

美

酒

I b a r a k i S a k e G u i d e B o o k

茨

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The Basics of sake

Tips for selecting sake

Sake is made from rice and water.

It is born through a collaboration between the power of invisible microorganisms and the skills of master brewers.

One essential ingredient is *koji* (the fungus used in fermenting the rice), the keystone of sake brewing.

The enzymes in the *koji* convert rice starch into sugar,

and the yeast breaks down the sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide.

This is called multiple parallel fermentation.* This may sound a bit technical, but sake is brewed using this unique fermentation method, which without a doubt is the secret to its distinctive taste.

Sake exhibits vastly different flavor profiles depending on the type of rice, region, and brewer. It may be fruity, or it may be bursting with rich flavors.

This is what makes sake so interesting and is one of the reasons why people are so keen to try more and more different kinds of sake.

When it comes to choosing sake, you should let your own taste preferences guide you.

To discover your ideal sake, begin by getting a definite idea of your own preferences, such as whether you want a clean, crisp sake or a medium-bodied sake with lots of flavor.

*Multiple parallel fermentation

Multiple parallel fermentation is a type of fermentation that takes place in the sake brewing process, meaning that saccharification (the conversion of starch into glucose by *koji* enzymes) and fermentation (the conversion of glucose into alcohol by yeast) occur simultaneously in the same container.

In recent years, sake has been gradually gaining in popularity around the world. Your visit to Japan is a golden opportunity for you to sample some freshly made sake, or a rare brand of local sake only available at the brewery. Here, sake journalist Kaori Haishi will be your guide on your journey into the world of sake.

Sake

Types of sake

Sake can be divided into two main types according to the ingredients. One is *junmai*, made from rice, *koji*, and water, and the other is *honjozo*, made from rice, *koji*, and water, with the addition of distilled alcohol. *Junmai* sake tends to be more robust in flavor, while *honjozo* sake tends to be more refreshing. In addition, sake is also classified into one of eight types according to the degree to which the rice is polished and the type of brewing employed. These are called Special Designation Sakes. The less the rice has been polished, the more flavorful the sake will be. Conversely, rice that has been polished to a higher degree will result in a clearer flavor. Among these, those bearing the name *ginjo* are characterized by a fruity aroma. Another type that has been enjoying a boom in recent years is sparkling sake. People are attracted to this easy-drinking sake because of its bubbly and refreshing taste. In addition to these, there are so many other processes that affect the taste that I could go on talking about them forever, such as the pressing method and differences in the yeast. For the moment, though, you only need to know the basics. There is so much to choose from, but with a little luck, you are sure to find the sake of your dreams.



Special Designation Sake

Type of sake		Ingredients	Rice polishing ratio	Requirements for flavors, etc.
Junmai-shu	Junmai daiginjo-shu	Rice, <i>koji</i>	50% or less remaining	Ginjo-zukuri (fermented at low temperatures), inherent flavor and particularly good color and clarity
	Junmai ginjo-shu		60% or less remaining	Ginjo-zukuri (fermented at low temperatures), inherent flavor and particularly good color and clarity
	Tokubetsu junmai-shu		60% or less remaining, or a special production method	Flavor and particularly good color and clarity
	Junmai-shu		–	Flavor and good color and clarity
Honjozo-shu	Daiginjo-shu	Rice, <i>koji</i> , distilled alcohol	50% or less remaining	Ginjo-zukuri (fermented at low temperatures), inherent flavor and particularly good color and clarity
	Ginjo-shu		60% or less remaining	Ginjo-zukuri (fermented at low temperatures), inherent flavor and particularly good color and clarity
	Tokubetsu honjozo-shu		60% or less remaining, or a special production method	Flavor and particularly good color and clarity
	Honjozo-shu		70% or less remaining	Flavor and good color and clarity

See "Sake no Shiori (March 2018)," Liquor Tax and Industry Division, Taxation Department, National Tax Agency

What Makes Sake from Ibaraki so Good?

Local sake born from rich nature and the seasoned skills of brewers

While there are many famous sake brewing regions, Ibaraki Prefecture's sake stands out from the crowd for very good reasons. First and foremost is the region's abundance of water. There are five water systems in the prefecture, including the Naka River system and the Mt. Tsukuba system. Water from these subterranean rivers is used to make sake, but each area has its own different water quality. Water quality is a major factor in determining the quality of sake, and it is this rich variety that helps give each brewery its own individuality, even within the same prefecture. In addition, each region is blessed with a rich natural environment including mountains, oceans, and rivers, with great diversity in terms of climate and natural features. This is another reason why each region has its own distinctive style of sake. What is more, Ibaraki Prefecture is also one of Japan's leading producers of rice, the main ingredient in sake. Hitachi Nishiki, a variety of rice born in the prefecture, was the first rice suitable for sake brewing in Ibaraki Prefecture. Sake brewed with Hitachi Nishiki rice and the prefecture's original yeast, Hitachi Yeast, epitomizes the very best of local sake. There are around 40 sake breweries in the prefecture. The brewers all get along well with each other and meet regularly to exchange technical know-how and improve their brewing techniques. Why not try pairing sake, a drink bursting with skill and individuality, with the local cuisine of its production region?

