

## 日本酒

# What is Sake?

Japanese sake is brewed by a unique method, from its raw materials of Japanese water, rice, and rice koji (malted rice). It is regarded as “Kokushu”, a national drink of Japan, for its deep connection to traditional culture.

## WATER

Sake consists of 80% water. The mineral content of the water influences the growth of the koji mold and yeast, so the flavor of the sake will change depending on the water used. Since water quality also affects the feeling in the mouth, good water is essential.



## RICE

Sake rice is rice that is especially suitable for making sake. Each grain has a milk white shimpaku (core of starch) in the center. The degree of how much the surface of the rice is polished away has an important effect on the character of the sake.



## BREWING ALCOHOL

Moromi is the fermenting mash that becomes the undiluted sake and determines the character of the sake. Brewing alcohol is sometimes added to this moromi. It brings out aromas in the sake and smoothenes the flavor.

## KOJI MOLD AND YEAST

The koji mold, which is the basis for the koji, converts the rice's starches into sugar (glucose). The yeast ferments the glucose into alcohol and carbon dioxide. Both are cornerstones of sake that influence the flavor and aroma of the final product.

## Fermented Beverages

Sake is in the same category of fermented liquor as wine and beer. Fermented beverages are alcoholic drinks made when yeast ferments alcohol from the agricultural crops used. That fermentation process differs for each type of drink.

For beer, the saccharification and fermentation happen separately. For wine, the saccharification is unnecessary because the base ingredient contains sugar. The unique characteristic of sake is that it uses a sophisticated production method called multiple parallel fermentation. Saccharification and fermentation happen at the same time.

## Production Method

### Wine



Ingredients: Grapes

#### Single Fermentation

Wine Yeast

Fermentation



Saccharification is unnecessary because the base ingredient contains sugar.

### Beer



Ingredients: Barley

#### Single Multiple Fermentation

Malt

Saccharification

Beer Yeast

Fermentation



Saccharification and fermentation happen separately.

### Sake



Ingredients: Rice

#### Multiple Parallel Fermentation

Koji

Saccharification

Sake Yeast

Fermentation







Saccharification and fermentation happen at the same time.

# Polishing Ratio & Tokutei Meisho-shu (Specially Designated Sake)

Sake is categorized by ingredients and rice polishing ratios.

Daiginjo-shu, Ginjo-shu, Junmai Ginjo-shu, Tokubetsu Junmai-shu, etc are called “Tokutei Meisho-shu (Specially Designated Sake)”.

	Ingredients	Rice, rice koji	Rice, rice koji, brewing alcohol
Rice Polishing Ratio	 <b>50% or less</b>	<b>Junmai Daiginjo-shu</b> 純米大吟醸酒 Ginjo production methods, characteristic aroma and taste, and exceptional color and clarity	<b>Daiginjo-shu</b> 大吟醸酒
	 <b>60% or less</b>	<b>Junmai Ginjo-shu</b> 純米吟醸酒 Ginjo production methods, characteristic aroma and taste, and exceptional color and clarity	<b>Ginjo-shu</b> 吟醸酒
	<b>60% or less</b> or made with special production methods	<b>Tokubetsu Junmai-shu</b> 特別純米酒 Characteristic aroma and taste, and exceptional color and clarity	<b>Tokubetsu Honjozo-shu</b> 特別本醸造酒
	 <b>70% or less</b>	<b>Junmai-shu</b> 純米酒 Characteristic aroma and taste, and exceptional color and clarity	<b>Honjozo-shu</b> 本醸造酒 Characteristic aroma and taste, and exceptional color and clarity
	 <b>Over 70%</b>		

Reference: 1989 Japan National Tax Agency Announcement No.8 Sake Production Quality Indication Standards Overview.



## Japan Sake and Shochu Information Center

The Japan Sake and Shochu Information Center allows people from around the world to see and experience Japanese sake, honkaku shochu, and awamori firsthand as a way to learn about their appeal.

Nihon Shuzo Toranomon Building 1st Floor, 1-6-15 Nishi Shimbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0003 Tel: 03-3519-2091  
Hours: 10:00AM-6:00PM (Days closed: Saturday, Sunday, public holidays, year-end & New Year holidays)  
[www.japansake.or.jp/sake/know/data](http://www.japansake.or.jp/sake/know/data)



# Label Information

Picking out bottles of sake becomes much more fun if you can read the labels.

