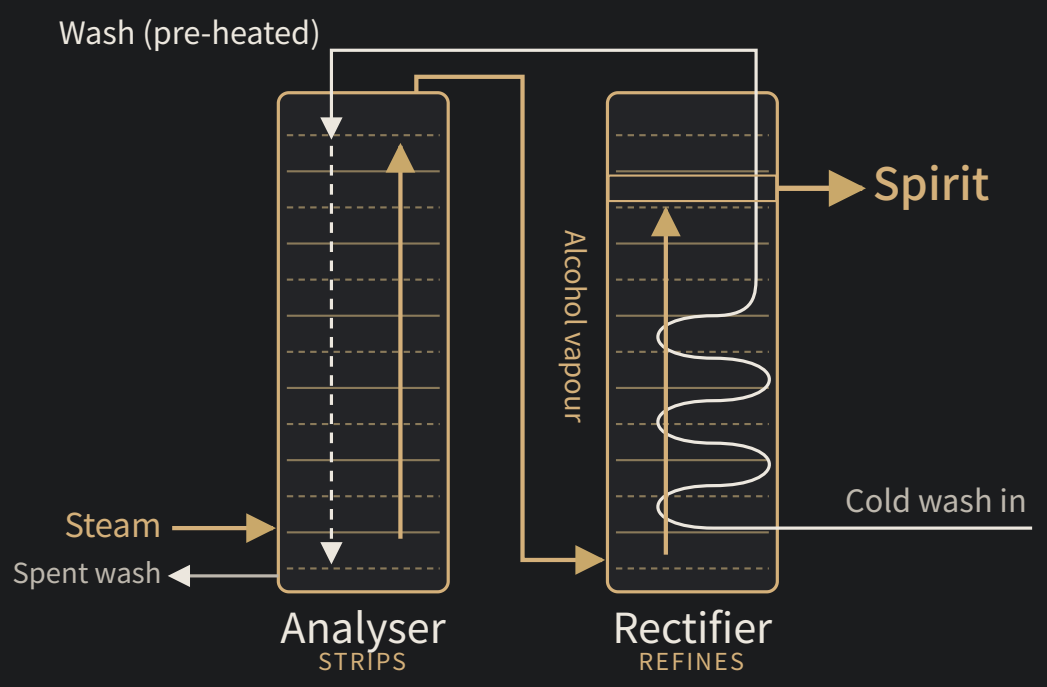
The Coffey Still

A 19th-century column still

Nikka Whisky



Nikka’s Coffey still. Photo: Nikka Whisky official site



1 Pre-heat

Cold wash runs through a pipe inside the rectifier, warms up, and enters the top of the analyser.

2 Strip

Wash falls over the plates of the analyser while steam rises from below, carrying the alcohol away as vapour.

3 Refine

The vapour climbs the rectifier and is refined; spirit is drawn off from a plate near the top.

目次

Built to keep flavour, not to be efficient.

Aeneas Coffey, an Irishman, patented this continuous still around 1830. Later stills are more efficient, but the Coffey still leaves more of the grain’s aroma, sweetness and body in the spirit. Nikka founder Masataka Taketsuru insisted on importing this old design, and it now runs at the Miyagikyo distillery. Nikka uses it to make separate corn and malted-barley spirits. Coffey Vodka is made only from this Coffey-still spirit.

c. 1830	Aeneas Coffey patents his continuous still
1963	Nikka imports one from Scotland to its Nishinomiya plant (running from 1964)
1999	Moved to the Miyagikyo distillery, Sendai, Miyagi
2017	Coffey Vodka and Coffey Gin, made only from Coffey-still spirit, are launched

Sources: Nikka Whisky official site (history, Coffey still) / bottle label. Diagram drawn by 2102.

Blue Rabbit Distillery

Blue Rabbit Distillery, LLC

Ota-ku, Tokyo

Blue Rabbit Yuzu-Infused Vodka

“MADE IN JAPAN BY A SCOTSMAN”



ALCOHOL	BOTANICAL
43%	Yuzu
ABV	Japanese yuzu peel

TASTE PROFILE

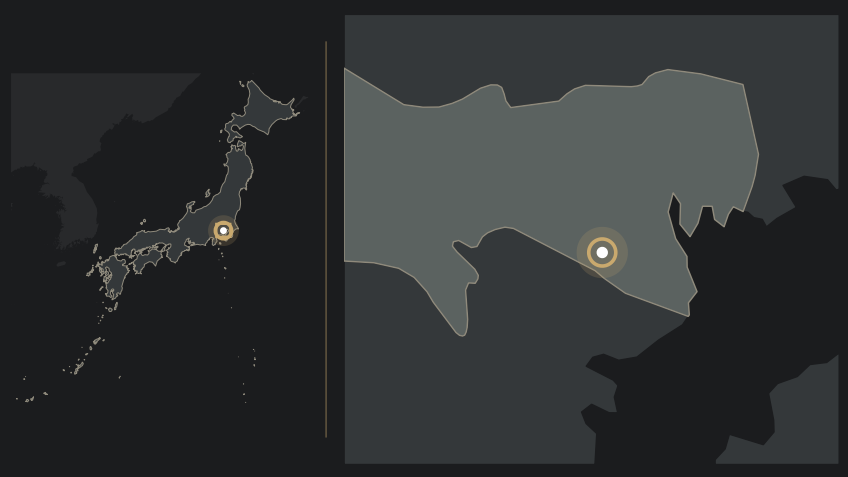
Yuzu

Fresh, velvet-smooth

Distillery	A small Denenchofu distillery, distilled and bottled in small batches
Filtered	Lightly, through Japanese white birch charcoal
Infused	With Japanese yuzu citrus peel
Size/ABV	700 ml / 43%, numbered bottle

30 ml ¥1,848 tax incl.

Ota City, Tokyo



Blue Rabbit Distillery, Denenchofu

Denenchofu, home of the distillery



The restored old Denenchofu Station building

Yuzu vodka, made in Tokyo by a Scotsman.

The label says it plainly: “Made in Japan by a Scotsman.” A Scottish distiller makes this vodka in small batches at a tiny distillery in Denenchofu, Tokyo. The spirit is lightly filtered through Japanese white birch charcoal for a velvet-smooth texture, then infused with Japanese yuzu peel. Each bottle is numbered and signed by the distiller.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Yuzu peel, white flowers	Smooth, gently bitter citrus	On the rocks, or with soda

Source: bottle label (Blue Rabbit Distillery, LLC) Photo: Suicasmo / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

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Okuhida Shuzo

Okuhida Sake Brewery

Gero, Gifu

Okuhida Vodka

“A NOVEL LOCAL BREW OF SPECIAL LIQUOR”



ALCOHOL
55%
ABV

BOTTLE
720ml
Square blue glass

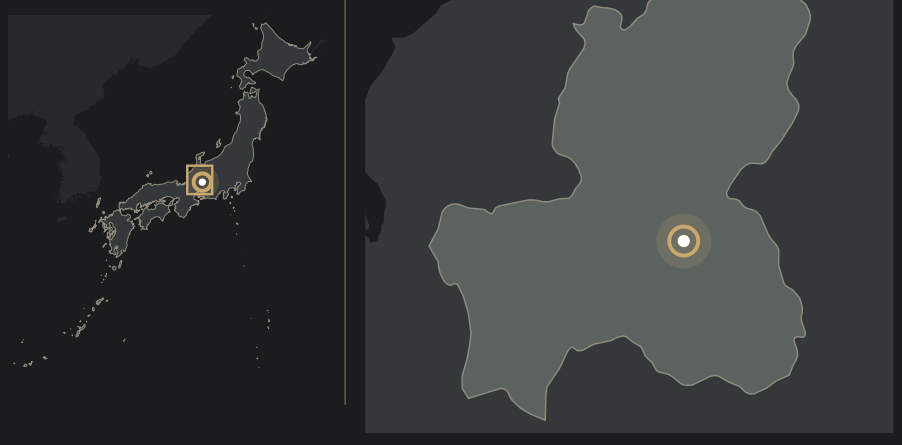
TASTE PROFILE
Powerful
Full-bodied

Brewery	Okuhida Shuzo, a sake brewery in Kanayama, Gero
Category	Spirits (vodka)
Strength	High proof, 55%
Size/ABV	720 ml / 55%

30 ml ¥1,925 tax incl.

目次

Gero, Gifu



Okuhida Shuzo, Kanayama, on the Hida River

Okuhida Shuzo in Kanayama



The Okuhida Shuzo shop, Kanayama, Gero

A 55% vodka from a Hida sake brewery.

Okuhida Shuzo makes sake in Kanayama, a town on the Hida River in Gero, Gifu. Its vodka is bottled at a strong 55%. The label promises “a mature full-bodied taste.” Try a small, ice-cold pour neat, or let its strength carry a lemon highball.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Clean, a hint of grain	Strong and full	Ice-cold neat, or a lemon sour

Source: bottle label (Okuhida Shuzo Co., Ltd.) Photo: 杉山宣嗣 / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Sanwa Shurui

Sanwa Shurui Co., Ltd.

Usa, Oita

TUMUGI Wapirits Koji

“WA” (JAPAN) + SPIRITS · NEW



ALCOHOL
40%
ABV

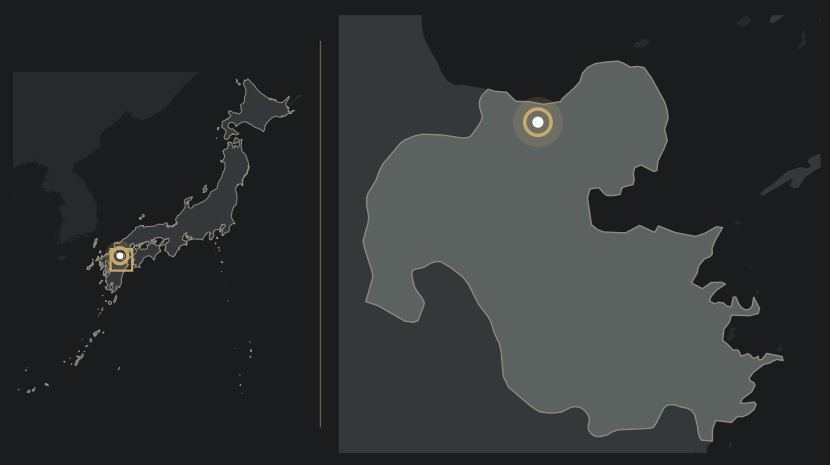
KEY
Koji
Japan’s brewing mold

TASTE PROFILE
Botanical
Clean and gentle

Maker	Sanwa Shurui, founded 1958, at its “Sake no Mori” site in Usa
Herbs	A careful selection of botanicals
Water	Clear water filtered through layers of bedrock
Size/ABV	750 ml / 40%

30 ml ¥1,484 tax incl.

Usa, Oita



Sanwa Shurui, Usa

Sanwa Shurui in Usa



The main gate of Sanwa Shurui’s head office, Usa

A Japanese cocktail base, spun with koji.

A new spirit from Sanwa Shurui in Usa, Oita, made at its “Sake no Mori” (forest of sake) surrounded by nature. “Wapirits” joins wa, meaning Japan, with spirits. Clear bedrock-filtered water and selected botanicals are brought together with koji, the traditional mold behind sake and shochu. Designed as a cocktail base, it also makes an excellent umeboshi (pickled plum) sour.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Soft koji sweetness, herbs	Clean and mellow	Umeboshi sour, or with soda

Source: bottle label (Sanwa Shurui Co., Ltd.) Photo: Watofamily / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

CONTENTS

Sanwa Shurui

Sanwa Shurui Co., Ltd.

Usa, Oita

TUMUGI Buntan

TOSA BUNTAN CITRUS · NEW



ALCOHOL
43%
ABV

CITRUS
Buntan
Tosa pomelo, Kochi

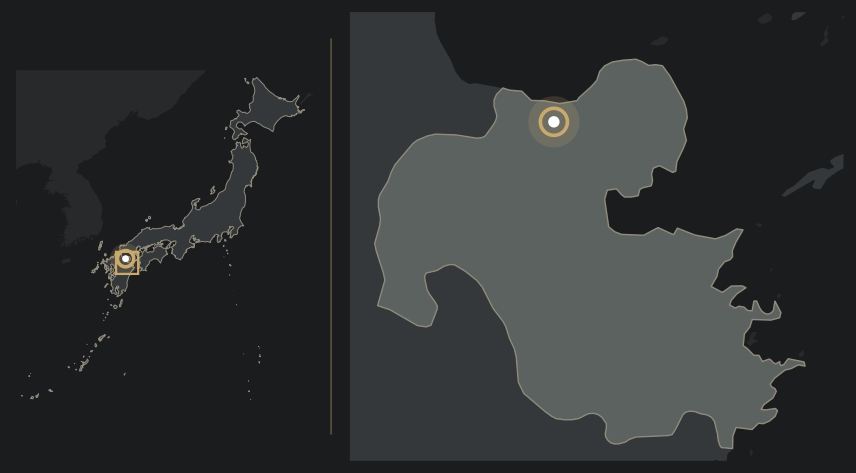
TASTE PROFILE
Citrus
Fresh, gently bitter

Maker	Sanwa Shurui, founded 1958, at its “Sake no Mori” site in Usa
Fruit	Tosa buntan, picked at its peak season
Method	Made with traditional koji techniques
Size/ABV	750 ml / 43%

30 ml ¥1,484 tax incl.

目次

Usa, Oita



Sanwa Shurui, Usa

Sanwa Shurui in Usa



The main gate of Sanwa Shurui’s head office, Usa

Peak-season Tosa buntan, spun with koji.

The citrus edition of the TUMUGI series. It uses buntan, a large pomelo-like citrus that is a specialty of Kochi (old Tosa), picked at the height of its season. Clear water and koji give it an elegant, juicy citrus aroma with a light bitter edge. At 43%, the aroma stays bright even with soda. We recommend it with soda and a twist of peel.

Nose	Palate	Try it
Buntan peel, juicy citrus	Fresh, lightly bitter	With soda or tonic

Source: bottle label (Sanwa Shurui Co., Ltd.) Photo: Watofamily / CC BY-SA 4.0 Map: Natural Earth

Japanese Absinthe

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery Absinthe Inunaki	58%	**¥2,079**
Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery Absinthe		**¥2,079**
Alchemiae Tatsumi Distillery Absinthe	58%	**¥2,079**
Tokyo Local Spirits Aoiya Absinthe	58%	**¥1,958**
Fukagawa Distillery Fukagawa Absinthe	61%	**¥1,958**
Sata Souji Shoten Akayane Absinthe Kusushiki	55%	**¥1,958**
Yokohama Bay Brewing Absinthe Honky Tonk Rouge	63%	**¥2,035**
Hombo Shuzo Mars Absinthe Mont Cerf	63%	**¥1,958**
THE HERBALIST YASO Absinthe prototype03	58%	**¥1,977**

CONTENTS

Japanese Absinthe: Its Story

Japanese absinthe has a long history, beginning before or soon after the Second World War. Domestic absinthe was made from around 1940 until the early 1990s, followed by a gap of about 20 years before new releases appeared after 2010.

A leading example was Hermes Absinthe from Suntory, formerly Kotobukiya. With wormwood extract permitted as a food additive in Japan, Suntory sold absinthe as part of its widely distributed Hermes liqueur series for cocktails. It was not especially unusual in liquor shops or bars.

目次

Hermes was long thought to be Japan’s oldest absinthe, but a Tommy Absinthe bottle appearing at auction in 2019 challenged that view. Asahi Kogyo’s Alice Extrait D’Absinthe in Yamanashi and Morozoff absinthe also existed in the 1960s. Japan continued production during Europe’s years of prohibition.

In 2015, crowdfunded Wabusun, made with Japanese mugwort instead of wormwood, signalled a revival.

A turning point came in 2017, when Shohei Tatsumi opened Japan’s first small-scale absinthe distillery in Gujo Hachiman, Gifu. Made in a kabuto still with a shochu base and eight botanicals, its Alchemiae absinthe is now highly sought after.

JAPANESE LIQUEUR

Tochigi Liqueur

Per glass / 30 ml / Tax included

M8 Pistachio	13%	¥1,648
ginger	20%	¥1,648
The Raindrops on Your Lips, Lavender	20%	¥1,648
M7 Raspberry, Ruby Tanzaku	15%	¥1,648
M5 Green Tea, Emerald Letter	20%	¥1,648
M9 Blue Rose, Sapphire Sheep	18%	¥1,648
M4 MENTHOL	20%	¥1,648



History

Founded in Utsunomiya by bartender Yuriko Hara, this maker of Japanese fruit liqueurs made its first shipments in January 2019. Crowdfunding exceeded its target, helping launch liqueurs made without added colour, including one using Tochigi's signature Tochiotome strawberries.

Vision

Seeking Japanese liqueurs that feel natural yet exist nowhere else: classic handmade liqueurs that unite local agriculture with the culture of regional drinks.

