

\\The rich aroma is the key\\

# A how-to-guide for Awamori lovers

How to enjoy Awamori

The perfect gift for beginners

wanting to learn



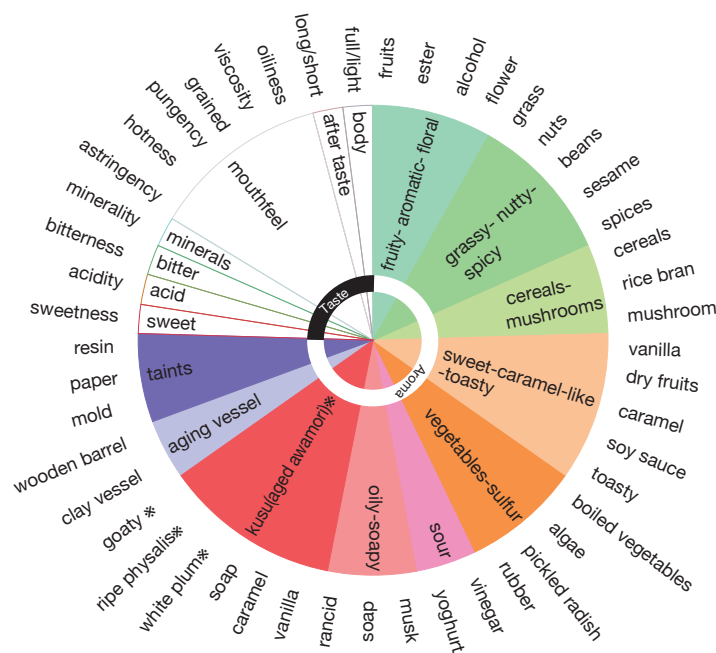


# The Aroma and Taste that signifies Awamori

Become able to explain, not just know the different tastes  
Your hand reaches out for another glass of awamori

There are 47 Awamori distilleries in Okinawa prefecture, and it is said that there are hundreds if not thousands of brands. There is a difference in the Aroma and Taste as well as the number of brands, and the way of feeling also changes depending on the way of drinking. In the Awamori flavor wheel that summarizes the types of aroma and flavor that can be felt from Awamori, expressions such as "fruity",

"nutty", "vanilla" and "oily" are mentioned in 49 different words. You might think, "That's too much to remember!" Fear not, for much of the difference in smell and taste actually comes from the way of drinking. Once you try different ways of drinking, start to know the difference in smell and taste, you can find your preferred way of style and branding.



The Awamori flavor wheel in the above figure is the arrangement of the expressions of "Aroma" and "Taste" that are felt from drinking Awamori. Created by members of Okinawa Regional Taxation Office, Okinawa Industrial Technology Center, University of the Ryukyus, National Institute of Technology, Okinawa College.

## 1 The smell of vanilla from kome-koji?

One of the features of Awamori is its sweet smell almost like vanilla or caramel. Especially in aged awamori, you can feel a sweet and mellow taste. In whiskey etc, it is said that the sweet smell of vanilla comes out by aging in the barrel. On the other hand, although awamori is not aged in barrels since the kome-koji is subjected to fermentation, distillation and ripening it still produces a unique sweet aroma of vanilla and caramel.

## 3 A scent of matsutake mushroom

Awamori contains ingredients called matsutakeol, which is responsible for the scent of the Matsutake mushroom. Awamori manufacturing uses kome-koji that bears rice with black kome-koji, and Matsutakeol is produced by that black kome-koji. For the production of shochu, black kome-koji or its white mutant white kome-koji is used. Shochu with "Black" in the brand name use black kome-koji in many cases.

## 5 Vacuum distillation and the smell of apples

Some fragrances like apples and bananas are also said to be found in awamori. This is because of a process called vacuum distillation where the pressure is lowered and the temperature is raised to about 40 ° C. It is the same principle of when water boils at about 87 ° C at the top of Mt. Fuji where the pressure is low. Usually the smell of toasty wins over when heated to a boil, but under vacuum distillation the fruity smell stands out.

