

Nagano's Traditional Craft

# Matsushiro Pottery (Matsushiro Yaki)

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## About Matsushiro Pottery (Matsushiro Yaki)

In the late Edo era about 200 years ago, the Matsushiro Provincial Government encouraged pottery production, which created successful pottery industry in Matsushiro and its surrounding areas. Later in the early Showa era, all pottery kilns were closed for some time, but they were revived during the 60s and 70s.

Produced with local clay rich in iron, Matsushiro Pottery has simple shapes and texture with original bluish green luster. The luster is created by double glazing, which is prepared with natural materials such as ashes and kaolin. The glaze applied on the top edge of the product melts and drips in the kiln. This creates a pattern called 'green dripping,' and they all have different shades of color.

Matsushiro Pottery is Northern Nagano's leading pottery, with variety of easy-to-use products in daily life from tableware to flower vases.

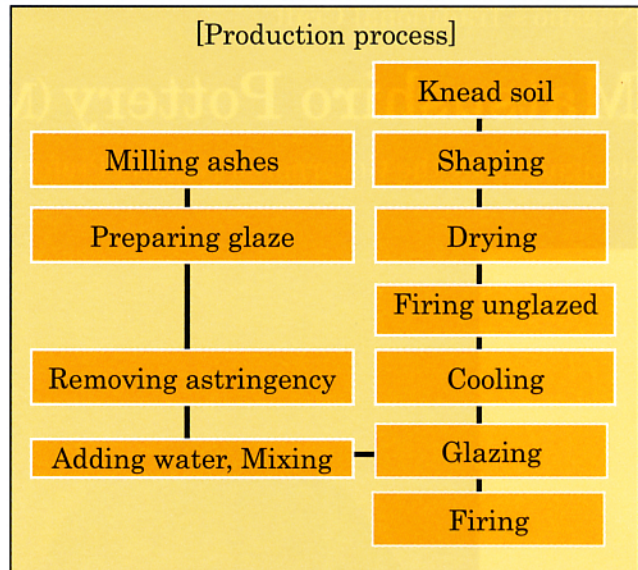


## Manufacture Techniques

### ◆ Shaping



### ◆ Glazing



Later, as the transportation network developed, cheaper products flew in from other areas, Matsushiro Pottery declined, and all kilns were closed in the early Showa era.

In the mid-1960s, however, there was a growing trend to revive culture of Nagano and pottery in Matsushiro. Efforts were made to restore pottery industry by excavating remains of kilns, interviewing former potters, and doing research using small-scale kilns. In 1972, a new kiln was built, marking the revival of Matsushiro Pottery, which continues to prosper now.

### Simple touch and original luster

One of the characteristics of Matsushiro Pottery is green dripping. After ash glaze is applied, copper glaze is applied at the top edge of the product. The copper glaze melts in the kiln and drips.

Since craftsmen cannot predict how the glaze drips, each product has different dripping patterns.

### History and Development

Matsushiro Pottery has allegedly started when a potter Kaheiji built his kiln in Matsushiro after receiving training in Karatsu in current Saga Prefecture.

In 1816, Yukitaka Sanada, the feudal lord of Matsushiro Province, encouraged pottery industry by owning and protecting kilns. He invited potters from Shigaraki in Shiga and Tokoname, and had them produce pottery. Many private kilns were also built and prospered. A variety of household tableware was made and used by common people.

### Glaze Made From Natural Materials

Glaze for Matsushiro Pottery is prepared by mixing several natural ashes such as wood ashes, straw ashes and rice husk ashes, and feldspar.

Glazing is done twice, and the color changes by how glazing is done, as well as by the season and weather.



### Matsushiro Pottery Society

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