

Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) Level 3 Award in Sake Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. What are the two main methods used for pasteurizing sake?**
 - A. Bulk and barrel.**
 - B. Bulk and bottle.**
 - C. Tube and bottle.**
 - D. Pot and barrel.**
- 2. How is the final alcohol content adjusted in sake?**
 - A. By fermenting it longer**
 - B. By adding sugars before fermentation**
 - C. By diluting with water after fermentation is complete**
 - D. By aging it in oak barrels**
- 3. What is "Namazake"?**
 - A. Sake that has been carbonated**
 - B. An aged type of sake**
 - C. Unpasteurized sake**
 - D. Sake that has been flavored with fruit**
- 4. What is sake-kasu?**
 - A. It is the rice and other solids separated from the sake liquid.**
 - B. It is the yeast used in the fermentation process.**
 - C. It is a type of sake storage container.**
 - D. It is a specific brewing technique.**
- 5. Which sake brewing method emphasizes the conversion of starches to sugars?**
 - A. Junmai**
 - B. Yamahai**
 - C. Junmai Ginjo**
 - D. Namazake**

- 6. If the moisture level of the grains is too high, what problem may occur during fermentation?**
- A. Slower enzymatic digestion**
 - B. Creation of too few enzymes**
 - C. Uncontrolled fermentation process**
 - D. Excessive starch gelatinization**
- 7. What does the term 'nama-chozō' indicate about the sake?**
- A. It is fermented at low temperatures**
 - B. It is pasteurised once after storage**
 - C. It is bottled without any pasteurisation**
 - D. It has been aged for more than two years**
- 8. What is the typical aging time for premium sake?**
- A. Several years**
 - B. Up to one year**
 - C. Sake is usually consumed fresh and may not be aged for long periods**
 - D. Indefinitely as long as properly bottled**
- 9. What is the method of fukuro-zuri/shizuku-dori characterized by?**
- A. Sake being mechanically pressed**
 - B. Sake dripping under the influence of gravity**
 - C. Sake being exposed to air for fermentation**
 - D. Sake being stored in vacuum conditions**
- 10. What temperature range is maintained during the "Spreading spores and initial mould growth" step of koji making?**
- A. 30-32°C**
 - B. 32-35°C**
 - C. 33-35°C**
 - D. 38-40°C**

Answers

SAMPLE

1. B
2. C
3. C
4. A
5. B
6. C
7. B
8. C
9. B
10. C

SAMPLE

Explanations

SAMPLE

1. What are the two main methods used for pasteurizing sake?

- A. Bulk and barrel.
- B. Bulk and bottle.**
- C. Tube and bottle.
- D. Pot and barrel.

The two main methods used for pasteurizing sake are bulk pasteurization and bottle pasteurization. Bulk pasteurization involves heating the sake in large tanks before it is bottled, ensuring that the entire batch is uniformly pasteurized and any potential spoilage organisms are eliminated. This method helps maintain the integrity of the sake during storage and enhances its shelf life. Bottle pasteurization, on the other hand, occurs after the sake has been bottled. This method allows for further stabilization and helps in preserving the flavor characteristics of the sake as it develops in the bottle. It is often used for sake that is intended for longer-term storage. These two methods are essential in the sake production process to ensure that the final product is safe for consumption and has the desired flavor profile. Understanding these pasteurization methods is important for recognizing how they influence the quality and longevity of sake. Other mentioned methods do not accurately reflect the common practices in the sake industry, as they do not align with the standard techniques for pasteurizing and preserving sake.

