



Celestial Water



MIÉ SAKE BREWERS ASSOCIATION

Celestial Water

TABLE OF CONTENTS



The Land "Mie"

- { Abundance of Nature and Water
- Centuries of Rice Farming
- Nature Offerings to the Gods

The Water

- { Flowing from Past to Present
- Blessings from the Sky

Symbiosis

- { Eternal Prayers Ise Jingu
- Living in Harmony with Nature

The Sake

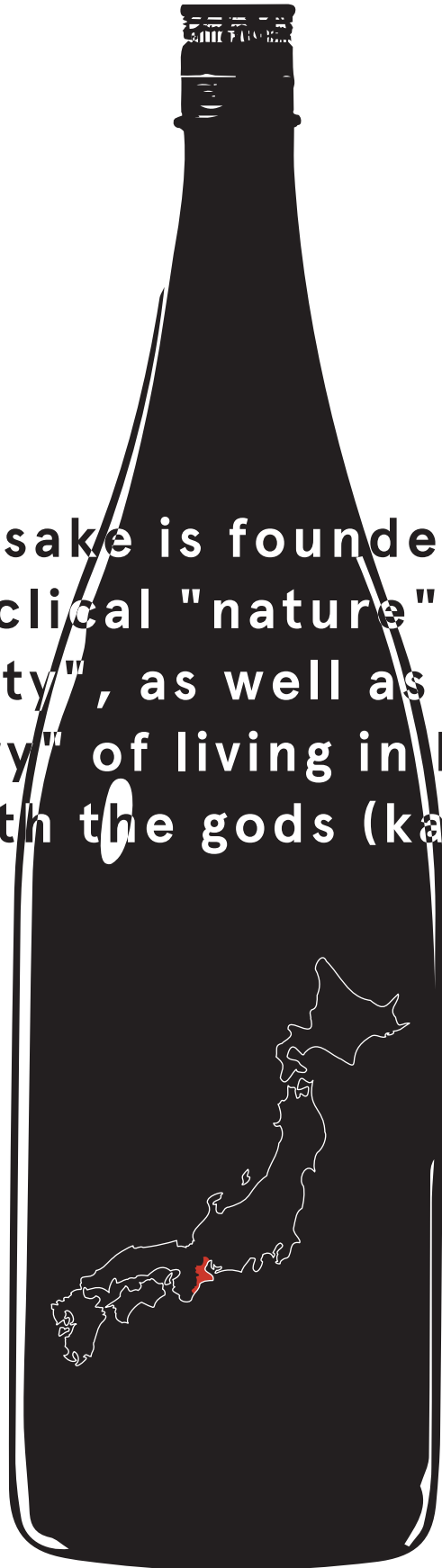
- { Passing on the Traditional Brewing with Inherited Wisdom and Skilled Craftsmanship
- The Importance and Quality of Water in Sake / Unique Characteristics of Mie's water
- How to brew Sake

[Column] From MIE to your Table!

MIÉ SAKE BREWERS ASSOCIATION

The Land “Mie”

Mie's sake is founded on its cyclical "nature" and "society", as well as its long "history" of living in harmony with the gods (kami).





Abundance of Nature and Water



Mie Prefecture is located near the center of the Japanese archipelago, with its prefectural land stretching from north to south, facing the Pacific Ocean. The northern region of Mie Prefecture is characterised by the flat Ise coastal plain, and to the west lies the Suzuka and Nunobiki Mountains, ranging in altitude from 700 meters to 1200 meters. Further west, lies the Iga Basin. Along the Miyagawa River that runs through the center of the prefecture, rise the Kii Mountains, with Mt. Odaigahara, at its highest peak. Closer to the shores, the Kumano-nada sea forms a "ria" coast with a complex and intricate pattern. In Mie Prefecture, every season is an encounter with nature.

The Ise Plain, where many Mie residents live, is a long and wide plain stretching from north to south. The climate is mild, with an average annual temperature of around 15 degrees celsius, and an annual precipitation of 1800-2000mm.

The Kumano-nada coast is the warmest in the prefecture, due to the Kii Mountains which block northwest monsoons and the warm Kuroshio Current which flows along its coast.

The Odaigahara mountain range, considered one of the "100 famous Japanese mountains", is known as one of the wettest regions of Japan, with an average annual precipitation of about 4000mm; twice as much as the Ise Plain.

