

## Yoshinogawa Sake Museum Joh-gura

Yoshinogawa Sake Brewery is the oldest sake brewery in Niigata Prefecture. The company was originally founded in 1548 by a member of the Kawakami family who was a former retainer of Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578), the daimyo lord of Echigo Province (modern-day Niigata). In 1543, he gave up his samurai status and moved to Settaya, where he began brewing sake. The company name was changed several times over the centuries until 1973, when it became Yoshinogawa in reference to its most popular series of sake. The Yoshinogawa Sake Museum Joh-gura offers samplings of Yoshinogawa’s renowned sake and information about the company’s history and its meticulous method of sake brewing.



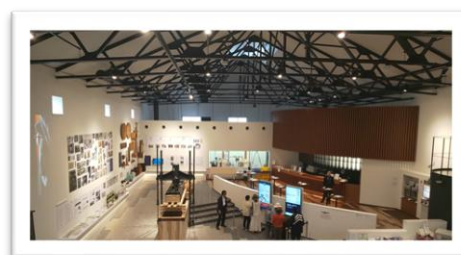
### *Characteristics of Yoshinogawa Sake*



Yoshinogawa sake is the result of centuries of skills and passion that successive master brewers have passed down through the generations. The sake is brewed using soft water from the Tenka Kanro Sen well at the rear of the brewery grounds. The Yoshinogawa brewers use only rice grown in Niigata Prefecture, including rice they grow themselves in the summer months, outside of the brewing season. The careful cultivation of this “brewer’s rice” (*kurabito saibaimai*) results in characteristics that, along with the pure spring water tapped on-site, contribute to the clean taste and smooth mouthfeel of Yoshinogawa sake.

### *Yoshinogawa Sake Museum Joh-gura*

This museum occupies an approximately 100-year-old warehouse that was once used to bottle sake. The structure is a nationally registered Tangible Cultural Property with early twentieth-century Western architectural elements, such as reinforced concrete construction and a steel truss roof. In the past, the upper floor of the warehouse served as the residence of approximately 50 brewery workers. Today, the renovated warehouse is a space where visitors can “learn, drink, and buy” all in one place. It contains an exhibition corner, a sake tasting bar, a Yoshinogawa sake shop, a craft beer brewery, and a digital tablet-based game that simulates the sake brewing process.



The exhibition corner displays old photos and items from Yoshinogawa's history, an educational video about Yoshinogawa, brewing implements, and written explanations of the brewing process. The tasting bar provides samplings of many varieties of Yoshinogawa sake and a sweet non-alcoholic option alongside a curated selection of snacks. The tasting bar and the shop both offer seasonal and limited-release varieties of sake that cannot be found in other stores, in addition to Yoshinogawa staples. Visitors interested in more interactive learning can play the sake brewing game, which involves shaking and moving a tablet computer to simulate steps in the brewing process such as sprinkling mold spores on rice to make koji or stirring mash.

Admission to the Yoshinogawa Sake Museum Joh-gura is free, though drinks and food have a separate charge. Business hours are from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and last order at the tasting bar is at 4:00 p.m. The museum is closed on Tuesdays and New Year's holidays.