



Shochu made with fresh milk, born from a wild idea

**MAKIBA NO YUME**

Born to highlight the distinctiveness of the kingdom of dairy, Kumamoto Prefecture. An alkaline shochu made from Hitoyoshi's high-quality rice and hot spring water as well as fresh milk from Hitoyoshi-Kuma. Sweet, fruity aroma and a deep flavor.

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



Made with water from an on-site hot spring, a rice shochu that leaves you feeling good

**ONSENSHOCHU - YUME**

A rice shochu overflowing with individuality, brewed with natural, weakly alkaline hot spring water that wells up into the distillery from 500m underground. The gentle taste is kind to both your mouth and body. An exceptional product that will leave you feeling refreshed.

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



Hitoyoshi's natural bounty bottled as shochu

**KUMAGAWA**

No added yeast, naturally fermented brown rice shochu

Under the philosophy of "living in harmony with the Kuma River," Kumagawa was born after the floods of July 2020. Made from brown rice and brown rice koji, it is fermented with a new strain of yeast found in the distillery. A flavor of nature that showcases both its kindness and brutality.

Ingredients: brown rice, brown rice koji  
ABV: 25%  
Distillation method: atmospheric

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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.

Yamatoichi Shuzumoto

大和一酒造元



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.





**Top left:** The distillery was destroyed by flooding and took two years to restore. The original pillars and beams were reused, but the layout was adjusted to make shochu production more efficient. They even made a training space that resembles a school classroom. **Top right:** Brown rice koji is carefully made by hand. It's difficult for koji mold to penetrate brown rice, so special methods and techniques are crucial. **Left:** A stone koji room that has been used since the Meiji era. The rice husks used to insulate the sides of the room were washed away in the flood. **Right:** An iron kettle in use since around 1955 (the cooler is made of tin).

YAMATOICHI SHUZOMOTO (Hitoyoshi)

# Living with the Kuma River, experimenting with the origins of shochu

**HISTORY**  
Unique ideas from past generations

Yamatoichi Shuzomoto was founded in 1898 by Senmatsu Okada who moved from Amakusa to Hitoyoshi to expand his business. The company became so successful and influential that, by the 1930s, it had built an onsen and operated a public bath and restaurant.

However, after World War II, his successor decided to do away with the distillery.

In 1952, Haguma Shimoda stepped in and obtained its management rights.

It would be Haguma's son, Takeshi, who was president during the historic floods of 1965 and had to overcome the loss of all the pots used for brewing.

The distillery began using vacuum stills in 1984. The distillery acts on its free-spirited ideas, forging on to create unique shochus that make full use of their home region's specialties. Onsenshochu Yume,

which is brewed from water from a hot spring beneath the distillery, and Makiba no Yume, which uses fresh Kuma milk, are popular brands that represent the height of this philosophy.

Takeshi's son Fumihito grew up watching his father's dedication and, at the age of 35, he quit his job as a high school teacher to become the successor to the distillery.

**ABOUT US**  
The taste of Hitoyoshi-Kuma in a bottle

Meiji Hatouka is a shochu developed by Fumihito and is made according to a centuries-old recipe. Fumihito touts the importance of "returning to the origins of shochu" and continues to push the boundaries of Kuma Shochu by going back to its roots and using yellow koji (which had been the dominant koji in the region for 450 years) and brown rice (which was originally the main ingredient in shochu). They make koji in their stone koji room and have attempted *donburi-jikomi* mashing with brown rice. They even have a *kabuto-gama*, an ancient type of Japanese still, to try to recreate the oldest forms of Kuma Shochu. While the distillery continued to explore historical Kuma Shochu and pursue its own

unique flavor and production methods, they were met with a key turning point.

That was the torrential rains of July 2020. The distillery was damaged, and the first floor was completely flooded. The distillery was rendered unusable and the unfinished shochu all washed away. In the midst of this devastation, Fumihito realized an innate need to live together with the Kuma River. Thus, Kumagawa was born. Just as shochu originates and is made according to the regional climate, this shochu is made from locally produced brown rice, water from the Kuma River, and a new yeast that occurs naturally in the distillery and was probably brought in by the flooding. Shimoda describes it as the manifestation of Hitoyoshi-Kuma's natural environment.

"Moving forward, I want to make shochu with a focus on using ingredients grown in Hitoyoshi to further improve the status of Kuma Shochu," says Fumihito Shimoda.



**Left:** The *kabuto-gama* still made by the distillery to reproduce pre-Meiji era shochu distillation methods. **Center:** Haguma Shimoda, who obtained the right to manage the brewery. **Right:** A brick chimney serves as a reminder of the days when coal was the primary fuel source.



The inside of the factory immediately after the flood. Storage tanks floated around and scattered, and many of the pots used for brewing were damaged.