



Japan's Clean Water

清らかな水



Fertile Soil

豊かな土壌



Spark Your Senses

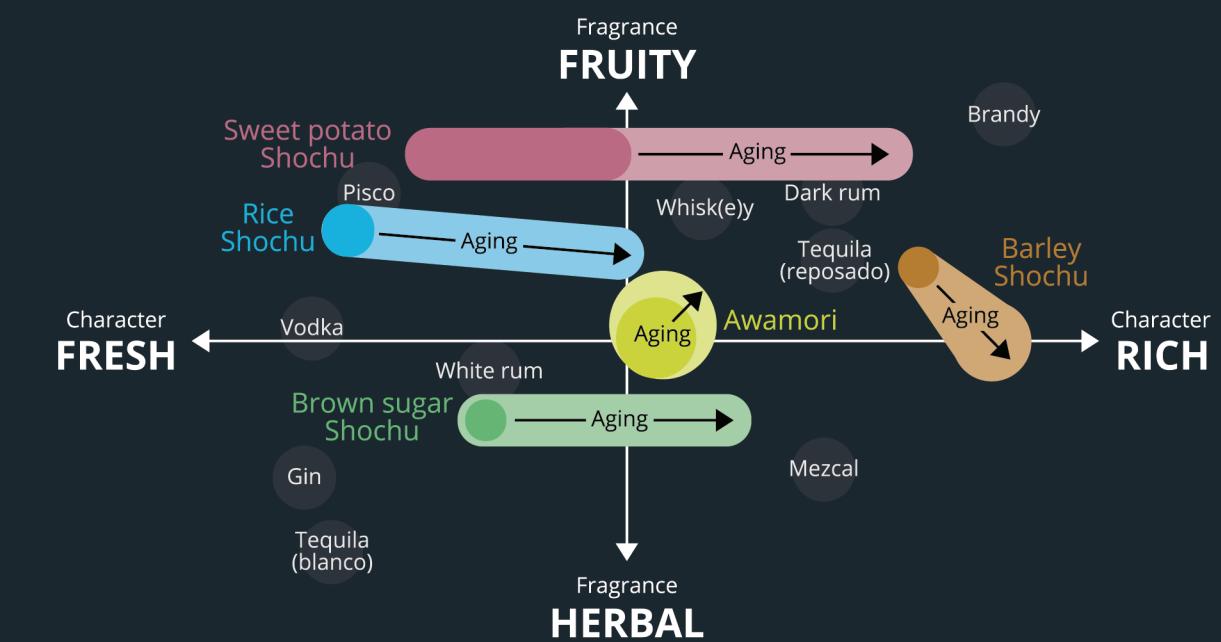


# What is Shochu?

Shochu is a spirit that makes use of a variety of traditional ingredients from Japan's long history, with many appealing points in terms of aroma and taste. There are two types of Shochu: Authentic "Honkaku Shochu" (single distillation Shochu) and the neutral-tasting "Korui Shochu" (consecutive distillation Shochu). Honkaku Shochu is made from a wide variety of raw, flavorful ingredients. The alcohol by volume (ABV) is usually between 20 and 35 percent, which is not as high as many other spirits in the world. However, the aroma produced by the different ingredients and manufacturing methods makes it a memorable spirit. Let's take a look at some of the most popular types of Honkaku Shochu.

If we compare its aroma and character to other spirits from around the world, we begin to understand Shochu in a global context. Where does Shochu stand in comparison to the major spirits available around the world, such as whiskey, gin, rum, and tequila? We have tried to illustrate this, including how it changes with aging, in the chart below. Although this is entirely a matter of perception, it should provide a rough idea of its relative qualities. We can see that Shochu appears all over the chart depending on what base ingredients it uses. Furthermore, sweet potato Shochu ranges greatly from the brandy pisco to full-bodied spirits like genever, and rice Shochu covers everything from fresh, vodka-like spirits to those more like whisky. Compared to other spirits, Shochu has a wide range of aromas depending on the ingredients and age, making it difficult to categorize Shochu by aroma. So the more you understand about the characteristics of each ingredient and experience their taste, the more you will enjoy them. Welcome to the unique world of Japanese Shochu. We hope you love it!

