

Tohoku Sake Awards 2025

November 10, 2025

Office of Analysis and Brewing Technology

Sendai Regional Taxation Bureau

1. Outline

(1) Purpose

The purpose of The Tohoku Sake Awards (Tohoku Seishu Kanpyokai) is to improve further the quality and brewing technique of sake brewers under the jurisdiction of the Sendai Regional Taxation Bureau, thereby contributing to the sound development of the sake brewing industry.

(2) Review of 2025

The Tohoku Sake Awards is an annual event that showcases sake brewers possessing the best brewing techniques in Japan, whose high-quality sake has been brewed with great care during winter, and meticulously managed and matured from spring to summer.

This year, 142 sake breweries in the Tohoku region's six prefectures entered 120 samples from 109 breweries in the *ginjo-shu* category, and 141 samples from 122 breweries for the *junmai-shu* category.

It was difficult to dissolve rice this year due to the impact of last year's intense heat. However, master brewers and brewery workers skillfully applied their brewing techniques to address the situation effectively, with each brewery showcasing its unique character and delivering sake with outstanding flavor and aroma. The submitted sakes had matured and gained depth. The *ginjo-shu* category showcased sakes with gorgeous fruity aromas and a smooth, fresh taste. The *junmai-shu* category featured sakes with an even-keeled aroma and a well-balanced taste of refined acidity and richness.

Including this year, all sakes entered in the Sake Awards are of a very high quality, signifying that Tohoku's breweries are not content with the status quo and are continuing to step up to new heights. While the environment surrounding sake breweries in Tohoku faces various challenges, from natural disasters like the Great East Japan Earthquake and torrential rains to global warming and international geopolitical conditions, the current surge in the price of rice for sake brewing has been an unprecedented challenge for Tohoku's sake breweries. However, we are confident that breweries in the Tohoku region, with their outstanding technical expertise and commitment to quality, will overcome any difficulties that may arise.

We hope that people who enjoy sake from Tohoku and support the breweries will spread not only

throughout Japan but across the world.

2. Entry

(1) Qualification for entry

Licensed *sake* breweries located within the jurisdiction of the Sendai Regional Taxation Bureau (i.e., Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, and Fukushima prefectures)

(2) Eligible *sakes*

Sake from the below-mentioned categories that were produced from the entrant's own production site located within the jurisdiction of the Sendai Regional Taxation Bureau during the brewing year of 2024.

(3) Categories

a *Ginjo-shu* category

Ginjo-shu as stipulated in the "Labeling Standard for the Manufacturing Process and Quality of *Sake*" (NTA notice #8, November 22, 1989)

b *Junmai-shu* category

Junmai-shu as stipulated in the "Labeling Standard for the Manufacturing Process and Quality of *Sake*" (NTA notice #8, November 22, 1989)

(4) Number of entries permitted

Each licensed sake brewery can submit up to two entries in total for the two categories. The number of entries for one category cannot be more than two.

3. Quality Examinations

(1) Schedule

- Preliminary examination: Tuesday, September 30 – Wednesday, October 1, 2025
- Final examination: Friday, October 3, 2025

(2) Process

The jurors assess the quality of each sample by sensory evaluation. All examinations are blind and administered by category. In the preliminary examinations, each sample is examined for individual attributes to clarify a sensory profile and overall evaluation is given based on a five-step scoring method. After this preliminary process, the highest scoring entries are selected for the final examination. In the final examination, the chosen sakes are evaluated by a three-step scoring method.

