

## ***Doburoku***

*Doburoku* is unfiltered sake, a cloudy alcoholic beverage made by blending steamed rice, water, and koji mold and simply leaving the mixture to ferment in a cool place. It was commonly brewed at home until the late nineteenth century when the Japanese government outlawed making alcohol without a license. However, *doburoku* made a comeback in Miyama in the early 2000s, after the town was designated a special “*doburoku* zone” as part of a government push to relax brewing regulations in the hope of stimulating rural economies.

Restaurants and hotels in Miyama are now allowed to set up microbreweries for *doburoku*, provided they grow the rice used themselves. Three facilities currently brew *doburoku*, selling it directly and at Miyama Fureai Hiroba, the local highway rest stop. All three varieties have an ABV of around 9 percent and are sweet and somewhat pungent. They differ slightly in aroma, including hints of tropical fruits like banana or papaya.

Since *doburoku* is unfiltered, it has a thick consistency and some of the texture of the rice remains in the liquid. As it also contains live lactic bacteria, if you buy *doburoku* to bring home you should take care not to shake the bottle and to keep it refrigerated before opening. The beverage stays fresh for up to a month but is best consumed within two weeks.