## Where Shochu Stands Among the Spirits of the World



# Feature of Shochu

Shochu is made using koji, a uniquely Japanese product of fermentation, involved in both the brewing and distilling techniques. The production process results in unique flavors. To mixologists and bartenders from overseas, it feels mysterious, a spirit that has evolved entirely on its own in Japan.



## Koji

**Brewing with koji gives Shochu its aroma, flavor, and oiliness, as well as a unique depth of sweetness**

Koji, made by adding the koji mold culture to steamed rice and letting it reproduce, is essential for Japanese fermented foods such as soy sauce and miso. Similarly, koji plays a major role in Shochu, which has been developed in a culture of fermentation. Koji is absolutely vital for producing the flavor, oiliness, and sweetness of Shochu. Spirits from other places in the world, by contrast, put a lot of emphasis on distillation and aging. Throughout its long history, stills have been the subject of much research, and the associated aging and blending techniques have been explored. Now, the world is beginning to see a reversal. Just as fermentation is drawing attention in the world's culinary industry, the world of spirits is showing growing interest in koji and fermentation: new spirits using koji are being created, and new flavors using previously unknown yeasts are being studied. The knowledge of yeast and koji that the Japanese have been exploring for many years can serve as an important foundation of expertise for the global market.

## Distillation

### **Stainless steel stills give each distillation meaning**

While most of the world's stills, such as those for whisky, are made of copper, most Shochu stills are made of stainless steel. Direct distillation, in which steam is blown directly into the mash, has become the most common method of distillation. This is because it offers a way to heat mashes of flammable ingredients without burning them. Moreover, the alcohol content of Shochu is defined as 45 percent or less. There is no limit on the number of distillations, but they are usually distilled only once and finished at 20–35 percent alcohol by volume. For this reason, Shochu is a spirit with many aromatic components, and one that brings out the characteristics of its ingredients well. More than most other spirits, Shochu is meant to be had with meals. There is a deeply rooted culture of mixing Shochu with hot water and drinking it with food. For this reason, the distillation method unique to Shochu is designed to retain a certain amount of oil—and with it, plenty of flavor—to bring out the full body of the ingredients when mixed with hot water.



### **Batch distillation**

Batch distillation effectively brings out the flavor of the ingredients. The alcohol content that can be obtained in a single distillation is low, and distillation may be repeated. Differences in the shape of the still can produce a variety of flavors. The stills used for this kind of distillation are known as "pot stills." The produce: Malt whisky, tequila, cognac (brandy), rum, Honaku Shochu (potato, barley, rice, brown sugar), awamori, gin (often combined with continuous distillation), and some types of rum.

### **Continuous distillation**

A relatively new distillation method that started to see use in the 19th century. Mash can be continuously fed into the still, allowing the efficient production of drinks with high alcohol content. This produces clear drinks that retain little flavor from the original ingredients, such as: Grain whisky, bourbon whisky (pot stills also sometimes used), grape brandy, vodka (pot stills also sometimes used), rum, and Korui Shochu.



## Filtration

**The inclusion of oil, left in after filtration, determines the weight and character of the Shochu, a technique distinct from other spirits around the world**

Compared to other spirits from around the world, Shochu has a completely different approach to oil, which brings roundness and depth to the taste. While other spirits compete for a "clean" flavor in terms of how much filtration is used to refine the taste, the taste of Shochu is determined by a filtration process that retains as much oil as possible, without excess oil oxidizing and spoiling the taste. If too much oil is removed, the Shochu will be "clean," but its depth of flavor will be reduced. For this reason, Shochu producers use various methods such as skimming off the oil with a net and filtering it out with paper, depending on the character of Shochu they are aiming for.

# Flavor

## A unique aroma found only in Shochu

Shochu contains average 25% of alcohol, in most case, it ranges from 20% to 35% which is substantially lower than other spirits, which are usually above 35%. Since its alcohol content is low, its aroma can be easily discerned from the moment it's poured. Different flavors can be discerned even with the same ingredients, because despite being a distilled spirit, the differences in the koji and yeast used also have a substantial impact. They produce an aroma unique to Shochu, quite unlike that of beer or wine. The flavor of Shochu can be described as a multiplication of koji, yeast, and the main ingredient. That structure itself already resembles a cocktail, and produces an aroma that you would not expect from the ingredients alone. By understanding these flavors, you can create cocktails that no one has ever tasted before. These are the kinds of unrealized possibilities that Shochu holds.



