

Nikka Japanese Whisky



Japanese whisky originated almost 100 years ago, modeled around the Scottish style of distilling. Yet only a small amount of people knew of it because it was mostly sold and consumed by locals. In recent years whiskies from Japan have burst on the scene in Europe and the U.S., garnering many awards.

In 1918, Masataka Taketsuru embarked alone on a long voyage to Scotland, leaving his family's renowned sake business, to learn the secrets of whisky making. Taketsuru was the first Japanese to study whisky making at University of Glasgow.

Taketsuru established Nikka in 1934 and built its first distillery in Yoichi, Hokkaido, which he had always considered to be the ideal site in Japan for whisky-making. The town is similar in many ways to the Scottish town where he had studied. Taketsuru's desire to establish Nikka was to introduce his fellow Japanese to the joys of authentic whisky. In 1940 he launched the first Nikka whisky. The Nikka Pure Malt and the Nikka Coffey Grain are signature selections.

Pure Malt

This is a blended malt named in honor of founder Masataka Taketsuru. Its gentle malt flavor, fruitiness and well-balanced taste make it a perfect entry point into the world of Nikka. This whisky is aged on average for 10 years in a variety of casks, including sherry. Flavors of sherry-soaked plums, raisins and green apple slices jump forward with hints of honey, oats, black pepper and char. Coffee and smoke linger beautifully on the finish.

Coffey Grain

Produced in Nikka's second Miyagikyo location, this whisky was distilled using a Coffey still imported from Scotland in the early 1960s. Coffey stills are said to give the flavors of a whisky more character than the modern continuous still can impart. The grain used in the mash bill is mostly corn with a small amount of barley. The characteristics of this whisky are similar to some bourbons. It is very smooth with a little spiciness and has an abundance of caramel, toffee and fruit sweetness.

Of note: There is no 'e' used in the spelling of any Japanese whisky, unlike whiskey from other non-Scotland regions. That is because this style is linked so closely to Scotland's methods.