The average temperature of the Iga Basin in January is 3 degrees celsius, making it the coldest in the prefecture. The summer heat can be extreme however, and the inland climate brings fluctuating daily and annual temperatures. The annual precipitation is 1300-1500mm, making it the area with the least rainfall in the prefecture.



Centuries of Rice Farming



Since ancient times, Japan has been referred to as the “land of abundant reed plains and rice fields” , and a “country blessed with water where rice grows in splendor”. In Japan, rice is not only a staple food, but an offering that connects the people to the gods.

Rice farming in Mie Prefecture has a long history, with legend saying Yamatohime-no-mikoto established the rice fields in Ise Jingu 2000 years ago.

At Ise Jingu, about 1500 rituals and ceremonies are held each year to pray for nature’s blessings and the well-being of its people. The rice used in the rituals are grown in Mie Prefecture, and the first rice of the year harvested is dedicated as an offering to the gods at the “Kanname-sai” , a ceremony to pray for a rich harvest and the continued health of the Imperial Family and the Japanese Nation. Such offerings are prayers of gratitude for blessings from the sky.





Nature Offering to the Gods



The history of sake in Mie prefecture can be seen in the offerings dedicated to its gods. The Higoto-asa-yu-omike-sai is a ceremony that has continued for 1500 years and takes place daily (higoto) - once in the morning and night (asa-yu) to offer food (omike) to the gods. The offering consists of three servings of rice, katsuobushi (bonito flakes), fish, seaweed, vegetables, fruits, salt, water, and three offerings of sake. In particular, the "rice, salt, sake, and water" are sourced locally from Ise Jingu. Seafood such as abalone, bonito, fish, and seaweed are also essential ingredients for the offerings and are all harvested in Mie Prefecture.





The Water

Pure and beautiful,
a blessing from the sky



Flowing from Past to Present



The rivers that flow through Mie stem from the rainwater that pours out from its magnificent Kii and Suzuka mountains. The rain that falls onto the forests transforms into a river that flows into the Pacific Ocean. The water then evaporates, returns to the sky, forms a cloud, and falls again onto the forests. Since the time the earth was born, water has continued to circulate through our ecosystem, offering its blessings to people.



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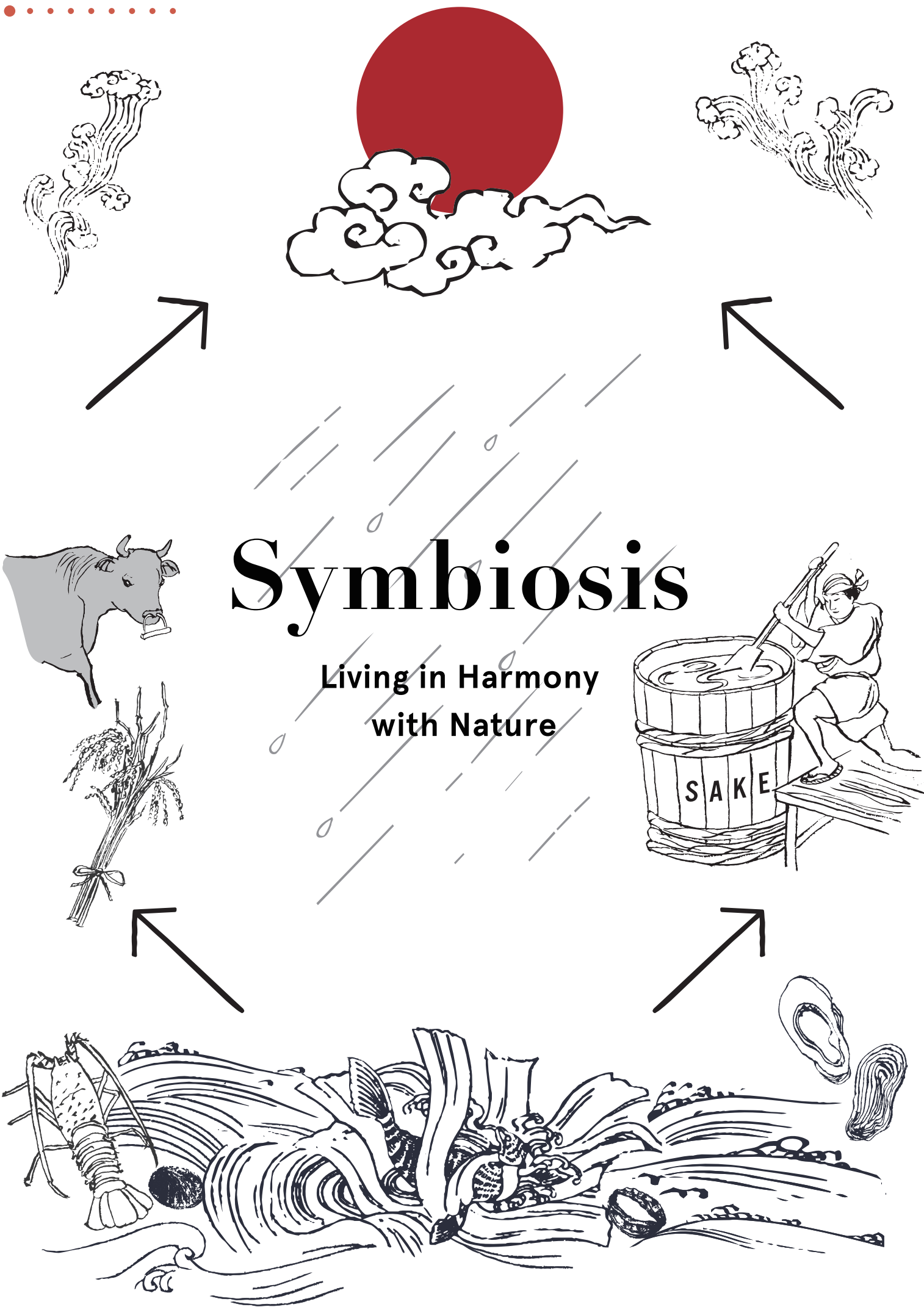