# Alcohol Volume

## Even with an alcohol content of 20 percent, Shochu's strong flavors allow it to be used in cocktails

As seen by the growing popularity of non-alcoholic "mocktails," health consciousness is driving a worldwide demand for cocktails with less alcohol. Some people think that Shochu's low alcohol content makes it unsuitable for cocktails, but if the flavors are strong enough, it can work as a low-alcohol cocktail, which has its advantages. For example, by adding 20ml of 25 percent spirits instead of 20ml of 40 percent spirits, you can create a cocktail that has a gentle fragrance and a soft mouthfeel while keeping the alcohol content in check. However, it's hard to make a cocktail if it is weak in terms of both alcohol and flavor. Such Shochu is best enjoyed mixed with hot or cold water.



Shochu / Awamori

20-35%

World spirits

35-45%

# Aging

## From a global perspective, Shochu is more valuable when it can be spoken of like whisky in terms of aging

Maturation for long periods of time holds new possibilities for Shochu. Whether aging is done in tanks, pots, or barrels, they all have one thing in common: As the Shochu ages, gas and fungal smells are eliminated, and the flavor becomes more mellow. This is particularly true for rice and barley Shochu. When the raw spirit is left in a barrel to age, it develops a character comparable to whisky. However, the value of aged Shochu has not been well established in Japan. For example, if Shochu is stored in oak barrels in the warm climates of Kyushu and Okinawa, it will mature quickly and take on the aroma of the barrel. As such, it is said that the 30-year aging periods used for whisky in Scotland may not be strictly necessary. There are still many things that remain unclear, such as differences in aging methods and how to identify the peak of maturity, but thinking globally, if there is Shochu that can be spoken of like whisky in terms of aging, then its value will surely increase.



## Tanks

Typically made of enamel. They do not impart any color, and only the character of the Shochu matures, unaffected by any external factors.



## Pots

Maturation occurs quickly. The distinctive smell of earthenware can produce a natural sweetness, but sometimes the flavor becomes muddy.



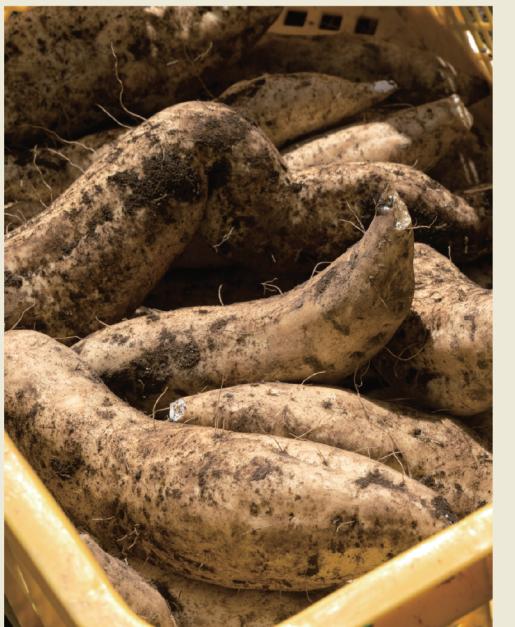
## Barrels

Extracts from the barrels seep out and transform as they mix with the raw spirit. Different types of barrels work well with different types of Shochu.

# Various Flavors of

# Japanese Shochu

There are various flavors of Japanese Shochu depending on the base ingredients. The most common base ingredients are sweet potato, barley, rice, and brown sugar. Each flavor has a distinctive aroma and characteristics.



## Sweet Potato Shochu

Sweet potato Shochu is aromatic and varied, with a multi-layered profile including fruit notes like lychee and mango, floral notes, and nuances of dairy. Shochu is made using koji and fermented in two stages. It becomes mellower as it ages and is famous for unique aromas depending on the type of sweet potato used. One of the best examples is the "Kogane sengan" sweet potato, which has an aroma reminiscent of chestnuts. Other varieties include the white "Joy White", the orange "Beni hayato", and the plum-colored "Purple Sweet Potato", all of which produce a variety of unique aromas such as citrus, carrot, and yogurt. The main production areas for this type of Shochu are Kagoshima Prefecture and southern Miyazaki Prefecture.



