

# 本格焼酎 泡盛

## What is Honkaku Shochu & Awamori?

Honkaku (authentic) shochu and awamori are brewed from diverse grains and other crops, also with rice koji, by unique brewing techniques. These too are positioned as “kokushu”, a national drink of Japan, for their deep connection to traditional culture.

Shochu made from natural ingredients, in old-fashioned ways, and batch distilled (officially called "otsu-type shochu") is called honkaku shochu. Within that category, shochu made in Okinawa Prefecture is called "awamori".

Honkaku shochu and awamori are distilled liquors, as are whisky, brandy, and vodka, but the difference lies in how the raw material starch is converted into sugar. Western distilled liquors use large amounts of barley or other raw materials of abundant sugar content. Korean soju, Chinese baijiu, and other Eastern distilled liquors use koji.

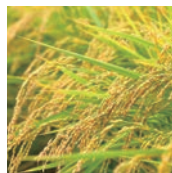
## Diverse Raw Materials



Sweet Potato



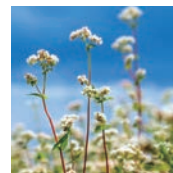
Barley



Rice



Brown Sugar



Buckwheat

Compared to foreign distilled liquors, the raw materials (for shochu) are truly diverse, including sweet potato, barley, rice, brown sugar, and buckwheat.

Each region grows grains and other crops suited to the local soil, and these become the ingredients for the honkaku shochu they produce. As a result, different kinds of honkaku shochu have different flavors and aromas based on where they were produced, making it a drink with plenty of variety to enjoy.

## Fermentation Method

The most distinctive features of the shochu production process are fermentation with koji, and the use of pot distillation. Koji-kin is a type of mold indigenous to Japan.

## Distillation Method

There are two types of pot distillation: atmospheric and reduced pressure distillation. Honkaku shochu and awamori are classified as pot distillation in which the spirit retains the rich aroma of the ingredients. On the other hand, continuous distillation, as the name suggests, involves continuously repeated distillation. This is used to efficiently produce high concentrations of alcohol, without the flavor and aroma of the ingredients.



Stainless Steel Pot Still



Wooden Pot Still

## Maturation Method

After distillation, they are placed in jars, barrels, or tanks to mature. This maturation further deepens taste and fragrance.

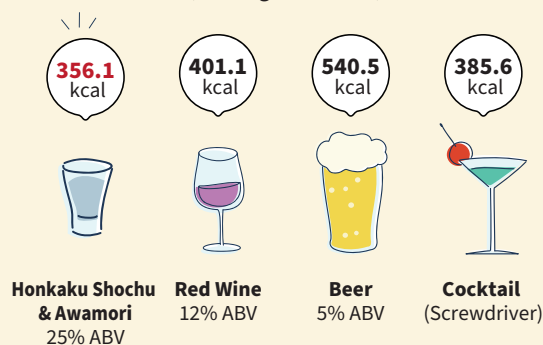
As awamori is matured, it develops a progressively deeper flavor. Matured awamori is known as “kusu.” The standards for kusu are strict and only products consisting of 100% awamori matured for at least three years can be labeled as kusu.



## Benefits of Honkaku Shochu and Awamori

Honkaku shochu and awamori have low calories and are free of sugars and purines. Honkaku shochu and awamori have higher alcohol content compared to brewed alcoholic drinks like beer and wine. Though it is commonly thought that this must mean they are higher in calories, in fact the opposite is the case.

### Calorie Comparison of Different Drinks (Per 50g of Alcohol)



\* Values calculated based on the 2010 Standard Tables of Food Composition in Japan: calorie content may vary by brand or by recipe.  
\* Because alcohol content varies by type of alcoholic drink, the total amount consumed will vary when consuming 50g of alcohol. For Honkaku Shochu, this amount is approximately 244g.

### What is the ideal amount to drink?

The ideal amount to drink is about 120 ml per day.

### What is the most effective way to drink?

The most effective way to drink it is mixed with hot water, which makes it easier to smell the aroma compounds, and improves absorption by internal organs. If you don't like, or can't handle, alcohol, even just mixing honkaku shochu or awamori with hot water and inhaling it is believed to help prevent blood clots.

In order to prevent rapid increases in alcohol levels within the body, it can be best to have it with a meal. Natto is one ingredient that heightens thrombolytic effects. Eat a relish made of natto with your drink to enhance the effect. Honkaku shochu and awamori are drinks can be expected to benefit health even when drunk in moderation.

### Honkaku Shochu & Awamori help dissolve blood clots?

Professor Hiroyuki Sumi of Kurashiki University of Science and the Arts published a paper and clinical data suggesting that honkaku shochu and awamori can help dissolve blood clots.

According to the research, drinking honkaku shochu or awamori leads to greater activation of enzymes that dissolve blood clots, compared to drinking other alcoholic drinks. The research also found that there are about a hundred aroma compounds in honkaku shochu awamori, and that they each stimulate the secretion of enzymes.

In addition to activating enzymes, drinking alcohol also has a relaxing effect, which is believed to help prevent blood clots. The enzymes work more effectively when the body is at rest, and reduce the effects of the activated enzymes, which are easily affected by external stress.

## Abundant Ways to Enjoy These Spirits

Honkaku shochu and awamori offer a variety of delicious options. There's no one "correct" way to drink spirits.