(3) Evaluation policy

Overall quality is determined based on the following style-based categories:

a *Ginjo-shu*: well-balanced flavor, characteristic aroma, and delicate taste

b *Junmai-shu*: refined flavor with *umami* (savoriness) and round texture

(4) Quality evaluation jurors

Jurors were selected from a pool of experts, including:

- Academics in the field of sake brewing
- Staff members from the National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB)
- Staff members from prefectural brewing-related organizations
- Sake experts and manufacturers recommended by the prefectural sake and shochu makers' associations of the Tohoku region
- Technical officers from the Sendai Regional Taxation Bureau

List of Jurors 2025

Name	Affiliations	Participating Examinations
SAITO TOMOAKI	AOMORI PREFECTURAL INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH CENTER, HIROSAKI INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE	GP, JP
OGURA AKIRA		GF, JF
KOMAI NOBUYUKI	HACHINOHE SHUZO CO., LTD.	GP, JP
NARUMI NOBUHIRO	NARUMIJOZOTEN CORPORATION	GF, JF
SATO NARUhide	IWATE INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE	GP, JP
HIRANO TAKAHIRO		GF, JF
OMOTO YUHKI	KIKUNOTSUKASA SAKE BREWERY CO., LTD.	GP, JP
SASAKI KATSUYOSHI	KAMIHEI SHUZO CO., LTD.	GF, JF
HASHIMOTO KENYA	INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE, MIYAGI PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT	GP, JP
ITO KENJI	MIYAGI SAKE AND SHOCHU MAKERS ASSOCIATION	GF, JF
WATANABE KOJI	SAURA CO., LTD.	GP, JP
HIRATSUKA TOSHIAKI	ABEKAN SAKE BREWERY CO., LTD.	GF, JF
SATO TOMONORI	AKITA RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND BREWING	GP, JP
UEHARA TOMOMI		GF, JF
TOMIOKA HIROKO	AKITA SHURUI SEIZOH CO., LTD.	GP, JP
SASAKI AKIHIRO	DEWATSURUSYUZO CO., LTD.	GF, JF
KUDOH SHINPEI	YAMAGATA RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	GP, JP
ISHIGAKI HIROYOSHI		GF, JF
KATO KODAI	EIKO FUJI SAKE BREWING COMPANY	GP, JP
WADA SHIGEKI	WADA SHUZO LIMITED PARTNERSHIP	GF, JF
MATSUMOTO TAKASHI	INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE FUKUSHIMA PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT, AIZUWAKAMATSU TECHNICAL SUPPORT CENTRE	GP, JP
TAKAHASHI RYO		GF, JF
MATSUZAKI HIROYUKI	MATSUZAKI SYUZO CO., LTD.	GP, JP
SATOU KENSHIN	MINENOYUKISHUZOJOYO CO., LTD.	GF, JF
JOHN GAUNTNER	SAKE WORLD, Inc.	GF, JF
KUMADA CARLIN	YUTAKA SHOPPING KK	GF, JF
KANAUCHI MAKOTO	MIYAGI UNIVERSITY	GF, JF

Name	Affiliations	Participating Examinations
FUJII TSUTOMU	FUKUSHIMA UNIVERSITY	GF, JF
FUJITA AKIKO	NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF BREWING	GF, JF
MATSUMOTO KEN	OFFICE OF ANALYSIS AND BREWING TECHNOLOGY, SENDAI REGIONAL TAXATION BUREAU	GP, JP, GF, JF
FUJITA DAISUKE		GP, JP, GF, JF
YAMADA KEITA		GP, JP, GF, JF
SEKI TAKAHIRO		GP, JP, GF, JF

Abbreviations: GP, *Ginjo-shu* preliminary ex.; JP, *Junmai-shu* preliminary ex.; GF, *Ginjo-shu* final ex.; JF, *Junmai-shu* final ex.

4. Awards

Entrants earning high scores in the final examination for each category are awarded an honor prize. The number of recipients of this prize is limited, and only those placing in the top one-third of all entrants in each category are eligible.

Of the top three rankings for each category, the “Grand Honor Prize” is awarded to those placing first in each category, and the “Special Honor Prize” to those placing second or third.

Certificates in English and Japanese are then presented to each of the prizewinners by the commissioner of the Sendai Regional Taxation Bureau.

5. Brewing Techniques Workshop

(1) Date

This event is scheduled to be held on Thursday, November 13, 2025.

(2) Location

This event is scheduled to be located at the 8th floor of the Sendai Joint Government Building A.

(3) Participants

Participants will be limited to sake brewers and technical guidance organization staff in the Tohoku area and jurors of the Tohoku Sake Awards 2025 who register in advance. To avoid overcrowding, the workshop will be divided into two sessions.