## Barley Shochu

Barley Shochu has a richness and flavor that rivals lightly barrel-aged whiskey or rum. As it matures, the aroma settles down and its flavor develops to become fuller and more intense. Common cask-aged aromas include oak, vanilla, and red fruits. Barley Shochu is one of the most popular categories of Shochu in Japan, and is made all over the country, but mostly in Oita, Miyazaki and Fukuoka Prefectures.



## Rice Shochu

Rice Shochu has a light yet expressive fragrance like that of ginjo sake, with hints of floral, green apple, citrus, and melon. Rice Shochu is of course made from rice, but unlike Japanese sake, it tends to use less refined rice so as to bring out the natural flavor. Some Shochu is made from rice lees, a byproduct of Japanese sake, giving it a more concentrated taste and delicious rice flavor. Rice Shochu is produced all over Japan, with famous roots in the Hitoyoshi and Kuma regions of Kumamoto Prefecture.



## Awamori

Awamori is moderate in both fragrance and character. With age, it develops a richer and fuller flavor and aroma of earth, mushrooms, and vanilla. Awamori is the oldest distilled spirit in Japan, and exclusive to Okinawa Prefecture. It is a 100% rice distilled spirit, part of a tradition that has been passed down for about 600 years. Importantly, when making awamori, Toji uses only black koji. Then, the rice is fermented with 100% rice koji and distilled only once.



## Other Shochu

Other types of Shochu can be distilled from a wide variety of ingredients. Many of them are local agricultural products made only in certain regions. For example, brown sugar Shochu is made from rice koji and kokuto sugar in the Amami Islands. Soba Shochu is made from buckwheat. Kasutori Shochu is made from sake lees. Kuri Shochu is made from chestnuts. Shiso Shochu is made from shiso. These are all popular because they are distilled without additives, giving them a wonderful aroma and taste.

# Enjoy Shochu at home. Authentic Drinking Styles

There are many different ways to drink Shochu in Japan. Here are the most popular authentic approaches to drinking Shochu.



## On the Rocks

Shochu is commonly enjoyed on the rocks. You can taste the full aroma and flavor of the Shochu with this easy-to-prepare serving method. As the ice melts, the flavors will become mellow. This works well for all Shochu, but especially for cask-aged barley Shochu or sweet potato Shochu. To make Shochu on the rocks, high-quality, transparent ice is ideal, and the ice should be made with mineral water or boiled water. Three or four big ice cubes are recommended. Shochu should be poured so it makes contact directly with the ice.



## Cold Water Mix

Blending with cold water (Mizuware in Japanese) is recommended for those who would like to enjoy Shochu with food, and is ideal for people who are not partial to strong drinks. The taste will be gentler when the Shochu is mixed with water, but the beverage still remains filled with aroma and flavor. This is highly recommended for barley Shochu and awamori. The usual ratio of Shochu to water is 3-to-2 or 1-to-1. High quality water is crucial, ideally soft water with low mineral content. In Japan, there is another way of mixing Shochu and water which is to let it sit overnight to impart a mellow taste.



## Hot Water Mix

Mixing Shochu with hot water (Oyuware in Japanese) is highly recommended, especially in the cold season. With this style, you can enjoy the aroma and umami flavor of Shochu through the steam. This method works well with sweet potato Shochu. To prepare it, add the hot water to the cup first and then add the Shochu. The hot water should be approximately 158 °F (70 °C) when the Shochu is added. The recommended ratio between Shochu and water is 1-to-1.



## With Sparkling Water

Many people enjoy Shochu with sparkling water (Sodawari in Japanese), which may remind you of a highball. To make it, pour Shochu into an ice-filled glass, then add sparkling water. The recommended ratio of Shochu to sparkling water is 1-to-3. Lemon slices are also a good addition if you would like to add more freshness. This method is the most crisp and refreshing.

## Approach to Shochu Cocktails

Mr. Shuzo Nagumo, a mixologist, proprietor, and bartender, created the approach to making Shochu cocktails to explore aromas. Important points are "picture the aroma's color" and "pick up on the main flavors" as well as "the sub flavors buried under the main ones." The key is to decide whether to bring out the main or sub flavors and what to mix in to bring out the desired effect.



