



- Explore the regions -



Tastes of JAPAN by ANA has won the award for Tourism Business (Field of Domestic and Inbound Travel) from Tourism EXPO Japan 2016, supported by Japan Tourism Agency and others.



- 1 Yamasa Corporation's fermentation tanks (about 3m wide and deep), where a mash of soybeans, wheat, *koji* (mold), and salt water is carefully aged.
- 2 Grace Wine is a family-run business led by its fourth-generation head and president, Shigekazu Misawa.
- 3 Label designs of this Kurambon Winery varietal series are based on a story of Kenji Miyazawa.



Region of Fermenting Possibilities

Stories & Photographs by Mayumi Ishii

The Kanto region in eastern Japan is where mountains, sea, and land offer rich treasures plus unique cultural activities. In Chiba Prefecture, enjoy flavorful soy sauce made from Japan's largest source place. Yamanashi wine

has a longtime reputation for varietals winning awards at home and abroad. With fine products like soy sauce and wine, Kanto is a region fermenting with possibilities to savor.

Looking Ahead

The next theme for Get to Know Kanto (Greater Tokyo) in December is Culture, when we introduce Kawagoe, a town retaining the culture and ambience of the Edo period (1603–1868).

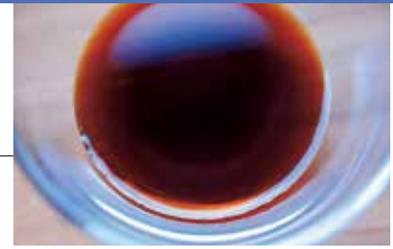
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Visit the special website of Tastes of JAPAN by ANA Kanto webpage.



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Fresh, savory soy sauce has a light reddish-brown color.



Chiba Pref.

Key Source of Soy Sauce

Soy sauce, crucial to the aroma and flavor of Japanese cuisine, derives from soybeans, wheat, salt and *koji* (mold). Soybeans are steamed, wheat is roasted and ground then mixed with *koji*, and then salt is added before the mash ages into soy sauce (*shoyu*). Production is said to have begun in western Japan's Wakayama Prefecture in the 13th century.

Chiba Prefecture, next to Tokyo, is Japan's largest origin place of soy sauce. Yamasa Corporation is a renowned soy sauce manufacturer begun by Gihei Hamaguchi, who relocated from Wakayama to Chiba in the 17th century. As Chiba was connected to Edo (now Tokyo) by the Tone River—major transport waterway—accessibility to the capital of Edo was key to the industry's growth in the prefecture.

Other prefectural makers of renown are Kikkoman and Higeta.

At the Yamasa factory in the city of Choshi, I watched every step of the manufacturing process. On sale at the factory shop are many tasty varieties. One product of special appeal is soy sauce flavored as soft-serve ice cream. It tasted like caramel. A worker told me *shoyu* contains some 350 different aromatic elements, with flavor experiences varying from one person to another. Such pleasures for the palate are further testimony to the complex appeal of soy sauce.

Getting There: ANA daily serves Tokyo (Haneda and Narita) with many direct flights from airports around Japan. Express trains from Tokyo Station to Choshi take about 2 hrs.

Kurambon Winery, in Katsunuma, grows Koshu grapes in its vineyard here.



Yamanashi Pref.

Royal Treat in the Wine Kingdom

Birthplace of Japan-originated wine, Yamanashi is one of Japan's largest grape producers, with over 80 wineries throughout the prefecture. In Koshu City's Katsunuma are 35 companies, from corporate enterprises to family-run businesses. Wine tasting is among many pleasures to sample at quality wineries like Grace Wine, 2016 and 2017 winner of the Platinum Award in the Decanter World Wine Awards.

"Some 1,300 years ago, grapes were introduced to Japan from China, along with Buddhism," related a Katsunuma taxi driver, "and tree saplings planted in various regions across Japan flourished best in Yamanashi." Winemaking started in Kofu in 1870, and two Katsunuma youths sent to France in 1877 to study vinification returned with the technology needed to begin winemaking in Japan. The most renowned Yamanashi varietal is a white wine of Koshu grapes, endemic to the Prefecture. Seventy percent of its DNA

matches that of Europe's *Vitis vinifera* stock, which, unlikely as it may seem, might imply transport to Japan via China.

At Kurambon Winery, established in 1913, the owner makes his prestige wine from grapes cultivated by natural farming. Delicious white wines and rosés are tasted at their salon inside a stately Japanese-style house, its cave-like old basement cellar swollen with a massive collection. At the other cellar, French oak barrels hold wine waiting for aging, proving yet again the long history behind this royal kingdom of wine.

Getting There: ANA daily serves Tokyo (Haneda and Narita) with many direct flights from airports around Japan. Express trains from Tokyo Station to Yamanashi take about 2 hrs.

