



**BRINGING**

**SAKE**



**TO  
THE**

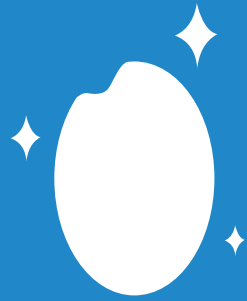
**TABLE**

**JAPAN**

**The Sake Handbook**

# What is Sake?

Sake is a fermented and brewed alcoholic beverage made from rice.



## The four key ingredients

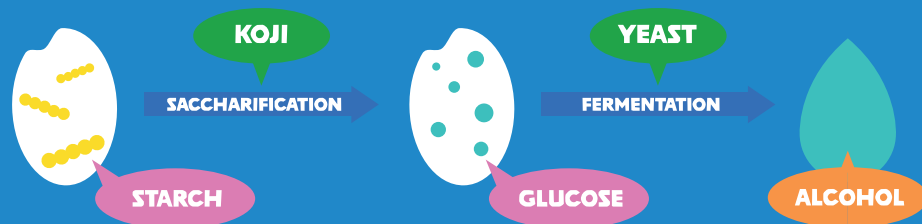


It is one of the world's most unique forms of alcohol production where rice is used as the raw material with the assistance of Koji (a rice mould).

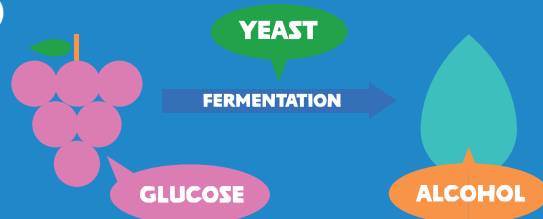
## Multiple Parallel Fermentation

Sake is made using a unique process called Multiple Parallel Fermentation, when both the glucose conversion and alcohol fermentation occur simultaneously. The enzymes in Koji

convert the starch (steamed rice) into glucose, while yeast converts glucose to alcohol. This all happens simultaneously in a single tank - this makes the 'starter ferment' or 'shubo'.



## Single Fermentation (Wine)



# Common Misconceptions About Sake

## Isn't sake high in alcohol?

It's important to note that sake is NOT distilled, therefore it is not a spirit. Sake is fermented and brewed. Sake's alcohol content sits at around 15%, which is closer to a wine in ABV.

## Doesn't sake have to be served hot?

This is a very common misconception. Sake can in fact be enjoyed at a variety of temperatures, from chilled to hot, depending on the style of sake, and of course, personal preference.

## ...but doesn't sake only pair with Japanese food?

This couldn't be further from the truth. Whilst sake is a delicious pairing with Japanese cuisine, it is in fact a very versatile and food friendly beverage! Sake is more umami-driven and has less acidity than wine. This enhances the flavour of the ingredients and creates a harmonious effect, making it a perfect pairing with a variety of dishes.

# Sake Aromas and Flavours

"So, what are some of the things I might smell and taste?"

The aroma and flavour spectrum of sake is delightfully broad, with so much to discover and enjoy!



## FLOWERS/FLORAL

white flowers, blossom, lilac, honeysuckle, violet



## PLANTS/WOOD

grass, straw/hay, green bamboo, black tea, pine, cedar, cypress, oak, ginseng



## EARTHY

mushroom, shiitake mushroom, dried shiitake mushroom, soil



## HERBAL/SPICES

cloves, cinnamon, lemongrass, anise, mint, basil, nutmeg, pepper, cacao, bitter chocolate



## NUTS/NUTTY

roasted nuts, chestnut, marzipan, fresh almond, walnut, caramelised nuts, hazelnut



## DAIRY/LACTIC

milk, cream, sour cream, yoghurt, butter, fermented butter, cheese, mature cheese, blue cheese, cream cheese



## FRUIT/FRUITY

pear, melon, ripe banana, green banana, banana bread, pineapple, green apple, lychee, apricot, peach, quince, fig, nectarine, lemon, grapefruit, grape, dried fruit



## OTHER

mineral, chalk, coffee, caramel, toast, biscuit, smoke, soy sauce, mirin, pickled vegetables, meat broth, smoked meats, molasses, honey, cotton candy, marshmallow, sugarcane



BELOW IS A ROUGH GUIDE TO HELP YOU CHOOSE FROM THE ABOVE PROFILES

- (JUNMAI) GINJO/ (JUNMAI) DAIGINJO
- AGED SAKE, KOSHU
- FUTSUSHU, HONJOZO
- JUNMAI, YAMAHAI, KIMOTO

Reference: "How to Enjoy Sake" Booklet by Japan Sake and Shochu Maker Association



## Enjoying Sake at Home

### Storage

Sake is far more forgiving than wine once opened and can keep well for weeks if stored correctly.

Although many sakes can keep well at room temperature, we do recommend storing your bottle in the fridge once opened. Be sure the cap is on tight.

