

## Shimaoka Shuzo

Founded in 1863, Shimaoka Shuzo is located in Ota shi, in the eastern part of the Gunma Prefecture. This traditional kura specializes in small batch sake and top-quality water.

Toji Fuse Tokutaro is 76 years old and has been working at the brewery for nearly 50 years. His family has held the toji position for several generations. Fuse Tokutaro is also the president of the Echigo Brewers Association, a very prestigious position. Because of the long-lived traditions at this kura, Toji Fuse only hires the most experienced kurabito (employees).

The water used in Shimaoka Shuzo, sake is from a local well in Akagiyama. The water has a high mineral content, giving the Gunma Izumi sakes a round, rich mouthfeel. Gunma Izumi sakes are typically blended with older sake, and /or aged 1-3 years, adding depth and the kura's signature color. The sakes are made in the Yamahai style, using only natural yeasts that have developed in the brewery over many generations.

Part of the brewery was severely damaged by fire at the turn of the century, and because of the importance of the kura to the community, the local townspeople helped to rebuild it.

Japan