

1. FUJIMI (MATSUI SHUZO)



The bottles of Fujimi Blended Japanese Whisky feature a samurai, symbolizing the code of conduct known as "Bushido." The number 7, also displayed on the bottle, represents the seven virtues: courage, integrity, loyalty, respect, honesty, compassion, and honor. With these symbols, the Kurayoshi Distillery—founded in 1910 on Japan's main island of Honshu—sets high standards for itself and its products, which include not only whiskies but also sake and shochu.

The name "Fujimi," which translates to "immortality," reflects the character of this blended whisky. It matures for three years in American white oak barrels, during which it develops a pale yellow color. While the aroma reveals slightly sharp notes, the palate is pleasantly surprising with a mild, rounded flavor accompanied by fresh and fruity notes.

2. CHICHIBU



Since 2004, the "Chichibu" distillery, part of the "Venture Whisky" company, has been located about 100 kilometers from Tokyo. Despite its young age, the distillery, founded by Ichiro Akuto, has already made a name for itself in the world of spirits.

For production, the distillery takes inspiration from its Scottish counterparts: authentic Scottish copper pot stills are used, and local ingredients are sourced for the products. This results in high-quality spirits that combine Japanese and Scottish techniques. One of the treasures of this young distillery is Ichiro's Malt & Grain Blended Whisky. Its aroma reveals notes of apricots and peaches, while its flavor is dominated by gingerbread, caramel, and barley malt.

3. ENSO (FRATERNITY SPIRITS - KIYOKAWA)



Enso is a handcrafted pot-still blended whisky from Japan. The exact locations of the distilleries remain a well-kept secret. However, it is known that the whisky is blended near Tokyo, specifically by the "Kiyokawa Company." This Japanese company was founded in May 1950 by Yoichiro Kiyokawa, whose family name also explains the origin of the company's name.

The whisky, on the other hand, derives its name from the Japanese word Enso, which means "circle" and is a symbol in Japanese calligraphy. According to rumors, the idea for this whisky came from a mysterious group of Japanese artists. The Enso Blended Whisky boasts a fruity and floral flavor profile with hints of vanilla and caramel.

4. HAKUSHU



A century after the opening of the Yamazaki Distillery, the Hakushu Distillery was built in Japan in 1973 by Master Blender Keizo Saji. While searching for a suitable location for his distillery, he found an ideal spot amidst dense forests near Mount Kaikoma in Japan's Akaishi Mountains. Without a doubt, Hakushu is one of the highest-altitude distilleries in the world.

The climate and the soft, pure water surrounding the distillery make it possible to create a truly unique malt whisky. The Hakushu Distiller's Reserve is one such exceptional whisky. This single malt boasts a fresh and lightly smoky character with notes of peppermint, cucumber, melon, grapefruit, lemon thyme, honey, pear, and nuts, complemented by delicate spicy aromas.

5. HIBIKI (SUNTORY)



One of the largest Japanese whisky producers is the Suntory Corporation, which is also behind the "Hibiki" bottlings. These are created by blending various distillates from Suntory's own distilleries. After a Japanese whisky was named Whisky of the Year in 2015, it was only a matter of time before the reserves of Japanese distilleries were nearly depleted.

To bridge the resulting gap until new, especially aged Japanese whiskies became available, Suntory introduced the NAS (No Age Statement) whisky Hibiki Japanese Harmony. With its sweet and fruity character featuring notes of lychee, banana, vanilla, caramel, honey, and chocolate, this whisky offers a delightful tasting experience.

6. YAMAZAKURA (SASANOKAWA SHUZO)



In northeastern Japan lies the Sasanokawa Shuzo distillery. The company in Fukushima entered the sake and shochu business as early as 1765. In 1946, it was granted a license to distill whisky. Yamazakura Whisky is a premium blended whisky in which all components are aged individually and then together in former bourbon casks. This process gives the final blend an intense ochre color and a variety of aromas.

For Yamazakura, the producers use 80% grain whisky and 20% single malt whisky. This distillate pampers the senses with notes of vanilla, caramel, pineapple, peach, lemon, and a touch of oak. The soft and mild taste reveals flavors of vanilla, caramel, and honey. In the sweet finish, you'll find aromas of ripe fruits and oak wood.