6. Statistics

(1) Number of Entries

Prefecture	<i>Ginjo-shu</i>	<i>Junmai-shu</i>	Total
Aomori	12 (11)	12 (11)	24 (13)
Iwate	8 (8)	23 (16)	31 (16)
Miyagi	19 (16)	21 (17)	40 (22)
Akita	22 (20)	26 (22)	48 (25)
Yamagata	27 (24)	27 (24)	54 (30)
Fukushima	32 (30)	32 (32)	64 (36)
Total	120 (109)	141 (122)	261 (142)

Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of breweries

(Previous Year)

Prefecture	<i>Ginjo-shu</i>	<i>Junmai-shu</i>	Total
Aomori	13 (12)	11 (11)	24 (13)
Iwate	10 (10)	19 (14)	29 (15)
Miyagi	20 (17)	24 (19)	44 (24)
Akita	25 (24)	27 (25)	52 (27)
Yamagata	33 (27)	27 (24)	60 (32)
Fukushima	35 (32)	30 (29)	65 (36)
Total	136 (122)	138 (122)	274 (147)

Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of breweries

(2) Number of Prizewinners (including Grand Honor and Special Honor Prizes)

Prefecture	<i>Ginjo-shu</i>	<i>Junmai-shu</i>	Total
Aomori	5 (5)	7 (6)	12 (10)
Iwate	3 (3)	9 (8)	12 (8)
Miyagi	6 (5)	5 (4)	11 (8)
Akita	5 (5)	4 (4)	9 (8)
Yamagata	9 (9)	10 (10)	19 (15)
Fukushima	12 (12)	9 (9)	21 (15)
Total	40 (39)	44 (41)	84 (64)

Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of breweries

(Previous Year)

Prefecture	<i>Ginjo-shu</i>	<i>Junmai-shu</i>	Total
Aomori	4 (4)	2 (2)	6 (5)
Iwate	5 (5)	9 (8)	14 (9)
Miyagi	8 (7)	10 (8)	18 (13)
Akita	9 (8)	6 (6)	15 (12)
Yamagata	12 (10)	4 (4)	16 (12)
Fukushima	14 (13)	15 (15)	29 (21)
Total	52 (47)	46 (43)	98 (72)

Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of breweries

7. Entrants awarded Grand Honor Prize and Special Honor Prize

In regard solely to entrants awarded the “Grand Honor Prize” and the “Special Honor Prize,” tasting notes by two foreign jurors and some of the Japanese jurors are published.

(1) *Ginjo-shu* Category

a. Grand Honor Prize

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
Fukushima	TANIGAWA SHUZO CO., LTD.	2380001005784	SAKAMIZUKI
Tasting notes by two foreign jurors			
• JOHN GAUNTNER (SAKE WORLD, Inc.) <i>A truly well brewed sake with all the flavors and aromas well integrated together. While slightly on the sweet side, it has great structure, depth, and resonance.</i> KUMADA CARLIN (YUTAKA SHOPPING KK) <i>Ripe pineapple and lemon grass on the nose with rich peach cobbler and rice porridge on the palate, crisp finish.</i>			
Tasting notes by Japanese jurors			
<i>Fresh and vibrant aroma of green apples followed by juicy fruity note of white peaches and pears. A good balance of rich yet refreshing acidity and sweetness. Subtle yet crisp bitterness brings out the flavor to leave a wonderful aftertaste.</i>			

b. Special Honor Prize

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
Iwate	NANBUBIJIN CO., LTD.	8400001007847	NANBUBIJIN
Tasting notes by two foreign jurors			
• JOHN GAUNTNER (SAKE WORLD, Inc.) <i>Overall, a creamy flavor profile, but well accented with slightly peppery notes and some stone fruit nuances too, all leading into a semi-dry finish.</i> • KUMADA CARLIN (YUTAKA SHOPPING KK) <i>Aromas of white grape, peach and white flowers. Silky smooth, semisweet palate leads to a tropical finish.</i>			
Tasting notes by Japanese jurors			
<i>A good balance of soft peach aroma and notes of apple and muscat grapes on the palate. A gentle, refined sweetness and crisp acidity bring out freshness, leaving a clean finish.</i>			