*Rice suitable for sake brewing

This designation refers to rice classified as brown rice for brewing under the Agricultural Products Inspection Act of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. It is classified into the following grades: Extra Special Quality, Special Quality, Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3.

Ibaraki Jizake Bar Mito : a stand where you can drink Ibaraki's local sake

Just outside the ticket gates of JR Mito Station, there is a stand where you can drink local sake from Ibaraki. You can choose from 30 kinds of local sake, most of which are carefully selected junmai-shu and junmai ginjo-shu. Order a set of three to compare the flavors and receive a complimentary glass of furumaizake, a Japanese tradition of offering up sake at festivals and other celebrations. You can also enjoy local specialty snacks.

Location: Excel Milsta 2F, Mito Station Building, 1-1-1 Miyamachi, Mito City, Ibaraki
(exit the ticket gates of JR Mito Station and you will see it in the passageway to the right)
Closed: December 31 ~ January 2 Hours: 17:30~22:00, 16:00~21:30 on weekends and national holidays
Credit cards: VISA • Mastercard • AMEX • Discover • DinersClub • JCB • UC • Rakuten • AEON • DC • SAISON
Other: English available Another shop **Ibaraki Jizake Bar Tsukuba**



Tips for Pairing Sake with Food

Get the most out of sake and cuisine with the perfect pairing!

Sake tastes even better when paired with the perfect dish. Both become doubly delicious when tasted together rather than on their own. It is simple to come up with pairings. The basic idea is to match sake with cuisine that has a similar depth of flavor. For example, you could pair a light-bodied sake with light white fish sashimi, or a more flavorful sake with rich *sukiyaki* hot pot. Currently, sake is classified into five types: four of these types are based on the level of aroma and the intensity of flavor, and the fifth is a sparkling type. Roughly speaking, those on the right half of the vertical axis-types of sake with more full-bodied flavors and aged types-should be paired with dishes that are rich in flavor, while those on left half-fruity and light types-should be paired with light dishes to achieve a good balance. The sparkling type, which could be likened to "Japanese Champagne," goes well with light dishes such as appetizers. It is recommended for the beginning of a party. Umami-rich sake, which contains up to ten or more times the amino acids of white wine, can be paired with any kind of cuisine, not just Japanese food. Please enjoy pairing it with a variety of dishes.

Ibaraki Food & Sake Pairings



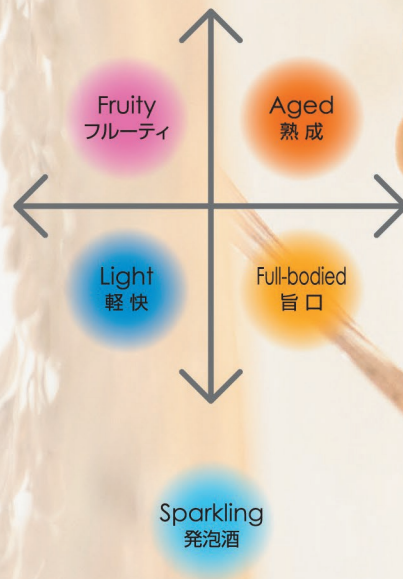
Profile: Kaori Haishi

Sake journalist, essayist, and chairman of the Japan Sake Association (JSA)

Born in 1966, Haishi has been fascinated by sake for 25 years. As a sake journalist, she is well versed in all things sake, from sake culture and tastes to tips on the best ways to enjoy sake and pairings with food, and provides commentary through TV, radio, magazines, and the Internet. As chairman of the JSA, she conducts "The Spirit of Japanese Sake" seminars geared towards foreigners. She has written many books, the most recent of which is *The Japanese Guide to Healthy Drinking* (Robinson, 2020).