7. THE SAN-IN (MATSUI SHUZO)



Discover one of the fascinating Japanese whisky creations with The SAN-IN Blended Whisky. This premium spirit is crafted by the Kurayoshi Distillery, located in Tottori Prefecture in western Japan. The region's warmer temperatures and the pure water used in production create light and refreshing whiskies with a smooth taste.

Aging in fine American white oak barrels imparts a fruity and sweet bouquet to the San-In Blended Whisky, with aromas of pear, apricot, and vanilla on the nose. The palate is caressed by flavors of melon and pear, harmoniously blended with notes of ginger and a hint of vanilla. The warming finish reveals fruity nuances of pear once more.

8. THE CHITA (SUNTORY)



Since 1923, Suntory, a leading beverage corporation in the Land of the Rising Sun, has been expanding the art of Japanese whisky. Under the Suntory name, distilleries such as Hakushu, Yamazaki, and since 1972, the Chita Distillery, have flourished. The Chita Distillery was built by Keizo Saji, Suntory's second Master Blender, on the Chita Peninsula in Japan. The distillery is exclusively dedicated to the production of grain whiskies.

The term „grain" might seem misleading at first glance, as technically all whisky is made from grain. However, grain whiskies are primarily distilled from unmalted grain. The components used in the production of The Chita whisky are aged in three different types of casks: white oak casks, Spanish oak casks, and wine casks.

9. KURAYOSHI (MATSUI SHUZO)



Water is not only the source of life; its quality also influences the taste of whisky, making it unique and vibrant. This knowledge drives the owners of the Kurayoshi Distillery to use only the finest water for their products. The water, which flows from the base of Mount Daisen—where the distillery is located—is said to be soft and creates a whisky that everyone can love. At least, that is the ambitious goal of the Japanese distillery, whose name translates to „Life is good.“

The 8-year-old Kurayoshi whisky ages in former bourbon casks made of American white oak. This gives the premium malt whisky a rich and intense flavor profile with notes of dried fruits, vanilla, and roasted nuts.

10. HATOZAKI (KAIKYO DISTILLERY)



The Japanese Kaikyo Distillery is named after the famous Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge, which is located at the base of the distillery and is one of the longest suspension bridges in the world. The founding Yonesawa family has been involved in the art of distillation since 1917, but only recently ventured into whisky production. When the old pot stills had to be replaced with new Copper-Twin-Pot-Stills in 2017, they were specifically designed for whisky distillation.

The brand name Hatozaki is derived from Japan's oldest stone lighthouse, the Hatozaki lighthouse. The Hatozaki Pure Malt is a blend of whiskies that have matured in different types of casks: ex-bourbon casks, sherry casks, and casks made of Japanese Mizunara oak.

11. YAMAZAKI (SUNTORY)



The Yamazaki Distillery, which opened in 1923 as Japan's first malt whisky distillery, is located on the outskirts of the former capital, Kyoto. The choice of location was influenced not only by the excellent quality of water but also by the warm climate in the region, which allows the Yamazaki whisky to mature into an exceptionally fine spirit. As in Scotland, these Japanese whiskies are produced using the classic pot-still method. Maturation in ex-Bordeaux wine casks made of French oak, ex-sherry casks, and casks made of Japanese Mizunara oak imparts an intense fruity character to the Yamazaki Distiller's Reserve. The single malt displays aromas of strawberries and cherries, which are complemented by notes of raspberries, peaches, and coconuts on the palate.

12. AKASHI (EIGASHIMA)



The Japanese White Oak distillery was founded in 1888 and was primarily known for producing sake and shochu. In 1919, it became the first distillery in Japan to be granted a license for whisky production. The whisky has gained increasing attention since the construction of a new distillery near the Kobe harbor, where the Akashi Blended Whisky has been produced since 1984. In addition to various blended whiskies, single malt whisky is also produced, although it is available in very limited quantities on the European market. As the name suggests, the Akashi Sherry Cask Finish undergoes a secondary maturation of about six months in fine sherry casks. This imparts notes of dried fruits, spices, and oak wood to the blended whisky.

