



球磨焼酎

*Flagship shochu that pairs excellently with Western food*

**GOKURAKU  
ATMOSPHERIC DISTILLED**

Gokuraku dates back to the Edo period. Genshu Gokuraku is diluted to 25% and bottled. A full-bodied shochu with big flavors that pair well with Western dishes. Available in 35% as well.

Ingredients: rice, rice koji  
ABV: 25%, 35%  
Distillation method: atmospheric  
Aged: 3+ years



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*A 3-year genshu overflowing with rice flavor*

**GENSHU GOKURAKU**

This genshu is atmospheric distilled and aged for 3 years to fully draw out the flavor of the rice. Enjoy the unique sweetness, crisp aftertaste, and fragrance of this aged shochu.

Ingredients: rice, rice koji  
ABV: 39 - 44%  
(changes year to year)  
Distillation method: atmospheric  
Aged: 3+ years



球磨焼酎

*A refreshing & smooth honkaku shochu*

**GOKURAKU  
VACUUM DISTILLED**

A robust, fruity fragrance paired with a smooth, distinguished taste. Although best described as refreshing, its rich flavor is deeply satisfying. Best served with soda or water.

Ingredients: rice, rice koji  
ABV: 25%  
Distillation method: vacuum  
Aged: 3+ years

## Hayashi Shuzojo

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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.

# Hayashi Shuzojo

林酒造場



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 moss-covered stone wall conveys the brewery's long history. The Miyako River, a branch of the Kuma River, runs right next to the brewery.

**Upper right:** The buildings on the property have been expanded and renovated through the centuries.

**Left:** Stone koji room.

**Right:** Distilled shochu is bottled after being matured in enamel tanks, clay pots or casks. Standard shochu ages for 3+ years, vintage shochu can go 30 years or more.

■ HAYASHI SHUZOJO (Yunomae) ■

# The joys of moderation, a shochu steeped in oral tradition

■ HISTORY

**A temporary residence for a lord**

Hayashi Shuzojo supposedly obtained a shochu distilling permit around 400 years ago when it was a temporary home for the lord of the Sagara domain. This is substantiated by a memorial tablet of the distillery's ancestors dated to 1682, but the lack of other records makes it difficult to know for sure. Apart from shochu, Hayashi originally made sake and miso as well, and

operated the distillery as a teahouse when the lord was out. Hayashi was supposedly also called "Maruju-san" after the rice shochu called Maruju they were producing. Because of the company's long history, many things are unclear.

However, what we know for sure is that 15 generations later, Hayashi still makes rice shochu, and their main product is called Gokuraku, meaning "ultimate enjoyment." The 11th-generation owner

gave it this name, meaning "shochu is the ultimate enjoyment," but because he didn't like excessive drinking, he added "drink in moderation to maintain your health" on the bottle as well. With the introduction of vacuum distillation in the 1970s, Hayashi began selling two kinds of shochu (vacuum and atmospheric distilled) made from Hinohikari rice grown in Hitoyoshi-Kuma and Kumamoto Prefecture and groundwater from the Ichifusa mountains.

■ ABOUT US

**The unique flavor of spring shochu**

Many Kuma Shochu distilleries ferment in December or January when it is cold because it is easier to control the temperature of the mash. However, Hayashi does its fermentation when it is warmer at the end of February through May. Although it requires careful attention to maintain the mash, because yeast generates more aromatic compounds at lower temperatures, working when it is warm keeps the aromas from being overpowering. This results in Gokuraku shochu that is full-flavored and aromatic, with the proper sweet and savory aspects of rice, and ending with a

clean finish. Each bottle strikes the ideal balance of light yet rich flavor.

Gokuraku has always had a special place in the town of Yunomae, but the 15th president decided to look further afield and began exporting shochu to Europe and Singapore. Moving forward, they plan to expand further into areas like Vietnam and China.

Hayashi wants to make a shochu that works as both an aperitif and a digestif. They hope Hayashi shochu will provide happiness from the beginning of the meal to the end.

Yasuhiro Hayashi, the toji, is the younger brother of the 14th president of the company, Nobuhiro Hayashi. In order to maintain the brewery's famous flavor, he plays an important role in supporting the 15th president, Atsuko (Nobuhiro's wife), and his nephew Kohei.



**Left:** Before starting the production process each year, employees offer rice, fish, and sake to the gods enshrined near the brewery to pray for safety.

**Center:** This memorial tablet to an ancestor is one of the few ways to trace the company's history.

**Right:** The Maruju (⊕) sign is engraved in many tools. There are differing stories regarding its origin, but none are definitive.



Even as they work to protect their legacy, they are always looking to push forward in new ways. Hayashi is working on projects to help get the word out about Kuma Shochu, including a bottle design competition and converting waste oils from making shochu into soap.