





# The Ultimate Sake and Food Pairing Guide: Perfect Matches for Every Dish



SAKURA SAKE SHOP

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# Introduction: The Magic of Sake Pairing



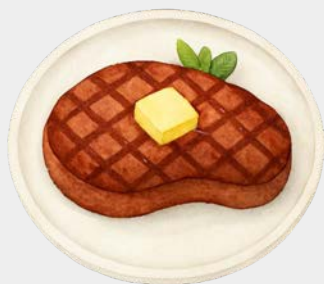
Food has the power to elevate the flavors of sake even further. While many people are familiar with wine and food pairing in Western cuisine, sake is equally impressive, or perhaps even better, as a beverage that pairs exceptionally well with food.

## Pairing Examples



### **Delicate sashimi with a crisp, gently sweet Junmai Daiginjo**

The combination of delicate sashimi with sake characterized by lightness and clarity creates a recommended pairing where both enhance each other's best qualities.



### **Steak paired with umami-rich Junmai sake**

By combining the sweetness of steak fat with the umami of sake, you can enhance the sweetness of the fat while enjoying the clean finish provided by the sake's acidity.



# The Four Fundamental Principles of Sake and Food Pairing



We present the basic rules of sake and food pairing as four principles.

1



**Match Intensity**

2



**Match Flavor Profiles**

3



**Create Contrasting Flavors**

4



**Match Temperature**



# 1 : Match Intensity



Full-bodied sake pairs with richly flavored dishes. Light sake pairs with delicate dishes. This is the basic concept of pairing.

## Rich, bold dishes



should be paired with  
full-bodied sake



Think "red wine  
with steak"

The same principle  
applies to sake.

## Light, delicate dishes



pair great with  
lighter sake



Think "white wine  
with fish"

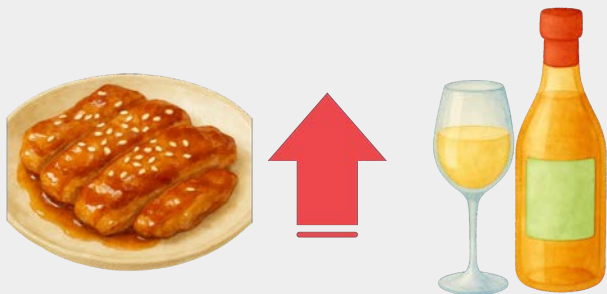


## 2 : Match Flavor Profiles



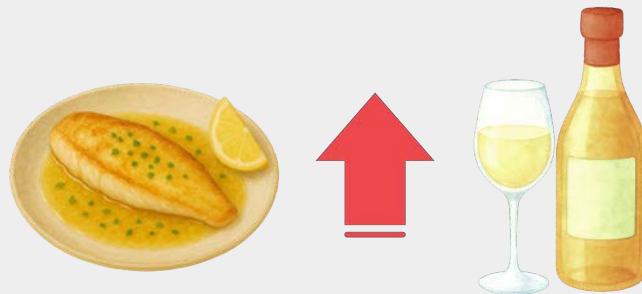
When the characteristics of food and sake are matched, a synergistic effect creates a pleasant flavor experience. Similar to pairing fruity white wine with fruit-based dishes, this involves matching sweet sake with sweet food, or acidic sake with acidic dishes.

**For sweet dishes...**



**Pair with sweet sake to enhance the sweetness.**

**For acidic dishes...**



**Pair with acidic sake to create a lighter, crisper finish.**



This is the royal road of pairing. Even beginners can easily reproduce and enjoy these pairings.



### 3 : Create Contrasting Flavors



Contrast is a technique that combines different flavors of food and sake to complement each other's characteristics. This might be easier to understand if you think about pairing bitter coffee with sweet desserts. For example, pairing spicy dishes with sweet sake falls into this category.

**For spicy dishes..**



**Sweet sake provides contrast that helps temper the spiciness**

**For rich, full-flavored dishes...**



**Pair with crisp, acidic sake to provide refreshing balance**



**When perfectly matched, this can create a sake experience that leaves you amazed!**





## 4 : Match Temperature



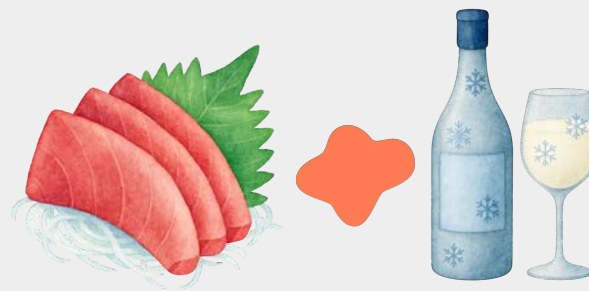
When pairing with warm dishes like soups or hot pots, warming the sake allows the food and sake to blend pleasantly in your mouth. Combinations like warm soup with warm sake are also recommended.

