

The Natural Organic Japanese Sake Brewery "Terada Honke"

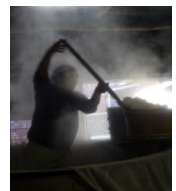
Terada Honke has brewed sake for more than 340 years in Kozaki; the 'Town of Brewage' located in Chiba Prefecture 87.5km to the northeast of Tokyo.

We make naturally brewed sake using **organic rice**, with the help of the yeasts and various microorganisms involved in sake making. In contrast to the modern mechanized sake brewage, all the work is **done manually**. We make our sake according to the ancient *Kimoto* method (a way to ferment with **wild microorganisms** taking plenty of time) which most sake brewers today have stopped practicing. The only ingredients are rice, water and *koji malt* (steamed rice inoculated with starch-breaking molds). Our sake is made following the **law of nature**, borrowing the help of the natural microorganisms inhabiting the air within the old walls of the brewery.

The characteristics of our sake:

1. The yeasts and bacteria are the principal characters of our sake making. We only be sure that the microorganisms ferment in the best of conditions. Brewed following the ancient **Kimoto Method**.
2. Organic ingredients and additive-free.
3. We work enjoying ourselves; the sake is brewed while the workers **sing songs**→ **Transmit our joy to the sake**.
4. Our aim is to brew sake that serves the customer: organic, naturally brewed and healthy - Based on the old Japanese saying that "**Sake is healthier than hundred medicines**" (*Hyakuyaku no Cho*).

Our way of sake making is as follows:



1. Growing the rice

Sake brewing begins from making the rice. We have our own 4,000m² rice field, where we cultivate pesticide and herbicide-free rice. We are also challenging in the recovery of old indigenous species of rice of this area. Apart from our own rice fields, we have 10 local farms growing rice for our sake; they are all practicing organic farming, but each has its own originality in their natural rice cultivation, such as *rice duck farming* (a method where ducks are freed in the rice fields, to let them eat the weeds and the bugs) and *non-tilled cropping* (Rice is cropped without ever tilling the soil).

2. Washing and soaking the rice

The milled rice is washed by hand, then soaked in water in order to be steamed the following morning in a large wooden vat.

The steamed rice is then moved into particular chambers according to different purposes - all the work is done manually.



3. Koji-malt making

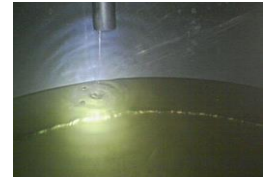
Koji is malted rice. It is steamed rice covered with white *koji mold* (*Aspergillus oryzae*) on its surface. The main role of the mold is to produce enzymes that break the starches of rice into sugars, which then can be fermented by the yeast into alcohol. Steamed rice is brought into a special chamber, where it is sprinkled with the spores of the mold and cultivated for 50 hours maintaining certain temperature and humidity, until the mold is entirely grown on the rice. *Koji* making is one of the most important stages of the entire brewing process, and it has a great influence in the taste and aroma of the produced sake.

4. Yeast starter (*Shubo*)

The word *Shubo*, when written in Japanese kanji characters means, 'The mother of sake'. This shows how important it is.

Before the ingredients of the sake are prepared in the main tank, *koji* malt, steamed rice and water are poured into a smaller tank, where the yeasts and *lactic acid bacteria* are cultured in order to help healthy fermentation. The role of the *lactic acid bacteria* is to produce natural acids which protect and help the growth of the yeasts. Today, most sake-brewers in Japan take the method of adding chemically synthesized lactic acid, and purely cultured yeasts in the starter. At Terada Honke, we practice the traditional way called '*Kimoto method*'; where we wait for the wild yeasts and microorganisms to float in naturally.

The rice-*koji* mash is then stirred up a number of times all night long, by men singing the ancient song of brewers. The *Kimoto* method is an amazing process in which various microorganisms take turns and work together in perfect harmony, to finally produce the sake. This method is said to have began more than 300 years ago.



5. Main mash (*Moromi*)

→ Fermentation → Pressing

When the yeast starter (*shubo*) is ready, it is moved into a larger tank, and more rice and more *koji* malt are added in three successive stages. The main mash is stirred everyday, and fermentation takes place over 30days. The complete mash (*moromi*) is then poured into cloth sacks and pressed to gain the fresh sake.

It is left to be matured for over a year before it is bottled.

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