Blessings from the Sky

- Celestial Water -

The rain that falls onto Mie's forests flows as a river, pours into the sea, gives life, and returns to the sky. The endless circulation of water. Sea, rice, sake, and the gods.

This water, blessed by the sky, we call "Celestial Water".



Symbiosis

Living in Harmony
with Nature



Eternal Prayers Ise Jingu



Ise Jingu is officially called "Jingu". The Jingu consists of 125 shrines, including the Inner Shrine, which enshrines the Shinto goddess Amaterasu-Omikami, and the Outer Shrine, which enshrines the goddess Toyouke-Omikami. The total area of Jingu, located in Ise, is almost the same size as the center of Paris, with most of the land consisting of forest. Many rituals and ceremonies are conducted daily to pray for the prosperity of the Imperial family, world peace, and an abundant harvest.



The largest ceremony of Jingu is the Shikinen Sengu. Every twenty years, a new divine palace with the same dimensions as the current one is constructed at an alternative site adjacent to the main sanctuary. This ceremony, which has been conducted for over 1300 years, symbolizes the shrine as “eternally unchanged”.



Nature And People

Living in Harmony with Nature



Nature's blessings are not something given, but borrowed.
We offer our gratitude so as to continue the cycle of blessings.
People offer their prayer with great reverence of nature.



Aiko Ono / Photographer x Ama Diver

"Ama diver's work is always in relation to nature. What a diver can catch depends on the seasons, and in days of typhoons, big waves, heavy winds and heavy rains, it is not even possible to go out to sea. Some days offer big catches, while other days don't. Ama diver's work does not rely on one's own power only, but is something that is bestowed upon. At sea, one is side by side with danger, so I pray daily with gratitude for safety - to the sea, to our ancestors, to Ujigami (guardian god), to Shintai (body of the Kami), and to Ise Jingu. I am amazed at how we have been supporting each other for generations and living with the blessings of the sea. Now it is our turn to pass on the abundant resources of the sea to the next generation. I promise this with my heart, and today again, with gratitude, I dive into the sea."

Yukiaki Tenpaku / CEO of Maruten Co., Ltd. - Katsuono Tenpaku (Katsuoibushi-goya)

"The dedications to Ise Jingu are at the foundation of how we make our katsuobushi (bonito flakes), and we have inherited the spirit of Naorai, where gratitude, prayer, and food is shared with the gods. My job is to utilize the wisdom of our ancestors who understood the climate of this land, protected the circulation of nature, and created produce that is good for our people. I believe it is our god given duty to receive this blessing, and to pass this forward to the next generation without forgetting our gratitude and reverence for nature."