13. NIKKA (YOICHI)



In 1918, the son of a sake-brewing family was tasked with creating a Japanese whisky. To do so, he traveled through Scotland to uncover the secrets of whisky production. In 1924, he built a Japanese distillery at the request of a major beer producer, and just a few years later, he was able to fulfill his dream of owning his own distillery. It is named after the coastal town of Yoichi. To this day, delicious whiskies are produced there using traditional methods. The character of Nikka Yoichi Whisky is primarily influenced by maturation in former sherry casks and new American oak barrels. In addition to aromas of fruits such as melons, kiwis, apples, and pears, the single malt also has spicy notes and delicate hints of peat smoke.

14. MARS (SHINSHU MARS)



Behind the Mars Cosmo Whisky is the Japanese distillery Mars Shinshu, which was founded in 1985. Located at 798 meters above sea level, it is the highest distillery in Japan. The cooler temperatures lead to slower processes, resulting in a whisky that tastes smoother and fuller, while also carrying the chill of the region. For the limited edition Mars Maltage Cosmo Wine Cask Finish, a combination of Japanese and Scottish single malts is used in the production. For a special touch, part of the maturation takes place in red wine casks from the distillery's own Japanese vineyard. The result is a blended malt that combines sweet honey aromas with notes of dark fruits, figs, oak, and fine spices.

15. MATSUI (MATSUI SHUZO)



This special Matsui Whisky comes from the Kurayoshi distillery, which has been located in the Tottori Prefecture in Japan since 1910. The Kurayoshi distillery uses only the best water for its products, sourced from the foot of Mount Daisen, which is said to have a particularly soft taste. In addition to whisky, traditional Japanese sake and shochu are also produced. The Matsui „The Peated" is double distilled in pot stills and matured in American oak casks. The bottle label and gift box feature the artwork The Great Wave off Kanagawa, which is meant to reflect the vibrant and smoky character of the single malt. In addition to the smoky aromas, the whisky also has notes of grain, seaweed, oak, vanilla, and a hint of fruit.

16. THE TOTTORI (MATSUI SHUZO)



For this special The Tottori whisky, a combination of different Japanese whiskies is used, which are aged for three years in used bourbon casks. The fine blend is produced by the Kurayoshi Distillery, which was founded in 1910 in the Tottori Prefecture, located near the sea. The distillery is also situated at the foot of Mount Daisen. The soft water from this area is ideal for distilling sake and whisky. To preserve an authentic whisky taste, the whiskies from the Kurayoshi Distillery are bottled without chill filtration. The Tottori Bourbon Barrel has a smooth character with sweet and smoky aromas on the nose, along with notes of vanilla and caramel on the palate.

17. TOGOUCHI (SAKURAO - CHUGOKU JOZU)



Since 1918, the Chugoku Jozu distillery has been producing fruit liqueurs, sake, and shochu on the Japanese island of Honshu. 72 years later, in 1990, the company began producing blended whisky. However, the products are not distilled in Japan. The distillates are imported from Scotland (malt whisky) and Canada (grain whisky) by the Japanese company. Only the aging and blending process takes place in the Japanese town. The whisky is stored in a railway tunnel in Togouchi, which was never completed. The Togouchi Beer Cask undergoes maturation in former bourbon casks, followed by a 6-month finishing period in IPA (Indian Pale Ale) beer casks. This gives the blended whisky notes of fruits, grains, and hops.

18. TOKI (SUNTORY)



One of the largest Japanese whisky manufacturers is the company Suntory, which is behind the Toki whisky. The whisky is a blend of malts from the Hakushu, Yamazaki, and Chita distilleries. The blend was developed by Shinji Fukuyo, Chief Blender at Suntory. After the blending of the individual components, the product is reduced to drinking strength with spring water and bottled. In the glass, we now have a light golden whisky with sweet aromas of honey and vanilla. These notes are accompanied by fruity and fresh flavors of grapefruit, thyme, and peppermint on the palate. Feel free to add a few drops of water, as this brings out the notes of vanilla, honey, and apple even more prominently.