### Mixed with Hot Water

For people looking for health effects



Mix about six parts 25% ABV honkaku shochu or awamori with four parts hot water. Hot water brings out the sweet and savory notes of these spirits.

### Mixed with Cold Water

What many Japanese people are drinking



Adding cold water is perhaps the most popular way to enjoy honkaku shochu and awamori: it makes these spirits milder and smoother, while still retaining their signature flavor and aroma.

### On the Rocks

Recommended for hot days



Pour into a glass over ice. As the ice melts, the flavor of these spirits gradually changes.

### Straight

To enjoy the full, true flavor



Pour directly into a small cup or glass, and savor your honkaku shochu or awamori at full strength.

# Distilled Spirits from Japan and the World

There are many drinks around the world that are categorized as distilled liquors, and the ingredients used in them are truly diverse.

Japan's honkaku shochu is called "shochu" in English, but the pronunciation is very close to the Korean distilled drink "soju", so some may think it is the same thing.

Japan's honkaku shochu and Korean soju have very different raw materials and distillation methods. In Japan, there are shochu varieties from specific base ingredients, such as sweet potato, rice, and barley, but soju uses a mixture of ingredients, such as grains and starch, and the ingredients are not specified.









## 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.honkakushochu-awamori.jp/english](http://www.honkakushochu-awamori.jp/english)



Japanese honkaku shochu is made by batch distilling, while Korean soju is made by continuous distilling. We recommend honkaku shochu to those who want to enjoy the taste and fragrance of the raw materials.

European Distilled Spirits				Asian Distilled Spirits			
	Brandy France, etc. 	Whisky UK, etc. 	Vodka Russia, etc. 		Soju (Diluted) Korea 	Baijiu China 	Honkaku Shochu & Awamori Japan 
Ingredients	Fruit	Malt	Malt, grains, potatoes	Ingredients	Enzyme agents, grains, starch	Cake style koji, grains	Rice koji, barley koji, grains, sweet potatoes
Distillation Method	Pot distillation (twice)	Pot distillation (twice)	Continuous distillation	Distillation Method	Continuous distillation	Steaming basket distillation	Pot distillation (once)
Alcohol Content	40%	40%	40%	Alcohol Content	20%	55%	25%
Unique Traits	Aged in casks for flavor and aroma		Filtered (refined) through white birch charcoal	Unique Traits	Made with highly distilled alcohol (95%), which is then diluted and mixed with sweeteners, etc.	Fermented without adding water; known for strong fragrance and flavor	Retains flavor and aroma of ingredients

Most common ingredients, distillation methods, and alcohol contents shown for each.



Sweet potato shochu, barley shochu, and rice shochu is often seen on a menu. If you are not sure, which one should you order?



## RICE

For the beginner, we recommend fruity rice shochu. The richness and faint sweetness of rice comes through, and the refined fragrance of ginjo. We recommend it for beginners because it is free of peculiar tastes.



## BARLEY

Barley shochu is easy to drink, with few eccentricities. You can enjoy the fragrant barley scent and flavor. It has few eccentricities in its flavor, leaving a wide range of options open for how to drink it, including in citrus-blended cocktails.



## SWEET POTATO

Strongly fragrant imojochu (sweet potato shochu). The unusual scent of sweet potatoes is powerful, and their subtle sweetness should not be overlooked. Try it mixed with water, hot or cold, to enjoy that sweet potato flavor.

# How the connoisseurs drink

### Pre-Mix

One unique way to try honkaku shochu or awamori is by “pre-mixing” it. Simply just add water to these spirits, and let rest for one to three days before drinking. The result is a smooth, pleasant drink.

### Jikikan

The flask is warmed over a direct flame, producing a soft and sweet flavor.



### Hanatare

The first part of shochu produced when the moromi mash is distilled is called hanatare. It has the highest alcohol content. As distillation progresses, hondare and suedare are produced, with declining alcohol content. Products which gather just the rare hanatare portion have started to come onto the market.

# How to Pair It

With shochu there are no “wrong” food pairings, so there is no need to worry about making a mistake. That being said, the right pairing can elevate both the food and shochu to all new heights!



### 芋 IMO

Sweet Potato shochu is intensely fragrant with a sweet smokey flavor. It pairs well with fermented or cured products like cheese and ham, but also works surprisingly well with sweets like chocolate.



### 麦 MUGI

Barley shochu has a relatively neutral flavor, accented by nutty or sometimes grassy notes. It pairs well with foods such as chicken and root vegetables.



### 米 KOME

Rice shochu is the most neutral shochu with a sweet aftertaste. It pairs well with foods with delicate flavors such as seafood, rice dishes, and cream sauces.



### 泡盛 AWAMORI

Although awamori is produced with rice, its distinct production process gives it a more robust flavor than rice shochu. It pairs well with fried foods and fatty meats such as pork belly.



### 黒糖 KOKUTOU

Brown sugar shochu is produced from sugarcane, so it's not all that surprising that it tastes a bit like rum. It's great with gamey meats such as pork and lamb, but also pairs well with desserts.



Cheese



Cured Meat



Fried



Lean Meat



Fatty Meat



Seafood



Spicy



Sweets



Vegetables

- 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.