The passion of Tochigi Liqueur

A seasonal range of 30 liqueurs draws on freshly harvested produce, pesticide-free crops and fully ripe fruit rarely available through ordinary markets. The range also explores sustainable local farming, including mangoes grown in greenhouses heated with forestry offcuts.

Proven quality

At the UK's ISC 2019, 4 Tochigi Liqueur products received silver or bronze medals, surpassing established makers. This is the competition where Suntory Hibiki and Nikka Taketsuru attracted acclaim with gold medals. Tochigi Liqueur is a brand with a promising future.



Yoichi Fruit, in Your Glass.

50% fruit juice. 5% alcohol. Liqueurs made with fruit sourced entirely from Yoichi, at a small workshop near the station.

Yoichi, Hokkaido. Apple seedlings distributed by the Hokkaido Development Commission in 1875 began a tradition that has made this one of the island’s leading fruit-growing towns. Masataka Taketsuru established his whisky distillery here in 1934. More recently, Yoichi has also earned a name as a wine region: a northern kingdom of fruit.

Yoichi Liqueur Factory opened in spring 2021, just a two-minute walk from Yoichi Station. Koji Terao, who runs the workshop, spent 15 years or more as a toji, or master sake brewer, at a brewery in Otaru. He uses only fruit from Yoichi. With a wooden press, he adjusts his method for each fruit, balancing juice, alcohol, acidity and sugar to capture the fruit at its most delicious. There are at least ten apple varieties alone; even the same variety is bottled separately by grower and harvest time. “I don’t have a story to tell,” Terao says with a smile. His liqueurs let the fruit speak for itself.

目次

50%	5%	100%	2021	18
fruit juice	alcohol	Yoichi-grown fruit	opened in Yoichi	types of fruit



Peach Liqueur

Peaches are rare in Hokkaido. Akatsuki’s gentle aroma and rich, velvety sweetness come straight to your glass.

Akatsuki peaches from Yoichi. 50% juice / 5% alc. Peaches: Hokkaido Agri Dream Co., Ltd

¥1,320 tax incl.



Blueberry Liqueur

A clear, deep purple. Bright berry sweetness and acidity lead to a surprisingly light finish.

Yoichi-grown blueberries. 50% juice / 5% alc. Blueberries: farm41

¥1,320 tax incl.



Red Grape Liqueur

Steuben’s rich sweetness and subtle astringency create a wine-like character: also lovely after dinner.

Steuben grapes from Yoichi. 50% juice / 5% alc. Produced at Yoichi Liqueur Factory, Okawa shop.

¥1,320 tax incl.

How to enjoy Serve chilled and neat, like biting into fresh fruit. Add our highly carbonated natural water for a light, refreshing fruit soda.

Japanese Liqueurs

30 ml per glass / Tax included

KSP STRAWBERRY WONDER	18%	¥1,815
Izu Shimoda Distillery Blue Curaçao	40%	¥1,867
Izu Shimoda Distillery Fortissimo ff op.1	40%	¥1,867
Hachioji Distillery Mulberry & Hops	28%	¥1,815
KSP Kubo Crème de Cassis	20%	¥1,815
KSP PASSION FRUITS	18%	¥1,815
KSP POMEGRANATE LIQUEUR	18%	¥1,815
Dover White Curaçao	40%	¥1,540
KSP ONI no Amaro Classic	25%	¥1,815
KSP AKA - ONI ROSSO	18%	¥1,815
Iseya Shuzo Scarlet Caffè Amaro	26%	¥1,815
Hiyori Vermouth Kihada	18%	¥1,815
Kobayashi Shuzo Houou Biden Yuzu	13%	¥1,815
Tatenokawa Shuzo Kodakara Yogurt	8%	¥1,705
Umenoyado Shuzo Aragoshi Momo, Peach	8%	¥1,815
Yamagata Masamune Torotoro / Plum Liqueur	10%	¥1,705
Uguisutomari Outoro / Plum Liqueur	12%	¥1,705
Kiuchi Brewery Kiuchi Umeshu	5%	¥1,867
Ryukyo Umeshu Komagatake Barrel Aged	25%	¥1,595
Chat Noir La France Pear	7%	¥1,815
Houou Biden / Fully Ripe Peach Liqueur	6%	¥1,815
Houou Biden / Lemon Liqueur	5%	¥1,815
Houou Biden / Mandarin Liqueur	11%	¥1,815
Jabara / Citrus Liqueur	8%	¥1,705
Premium Ginger / Ginger & Kabosu	8%	¥1,705
Omishima Limone Limoncello	26-27%	¥1,650
Mok In’ei	43%	¥1,705

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A small harbour near Sekiguchi’s mother’s family home. Drone photograph by Sekiguchi, July 2026.

Sado, His Mother’s Island.

The birthplace of owner Sekiguchi’s mother. Before turning to the sake menu, take a moment to discover her island.

Just over an hour by jetfoil from Niigata Port, Sado lies in the Sea of Japan. Excluding Japan’s four main islands - Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu and Shikoku - it is the country’s second-largest island after Okinawa. Rice grows on the plain between the Osado and Kosado mountain ranges, surrounded by seas where warm and cold currents meet. It is also the island where owner Sekiguchi’s mother was born.

目次

Known for its gold mines and the return of the toki (Japanese crested ibis) to the wild, Sado has five sake breweries today; there are said to have been two hundred. One of them, Hokusetsu, brought Sado’s name to the world through its sake served at NOBU, the restaurant co-owned by Robert De Niro. Yet we have chosen not to stock it.

Instead, we chose sake from small breweries devoted to the island’s rice and water. Sekiguchi travelled to Sado and visited the breweries himself to obtain the three bottles on the next page. These are sake you rarely have the chance to encounter in Tokyo.

~855 km²
Area
~1.4× Tokyo’s 23 wards

Under 50,000
Population
Island life remains quiet

5
Sake breweries
Once said to number 200

2024
World Heritage listing
Sado Island Gold Mines

Since 2008
Toki return to the wild
Ibises soar over rice fields

Just over 1 hr
From Niigata Port
Jetfoil to Ryotsu Port

Henmi Shuzo SINCE 1872

Founded in 1872, Henmi is the smallest of Sado’s five sake breweries: a family operation brewing only what it can personally oversee. Known for Shinryo and Itaru, its sake are rarely found beyond the island.

Sake

120 ml per glass (Kikusui: 200 ml) / Tax included

Tsuchida Shuzo Shin Tsuchida / Gunma › 16% **¥1,650**
Rich, mature umami from 90%-polished rice and natural fermentation.

Henmi Shuzo Shinryo Junmai Daiginjo / Sado › 15% **¥1,815**
Smooth and rounded, with depth from maturation; Koshitanrei rice.

Henmi Shuzo Shinryo Daiginjo / Sado › 15% **¥1,815**
Sado-grown Koshitanrei polished to 50%. Fruity, light and cleanly dry.

Kikusui Daiginjo Funaguchi / 200 ml › 19% **¥1,925**
Unpasteurised, undiluted daiginjo; fruity, full and richly textured.

AKABU Tamashii no Owaza Daiginjo / Iwate › 16% **¥1,925**
Refined ginjo aromas and rich umami; Yamadanishiki polished to 35%.

Noguchi Naohiko Junmai Muroka Nama Genshu 2024 › 19% **¥1,868**
Japanese citrus and floral notes, a smooth texture and deep umami.

Ozasaya Taketsuru Daiwa Omachi Junmai Genshu R2BY › 20% **¥1,538**
Rich rice umami and depth from ageing; also enjoyable warm.

Taketsuru Omachi Junmai Nigori R4BY / Hiroshima › 19.3% **¥1,538**
Bold acidity and a lees-rich texture; a robust sake to enjoy with food.

Taketsuru Kan Nigori / Hiroshima › 16.5% **¥1,485**
Dry, savoury nigori; warming reveals rice umami and a crisp finish.

SAKE BY THE BOTTLE / Tax included

Shichiken Yama no Kasumi Sparkling Sake

Yamanashi Meijo 720 ml 12% **¥6,578**
Fine bubbles from secondary fermentation in the bottle. Fruity aromas and gentle sweetness meet a refreshing taste and a clean finish.

CONTENTS

Tsuchida Brewery

TSUCHIDA

Kawaba, Gunma

Shin Tsuchida

KIMOTO JUNMAI



ALCOHOL
16%
ABV

RICE POLISHING
90%
Rice from Gunma

SAKE PROFILE
Kimoto Junmai
Native yeasts and lactic bacteria

umami
Full-bodied Mature complexity
Evolves after opening

120ml ¥1,650 tax included

目次

Kawaba, Gunma



Tsuchida Brewery

A living tradition in Kawaba



Tsuchida Brewery in the village of Kawaba

The depth of rice. The character of time.

Gunma-grown rice, polished to 90%, is brewed in the traditional kimoto style with yeasts and lactic acid bacteria native to the brewery. Rich umami meets a mature, layered character. This distinctive sake continues to change after opening, revealing new expressions with time.

Photo: Tsuchida Brewery
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Tsuchida Brewery

Henmi Brewery

HENMI

Sado Island, Niigata

Shinryo Junmai Daiginjo

SADO ISLAND / SMALL FAMILY BREWERY



ALCOHOL
15%
ABV

RICE POLISHING
50%
Koshitanrei rice

SAKE PROFILE
Mellow Depth
A smooth, rounded texture



Nanaura Coast, Sado Island

120ml ¥1,815 tax included

Sado Island, Niigata



A small family brewery on Sado



Henmi Brewery

Henmi Brewery, a small brewery on Sado Island

A silky texture, unfolding into mellow depth.

Brewed from Koshitanrei rice polished to 50%, this junmai daiginjo opens with a smooth texture and slowly reveals the rounded depth of maturation. Gentle acidity brings balance to the finish. Made in small, closely tended batches by a family-run brewery on Sado Island.

Photo: Sado Tourism Association
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Henmi Brewery
Landscape: houroumono.jpg) / CC BY 2.0 (cropped)

CONTENTS

Henmi Brewery

HENMI

Sado Island, Niigata

Shinryo Daiginjo

SADO ISLAND / SMALL FAMILY BREWERY



ALCOHOL
15%
ABV

RICE POLISHING
50%
Sado-grown Koshitanrei

SAKE PROFILE
Fruit & Finesse
Light and gently dry



Ogura rice terraces, Sado Island

120ml ¥1,815 tax included

目次

Sado Island, Niigata



Henmi Brewery

Rooted in island life



Henmi Brewery in Nagaishi, Sado

Fruit on the nose. Clarity on the finish.

Sado-grown Koshitanrei rice, polished to 50%, gives this daiginjo its fruity aroma and light, flowing texture. A gently dry character and clean finish make it especially appealing chilled. Made in small, closely tended batches by a family-run brewery on Sado Island.

Photo: Sado Tourism Association
Map: Natural Earth
Product source: Henmi Brewery
Landscape: 伊藤善行 / CC BY-SA 3.0 (cropped)

Kikusui Brewery

KIKUSUI

Shibata, Niigata

Kikusui Daiginjo Funaguchi

DAIGINJO NAMA GENSHU



ALCOHOL
19%
ABV

RICE POLISHING
50%
Rice from Niigata

SAKE PROFILE
Fresh & Full
Unpasteurised and undiluted

Fresh fruit aromas
Generous umami
Daiginjo in a little can

200ml ¥1,925 tax included

Shibata, Niigata



Kikusui Brewery

Brewing in the snow country



Winter at Kikusui Brewery, Shibata, Niigata

A small can. A generous taste of daiginjo.

Niigata-grown rice is polished to 50% for this unpasteurised, undiluted daiginjo. Fresh fruit aromas lead into generous umami and rounded depth. The strength of 19% ABV is balanced by finesse: a rich sake experience in one small can.

Photo: Kikusui Brewery
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Kikusui Brewery

CONTENTS

Akabu Brewery

AKABU

Morioka, Iwate

AKABU Tamashii no Owaza Daiginjo

YAMADA NISHIKI / LOW-TEMPERATURE FERMENTATION



ALCOHOL
16%
ABV

RICE POLISHING
35%
Yamada Nishiki rice

SAKE PROFILE
Aroma & Umami
Elegant ginjo fragrance

Rich, concentrated umami
Meticulously washed rice
Savour slowly, chilled

120ml ¥1,925 tax included

目次

Morioka, Iwate



Akabu Brewery

A new chapter in Morioka



Akabu’s rebuilt brewery in Morioka, Iwate

Finely polished rice. Fragrance and depth.

Yamada Nishiki rice is polished to 35%, carefully washed and fermented at very low temperatures to create this daiginjo. Elegant ginjo aromas rise from the glass, followed by concentrated umami on the palate. Serve chilled and take time to explore its fragrance and depth.

Photo: SAKETIMES
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Akabu Brewery

Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute

NOGUCHI NAOHIKO

Komatsu, Ishikawa

Junmai Muroka Nama Genshu

JUNMAI / 2024 VINTAGE



ALCOHOL
19%
ABV

RICE POLISHING
60%
Local Gohyakumangoku rice



Naohiko Noguchi
Born 24 December 1932
Still brewing at 93
As of 28 October 2026
Over 70 years of brewing and passing his skills to the next generation.

120ml ¥1,868 tax included

Komatsu, Ishikawa



Noguchi Institute

The landscape of Kanagaso



Rural views from the Toan tasting room

Local rice, a master brewer's touch.

Local Gohyakumangoku rice, polished to 60%, becomes an unfiltered, undiluted and unpasteurised junmai. Japanese citrus and floral aromas meet a smooth palate, concentrated umami, acidity and a hint of bitterness, with a gentle steamed-rice and white-flower finish. On 16 October 2026, the Council for Cultural Affairs recommended Noguchi’s designation as a Living National Treasure for ginjo brewing – a first for a sake master brewer.

Photo: Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute
Map: Natural Earth
Product source: Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute
Biography source: Agency for Cultural Affairs

Taketsuru Brewery

TAKETSURU

Takehara, Hiroshima

Ozasaya Taketsuru Daiwa Omachi

JUNMAI GENSHU / R2BY



ALCOHOL
20%
ABV

R2BY
2020
Brewing year

SAKE PROFILE
Mature Depth
Full-bodied rice umami

Bottled without dilution
Warmth opens the palate
A fine match for meat

120ml ¥1,538 tax included

目次

Takehara, Hiroshima



Taketsuru Brewery

A brewery shaped by history



Taketsuru Brewery in Takehara's historic district

The strength of Omachi, mellowed by time.

Named after the brewery's Edo-period trading house, Ozasaya, this undiluted junmai uses Omachi rice grown in Daiwa, Mihara, Hiroshima. From the 2020 brewing year (R2BY), it balances rich rice umami with firm acidity and the composure of maturation. A broad, satisfying sake that pairs well with meat dishes.

Photo: Takehara Tourism
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Taketsuru Brewery

Taketsuru Brewery

TAKETSURU

Takehara, Hiroshima

Taketsuru Omachi Junmai Nigori

JUNMAI NIGORI / R4BY



ALCOHOL
19.3%
ABV

R4BY
2022
Brewing year

SAKE PROFILE
Acidity & Umami
Character beyond sweetness

Rice sediment adds body
For richly flavoured dishes
Rounded when served warm

120ml ¥1,538 tax included

Takehara, Hiroshima



Craft handed down in the brewery



Taketsuru Brewery

Brewing traditions at Taketsuru in Takehara

Vivid acidity. Layers of rice-rich flavour.

Mature rice umami and vivid acidity shape this powerful cloudy sake. Rice sediment adds body and depth beyond sweetness. This bottle is from the 2022 brewing year (R4BY). Its acidity and umami complement food in true Taketsuru style; served warm, the flavours and sediment come together with satisfying harmony.

Photo: Taketsuru Brewery
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Taketsuru Brewery

CONTENTS

Taketsuru Brewery

TAKETSURU

Takehara, Hiroshima

Taketsuru Kan Nigori

DRY NIGORI / BEST ENJOYED WARM



ALCOHOL
16.5%
ABV

SERVING STYLE
WARM
Gently warmed

SAKE PROFILE
Dry Nigori
Rice umami, a clean finish

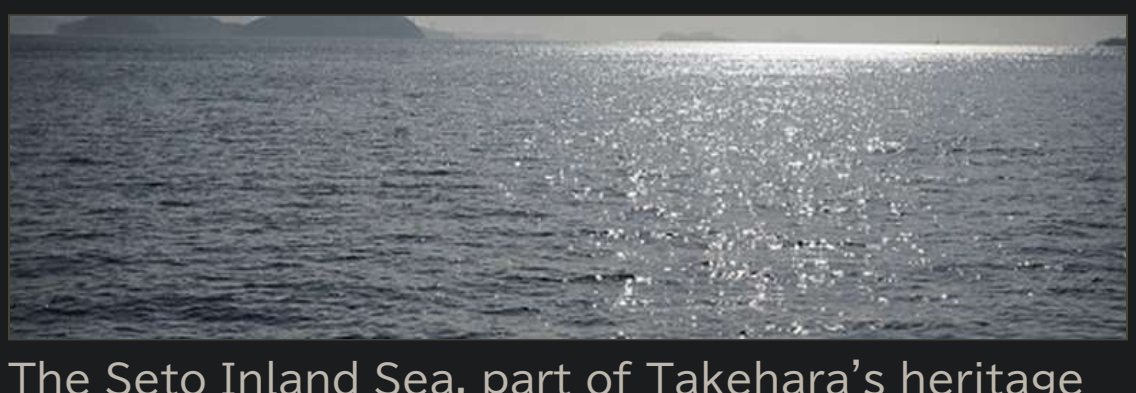
Restrained sweetness
Made to accompany food
A refreshingly dry finish

120ml ¥1,485 tax included

Takehara, Hiroshima



The sea behind Takehara’s culture



Taketsuru Brewery

The Seto Inland Sea, part of Takehara’s heritage

Discover the warmth of cloudy sake.