**Front**

**Alcohol content**  
The number of milliliters of alcohol per 100ml of sake.  
アルコール分 15.0 度以上 16.0 度未満

**Ingredients**  
In addition to rice and rice koji, brewer's alcohol is generally used to bring out aromas in the sake.  
原材料名 米 (国産) 米こうじ (国産) 醸造アルコール

**Product name**  
This is expressed as nihonshu or seishu in Japanese.  
日本酒 720 ml

**Date of manufacture**  
This shows when the sake was bottled in the container. There is no consume-by date, because the quality of properly stored sake does not change for a few years.  
製造年月 27.3

**Special designation**  
For sake with designated naming, the classification will be listed.  
吟醸酒

**Rice varietal**  
The rice varietal name and usage ratio is listed.  
山田錦 100 %

**Sake name**  
The unique brand name of the sake.  
國酒

**Manufacturer's name and address**  
日本酒造組合中央会  
東京都港区西新橋〇丁目△-□

**Back**

**Rice varietal**  
The rice varietal used is also listed on the back label.  
原材料 山田錦 精米歩合 60%

**Yeast**  
The name of the yeast used for this sake is listed.  
使用酵母 協会 000 号

**Acidity**  
An index showing the amount of total acidity in the sake. When the acidity level is high, the sake will tend to be rich and tart, and when it is low, it will tend to be light and sweet.  
成分 日本酒度 +5 酸度 1.6 アミノ酸度 1.6

**Sake meter value**  
An index showing the specific 'gravity' of the sake. The standard is 0, and if the value is a high positive number (+), the sake will tend to be dry. If it is a low negative number (-), it will tend to be sweet.  
甘辛 甘口 やや甘口 やや辛口 辛口

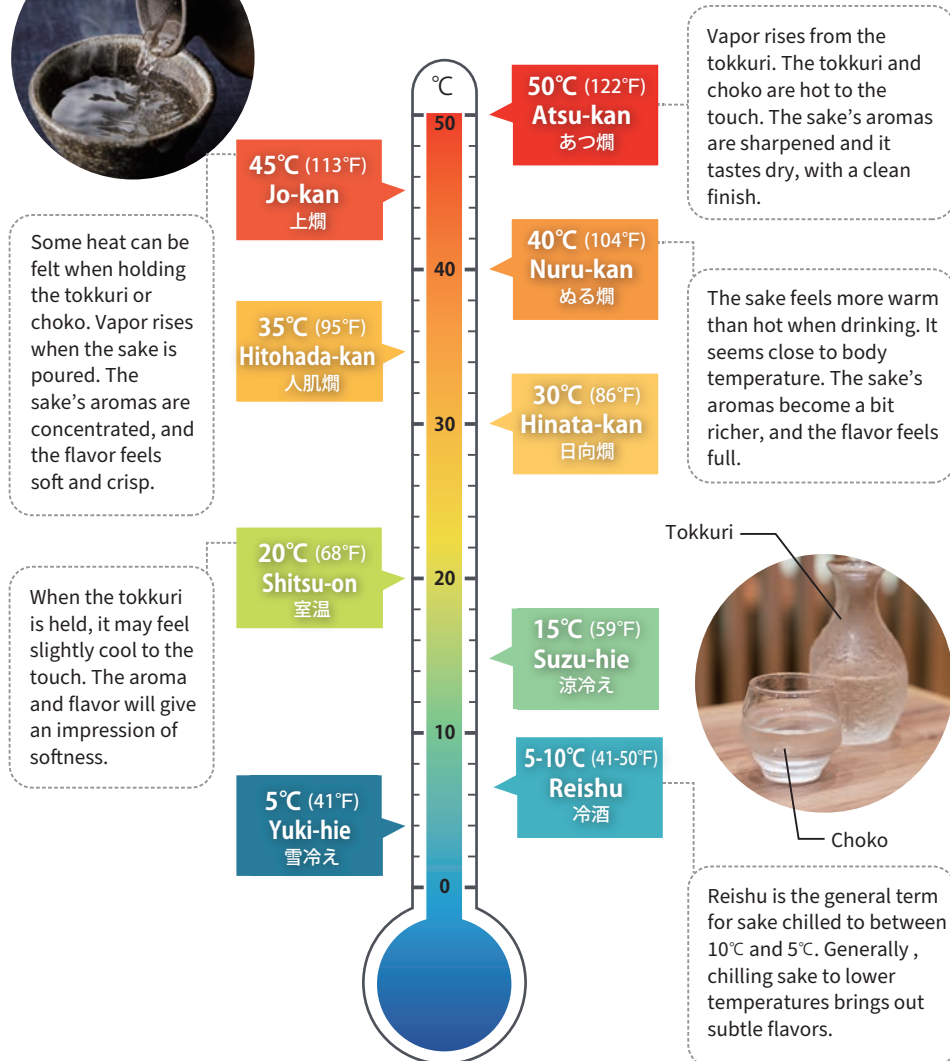
**Sweetness/dryness**  
The sake is classified into one of several categories, indicating the tendency of its flavor: sweet, medium sweet, medium dry, or dry.  
おすすめの飲み方 冷やして 室温 める爛 熱爛 △ ○ ◎ ○

