



Sake and the Path to Sustainability

Originally brewed for the Shinto gods themselves, sake (*nihonshu*) has long been a symbol of tradition and craftsmanship across Japan. The meticulous brewing process—which far exceeds other liquor production methods in intricacy—is a testament to the industry’s commitment to intense, traditional techniques, resulting not only in an impressive flavour complexity across brands, but a locally-oriented, sustainable mode of production. As the rest of the craft liquor world sluggishly moves towards environmental sustainability, the craft sake industry is already well ahead.



For the rural people of central Honshu, sake is the water of life. The most discerning among sake enjoyers can, like true *sommeliers*, deduce exactly where a given sake originated with just a taste. No doubt, this is due to most smaller or independent breweries sourcing their rice from as close as

possible, often contracting farms you can reach in a few short steps from the factory doors.

By sourcing rice from local or organic farmers who follow environmentally friendly cultivation practices, these sake breweries support local economies, reduce transportation emissions, and encourage biodiversity conservation.



Water, as another vital component of the process, is thought of similarly, and brought from as clean and as close a source as possible, resulting in the old saying: “Where there is good sake, there is always good water.”

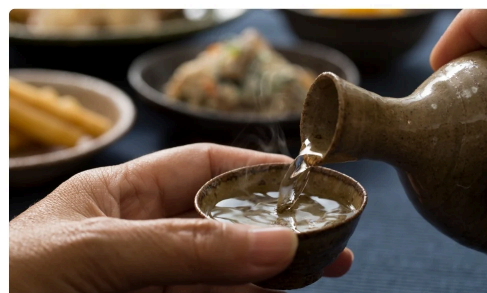
In a world where every choice we make impacts the planet, craft sake tells a stern lesson, that the most sustainable methods aren’t only discovered on the edge of modern techniques, but are hidden in the heritage of our past. So, the next time you raise your glass of *nihonshu*, savour not just the taste, but the resolve of the community that, interconnected and interwoven, brought it to your table.

You can learn more about how sake breweries are balancing traditional brewing techniques with environmentally friendly practices by heading to our blog post below. There, we explore how one heritage brewer, hidden in the unassuming Iiyama valley, commits itself to sustainability from the heart of tradition.

Blog Post

Head to our blog to read more about sake and sustainability.

[Read more](#)



Expert Profile: SAMU

See what Samu has to say about sake and sustainability...



HOW IS VISITING A SAKE BREWERY A FORM OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

Sake breweries are often generationally family-run businesses. By visiting a sake brewery you can gain intimate insight into the unique history of that specific brewery. You can also sample their delicious local sake, known as “jizake,” which is often not even available for sale outside of that region, and support a local business by purchasing a bottle or two to take home.

WHY IS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IMPORTANT TO JAPAN?

Sustainable tourism promotes the support of local economies that may not typically receive a high influx of tourism. Japan is currently facing over-tourism in some regions that have become famous by name and simultaneously lack of tourism in areas that are just as bountiful in history, culture, and worthwhile experiences for locals and foreign visitors alike.

HOW DO YOU SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS IN JAPAN?

I like to support local business in Japan by shopping at farmer’s markets, purchasing handmade artisan crafts, and of course, encouraging visitors to explore the less-seen,

authentic side of Japan! You can always ask our team of experts for some great suggestions!

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