19. KUJIRA (MASAHIRO SHUZO)



The Kujira Ryukyu whiskies are produced by the Japanese Masahiro Distillery, which has been in operation since 1883, making it one of the oldest family-owned distilleries on the island of Okinawa. This tropical island is located in the far south of Japan. Due to the warm temperatures, the whiskies produced there mature faster than in other regions, resulting in a stronger aroma and more intense flavor. The Kujira Ryukyu Single Grain Whisky is made from 100% high-quality Indica rice. It is aged for 5 years in first-fill American oak barrels, creating an appealing whisky with aromas of sweet caramel, vanilla, licorice, and spicy oak, which are also reflected in the taste.

20. SHINOBU



Surrounded by majestic mountains and the Japanese Sea, the Shinobu Distillery is located in the Niigata Prefecture on Japan's main island of Honshu. For the founder and master blender of the distillery, Ken Usami, this is the perfect place to produce Japanese craft whiskies. In 2017, the Shinobu Distillery became the first distillery in the Niigata Prefecture to receive a license to distill whisky. „Shinobu" is the Japanese word for „patience," and so their whiskies are crafted with great care and patience. This particular Shinobu release is a blend of whiskies aged in former sherry and bourbon casks. Afterward, the blending takes place in a Japanese Mizunara oak cask, where the whisky receives its finish. This results in a complex and harmonious whisky.

21. NOBUSHI (FRATERNITY SPIRITS - KIYOKAWA)



The Nobushi Whisky comes from the Kiyokawa Company, a Japanese company founded by Yoichiro Kiyokawa in May 1950. Using fresh and pure spring water from the nearby mountains, the company produces high-quality spirits. To create the Nobushi Blended Whisky, a combination of whiskies from the Miyagi and Nagano Prefectures is used. After blending, the whisky matures for four years in American oak casks. The Nobushi Whisky offers a well-balanced flavor profile with notes of dried fruits and a hint of chocolate. The name „Nobushi" refers to an elite warrior unit from feudal Japan, known for safeguarding their techniques and wisdom, passing them down through generations.

22. KAMIKI



The gods seem to be favoring the Kamiki distillery, as the Japanese producer consistently earns numerous medals for its creations each year. The distillery is located in a special place at the foot of the sacred Mount Miwa, near the ancient capital of Japan, Nara. The cool breezes descending from the mountain inspired the founders when naming the distillery: "Kami" means "god," and "iki" translates to "breath."

The Kamiki Intense Wood is a truly unique release from the distillery. For its second maturation phase, this blended malt is aged in fine casks made from Japanese cedar wood. This imparts a notably smooth character to the whisky, with aromas of green tea, sandalwood, pepper, cinnamon, dried fruits, and tobacco.

23. KANOSUKE



The Kanosuke Distillery was founded in 2017 in the southwest of Japan, located near Fukiagehama, one of the longest sand beaches in the country. This scenic location allows for stunning sunsets, which are also depicted on the bottle of Kanosuke Whisky. The proximity to the coast and the influence of the local climate contribute to the unique characteristics of the distillery's products, resulting in whiskies with a richer and smoother profile. For the distillation of Kanosuke Single Malt, three different pot stills are used. The whisky undergoes maturation in American oak casks, which were previously used to age the renowned „Mellowed Kozuru" Shochu. This unique process imparts distinctive flavors of honey, bananas, caramel, lemons, ginger, and smoked nuts to the whisky, making it a well-rounded and flavorful expression.

24. AKKESHI



Since 2016, the "Akkeshi Distillery" in the north of Japan, on the island of Hokkaido, has been producing high-quality spirits. The distillery manufactures its products according to Scottish traditions, using two traditional copper pot stills from the renowned brand Forsyths. Additionally, some peated barley is used to closely resemble the character of an Islay whisky. The proximity to the coastline also imparts a maritime flavor profile to the whiskies.

The Akkeshi Taisho 2022 Blended Whisky is a fruity and smooth expression from the distillery, dedicated to the hottest time of the year, summer, with its many festivals. The label design, featuring indigo blue, is meant to evoke the image of Yukatas, the light summer kimonos traditionally worn during this season.