

Date _____ Location _____

Sake Name _____

Brewery _____ Prefecture _____

Polish Rate _____ Rice _____

CATEGORY

Futsu-shu
Ginjo
Daiginjo
Honjozo
Junmai
Junmai Ginjo
Junmai Daiginjo

STYLE

Nama Yamahai Shizuku
Nigori Tokubetsu Muroka
Genshu Taru Sparkling
Kimoto Koshu Shizuku
Other _____

SERVING TEMPERATURE

Chilled Room Temperature Warm Hot

NOTES

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NOTES

SAKÉ PLOT

Mark where this sake lands in terms of dry/sweet and earthy/fruity



FLAVOR & AROMA CHARACTERISTICS

F = Flavor A = Aroma ; Check all that apply

- Banana, Pineapple, Steamed Rice, Lemongrass, Apple, Lemon, Hazelnut, Clove, Pear, Orange, Almond, Cinnamon, Melon, Fig, Walnut, Nutmeg, Lychee, Banana Bread, Roasted Nuts, Pepper, Cherry, Lily, Caramelised Nuts, Soy, Strawberry, Rose, Cream, Meat Broth, Grape, Cotton Candy, Yoghurt, Cedar, Aniseed, Honey, Butter, Earthiness, Nectarine, Brown Sugar, Fresh Cheese, Mushroom, Plum, Caramel, Mint, Roast Meat, Apricot, Bran, Basil, Water

Price _____ Size _____ Value Rating ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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ALCOHOL ADDED SAKÉ CATEGORIES

Futsu-shu

Saké made using rice coarsely milled - usually 70% - or higher that may also contain additional ingredients such as flavor enhancers, sugars and acids.

Honjozo

A versatile premium saké that occupies a grey area between ginjo and futsu-shu because the polish rate is around 70% but only a small amount of brewer's alcohol is allowed beyond the core water, rice, koji and yeast ingredients.

Ginjo

Super-premium saké made with rice milled below 60% and a small amount of distilled alcohol for stylistic purposes.

Daiginjo

Ultra-premium saké that is oft-considered the apex of the craft, daiginjo saké is made with rice milled below 50% with a small amount of distilled alcohol for stylistic purposes.

Tokubetsu

Literally meaning "special," Tokubetsu further separates a honjozo or junmai in any of three qualifying cases.

- 1) A saké is polished to 60% or below.
- 2) The saké is made 100 percent from saké-specific rice.
- 3) Features legally recognized quality-enhancing process.

The Role of Distilled Alcohol in Saké

Distilled alcohol is added to sake for a variety of reasons and whether or not a sake has added alcohol, it should not be interpreted as a sign that it is of a lesser nor higher quality.

Additionally, it may be logical to infer that distilled alcohol is used to increase alcohol content but that notion simply is not true. Nearly all saké is diluted to about 15% ABV after maturation. In some cases, adding distilled alcohol to basic table-grade sake is done for the purpose of increasing batch yield.

BREWING STYLE VARIANTS

Kimoto

During the first phase of fermentation, the kimoto method is an old and labor intensive technique used to mix and aerate the main ferment starter by rhythmically pushing the mash with wooden poles. This allows lactic acid to naturally develop and often yields a rich, layered and complex umami profile.

Yamahai

A simplified version of kimoto, yamahai is also a laborious method used to mix the fermentation starter, creating natural lactic acid. The resulting saké is also similarly complex with umami flavors and a higher acidity.

Nama

The word nama denotes that a saké has not been pasteurized like most saké. 'Namazake' must be cold stored and enjoyed shortly after brewing/purchase for maximum freshness. Nama is a rare style but for those looking for explosive ginjo flavor and pronounced aromatics, it is worth the hunt.

Genshu

Most saké is diluted with water to around 14-16% alcohol by volume (ABV) prior to bottling. However, genshu saké is not which tends to give it a heavier body and bolder flavor. Genshu saké usually runs between 18-20% ABV, making it ideal as-is and cocktails.

Nigori

Creamy or cloudy in appearance, nigori saké has been either coarsely filtered to allow fermentation solids or lees to pass through to final product. Alternatively, solids can simply be added back into the clear saké after fine filtering. Nigori saké is generally a lightly sweet, creamy and luscious beverage with characteristics ranging from almond and honey to banana and cherry. Best enjoyed lightly chilled.

PURE RICE SAKÉ CATEGORIES

Junmai

Meaning "pure," junmai saké must adhere strictly to the four core ingredients limitation of the category which prohibits the addition of ingredients beyond rice, water, koji and yeast. Most notably, this forbids brewers from adding distilled alcohol. Basic junmai saké does not have a minimum rice milling requirement.

Junmai Ginjo

Pure super-premium saké made with rice milled below 60% and no added distilled alcohol.

Junmai Daiginjo

Pure ultra-premium saké that is oft-considered the apex of the craft. As a daiginjo, the rice must be milled below 50%. As a junmai, only rice, water, koji and yeast may be used.

JUNMAI INGREDIENTS

Rice

relatively few rices are fit for brewing sake. A style is chosen to best feed the type of koji and yeast.

Water

An obvious ingredient, but the kind and source has a significant impact on flavor. Brewers seek soft, low mineral water.

Koji Mold

Koji mold converts rice starch into fermentable sugar by digesting the grain as it multiplies and grows. The type of koji mold will also impact flavor, aroma and mouthfeel.

Yeast

Similar to beer and wine, diverse strains of yeast offer a wide variety of influences on aroma, flavor and alcohol yield.

Sparkling

Carbon dioxide gas is added to a sweeter or infused style to create a bubbly and easy drinking saké. It is not a rule, but it is common for these to be packaged in single serving bottles at a lower alcohol content.

Koshu

Aged saké. Extremely rare and generally aged between three to five years. Koshu saké often appears yellow, amber or brown in color and may contain aromas and flavor characteristics ranging from honey and caramel to pungent soy, meat broth or pickled vegetables. Best served at room temperature or heated.

Muroka

Many saké is fined using active charcoal to remove all color, leaving a clear and colorless appearance. Clear, un-aged saké containing hints of yellow or lemongrass can be a sign that a saké is a muroka saké meaning the brewers did not use active charcoal to remove color.

Kijoshu

A rare sweet style variation created by replacing the water added on the third day of building the main ferment with saké. This method kickstarts the starch to sugar conversion, forcing the yeast to catch up over a longer fermentation period. The excess sugars create a much sweeter and luscious flavor profile with a higher alcohol content prior to dilution.

Taru-zake

Saké made using an age-old method of maturing the fermented liquid in Japanese cedar. Depending on the maturation duration, the saké will take on various levels of cedar aroma and flavor.