Soft and milky in appearance, yet firmly dry. Full fermentation keeps sweetness in check while preserving rice umami and a clean finish. Gentle warming opens its rice character without sacrificing freshness. Kan Nigori expresses Taketsuru’s belief in sake enjoyed with food – and reveals another side of cloudy sake.

Photo: Taketsuru Brewery
Map: Natural Earth

Product source: Taketsuru Brewery

Uchu Brewing

UCHU BREWING

Hokuto, Yamanashi | Uchu Company

UCHU IPA

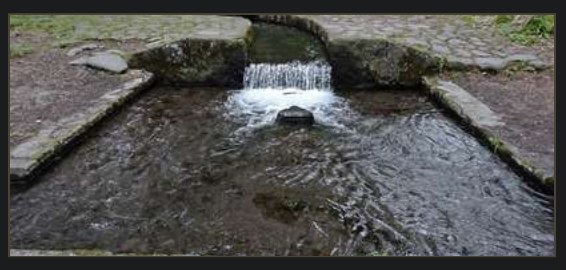
DDH IPA (Double Dry Hopped)



ALCOHOL
7%
ABV

SIZE
350 ml
Can, kept cold

DDH IPA
“Uchu” fruit
Aroma and deep bitterness



Sanbuichi Spring, Hokuto

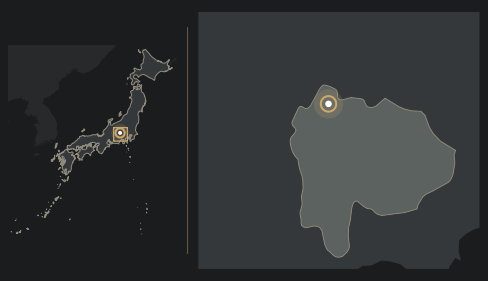


The Summer Triangle setting in a winter sky (Nagano)

Malt, wheat, hops, oats
Stored below 5°C: freshness first

350 ml can ¥1,757 tax incl.

Southern foot of Yatsugatake, Takane



Uchu Brewing, Takane, Hokuto

The Yatsugatake range



Yatsugatake from a farm road in Takane, Hokuto

The scent of “uchu”, a fruit of the galaxy.

The flagship of Uchu Brewing, on the southern slopes of Yatsugatake in Hokuto, Yamanashi. Double dry hopped, with wheat and oats for a smooth body. The can promises “the aroma of uchu, a five-dimensional fruit of the galaxy, and a profound bitterness”: juicy mandarin and mango, then a deep IPA bite. “Freshness is everything,” so we keep it cold.

Photos: Ebiebi2 / CC BY-SA 4.0 ・ ブルーノ・プラス / CC BY-SA 4.0 ・ Kouji Ohnishi/IAU OAE / CC BY 4.0
Map: Natural Earth

Product facts: can label
Can photo: 2102

CONTENTS

CRAFT FREE-FLOW

60-MINUTE ALL-YOU-CAN-DRINK

¥6,578

60 minutes / tax incl.
12% service charge extra
20-min extension ¥2,420 (tax incl.)

GUESTS	TIME	LAST ENTRY
1–3 per group	60 min auto-extends 20 min	23:00 last admission

> Free-flow is available for groups of **1 to 3 guests**. A maximum of 3 guests can be on free-flow at the same time.

HOW IT WORKS

01 START — 60 minutes from the first order or first drink served. One drink per person at a time; finish your glass before ordering another.

02 EXTENSION — After the time limit, your session automatically extends in 20-minute blocks.

03 CHECK — To avoid an extension, please settle the bill at least 5 minutes before the end.

THE LINEUP

- Japanese whisky
- Shochu
- Craft beer
- World spirits
- Craft gin
- Sake
- Highballs
- Hikicha latte
- Absinthe
- Japanese liqueurs
- Seasonal cocktails
- A2 milk & soft drinks

Martinis, Manhattans, White Ladies and more are also available, subject to ingredients in stock.

* Includes in-stock drinks served by the glass. Bottles excluded.
* Limited-release bottles: up to 15ml per person.

目次

World Whisky

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Waterford Single Farm Origin Lakefield Edition 1.1	50%	¥1,925
Waterford Biodynamic Luna 1.1	50%	¥1,925
Waterford Peated Fenniscourt	50%	¥1,925
Roe & Co Blended Irish Whiskey	45%	¥1,925
Teeling Single Malt Irish Whiskey	46%	¥1,925
The Dubliner Bourbon Cask	40%	¥1,925
Domaine des Hautes Glaces Trièves Single Malt	50.3%	¥1,925
Domaine des Hautes Glaces Trièves Single Malt	50.6%	¥1,925
Bastille 1789 Hand-Crafted Blended Whisky	40%	¥1,925
Bellevoye Rose (Finition Prune) Triple Malt Whisky	43%	¥1,925
M&H Elements Red Wine Cask	46%	¥1,925
Mackmyra Grönt Te Swedish	46.1%	¥1,925
PUNI SOLE The Italian Malt Whisky	46%	¥1,925
Kavalan Distillery Select No.1	40%	¥1,925
Kavalan Rhythm of Taiwan Collection - Ocean	43%	¥1,925
Rittenhouse Straight Rye Whisky Bottled-In-Bond 50% (100 Proof)	50%	¥1,925
Russell’s Reserve Single Barrel Kentucky Bourbon	55%	¥1,925
Westland Garryana American Single Malt Whiskey	50%	¥2,475
Westland Sherry Wood American Single Malt Whiskey	46%	¥1,925
SirDavis American Whisky	44%	¥1,925

CONTENTS

Blended Scotch

30 ml per glass / Tax included

J.G. Thomson & Co. Rich Batch No.03	46.5%	**¥2,145**
J.G. Thomson & Co. Smoky Batch No.02	46%	**¥2,145**
J.G. Thomson & Co. Sweet Batch No.03	46.5%	**¥2,145**
Douglas Laing’s The Gauldrons Campbeltown	46.2%	**¥2,087**
Douglas Laing’s The Gauldrons Campbeltown Limited Edition Finished in Sherry Casks	50%	**¥2,087**
Douglas Laing’s Scallywag 10y Speyside, 100% Sherry Cask Matured	46%	**¥2,087**
The Mime 9y, Lowland by Whisk-e	67.6%	**¥2,145**
Scarabus Islay	46%	**¥1,925**
Compass Box The Story of The Spaniard	43%	**¥2,087**
Compass Box The Spice Tree	46%	**¥2,087**
Chivas Regal Crystal Gold Spirit Drink	40%	**¥1,705**
Chivas Regal Mizunara 12y Special Edition	40%	**¥1,815**
Chivas Regal Takumi Reserve 12y Spirit Drink	40%	**¥1,925**
Chivas Regal 12y Old	43%	**¥2,035**
Chivas Regal 12y	40%	**¥1,485**
The Deacon	40%	**¥1,274**

目次

Single Malt Scotch

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Bruichladdich The Classic Laddie	50%	¥1,705
Bruichladdich Islay Barley 2013	50%	¥1,925
Bruichladdich Micro-Provenance Single Cask #0884	60.2%	¥2,695
Lagavulin 8y	48%	¥1,925
Lagavulin 16y	43%	¥1,958
Bowmore 15y Golden & Elegant	43%	¥1,925
Bowmore 21y Seagull Label	43%	¥4,947
Laphroaig 10y	40%	¥1,815
Ardbeg Ten	46%	¥1,925
Ardbeg Smoketrails Côte Rôtie Edition	46%	¥2,090
Ardbeg Smokiverse	48.3%	¥2,805
Port Charlotte Heavily Peated 10y	50%	¥1,977
Octomore Edition 16.1	59.3%	¥3,025
Octomore Edition 14.1	59.6%	¥3,025
Octomore Edition 16.2	58.1%	¥3,278
Octomore Edition 16.3	61.6%	¥3,630
Talisker 10y	45.8%	¥1,705
Talisker x Parley Wilder Seas	48.6%	¥2,035
Talisker 8y Special Release	59.7%	¥3,187
The Six Isles Voyager	46%	¥1,815
Islay Mist The Original Peated Blend	40%	¥1,695
Elements of Islay Cask Edit	46%	¥1,815

CONTENTS

Single Malt Scotch

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Glenfiddich Our Original Twelve (12y)	40%	**¥1,705**
Glenfiddich Pure Malt Special Old Reserve, Old Bottle	43%	**¥1,815**
Glenfiddich Ancient Reserve 18y, Old Bottle	43%	**¥2,200**
Arran Signature Series Edition 3 Duero Discovery	50%	**¥2,178**
Glenmorangie The Lasanta 12y	43%	**¥1,925**
Glenmorangie The Nectar 16y	46%	**¥1,925**
Glenmorangie The Original 10y	40%	**¥1,705**
Glenmorangie Nectar D'Or, Sauternes Cask Finish	46%	**¥1,925**
Glenmorangie The Quinta Ruban 14y Port Cask Finish	46%	**¥1,925**
Glenmorangie Extremely Rare 18y	43%	**¥2,475**
Highland Park Dragon Legend	43.1%	**¥2,035**
Old Pulteney 12y	40%	**¥1,815**
The Glenlivet 14y Cognac Cask Selection	40%	**¥1,856**
The Glenlivet 18y Batch Reserve	40%	**¥2,079**
Cragganmore 12y	40%	**¥1,925**
Strathearn The Heart (Douglas Laing's New Make Spirit Drink)	63.5%	**¥2,090**
That Boutique-y Whisky Company Dufftown 10y Batch 7	47.8%	**¥2,145**

目次

Single Malt Scotch

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Glenrothes Select Reserve	43%	**¥1,815**
The Balvenie 12y DoubleWood	40%	**¥1,925**
The Macallan 12y Sherry Oak Collection	40%	**¥2,178**
Edradour 12y Caledonia Selection	46%	**¥1,925**
The Singleton of Dufftown 18y	40%	**¥2,178**
The Singleton of Dufftown 12y	40%	**¥1,925**
Celtic Revival	46%	**¥1,925**
Darkness 8y Finished in Sherry Casks	47.8%	**¥2,035**
&Girls Tobermory Distillery 24y	53.5%	**¥3,077**
&Girls A Secret Speyside Distillery 12y	63%	**¥2,475**
Royal Cabinet 20y Limited Edition	44.9%	**¥2,585**
Roseisle 14y Special Release 2023, Natural Cask Strength	55.9%	**¥2,178**
The Oceans Limited Edition 2015 10y Single Cask	59.6%	**¥2,178**
Meikle Tòir The Sherry One 5y Peated Speyside Single Malt	48%	**¥2,178**
Secret Highland Distilleries Collection 9y	52.6%	**¥2,178**
Signatory Vintage Mannochmore 2012 11y, 100 Proof Edition #13	57.1%	**¥2,365**

CONTENTS

World Gin

30 ml per glass / Tax included

The Cambridge Distillery Truffle Gin	42%	¥2,747
Ferdinand’s Saar Dry Gin	44%	¥1,925
Cotswolds Dry Gin	46%	¥1,925
Cotswolds Wildflower Gin No.1	41.7%	¥1,925
The Botanist Islay Dry Gin 22 Foraged Botanicals	46%	¥1,925
Pigskin London Dry Gin	40%	¥1,925
KOKORO GIN	42%	¥1,595
BrewDog LoneWolf Cloudy Lemon Gin	40%	¥1,925
BrewDog LoneWolf Cactus & Lime Gin	40%	¥1,925
Melifera French Gin	43%	¥1,925
Boord’s Old Tom Gold London Gin	50%	¥1,925
Dancing Sands Sauvignon Blanc Gin	37.5%	¥1,925
Dancing Sands Dry Gin	44%	¥1,925
BrewDog LoneWolf Gunpowder Proof Gin	57%	¥1,925
Bobby’s Schiedam Dry Gin	42%	¥1,925
Kingsbury Victorian Vat Gin	47%	¥1,925
Kavalan Gin	40%	¥1,925
MONKEY 47	47%	¥1,925
Le Gin de Christian Drouin Calvados Cask Finish	42%	¥1,925
Empress 1908 Gin	42.5%	¥1,925

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World Rum

30 ml per glass / Tax included

83 Islands Distillery Vanuatu Cacao Nibs Infused Rum	30%	**¥1,977**
83 Islands Distillery Select Barrels Aged Yumi Rum 2y	40%	**¥1,977**
83 Islands Distillery Touaraken Farm Vintage 2023 Overproof Pure Cane Yumi Rum	56%	**¥1,977**
eighty-three Islands Rum LOST TIMES Special Release	40%	**¥1,977**
LAODI Pure Sugarcane Rhum WHITE	42%	**¥1,977**
Neisson Profil 107 Rhum Agricole Élevé Sous Bois	52.8%	**¥1,977**
Chamarel Premium Rum Classic	42%	**¥1,977**
Bacardi Carta Blanca Superior White Rum	40%	**¥979**
Berry Bros. & Rudd Propino Jamaican Rum, Monymusk Distillery, 16y (2002)	59%	**¥1,977**
Clément Rhum Blanc Agricole Martinique	40%	**¥1,977**
SelvaRey Cacao Rum 5years	35%	**¥1,977**
Rhum Bielle Marie-Galante Rhum Agricole	59%	**¥1,977**
Ron Zacapa Centenario 23 Solera Gran Reserva	40%	**¥1,977**
Plantation Rum Single Cask Panama 2006	41.9%	**¥1,977**
Plantation Rum 3 Stars	41.2%	**¥1,375**
Captain Morgan Original Spiced Gold	35%	**¥1,375**
Diplomático Reserva Exclusiva Rum	40%	**¥1,977**
The Kraken Black Spiced Rum	47%	**¥1,595**
Revolution Spirit Marianne de Paraguay Cask Strength Pure Single Rum	54%	**¥1,977**
Rum Nation Ilha da Madeira Natural Rum Agricole Da Madeira (Release 2017)	50%	**¥1,977**
Revolution Spirit Marianne de Paraguay Spiced Rum Oak Aged	48%	**¥1,977**

CONTENTS

Tequila, Mezcal & Sotol

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Corralejo 99 000 Horas Añejo Tequila	40%	**¥1,977**
Casamigos Tequila Añejo 21040	40%	**¥1,977**
Casamigos Tequila Reposado 22040	40%	**¥1,977**
Casa Noble Tequila Reposado	40%	**¥1,857**
Gran Patrón Reposado Tequila	40%	**¥1,857**
Don Julio Tequila Reposado	38%	**¥1,857**
Cabo Wabo Tequila Reposado	40%	**¥1,857**
Alipús Mezcal Artesanal San Juan	47.5%	**¥1,857**
Mezcal Amores Cupreata (Mazatlán, Guerrero)	41%	**¥1,857**
Mezcal Amores Espadín (Oaxaca)	37%	**¥1,857**
Sotol Coyote Blanco Triunfo del Desierto (Coahuila)	48%	**¥1,925**

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Grappa, Pisco & Brandy

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Sibona Grappa Riserva in Botti da Sherry	44%	**¥1,977**
Sibona Grappa Riserva in Botti da Sauternes	44%	**¥1,977**
Sibona Grappa Riserva in Botti da Porto	44%	**¥1,977**
DARVELLE FRERES V.S.O.P.	40%	**¥1,967**
Christian Drouin Calvados Pays d’Auge Pomme Prisonnière	40%	**¥1,967**
Calvados Michel Huard 2005	40%	**¥1,967**
Boulard Calvados Pays d’Auge Grand Solage	40%	**¥1,757**
La Caravedo Pisco	41%	**¥1,967**
Demonio de los Andes Pisco Quebranta Tacama	40%	**¥1,967**
Tres Generaciones Pisco Mosto Verde Torontel	41%	**¥1,967**
Wolfberger Gastronomie Eau-De-Vie Vieille Prune	40%	**¥1,967**

CONTENTS

THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTION

World Absinthe

30 ml per glass / Tax included

Kübler Absinthe Verte Suisse 2018 Edition Millésimée	72%	**¥2,475**
Vieux Pontarlier Absinthe	65%	**¥1,977**
Absinthe Bourgeois	55%	**¥1,977**
Marienhof Absinth Spirituose	55%	**¥2,035**
Absinthe Pontarlier H. Deniset Jeune	56%	**¥1,977**
Butterfly Classic Absinthe	65%	**¥1,867**

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COINTREAU · ANGERS · CIRCA 1980

AUX QUATRE COINS DU MONDE

Across the world, to Higashi-Azabu.