## 2 The smell of "male goat"?

The last King of the Ryukyu Kingdom, King Shō Tai's fourth son, the Baron Shō Jun was famous as a hobbyist, and wrote many essays on his favorite topic which was Awamori. At one point records who he wrote that, "It is originally so that aged awamori Kusu has various good smells and they can be broken down into three basic categories." Mysteriously, the three categories are a "male goat", "a ripened ground cherry" and "white plum." You now know the mystery surrounding the smell of ancient sake...

## 4 Tastes sweet but sugar-free

Awamori and shochu and other distilled spirits do not contain any sugar. Nevertheless, some awamori, especially aged ones, taste and feel very sweet. This is because of the illusion people fall to when they smell the sweet aroma. To prove that, pinch your nose next time you take a sip of awamori. You probably won't feel much of the sweet taste you thought you tasted before.

## 6 The key to rich taste is in the alcohol level

Aged awamori with a high alcohol content has an oily and mellow mouthfeel. This is because the fat that is the source of delicious is more soluble in alcohol than water. If this oil is divided by water or if the temperature drops during the winter, it can not be dissolved completely and it sometimes appears as white lumps. Depending on the manufacturer, in anticipation that fat will appear as lumps in winter time, awamori is cooled in advance to remove the fat.



Traditional drinking style of condensed delicious

# Taste well and straight

Awamori, the only hard liquor in traditional Japanese liquor.  
You can enjoy the flavor, taste and aroma of kome-koji.



Awamori is a traditional Okinawan liquor that is said to have a history of some 600 years  
In the Edo period, it was used as a gift of dedication to the Shogunate,  
Since then, it is known as a hard liquor favored for its "strength".



Taste the depths with a traditional drinking vessel



## Gentle sip to soften your tongue

Taste the depths with a traditional drinking vessel

Gentle sip to soften your tongue

Awamori made solely from kome-koji is condensed with the taste and flavor of rice bran. The freshness of Awamori's alcohol content is over 40 degrees. Most of the awamori, especially called kusu or old liquor, has been matured for over 3 years, and has a sweet flavor like vanilla and caramel. You can immerse yourself in the deep world of history when you take sip from Okinawa's traditional small-mouthed "chibuguwa" drinking vessel.



## I love the sweet smell that blooms

Awamori features sweet aroma like vanilla and caramel. There are two ways to make this scent even better. One is to use a long glass like champagne glass or grappa glass. The other is to leave a few containers after drinking. Strangely, a sweeter scent comes out stronger from the empty glass that has been swallowed, then when there was awamori left in the glass.

## The sweet aroma stays

## Before and even

## after drinking

Deep in private time with sweet afterglow

## Kick back and relax with your favorite **on the rock**

Surprisingly with on the rock the sweet vanilla taste deepens  
The flavor is ice firm and smooth to drink



When it cools, most of the aroma becomes mild, but the vanilla stays and spreads in the mouth  
The beautiful glow of rock glass and ice is a soothing attraction



Refreshing, smooth sweet finish

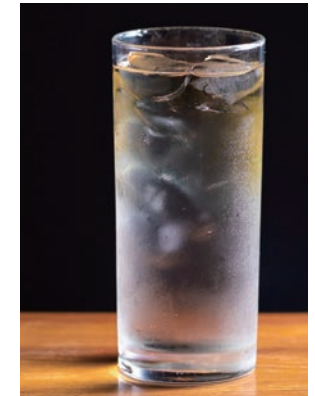
## Pour **on the rock** with ice

By cooling with ice, the aroma becomes mild and the texture more smooth.  
The best part of drinking on the rock lies in this coolness, but the characteristic of awamori on the rock is its sweet vanilla and matsutake fragrance.



## Float style awamori that changes over time

Add 6 to 70 percent of the water in a glass filled with ice to cool, and pour awamori gently. Since awamori weighs lighter, it will float on top of the water without mixing. The first few sips can be enjoyed straight for its smell and taste, and the left over ice and water can help you gradually cool, and refresh your mouth and pallet. This way of drinking definitely makes it more enjoyable and you will want to try other various brands of awamori as well.