Takehisa Inada / Rice Farmer

"I grow rice called Isehikari using a method that uses as little pesticide as possible. Of the rice cultivated at a field in Ise Jingu, the Isehikari is a variety selected from the only two strains of rice that remained after a devastating typhoon one year. The rice from Ise Jingu is grown on the land inherited from our ancestors, and with the water that springs from the mountains of Ise Jingu. Although this method of rice farming that does not rely on pesticides is easily impacted by nature and can be inconsistent in quality, the hardship turns into joy when I think of the rice that reaches people as a meal or sake, and the smile that puts on their faces. There are students in their twenties who are striving to inherit the lineage of this work. It is my wish to entrust to the new generation, this form of agriculture that is carried out within the natural cycles of nature."



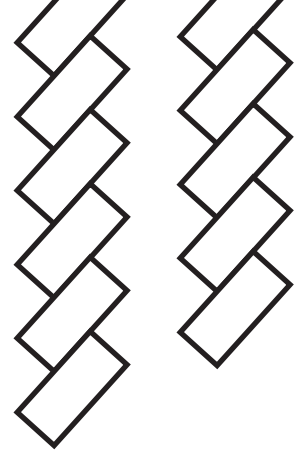
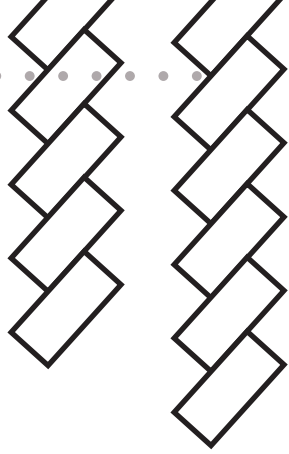
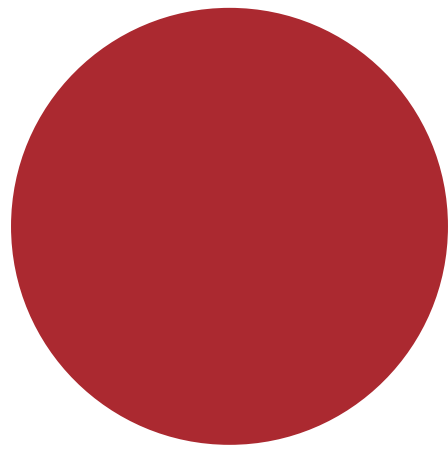


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Since ancient times, agriculture and fisheries have been deeply connected to the harsh natural world, and people working in these industries have always had a special feeling towards the gods. Their unwavering commitment to offer their dedications to Ise Jingu represents the “giving back” of blessings received from nature. Sake brewers also make sake with great care, to make the most of the blessings and not disrespect the deities when offering sake.



三重縣酒造組合

The Sake

Circulation



Passing on the Traditional Brewing with Inherited Wisdom and Skilled Craftsmanship



Since ancient times, people across the country have traveled to Mie Prefecture on numerous pilgrimage roads such as the Tokaido and the Kumano Kaido. The area naturally flourished as an exchange site for food, art, industry, where sake also was appreciated by travelers.

The sake breweries in Mie Prefecture with their long history are devoting all of their skills and passion in order to pass on the tradition of local breweries into the future. Their continued dedication cherishes the traditional origin of breweries and appreciates the ingredients nourished by nature.

The breweries' loyalty towards their sake illustrates "Tokowaka", the notion behind Shikinen Sengu ritual to rebuild Ise Jingu every twenty years. Similar to how the shrine is rebuilt without halting the tradition, the flavor of sake evolves but the gratitude and the inherited spirit are never forgotten.







酒



The Importance and Quality of Water in Sake



With the primary ingredients being rice and water, sake is produced using malted rice to convert starch into sugar and by undergoing fermentation. The quality of water can considerably affect the flavor of sake, and its use is not limited just as an ingredient. Water is also used to steam rice and to maintain the sanitation of tools and brewery. Due to its vital role in the production of sake, the amount of water required throughout the whole brewing process is about fifty times the amount of rice used.