**Amino Acid content**  
An index of the amino acids in the sake. Higher numbers tend to indicate sake with more umami.

**Recommended drinking styles**  
Indicates the estimated temperatures to bring out the best of that sake's flavor.

# Drinking Temperature

Heated wine and beer drinks containing fruit and spices are well known, but sake is another beverage that can be drunk warmed. In fact, it can be enjoyed at a wide range of temperatures. Each temperature has a different name, and unique aspects of the same sake can be enjoyed at different temperatures.



# Sake Characteristics & Food Pairing

Sake and washoku (Japanese food) pair wonderfully together, but there are some recommended cuisines for each of the four types of sake. Of course, sake can also be enjoyed with food from many other countries as well.

## Fruity Type

**Aroma** Features gorgeous aromas of fruit or flowers, and has a sense of clarity.

**Taste** Has moderate sweetness and roundness, balanced with a refreshing acidity.

### Food pairing

Cuisine that brings out the flavors of ingredients like vegetables and seafood is suited to this kind of sake.



White fish carpaccio



Vegetable tempura

## Matured Type

**Aroma** Features strong and complex aromas, like spices or dried fruit.

**Taste** Thick sweetness, balanced with an acidity mellowed by maturation.

### Food pairing

This type of sake goes well with food that uses umami-rich ingredients high in protein.



Cheese



Eel broiled in soy-based sauce

Fresh  
**Delicate Taste**  
Simple

## Light & Smooth Type

**Aroma** Features a mild and moderate aroma.

**Taste** Has a refreshing taste and a smooth feeling in the mouth.

### Food pairing

This type of sake pairs well with light food that has a clean aftertaste.



Dashi-maki tamago (seasoned Japanese omelette)



Sashimi (raw fish)

Simple  
**Moderate Aroma**  
Light

Umami  
**Rich Taste**  
Complex

## Full-Bodied Type

**Aroma** Features a grainy scent, or an aroma conveying savory umami, like daily products.

**Taste** Features sweetness, acidity, a pleasant bitterness, and a well-rounded richness

### Food pairing

This type of sake pairs well with food that emphasizes the umami of chicken, pork, milk, or other ingredients.



Braised diced pork rib



Yakitori (glazed with sauce)



# Gems of Wisdom: Etiquette & Terminology

Have you ever ordered sake in a restaurant and had it served in a glass that's filled to overflowing and standing in a little wooden box? Did you wonder how to go about drinking it? If the sake comes out in a flask with little cups and you're offered some, how would you receive it? This section will introduce sake manners to remember.

## Masuzake (sake in a wooden box) and glasses

This is a pattern that worries many Japanese people too. However you choose to drink, it will not be a breach of etiquette, but there are some ways we would recommend.

1. Take the first sip directly from the glass.
2. Once there is a bit less in the glass, take the glass out of the box (the masu).
3. Enjoy the sake from the glass, and from the box corner. If it is difficult for you to drink from the box, you can pour sake from the box into your empty glass.



## Tokkuri

### Pouring:

When offering sake to someone, offer it when their cup is less than one-third full. Do not offer when your companion is in the middle of drinking, or when there is enough sake in their cup.

### Receiving:

When someone offers you sake, take a small sip of the sake remaining in your cup before holding it out to the person pouring (you do not need to finish all of the sake in the cup)

## Sake Types

### Koshu -Aged sake

Sake can be matured for a long time. Longer-term storage smooths out the sake's flavor. Some koshu is aged for two, three, or even over five years.