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
Fukushima	HIGASHINIHONSYUZO PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT COOPERATIVE	1380005003942	OKUNOMATSU
Tasting notes by two foreign jurors			
• JOHN GAUNTNER (SAKE WORLD, Inc.) <i>A fairly young style of sake, bright flavors and aromas, slightly sweet but very balanced. Ripe banana and cocoa notes pervade the flavors and aromas.</i> • KUMADA CARLIN (YUTAKA SHOPPING KK) <i>Nose of pineapple and pear leads to a sweet and smooth palate with hints of powdered sugar.</i>			
Tasting notes by Japanese jurors			
<i>Fresh aromas of green apples and melon followed by a well-balanced taste of rich, refined sweetness and moderately crisp acidity, with a lingering, pleasant finish of juicy fruits.</i>			

(2) *Junmai-shu* Category

a. Grand Honor Prize

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
Iwate	WASHINOO CO., LTD.	8400001004101	WASHINOO
Tasting notes by two foreign jurors			
• JOHN GAUNTNER (SAKE WORLD, Inc.) <i>A crisp flavor profile, due to a moderate acidity, with a solid core of flavor surrounded by a gentle umami. A mild acidity spreads the flavor across the palate very effectively.</i> • KUMADA CARLIN (YUTAKA SHOPPING KK) <i>Green melon and herbs on the nose lead to a soft sweet palate with hints of chestnut and candied apricot.</i>			
Tasting notes by Japanese jurors			
<i>Juicy aromas of apples and pears with a perfect balance of sweetness and acidity. A moderate richness brings out the flavor, giving a crisp finish.</i>			

b. Special Honor Prize

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
Yamagata	SHUHO SHUZOJO CO., LTD.	4390002001276	SHUHO
Tasting notes by two foreign jurors			
• JOHN GAUNTNER (SAKE WORLD, Inc.) <i>Overall, this sake has a great presence that manifests in a delightful blend of rice flavor, slightly floral aromas, as well as banana and grapefruit notes, and a very pure nature. All of these are in exquisite balance.</i> • KUMADA CARLIN (YUTAKA SHOPPING KK) <i>Bright aromas of fresh pineapple and passion fruits lead to a zesty palate with lively acidity and a crisp finish.</i>			
Tasting notes by Japanese jurors			
<i>An elegant and pleasant fruity aroma like green apples and apricots. Sweetness and sharp acidity form the structure of the flavor, while a mellow, rich bitterness gives a complex finish.</i>			

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
Fukushima	HIGASHINIHONSYUZO PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT COOPERATIVE	1380005003942	OKUNOMATSU
Tasting notes by two foreign jurors			
• JOHN GAUNTNER (SAKE WORLD, Inc.) <i>A citric touch to the aromas leads into a slightly sweet taste that is very even-keeled and then a long finish. Overall, a very fine-grained set of flavors, true to regional style.</i> • KUMADA CARLIN (YUTAKA SHOPPING KK) <i>Aromas of pear with hints of citrus. Palate is sweet with notes of plum and apricot, crisp finish.</i>			
Tasting notes by Japanese jurors			
<i>A gorgeous aroma of fresh green apples. A light, refreshing mouthfeel followed by clean sweetness and acidity on the palate, finishing with a crisp, clean flavor.</i>			

8. List of Prizewinners

The “☆” symbols next the brewery names indicate Grand Honor Prize winners, and the “◎” symbols next the brewery names indicate Special Honor Prize winners.

