

SUMMER 2023

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酒天国  
SAKE TENGOKU

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# Aizu Chujo / Tsurunoe Shuzo

Prefecture: Fukushima Town: Aizu Wakamatsu Brewer: Yuri Hayashi General Manager: Yoshimasa Sakai Established: 1794

## About the brewery

Tsurunoe Brewery (brand name: Aizu Chujo) was established in the city of Aizu Wakamatsu in Fukushima prefecture in 1794. The brewery was named after the famous Tsurugajo Castle and Inawashiro Lake, both of which are honored symbols of the area. The brand name Aizu Chujo was established in 1977, and named after the Lieutenant General Masayuki Hoshina, the first clan leader that defended the area.

The city of Aizu Wakamatsu has drastic weather patterns, creating distinctive and polar seasonal changes that allow the farmers to grow high quality rice. The requirements of heavy rainfall, cool winters, and hot, humid summers marked by large temperature swings from day to night are all present in the area. In winter, persistent snowfall cleans the atmosphere, and provides the cool climate for natural temperature control—an ideal sake brewing environment. In addition to having clean well-water as a source, they are able to utilize the great quality rice grown locally, including the Hattannishiki used for their Daiginjo and Junmai Daiginjo bottlings.

Tsurunoe is a very traditional sakagura, and visiting is like a trip back in time. There are no modern machines used in the brewery. Instead, you'll find large metal pots for steaming rice, ropes and pulleys to transport ingredients and sake in various stages of fermentation throughout the brewery, wooden platforms for accessing tanks, and wheelbarrows for movement of larger items. All brewing processes are done by hand in small batches—imbuing lots of care (and labor!) into each sake. The Toji (or brewmaster), believes that doing everything by hand allows a positive spirit to be present in the resulting sake. The style of sakes produced are at once pretty and delicate, while also being rich in flavor, with a long and lingering impression on the palate that beautifully fades away.

As old-school as the methods in the brewery are, there is one thing that is distinctive and modern in the brewery: the presence of female kurabito (those that work in the brewery). Yuri Hayashi continues her family's brewing traditions as the Toji, while her husband, Yoshimasa Mukai, is the General Manager. The pair met in college and eventually ended up working at her family's brewery together. As they tell it, they realized they were always fighting—so naturally, decided to get married. Yuri and her mother, Keiko, are also making and bottling sake under her own 'Yuri' label—a truly progressive step, and one the family is proud of.



Tsurunoe Shuzo exterior



The family + brewery team

# Aizu Chujo / Tsurunoe Shuzo

Prefecture: Fukushima Town: Aizu Wakamatsu Brewer: Yuri Hayashi General Manager: Yoshimasa Sakai Established: 1794

## Sakes

### Aizu Chujo Junmai

**Tasting notes:** Rich, subtle and complex aromas of quince, citrus and crushed sweet herbs intermingle with ripe banana and white chocolate. This sake is medium bodied and lush with a fine seam of minerality.

**Size formats:** 1.8L, 720mL      **SMV:** +3      **Polishing/Seimaibuai:** 60%      **Alcohol:** 15%

**Rice:** Gohyakumangoku (kaji), Takenemino (kake)      **Yeast:** Utsukushima Yume

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, slightly warm [41 - 95° F]

### Aizu Chujo Tokubetsu Honjozo

**Tasting notes:** Full of sweet spice, almond and smoke aromas with a slight herbaceous character. Just-dry and rich, featuring mid-palate notes of melon and peach, with a long and dry finish.

**Size formats:** 1.8L      **SMV:** +4      **Seimaibuai:** 55%      **Alcohol:** 15-16%

**Rice:** Gohyakumangoku (kaji), Takenemino (kake)      **Yeast:** Utsukushima Yume

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, slightly warm [41 - 95° F]

### Aizu Chujo Junmai Ginjo Yumenokaori

**Tasting notes:** Fresh and pure aromas of flower shop, fresh snow, honeydew melon, wet rock and a hint of bubble-gum. Bright and intriguing flavors of anise, ripe melon and white chocolate, with nice mid-palate ripeness.

