

## Hiroshima Sake

Hiroshima is well known as one of three Japanese regions that produce highly acclaimed premium sake, with locally brewed varieties being renowned for their rich taste. It was Hiroshima sake with which US president Barack Obama and Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo toasted when Obama visited Japan in 2014.

This was not always the case, however. Hiroshima has most of the natural elements essential for sake brewing: fertile land on which to grow rice, a mild climate, pure water, and clean air. Traditional brewing, though, had always made use of hard water, whereas that of the Hiroshima region is soft. In 1898, local brewer Miura Senzaburo (1847–1908) set Hiroshima sake on the path to its present exalted status by developing a method of brewing using soft water. This delivered a product as good as—or even, according to many aficionados, superior to—the hard-water-brewed sake produced elsewhere. Miura's innovative technique was adopted and further refined by other local brewers, and the increasingly revered sake was dubbed *ginjoshu*. Miura is honored with a statue at Sakakiyama Hachiman Shrine, in eastern Hiroshima Prefecture.

Although Hiroshima sake is brewed using the method originated by Miura, each one possesses its own distinct character, ranging from dry to sweet and sometimes deeply fragrant. A great starting point for discovering Hiroshima sake is Kamotsuru Daiginjo. This widely available brew is the one famously shared by Abe and Obama.