(1) *Ginjo-shu* Category

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
Aomori	KANETATAMADASHUZO CORPORATION	2420001008956	TSUGARU JONKARA
Aomori	NAKAMURA KAMEKICHI CO., LTD.	1420001009988	TAMADARE
Aomori	NARUMIJOZOTEN CORPORATION	2420001009987	INAMURAYABUNSHIROU
Aomori	HATOMASAMUNE CORPORATION	8420001011186	HATOMASAMUNE GINREI
Aomori	MOMOKAWA BREWING, INC.	6420001012244	MOMOKAWA
Iwate	AKABUSHUZOU CO., LTD.	5400001007445	AKABU
Iwate	KAMIHEI SHUZO CO., LTD.	6400001006636	KOKKANOKAORI
Iwate	NANBUBIJIN CO., LTD. ◎	8400001007847	NANBUBIJIN
Miyagi	SAURA COMPANY, LIMITED YAMOTOGURA	5370601000266	URAKASUMI
Miyagi	ABEKAN SAKE BREWERY CO., LTD.	4370001041432	ABEKAN
Miyagi	ICHINOKURA CORPORATION HONSHAKURA	4370201000031	ICHINOKURA
Miyagi	ONUMASHUZOTEN LIMITED, COMPANY	3370102000107	KENKONICHI
Miyagi	ZAO SHUZO CORPORATION	8370101001308	ZAO
Akita	AKITA SHURUI SEIZOH CO., LTD. GOSHONOGURA	8410001000388	TAKASHIMIZU
Akita	HOKUSHIKA CO., LTD.	1410001006136	HOKUSHIKA
Akita	AKITAKENHAKKOKOGYO CORPORATION	6410001005430	ITTEKISENRYO
Akita	AKITAMEIJYO COMPANY LIMITED	5410001005431	RANMAN

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
Akita	SUZUKI BREWING AND CO.	5410003002220	HIDEYOSHI
Yamagata	SHUHO SHUZOJO CO., LTD.	4390002001276	SHUHO
Yamagata	DEWAZAKURA SAKE BREWERY CO., LTD.	5390001004452	DEWAZAKURA
Yamagata	KAMENOI SHUZO CO., LTD.	5390001007975	KUDOKIJOZU
Yamagata	KOIKAWA SHUZO CO., LTD.	1390001006816	KOIKAWA
Yamagata	EIKO FUJI SAKE BREWING COMPANY	8390001007782	EIKO FUJI
Yamagata	SAKATA SHUZO CO., LTD.	5390001006226	JOKIGEN
Yamagata	SUGIISAMI WARABIOKA BREWERY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP	7390003000456	SUGIISAMI
Yamagata	MATUYAMA SYUZO CORPORATION	8390001007254	MATUMINE NO FUJI
Yamagata	KOYASHUZO CORPORATION	9390001008714	HANAUYO
Fukushima	AKEBONOSYUZOU CO., LTD.	5380003001861	ISSHOUSEISYUN
Fukushima	SHIRAISHUZOTEN LIMITED PARTNERSHIP	3380003001772	BANDAIHOU
Fukushima	SUEHIRO SAKE BREWERY CO., LTD. HAKASEGURA	2380001017549	GENSAI
Fukushima	HANAHARUSHUZOU CO., LTD.	3380001026763	HANAHARU
Fukushima	SATOU SHUZOUTEN CORPORATION	7380002009846	FUJINOI
Fukushima	TANIGAWA SHUZO CO., LTD. ☆	2380001005784	SAKAMIZUKI
Fukushima	SENKOMA SYUZO CORPORATION	4380001010279	SENKOMA
Fukushima	MATSUZAKISYUZO CO., LTD.	8380001029290	HIROTOGAWA
Fukushima	HOMARE SAKE BREWERY CO., LTD.	3380001018703	AIZU HOMARE
Fukushima	YAMATOGAWA SYUZOTEN LTD.	5380003001936	YAUEMON
Fukushima	YOSHINOAWA LIMITED PARTNERSHIP	8380003001941	AIZU YOSHINOAWA
Fukushima	HIGASHINIHONSYUZO	1380005003942	OKUNOMATSU

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
	PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT COOPERATIVE ©		