**Size formats:** 720mL      **SMV:** +2      **Seimaibuai:** 55%      **Alcohol:** 15%

**Rice:** 100% Yumenokaori      **Yeast:** Utsukushima Yume

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, slightly warm [41 - 95° F]

### Aizu Chujo Daiginjo Hattannishiki

**Tasting notes:** Delicate aromas of lime, cucumber and melon. A lush mouthfeel full of fresh melon, peach and marcona almond, with a clean and dry finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL      **SMV:** +4      **Seimaibuai:** 40%      **Alcohol:** 17%

**Rice:** 100% Hattannishiki      **Yeast:** Utsukushima Yume

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

### Aizu Chujo Junmai Daiginjo Hattannishiki

**Tasting notes:** Beautiful nose of banana, melon and star anise, complimented with flavors of plum, lime and minerals with a clean and dry finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL      **SMV:** +3      **Seimaibuai:** 40%      **Alcohol:** 15%

**Rice:** 100% Hattannishiki      **Yeast:** Utsukushima Yume

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

# Aizu Chujo / Tsurunoe Shuzo

Prefecture: Fukushima Town: Aizu Wakamatsu Brewer: Yuri Hayashi General Manager: Yoshimasa Sakai Established: 1794

## Aizu Chujo Junmai Namachozo

**Tasting notes:** Fresh, complex aromas of quince and citrus with herbal tones. Off dry & brimming with flavors of banana, white chocolate, and a mineral-dry finish.

**Size formats:** 300mL

**SMV:** +3

**Polishing/Seimaibuai:** 60% **Alcohol:** 15%

**Rice:** Gohyakumangoku (koji), Takenemino (kake)

**Yeast:** Utsukushima Yume

**Temperature range:** Chilled [41 - 50° F]

## Yuri Junmai Ginjo

**Tasting notes:** Fresh, subtle aromas of brioche, cucumber, lychee and honeysuckle. Flavors are dry, with notes of crisp pear, lychee, banana and soft minerality in the finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +5

**Polishing/Seimaibuai:** 58% **Alcohol:** 15%

**Rice:** Gohyakumangoku

**Yeast:** Proprietary

**Temperature range:** Chilled [41 - 50° F]

# Gunma Izumi / Shimaoka Shuzo

Prefecture: Gunma

Town: Ōta-shi

Brewer: Toshinori Shimaoka

Established: 1863

## About the brewery

Located in the eastern region of the Gunma Prefecture between the Tone and Watarase rivers, this traditional brewery has prided itself on producing sake in small batches to maintain excellent taste and quality since 1863. Because of the traditional and laborious brewing-style of the brewery, the Toji only employs the most experienced kurabito (brewery workers).

The most important ingredient that goes into this sake is the water—which is from a local well in Akagiyama. The content of this local water is high in minerals—making it a bit ‘harder’ in style (still soft compared to most water sources in the world)—that gives these sakes a round and rich mouthfeel due to a more vigorous fermentation. They age all the sake anywhere from 1-3 years prior to release, which adds the depth and color for which this brewery is known. This sakagura is famous for using a traditional style of brewing called Yamahai, using only the natural yeast that has built up in the brewery over many generations. Between the higher-iron content in the water, Yamahai method of producing the shubo, and aging of the sakes, the style of sake from this brewery is decidedly rich, layered and complex, with a brightness of acidity—all which combine to make these sakes incredibly versatile with food, and great at any temperature.

Part of the brewery was severely damaged by a fire at the turn of the century. Because of the importance of the sakagura to the community, the local townspeople came together to rebuild and rehabilitate their beloved brewery.



Brewery tasting room



Koji-making in the brewery



Rice steaming prior to brewing

# Gunma Izumi / Shimaoka Shuzo

Prefecture: Gunma

Town: Ōta-shi

Brewer: Toshinori Shimaoka

Established: 1863

## Sakes

### Gunma Izumi Chotoku Junmai

**Tasting notes:** The yamahai style brewing process gives this sake a weighty, round, earthy palate with mushroom, roasted carrot and sweet potato notes, as well as a refreshing ripe fruit character of peach and papaya.

**Size formats:** 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +3

**Seimaibuai:** 50%

**Alcohol:** 15-16%

**Rice:** 100% Wakamizu

**Yeast:** Kyokai 9

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, warm [46 - 105° F]; highly versatile temperature-wise

### Gunma Izumi Yamahai Honjozo

**Tasting notes:** This is a classic, delicious Honjozo with crimini mushroom, almonds and lilac aromas. The first sip of this sake is full of stone fruit and minerals complimented by notes of caramel, cocoa and almond. Very umami.