2. How is the final alcohol content adjusted in sake?

- A. By fermenting it longer
- B. By adding sugars before fermentation
- C. By diluting with water after fermentation is complete**
- D. By aging it in oak barrels

The final alcohol content in sake is adjusted by diluting it with water after fermentation is complete. This process is known as “watering back,” and it typically occurs after the sake has been pressed and before bottling. The alcohol level of sake typically ranges from 15% to 20%, but by diluting the sake with water, producers can achieve the desired alcohol content without altering the overall flavor profile significantly. This technique allows for fine-tuning of the sake’s final characteristics, including balance and aroma. The other methods mentioned do not contribute to adjusting the final alcohol content in sake effectively. Fermenting longer can increase the alcohol level but may lead to undesirable flavors and an unbalanced product. Adding sugars before fermentation can affect the fermentation process, but it does not allow for precise control over the final alcohol level. Aging sake in oak barrels is primarily done for flavor development and does not play a role in alcohol content adjustment.

3. What is "Namazake"?

- A. Sake that has been carbonated
- B. An aged type of sake
- C. Unpasteurized sake**
- D. Sake that has been flavored with fruit

Namazake refers specifically to unpasteurized sake. The process of pasteurization is typically used in sake production to kill any remaining yeast and mold and to stabilize the sake for longer-term storage and shelf life. In contrast, Namazake is bottled without undergoing this pasteurization step, which helps retain the fresh, vibrant flavors and aromas of the sake, often allowing for a more aromatic and fruity character. It can also be more sensitive to temperature and storage conditions due to the presence of active yeast and enzymes, which contributes to its unique taste profile compared to pasteurized varieties.

4. What is sake-kasu?

- A. It is the rice and other solids separated from the sake liquid.**
- B. It is the yeast used in the fermentation process.
- C. It is a type of sake storage container.
- D. It is a specific brewing technique.

Sake-kasu refers specifically to the rice sediments and other solids that remain after the sake has been pressed to separate the liquid from the solids. This byproduct contains residual sugars, amino acids, and other compounds, making it a versatile ingredient in various culinary applications such as soups, marinades, and even as a base for desserts. Understanding sake-kasu is crucial for appreciating the entire sake-making process, as it reflects the transformation of rice during fermentation. It also highlights how certain byproducts can be utilized, promoting sustainable practices in both brewing and culinary arts. The role of sake-kasu is quite distinct from the other options listed, as it does not pertain to yeasts, storage containers, or brewing techniques, which serve different purposes within the sake production process.

5. Which sake brewing method emphasizes the conversion of starches to sugars?

- A. Junmai
- B. Yamahai**
- C. Junmai Ginjo
- D. Namazake

The sake brewing method that emphasizes the conversion of starches to sugars is the Yamahai method. This technique is characterized by a natural lactic acid production, which creates a unique environment for the yeast. In this process, the conversion of starches in rice to sugars is crucial as it provides the fermentable sugars needed for alcohol production. The Yamahai method allows for a longer maturation of the yeast starter, which helps in the development of complex flavors and aromas in the sake. This method contrasts with other brewing methods that might prioritize different aspects, such as the purity of ingredients or specific flavor profiles. In summary, Yamahai's focus on converting starches to sugars makes it distinct in the brewing process, enhancing both the fermentation and the eventual flavor profile of the sake.

6. If the moisture level of the grains is too high, what problem may occur during fermentation?

- A. Slower enzymatic digestion**
- B. Creation of too few enzymes**
- C. Uncontrolled fermentation process**
- D. Excessive starch gelatinization**

When the moisture level of the grains used in sake production is too high, it can significantly affect the fermentation process. The ideal moisture content is crucial for maintaining a controlled fermentation environment. Excessive moisture can lead to an uncontrolled fermentation, where the activity of the yeast may become irregular and unpredictable. This can result in off-flavors or undesirable compounds being produced, which can adversely impact the quality of the sake. During fermentation, yeast converts sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide, and this process requires a certain balance of conditions, including moisture. If the moisture level is too high, it may create an environment conducive to unwanted microorganisms, which can compete with the yeast for nutrients and lead to spoilage. Thus, an uncontrolled fermentation process becomes a significant risk, making it vital to monitor and manage the moisture content of the grains carefully. While slower enzymatic digestion, too few enzymes, and excessive starch gelatinization are all concerns related to the fermentation process, they do not directly relate to the consequences of high moisture content in grains as significantly as uncontrolled fermentation does. Hence, focusing on moisture management is essential in ensuring a successful fermentation.