JCN indicates Japan Corporate Number

(2) Junmai-shu Category

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
Aomori	NISHIDASYUZOUTEN CO.	9420001001673	DENSYU
Aomori	MATSUMIDORI BREWERY CO., LTD.	1420001009063	ROKKON
Aomori	MIURASHUZO CO., LTD.	4420001010349	HOUHAI
Aomori	ROKKA SHUZO CO., LTD.	3420001009607	TORAI
Aomori	HACHINOHESYURUI CORPORATION GONOHEKOUJYOU	8420001006418	JYOKU
Aomori	MOMOKAWA BREWING, INC.	6420001012244	MOMOKAWA
Iwate	AKABUSHUZOU CO., LTD.	5400001007445	AKABU
Iwate	SHIWA SHUZOTEN CORPORATION	8400001015742	HIROKI
Iwate	WASHINOO CO., LTD. ☆	8400001004101	WASHINOO
Iwate	SUISENSHUZO CORPORATION	7402701000297	SUISEN
Iwate	IWATEMEIJYO CO., LTD.	4400601000560	IWATEHOMARE
Iwate	KAMIHEI SHUZO CO., LTD.	6400001006636	KOKKANOKAORI
Iwate	HAMACHIDORI CO., LTD.	4400001007322	HAMACHIDORI
Iwate	NANBUBIJIN CO., LTD.	8400001007847	NANBUBIJIN
Miyagi	ICHINOKURA CORPORATION HONSHAKURA	4370201000031	ICHINOKURA SHOKO
Miyagi	KANBAISHUZO CORPORATION	9370203000058	MIYAKANBAI JUNREI JUNKO
Miyagi	ICHINOKURA CORPORATION KINRYUKURA	4370201000031	ICHINOKURA KINRYUKURA
Miyagi	HAGINO SHUZO CO., LTD.	7370201003139	HAGINOTSURU
Akita	AKITA SHUZO CO., LTD.	2410001001020	SUIRAKUTEN HYAKUDENBARE
Akita	AKITA SHURUI SEIZOH CO., LTD. GOSHONOGURA	8410001000388	TAKASHIMIZU
Akita	HIRAIZUMIHONPO CO., LTD.	8410001005189	HIRAIZUMI

Prefecture	Brewery	JCN	Brand
Akita	DEWATSURUSYUZO CO., LTD.	6410001008202	DEWATSURU
Yamagata	SHUHO SHUZOJO CO., LTD. ©	4390002001276	SHUHO
Yamagata	AZUMANOFUMOTO LIMITED COMPANY	4390002014534	AZUMANOFUMOTO
Yamagata	KOJIMASOUHONTEN CORPORATION	1390001009851	TOKO
Yamagata	YONETSURUSYUZO CORPORATION	8390001010456	YONETSURU
Yamagata	KOIKAWA SHUZO CO., LTD.	1390001006816	BEPPIN
Yamagata	EIKO FUJI SAKE BREWING COMPANY	8390001007782	EIKO FUJI
Yamagata	SAKATA SHUZO CO., LTD.	5390001006226	JOKIGEN
Yamagata	FUMOTOI CO., LTD.	6390001006753	FUMOTOI
Yamagata	TAKAGI SHUZO CORPORATION	4390001009320	JUYONDAI
Yamagata	NAGANUMA GENERAL PARTNERSHIP	5390003000879	SOUMURA
Fukushima	AKEBONOSYUZOU CO., LTD.	5380003001861	TENMEI
Fukushima	SUEHIRO SAKE BREWERY CO., LTD. HAKASEGURA	2380001017549	KYOU
Fukushima	TSURUNOE SYUZO CO., LTD.	7380001017619	AIZU CHUJO
Fukushima	SASANOKAWA SHUZO CORPORATION	4380001005337	KAISEI
Fukushima	MIHARU SHUZO CO., LTD.	4380001007977	MIHARUKOMA
Fukushima	MATSUZAKISYUZO CO., LTD.	8380001029290	HIROTOGAWA
Fukushima	HOMARE SAKE BREWERY CO., LTD.	3380001018703	AIZU HOMARE
Fukushima	YOSHINOAWA LIMITED PARTNERSHIP	8380003001941	AIZU YOSHINOAWA
Fukushima	HIGASHINIHONSYUZO PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT COOPERATIVE ©	1380005003942	OKUNOMATSU

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