**Size formats:** 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +3

**Seimaibuai:** 60%

**Alcohol:** 16-17%

**Rice:** 100% Wakamizu

**Yeast:** Kyokai 7

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, warm [41 - 105° F]

### Gunma Izumi Yamahai Junmai

**Tasting notes:** The alluring nose of this sake has apple, melon, rose and mushroom notes that lead to a very balanced, nuanced palate of mineral and pear. The Yamahai process uses the wild, natural yeast, and provides this sake with distinct earthy notes, including raisin, brown sugar, roasted oats and a long, dry finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +3

**Seimaibuai:** 60%

**Alcohol:** 15-16%

**Rice:** 100% Wakamizu

**Yeast:** Kyokai 7

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, warm [41 - 105° F]

### Gunma Izumi Usu-Midori Junmai Ginjo

**Tasting notes:** This bottling is one of the only releases from this brewery that's not aged prior to release.

'Usu-midori' translates to 'light green', and refers to the freshness of the sake, including notes of green pear, musk melon and grilled rice.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +3

**Seimaibuai:** 50%

**Alcohol:** 15.5%

**Rice:** 100% Wakamizu

**Yeast:** Proprietary

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

### Gunma Izumi Yamahai Junmai Maikase

**Tasting notes:** Savory nuances of toasted quinoa, banana bread and nutmeg are present in the nose. On the palate, this sake is layered, lifted and complex, with flavors of plantain, dried cranberry, nougat, white mushroom and almond.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +3

**Seimaibuai:** 60%

**Alcohol:** 15-16%

**Rice:** 100% Wakamizu

**Yeast:** Proprietary

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

# Jozen / Uonouma / Shirataki Shuzo

Prefecture: Niigata

Town: Echigo Yuzawa

Brewer: Takaki Matsumoto

Established: 1855

## About the brewery

Shirataki Shuzo was established in 1855 with the belief that the best sake is made using the finest locally sourced ingredients. This philosophy has been passed down through seven generations—and is currently executed by Takaki Matsumoto, the Toji. The brewery is based in the town of Echigo Yuzawa in Niigata Prefecture—an area renowned for its heavy snowfall, hot springs and plentiful skiing. In the spring, the snow melts to provide an abundance of clear, natural mineral water, which is a prime ingredient for sake. The melted snow passes through a coal seam when running downhill from the mountain peaks, creating a natural filtration—resulting in the soft and clean “snow melt” character the sakes are known for. The filtration process continues at the brewery, which further accentuates the taste and quality of the water. The resulting sake is easy-to-drink with a gentle texture, complex palate with a hint of sweetness, and delicate aroma.

Shirataki is a modern and innovative brewery, whose brewers are constantly experimenting and creating new bottlings and sake-related products. Jozen’s style is decidedly bright, aromatic, youthful, and clean.

Seven is Shirataki Shuzo’s homage to the seventh generation to take the reins as Toji and President of the company. It is their smallest production, most highly polished sake.

Echigo Yuzawa is in the Uonuma district, home to Uonuma Koshihikari, the most famous, high quality rice brand in Japan. As an homage to the local rice, Shirataki bottles the Uonuma sakes made at a lower polish rate, showcasing the quality and flavor profile in a forward and beautifully balanced way.

The combination of high quality clear natural water and top-quality rice means that Shirataki Shuzo is based in one of the best locations in Japan for the production of sake. Shirataki Shuzo produces seasonal sake that celebrates the opening of brewing season in the fall, and sakes that represent the winter, spring, and summer months. Notably, they are well known for their fresh and lively Namazake Junmai Ginjo, which can be enjoyed year-round.



Mountains surrounding Echigo Yuzawa



Takaki Matsumoto, Toji



# Jozen / Uonouma / Shirataki Shuzo

Prefecture: Niigata

Town: Echigo Yuzawa

Brewer: Takaki Matsumoto

Established: 1855

## Sakes

### Jozen Junmai Ginjo Namazake

**Tasting notes:** Fresh and lively on the palate, this namazake (unpasteurized sake) possesses a nose full of persimmon, citrus flowers, and white peach. Bold, bright flavors on the palate feature peach pie, vanilla wafers, lime and red licorice rope. This is a juicy, floral, and fruit forward expression of nama.

