



KUNCHŌ BREWERY

HITA CITY, ŌITA PREFECTURE



HISTORY OF KUNCHŌ BREWERY

Kunchō Brewery's history dates back to 1745 in Fukuoka Prefecture. The brewery's founders, the Tomiyasu family, were prominent figures in Kurume, Fukuoka, serving as senior retainers to the local castle during the Edo period. Leveraging their authority, they transitioned into sake brewing, an uninterrupted tradition for nearly 300 years.



KUNCHŌ'S COMMITMENT TO TRADITION AND DEEP FLAVOR

In recent years, advancements in brewing technology have led to a trend of producing clean, crisp sake. However, Kunchō Brewery has chosen to preserve the traditional methods, using facilities built 300 years ago. This dedication results in sake with a deep, complex flavor that sets it apart from the streamlined, modern varieties.



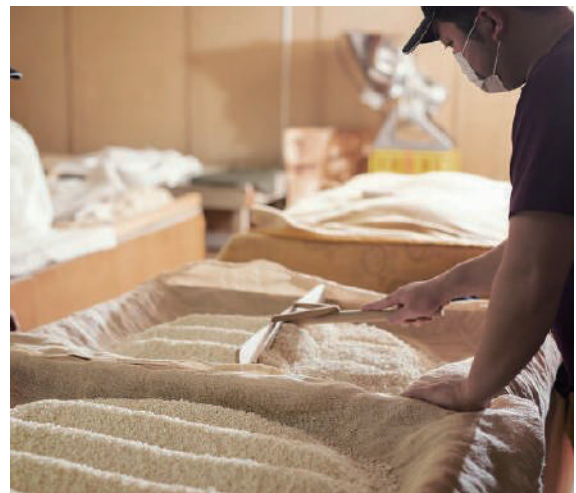
DEPTH OF FLAVOR AND COMPLEXITY

Kunchō's sake retains the richness and complexity often absent in modern brewing, including subtle bitterness and astringency. These elements are cherished by connoisseurs who seek to savor the full spectrum of taste: sweetness, saltiness, sourness, bitterness, and umami—a result offered only by a deeply crafted sake.



CRAFTSMANSHIP - TRADITIONAL SAKE BREWING

Kunchō Brewery emphasizes its craftspeople's artisanal skills and intuition, increasingly rare expertise due to technological advancements. By continuing the semi-annual brewing process using traditional methods passed down through generations, Kunchō produces sake with a variety of nuanced characteristics.

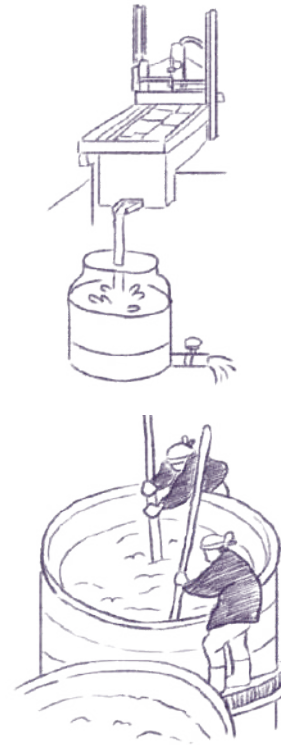


KUNCHŌ BREWERY AND TŌJI (MASTER BREWERS) OJIKA TŌJI GUILD - GOTŌ ISLANDS

In the past, the chief brewer was an indispensable part of sake brewing and the brewery. Before the development of advanced facilities, the chief brewer was not allowed to leave the brewery during brewing season, and he had to continue brewing even if a crisis occurred in his family — a weighty responsibility.

On the other hand, the culture of seasonal tōji, who traveled for work, is fading. Yet, Kunchō Brewery has a deep connection with the Ojika Tōji Guild, a collective of highly skilled brewers from the Gotō Islands in Nagasaki Prefecture. The guild, with roots in the Edo period, has passed down its knowledge and techniques through generations.