Bottle-base “80” stamp / top of the cap

Perhaps it left the distillery in Saint-Barthélemy-d’ Anjou, near Angers, around 1980. The “80” stamped into the base and the barcode-free back label suggest the date. More than four decades later, this amber square bottle has found its way to our shelf in Higashi-Azabu, still holding the orange aromas of another era. The back label offers a simple invitation: *“Buvez-le sec ou sur un glaçon”* — drink it neat, or over a single ice cube. A recommendation from the past, still worth following today.

Dated	c. 1980 (base stamp “80”)
Distillery	Saint-Barthélemy-d’ Anjou
Size · ABV	0.7 L / 40% alc.
Ingredients	Sweet & bitter orange peel

NEAT OR ON THE ROCKS

Cointreau circa 1980 · 30 ml

¥2,035 incl. tax / ¥1,850

As the back label recommends: neat, or over one ice cube, letting it melt slowly.

ORANGE LIQUEUR FLIGHT

Three-way tasting · 15 ml each

¥2,088 incl. tax / ¥1,898

1 Cointreau circa 1980 — c. 1980
2 Cointreau L’ Unique — current
3 Shirahama Triple Sec — Shimoda

COINTREAU 1980 COCKTAILS ¥2,145 each (¥1,950 + tax)

2 : 1 : 1
Base 30 ml, Cointreau 1980 15 ml, citrus 15 ml. Shaken.

White Lady
Craft gin · lemon
The Savoy’ s 2:1:1, 1930

Sidecar
Brandy · lemon
A Cointreau classic

Margarita
Tequila · Tokushima lime
Half-salted rim

Balalaika
Okuhida vodka · lemon
A Japanese bar favourite

X.Y.Z.
Japanese rum · lemon
A Sidecar made with rum

Prices incl. tax; 12% service charge. One 1980 bottle only, while it lasts.

CONTENTS

Japanese & World Liqueurs

30 ml per glass / Tax included

COFFEE LIQUEURS

Kahlúa The Original Coffee Liqueur	20%	¥968
Kahlúa Matcha Coffee Liqueur	20%	¥1,045
Togouchi Coffee Liqueur	18%	¥1,925
35 Sango Liqueur AWAMORI COFFEE Sugarless	12%	¥1,925
Kumejima’s Kumesen Awamori Coffee, Caramel Flavor	12%	¥1,925
Coffee and Awamori Spirits	30%	¥1,925
Seifuku Coffee Liqueur of Awamori	12%	¥1,925
SANABURI Coffee Liqueur with Satoyama Coffee	25%	¥1,500

WORLD LIQUEURS & MORE

Campari	25%	¥968
Chartreuse Cuvée des Meilleurs Ouvriers de France Sommeliers	45%	¥1,925
Taiwanese Liquor, Ceramic Bottle		¥1,705
Pertsovka Hot Pepper Flavored Vodka	35%	¥1,705

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NON-ALCOHOLIC SPIRITS & SYRUPS

Seedlip Garden 108 Distilled Non-Alcoholic Spirits	0.00%	¥1,925
NEMA Original Botanical Water (Non-Alcoholic)	0.00%	¥1,925
GINNIE CORDIAL Sudachi / Hinoki (Non-Alcoholic)	0.00%	¥1,705
GINNIE CORDIAL Sobacha / Vanilla (Non-Alcoholic)	0.00%	¥1,705
GINNIE CORDIAL Shiso / Cardamom (Non-Alcoholic)	0.00%	¥1,705

DRINK ADDITIONS / PER SERVING

Kami no Tsukai Raw Honey from Okayama	¥429
Santa Maria Cane Syrup	¥429
Kitao Kuromitsu Brown Sugar Syrup	¥429
Shinshu Honey	¥429

Non-alcoholic drinks and additions are priced per serving.

Sparkling Wine

VIN MOUSSEUX · Ice-cold, fine and fresh.

YOSHI Chardonnay Brut

200 ml ¥2,398

JAPAN / TAKAHATA, YAMAGATA / CHARDONNAY / DRY

Bright citrus and white-flower aromas. Fine bubbles and savoury acidity make this a refreshing sparkling wine.

Anna de Codorníu Blanc de Blancs Brut Reserva

750 ml ¥6,980

SPAIN / CAVA / BRUT RESERVA

A dry Blanc de Blancs sparkling wine made from white grapes, with fine bubbles, pure fruit and crisp, pleasing acidity.

KIZAN SPARKLING TRADITIONAL BRUT

750 ml ¥9,889

JAPAN / YAMANASHI / 100% KOSHU / 11.5%

Fresh Koshu fruit meets toast from secondary fermentation in the bottle. Rich in flavour, with a clean, refreshing finish.

CONTENTS

White Wine

VIN BLANC · Chilled, light and bright.

Nigori Koshu — 750 ml ¥3,980

JAPAN / YAMANASHI / KOSHU / OFF-DRY

Fresh Koshu acidity and gentle sweetness. A softly rounded, cloudy wine with generous fruit character.

Izutsu White — 750 ml ¥3,980

JAPAN / SHIOJIRI, NAGANO / WHITE WINE / MEDIUM-DRY

Gentle fruit aromas and refreshing acidity, with a clean palate that pairs naturally with Japanese food.

目次

Sol Mar White Wine — 750 ml ¥3,980

CHILE / WHITE WINE / DRY

Refreshing citrus aromas, lively acidity and a clean finish make this an approachable white.

Château Galochet Bordeaux 2023 — 750 ml ¥3,980

FRANCE / BORDEAUX / WHITE WINE / DRY

Fresh herbal aromas, lively acidity and bright fruit flavours in a crisp, dry Bordeaux white.

Combe Grasse Viognier-Grenache — 750 ml ¥5,980

FRANCE / VIOGNIER & GRENACHE / DRY

Inviting aromas of white peach, apricot and white flowers. A southern French white with rounded fruit flavours.

White Wine

VIN BLANC · Chilled, light and bright.

L’Autantique Chardonnay

750 ml ¥5,980

FRANCE / LANGUEDOC / CHARDONNAY / DRY

Ripe apple, pear and a hint of vanilla, with generous fruit and a smooth finish.

Le Belle Vigne Vino Bianco

750 ml ¥5,980

ITALY / WHITE WINE / DRY

Fresh fruit and a clean palate. A light, easy-drinking white that pairs with a wide range of dishes.

Lespoli Macabeo

750 ml ¥5,980

SPAIN / MACABEO / DRY

Refreshing apple, pear and citrus aromas, with light acidity and a cooling freshness.

Minka Reserva Sauvignon Blanc 2024

750 ml ¥5,980

CHILE / SAUVIGNON BLANC / DRY

Fresh lime and grapefruit aromas, with pleasantly lively acidity.

MANA Sauvignon Blanc 2023

750 ml ¥6,980

NEW ZEALAND / SAUVIGNON BLANC / DRY

Grapefruit, tropical fruit and herbs, with vivid acidity and an invigorating freshness.

Kikuka Chardonnay

750 ml ¥9,980

JAPAN / CHARDONNAY / DRY

White peach, apple, orange blossom, lemon and other fresh citrus notes harmonise with oak-derived richness and complexity.

CONTENTS

Red Wine

VIN ROUGE · Slow, deep and warm.

Moncaro Sangiovese Marche 750 ml ¥4,980

ITALY / MARCHE / SANGIOVESE / MEDIUM-BODIED

Cherry and red-fruit aromas with gentle tannins. An approachable, food-friendly red.

Conte di Campiano Appassimento 750 ml ¥5,980

ITALY / APPASSIMENTO METHOD / FULL-BODIED

Intense aromas of ripe dark fruit and dried fruit, with concentration and rounded richness.

目次

El Castro de Valtuille Mencía Joven 2021 750 ml ¥5,980

SPAIN / BIERZO / MENCIA / RED

A wine that quietly charms through aroma and finish rather than sheer weight. This elegant Spanish red also suits lovers of Pinot Noir or Gamay.

ROUGE

Red Wine

VIN ROUGE · Slow, deep and warm.

Domaine de Moulines Cabernet Sauvignon Non Filtré 2019

750 ml ¥7,500

FRANCE / 100% CABERNET SAUVIGNON / UNFILTERED

Cabernet Sauvignon ripened in the southern French sun, harvested at full maturity and bottled unfiltered. Ripe cassis and blueberry meet cinnamon and clove. Dry fruit flavours, smooth tannins and pleasing acidity combine harmoniously.

Passione Natura Axioma Montepulciano 2021

750 ml ¥8,980

ITALY / ABRUZZO / MONTEPULCIANO / MEDIUM-BODIED

Generous raspberry and plum fruit. Smooth tannins and beautiful acidity come together in a naturally expressive red.

Château de Lussac 2006

750 ml ¥14,000

FRANCE / 80% MERLOT / 20% CABERNET FRANC

This historic Saint-Emilion estate on Bordeaux's Right Bank has its wines made by a team led by renowned winemaking consultant Michel Rolland. It draws out the richness and smoothness of Merlot (80%). The 2006 vintage offers complex, refined aromas of ripe dried fruit, cigar, leather and cinnamon. Long ageing has polished the tannins to silk, with a deep, serene finish: a remarkable wine now at its peak.

CONTENTS

Red Wine

VIN ROUGE · Slow, deep and warm.

Château Branaire-Ducru 1997 750 ml ¥29,800

FRANCE / SAINT-JULIEN / BORDEAUX BLEND / FULL-BODIED

Mature dark fruit with complex notes of cedar and cigar. A poised, deep and distinguished classified-growth Bordeaux.

CHATEAU BATAILLEY 1986 750 ml ¥49,800

FRANCE / CABERNET SAUVIGNON-LED BLEND, MERLOT, CABERNET FRANC & PETIT VERDOT

1986 was a great Médoc vintage, with perfectly ripe Cabernet Sauvignon and iron-like tannins. Forty years have gently softened its armour: a Pauillac that speaks through quiet depth rather than exuberance. Its vineyard lies beside Les Forts de Latour. This fifth-growth Médoc chateau has over 450 years of history and ties to Napoleon III.

Château Certan Pomerol 2010 375 ml ¥69,880

FRANCE / POMEROL / MERLOT-LED BLEND / FULL-BODIED

Aromas of ripe dark fruit and cacao, with concentrated fruit flavours and smooth tannins.

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Non-Alcoholic Drinks

Per glass / Tax included

GINNIE Non-Alcoholic Gin	0%	¥1,207
Umenoyado Shuzo Aragoshi Yuzu, Non-Alcoholic	0%	¥1,207
Iyoshi Cola	0%	¥1,207
Open Book Lemonade Syrup	0%	¥1,207
Plust Kumi Tonic Water, Plain	0%	¥877
Delicious from Hokkaido Hakko Ginger Original Ginger	0%	¥877
Fever-Tree Elderflower Tonic Water	0%	¥605
Fever-Tree Mediterranean Tonic Water	0%	¥605
Fever-Tree Premium Indian Tonic Water	0%	¥605
A2 Milk		¥437
Hikichado Matcha Latte with A2 Milk		¥2,035
Café au Lait with A2 Milk		¥1,375
Caffè Latte with A2 Milk		¥1,275
Sencha Green Tea		¥715
Usucha, Lightly Whisked Green Tea		¥1,705

CONTENTS

About A2 Milk

We use A2 milk at our bar

> Casein is about 80% of milk protein
> A1 / Position 67: histidine
> A2 / Position 67: proline
> Ordinary milk: A1A1, A1A2 & A2A2 cows
> A2 milk: collected only from A2A2 cows

What is A2 milk?

Casein accounts for about 80% of milk protein. One type is beta-casein, which has 2 principal genetic variants: A1 and A2.

A2 milk comes from cows carrying only the A2 variant, so 100% of its beta-casein is A2. Early cattle are believed to have produced only A2 milk. A mutation during domestication is thought to have introduced A1, now common in European-derived dairy breeds.

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Why is it described as gentler?

Discomfort after drinking milk is mainly associated with lactose intolerance, but research has also examined the role of A1 protein digestion.

A1: Digestion can readily release BCM-7, a substance suggested to contribute to intestinal inflammation and discomfort, including rumbling and loose stools.

A2: Its structure is closer to that found in human breast milk and goat's milk, and little BCM-7 is released during digestion. Many people who find ordinary milk uncomfortable say they can drink A2 milk. Its chief feature is a gentler digestive experience.

Hikicha



Meet Hikichado

Hikichado specialises in finely milled Japanese tea, carrying tradition into new ways of enjoying it. We grind whole, single-origin leaves grown with care by tea artisans across Japan.

Only first-flush tea from one cultivar and one farm: leaves so rare that their growers may be astonished to see them ground into powder. As with speciality coffee, discover the craft, individual character and terroir of each origin.

There is more to Japanese tea than matcha

Matcha may be the first Japanese tea that comes to mind. Loved worldwide, it needs no teapot and works beautifully in lattes and sweets. As a whole-leaf superfood offering all the leaf's nutrients, it remains popular even at a high price.

Yet matcha is only one part of Japanese tea: specifically, powdered tencha. Japan also makes sencha, pan-fired kamairicha, withered tea and many other styles, each with its own personality.

As attention has centred on matcha, growers of sencha and other teas have declined, putting that diversity at risk. Tea powders made from leaves other than tencha are often treated as merely cheap tea. Very low-grade leaves used in dispensers and conveyor-belt sushi restaurants have helped create an image of powder as cheap and poor quality.

A new chapter for Japanese tea

Our idea is to mill Japan's characterful teas so they can be enjoyed as freely as matcha. Neither matcha nor ordinary powdered tea, we call this hikicha: simply, tea that has been ground. By opening up new ways to enjoy these leaves, we hope to protect the diversity of tea culture.

Our wish is for Japanese tea to thrive again as a rich, varied tradition to be proud of. The story begins with a single cup of hikicha.

Hikicha Drinks

Per serving / Tax included



Japanese Old Fashioned

Saemidori withered, pan-fired tea from Ijuin, Kagoshima; kuromitsu brown sugar syrup and Japanese whisky.

¥2,805

Hikicha Gin & Tonic

¥2,178~



Saemidori Hikicha Latte

Non-Alcoholic

¥2,035

Saemidori Usucha

Non-Alcoholic

¥1,705

目次

Made with Saemidori tea from Satsuma, Kagoshima. All drinks are served by the glass. Tax included.

FOOD

Bar Snacks

Per serving / Tax included



Mixed Nuts ¥660



Dried Sweet Potato ¥990



Dried Fermented Soybeans (Natto) ¥660



Chocolate ¥880



Pickled Ume Plum with Kombu Broth ¥265



Raw Nagoya Cochin Egg for Rice ¥330



Nori Seaweed Simmered in Soy Sauce ¥198



Salt-Fermented Shrimp with Rice Koji ¥968



Mentaiko, Spicy Pollock Roe ¥528



Shijimi Clam Miso Soup ¥330

CONTENTS

Fresh Rice from a High-Heat Gas Kettle

150 g ¥1,650 / 10 g ¥110 / 200 g ¥2,200 / Tax included





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Nanakai no Sato Koshihikari An exceptional rice brand with numerous gold awards at competitions including the Best Rice in Japan contest.

City gas 13A is methane-based underground natural gas. Propane is LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas). Beyond the supply system, their differences have a clear effect on cooking, particularly the way rice cooks.

1 / Different heat values

Heat values per 1 m³ are approximately 45 MJ (10,750 kcal) for city gas and 99 MJ (24,000 kcal) for propane. Propane carries about 2.2 times as much energy in the same volume: a fundamental difference in heat density.

2 / Bringing each grain to life

The keys to well-cooked rice are a rapid rise to boiling and vigorous convection. Propane's high energy heats the bottom of the kettle quickly, creating strong thermal currents that keep each grain moving as though it is dancing.

Please allow approximately 40 minutes after ordering.

Ozaki Beef from Miyazaki

Sirloin Steak Plate ¥5,578 / Tax included / Rice extra





Enjoy with award-winning, freshly cooked rice, ordered separately. Accompaniments include natural salt, salted fresh peppercorns, white soy sauce, wasabi, Japanese grated-daikon steak sauce and kombu-dashi umeboshi.

Please order your preferred portion of rice separately.

1. Savour the exceptional rice, then try the kombu-dashi umeboshi.
2. Taste the ultimate wagyu, Miyazaki Ozaki sirloin, with salt.
3. Try the sirloin with unpasteurised soy sauce and wasabi.
4. Add the steak sauce.
5. Add salted fresh peppercorns.
6. Enjoy it together with the rice.
7. OTR: place the steak on the rice.
8. Explore a pairing with your drink.
9. Add a raw egg (¥330, tax included).
10. Enjoy the richness of Japanese food culture.

Ozaki Beef, the ultimate wagyu, is raised in Miyazaki by master producer Muneharu Ozaki. It is a rare wagyu permitted to bear its producer’s own name.