**Size formats:** 300mL, 720mL      **SMV:** +5      **Seimaibuai:** 60%      **Alcohol:** 15.5%

**Rice:** Gohyakumangoku (koji) & Koshi Ibuki (kake)      **Yeast:** K1801

**Temperature range:** Chilled [41 - 68° F]

### Jozen Junmai Ginjo Nigori

**Tasting notes:** Inviting aromas of mint, marshmallow, and Asian pear segue into a surprisingly dry palate, with additional notes of white chocolate and tart cherries. This nigori is an elegant, medium-bodied expression of the style.

**Size formats:** 300mL, 720mL      **SMV:** +4      **Seimaibuai:** 55%      **Alcohol:** 17.5%

**Rice:** Gohyakumangoku (koji) & Koshi Ibuki (kake)      **Yeast:** K1801

**Temperature range:** Chilled [41 - 68° F]

### Jozen Junmai Daiginjo Indigo

**Tasting notes:** Brilliantly clear, this elegant, highly polished sake (35%) shows clean, subtle aromas of honeydew melon and pear, with notes of fresh lilly intermingled with sumac. Strong in character, on the palate the fruit and minerality intertwine for balance, with flavors of apple, shiso, blood orange, bamboo and a hint of spice.

**Size formats:** 300mL, 720mL, 1.8L **SMV:** +2      **Seimaibuai:** 45%      **Alcohol:** 15.5%

**Rice:** Yamadanishiki (koji) & Miyamanishiki (kake)      **Yeast:** K901

**Temperature range:** Chilled [41 - 68° F]

### Jozen Junmai Daiginjo Genshu

**Tasting notes:** This undiluted (Genshu) bottling is fresh, clean, and creamy, with notes of mineral water, honeydew, pineapple, tapioca, anise, and lillies. The palate features a rich, layered fruitiness that shows yellow apple and melon parfait. The mineral-dominated finish is long with lovely, balancing acidity.

**Size formats:** 720mL      **SMV:** -2      **Seimaibuai:** 45%      **Alcohol:** 16-17%

**Rice:** 100% Koshi Tanrei      **Yeast:** K1801

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

### Jozen Junmai Ginjo Hiyaoroshi

**Tasting notes:** The Hiyaoroshi Namazume (once pasteurized) seasonal sake is a celebration of the arrival of Fall and the new brewing season. It's aromas are forward, fresh, and fruity, with notes of sweet melon, cherries, and hints of vanilla. Flavors on the palate evoke the season, including pumpkin pie, roasted nuts, and spiced plums.

**Size formats:** 300mL, 720mL, 1.8L **SMV:** -2      **Seimaibuai:** 60%      **Alcohol:** 16-17%

**Rice:** 100% Koshi Tanrei      **Yeast:** K1801

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

# Jozen / Uonouma / Shirataki Shuzo

Prefecture: Niigata

Town: Echigo Yuzawa

Brewer: Takaki Matsumoto

Established: 1855

## Sakes

### Seven Junmai Daiginjo

**Tasting notes:** This special bottling from Jozen commemorates the 7th generation of the family to lead the brewing tradition. It shows the elegance and finesse of a highly polished sake—with pristine orchard fruits and spring flower tones, with snow-melt texture and a softly-dry finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** -8

**Seimaibuai:** 25%

**Alcohol:** 16-17%

**Rice:** Yamadanishiki

**Yeast:** K1801

**Temperature range:** Chilled

### Uonuma Noujun Junmai

**Tasting notes:** The nose on this unique sake is a wonderful collection of butterscotch, caramel, and maple syrup candy aromas. Smooth and lush, rich and round, and layered and balanced. There is a solid toasted rice note with hints of honey, and a dash of caramel tones.

**Size formats:** 300 or 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +2

**Seimaibuai:** 80%

**Alcohol:** 16%

**Rice:** Gohyakumangoku

**Yeast:** G74 Niigata

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, warm [41 - 104° F]

### Jozen Junmai Sparkling Kira Kira

**Tasting notes:** Aromas of creamsicle and tart green apple. Light and effervescent on the palate with flavors of lychee, cream soda, and lemon meringue pie.

