

From [Sandor Katz](#), author of the James Beard Award winning *The Art of Fermentation*

A while back, I visited the [Terada Honke Brewery](#) in Chiba Prefecture in Japan, where they make incredibly delicious 100% wild fermented saké using very traditional methods and no pure strain starters. I spent a day observing, tasting, and talking with brewmaster Masaru Terada, the 24th generation brewmaster there. Masaru-san described to me a simple ancient method of making saké, which he called Bodai-Moto-Zukuri that sounded so simple I had to try it as soon as I got home. I'm very pleased with the results! (Try it out. Recipe below).

The only ingredients are rice and water. I used 1.5 kg (3 lbs) of rice altogether to make about 3 liters/quarts of saké. Some of the rice is in the form of koji, molded rice; see *The Art of Fermentation* for info on making koji, or but it. (Gem Cultures and Cold Mountain are both reputable companies.) The whole process took about 2 weeks. The only equipment you need is a vessel with a capacity of at least 6 liters (1.5 gallons), and 2 cloth or mesh bags with mesh fine enough to hold rice.



Steam 500 g (1 lb) rice.

Fill mesh bags: Transfer the steamed rice to a mesh bag, and place 500 g raw rice in the other bag.

Submerge: Fill vessel with 2 liters dechlorinated water and submerge the two bags of rice. The cooked rice will decompose into the water, providing nutrients for the yeast and bacteria on the raw rice.

Gently massage bag of cooked rice for a few minutes each day.

Taste after a few days. It's time for the next step when it's bubbly and starts to taste a little sour. For me this took four days.

Remove bags of rice from the water, and retain liquid that drains from them.

Steam the soaked raw rice.

Cool until still warm but comfortable to the touch.

Mix warm rice with 500 g (1 lb) koji, as well as the original cooked rice that has been soaking. Mix three different forms of rice together thoroughly.

Return rice to water in vessel.

Stir daily.

Ferment 10 days to 2 weeks, tasting periodically.

Strain.

Enjoy! -Sandy