

Japanese firm to mature whisky in space

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Japanese whisky will be sent into space next month to test how time in a zero-gravity environment affects its flavour, one of the country's biggest drinks makers said Friday.

Samples of whisky produced by Suntory will be stored in the Japanese laboratory facility of the International Space Station for at least a year, with some flasks staying longer.

Researchers for the company believe that storing the beverage in an environment with only slight temperature changes and limited liquid movement could lead to a mellower flavour.

Suntory will send whisky aged for 10, 18 and 21 years as well as a number of other alcoholic substances.

Once they are returned to Earth, blenders will assess their flavours while researchers subject the liquids to scientific analysis, the company said.

"For the moment, we're not thinking about applying the study results to commercial products," a Suntory spokeswoman told AFP.

Whisky demand rocketed in Japan last year after national broadcaster NHK aired a period drama called "Massan," the true story of a Japanese entrepreneur and his Scottish wife who are credited with establishing Japan's first whisky distillery.

Sales also soared when Suntory's Yamazaki Single Malt Sherry Cask

2013 was named the best in the world by the prestigious Jim Murray's Whisky Bible 2015.

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