

LUXEMBOURG 酒 SAKE CHALLENGE

A challenge of the finest quality

Luxembourg Sake Challenge 2026

Application rules

Event Outline

Objectives

The Luxembourg Sake Challenge is an international sake competition co-organised by the Sake Sommelier Association and Luxembourg GLOBAL LINK SARL (House of Japan) as part of the Sake Challenge project.

The Sake Challenge project is led by internationally active sake sommeliers and educators with the aim of increasing global appreciation and recognition of sake culture.

The Luxembourg Sake Challenge provides an opportunity to introduce highly regarded sake products to the European market while supporting new market opportunities and long-term brand value development.

The competition also aims to share the appeal of sake with younger generations in Luxembourg and across Europe, while presenting sake as a refined lifestyle product capable of pairing with a wide range of cuisines beyond Japanese food.

In addition to recognising and celebrating outstanding sake quality, the Luxembourg Sake Challenge aims to:

- Provide independent evaluations for all entries
- Introduce high-quality sake to emerging international markets
- Promote the individuality, quality and excellence of awarded products
- Encourage the international development of sake culture
- Increase appreciation and understanding of sake outside Japan
- Expand awareness of awarded products both internationally and within Japan

The competition also values collaboration with the European gastronomy and fine dining industry, including networks such as Gault & Millau, in order to further expand the possibilities of sake within international food culture.

Judges

Assessing sake requires a high degree of expertise, much like judging wine. For this reason, the Luxembourg Sake Challenge appoints Certified Sake Sommeliers and industry professionals as judges.

To ensure an international and balanced perspective on taste and quality, judges are selected from Luxembourg and across Europe, including professionals active in the beverage and hospitality industries.

All judges share a deep passion and knowledge of sake, and approach each entry with respect for the producers and craftsmanship behind it.

Judging Criteria

Each sake entry is evaluated individually through a blind tasting process. Comparative judging is not conducted.

In addition to the quality of the sake itself, label design and packaging presentation are also evaluated as part of the overall assessment.

Judges score entries according to established criteria, and the combined results determine Platinum, Gold and Silver awards.

The judging criteria are as follows:

- Appearance, clarity, colour and brilliance
- Aroma and aromatic expression
- Overall balance, flavour and finish
- Design and packaging presentation from an international market perspective

Scores are indicated using a star rating system from 0 to 10.

- 0 Stars Does not meet the competition standard
- 1–2 Stars Good
- 3–4 Stars Very Good
- 5–6 Stars Excellent
- 7–8 Stars Outstanding
- 9–10 Stars Exceptional

Advantages of Entering the Luxembourg Sake Challenge

1. The Sake Challenge competitions are held around the world and judged by professionals familiar with each local market.

Evaluation by local experts can serve not only as valuable feedback for overseas market development and product strategy, but also as an effective gateway into new international markets.

2. Based on the overall score, Platinum, Gold and Silver awards will be presented. Platinum and Gold award winners will receive 250 official award stickers that may be affixed to awarded bottles. Sticker

data can also be provided upon request. Additional stickers may be ordered by contacting the organiser via email.

3. All entrants will receive an English evaluation report for their submitted products. These reports may be used as marketing material for international markets.

4. Following the judging session, all submitted products will be showcased at the “Japan Life” event. This provides an opportunity to introduce products to beverage industry professionals, buyers, wholesalers, media representatives and consumers in Luxembourg and across Europe.

5. Award-winning products will be promoted internationally through the official website and official social media channels.

Terms and Conditions

I. Organiser

The Luxembourg Sake Challenge is co-organised by the Sake Sommelier Association headquarters and Luxembourg GLOBAL LINK SARL (House of Japan).

Website:

<https://luxembourgsakechallenge.com/>

Email:

hello@luxembourgsakechallenge.com

1. By registering for the competition, entrants agree to be bound by these Terms and Conditions.
2. Entry instructions form part of these Terms and Conditions. Entries submitted with incomplete, inaccurate or invalid information may be rejected.
3. The organiser accepts no responsibility for entries that are lost, delayed or damaged. Proof of shipment shall not be considered proof of receipt.
4. The organiser reserves the right to amend, postpone, suspend or cancel the competition if necessary.
5. The organiser and associated organisations shall not be liable for any loss, expense or damage arising in connection with the competition, except where liability cannot legally be excluded.
6. All decisions made by the organiser regarding the competition are final.
7. This competition is governed by the laws and regulations of Luxembourg and the European Union.

II. Eligibility Criteria

1. The competition is open to producers, distributors, exporters, importers and consultants involved in alcoholic beverages.

2. All categories of sake and Japanese alcoholic beverages are eligible, including Futsushu, Honjozo, Junmai, Ginjo, Junmai Ginjo, Daiginjo, Junmai Daiginjo, Koshu, Japanese wine and other Japanese alcoholic beverages. Products must contain less than 20% alcohol by volume.
3. Samples should generally consist of 2 bottles of 720ml. Other bottle sizes are accepted provided each bottle is less than 1 litre and the total volume submitted is at least 1440ml.
4. Each entry must be accompanied by a completed Product Form. Submitted products will not be returned.

III. Entry Fee

1. The entry fee is 59,000 JPY per product.
2. Payment may be made by bank transfer, credit card, PayPal or international remittance services such as Wise through the official website.
3. Any transfer or banking fees must be paid by the entrant.
4. Entry fees are non-refundable.

IV. How to Enter

1. Entry registration will open on Friday 28th August 2026. Applications should be submitted through the official website no later than Friday 4th September 2026. Alternatively, the Product Form may be submitted by email together with payment of the entry fee.
2. Samples must arrive at the organiser's designated location no later than Friday 11th September 2026. Customs duties, VAT, storage fees and domestic transportation costs within Luxembourg will be covered by the organiser.
3. The organiser reserves the right to refuse entries submitted after the deadline.

V. Entries from Outside Japan

1. Entrants are responsible for shipping fees, insurance and all related shipping expenses.
2. The organiser will cover customs clearance, VAT, storage and related costs incurred after arrival in Luxembourg.
3. Entrants are responsible for completing shipment procedures by the designated deadline.

VI. Cancellation

1. Entry cancellations must be submitted to the organiser by email, including the entrant name and the relevant product name.
2. Entry fees are non-refundable and submitted products will not be returned.

VII. Award Winners

1. Platinum, Gold and Silver awards will be presented in each category. Special awards may also be presented in collaboration with partners including Gault & Millau.
2. Award results will be announced on the official website and by email to entrants.
3. Entrants of awarded products agree that the organiser may use product names, descriptions and images for promotional and publicity purposes.
4. Any reference to awards must include the official award title and award year.
5. Awards are granted to individual products and not to entrants or companies.
6. Entrants may use the competition name, logo and award references solely for the promotion of awarded products.
7. Entrants must cease use of the competition name, logo and award references within 14 days if requested by the organiser.
8. The competition logo and related designs remain the property of the organiser. Unauthorised use, reproduction or modification is strictly prohibited.