

## 5 to Try: Sakes to Serve Hot

As an international *kikisake-shi* (sake sommelier) and the first to receive the title of Miss Sake USA in 2016, Jessica Joly, marketing director at Sake Discoveries, appreciates how premium sake can be served at an array of temperatures: “On the rocks, cold, room temperature, warm, lukewarm, hot, extremely hot—it is unlike any other alcoholic beverage,” Joly explains. Some styles are better suited to be served as *kanzake*, or warm sake: Styles like Junmai and Taru are bold and more classic in flavor, so they’re ideal for warm or hot sake, says Joly. “Sake that is clean and crisp is also ideal for hot sake—especially styles that are from Niigata Prefecture. These styles of sake are not as aromatic, and are suitable for warm or hot sake.” Heat things up with these five bottle recs from Joly.

By Jillian Dara

### 1 Tengumai Yamahai Junmai “Dancing Goblin”

“This sake is great warm because it is a Yamahai style—one of the older ways of brewing, which lets natural lactic acid develop,” says Joly about this Junmai from Ishikawa Prefecture. “In this region they focus a lot of the cuisine on fermented fish, the most famous one being *kaburazushi*—yellowtail and turnip that is fermented. These dishes have a distinct flavor and are quite fishy. It is often you find the locals and people enjoying *kanzake* with these types of dishes,” Joly says. “Notes of mushroom shine through the pale amber color, and the palate has a buttery mouthfeel with earthy notes and a long, smooth finish.” \$30, [tippsysake.com](https://tippsysake.com)

### 2 Daishichi Kimoto Honjozo

“Daishichi is unlike any other producer. They were the first brewery to develop the super flat rice polishing machine, which is highly efficient for rice milling,” says Joly. The Fukushima-based producer only brews kimoto styles, another traditional way of brewing that also allows the lactic acid to develop, and all their sake is aged. “Honjozo also has a bit of brewers alcohol added and therefore, when warmed, it creates this creamy mouthfeel,” says Joly. “The lactic acid on this sake gives it a nice texture once warmed, and is a perfect pairing for the winter season.” \$27, [sunflowersake.com](https://sunflowersake.com)

### 3 Nanbu Bijin Umeshu “No Added Sugar” Plum Sake

“This plum sake is made with no addition of sugar and is made solely from 100 percent koji rice and young green plums—*kishu nankobai*,” says Joly, noting that it’s a great option for sake newbies or those who prefer lower alcohol with a bit of



Courtesy of Jessica Joly

sweetness. “When you warm this up, the nuttiness and flavor of the tart ume plum becomes softer on the palate. This sake from Iwate is a great dessert pairing for dark chocolate, and a very food-friendly umeshu, but also an excellent mixer with Japanese whisky.” \$38.99, [unclefossil.com](https://unclefossil.com)

### 4 Hakkaisan Yukimuro 3 Year “Snow Aged” Junmai Daiginjo

This sake from Niigata prefecture is aged for three years in a *yukimuro*, an eco-friendly snow storage facility, at about 37 degrees Fahrenheit. “By aging this sake it allows the sake to mellow out,” says Joly. “It has layered flavors that become very round with aging, and is extremely smooth. No water is added, making it a *genshu* (undiluted sake) with very limited aroma, and subtle steamed rice notes.” Joly recommends serving this Junmai Daiginjo at 160 degrees Fahrenheit: “The biggest point for doing this is because of the aging and because the aroma is very subdued. When you have a floral and fragrant sake and warm it up, the aromas will dissipate.” \$70, [umamimart.com](https://umamimart.com)

### 5 Kenbishi “Kuromatsu” Honjozo

“They say that samurai drank this sake before military battles,” says Joly of the sake from this Hyogo producer, which has been operating since 1505 and is one of the oldest producers still making sake. “It has such a long history and is loved by many old-school sake fans. They use the famous rice strain Yamada Nishiki along with Aiyama rice, which is quite rare.” Joly describes its tasting profile as “interesting, umami aromas and flavors of marinated mushrooms, cocoa nibs, and rice cake with salinity—it’s deep and rich, with balanced acidity.” \$52, [tippsysake.com](https://tippsysake.com)