Classification of Flavor by Tasting



Producing only junmai-shu made with carefully selected rice

KIKUSAKARI (菊盛) Kiuchi Brewery

Junmai Ginjo Aiyama, Junmai Tarusake, Kurahibiki Junmai Daiginjo



The toji, in charge of sake brewing



Founded in 1823. High quality groundwater gushing from the brewery's wells is soft, almost medium-hard, which aids fermentation and brings out the best in the rice. In addition to sake, the brewery also brews *shochu*, wine, liqueurs, and craft beer. Other than the sake brewery itself, there is a store, sake tasting counter, and *soba* buckwheat noodle restaurant on the premises. Junmai Ginjo Aiyama is a *junmai ginjo-shu* made only with Aiyama, a variety of rice suitable for sake brewing. It is characterized by its soft sweetness and subdued aroma. Junmai Tarusake is made by pouring pressed sake into Japanese cedar barrels and leaving it to mature. The fresh aroma of the cedar is also popular with overseas drinkers. Served either at room temperature or lukewarm, its aroma is enticing and its flavor deep. Kurahibiki comes in a wine bottle and is a well-balanced sake with a sweet and sour taste, bursting with the distinctive flavor of Yamada Nishiki, the highest grade of sake rice.



In addition to sake, taste local craft beer
Hitachino Nest!

- Tastings (fee applies)
- Brewery tours available (reservation required)
- English-speaking staff available
- English pamphlet available
- English signs in store and at the brewery
- Qualifies for liquor tax exemption
- Credit cards: VISA · Mastercard · UC · UFJ · DC · JCB · 銀聯 (UnionPay)
- TEL: +81-29-270-7955 Address: 1257 Konosu, Naka City, Ibaraki
- Hours: 10:00–18:30 (main store) Closed: Open year-round
- URL: <http://kodawari.cc/en/index.html>



A special taste from a brewery that developed its own yeast

This brewery was founded over 160 years ago. In addition to sake, it also produces *shochu*, liqueurs, and fermented seasonings, with many of its products exported to overseas markets. The brewery developed its own yeast, which is essential for sake brewing, of which the Meiri-Ogawa yeast in particular works well at low temperatures and produces a refreshing *ginjo* fragrance.



M-310 yeast, which was born from this Meiri-Ogawa yeast, has gained an even higher reputation and is widely used in sake breweries throughout the country as a yeast for high quality sake, such as *daiginjo*. Fukushima Daiginjo has won a total of 13 gold medals at the Annual Japan Sake Awards, and the gold medal in the Daiginjo category of the International

Wine Challenge 2020.

Fukushogun Junmai Ginjo won the Grand Gold Medal at the The Fine SAKE Awards Japan in 2019. It is fragrant yet refreshing without intruding upon the taste of food, and goes well with rich stews and spicy flavors.



- Free tastings
 - Only the *umeshu* plum wine brewery is open for tours. Groups require reservations.
 - English pamphlet available
 - English signs in store and at the brewery
 - Qualifies for liquor tax exemption
 - Credit cards: VISA・Mastercard・AMEX・Discover・DinersClub・JCB・UC・Rakuten・銀聯(Union Pay)
- TEL: +81-29-247-6111 Address: 338 Motoyoshida-cho, Mito City, Ibaraki Hours: 9:30-16:30 (Bessyun-kan)
Closed: Mondays (or the following day if Monday is a national holiday),
open every day in February and March URL: <http://bessyun-kan.jp/>



FUKUSHOGUN (副將軍) Meiri Shurui Co., Ltd.



Fukushogun Junmai Daiginjo, Fukushogun Daiginjo, Fukushogun Junmai Ginjo

The brewery is famous for its best-in-Japan award-winning *umeshu* plumwine. After viewing the display of old sake-brewing tools in the Bessyun-kan museum and the *umeshu* storehouse, sample the variety that line the shop shelves to discover your favorite.



The only brewery in Oarai cultivating rice and brewing sake entirely locally

NANOTSUKI (和の月) TSUKINOI-SHUZOUTEN CO., LTD.



Junmai Daiginjo Nanotsuki, Tsukinoi unfiltered unpasteurized sake, Junmai Hikoichi



The 8th generation head brewer tasting sake.

Since its establishment in 1865, this brewery has been brewing sake in the town of Oarai, facing the Pacific Ocean. Nanotsuki, an organic sake, is made from organically grown rice. The entire production process is performed organically using traditional methods, meaning that the sake is not exposed to any kinds of chemicals right up until the moment it is shipped. This well-balanced sake has a gentle yet

flavorful taste with a crisp finish that will spread throughout your body, making it a favorite among foreign visitors. The story of how the brewer created this sake has been made into a television series featuring popular actors. Hikoichi, named after the founder, is a sake brewed with the rice, water, and climate of Oarai. Although difficult to grow in this area, after much hard work a delicious, flavorful sake rice was produced. The label on the bottle features an image of Oarai's sea inside a full moon. It is a rare sake that can only be purchased at a limited number of distributors in Japan and at the brewery's head office.