We interviewed Kenichiro Hisada, a Geologist and a former Professor at the University of Tsukuba, about water characteristics in Mie Prefecture.

Strata in Japan have a unique origin and structure in the world.

The geology of Japan has a unique structure in the world. Sediments and seamount debris are rubbed against the landside of the ocean trench, where the ocean plate sinks, and accretionary prisms are formed. Furthermore, Japan is one of the global type areas of accretionary prisms, and it is no exaggeration to say that the country itself is made up of these prisms.

Water in Japan is exceptional, geologically, and globally.

In contrast to Japan's geology, for example, the strata in Europe centered on Paris, offers geological features where the layer of sedimentary rocks rises in such a way that many strata lie sideways, and are hardened by the groundwater inside the limestone layer.

Japan's geology is diverse in composition and forms, where many strata are shaped vertically rather than flat. Furthermore, Japan has one of the largest amounts of rainfall in the world, causing a vast quantity of water to spring out of the stratum in a short period, which then softens the water. In fact, it can be said that water in Japan is geologically exceptional, by global standards as well.

Water in Mie is plentiful and offers soft quality

The geology of Mie Prefecture differs significantly between the north and the south across the Median Tectonic Line. The northern region, where most of Mie's sake breweries are located, consists of granitic rocks, and the southern region of the geology consists of black schist and pelitic rock.

Such geological features, combined with the rich greenery, many mountains, and rainfall, blesses the region with its abundant water and its soft quality.

How to brew Sake

STAGE	COMPONENT	STEP	CONTENT OF OPERATION
1 Processing of raw material		Seimai	<p>The bran is first removed from the surface of the rice by washing. Since it is important to make sure that an appropriate amount of water gets absorbed by the rice, the time the rice is soaked in water must be strictly managed.</p> <p>This is a process of steaming washed rice at high-temperature in a large steamer. The steamed rice is cooled to an appropriate temperature and transported to the next process.</p>
		Shinseki	
		Jōkyō	
2 Production of koji	Steamed rice + Seed malt	Seikiku (Kōji fungus production)	Producing a perfect kōji fungus is the most crucial part of sake brewing, and to do so, precise temperature control is crucial. Spores of Kōji fungus are sprinkled on steamed rice and then are placed in a designated room for 50-60 hours to grow.
3 Fermentation	Malt + Steamed rice + Yeast	Shubo	<p>This is a process of growing microorganisms for fermentation, known as yeast. There are two methods - Shokujō Keishūbo, which produces arbitrary yeast in an acidic medium, and Kimoto Keishūbo, which ferments lactic acid bacteria to produce yeast.</p> <p>The last step in producing sake is to ferment moromi by controlling the temperature while measuring the balance of sugar content, yeast count, and alcohol content. Various factors can affect the degree of moromi's fermentation, such as the ratio of the total amount of rice to water, and the additional water poured into the tank. Therefore, it is important to precisely perform each process in order to make quality sake.</p>
		Moromi	
		<p>Jyōso/Shibori</p>	



The flavor of sake is altered by the balance of many element that develop daily during fermentation, but it is "water" that plays a significant role in this process.



From MIE to your Table!

The great Sakes of the prefecture of MIE have an ability to create emotion with the ecosystem that surrounds them.

This is one of the reasons for the creation of its brand new GI (Geographical Indication) in May 2020.

MIE Sakes are part of the «terroir» and the agricultural heritage of the prefecture.

We will review some of the famous local foods of MIE and see together how sake matches with them.

Ise Lobster:

MIE lobsters are known for their juicy and tasty flesh. We can almost consider them as "sea meat".

The Sake of MIE, especially «Junmai», has the necessary quality to create a marriage of texture and taste.

The firm texture of the lobster in contact with the salty and spicy aspect of the «Junmai» type sake will create a real emotion in the palate.

Matoya, Uramura and Watari Oysters:

This is the major pairing for the sake of MIE; these oysters offer great companion to the «Junmai DaiGinjo» and «Junmai Ginjo», with their purity and elegance.

Served raw, the oysters with their freshness, and slightly oily texture allow the style «Ginjo – DaiGinjo» to burst in the mouth for an incomparable refreshing sensation; only the sake of MIE gives rise to these exceptional moments.

My advice is to put both in the mouth at the same time for an unforgettable experience.