**Size formats:** 360mL

**SMV:** -12

**Seimaibuai:** 60%

**Alcohol:** 13-14%

**Rice:** Gohyakumangoku

**Yeast:** K1801

**Temperature range:** Chilled [41 - 50° F]

# Matsui Shuzoten / Matsuno Kotobuki

Prefecture: Tochigi

Town: Shioya-Gun

Brewer: Nobutaka Matsui

Established: 1865

## About the brewery

The founder of this brewery was Master Brewer Shioya-Gun, after-which the town where the brewery is located was named. As a young man, Shioya-Gun learned how to make sake in Niigata Prefecture. In 1865, he left Niigata determined to find the best water for brewing sake in Japan, which led him to his final destination in the Black Mountains of Tochigi Prefecture—just north of Tokyo—where there is an abundance of soft, clean water. Tucked away in the middle of a pine forest, a mountain stream flows down the hillside and is channeled directly into the brewery. The quality of water gives the sake a clean, soft mouthfeel and pristine expression. Matsuno Kotobuki is known to be a distinct and memorable sake.

The brewery itself is very small, and was once considered under the radar. With presence now in Japan and the United States, it receives the recognition it deserves and is highly allocated as a result. Motojiro Matsui, Toji and owner, is proud of his workers from the local community, admiring their passion for Japanese food and work. He likes to say they have the “souls of samurais”. Matsu no Kotobuki has a hidden meaning of ‘best happiness’ in it’s Japanese context, and expresses the passion of the brewers to craft sake that will ultimately make people happy—and mirrors the joviality with-which it’s made.



Brewing tanks at Matsui Shuzoten



Water from the source in Shioya-Gun

# Matsui Shuzoten / Matsuno Kotobuki

Prefecture: Tochigi

Town: Shioya-Gun

Brewer: Nobutaka Matsui

Established: 1865

## Sakes

### Matsuno Kotobuki Honjozo Otoko No Yujyo

**Tasting notes:** This fresh, subtle Honjozo has a nose of cantaloupe, leek, fresh clay, and pear. With just a hint of sweetness, the palate is light bodied with flavors of burnt caramel, chalk, and marshmallow, finishing dry.

**Size formats:** 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +8

**Seimaibuai:** 65%

**Alcohol:** 15-16%

**Rice:** Hitogokochi (koji), Tochigi 14 (kake)

**Yeast:** Kyokai 901

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [46 - 70° F]

### Matsuno Kotobuki Junmai Tochigi 14

**Tasting notes:** Slightly brassy in color, this sake has a unique, wonderful nose of cooked banana, apple, and fresh English peas. The locally grown "Tochigi 14" rice gives this rich, dry sake elements of plum, cucumber, and blood orange, and an intriguing hint of passion fruit.

**Size formats:** 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +3.5

**Seimaibuai:** 65%

**Alcohol:** 16-17%

**Rice:** 100% Tochigi 14

**Yeast:** Kyokai 601 & 1801

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [46 - 70° F]

### Matsuno Kotobuki Ginjo Namachozo

**Tasting notes:** This sake has a delicate and fresh nose with hints of candied orange, mint, bright strawberry, and wheatgrass. The palate is medium bodied with lively & rich tones of cherry and roasted walnut, showing balanced minerality and a long finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +6

**Seimaibuai:** 55%

**Alcohol:** 14-15%

**Rice:** 100% Gohyakumangoku

**Yeast:** Proprietary

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

### Matsuno Kotobuki Ginjo Gohyakumangoku

**Tasting notes:** This beautifully balanced Ginjo-style sake has a clean and refreshing nose reminiscent of pine needles, lychee, wintergreen, and dried pear. Slightly off-dry on the palate and full of eucalyptus, cucumber, and mineral notes, finishing with a clean & dry finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +5.5

**Seimaibuai:** 55%

**Alcohol:** 15-16%

**Rice:** 100% Gohyakumangoku

**Yeast:** Kyokai 601 & 1801

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

### Matsuno Kotobuki Matsucup Futsushu

**Tasting notes:** This clean, subtle Honjozo has a lovely nose of leek, dried pear, almond, white lily, with a hint of anise and tapioca. On the palate, this sake has a medium body, and shows notes of melon, pear, cereal, and white mushroom, with medium acidity and a classic Honjozo-style dry, clean finish.