The cattle receive a farm-blended diet of 13 plant-based ingredients with no animal protein, including brewer’s grains, yeast, soybean meal, roasted soy flour, barley, corn and wheat bran. The resulting fat is clean and light, without a lingering heaviness. The lean meat holds wagyu’s rich umami: qualities that inspire leading chefs around the world to seek out Ozaki Beef by name.

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The Story of Ozaki Beef



Ozaki beef sirloin steak plate



Good water, fresh air and a farm-blended diet.

Ozaki Beef comes only from cattle raised from calfhood on the farm run by Beef Merchant Ozaki in Miyazaki. It is described as the world’s only beef brand marketed under the cattle producer’s own name.

Ozaki studied advanced beef-production techniques at an American operation with 17,000 cattle. There, the emphasis was on fattening quickly and shipping early: beef production on an industrial scale.

On the flight home, he decided to make beef he would want to eat himself, and feel happy serving to family and friends. He soon took over his father’s farm, beginning with around 100 cattle.

Through repeated trials of different feed blends and constant tasting, he gradually achieved a flavour of fat he could be proud of. The herd reached 1,000 cattle, and the beef was selected for Japan Airlines’ first-class Western menu on the Paris-to-Haneda route.

”First, I make beef I want to eat. Then for my family, our staff and friends, and finally for our customers. If I am not moved by what I make, I cannot move anyone else.”

His goal is beef you will want to eat again the next day. Its fat is light rather than cloying; even when used for shabu-shabu, it produces no scum. Developed over 35 years since his father’s generation, this is beef he hopes people will enjoy on happy occasions.

The farm prizes good water, fresh air and its surroundings, including good airflow. Its own feed blend uses no antibiotics, preservatives or meat-and-bone meal. Even the sirloin has a clean, restrained richness and a deep flavour of beef.

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Niigata Whisky Eel

Shirayaki Plate ¥4,478 / Tax included / Rice extra



These eels are carefully raised using malt residue from whisky production in their feed. The flesh is plump and tender, with refined richness. Enjoy the eel’s natural flavour as shirayaki, grilled without sauce, or add kabayaki sauce for a savoury finish.

Please order your preferred portion of rice separately.

Served with salt, sansho salt, wasabi, unpasteurised soy sauce, house-made eel sauce, salted kombu, freshly ground sansho and kombu-dashi umeboshi. A raw Nagoya Cochin egg can be added for ¥330, tax included.

1. Taste the freshly cooked rice.
2. Try the shirayaki whisky eel with salt.
3. Add unpasteurised soy sauce and wasabi.
4. Dress the eel with sauce.
5. Add both sauce and sansho.
6. Enjoy it together with the rice.
7. Add a Nagoya Cochin raw egg (¥330, tax included).
8. Pair it with whisky from Niigata Kameda Distillery.
9. Discover a taste of Japan that feels both familiar and new.

Enjoy 9 or more ways to change the flavour in one serving.

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Niigata, in a Glass and on a Plate

Niigata Kameda Distillery × Niigata Whisky Eel



KAMEOW GIN

“Love again...”

Niigata-grown Le Lectier pear / 42%

30 ml ¥1,815 tax included

From Niigata Kameda Distillery, home of Ohtani whisky. Fragrant Le Lectier pear and gentle fruit notes: begin with a gin and soda.

Even eel is among the botanicals.
Juniper, rose, citrus, Koshihikari rice - and eel. A playful expression of Niigata, right down to the ingredients.

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Shirayaki eel, with a gin and soda.



The eel is raised on feed made with malt residue from whisky production. A bite of shirayaki with salt or wasabi, then a sip of gin and soda: a pairing lifted by pear aromas.



Whisky Today

Reading at the Counter

A 2026 view of whisky through the numbers from around the world and Japan.

A small companion to enjoy over a glass.
Six questions, and the stories beyond the figures.
Feature: 80 years of Japan and whisky, in numbers.

BAR 2102
2F Sekiguchi Building, 2-10-2 Higashiazabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo

November 2026 / Sources on page 444

Cover photo: Dktue / CC0 / Wikimedia Commons

Introduction

Where did the amber in your glass come from, and where is it going now?

Around the world, more than 200 bottles of whisky are opened every second. Roughly half of all whisky is drunk in India; 1.3 billion bottles leave Scotland by sea each year; and spirits from Japanese distilleries travel abroad at prices never seen before.

This booklet brings together figures available as of October 2026 from national industry bodies and official statistics, arranged around six questions. The fourth, on how much whisky Japan drinks, has grown into an eleven-page feature on eighty years of volumes and taxes. Take your time, and enjoy it over a glass.

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Q02 How many bottles are opened every second? › p.429
Q03 Which countries buy Scotch whisky? › p.430
Q04 How much whisky do people in Japan drink? (11-page feature) › p.431–441
Q05 How much Japanese whisky is sold overseas? › p.442
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Small numbers, big conversations / Sources › p.444
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Figures reflect information published by October 2026. Where official totals are unavailable, figures are marked as estimates. One case = 9 litres, or about 13 bottles of 700 ml.

Q 01

Which country makes the world's best-selling whisky?

A. India. In fact, it holds all three top places.

The world's best-selling whisky in 2025 was Royal Stag: 32.6 million cases a year, equivalent to about 420 million 700 ml bottles, or roughly 1.15 million bottles opened each day. McDowell's in second place and Officer's Choice in third are also Indian brands. Johnnie Walker, often the first name that comes to mind, shares fourth place with Imperial Blue.

Many Indian whiskies blend in spirits made from molasses and cannot be called 'whisky' under the EU definition. Yet the amount drunk each day in a country of 1.4 billion people is overwhelming: India consumes roughly half the world's whisky.



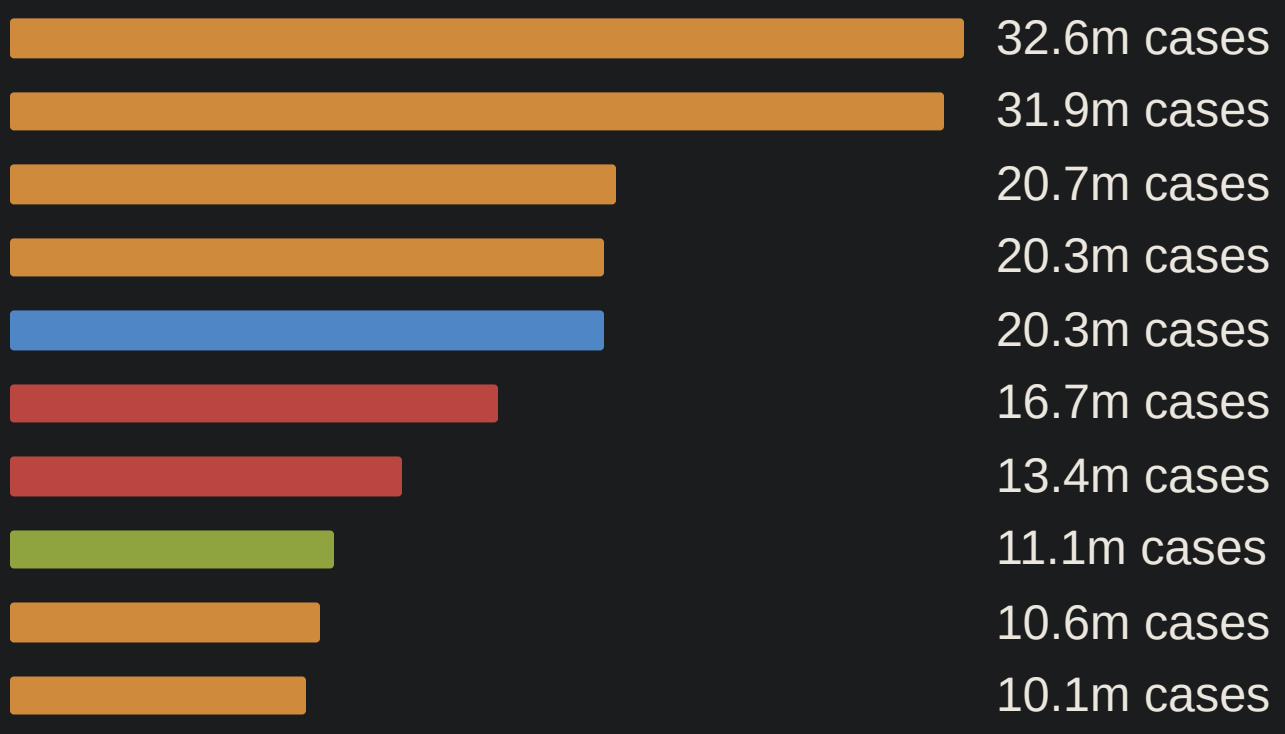
McDowell's No.1, one of the world's best-selling whisky brands



A liquor shop in Shimla, India: whisky shops are known locally as "wine shops"

World's top 10 whisky brands by sales volume (2025)

One case = 9 litres. Origin: amber = India; blue = Scotland; red = US; green = Ireland.



A SIP OF CONTEXT

Japan is represented by Suntory Kakubin in 17th place (4 million cases), with Torys at 2.5 million cases. Both figures reflect the popularity of highballs.

Source: The Spirits Business, The Brand Champions 2026 (shipments in calendar year 2025).

Photos: Indian brands: Gargarapalvin / CC BY 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Liquor shop, India: paul-simpson.org / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

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Q 02

How many bottles of whisky are opened every second?

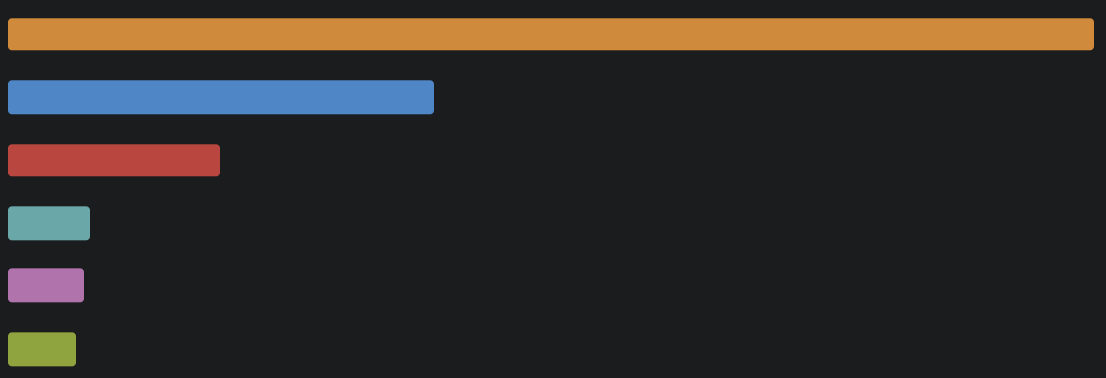
A. About 216. That is 6.8 billion bottles a year.

Adding up statistics from individual countries gives approximately 530 million cases of whisky consumed worldwide each year: about 6.8 billion 700 ml bottles, or a little less than one bottle per person on Earth. Divide that by the number of seconds in a year and you get 216 bottles a second. By the time you finish this sentence, roughly 1,000 bottles will have been opened somewhere in the world.

By origin, Indian whisky makes up about half, followed by Scotch at roughly one-fifth and American whisky, including bourbon and Tennessee whiskey, at about one-tenth. Canada, Japan and Ireland follow at 16–20 million cases each. Looking at the countries that drink whisky, Japan ranks third after India and the US. It is one of the world's fore-most whisky-loving nations.

World whisky sales volume by origin (2025)

Industry figures. Scotch: exports only, excluding UK consumption. Irish: 2024. Canadian and Japanese: estimates. The six origins total about 480m cases.



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Scotland: Glenfiddich still house



US: Buffalo Trace rickhouse, Kentucky



Canada: Crown Royal's Gimli distillery, Manitoba



Japan: Kirin Fuji Gotemba Distillery



N. Ireland: Old Bushmills Distillery (Irish whiskey)

Whisky-drinking countries / annual

US: DISCUS 2025 supplier data, all whisky categories. Japan: converted from NTA FY2024 sales of 204,928 kL. Ranks 4 and 5 are estimates.

1 India	**~260m cases**
2 US	**~60m cases**
3 Japan	**22.77m cases**
4 France (est.)	**13-14m cases**
5 UK (est.)	**8-10m cases**

A SIP OF CONTEXT

There is no official "world total". The approximately 530 million cases in this booklet is an estimate assembled from public figures issued by industry bodies and governments, including IWSR (India), DISCUS (US) and Japan's National Tax Agency.

Source: IWSR; Scotch Whisky Association; DISCUS; Euromonitor; Irish Whiskey Association; National Tax Agency. World total: this booklet's estimate.

Photos: Scotland: Oyoyoy / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons Kentucky: Jaimin Trivedi / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Canada: Christopher F. Orr / Public domain / Wikimedia Commons Japan: Keeezawa / CC0 / Wikimedia Commons Ireland: Supermac1961 / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Q 03

Which countries buy Scotch whisky?

A. India by volume; the US by value. The price per bottle differs sixfold between them.

1.34bn
2025 exports
700 ml bottles

~¥1tn
Export value
£5.36bn / £1 = ¥199

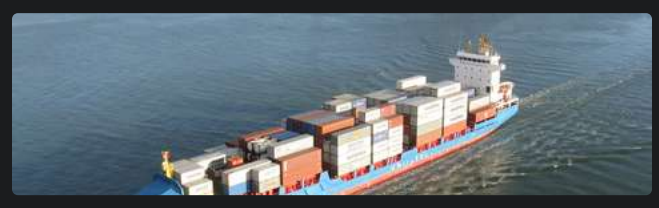
43/sec
Leaving the UK
Bottles per second



Bruichladdich's warehouse on Islay: casks that will one day cross the sea



Cadenhead's, the old independent bottler on Edinburgh's Royal Mile. The UK is the largest whisky exporter by volume and value



A container ship on the Firth of Forth, Scotland: 43 bottles of Scotch leave the UK every second

In 2025, Scotland exported 1.34 billion bottles of Scotch, worth £5.36 billion, or roughly ¥1 trillion. That works out at 43 bottles leaving the UK every second.

India bought the most by volume: 220 million bottles. But the US ranked first by value, with an average of £7.78, or about ¥1,550, per bottle. For India it was £1.30, or about ¥260. Long-aged bottles and expensive single malts head to the US; bulk spirit for local blending and affordable blends go to India. The price difference reflects different ways of drinking.

Japan ranked sixth by volume, at 54 million bottles. That was 27% below the previous year, yet still equivalent to 1.7 bottles every second.

Top 10 Scotch export markets

2025 volume, 700 ml bottles. Japan in amber.

India	220m	Japan	54m
France	152m	Spain	54m
US	120m	Türkiye	53m
Germany	59m	Poland	43m
Brazil	54m	China	34m

Average export price per bottle (2025)

Export value ÷ bottles. £1 = ¥199.

US	£7.78 / ~¥1,550
World	£4.00 / ~¥800
France	£2.66 / ~¥530
India	£1.30 / ~¥260

A SIP OF CONTEXT

Bottled blends account for six-tenths of Scotch export value and single malts for three-tenths. Single malt has a greater presence in value than in volume.

Source: Scotch Whisky Association, 2025 Export Figures (published February 2026; revised March).

Photos: Warehouse: sebastian.b. / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons Whisky shop: morebyless / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons Container ship: M J Richardson / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

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Q 04

How much whisky do people in Japan drink?

A. About 2.8 bottles per adult a year. In 1983 it was 6.5.



A bottle-keep shelf. Today it holds shochu; in a Showa-era bar or snack, special-grade “Old” lined these shelves

6.5 bottles
FY1983, the peak year
381k kL ÷ 84 million adults

1.0 bottle
FY2007, the low
74k kL ÷ 103.6 million adults

2.8 bottles
FY2024 (sales)
205k kL ÷ 104.5 million adults

Japan sold 204,928 kilolitres of whisky in FY2024 (NTA sales volume): about 290 million 700 ml bottles, or 2.8 bottles for every person aged 20 and over. Yet that is less than half the figure for 1983, the peak year. This feature follows, in charts and photographs, how much whisky Japan has drunk over the eighty post-war years, the “special, first and second grade” system that set its prices, and the taxes behind it.