### Sweet potato Shochu

Drawing on the lychee-like fruity aroma, and the warmth and softness of sweet potato, with a sweet-and-sour lactic nuance.

#### Main flavors

Sweet potato, Floral, Creamy, Fruity

#### Sub flavors

Chocolate, Cacao nibs, Vanilla, Egg yolk, Blue cheese, Muscat grapes, Lavender, Elderflower, Coriander, Ginger



### Awamori

Develops a vanilla flavor through extended aging.

#### Main flavors

Earthenware pot aroma, Vanillin, Condensed milk, Mushroom aroma, Roasted aroma

#### Sub flavors

Chocolate, Black walnut, Almond, Espresso (coffee), Vanilla, Butterscotch, Pineapple, Mango, Dashi (soup stock), Wasabi



### Rice Shochu

Aromas that recall florid ginjo sake, white flowers, herbs, and pale green fruit.

#### Main flavors

Ginjo sake, Floral, Lactic

#### Sub flavors

Jasmine, Elderflower, Rose, Lime leaves, Hops, Yogurt, Vanilla, Peach, Melon, Japanese pepper



### Barley Shochu

Savory aroma from standard-pressure distillation = Nuance of toast right out of the toaster Distillation under diminished pressure produces a plainer spirit.

#### Main flavors

Savory aroma of barley, Vanillin (aged)

#### Sub flavors

Honey, Coffee (caffè mocha), Mascarpone cheese, Marmalade, Chocolate spread, Berry jam, Lemon curd, Egg, Campari and other bitter liqueurs, Pineapple



### Brown sugar Shochu

Distillation under diminished pressure produces an "unripe" aroma, while standard pressure recalls sugarcane and rum. Barrel-aged Shochu recall "brown" foods and ingredients.

#### Main flavors

Vanillin, Lactic, Young grass, Sugarcane

#### Sub flavors

Mango, Banana, Guava, Passion fruit, Pineapple, Roasted soybean flour, Caramel, Coffee, Tonka beans, Mint

# Signature Cocktail, Shochu Highball



The Shochu Highball is one of the best ways to savor the rich aroma and flavor of Shochu. It can be made with very simple ingredients: Sparkling water, ice, and fresh fruits such as citrus.

The many varieties of Shochu itself, each with a different flavor, make it so that a simple cocktail is ideal for fully appreciating the variations between them.

The Shochu Highball tastes refreshing, with a clear aftertaste that retains the full flavor of the base spirit, and goes well with a variety of different fruit juices and other ingredients.

Shochu Highballs are perfect for Shochu beginners, and since they are made with sparkling water, they can be enjoyed casually, for instance on weeknights when you may want to enjoy a lighter drink.

# Shochu Ambassador Bars



## Shochu Meets Top-Mixologists

Prominent Mixologists in LA created special Shochu cocktails.



Shochu is a pure, clean, and expressive spirit from Japan made from rice, barley, sweet potatoes, etc. The most distinctive feature of Shochu is its unique aroma and flavor, depending on the ingredients.

Through the campaign, we have collaborated with top mixologists in Los Angeles to create original Shochu cocktails that can be experienced at their bars.

# Baby Gee

Mixologist: Gianna Johns

Baby Gee is an atmospheric cocktail den, with a focus on authentic hospitality and innovative cocktails, in a unique and colorful space.



## Evening Mist Shochu Highball

**Shochu** Aokage Forty-One Genshu / Yanagita Shuzo

**How to Enjoy** Roasted barley & chocolate notes are amplified with sparkling coconut water & Islay scotch. Peppermint adds a cool and fresh component.

### Ingredients

- 2.5 oz Aokage Forty-One Genshu
- 6 dash Peppermint tincture
- Tsp Islay scotch
- 4 oz Unsweetened sparkling coconut water
- Mint plouche



## Cloudy Moon, Windy Flowers

**Shochu** DAIYAME 40 / Hamada Syuzou

**How to Enjoy** Even with layers of bright citrus & celery, earthy Frankincense and a rich silky body from coconut, the floral and fruity Shochu is still the star.

