

HOW TO SPEAK SAKE (*sah-kay*) 酒

原酒 **Genshu** (*G'en-shoe*)

Undiluted sake that is often higher in alcohol and more concentrated in flavor and texture.

吟醸 **Ginjo** (*Geen-joe*)

Premium sake. Indicates a special and painstaking brewing process that produces a sake that is layered and complex, light and fragrant. Must have a seimaibuai (milling rate) of at least 60%.

地酒 **Jizake** (*jee-zah-kay*)

Local sake made by small brewers from a particular region, similar to the beer term "micro-brew."

乾杯 **Kanpai** (*kahn-pie*): Cheers!

生もと **Kimoto** (*key-mo-toh*)

Traditional type of yeast starter with no lactic acid added. The yeast is activated by mashing the rice and koji into a paste with long poles. It takes around a month, resulting in savory, often gamey flavors.

石 **Koku** (*koe-koo*)

Originally, a measurement of rice defined as enough to feed one person for a year. For sake, a measurement of 180 liters used for describing a brewery's production capacity.

麴 **Koji** (*koh-jee*)

Mold that prompts the sake fermentation process.

古酒 **Koshu** (*koh-shoo*)

Sake deliberately aged in either bottle or tank. It must be kept at low temperatures in order retain a clear color and have a subtle roundedness and richness in texture.

蔵 **Kura** (*koo-rah*): Sake brewery

酒母 **Moto** (*mo-toh*)

Yeast starter, also known as "shubo." An extremely high concentration of yeast cells is cultivated in a mixture of rice, koji, yeast, and water.

飲み会 **Nomikai** (*noh-mee-kai*)

A get-together or event focused around drinking.

酒飲み **Sakenomi** (*sah-kay-noh-mee*)

Someone who likes to drink.

精米歩合 **Seimaibuai** (*say-my-boo-eye*)

The degree to which rice has been polished (milled) before brewing. A value of 60% means that the rice has been milled so only 60% of the rice kernel remains (40% of the kernel has been ground away).

心白 **Shinpaku** (*sheen-pah-koo*)

The hard, white center of sake rice comprised of starch.

酒 **-Shu** (*shoo*)

Another reading of the Japanese character meaning sake (which, in Japan, refers to any alcoholic beverage). This suffix is officially part of all sake types (e.g. junmai-shu, ginjo-shu) but is often dropped in abbreviation.

杜氏 **Toji** (*toe-gee*): Head brewer of a brewery.

特別 **Tokubetsu** (*toe-koo-bet-sue*)

Special. Any sake labeled "tokubetsu" has been brewed in some special way. This may mean a high milling rate, a very low temperature fermentation, or a very special rice strain.

山麴 **Yamahai** (*yah-mah-hai*)

Yeast starter with no lactic acid added; yet instead of mashing the rice and koji together (kimoto), the koji enzymes work to dissolve all rice so that sake yeast can activate. Similar flavor profile to Kimoto.

酔っ払い **Yopparai** (*yoh-pahr-eye*): To be drunk.