

AKA ONI

Shochu

Inoue Shuzo, Oita Prefecture

SHOCHU DETAILS:

Raw Material: Barley (*Mugi*)

Alcohol: 20%

Distillation: Single

ABOUT SHOCHU

Shochu is a distilled spirit native to Japan since the 15th century. It originated on the southern island of Kyushu, which remains its heart, but is now produced all over Japan. *Shochu* can be distilled from many different ingredients, but barley, rice and sweet potato are the most common. *Shochu* is unique from other categories of distilled spirits because it begins with a grain inoculated with *koji-kin*, similar to sake production. The *koji* is then fermented in the same way a sake starter is created, following which the mash is distilled, filtered, stored and bottled. Until the 1970s, *shochu* was only consumed in southern Japan, but its appeal began to travel and resulted in a national boom. In 2003, domestic *shochu* sales surpassed sake and have never looked back.

ABOUT THE DISTILLERY

Inoue Shuzo was established in 1893 in the Oita Prefecture of Kyushu Island. The 6th generation of the Inoue family is now at the helm, and a total of 10 *kura-bito* craft all their offerings. Although they also produce sake, they are most famous for their barley shochu. Oita is famous for their rejuvenating hot springs, and it is from this mineral water that Inoue Shuzo crafts its delicate shochu. The water begins as snowmelt atop Mt. Hikosan and slowly filters through layers of volcanic rock before eventually reaching the well at Inoue Shuzo. In 2001, Inoue Shuzo completed their "Shochu Dojo", a small facility adjacent to their main production house that produces small batches of shochu in the ancient, traditional, and hands-on approach.

TASTING NOTE

Light-bodied with subtle aromas of celery and mizuna leaf (Japanese mustard seed) with a touch of mineral and white pepper.

FOOD PAIRING

Perfect in a shochu Bloody Mary! Otherwise, a wonderful match for hearty salads, such as greens with seared salmon.



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