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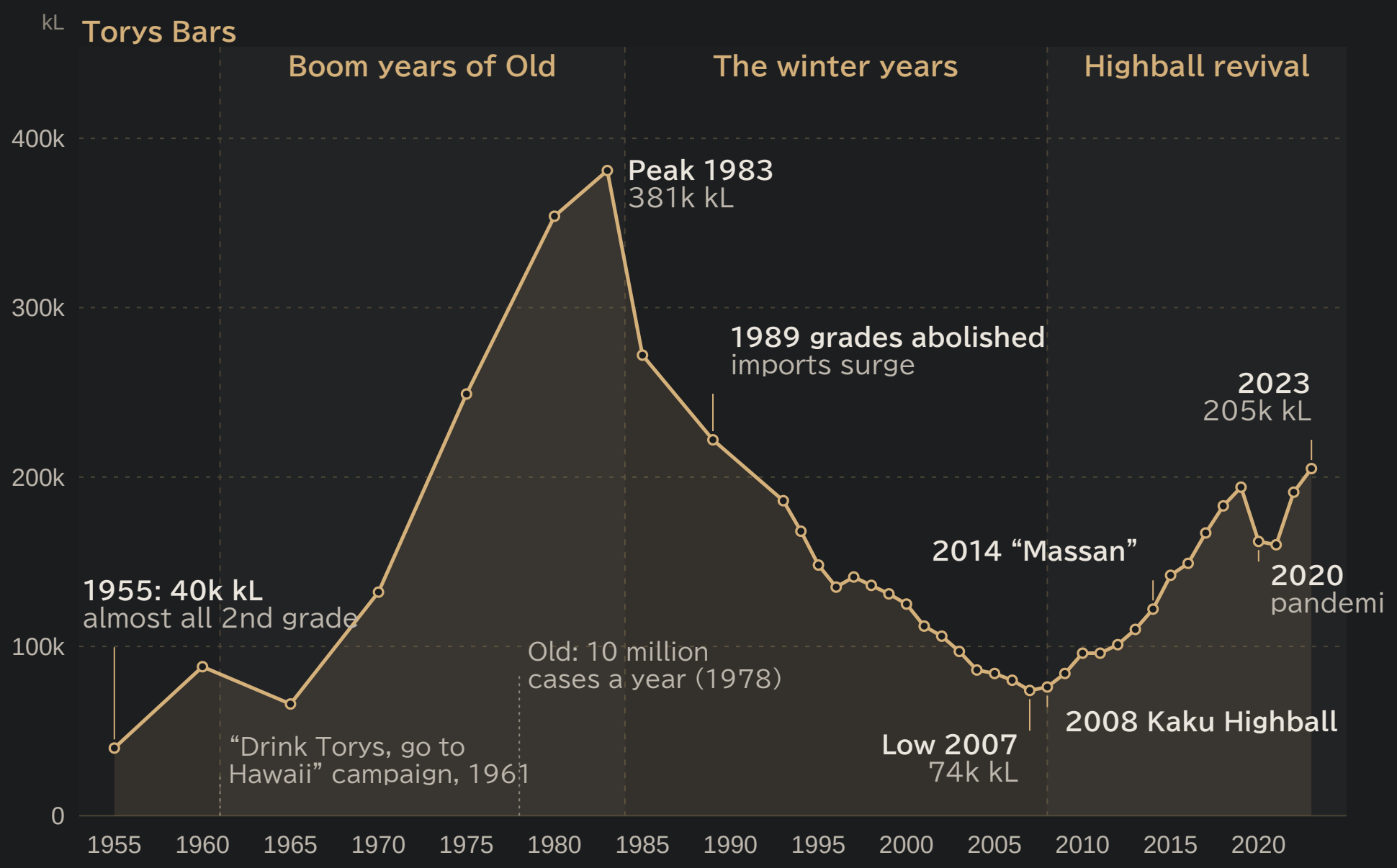
10 Timeline
Eighty years of whisky and tax
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Tap a chapter to jump. Sources are given on each page and on page 442.

Photos: Bottle keep: Nesnad / CC BY 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

How much whisky Japan has drunk since the war

Taxed volume, 1955–2023: one mountain, one valley, and a second climb.



NTA and others, taxed volume by fiscal year

1950s–1961
Torys Bar years
Second-grade Torys was the salaryman’s first taste of Western spirits

1961–1983
The age of Old
High growth, mizuwari and bottle keep. 381k kL in 1983

1984–2008
The winter years
Shochu boom, grades abolished, a long slide. 74k kL in 2007

2008–
Highball revival
Kaku Highball, “Massan”, world acclaim. 205k kL in 2023

In the mid-1950s Japan drank only 40,000 kilolitres of whisky a year. Cheap second-grade whisky with a trace of real spirit led the way, and Torys Bars spread through the salaryman districts. Volume grew with the economy from the mid-1960s to 381,000 kilolitres in 1983: nearly ten times in thirty years.

Then came the shochu boom, the end of the grades and a long recession, and by 2007 volume had fallen to 74,000 kilolitres, one-fifth of the peak. The Kaku Highball lit the fuse in 2008, the 2014 television drama “Massan” and worldwide acclaim followed, and 2023 reached 205,000 kilolitres, a level last seen some thirty years earlier.

Sources: National Tax Agency, Sake no Shiori, taxed volume by fiscal year (domestic + customs); 1955–65 from the National Tax College tax-history archive (“whisky class”, including brandy). The 1983 peak as reported by WANDS magazine.

Bottles per adult: 1.1, then 6.5, now 2.8



Taxed volume ÷ population aged 20+, in 700 ml bottles (FY2024: sales volume)

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Torys Extra (a 2010–2015 bottling; today a single “Torys Whisky” remains). Torys itself dates from 1946; from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s a 640 ml bottle retailed in the ¥300s



Whisky with a meal. Suntory’s 1970s “two chopsticks” campaign made whisky a drink to have with food

In 1955 each adult drank about one 700 ml bottle of whisky a year, mostly cheap Torys served as a highball in a Torys Bar. After the “Drink Torys, go to Hawaii” campaign of 1961, the figure reached 1.5 bottles in 1965, and by 1975, when mizuwari and bottle keep had taken hold, 4.6.

At the 1983 peak it was 6.5 bottles: every adult in Japan emptying a bottle every two months. The slide that followed was long, and by 2007 the figure was back to exactly one. Today’s 2.8 bottles match the level of around 1970, at the end of the high-growth years.

A SIP OF CONTEXT

Bottles = taxed volume (sales volume for FY2024) ÷ population aged 20 and over, so the average includes people who never drink. Suntory Old alone shipped 12.4 million cases in 1980, more than half of all the whisky Japan drinks today (about 22.8 million cases).

Sources: NTA Sake no Shiori; Statistics Bureau census (population aged 20+, 1955/1965/1975; 1983 and 2007 interpolated between censuses) and population estimates (2024); Retail Price Survey (Tokyo wards, whisky 640 ml); nippon.com (Old shipments)

Photos: Torys: Ninosan / CC0 / Wikimedia Commons Whisky with a meal: nakashi from Chofu, Tokyo, JAPAN / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

What were “special, first and second grade”?

From 1943 to 1989, every Japanese whisky carried a grade set by the state.



Special grade

Old, Reserve, Super Nikka, imported Scotch

Rule (from 1978) ≥27% whisky spirit, ≥43% ABV
Tax ¥1,595 per 760 ml (1987)
Price ¥3,170 (example), half of it tax



First grade

Kakubin, Black Nikka

Rule (from 1978) ≥17% whisky spirit, ≥40% ABV
Tax ¥728 per 720 ml
Price ¥1,620, 45% tax



Second grade

Torys, Red, Hi Nikka

Rule (from 1978) ≥10% whisky spirit, no ABV floor (37% typical)
Tax ¥190 per 640 ml
Price ¥670, 28% tax

1978 standard: share of the alcohol that comes from whisky spirit



Special
≥27%, ≥43% ABV

1st grade
≥17%, ≥40% ABV

2nd grade
≥10%, no ABV floor

From 1989: whisky
≥10% from whisky spirit

gold = whisky spirit, grey = neutral spirit, water

In 1943, in the middle of the war, an amendment to the Liquor Tax Act divided whisky into grades according to how much genuine whisky spirit it contained. This “whisky-spirit content” remained the backbone of the system. The grades were renamed special, first and second in 1953, and the 1962 amendment set the tests at 20% whisky spirit and 43% ABV for special grade, 10% and 40% for first.

Each grade carried its own tax rate and its own price. Second grade, with little real spirit, was cheap and everyday; special grade, with the most, was expensive, a gift or a drink for special occasions. The state, in effect, ranked whisky. The system lasted forty-six years, until April 1989.

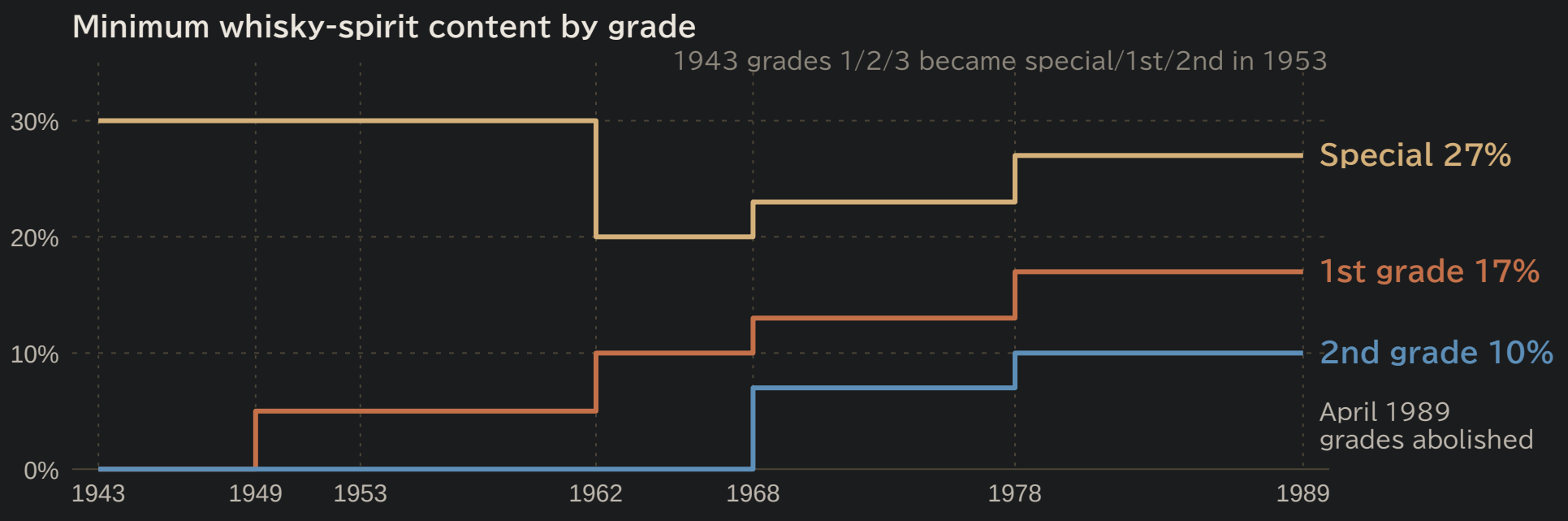
Grades and tax, seen from shochu →

JAPANESE WHISKY HISTORY →

Sources: Liquor Tax Act and enforcement order (1962 and 1978 amendments); GATT panel report L/6216 (1987 taxes and prices). Brands shown as graded at the time.

Photos: Old: Melanie M / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons Kakubin: Akonnchiroll / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Red: Kentin / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

How much was real whisky? The spirit-content rules





Issho-bin, 1.8-litre bottles. These hold sake, but second-grade whisky also came this way, a fixture of country liquor shops and diners

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Whisky-spirit content is the share of the alcohol in the bottle that comes from genuine whisky: distilled from malt or grain and aged in casks. The rest was neutral spirit from a continuous still, water, flavourings and colouring.

The 1943 rules set 30% for first grade (later special). The 1962 amendment fixed special at 20% and first at 10% (with strength floors of 43% and 40% ABV); the floors then rose twice, to 23/13/7% in 1968 and 27/17/10% in 1978. Even a special-grade whisky, in other words, could legally be more than 70% something other than whisky.

Since the grades ended in 1989, anything with at least 10% of its alcohol from whisky spirit may be called whisky, and that definition still stands in the Liquor Tax Act. The industry's 2021 "Japanese whisky" standard drew a much stricter voluntary line on top of this lenient law.

A SIP OF CONTEXT

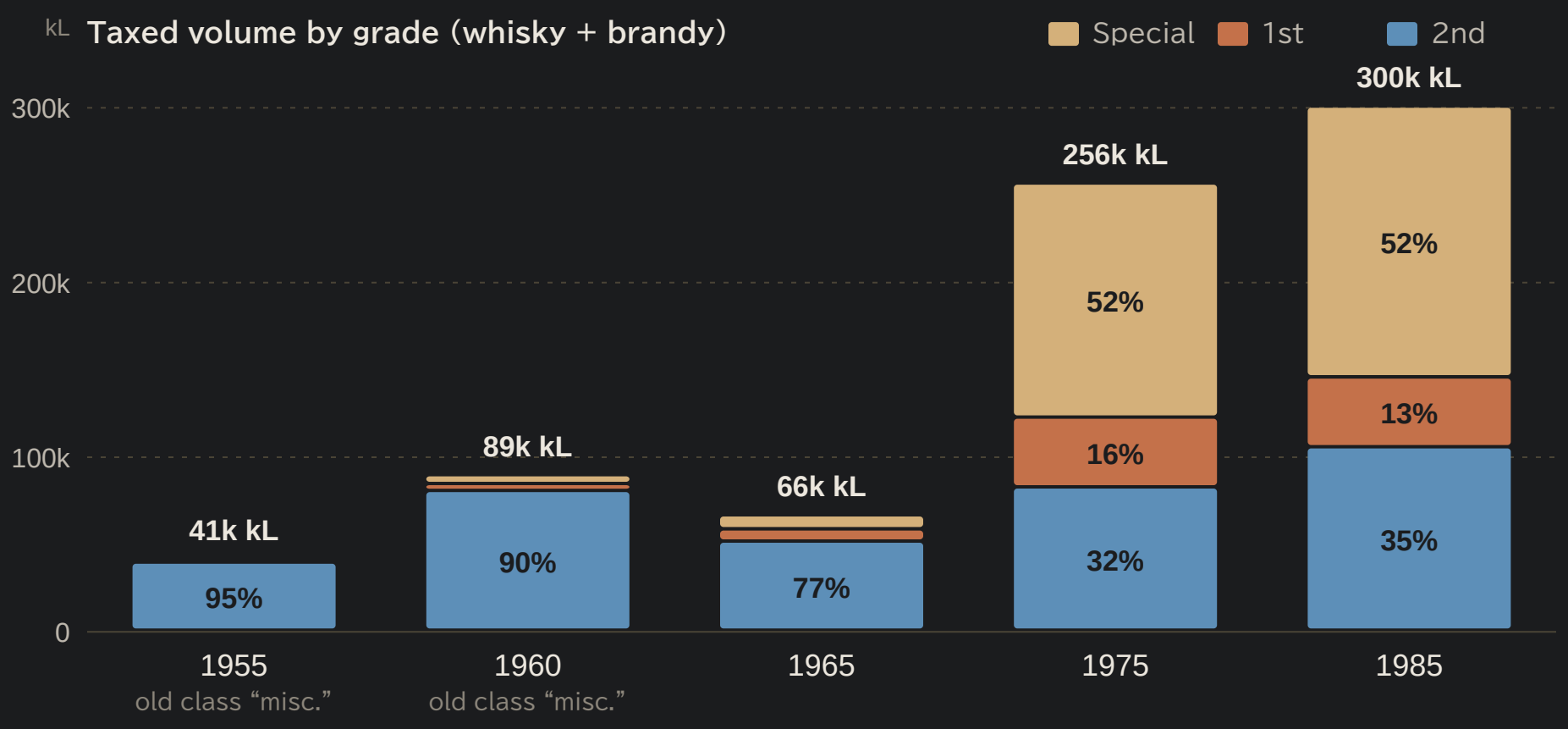
The issho-bin was the emblem of second grade. The tax on one 1.8-litre bottle at 37% ABV went from about ¥530 to about ¥1,640 when the grades ended in 1989: three times as much.

The "Japanese whisky" standard →

Sources: Liquor Tax Act and its enforcement order (1962, 1968, 1978 amendments); Whisky Connoisseur textbook; Whisky Rising (S. Van Eycken); tax per bottle computed from the rates of each year

Photos: Issho-bin: koutalou / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

From the age of second grade to the age of special





A street stall in Asakusa, 1946. Western spirits started over from the rough “bakudan” liquor of the black-market years



Tokyo (Asakusa), 1984. Special-grade Old and Reserve ruled the bars and expense accounts

In 1955, 95% of the whisky taxed in Japan was second grade. Cheap whisky with barely any real spirit, drunk as a highball: that was the post-war gateway to Western spirits.

By 1965 special and first grade together made up nearly a quarter, and by 1975 special grade alone was over half. Incomes rose, mizuwari and bottle keep spread, and Old became the standard gift. In 1985 special grade still held 52% and second grade 35%: second grade kept its volume, but the face of whisky had moved to special.