**For warm dishes...**



**Pair with warm sake**

**For cold dishes...**



**Pair with chilled sake**



One of sake's charms is that it can be enjoyed at various temperatures.





## [Advanced] Creative Pairings



After understanding the four principles, the true joy of pairing can be found in deliberately "breaking" these rules. Unexpected combinations like warm food with cold sake, or delicate dishes with rich sake, can sometimes reveal surprising compatibility.

**For warm dishes...**



**Pair with cold sake**  
→ ex) Unexpected refreshment

**For delicately flavored dishes...**



**Pair with rich, full-bodied sake**  
→ ex) The sake acts like a sauce



**Don't be bound by logic—find the best pairing that works for you!**

## Case Study No.1: 1.Matching Intensity / 2.Matching Type



Duck with Mushroom and Balsamic Dual Sauce ×  
Hokko Masamune Tokubetsu Junmai (4-year aged)



The cocoa-like aroma from 4 years of aging resonates with the aroma of the balsamic sauce. The sake's robust body firmly supports the rich flavor of the meat while creating a crisp finish. The acidity of the sauce also harmonizes with the sake's acidity, creating a perfect match in both flavor profile and intensity balance.

HOKKO MASAMUNE Tokubetsu  
Junmai Kinmon Nishiki



Brewery: Kadoguchi Brewery  
Alcohol Content: 15%  
Rice Variety: Kinmon Nishiki  
Rice Polishing Ratio: 59%

## Case Study No.2: 3.Contrasting Flavors



Kinmedai (Golden Eye Snapper) Nigiri ×  
HAKURAKUSEI Junmai Ginjo



The sharp edge of Hakurakusei perfectly complements the rich umami and fat of kinmedai. By contrasting opposite flavor profiles, both characteristics are enhanced, creating a balanced harmony in the mouth.

HAKURAKUSEI Junmai Ginjo



Brewery: Niizawa Brewery  
Alcohol Content: 15%  
Rice Variety: Kura no Hana  
Rice Polishing Ratio: 55%



Gindara Saikyo Yaki (Black Cod with Sweet Miso) ×  
TOHOKUIZUMI Omachi Junmai Karakuchi



A combination where the intensity of both the dish and sake are equally matched. The sake firmly embraces and expands the sweetness and saltiness of the white miso, while delivering a clean, sharp finish. The dry finish of the sake allows the sweet aftertaste of the dish to linger, creating a pairing you can immerse yourself in completely.

TOHOKUIZUMI Omachi  
Junmai Karakuchi



Brewery: Takahashi Brewery  
Alcohol Content: 15.5%  
Rice Variety: Omachi  
Rice Polishing Ratio: 58%



Sakura Trout with Cherry Leaf Aroma ×  
ASAMAYAMA BLOOMIN'



The sharpness and fresh aroma of the sake harmonize with the cherry leaf, while the sake's sweetness gradually spreads. The cherry aroma and sake's sweetness overlap, yet the finish is clean and crisp, leaving a refreshing aftertaste. This is a springtime marriage of aromas and sweetness that amplify each other.

### ASAMAYAMA BLOOMIN'



Brewery: Asamayama Brewery  
Alcohol Content: 15%  
Rice Variety: Yamakei Nishiki  
Rice Polishing Ratio: 60%

## Case Study No.5: 2.Matching Type



Hata-masu and Kanburi Sashimi ×  
ZAKU KIZUI Junmai Daiginjo



The sake extends the savory aroma and sweet fat of the winter yellowtail, creating a lingering, slow-flowing experience in the aftertaste. The richness of the fish meets the gentleness of the sake, a perfect combination that amplifies each other's deliciousness.

ZAKU KIZUI Junmai Daiginjo



Brewery: Shimizu Seizaburo Shoten  
Alcohol Content: 16%  
Rice Variety: Yamada Nishiki  
Rice Polishing Ratio: 35%

## Case Study No.6: 3.Contrasting Flavors



Medai (Japanese butterfish) Fritters with Butterbur Sprout ×  
YOKOYAMA SILVER Junmai Ginjo Super Dry 7 Nama



Against the bitterness of the butterbur sprout, the sake offers a hint of sweetness, while the finish crisply cuts through the oil. The bitterness and sweetness create a vivid contrast, resulting in a refreshing combination.

### YOKOYAMA SILVER Junmai Ginjo Super Dry 7 Nama



Brewery: Omoya Brewery  
Alcohol Content: 15%  
Rice Variety: Yamada Nishiki  
Rice Polishing Ratio:  
50% (koji rice) / 55% (kake rice)



## Case Study No.7: 3.Contrasting Flavors



Tofu and Winter Vegetable Cake Sale with Mapo Sauce × Zaku  
Junmai Daiginjo New Sake 2024 純米大吟醸 新酒 2024



The sweetness and smoothness of the sake mask the spiciness of the mapo sauce, embracing it in contrast. The saltiness of the cake sale and the sweetness of the sake also create a vividly contrasting flavor.