Today, only one member of the Ojika Tōji Guild remains involved with Kunchō Brewery, a sign of the changing times. However, the relationship between Kunchō and the tōji dates back to the 1700s when the Tomiyasu family first employed them. This enduring connection has shaped the history of the brewery and the tōji.



"The home of the Ojika Tōji Guild in the Gotō Islands."

KUNCHŌ'S "YAMAHAI" SAKE

- A LEGACY OF THE OJIKA TŌJI GUILD

The last tōji from the Ojika Guild continues to pass on the "yamahai" brewing tradition. Unlike modern, simplified methods designed for safety and efficiency, yamahai involves a natural fermentation process using wild yeast that has flourished in Kunchō's brewery for centuries. This process takes more than a month compared to the one to two weeks required by contemporary methods. By creating an environment conducive to the natural growth of microorganisms, and taking the time to let the sake mature, Kunchō produces a drink that improves with age.

While modern brewing equipment aims to reduce labor and increase efficiency, yamahai brewing is perhaps the opposite: labor-intensive and time-consuming. Yet in today's world, preserving this method, which respects the natural order and focuses on the essence of sake brewing, is vital.

When drinking yamahai sake, imagine the faces of the brewers who painstakingly crafted and took the time to savor it.



KUNCHŌ NEXT SERIES: A NEW CHALLENGE IN THE TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE



While Kunchō Brewery remains committed to traditional methods and the inheritance of tōji techniques, it is also innovating to meet contemporary demands. The Kunchō NEXT series embodies this blend of tradition and innovation with the following guiding principles:

- Adhering to Kunchō's long-standing brewing philosophy of creating "sake that you can drink without losing interest, no matter how much you drink."
- Avoiding cerulenin-resistant yeast and using traditional yeast achieves a gentle ginjō aroma.
- Ensuring that traditional kōji molds are selected for a balanced flavor, rather than modern varieties that produce sweet sake.
- Employing ginjō brewing methods for all products.
- Defining the concept of each product. The Kunchō NEXT series upholds Kunchō's brewing philosophy while offering a new beverage that merges tradition with innovation, catering to the evolving ways people enjoy sake.

KUNCHŌ SAKE:

A REFLECTION OF NATURE, AGRICULTURE, AND COMMUNITY

RICE

Kunchō Brewery often uses local rice varieties, such as "Hinohikari," a variety not typically considered sake rice but well-suited to the local region. This large, flavorful rice is also a staple on the dinner tables of Hita's residents. During the brewing process, it dissolves easily, producing a robust and distinct flavor.



WATER

Hita is known as "Suikyō Hita" (Hita, The Water Capital) for its abundant and pristine water resources, which attract major beverage companies to the area. Kunchō Brewery's sake is distinguished by its crisp, clean flavor, which results from using soft water drawn from 140 meters underground.



THE BREWERY

Kunchō's brewery buildings, including its five sake storehouses, remain in their original condition from 1826. While modern facilities can now control fermentation temperatures and enhance yeast and kōji mold activity, Kunchō continues to use traditional techniques and facilities, embracing the complexities and variations that these methods bring to their sake.



PEOPLE

Located in the heart of Mameda-machi, known as the "Little Kyōto of Kyūshū," Kunchō Brewery operates a shop adjacent to the brewery, attracting both locals and tourists. Beyond selling through trusted retailers, Kunchō values direct interaction with customers. The brewery offers a relaxing space with a café and sake-tasting area where visitors can unwind and enjoy a brewery tour.

Kunchō Brewery is also notable for its many female employees, contributing to a work environment that supports the local community. Visitors often feel a warm, heartfelt welcome, fostering a deeper connection with the region.





Kunchō Brewery's sake is a product of the rich local environment, pure water, and the inherited techniques of master brewers. They combine to create a unique flavor that cannot be replicated. When people in America enjoy Kunchō's sake, we hope they imagine the scenery of Hita, its residents, and the craftspeople who bring this sake to life. Perhaps they will feel inspired to visit us someday.