## Straight awamori brimming gently in ice water



—< Goes well with both cold water and  
warm hot water >—

## Mixing with cold/hot water goes well with delicious cuisine

No matter how much you divide it with water, it still tastes sweet.  
No matter how much you divide it with hot water, it stays warm and delicious.  
Have some Awamori on the side with your favorite meal



Watered Awamori goes hand in hand with delicious Goya Chanpuru and Rafute pork chops.  
In winter, warm your body and mind with some soothing Awamori topped with hot water.  
Either when you're celebrating with friends & family or when you're alone,  
Awamori is the perfect match for all occasions



Okinawa local style is the glass mug!



## Soft water split with ice makes the taste smoother

First pour in the ice, then after that comes awamori and some water, the usual ratio is about 40% awamori and 60% water.

If you prefer less alcohol, dilute it with plenty of water and enjoy the aftertaste like vanilla or spice clove spread inside your mouth. In Okinawa, people make their own preferred drinks in glass mugs to enjoy with their food.



## Warm hot water and awamori is a surprisingly good match



## Hot water splitting

Awamori has higher alcohol content than shochu, so it contains more oil-soluble fat. Combined with the warmth of hot water, the mellowness of the fat and the taste spread out in the mouth. In addition, fragrant flavor similar to roasted rice stands out well. During winter, give Awamori hot water split a try with some delicious hot pot and you won't regret it.

# Awamori Basics

Q&A format of basic  
Awamori facts



## Q What is it made from?

**A** It is made only with kome-koji and water.

Awamori is made from kome-koji and water only. Add yeast to kome-koji and water and ferment for 2 to 3 weeks. After that, boiling this and cooling the generated vapor forms Awamori.

## Q Is Awamori different from Shochu?

**A** Under the liquor tax law, Awamori is classified as a kind of shochu.

It can be said that it is a shochu made solely from kome-koji and water. In addition, there is a restriction on the koji that makes the kome-koji, and only black kome-koji can be used for Awamori. Some shochu like imo-shochu also use kome-koji.

## Q Does Awamori have an expiration date?

**A** There is no expiration date and there is no rot.

More than 99% of the ingredients are water and alcohol, and the remaining less than 1% are fragrant ingredients. It does not contain perishable ingredients, so if it is unopened it can be kept for many decades. However, please watch out for the deterioration of the cap.

## Q How should I keep it stored?

**A** It can be stored at room temperature, and it is said that a dark rather than light place is preferred.

There is no need to put it in a refrigerator as it will not deteriorate even if stored at room temperature. However, because it is said to deteriorate by ultraviolet light, storage away from direct sunlight would be best.

## Q What is Kusu or old liquor?

**A** Awamori that has been stored for over 3 years.

Awamori that has been stored for over 3 years is called kusu or old liquor. When multiple kusu are blended, the age of the youngest stored kusu among them is displayed as the "number of years aged".

## Q What is Ryukyu Awamori?

**A** Awamori produced in Okinawa Prefecture, meeting strict and specific criteria.

Awamori itself can be manufactured and displayed outside of Okinawa Prefecture, but the display "Ryukyu" can only be displayed on Awamori produced in Okinawa Prefecture that follows specific criteria.

## Q Why is the alcohol content high?

**A** Because alcohol is concentrated by the process of distillation.

By going through the process of distillation, the alcohol content is usually 40% or more. 30% and 25% products are adjusted by diluting it with water before shipment.

## Q Is there a season for new liquor?

**A** It is made all year round and there is no particular season.

Sake and wine are often produced in specific seasons, so there is a custom of enjoying fresh sake, but since Awamori is produced all year round, there is no seasonal schedule.

## Q What is the feature of Awamori sold in pots?

**A** They are sold at home for long-term aging and enjoyment for private households and family.

Long-term aging is said to improve sweetness and taste. Awamori enthusiasts use a traditional storage container, a ceramic pot, to age Awamori to their liking.

*Have a good  
Awamori time*