7. What does the term 'nama-chozō' indicate about the sake?

- A. It is fermented at low temperatures**
- B. It is pasteurised once after storage**
- C. It is bottled without any pasteurisation**
- D. It has been aged for more than two years**

The term 'nama-chozō' specifically indicates that the sake has been pasteurized once after storage. This is a particular method of preparing sake that distinguishes it from other sake variants. In the production of sake, pasteurization is a critical step that helps to stabilize the flavors and aromas. With 'nama-chozō,' the sake undergoes a single pasteurization process after being stored in tanks, which allows it to maintain a certain freshness while still ensuring it is microbiologically stable for consumption. This option accurately encapsulates the essence of the term 'nama-chozō', indicating a balance between fresh characteristics and the safety gained from pasteurization. This differentiates it from other types of sake that may be bottled without pasteurization or have undergone different aging processes.

8. What is the typical aging time for premium sake?

- A. Several years
- B. Up to one year
- C. Sake is usually consumed fresh and may not be aged for long periods**
- D. Indefinitely as long as properly bottled

Premium sake is typically consumed fresh and is not designed for long aging. While some sake can age, most premium varieties are best enjoyed within a short timeframe after production, usually within a year. This is because the fresh characteristics of premium sake, such as its fruity and floral aromas, can diminish over time, leading to a loss of quality and flavor. Sake's delicate nature means that it is crafted to be consumed young, allowing consumers to experience its intended taste profile. Some types of sake, particularly those categorized as "junmai" or "ginjo" and other premium styles, are made to highlight fresh, vibrant flavors. While a small number of sakes can age and develop complexity over time, these are exceptions rather than the rule. Aged sake can become more mellow and develop different characteristics, but most premium sakes are formulated with the intention of being enjoyed relatively fresh to showcase their bright and lively flavors. Therefore, the understanding that premium sake is usually consumed fresh and may not be aged for long periods aligns with conventional practices within the sake industry.

9. What is the method of fukuro-zuri/shizuku-dori characterized by?

- A. Sake being mechanically pressed
- B. Sake dripping under the influence of gravity**
- C. Sake being exposed to air for fermentation
- D. Sake being stored in vacuum conditions

The method of fukuro-zuri or shizuku-dori is characterized by the process of sake dripping under the influence of gravity. In this traditional technique, sake is contained in a special bag or cloth and hung, allowing the liquid to naturally flow from the bag without the application of pressure. This gravity-based process helps to preserve the delicate flavors and aromas of the sake, resulting in a high-quality product often associated with premium sake varieties. The gravity method contrasts sharply with mechanical pressing techniques, which can release more solids and extract different components from the rice and yeast. It also differs from fermentation practices involving exposure to air, which could lead to oxidation and alter the sake's profile significantly. Similarly, the use of vacuum conditions is unrelated to the dripping method and is not a standard practice in sake production. Overall, fukuro-zuri/shizuku-dori emphasizes the gentle extraction of sake to maintain its elegance and complexity.

10. What temperature range is maintained during the "Spreading spores and initial mould growth" step of koji making?

A. 30-32°C

B. 32-35°C

C. 33-35°C

D. 38-40°C

The temperature range of 33-35°C is crucial during the "Spreading spores and initial mould growth" step of koji making because it provides an optimal environment for the growth of the koji mold, *Aspergillus oryzae*. This specific temperature range encourages the active proliferation of the mold spores that have been introduced to the steamed rice. At these temperatures, the koji mold can thrive, producing enzymes that are essential for breaking down starches into fermentable sugars. Maintaining a consistent temperature within this range fosters a favorable humidity level that supports mold activity while preventing the growth of undesirable microorganisms that could spoil the rice. By controlling the temperature effectively during this initial stage, sake brewers set the foundation for developing the desired flavors and aromas in the final product, making it a critical step in the sake brewing process.