If the sake is delicate and aromatic, we recommend drinking it within 2 weeks once opened. However, most sake will keep well for several weeks after opening.

### What to sip sake from

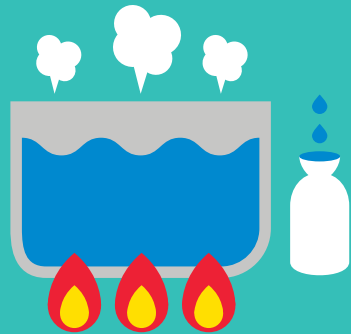
Sake can be enjoyed from a variety of vessels, including ceramic, lacquer-ware and glass. Wine glasses are commonly used for drinking sake, (chilled or room temperature), as it enhances the aromatic qualities. For hot sake, we recommend using a ceramic vessel.

### Warming Sake at Home

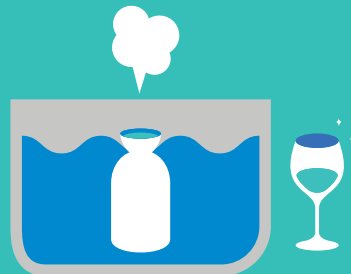
You don't need fancy equipment to enjoy warm sake at home. Although microwave method works, we recommend the waterbath method (see below), as this heats the sake gently and more evenly.

Affordable ceramic carafes (called Tokkuri in Japanese) are widely available and very handy to have if you are heating sake at home, as are digital kitchen thermometers.

#### 1. HEAT WATER UNTIL JUST BEFORE BOILING. POUR SAKE INTO A CERAMIC VESSEL.



#### 2. STOP THE HEAT AND IMMERSE THE VESSEL UP TO ITS NECK. LET IT WARM FOR ABOUT A MINUTE OR UNTIL THE DESIRED TEMPERATURE IS REACHED.



## Some Recommended Food Pairings

### Cheese and Salumi board

Sake is the perfect pairing with cheese due to the presence (in both sake and cheese) of lactic acid & amino acids - resulting in high levels of umami. Sake pairs well with salty food, like cured meats, so a cheese and salumi board is an absolute winner. The sake choices are endless here, but perhaps start with a fruity Ginjo style sake - the fruity sweetness compliments both the cheese and the meat, bringing out a little sweetness in both. A rich, full bodied Junmai or Kimoto will pair nicely with harder or aged cheeses, where an elegant but fruity Daiginjo or Ginjo style sake will compliment and soften the strong flavours of a blue cheese - think of a fruity sake as a substitute for fruit paste on your platter. Sparkling sake that's on the drier side pairs beautifully with a washed rind soft cheese. If you like something a little more adventurous, try a Namazake (unpasteurized) or a Koshu (mature sake) with a funky blue cheese - delicious!

### Ice Cream

Yes, we're serious! There are even a few brewers who have made sake specifically with this pairing in mind. Kijoshu, which is a sweeter style sake, is also a great pairing with ice cream, alongside it or poured over the top. Don't be afraid to try a little sake with, or on, your ice cream. We recommend vanilla ice cream for this pairing.



### Pizza

This match works so well and for many of the reasons listed earlier due to the cheese component of pizza. Cured meats are also a common ingredient of pizza. Tomatoes, often used as a base for pizza toppings, are also super high in umami. For a Margherita pizza, try a Ginjo style or a light, dry Junmai. Depending on your pizza's toppings, the choices are vast and varied. Cheese and mushroom pizza, or BBQ pizza pairs well with a richer or umami-driven sake, such as a Yamahai, Kimoto, Junmai or Honjozo. A four cheese pizza is perfect with a fresh and funky Namazake. A cloudy sparkling sake also pairs well with pizza, complimenting the yeasty bread base, try it with spicy salami, mushroom or pepperoni pizza. Seriously though, it's hard to go wrong with pizza and sake!

### BBQ and Grilled Meat

Don't be afraid to take a bottle of sake to your next BBQ - it's a great match! If you are cooking red or richer meats, opt for a richer, earthier or full bodied sake that will stand up to heavier flavours. Junmai, Kimoto, Yamahai or even something with just a hint of age can work well with the smokiness of the meat. If surf and turf is your thing, grab a bottle of Junmai Ginjo or a lighter Junmai style sake. If you're hitting the seafood hard, a cloudy sparkling works well, as does a Daiginjo or Ginjo style sake. A crisp and dry Junmai is also a good all rounder for the great Aussie BBQ!



**Cheers... Kanpai!!**

**Visit the "Bringing Sake to the Table" Campaign Website**

[www.sake-news.com.au/bringing-sake-to-the-table/](http://www.sake-news.com.au/bringing-sake-to-the-table/)



**The Sake Handbook**

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**Japan.** "Kampai" to the world.  
*Sake & Shochu*