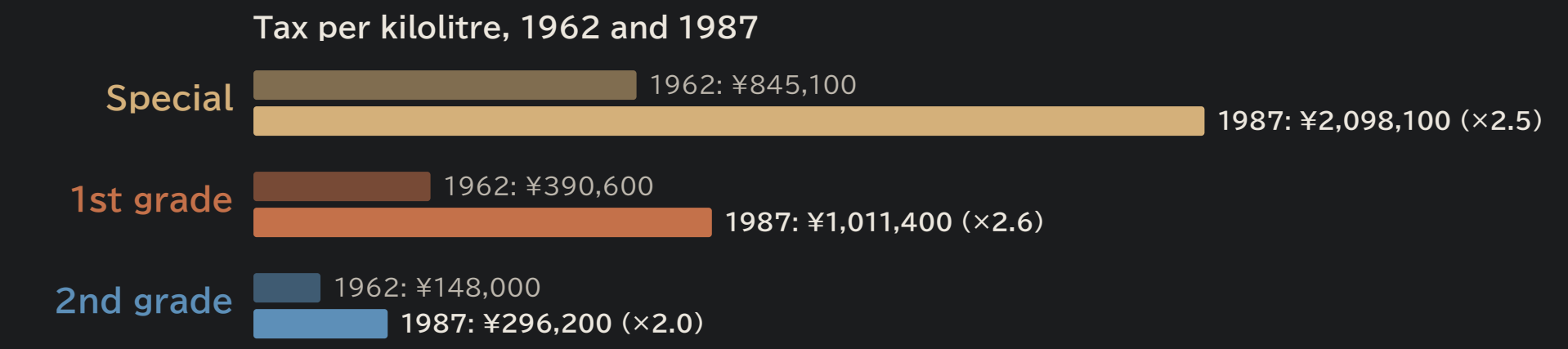
> A SIP OF CONTEXT
> The 1955 and 1960 figures date from when whisky was still classed as “miscellaneous liquor” under the Act. “Whisky-type” also includes brandy.

Sources: National Tax College tax-history archive, taxed volume by grade (from NTA statistical yearbooks). Whisky-type = whisky + brandy

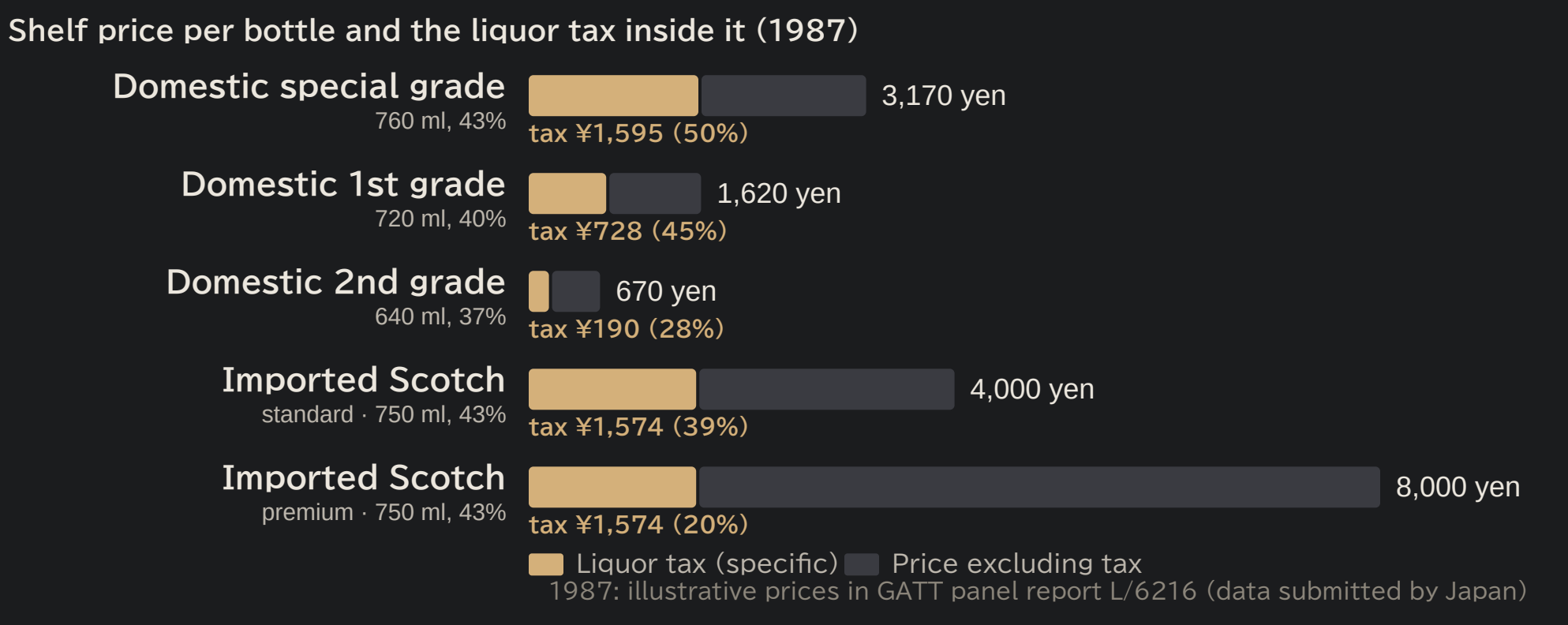
Photos: Asakusa, 1946: Kōji Morooka / Public domain / Wikimedia Commons Tokyo, 1984: David Pirmann / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

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Half the shelf price was tax: one rate per grade



Sources: Liquor Tax Act (1962 amendment) art. 22; GATT L/6216 (1987)



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The Ministry of Finance in Kasumigaseki. Liquor tax was long one of the state's great revenues

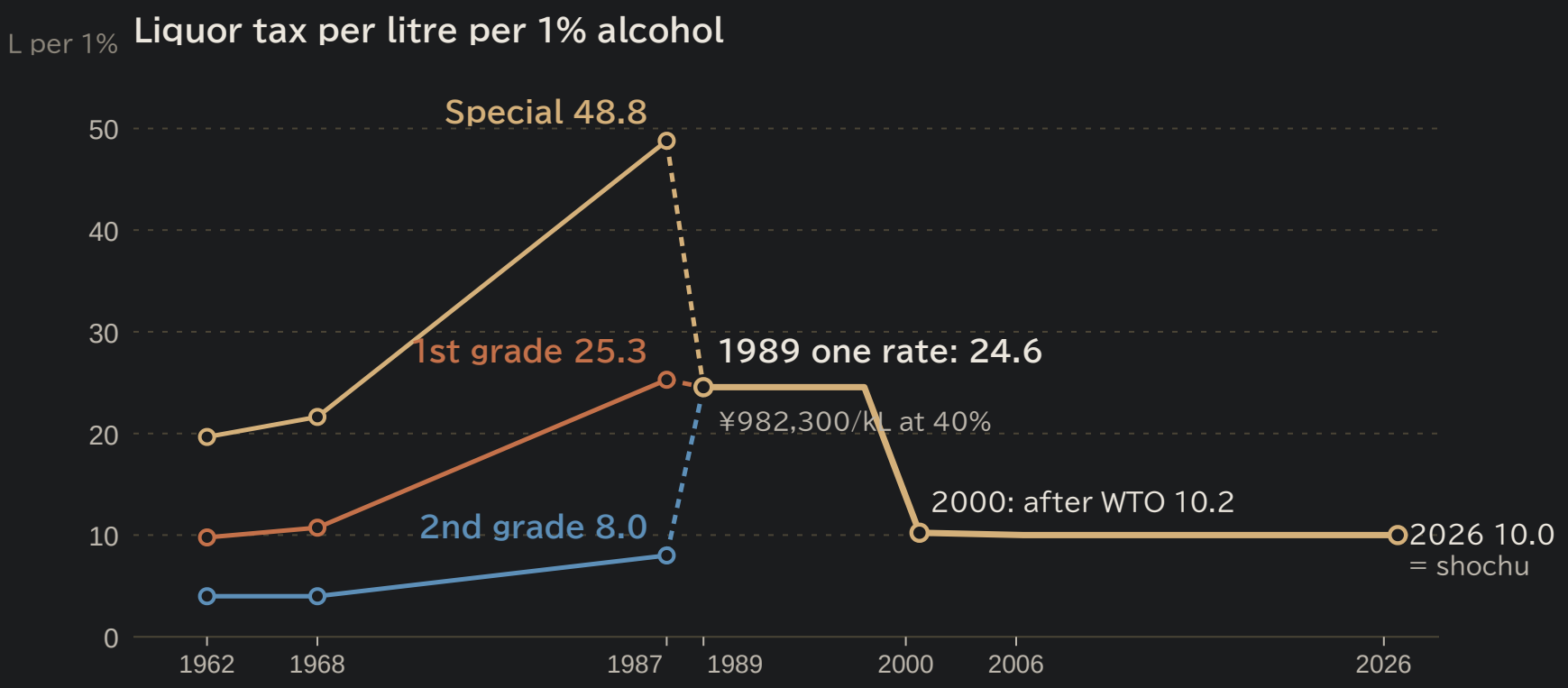
The grades were tax brackets as much as marks of rank. Under the 1962 Act the tax per kilolitre was ¥845,000 for special, ¥390,000 for first and ¥148,000 for second grade: 5.7 times more on special than on second. Later revisions widened the gap, to ¥2,098,000, ¥1,011,000 and ¥296,000 by 1987.

On the shelf, half of the ¥3,170 for a typical 760 ml bottle of domestic special-grade whisky in 1987 was tax, ¥1,595. A ¥670 second-grade whisky carried ¥190, or 28%. An ¥8,000 bottle of imported Scotch paid ¥1,574, one-fifth of its price. Japan could argue that its own special grade was the most heavily taxed; from abroad it looked as if imports were classed almost automatically as special grade, taxed at the top rate and treated unfairly against shochu.

Sources: Liquor Tax Act (1962 amendment), art. 22; GATT panel report L/6216, Japan: Customs duties, taxes and labelling practices on imported wines and alcoholic beverages (November 1987; data submitted by Japan)

Photos: Ministry of Finance: Nori Norisa / CC BY 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

The day the tax became one: April 1989

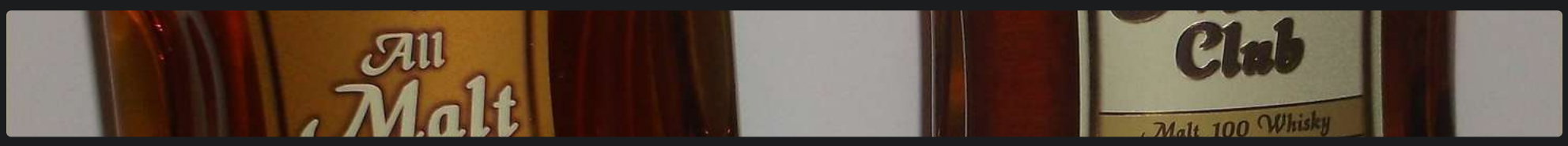


computed from the specific rates of 1962, 1968 and 1987

SPECIAL
Suntory Old
¥2,750 → ¥1,980
−28%, Tokyo wards, 1988→93

FIRST
Black Nikka
¥1,840 → ¥1,850
almost unchanged

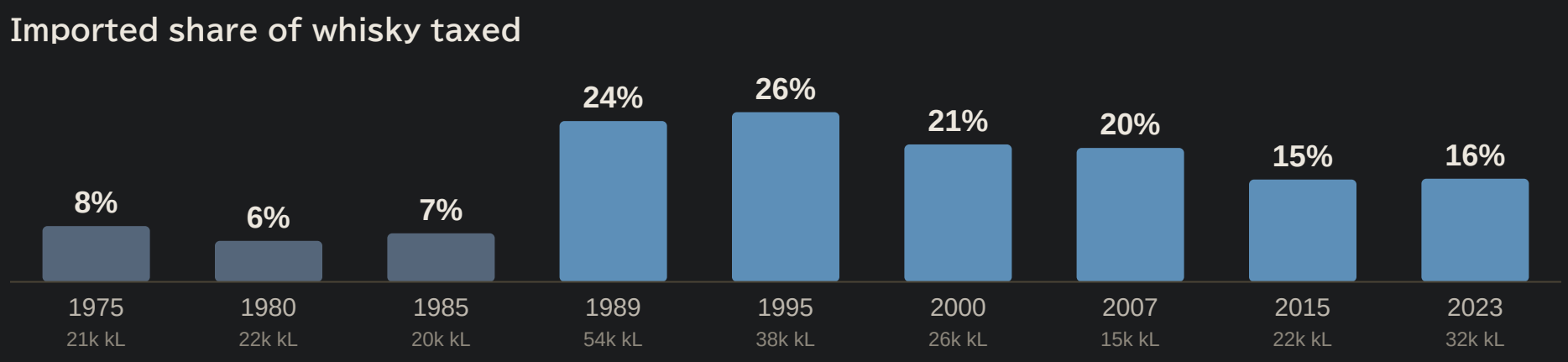
SECOND
Suntory Red
¥900 → ¥1,450
+61%, its tax tripled



Nikka All Malt (1990) and Malt Club: once the grades were gone, all-malt whisky could be sold at an everyday price

In 1986 the European Community took Japan to the GATT, arguing that its liquor tax discriminated against imported whisky and other Western liquor, and in 1987 the panel ruled against Japan. On 1 April 1989, the day the consumption tax was introduced, the grades were abolished and whisky was taxed on a single formula by strength: ¥982,300 per kilolitre at 40%.

The effect was dramatic. Tax on special grade fell by almost half; tax on second grade tripled. In Tokyo shops, Old went from ¥2,750 to ¥1,980 while second-grade Red rose from ¥900 to ¥1,450. Cheap whisky disappeared and imported Scotch suddenly came within reach: the import share jumped from 7% in 1985 to 24% in 1989.

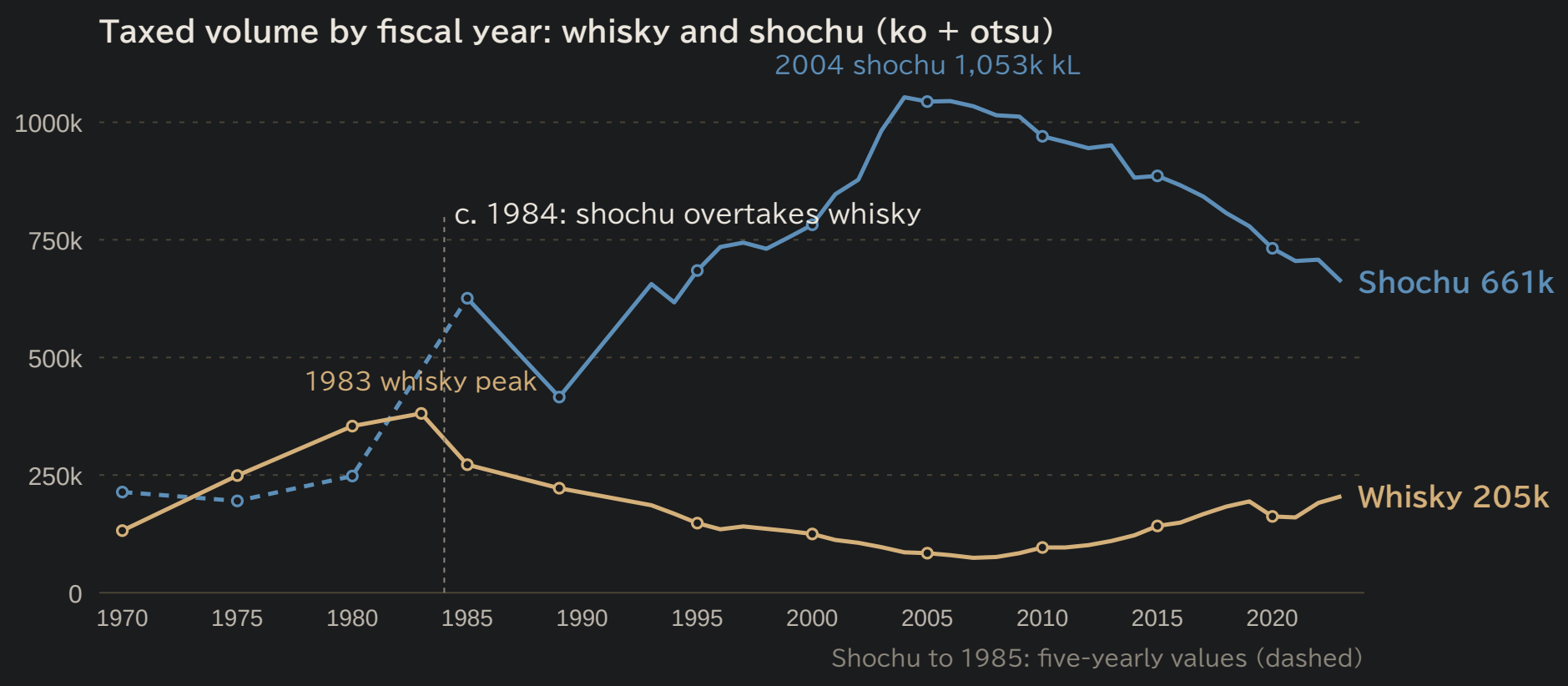


Sources: Ministry of Finance, Heisei Fiscal History; GATT panel report L/6216; Retail Price Survey (Tokyo wards, 1988 and 1993); NTA Sake no Shiori (customs-cleared volume)

Photos: Nikka: Kentin / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

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Twenty-four years behind shochu, 1984–2008





Shochu. The chuhai and barley-shochu boom of the 1980s, then the honkaku boom of the 2000s, took the everyday glass away from whisky

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The year after whisky's 1983 peak, shochu overtook it. The chuhai craze and the popularity of barley shochu such as iichiko carried shochu to 626,000 kilolitres in 1985, 2.3 times whisky. Per litre and per degree of alcohol, shochu paid about half the tax on second-grade whisky, and less than a tenth of that on special grade. The everyday glass moved to something cheaper and lighter.