### Namazake -Un-pasteurized sake

This sake is sent to market without any pasteurization in the production process. Keep it in a refrigerator to enjoy its freshness.

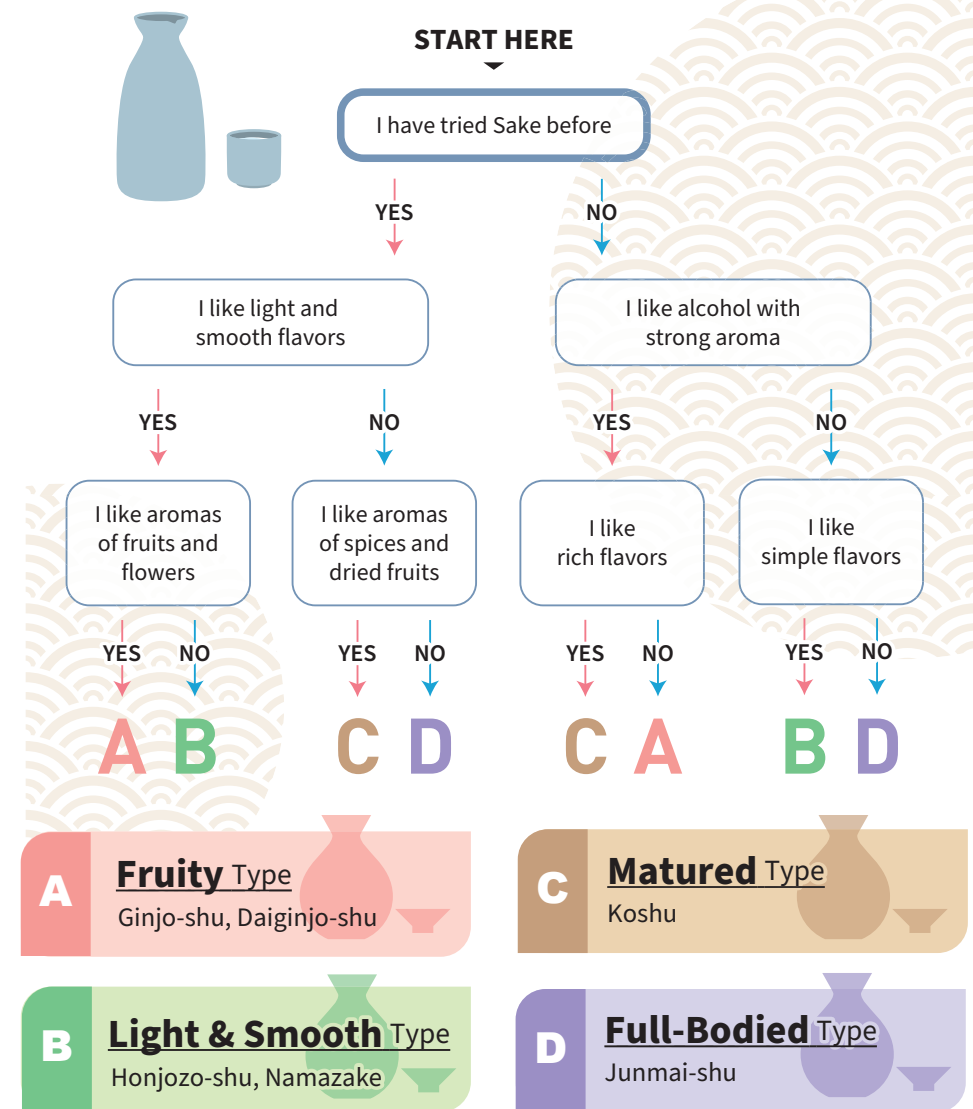
### Genshu -Undiluted sake

Many sake on the market has had its alcohol content adjusted 15-16 % through dilution with water, but since genshu is undiluted sake, it's alcohol content is often unique high, at 18-20%.

### Hiyaoroshi -Autumn sake

This sake is shipped after summer moves into fall.

# Find your perfect match



- The drinking age in Japan is 20 years old. ● Drink responsibly.
- Do not drink and drive. ● Please recycle empty drink containers.
- Women should not drink during pregnancy or breastfeeding due to the risks of harmful effects on unborn children and babies.