The Abalone of Toba and Shima:

For sure, the dish should never be paired with wine. Due to its rubbery texture, the wine does not manage to find its place.

Mié's sake acts as a flavor enhancer; it will not compete with the firm texture of abalone, but its refreshing nature will allow it to amplify the abalone's aromas.

My preference will be «Nama» type sake (pure sake) and served very fresh.

Do not wait any longer, and come and experience the great sakes of MIE!

KANPAI !



Xavier THUIZAT

Chef Sommelier – Hôtel de Crillon Paris
Sake Samurai
President of Kura Master







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The circle represents sun, with the sun being a symbol of faith. During the summer solstice, the sun rises between Meotoiwa rock in Futamigaura, and during the winter solstice, the sun rises from the Otorii gate of Ujibashi bridge in Ise Ise Jingu Kotaijingu (Naiku).



The sun's shape is "Tabanenoshi", which symbolizes Mie Prefecture's lush nature, history, tradition, and food. "Tabanenoshi" is made of bundled dried abalone that has been thinly shaped and given as a lucky charm. Furthermore, due to its auspicious essence, it is also used as a fishing flag wishing for a big catch and as a part of wedding costumes.



This bowl represents a sake cup. At Ise Jingu, Omiki (sacred sake) is always poured into a new unglazed sake cup and offered to God.



Northern (Kuwana, Yokkaichi, Suzuka, Mie District)

Location	Brand	Company	Location	Brand	Company
Kuwana-city	Seiun	Goto Shuzojo	Kuwana-city	Ageuma	HOSOKAWA BREWERY
Yokkaichi-city	Kagura	Kagura Shuzo	Yokkaichi-city	Fukii	Ishikawa Shuzo co.,LTD.
Yokkaichi-city	Uzume	Ito Syuzo Co.,Ltd.	Komono-cho, Mie-gun	Tabika	Hayakawa Brewery & Co.
Kawagoe-cho, Mie-gun	Tenichi	Hayakawa Shuzobu	Yokkaichi-city	TEN YU RIN	TAKAHASHI BREWERY CO.,LTD.
Yokkaichi-city	Mienokanbai	Maruhiko Sake Brewery Co.,Ltd.	Asahi-cho, Mie-gun	Fujinohikari	Adachihonke Shuzo
Asahi-cho, Mie-gun	Miyamasugi	INAGAKI SAKE BREWERY	Yokkaichi-city	Miyanoyuki	MIYAZAKI HONTEN BREWERY CO.,LTD.
Suzuka-city	Zaku	Shimizu Seizaburo Shoten Ltd.			

Central and Southern (Tsu, Matsusaka, Ise, Taki District)

Location	Brand	Company	Location	Brand	Company
Tsu-city	Takatora	Matsushima Shuzo	Tsu-city	Hatsuhi	Abusho
Tsu-city	Kigenyoshi	Imamura Shuzo	Tsu-city	Kankoubai	KANKOUBAISYUZOU Co.,Ltd.
Tsu-city	Den	Ogawa Honke	Matsusaka-city	Musou	Nira Shuzo
Matsusaka-city	Hakumaijoh	Nakayama Shuzo	Taki-cho, Taki-gun	Hokosugi	Kawabu Brewery Co.,Ltd.
Odai-cho, Taki-gun	Sakaya Hachibei	Gensaka Sake Brewing Co., Ltd.	Ise-city	Okagesama	Iseman
Meiwa-cho, Taki-gun	Iseasahi	Asahi Shuzo			

Iga (Iga, Nabari)

Location	Brand	Company	Location	Brand	Company
Iga-city	Mienishiki	Nakai Shuzojo	Iga-city	RUMIKO NO SAKE	Moriki Sake Brewery
Iga-city	Hanzo	Ota Sake Brewery Co.,Ltd.	Iga-city		Imuraya co.,Ltd.
Iga-city	Haisei Bashou	Hashimoto Sake Brewery	Nabari-city	Jikon	KIYASHO SHUZO CO.,LTD
Nabari-city	Tenkanishiki	Fukumochi Shuzojo	Nabari-city	Sanguu	Sawasa Shuzou
Nabari-city	Takijiman	TAKIJIMAN SAKE BREWING CO.,LTD.	Iga-city	Gizaemon	waka-ebis brewery & co.