

Japan Sommelier Association (JSA) Sake Diploma International

Training Format: Hybrid (e-Learning + in-person), in English only

Training Duration: 3 days of training (2 days of online theory + 1 day of in-person tasting) + 1 in-person revision day + ½ day in-person exam

Prerequisites:

- Must be of legal age (18+) on the day of the training.
- Must be able to read and understand English.
- **No prior knowledge of sake is required**, though WSET Level 2 Award in Sake or WSET Level 3 Award in Sake, or Sake Service Institute (SSI) *Kikizake-shi* or *Kikizake-shi International* or equivalent is **recommended**.

By accepting these prerequisites, the candidate commits to the required level of knowledge and skills expected for this training.

Target Audience:

- Individuals seeking **advanced skills and knowledge** in sake and tasting to improve employability and/or broaden their professional activity and knowledge.
- Professionals working in sake production and distribution.
- Anyone interested in learning the fundamentals of sake.

Objectives:

The operational objectives targeted are:

- Acquire an in-depth understanding of the history, ingredients, and production methods of sake and shōchū.
- Identify and distinguish the main styles of sake and shōchū, along with their sensory characteristics.
- Understand the influence of regions, rice, water, microorganisms, and brewing techniques on the final product.
- Learn to taste sake and shōchū professionally using a structured method.
- Know the labeling rules and geographical indications (GI) applicable to sake and shōchū.
- Become familiar with service, food pairings with sake, and contexts of consumption.
- Prepare effectively for the JSA Sake Diploma International exam through theoretical reviews and practical tastings.

Skills and Competencies:

- Master the fundamental principles of sake production, from rice preparation to bottling.
- Understand the key stages of the fermentation process, including the roles of *kōji*, *shubo*, and *moromi*.
- Identify the different types of rice used in sake production and their impact on the final profile.
- Know the main yeasts and microorganisms involved in fermentation and their influence on aromas.
- Understand the role of prefectures and terroirs in the diversity of sake styles.
- Learn how to serve sake properly, according to style, temperature, and type of vessel (glass, *carafe*, etc.).
- Be able to recommend food and sake pairings based on aroma profiles and types of dishes.
- Identify the factors that influence sake flavours: ingredients, production methods, maturation time, serving temperature, etc.
- Describe a sake in a structured and professional manner using appropriate sensory vocabulary (visual, olfactory, gustatory).
- Distinguish sake styles (*junmai*, *ginjo*, *daiginjo*, *namazake*, etc.) and their respective characteristics.
- Assess the quality of a sake during blind tasting according to established criteria.
- Know the labelling rules, official designations, and geographical indications (GI) for sake and *shōchū*.
- Get introduced to the different types of *shōchū*, their distillation methods, raw materials, and aromatic profiles.
- Develop a professional approach to sake service, recommendation, and presentation in a commercial or gastronomic setting.

Bloc de compétences : Cette formation n'est pas accessible par blocs de compétences.

Competency Blocks: This training is not offered in separate competency blocks.

Career Opportunities:

- Drinks retailers
- Servers/Sommeliers
- Importers/Distributors
- Marketing professionals/Consultants

Documents Provided:

- Official certificate (upon passing the exam successfully), issued by Japan Sommelier Association (JSA) in Tokyo
- Certificate of Attendance (*available upon request*)

Fees:

Option 1 (Exam only; textbook included): €238 incl. tax
Option 2 (Revision Workshop + Exam; textbook included): €348 incl. tax
Option 3 (Training Course + Exam; textbook included): €860 incl. tax
Option 4 (Training Course + Revision Workshop + Exam; textbook included): €940 incl. tax
(VAT exempt under article 261 - 4.4 of the French General Tax Code)

Enrollment Process:

Registration opens one month before the start of each session and closes **3 days** before or once **8 participants** are enrolled.

Access Time Frames:

- Immediate access if self-funded.
- Access begins once funding agreement is received from the sponsor.

Accessibility for Disabled Persons:

Our team is committed to ensuring accessibility for all learners, including those with disabilities. All training venues are designed to be accessible. If you have specific needs, contact us at: ecolesake@galeriekparis.com

Teaching Methods and Support:

The JSA Sake Diploma International training program is modular and spans a total of 4.5 days. It includes 2 days of remote theoretical instruction, 1 day of in-person tasting, 1 in-person revision day (including a mock exam), and a half-day in-person final exam. These sessions are led by our team of certified instructors, including Tony Yip, holder of the JSA Sake Diploma International and numerous other sake-related qualifications.

Each participant receives, prior to the course, a training booklet summarizing the key points covered during the sessions. This material also includes tasting sheets and self-assessment exercises to reinforce learning and understanding of the concepts taught.

Evaluation Methods:

At the end of the training, each participant must complete a final assessment in the form of a **120-minute exam**. This exam includes:

- 100 fill-in-the-blank questions (60 minutes)
- 2 short essay questions (20 minutes)
- A blind tasting of 4 sakes and 2 shōchū and/or awamori (40 minutes)

To obtain the official diploma, the candidate must score at least **70%** in each of the three sections of the exam.

Results will be communicated by email approximately 10 weeks after the exam date. The official certificate from the Japan Sommelier Association (JSA), along with an official JSA pin, will then be sent by mail.

In case of failure, the participant may retake the exam (held once per year in October) for a fee of **€128** (2025 rate, subject to annual revision).

Pass Rate:

This training will be offered in France for the first time in 2025, so no statistics are available at this time.

Programme :

- Option 1 (Exam only)
- Option 2 (Revision Workshop + Exam)
- Option 3 (Training Course + Exam)
- Option 4 (Training Course + Revision Workshop + Exam)

Example 2025

Training Course	31/08/2025 09:30-17:00	online	09:30–09:40: Introduction to the JSA 09:40–09:45: Exam format 09:45–09:55: Definition and history of sake 09:55–10:30: Ingredients 10:30–12:30: Introduction to key prefectures 12:30-13:30: lunch break 13:30–14:30: Rice preparation 14:30–15:00: Microorganisms 15:00–16:00: Kōji production 16:00–17:00: Shubo (starter mash)
	01/09/2025 09:30-17:00	online	09:30–09:45: Sandan-Jikomi (successive additions) 09:45–10:00: Moromi (main fermentation) 10:00–10:30: Jōso (filtration/pressing) 10:30–11:30: Post-jōso processes 11:30–12:30: Yeasts 12:30-13:30: lunch break 13:30–14:00: Tōji guilds (master brewers) 14:00–14:30: Sake service 14:30–15:30: Definition and history of shōchū 15:30–16:30: Types of shōchū 16:30–17:00: Geographical Indications (GI) and labeling rules
	13/09/2025 09:30-17:00	in-person	09:30–12:30: Revision 12:30-13:30: lunch break 13:30–15:30: Sake tasting 15:30–17:00: Shōchū tasting
Revision Workshop	12/10/2025 09:30-17:00	in-person	09:30–09:45: Introductions / administration 09:45–10:45: Mock exam (fill-in-the-blank + short essay questions) 10:45–11:00: Break 11:00–12:30: Corrections / discussions 12:30-13:30: lunch break 13:30–14:10: Mock tasting exam 14:10–15:10: Corrections / discussions 15:10–15:20: Break 15:20–17:00: Final review
Exam	13/10/2025 13:00-15:15	in-person	13:00–14:00: Theory (fill-in-the-blank questions) 14:15–14:55: Tastings (4 sakes, 2 shōchū/awamori) 14:55–15:15: Theory (short essay questions)