- Free tastings •Brewery tours available (500 yen, includes sake tasting, reservation required) •English pamphlet available
- Qualifies for liquor tax exemption

TEL: +81-29-266-2168 Address: 638 Isohama-cho, Oarai-Town, Higashiibaraki-gun, Ibaraki Hours: 9:00-17:00 Closed: Irregular closures
URL: <https://exports.pref.ibaraki.jp/en/company/detail?id=714763>



*Bringing sake favored by notable people
from Mito to the world*

IPPIN (一品) YOSHIKUBO SAKE BREWERY



This brewery was founded in 1790. The brewery's founder, who at the time was a rice wholesaler, turned to sake brewing because of his connoisseurship of fine quality rice and the presence of ultra-soft water. Today, the brewery exports to 15 countries and has won various awards both in Japan and abroad, including a Double Gold Medal at the San Francisco International Wine Competition. It has also created new brews with different approaches in mind, such as Salmon de SHU, a sake that makes salmon even more delicious, as well as SABA de SHU, a sake to go with mackerel.



- Free tastings (reservation required)
 - Brewery tours available (reservation required) English-speaking staff available
 - Credit cards: VISA • Mastercard • AMEX • Discover • DinersClub • JCB • 銀聯 (Union Pay)
- TEL: +81-29-224-4111 Address: 3-9-5 Honcho, Mito City, Ibaraki
Hours: 8:30-17:30 Closed: Weekends and national holidays
URL: <https://www.ippin.co.jp/en/>



*Making the most of nature's blessings to
exclusively produce unfiltered junmai daiginjo*

Satonohomare (郷乃譽) Sudohonke Co., Ltd.

This brewery takes a naturalistic approach to sake, striving to create sake worthy of the gods amid the majesty of nature. The family motto, which expresses gratitude and respect for nature, is linked to sake, rice, soil, water, and trees. It was the first brewery in the world to release unpasteurized sake, and all of the sake in its cellars is unpasteurized and unfiltered. Its honors include being awarded 91 points by Robert Parker, and Trophy, Gold, Silver and Commended awards at the International Wine Challenge.



- Tastings (fee applies) Three glasses of Junmai daiginjo-shu: 1,650 yen (tax incl.)
 - Brewery tours available (view from windows of tasting room) English-speaking staff available.
- Reservation required • English pamphlet available
- English signs in store and at the brewery
 - Qualifies for liquor tax exemption
- TEL: +81-29-677-0152 Address: 2125 Obara, Kasama City, Ibaraki
Hours: 10:00-16:30 Closed: Sundays URL: <http://www.sudohonke.co.jp/en/>



Local sake for enjoying the taste and aroma of rice

INASATO (稲里) ISOKURA SAKE BREWERY



Founded in 1868, this brewery is located in Inada, Kasama City, a region that has flourished in rice farming since ancient times. Local rice, high-quality underground water gushing from Japan's most extensive area of granite, and the brewers—through relationships and interactions with many different people, the brewery produces Inasato, the epitome of sake bursting with the taste and aroma of rice.



- Free tastings (up to 5 people per session)
 - Brewery tours available (reservation required). English-speaking staff available.
- Foreign language reservations by email only (info@isokura.jp) ●English pamphlet available
TEL: +81-29-674-2002 Address: 2281-1, Inada, Kasama City, Ibaraki
Hours: 10:00–18:00 Closed: Irregular closures
URL: <https://isokura.jp/english.html>



Traditional tastes brewed at the foot of Mt. Tsukuba

Minanogawa (男女川) INABASHUZO

Since its establishment in 1867 at the end of the Edo period, this brewery has been brewing sake with local rice, local water, and local people, using methods that treasure the climate and environment of Tsukuba for over 150 years. Every process is performed by hand in order to produce the highest quality sake, resulting in exquisite sake that shines with individuality. The brewery has received a BEST OF CLASS, GOLD MEDAL at the Los Angeles International Wine Competition.



