



Aged in 3 kinds of barrels,  
blended to perfection

**KIN SHIRO (KINJO SHIRO)**

Unique spirit blend of Shiro with three honkaku rice shochus aged in American white oak, cognac, and sherry barrels. This barrel-aged quality gives it a bold flavor, rich mouthfeel, and mellow aroma.

Ingredients: rice, rice koji  
ABV: 25%  
Distillation method: vacuum



The face of Kuma Shochu;  
pleasant aromas of the finest rice

**HAKUTAKE SHIRO**

A light, fruity-tasting shochu with a refined, rice-like aroma. Pairs well with any dish to accentuate the quality and flavor of the ingredients; sure to become your go-to dinner drink. Synonymous with Kuma Shochu.

Ingredients: rice, rice koji  
ABV: 25%  
Distillation method: vacuum



Low-temperature fermentation of ginjo yeast  
for a satisfying ginjo aroma

**GIN SHIRO (GINJO SHIRO)**

A distinctive flowery ginjo aroma that belies its subtle, clear flavor. A blend of Shiro with shochu made with ginjo yeast fermented at low temperatures. The deep yet mellow flavor creates a smooth spirit that goes down easy.

Ingredients: rice, rice koji  
ABV: 25%  
Distillation method: vacuum

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THE HISTORY OF  
KUMA SHOCHU

Kuma Shochu: Born from the History,  
Climate & Culture of Hitoyoshi-Kuma



**Abundant Water & Unique Climate**

The Kuma Valley is located at the southernmost tip of Kumamoto Prefecture, deep in the mountains of Kyushu. The cool waters of the Kuma River—famed for its rapids—nourish the fields, while the valley's distinctive climate and significant temperature variations create one of the prefecture's prime rice-growing areas. The frequent dense fog in the region allows for fermentation and storage at relatively low temperatures, which helps give Kuma

Shochu its refreshing aroma. The soft water from the Kuma River system is ideal for shochu making and helps enhance the gentle sweetness of the rice. The rich aroma and deep flavor of Kuma Shochu can only be produced in the Hitoyoshi-Kuma region.

**Tradition & Evolution**

Rice shochu production in the Hitoyoshi-Kuma region is believed to have started about 500 years ago. Distillation

techniques were supposedly brought over through trade with southeast and continental Asia. Today, 27 distilleries preserve the traditional techniques honed by their predecessors, offering a variety of flavors that have evolved over time.

In 1995, Kuma Shochu was designated as a Geographical Indication by the National Tax Agency, establishing it as a world-class shochu brand and attracting attention from around the globe.

WHAT IS  
KUMA SHOCHU?

- Must be made with rice (including rice koji) grown in Japan
- Mash must be made with Hitoyoshi-Kuma water and shochu must be distilled in a pot still and bottled in Hitoyoshi-Kuma.

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You must be 20 or older to drink. Do not drink and drive.  
Drinking alcohol during pregnancy and breastfeeding may affect the development of the fetus or infant.  
Drink in moderation. Please recycle.





**Upper left:** The Hakutake Shuzo Research Institute stands near Inokuchi, one of Hitoyoshi's three major wellsprings. The massive campus houses a factory where they strive to make the finest rice shochu under the strictest quality controls.

**Upper right:** Vacuum stills used to produce Hakutake and Hakutake Shiro. Up to 2000 liters can be distilled per batch.

**Left:** Outdoor fermentation tanks.

**Right:** Takahashi Shuzo warehouse, where many shochu varieties await shipment.

## ■ HAKUTAKE SHUZO RESEARCH INSTITUTE (Hitoyoshi) ■

# Forever seeking modern shochu, proud pioneers in vacuum distillation

### ■ HISTORY

#### A dedicated distillery

Takahashi Shuzo was founded in 1900 in Taragi, a place that maintains its scenic rural charm to this day. The area has a long history of producing rice shochu, for which its high-quality rice crops and crystal-clear water are well-suited. For years, this distillery has been one of many in Hitoyoshi-Kuma, and its Ichifusa no Tsuyu brand is the drink of choice for many locals.

In 1974, a revolutionary new distilling technology called vacuum distillation was developed and ushered in a new era of shochu. Takahashi Shuzo became one of the first to use this new method, and this shift from atmospheric distillation altered the course of local shochu. Thus Hakutake was developed, a new shochu that transformed the image of Kuma Shochu. This

new spirit created a sensation, leading to increased output and the expansion of Takahashi Shuzo's operations.

In 1986, the Hakutake Shuzo Research Institute was founded near the Inokuchi wellspring to serve as the distillery for Takahashi Shuzo shochu. A bottling facility was built next door, thus forming a complete supply chain, from production to shipping.

### ■ ABOUT US

#### Making Kuma Shochu global

Hakutake Shiro was developed after a worldwide boom in the popularity of spirits in the 1970s and 80s as a great shochu to drink on the rocks. The market also sought a dinner-time shochu that paired with Japanese food. Takahashi Shuzo decided to use highly polished brewer's rice instead of the processed rice typically used for Kuma Shochu. They improved their expertise through research and refinement of methods for steaming rice, making koji, fermenting mash at low temperatures, and developing new strains of yeasts. After two years of development, the end result was Hakutake Shiro. It represented a new achievement after redefining shochu with

vacuum distillation and took the world by storm.

Two brands of shochu made here are now distributed worldwide, and the Research Institute will continue to develop new, contemporary products. The Hakutake Denshogura Kuma Shochu Museum opened in 2010. This facility introduces the historical and cultural value of Kuma Shochu through various exhibits, including a corner demonstrating how shochu was made from the mid-1800s to early 1900s. It is also a popular tourist destination, where visitors can sample shochu.

Yoshio Ibi, of the Production Department. Although mass production and mechanization have become commonplace, the human touch of listening to the churning mash and watching over the roiling cauldrons is still important.



The Hakutake Denshogura Kuma Shochu Museum proudly shares the history and culture of Kuma Shochu with the world. The exhibits here explain the key points of Takahashi Shuzo as well as the traditional brewing methods and tools. ■ Hakutake Denshogura Kuma Shochu Museum Website: <https://www.denshogura.jp>



The factory has massive tanks for koji-making and fermentation to support the enormous volume of shochu produced.