

Summary of Product Specification of Japanese GIs

I. Name of the Geographical Indication

和歌山梅酒 (Wakayama Umeshu)

II. Product Category

Liqueur – Article 3, Item 21 of Liquor Tax Act

III. Petitioner

GI Wakayama Umeshu Management Committee

16 Saikaya-machi, Wakayama City, Wakayama Prefecture

IV. Date of Protection in Japan

7, September, 2020

V. Product Description

(a) Raw Material and Production Method (See Annex 1&2)

(1) Raw materials

i) Only fresh unripe green ume (Japanese plum) or fully ripened ume picked within Wakayama Prefecture must be used as the ume fruit steeped in liquor.

(Note 1) Fresh unripe green ume refers to ume fruit that has been thinned out from ume trees (not including one with fractures or cut or one that was squeezed or condensed) and has the fruit skin with firm and luster and with a color of blue-green to yellowish green (including one in purple and red depending on the variety).

(Note 2) Fully ripened ume refers to one with the softened flesh and yellow- to orange-colored fruit skin (including one in purple and red depending on the variety).

ii) The only seishu, continuous distilled shochu, single distilled shochu, whisky, brandy, material alcohol, or sprits, specified in Article 3-7, 3-9, 3-10, 3-15, 3-16, 3-17, or 3-20 of the Liquor Tax Act respectively (including a mix of these liquor) must be used as the liquor in which ume fruit is steeped.

iii) The only ingredients other than the liquor and ume fruit must be the ones listed below: Ume flesh, ume juice, saccharides, sugar-containing substance (excluding synthetic sweeteners), and carbonic acid

(2) Production method

i) At least 300 kg of ume fruit must be used for each 1 kl of liquor in which to steep.

- ii) Ume fruit must be steeped into liquor within Wakayama Prefecture.
- iii) Ume fruit must be steeped into liquor for at least 90 days.
- iv) Ume fruit must not intentionally be crushed or squeezed in the liquor in which it is steeped.
- v) Ume fruit taken out from the liquor in which it has been steeped must not be used for making umeshu again.
- vi) Liquors must be stored in Wakayama Prefecture, if needed in the producing process.
- vii) In the case of bottling in containers to be shipped to consumers, liquors must be bottled in Wakayama Prefecture.

(b) Characteristic

(1) Sensory factor

"Umeshu" is a liquor made by steeping ume fruit in liquor to extract the essence of the fruit and adding saccharides, etc. to adjust the flavor.

Wakayama Umeshu, an umeshu brand, has a rich, thick aroma of fresh unripe green ume or fully ripened ume picked within Wakayama Prefecture, which wraps the pungent aroma of alcohol in liquor and spreads in the mouth as a refreshing flavor. The full bodied essence of ume melted into alcohol harmonizes with the sweetness and taste of liquor, allowing a complex and strong flavor to be felt. The relatively long-lasting pleasing aftertaste thanks to the moderate sweet taste of saccharides and the sourness of ume tunes the sense of taste and smell and thus complements the flavor of the next food to eat, which is also perfect as an aperitif.

(2) Chemical factors

Wakayama Umeshu, including those with sparkling qualities, are liquors that fulfill the following conditions regarding alcohol content, total acidity and extract:

- i) Alcohol content is 10.0% or above and below 35.0%
- ii) Total acidity is not less than 3.5 g/L
- iii) Extract is not less than 100 g/L

VI. Description of the Geographical Area

Wakayama Prefecture

VII. Link with the Geographical Area

(a) Natural factor

Wakayama Prefecture is located in the west side of Kii Peninsula, with mountains accounting for approximately 80% of the area. The prefecture faces the sea on its west side, from the Inland Sea of Japan (the Seto Naikai) to the Pacific Ocean, while the Kii Mountains extending from the north to the south on the east side of the prefecture have many areas where the sea is close at hand, forming strata rich in minerals, which is suitable for growing quality ume across

the mountainous area.

Wakayama Prefecture also has a warm climate due to warm winds from the sea, along with a heavy annual rainfall, frequently landed typhoons during summer, as well as little flat terrain, which leaves many areas unsuitable for rice cultivation and therefore people have actively been engaged in fruit growing. In particular, ume grows efficiently even in poor land with many slopes, can be picked around June before the typhoon season, and requires heavy rainfall as an essential factor for the ume fruit to grow larger, which led the growing of ume to spread mainly in Tanabe City and Minabe Town as a right fruit tree for the prefecture.

(b) Human factor

Wakayama Prefecture is also a great place for producing fermented food, such as Kinzanji-miso and Yuasa soy-sauce, since old times and has many manufacturers of liquor including seishu. Following a rice crop, a sake ingredient, sake manufacturers are busy from winter to spring with low temperatures which is suited for brewing sake, but are not busy from spring to summer and thus needed to secure sources of income and improve productivity during this period.

In addition, although ume picked in Wakayama Prefecture was previously processed and eaten as umeboshi (pickled ume) as the main use, the demand for umeboshi decreased due to a shift in consumers' tastes, which made the development of a new use of ume necessary.

In such a circumstance, Wakayama Prefecture, the largest production center of ume fruit in Japan, came up with an idea of producing umeshu made from ume, which can be picked during the time sake manufacturers are not busy; the idea solved the issues of both ume fruit producers and sake manufacturers, resulting in active manufacture of umeshu in the prefecture while inventing ume growing methods assuming that it will be used as a umeshu ingredient and ume processed food, improving ume quality, and so on.

With the establishment of the "Minabe-Tanabe Ume System" (enhanced pollination of honey bees, improved training and pruning techniques, use of a harvesting net, etc.), which was certified as the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) in 2015, and other initiatives, the prefecture has also been developing and accumulating cultivation techniques for stably growing quality ume as a umeshu ingredient.

In addition, Wakayama Prefecture has been developing the manufacture of umeshu across the entire region, including Tanabe City and Minabe Town, which were designated as a special deregulation zones in 2008, and striving to improve the techniques including umeshu manufacturing and storage methods through technical guidance provided by technical officers from Taxation Bureaus.

In this way, Wakayama Prefecture, which has stably producing ume, has been maintaining and forming the characteristics of "Wakayama Umeshu" through advancing umeshu-related research and initiatives as a united effort of umeshu manufacturers, ume farmers, and the prefecture.

VIII. Control Body

In order to use “Wakayama Umeshu,” the liquor that uses “Wakayama Umeshu” is required to be confirmed by the following control body pursuant to guidelines for work implementation, prepared by the organization.

GI Wakayama Umeshu Management Committee

16 Saikaya-machi, Wakayama City, Wakayama Prefecture

(Annex1)

Liquor Tax Act(excerpt)

(Definitions of other terms)

Article 3

(21) “Liqueur” means liquors made from liquors, and saccharides or other substances (including liquors) as raw materials whose extract content is two percent or more (excluding the liquors stated in Item 7 to Item 19, the powdered liquor provided for in Paragraph 1 of the preceding article that can dissolve into beverages of one percent or more alcohol content, and the liquors provided for by Cabinet Order as liquors whose properties resemble the properties of *mirin*).

(Annex2) flowchart of making Umeshu