**Size formats:** 180mL

**SMV:** +3

**Seimaibuai:** 70%

**Alcohol:** 17.5%

**Rice:** Hitogokochi (koji), Tochigi 14 (kake)

**Yeast:** Kyokai 901

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [46 - 70° F]

# Sawahime / Inoue Seikichi

Prefecture: Tochigi

Town: Utsunomiya

Brewer: Hiroshi Inoue

Established: 1863

## About the brewery

The young Toji and owner of this brewery, Hiro Inoue, believes it is very important that the brewery uses all things-local in the brewing process—including playing the music of a local musician to fermenting sake as it progresses through the brewing process. Local rice is used for each bottling, and is primarily Hitogokochi and Gohyakumangoku. The yeast strains utilized were isolated locally in Tochigi prefecture, and the brewers are all members of the community. Inoue believes that making sake should be fun and enjoyable—and his playful nature and joie de vivre is reflected in every sake he makes. His passion and skill earned his Sawahime Daiginjo the award of “best in the world” at the 2010 International Wine Challenge held in London.

As a commitment to his craft, the place, and the local style and best practices of brewing sake in the area, Inoue and two other brewers founded a Master Brewers School in the area, named Shimotsuke Toji. The declining number of Toji and the aging of the sake industry in Japan is of continuing concern for sake brewers and enthusiasts alike, so this allowed Inoue and fellow local Toji to help teach, mentor and pass on their enthusiasm for brewing sake on to the next generation.



Inoue Seikichi brewery



Hiro Inoue, Toji-Owner

# Sawahime / Inoue Seikichi

Prefecture: Tochigi

Town: Utsunomiya

Brewer: Hiroshi Inoue

Established: 1863

## Sakes

### Sawahime Tokubetsu Honjozo

**Tasting notes:** This inviting Honjozo is full of floral, quince, dried mango, anise, and hazelnut aromas. On the palate, this sake is medium bodied with a smooth and lush mouthfeel. Forward flavors of persimmon, bubble gum, and black pepper are balanced by lively acidity.

**Size formats:** 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +5

**Seimaibuai:** 60%

**Alcohol:** 15%

**Rice:** 100% Gohyakumangoku

**Yeast:** KT-901

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, warm [41 - 105° F]

### Sawahime Yamahai Junmai

**Tasting notes:** This sake has aromas of gardenia, ripe kiwi, papaya, green peppercorn, and aged comte cheese. On the palate, it also shows notes of nutmeg, mushroom, toasted oat, and yeast, with a rich body and bright acidity.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +1

**Seimaibuai:** 65%

**Alcohol:** 16-17%

**Rice:** 100% Hitogokochi

**Yeast:** Tochigi T-ND & T-F

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, warm [41 - 105° F]

### Sawahime Junmai Gold

**Tasting notes:** A forward, complex nose of rose, soy sauce, mushrooms, and hazelnuts combined with rich and buttery-caramel notes. Off-dry and beautifully balanced with flavors of golden delicious apple, peach, melon, chocolate, butter, and a lovely savory character. A beautiful aged sake with many food pairing possibilities.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** -28

**Seimaibuai:** 85%

**Alcohol:** 17%

**Rice:** 100% Tochigi Rice

**Yeast:** KT-901 (non-foaming!) Kyokai-Tochigi

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, warm [41 - 105° F]

### Sawahime Ginjo

**Tasting notes:** Notes of fresh cucumber, peach, apple, and bamboo are followed by light minerality. Slightly off-dry on the palate, with medium body, this sake suggests flavors of maraschino cherry, kiwi sorbet, and a hint of chive. Very well balanced—this sake has a rich, long finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +4

**Seimaibuai:** 50%

**Alcohol:** 16-17%

**Rice:** 100% Hitogokochi

**Yeast:** Tochigi T-ND

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

### Sawahime Junmai Ginjo

**Tasting notes:** This sake has subtle aromas of green apple, green asparagus, melon, creamy tapioca, and sweet pea flowers. The palate features fresh and pure flavors of melon rind, dried pear, cashew, and white pepper with an intriguing herbal, eucalyptus flavor, and finishes with crisp acidity.