Whisky kept falling after second grade vanished with the grades. The recession of the 1990s, a sense that Western spirits were old-fashioned, and a second shochu boom: shochu passed sake in 2003 and peaked at 1.05 million kilolitres in 2004, while whisky shrank to 74,000 kilolitres in 2007.

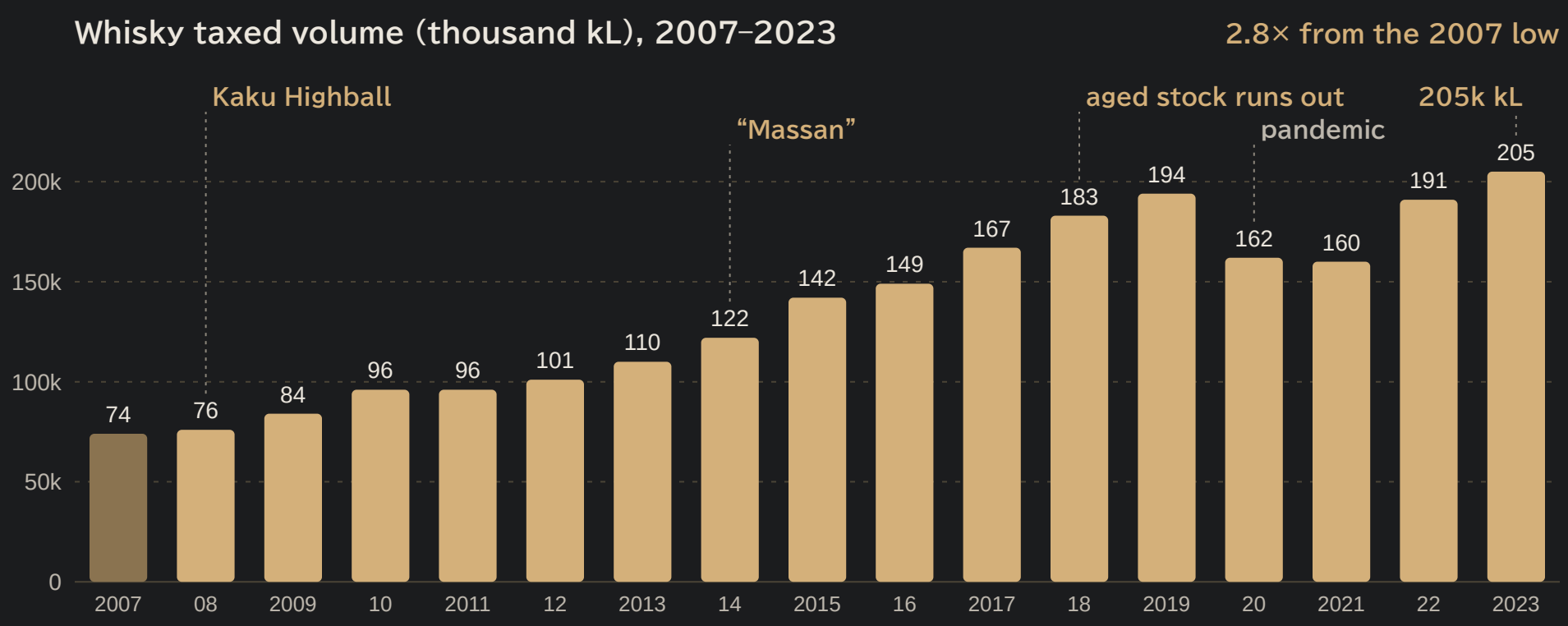
A SIP OF CONTEXT

In 1996 it was the WTO's turn to rule that Japan's liquor tax favoured shochu. Between 1997 and October 2000 the tax on shochu rose and the tax on whisky fell, narrowing the gap sharply (whisky's side is in the chart on page 438).

Sources: NTA Sake no Shiori, taxed volume by fiscal year (shochu = ko-type + otsu-type); tax rates from GATT panel report L/6216 (1987)

Photos: Shochu: Ostrzyciel / CC BY-SA 3.0 / Wikimedia Commons

The highball’s fifteen years, from 2008





A “Kaku Highball” lantern at an izakaya in Sapporo. In 2008 Suntory pushed Kakubin with soda through izakaya and television, and the highball took off

In 2008 Suntory launched a campaign to spread the Kakubin highball through izakaya: a beer mug, plenty of ice, a squeeze of lemon. A light way to drink whisky as the first glass of the evening reached a generation that had never tried it, and that fiscal year the long slide from the 1983 peak finally stopped: taxed volume turned upward.

In 2014 the television drama “Massan” told the story of Nikka’s founders, Masataka Taketsuru and Rita, and Yamazaki Sherry Cask 2013 was named World Whisky of the Year in Jim Murray’s Whisky Bible 2015. Demand outran the aged stock, and in 2018 Hakushu 12 and Hibiki 17 were withdrawn. After a dip in the pandemic, 2023 reached 205,000 kilolitres, a level last seen some thirty years before.

A SIP OF CONTEXT

Kakubin ranks 17th among the whisky brands tallied by The Spirits Business (4 million cases a year), and Torys sells 2.5 million; both ride on the highball (page 428). Our own approach to the highball is on page 32.

Our highball → Whisky list →

Sources: NTA Sake no Shiori; Suntory and Nikka announcements; The Spirits Business

Photos: Highball: MIKI Yoshihito from Sapporo City,Hokkaido., JAPAN / CC BY 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

CONTENTS

Eighty years of whisky and tax

● Law and tax ● Market ● Culture

1943 ● Liquor Tax Act amended: whisky graded by whisky-spirit content (grades 1, 2, 3)

1946 ● Torys Whisky launched by Kotobukiya, now Suntory
the face of second grade

1950 ● The first Torys Bar opens in Tokyo
about 2,000 nationwide at the peak

1953 ● Grades renamed special, first and second

1961 ● “Drink Torys, go to Hawaii”
a prize campaign before overseas travel was freed

1962 ● Special: ≥20% spirit, ≥43% ABV; first: ≥10%, ≥40%
special grade taxed ¥845,000/kL

1968 ● Spirit-content floors raised to 23, 13 and 7%

1971 ● Whisky imports liberalised
Scotch reaches department-store shelves

1978 ● Floors raised to 27, 17 and 10%: the final form of the grades

1980 ● Suntory Old ships 12.4 million cases a year

1983 ● Taxed volume peaks at 381,000 kL
6.5 bottles per adult

1984 ● Shochu overtakes whisky
chuhai and barley-shochu boom

1987 ● GATT panel finds Japan’s liquor tax in breach
on the EC’s 1986 complaint

1989 ● 1 April: grades abolished, one tax rate (same day as the consumption tax)
import share 7% → 24%

1996 ● WTO rules the shochu preference in breach
rates converge 1997–2000

2003 ● Shochu passes sake; peaks at 1.05 million kL in 2004

2007 ● Whisky taxed volume bottoms at 74,000 kL
1.0 bottle per adult

2008 ● Kaku Highball campaign
taxed volume turns upward

2014 ● Television drama “Massan”

2018 ● Hakushu 12 and Hibiki 17 withdrawn for lack of aged stock

2021 ● “Japanese whisky” labelling standard (industry rules)
→ p.443

2023 ● Taxed volume 205,000 kL, highest in about thirty years
2.8 bottles per adult (FY2024)

2025 ● Whisky exports ¥49 billion
→ p.442

The grades lasted forty-six years, and thirty-seven more have passed since they ended. The price of whisky in Japan, and the way it is drunk, have always followed the shape of the tax. Today the rate is ¥400,000 per kilolitre at 40%, and since 2006 whisky and shochu have been taxed alike.

Back to the start of the feature → Q05 Japanese whisky exports →

Sources: Sources on each page, plus NTA summaries of Liquor Tax Act amendments and the Suntory and Nikka company histories

Q 05

How much Japanese whisky is sold overseas?

A. ¥48.9 billion a year. A 4.7-fold rise in ten years.

¥48.98bn
2025 exports
Whisky export value

4.7x
Ten-year rise
Versus ¥10.38bn in 2015

+7.5%
Jan-Aug 2026
Year-on-year export value

Japan's whisky exports totalled ¥48.98 billion in 2025, up 4.7-fold from ¥10.38 billion in 2015. Whisky became the largest category of alcoholic drinks exported from Japan, accounting for one-third of the total. Exports eased after peaking at ¥56 billion in 2022, but were rising again in 2026, up 7.5% year on year for January to August.

The leading destination is the US, followed by China and Singapore. Prices are especially striking: exported whisky averages ¥3,617 per litre, while whisky imported into Japan averages ¥1,114 per litre. Japan has become a country that buys whisky cheaply and sells it for more than three times as much.



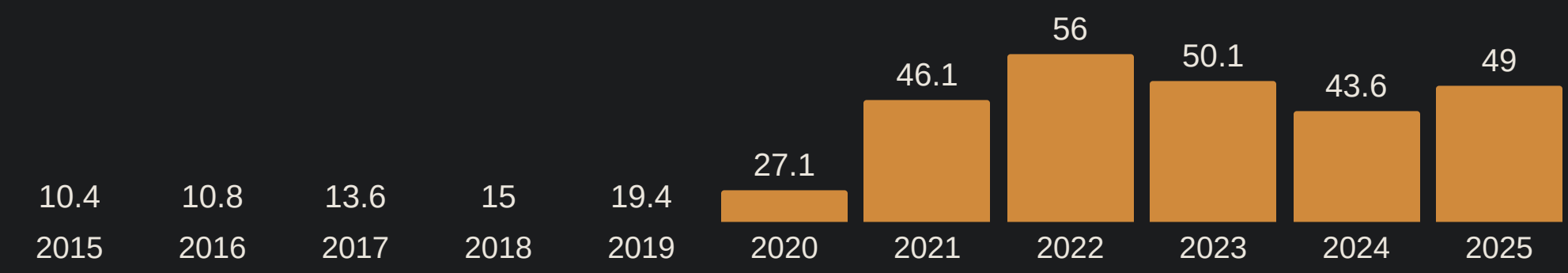
Japanese whisky on a back bar (Yoichi, Kosyu, Matsui, Kura…). Abroad, prices have changed beyond recognition in ten years



Aomi container terminal, Port of Tokyo. By value, whisky is Japan's largest alcoholic-drink export

Japan's whisky export value (calendar year, ¥ billion)

Ministry of Finance trade statistics. Jan-Aug 2026: ¥38.78bn, +7.5% year on year.



Top five export destinations / 2025 value

Percentages are shares of total export value. The Netherlands is a European distribution hub.

1 US	**¥11.0bn / 22%**	2 China	**¥7.2bn / 15%**
3 Singapore	**¥6.6bn / 13%**	4 Netherlands	**¥6.1bn / 13%**
5 France	**¥3.6bn / 7%**		

A SIP OF CONTEXT

Japan's exports average ¥3,617 per litre, versus about ¥1,140 per litre for Scotch. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has set a 2030 export target of ¥75 billion.

Source: Ministry of Finance trade statistics (NTA/MAFF compilation); NTA Sake no Shiori, July 2026; MAFF export-expansion strategy, revised May 2025.

Photos: Japanese whisky: Culture Japon / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons Port of Tokyo: Christophe95 / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Wikimedia Commons

Q 06

What qualifies as “Japanese whisky”?

A. Voluntary industry standards adopted in 2021 drew a line for the first time.

It may come as a surprise, but for many years Japan had no legal definition of “Japanese whisky”. Even spirit imported from abroad and merely bottled in Japan could carry the word “Japanese” on its label. As its worldwide reputation grew, so did the confusion. In 2021, the Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Makers Association adopted voluntary standards. They have applied in full since the transition period ended in April 2024.

Standards adopted
Feb 2021
The association’s voluntary rules

Take effect
Apr 2021
New bottles begin using the labelling

Full application
Apr 2024
Three-year transition ends

Requirements for the “Japanese whisky” label

Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Makers Association, 2021.

1. **Malt and grain, plus water collected in Japan**
   Malt must always be used.
2. **Saccharification, fermentation and distillation in Japan**
   At a distillery in Japan; distillation below 95% ABV.
3. **At least three years’ maturation in Japan**
   In wooden casks of 700 litres or less; no restriction on wood or cask type.
4. **Bottled in Japan at 40% ABV or above**
   Caramel may be used for minor colour adjustment.

目次



Nikka casks resting in a warehouse. At least three years in Japan, in wooden casks of 700 litres or less



The bottling line at Kirin’s Fuji Gotemba distillery. Bottled in Japan at 40% or more: the label is now a promise

Comparing Ministry of Finance trade data with NTA taxation data suggests that around 40% of the approximately 63,000 kL of whisky imported in 2025 entered domestic production sites as unbottled spirit. Whisky that does not meet the standards is not necessarily bad. The point is that the words “Japanese whisky” on a label now carry a particular promise.

A SIP OF CONTEXT

NTA statistics record 73 production sites making whisky in FY2024. Our menu groups bottles from distilleries across Japan by region, from Hokkaido to Okinawa.

Source: JSLMA, Standards for Labeling Japanese Whisky; Ministry of Finance trade statistics; NTA Statistical Annual Report, FY2024.

Photos: Warehouse: hirotomo t / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons Bottling line: Keeezawa / CC0 / Wikimedia Commons

Small numbers, big conversations

Something to share across the counter.

Eight figures from these pages that may make you want to tell someone else. Sources for the feature (pp.431–441) are also listed here.

216 bottles
Opened worldwide each second
Estimated 530m cases (6.8bn bottles) ÷ seconds per year.

43 bottles
Scotch leaving the UK each second
From 1.34bn bottles exported in 2025.

9 bottles
Whisky drunk in Japan each second
From about 290m bottles sold in FY2024.

3rd
Japan's rank as a whisky-drinking country
After India and the US; includes estimates.

17th
Suntory Kakubin's world ranking
4m cases a year (The Spirits Business). Torys sells 2.5m.

3.2x
Japan's export unit price vs import price
¥3,617 vs ¥1,114 per litre (2025).

~¥1 trillion
Scotch's annual export value
£5.36bn; about ¥800 per bottle on average.

6.5 → 2.8
Bottles per adult a year, 1983 and FY2024
700 ml bottles. The 2007 low was 1.0 (see p.433).

SOURCES

Brand sales volumes	The Spirits Business, The Brand Champions 2026; Drinks International, Millionaires' Club 2026 (calendar 2025).
Scotch	Scotch Whisky Association, 2025 Export Figures (February 2026; March update incorporates HMRC revisions).
World volumes	IWSR (India); DISCUS (US); Euromonitor; Irish Whiskey Association. World total is this booklet's estimate assembled from published figures.
Japan: consumption / production	NTA, Sake no Shiori, various editions; Statistical Annual Report, FY2024. Taxable volumes for 1983 and 2007 are from WANDS magazine reporting.
Grades and liquor tax	National Tax College tax-history archive (taxed volume by grade); Liquor Tax Act (1962, 1968, 1978 amendments); GATT panel report L/6216 (1987); Ministry of Finance, Heisei Fiscal History; Tax Commission papers; Whisky Connoisseur textbook.
Population, prices, shipments	Statistics Bureau census (population aged 20+) and population estimates; Retail Price Survey (Tokyo wards); Dentsu-ho; nippon.com; Whisky Rising (S. Van Eycken).
Japan: imports / exports	Ministry of Finance trade statistics (2025, compiled by NTA/MAFF); MAFF export-expansion strategy, revised May 2025.
Labelling standards	JSLMA, Standards for Labeling Japanese Whisky (adopted February 2021; effective April 2021).
Conversions	1 case = 9 L = 12.857 × 700 ml bottles. Approximate 2025 average exchange rate: £1 = ¥199. Japan: about 104.5 million people aged 20 and over.

Figures are based on information published by October 2026. Estimates are identified as such.

CONTENTS

Numbers are only a map.

On that map, the plains of India and the shores of Islay are both tiny dots. Yet the whisky in your glass is a gathering of a place's water, grain and casks, and the years that have passed. Every glass has a character of its own.

Our shelves bring together whisky from distilleries across Japan, from Hokkaido to Okinawa, arranged by region. If a figure in this booklet has caught your eye, please ask us about it across the counter.

Let's share the stories beyond the numbers.

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The back bar of the Bon Accord, a Glasgow pub. Behind every dot on the map, a shelf like this

Japanese Spirits & SAKE Bar 2102

AZABU-TOKYO

2F Sekiguchi Building, 2-10-2 Higashiazabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo
bar2102.com / November 2026

Photos: Glasgow pub: calflier001 / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons