

JOZEN WHITE

Junmai Ginjo

Shirataki Sake Brewery, Niigata Prefecture



SAKE DETAILS:

Rice: Gohyakumangoku
Polish Rate: 60%
Sake Meter Value: +5
Acidity: 1.3
Alcohol: 14-15%

ABOUT "JUNMAI GINJO" SAKES

The term *Junmai* is constructed of two kanji that together mean "pure rice." This means that the brew cannot contain any ingredient beyond the principal four of rice, water, yeast and koji. The term *Ginjo* means "specialized brew." *Ginjo* grade sakes must use rice polished to at least 60%, and generally employ labor intensive practices resulting in a more refined sake. Therefore, *Junmai Ginjo* sakes are pure rice brews, with a high polish rate and a specialized method of production.

ABOUT THE BREWERY

Since 1855, Shirataki Sake Brewery has hailed from the Niigata Prefecture, on the northwest coast of the main island. Niigata is one of the classic sake producing prefectures, currently home to about 10% of Japan's breweries and produces the country's most sake by volume. Niigata is known for its fresh groundwater that begins as snowmelt from the neighboring mountains, a journey that takes 40-50 years from snow to well water. In the decades that the water takes to journey from mountaintop to sake bottle, it slowly absorbs healthy minerals from the earth, taking on a slightly sweet flavor that has been coveted for centuries.

Niigata is roughly on the same longitude as Tokyo, though divided by a towering and sacred mountain range. Centuries ago, weary travelers from Tokyo would find solace in the abundance of inns providing shelter and welcoming hot springs. Naturally, local sake from Niigata was known to soothe these weary travelers. As Niigata experiences cold and snowy winter months, this makes sake production perfect for longer, colder fermentation. This, combined with the uniquely soft water, lends to delicate, clean and aromatic sakes. As the mountains slope to sea level, the fertile basin provides rich soil for sake rice production, allowing the breweries of Niigata to source their rice from their local communities.

Sake brewing at Shirataki peaks in the winter months, but action goes on all year. The summer months are for maintaining the brewing equipment, the fall is for preparing the brewery for the year's sake, and springtime is a time to give thanks and begin preparing the new year's rice crop with local farmers. Shirataki puts a focus on brewing excellent value Ginjo grade sakes, in classic Niigata style, with sleek and elegant packaging.

TASTING NOTE

The nose has a light strawberry feel. Bright green apple tones and the dry nature of the sake highlight the natural rice flavor. A wisp of light caramel creates a quiet balance. There is a thin layer of umami from the rice hiding in the crispness of the green apple. A clean, quick finish but after a moment a rich rice aftertaste blooms.

FOOD PAIRING

Fresh oysters, caprese salad or simple edamame work well.



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