### ZAKU Junmai Daiginjo Shinshu



Brewery: Shimizu Seizaburo Shoten  
Alcohol Content: 15%  
Rice Variety: Mie Prefecture Rice  
Rice Polishing Ratio: 50%

## Case Study No.8: All Four Principles



Lily Root, Mizuna, and Shiitake Soup × Rokujuyoshu Junmai Yamada Nishiki (55°C)六十餘洲 純米 山田錦(55°C)



The 55°C sake harmonizes with the hot soup. The acidity and sharpness of the sake enhance the steamed lily root's fluffy umami. Meanwhile, the shiitake mushroom's umami confronts the warm sake equally, allowing you to enjoy the unity created by temperature.

### ROKUJU YOSHU Junmai



Brewery: Imaszato Brewery  
Alcohol Content: 15%  
Rice Variety: Bizen Omachi  
Rice Polishing Ratio: 65%



Tai & Maguro Sashimi ×  
KAMOKINSHU Sakura Fubuki Tokubetsu Junmai Nama



Chilled sake with cold sashimi is a classic temperature match. With tai (sea bream), the contrast between saltiness and the sake's sweetness spreads the white fish's umami. With maguro (tuna), the sweetness of the fatty meat and the crispness of the cold sake make a clean cut, leaving you craving more of the tuna's umami in the aftertaste.

### KAMOKINSHU Sakura Fubuki Tokubetsu Junmai Nama



Brewery: Kanemitsu Brewery  
Alcohol Content: 16%  
Rice Variety:  
Koji rice: Akaiwa Omachi  
Kake rice: Nakate Shinsenbon  
Rice Polishing Ratio:  
50% (koji rice) / 60% (kake rice)

## Case Study No.10: 1.Matching Intensity / 2.Matching Type



Apple Tart with Caramel and Sansho Ice Cream ×  
KATSUYAMA -LEI- Semi Sweet Body Junmai Ginjo



Katsuyama's melon aroma and rich sweetness embrace the sweetness of the caramel. When first poured, it harmonizes with the cold ice cream, and over time, it comes to harmonize with the apple compote and tart crust—a combination that's delicious in two different ways.

### KATSUYAMA - LEI- SEMI SWEET BODY



Brewery: Katsuyama Brewery  
Alcohol Content: 12%  
Rice Variety: Hitomebore  
Rice Polishing Ratio: 55%



## 1. Export achievements to 22 countries (as of April 2025)

We are well-versed in the market characteristics and regulations of different countries, enabling smooth export procedures

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## 2. Strong connections with sake breweries

We currently work with 70 breweries and offer over 1,500 SKUs, allowing us to propose a wide variety of products.

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## 3. Strict cold-chain shipping

To deliver sake that tastes just as good as it does in Japan, we use reefer containers and maintain strict temperature control during transportation.



Canada  
**Nippon Sake Imports**  
Jason Evans

"Sakura Sake Shop truly understands the Canadian market and is an indispensable partner for our sake business."



Austria  
**SAKE no BA**  
Yuri Iwata

"Not only do they offer an excellent lineup of sake and quality management, but they also support us in all aspect, including planning brewery tours."



Hong Kong  
**Shu Gen Washuya**  
Tony Lee

"They handle famous brands like Zaku and Hakurakusei, and I'm very grateful for their high level of service which smoothly provides the sake we want."





# Brands We Carry (Partial List)



HAKURA  
KUSEI  
(Miyagi)



KATSU  
YAMA  
(Miyagi)



KANKO  
BAI  
(Mie)



HYAKU  
JURO  
(Gifu)



AKITOR  
A  
(Kochi)



BUNKAJ  
IN  
(Kochi)



UGO NO  
TSUKI  
(Hiroshima)



TOYO  
BLJIN  
(Yamaguchi)



YOKO  
YAMA  
(Nagasaki)



SHICHIDA  
(Saga)



ZAKU  
(Mie)



DOMAINE  
WATANABE  
(Niigata)



ZANKYO  
(Miyagi)



DALJIRO  
(Shiga)



MII NO  
KOTOBUKI  
(Fukuoka)



HIWATA  
(Miyagi)



SHICHI  
HONYARI  
(Shiga)



KAMOKIN  
SHU  
(Hiroshima)



ROKUJU  
YOSHU  
(Nagasaki)



ISHI  
ZUCHI  
(Ehime)



TAKA  
CHIYO  
(Niigata)



TSUSHI  
MAYA  
(Gifu)



HAKUIN  
MASAMUNE  
(Shizuoka)



# THANK YOU



SAKURA SAKE SHOP

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