**Size formats:** 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +6

**Seimaibuai:** 50%

**Alcohol:** 15-16%

**Rice:** 100% Hitogokochi

**Yeast:** Tochigi T-ND, T-F & T-S

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

# Sawahime / Inoue Seikichi

Prefecture: Tochigi

Town: Utsunomiya

Brewer: Hiroshi Inoue

Established: 1863

## Sakes

### Sawahime Daiginjo

**Tasting notes:** This sake has bright aromas of fresh lilies, ripe pear, and banana. On the palate, the minerality is reminiscent of fresh morning dew, is dry to off-dry with medium-plus body, medium acidity and flavors of pear and melon, finishing with and the classic Sawahime-dry finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +3

**Seimaibuai:** 40%

**Alcohol:** 17-18%

**Rice:** 100% Hitogokochi

**Yeast:** Tochigi T-F & T-S

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

### Sawahime Junmai Daiginjo Shimotsuke

**Tasting notes:** Delightful aromas of cantaloupe, raspberry, and saffras are complimented by delicate minerality and flavors of citrus, vanilla custard, and melon, finishing dry.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +0

**Seimaibuai:** 40%

**Alcohol:** 15%

**Rice:** 100% Gohyakumangoku

**Yeast:** Tochigi T-F & T-S

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

### Sawahime Junmai Daiginjo Platinum

**Tasting notes:** A fresh, clean, and complex nose features peach, banana, lychee, and pineapple, accented by notes of cucumber, rose, licorice, and cotton candy. Medium bodied and off-dry with rice and peach flavors on the palate accented by balancing acidity and a long, dry finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +.5

**Seimaibuai:** 40%

**Alcohol:** 16.5%

**Rice:** 100% Yume-Sasara

**Yeast:** Tochigi yeast T-S & Tochigi Yeast T-F

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature [41 - 68° F]

# Shuho Shuzo

Prefecture: Yamagata

Town: Yamagata City

Brewer: Katsuyuki Aita

Established: 1890

## About the brewery

Shuho Sake Brewery was established in 1890 in a small mountain village at the foot of Mount Zao — an active volcanic mountain range separating Yamagata and Miyagi prefectures. This cold, snowy and remote area is known for extremely high quality sake — having the distinct honor of being the only internationally recognized GI (short for Geographical Indication) for sake in the world; other famous GIs include Champagne and Darjeeling tea.

Shuho specializes in Daiginjo level sake, believing that sake made from highly polished rice represents the pinnacle of the brewmaster's technique, especially due to the arduous process of refining the rice into sake, the small margin for error producing this style has, and the delicacy and clarity that the resulting sake expresses. Shuho utilizes and polishes in-house over 10 types of rice from local, family-owned farms. While Shuho produces a number of unique sakes with different sakamai, polish rates and styles, the common seam throughout their bottlings is a delicate balance of umami and acidity, and a clean mineral undertone.





# Shuho Shuzo

Prefecture: Yamagata

Town: Yamagata City

Brewer: Katsuyuki Aita

Established: 1890

## Sakes

### Shuho Junmai Daiginjo Yamadaho 45

**Tasting notes:** This elegant and aromatic sake shows notes of bruised pear, kiwi, lemon blossoms and freshly-kneaded bread dough. On the palate, a core of mountain stream-minerality intermingles with floral tones and ripe green-pomaceous fruits.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** -4

**Seimaibuai:** 45%

**Alcohol:** 17%

**Rice:** Yamadaho

**Yeast:** Yamagata yeast

**Temperature range:** Chilled [46 - 50° F]

### Shuho Junmai Daiginjo Chokarakuchi

**Tasting notes:** This dry and layered sake shows softly aromatic notes of honeysuckle, tarragon and lychee. On the palate, medium bodied-weight carries freshly steamed rice notes, along with green grapes and bruised apple.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +10

**Seimaibuai:** 45%

**Alcohol:** 17%

**Rice:** Yukimegami

**Yeast:** Yamagata yeast

**Temperature range:** Chilled [46 - 50° F]

### Shuho Junmai Ginjo Omachi

**Tasting notes:** This rich and juicy expression of Omachi rice shows aromas of plantain, golden delicious apple and rainier cherries. On the palate, bright acidity weaves through chewy-juicy texture, with notes of honeydew melon, summer peach, toasted wheat and cheerios.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** -1

**Seimaibuai:** 50%

**Alcohol:** 17%

**Rice:** Omachi

**Yeast:** Yamagata yeast

**Temperature range:** Chilled [46 - 50° F]

### Shuho Tokubetsu Junmai Chokarakuchi

**Tasting notes:** This sake shows round and plush, with notes of fennel flower, oats, white mushroom and puffed rice. Fresh yogurt, mint and daikon are present on the mid-palate, along with ample acidity and a lingering finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +10

