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What's for Dinner? v9.10: The West Has Nothing Like It - Sake

by [thenekkidtruth](#)

When I lived in the good ship California, I dabbled with Western wines, but I decided that I lacked both the brain power and the pocketbook to master such a ponderous course of study. I coupled, instead, my affinity for Asian cuisine with a smaller, more digestible subject matter (I thought), and read everything I could find about Japanese sake. Neither of those two prepositions led to any particular success - the study of sake is equally as complicated and detailed as that of Western wine, and good sake certainly doesn't necessarily cost any less!

Probably historically anchored in the Nara (奈良時代) Period (710–794 AD), sake (酒) is only one

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For a better than average sake experience in North America at a reasonable price, consider **Momokawa Silver** - brewed with the blessing of the Emperor in Forest Grove, Oregon.



Sake mash - Nanbu Bijin Shuzo

What makes sake different is that the grain (polished rice) is broken down to sugars and the sugars are fermented, *all in the same indiscreet and simultaneous step*. There's nothing else quite like it. An incredible feat, really, which requires exacting temperature control that - during some brewing stages - cannot vary by any more than a few degrees. I've tried brewing my own sake, and the result was more than impalatable - I couldn't come close to being able to control the temperatures to near the necessary degree.

The result, though, is something quite unique. First of all, sake has a great deal of ethyl alcohol - **considerably more than either beer or wine.**