

# What's up,

# OITA!

2020 December

No. 55

*Bringing the latest from Oita, Japan to all those connected to Oita thriving all across the globe.*



The Oita

あなたの思いをカタチに。

## Delivering a Delectable Oita

Promotional video for Oita's agricultural, forestry and fisheries products



The Oita Prefecture has lately produced a new video aimed at promoting Oita's agricultural, forestry and fisheries products to overseas businesses and consumers.

While there have been challenges with business negotiations and onsite fairs due to flight disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, new opportunities have arisen from online business meetings and other virtual events.

The promotional video was made with the intention of promoting Oita's products effectively in face of changing circumstances.



Shiitake farmers



Sweet potatoes



Oita's product selection includes sweet potatoes, dried shiitake, farmed bluefin tuna, pears, beef, farmed yellowtail, and many more.



## Kawazu-zakura cherry blossoms on Youra Peninsula, Tsukumi

Tsukumi City



The first sights of cherry blossoms can be spotted yearly at the Youra District, Tsukumi City from as early as February.

The Youra District is the biggest Kawazu-zakura cherry blossom viewing spot in Oita, with 5,000 trees or more trees planted on site.

In previous years, the first blooms were sighted in early-February, making the month of February the best period to enjoy the flowers, with mid-February marking peak viewing time.

Youra District's history as a famous Kawazu-zakura viewing spot began when Typhoon Chaba wreaked havoc in the region in year 2004. In an attempt to recover from damages and make the locality more appealing, residents and other members of the community combined their strengths to realise a long-discussed idea by planting Kawazu-sakura trees along local roads.

Although there were early challenges, such deer induced damage, through the community's tenacity, generous donations of saplings from other parties, and diligent management, Youra District now boasts around 5,000 trees, in turn making Oita one of West Japan's top Kawazu-zakura viewing spots.

After its first reception of guided tour groups, the Youra District subsequently began running the Bungo Channel Kawazu-zakura Festival [豊後水道河津桜まつり] from year 2013.

The pink Kawazu-zakura look especially beautiful against the backdrops of Bungo Channel's aquamarine seas on a fine day.

We cordially invite our readers to visit Youra, where Spring lays its first footsteps.



# Native Spirit of Japan, iichiko Hita Distillery

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The history of alcohol distillation can be traced back to as early as 2000 BC. Some say that the technique was first used in China, Egypt, or Mesopotamia to produce herbal medicines, perfumes and alchemic preparations. Distillation was first introduced to Japan in around the 15<sup>th</sup> century and gave birth to the shochu spirit. Unlike the colder regions of Japan, the mild climate of Kyushu is unsuited for sake production before the days of refrigeration. Instead, regions across the island produce shochu liquor with local-specific crops including barley, rice, and sweet potatoes. As a result, Kyushu is often dubbed the 'Kingdom of Shochu'.

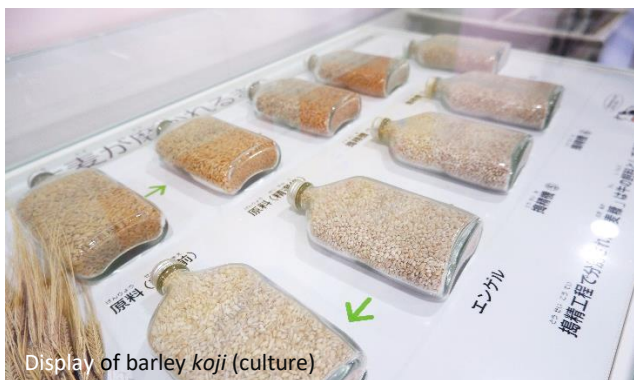
Nestled in the hearts of Hita is the iichiko Hita Distillery owned by Sanwa Shurui Co., Ltd. Founded by four sake breweries based in Usa, Sanwa Shurui currently produces multiple types of alcoholic beverages. When it comes to shochu, the company is dedicated to producing high quality items with a focus on *koji* making (fermentation culture making). Oita overall specialises in barley shochu, which Sanwa Shurui makes with the more labour-and-time-intensive 'All koji' approach that uses barley koji exclusively, as opposed to the more conventional method of using both barley and barley koji. The company products' rich aroma and taste have earned popularity among shochu enthusiasts.



Distillery store

Visitors can learn about the process of distillation in depth by exploring parts of the distillery and viewing displays and videos with multilingual translations. After the tour, you may choose to browse through the iichiko Hita Distillery store, which holds several exclusive products that can only be purchased onsite, before taking a stroll through the outdoor area surrounded by abundant nature.

The iichiko Hita Distillery can be entered free of charge. For more information, please refer to Sanwa Shurui's official website.



Display of barley koji (culture)

## iichiko Hita Distillery

810-1 Nishiarita, Hita, Oita 877-0000  
TEL 0973-25-5600 FAX 0973-25-6215

Hours: 10:00 ~ 16:00

Entrance fee: Free

Closed: Tuesdays (except for public holidays),  
the Bon Festival period, and the New Year holidays

Parking: Approx. 42 spaces available

<https://www.iichiko.co.jp/factory/>



*\*Please refrain from drinking if you are under the age of 20, a driver or a designated driver, pregnant or breastfeeding.*