**Seimaibuai:** 55%

**Alcohol:** 16%

**Rice:** Yukimegami

**Yeast:** Yamagata yeast

**Temperature range:** Chilled [46 - 50° F]

# Tsuji Zenbei Shoten / Sakuragawa

Prefecture: Tochigi

Town: Mooka-shi

Brewer: Hiroyuki Tsuji

Established: 1743

## About the brewery

Tsuji Zenbei was founded in the mid-18th century, and the family has passed down the brewing traditions to the current young owner of the brewery, who represents the 16th generation. The brewery is surrounded by very soft local well-water that allows the sake to be more umami. The brewery uses many different types of rice, including Yamadanishiki, Omachi, Gohyakumangoku, Yumenishiki, Tochigi 14, Miyamanishiki, and Ashinoyume, which are all locally sourced. This brewery is well known for the aging process of their sake, which entails five different refrigerators with different temperatures. This allows each bottling to rest at the temperature the Toji feels is most ideal for the individual style of each sake produced. Whereas the majority of breweries purchase rice that's polished offsite, this brewery is one of the rare few that owns a rice polishing machine, allowing oversight and quality control beginning with the milling of the rice.

The style of sake at Tsuji Zenbei is made to be enjoyed with food, and they've found a following with a younger population of sake drinkers in Japan. The family shows extreme passion for brewing, and they strive to improve their sake each year no matter what.



Brewery entrance

# Tsuji Zenbei Shoten / Sakuragawa

Prefecture: Tochigi

Town: Mooka-shi

Brewer: Hiroyuki Tsuji

Established: 1743

## Sakes

### Tsuji Zenbei Junmai Daiginjo Tobingakoi

**Tasting notes:** This Junmai has a beautiful nose full of banana, melon, and star anise. The all natural brewing process gives this sake a bright, fresh mouthfeel full of plum, lime, green banana, and soft minerals, accented by a clean and dry finish. This is a collaboration with Chef Ken Tominaga, and only 100 bottles were made.

**Size formats:** 1.8L

**SMV:** +2

**Seimaibuai:** 50%

**Alcohol:** 17-18%

**Rice:** 100% Yamada Nishiki

**Yeast:** Kumamoto 9, Kyokai 1801

**Temperature range:** Chilled [46 - 50° F]

### Tsuji Zenbei Junmai Daiginjo Aiyama

**Tasting notes:** Soft aromas of tea, ginger, cucumber, vanilla, and almond. The style is just-dry, with bright and rich flavors of pear, nectarine, and cantaloupe, with a long, mineral-driven finish.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +1

**Seimaibuai:** 50%

**Alcohol:** 17%

**Rice:** 100% Aiyama

**Yeast:** 1801 & 1401

**Temperature range:** Chilled [46 - 50° F]

### Tsuji Zenbei Junmai Ginjo Muroka Nama Genshu Omachi

**Tasting notes:** Fresh and forward, this nama has intense aromas of lemon, melon, peach, and honeysuckle. Off-dry and full bodied with mirrored flavors (as the aromas) on the palate, and matched by bright acidity.

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +1

**Seimaibuai:** 56%

**Alcohol:** 17.3%

**Rice:** 100% Omachi

**Yeast:** 1801 & T-ND

**Temperature range:** Chilled [46 - 50° F]

### Tsuji Zenbei Junmai w/Wine Yeast

**Tasting notes:** The use of Premiere de Mousse-Champagne wine yeast in this sake creates a brew with bright, lifted acidity. It has fresh and pure aromatics of lemon-lime, celery, tarragon, lily, pear and nectarine. Very wine-like on the palate,

**Size formats:** 720mL

**SMV:** +2

**Seimaibuai:** 65%

**Alcohol:** 13.6%

**Rice:** 100% Gohyakumangoku

**Yeast:** Champagne wine yeast, specifically PDM

**Temperature range:** Chilled [46 - 50° F]

### Sakuragawa Futsushu

**Tasting notes:** A subtle and dry medium-bodied sake, with notes of almond, citrus, and crushed herbs. Clean, dry, and lithe, this is a great everyday-drinking sake.

**Size formats:** 720mL, 1.8L

**SMV:** +4

**Seimaibuai:** 68%

**Alcohol:** 15.5%

**Rice:** 100% Local Japanese rice

**Yeast:** Kyokai 701

**Temperature range:** Chilled, room temperature, warm [41 - 105° F]