### Ingredients

- 1 oz DAIYAME 40
- 3 dash Frankincense tincture
- 6 dash White soy & rice vinegar
- 0.5 oz Lemon Juice
- 0.5 oz Coconut syrup
- 0.75 oz Grapefruit juice
- 1 oz Macchia dry vermouth
- 2 oz Dr. brown's Cel-Ray soda Collins.
- Garnish with a grapefruit wheel & snowflake celery leaf

# No Smoking Bar

Mixologist: Ben Rojo

A bar for everyone.



## Blue Silk Shochu Highball

**Shochu** Nankai Shochu / Machida Shuzo

**How to Enjoy** Lychee and citrus highlight the fragrant nose and lush texture of Nankai's brown sugar Shochu, inspired by the hand-woven silks of the Amami Islands.

### Ingredients

- 1.5 oz Nankai Shochu
- 0.34 oz Lychee liqueur
- 0.34 oz Quinine syrup
- 0.34 oz Blue curacao
- 1.5 oz White grapefruit juice
- 1.5 oz Soda water



## Shadowdancer

**Shochu** Mizunomai Green Tea Shochu / Munemasa Shuzo

**How to Enjoy** Roasted notes of hojicha and natsume emphasize the rich and punctuated palate of Mizu's Green Tea Shochu, paired with a spiced cookie cold foam.

### Ingredients

- 45mL Mizunomai Green Tea Shochu
- 60mL Hojicha roasted green tea
- 15mL Natsume honey syrup
- 20mL Speculoos cold foam

# Death & Co LA

Mixologist: Matthew Belanger

Multiple award-winning cocktail bar, with outlets in New York, Los Angeles, Denver and Washington, D.C.



## Ureshino Shochu Highball

**Shochu** Mizunomai Green Tea Shochu / Munemasa Shuzo

**How to Enjoy** By subtly enhancing the tannic structure, rich chocolate and crisp green note of Mizu Shochu with cacao rum and herbaceous Green Chartreuse we create a refreshing, vibrant riff on the classic Shochu Highball.

### Ingredients

- 1.75 oz Mizunomai Green Tea Shochu
- 5 oz Seltzer water
- 1 tsp Copalli Cacao Rum
- 0.5 tsp Green Chartreuse
- 0.5 oz Simple syrup
- 1 tsp Acid Phosphate
- Garnish with a lemon twist



## New Wave

**Shochu** iichiko Silhouette / iichiko USA

**How to Enjoy** Nuttiness, florality and subtle fruit of the iichiko silhouette is bolstered with the addition of coconut and grapefruit, balanced with fresh lime and a touch of cinnamon bark.

### Ingredients

- 1.5 oz iichiko Silhouette
- 0.5 oz Planteray coconut rum
- 1 tsp Kalani coconut liqueur
- 0.5 oz Grapefruit juice
- 0.5 oz Lime juice
- 0.5 oz Cinnamon syrup
- Garnish with a grated cinnamon

# Redbird

Mixologist: Tobin Shea

The menu features Bar Director Tobin Shea's well-balanced, bespoke renditions of the classics, garnering awards from Time Out & Tales of the Cocktail.



## Holonigai Shochu Highball

**Shochu** Sobagura / Satsuma Shuzo

**How to Enjoy** Our house-made tonic adds a bright bitter note to rich umami flavors of the sobagura Shochu.

### Ingredients

- 1.5 oz Sobagura Shochu
- Our house made tonic water
- Garnished with a grapefruit half moon



## Sister City

**Shochu** ZANPA Shequwasar Spirits / Higa Shuzo

**How to Enjoy** A bright aromatic "old fashioned" style cocktail that highlights the citrus notes of Zanpa Shochu. It incorporates tropical flavors that pair well with the Okinawan Shochu.

### Ingredients

- 2 oz ZANPA Shequwasar Spirits
- 75 oz Cap Corse
- 5 oz Mango eau de vie
- 25 oz Cointreau
- Pineapple Ice

# The Wolves

Mixologist: Lusiana Aguirre / Kaleb Davies

A Parisian styled salon in the heart of historic DTLA. A place for artists and troubadours to gather over hot food and craft cocktails.