- Tastings (fee applies) Tasting set (three kinds of sake): 660 yen
 - Brewery tours available reservation required 1,650 yen, tasting set (three kinds of sake), tour given in Japanese, English explanatory video available ●English pamphlet available
 - Credit cards: VISA・Mastercard・AMEX・DinersClub・JCB
- TEL: +81-29-866-0020 Address: 1485, Numata, Tsukuba City, Ibaraki
Hours: 9:00–18:00 (tastings 10:00–17:00) Closed: Wednesdays
URL: www.minanogawa.jp/en/



*Flavorful sake made with rice
from local contract farmers*

Shiragiku (白菊)
Hirose Company



This brewery was established in 1805. It values its ties with the local community and brews sake using mainly rice grown in Ibaraki Prefecture by local contract farmers, under the motto “sake with a taste that never gets old,” one that blends in as part of daily life. Shiragiku, its representative brand, is a sake for evening drinking, and includes everything from *seisen* and *honjozo* to *daiginjo* and *junmai ginjo*. It also produces popular liqueurs, including *yuzu* and *umeshu* plum wine.

- Free tastings
- Brewery tours available (reservation required) English-speaking staff not available
- English pamphlet available
- Credit cards: VISA・Mastercard

TEL: +81-299-26-4131 Address: 880,Takahama, Ishioka City, Ibaraki
Hours: 8:00-17:00 Closed: Weekends and national holidays
URL: <https://shiragiku-sake.jp/>



*Local sake born in a waterside area
with plentiful water and greenery*

AIYU (愛友) Aiyushuzo Co., Ltd.

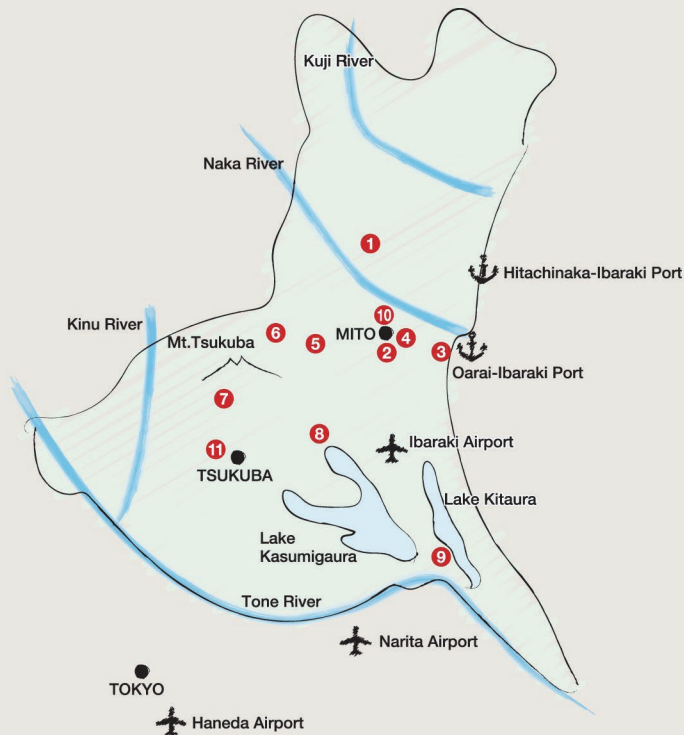
This sake brewery, located in Itako, Ibaraki, was founded in 1804. This brewery's sake is a labor of love, made with pure water from the Kitaura and Kasumigaura lakes and local rice. The Aiyu Daiginjo won the Gold Prize at the Annual Japan Sake Awards 2019, and a Trophy in the sake category at the International Wine Challenge 2020. Its Aiyu Junmai Daiginjo won first place in the *junmai daiginjo* category at the SAKE COMPETITION 2016.



- Free tastings
- Brewery tours available (reservation required).
- English pamphlet available
- Credit cards: VISA・Mastercard・AMEX・DinersClub・JCB

TEL: +81-299-62-2234 Address: 205, Tsuji, Itako City, Ibaraki
Hours: 9:00-17:00 Closed: Open year-round
URL: <http://aiyu-sake.jp/en/home/>





IBARAKI Sake Breweries & Sake Bars

- 1 Kiuchi Brewery (Naka City)
- 2 Meiri Shurui Co., Ltd. (Mito City)
- 3 TSUKINOI-SHUZOUTEN CO., LTD. (Oarai Town)
- 4 YOSHIKUBO SAKE BREWERY (Mito City)
- 5 Sudohonke Co., Ltd. (Kasama City)
- 6 ISOKURA SAKE BREWERY (Kasama City)
- 7 INABASHUZO (Tsukuba City)
- 8 Hirose Company (Ishioka City)
- 9 Aiyushuzo Co., Ltd. (Itako City)
- 10 Ibaraki Jizake Bar Mito (Mito Station)
- 11 Ibaraki Jizake Bar Tsukuba (Tsukuba Station)



IBARAKI GUIDE
<https://english.ibarakiguide.jp/>



IBARAKI SAKE
 GUIDE BOOK



IBARAKI EXPORTS