## Nikaido Shochu Highball

**Shochu** Nikaido / Nikaido Shuzou

**How to Enjoy**  
Take note of the rich aroma of the ghee washed barley Shochu. Tomato, curry spices, and palm sugar accentuate the round complexity of the Nikaido. Take a lick of the kasuri-sesame salt on the rim to complement the warm flavors.

### Ingredients

- 2oz Ghee-washed Nikaido
- 1.25oz Tomato cordial
- 0.25oz Masala syrup
- 0.25oz Palm sugar syrup
- 25% Dilution force carbonated
- Garnished with a kasuri-sesame salt rim



## Pink Grain Fizz

**Shochu** Mannen Boshi Genshu / Watanabe Shuzo

**How to Enjoy**  
Grapefruit notes rise first, bright and soft, before the barley Shochu's warm toasted grain settles in. The cardamom and allspice drifts through lightly and the fizz lifts everything into an airy silky refreshing finish.

### Ingredients

- 1.5 oz Mannen-Boshi Genshu
- 0.75 oz Cardamom grapefruit
- 0.25 oz Allspice dram
- 0.5 oz Lime

# Thunderbolt

Mixologist: Tom Liu

Thunderbolt is a neighborhood cocktail bar with great food, located at the intersections of Historic Filipinotown, Echo Park, and DTLA.



## Lemon Tea Shochu Highball

**Shochu** iichiko Saiten / iichiko USA

**How to Enjoy**  
The complex honey and fruit notes in iichiko Saiten pair well with the lemon and tea flavors of this light and refreshing Shochu-and-tea-based highball!!

### Ingredients

- 1 oz iichiko Saiten
- 0.5 oz SC Lab Logan black tea spirit
- 0.75 oz Lemon cordial
- 3.75 oz Chrysanthemum black tea
- 1.5 oz Water
- Force carbonated



## Choco Imo

**Shochu** Nankai Imo Black / Ooyama Jinhichi Shoten

**How to Enjoy**  
Hojicha and brown sugar help tie in the roasted sweet potato notes from the Shochu while also creating a creamy texture highlighted with some cacao notes to create an easy drinking Old Fashioned cocktail!

### Ingredients

- 1.75 oz Nankai Imo Black
- 0.25 oz Copalli cacao rum
- 0.25 oz Hojicha brown sugar syrup
- 0.25 oz Polydextrose syrup
- 1 dash Angostura bitters

# Tokyo Noir

Mixologist: Kevin Lee

Tokyo Noir is a Japanese-style speakeasy tucked behind El Barrio Cantina. The bar blends the intimacy of Tokyo's cocktail rooms with the raw energy of LA. Kevin Lee runs the program with drinks that stay sharp, balanced, and intentional.



## Tokyo Melon Shochu Highball

**Shochu** Fukiage Kura / Fukiage Shochu

**How to Enjoy**  
Effervescent melon with a hint of oak and umami.

### Ingredients

- 1.5 oz Fukiage Kura
- 5 oz Fermented tomato cordial
- 5 oz Midori
- 3 oz Soda water



## Chawanmushi FLIP

**Shochu** MUJEN Original / MUJEN Spirits

**How to Enjoy**  
Savory Cocktail is a play on chawanmushi.

### Ingredients

- 1.5 oz Mujen Original
- 5 oz Mushroom dashi
- 5 oz Mitsuba syrup
- 1 Jidori egg
- 2 dash Saline solution

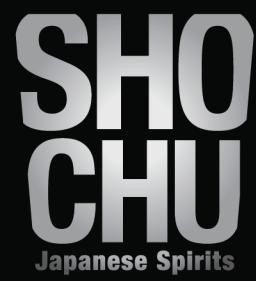
## About JFOODO

JFOODO, The Japan Food Product Overseas Promotion Center, was established on April 1, 2017 within JETRO, Japan External Trade Organization. JFOODO will devote its resources to the branding of Japanese agricultural, forestry, fishery and food products.

**JFOODO official website**  
<https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/jfoodo/>

**JFOODO Shochu official website**  
<https://japan-food.jetro.go.jp/shochu/>

**JFOODO Shochu official Instagram**  
[https://www.instagram.com/shochu\\_japan/](https://www.instagram.com/shochu_japan/)



Shochu Website



Shochu Instagram