



JAPAN **日本 (Nippon)**

Area: 145,937 sq. mi. (67th) -*slightly smaller than California*
Consists of 6,852 islands

Population: 125.4m (11th); **Ethnic Groups:** Japanese

Language: Japanese; **Religion:** Shinto, Buddhism, Christianity

Per Capita GDP (PPP) \$44,585 (27th); **GDP:** \$5.5 trillion (3rd)

HDI: 0.919 (19th) – *very high*; **Life Expectancy:** 81

Government: Parliamentary democracy

Head of State: Emperor Naruhito; **Prime Minister:** Yoshihide Suga

Organizations: UN System, G7, G20, APEC,...



In 1603, a Tokugawa shogunate (rule by the warlords) ushered in a long period of isolation from foreign influence in order to secure its power. For 250 years this policy enabled Japan to enjoy stability and a flowering of its indigenous culture. Following the Treaty of Kanagawa with the United States in 1854, Japan opened its ports and began to interact intensively with the world and became the first non-western nation to modernize and industrialize. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Japan became a regional power that defeated both China and Russia. It annexed Formosa (Taiwan), and southern Sakhalin Island as a result of the Treaty of Shimonoseki and Treaty of Portsmouth respectively. Korea was annexed as a result of the 1910 Japan–Korea Merger Treaty. In 1933 Japan occupied Manchuria and in 1937 it launched a full-scale invasion of China. Japan attacked Allied forces in 1941 - triggering America's entry into World War II - and soon occupied much of East and Southeast Asia.

After its defeat in World War II, and a seven-year occupation by Allied troops, Japan recovered to become an economic power and a staunch ally of the US. While the Emperor remains as a symbol of national unity, Japan is a parliamentary democracy whereby actual power rests in the people who are represented in the Diet which is the legislative branch of government. The economy has experienced a long period of stagnation starting in the 1990s following four decades of unprecedented growth, but Japan remains a major economic power, both in Asia and globally.

Japan spans an archipelago of 6,852 islands. About three-fourths of the country's terrain is mountainous. Greater Tokyo is the most populous metropolitan area in the world, with more than 37.4 million residents. Japan's economy is the 3rd largest in the world and it is a global leader in automotive and electronics industries.

The culture of Japan is well known around the world, including its art, cuisine, music, and popular culture which encompasses prominent animation and video game industries.

From the late 20th century onwards, the United States and Japan have firm and very active political, economic and military relationships. The US considers Japan to be one of its closest allies and partners. Japan is currently one of the most pro-American nations in the world. Although its Constitution has outlawed war as a means to settle international disputes, the country maintains Self-Defense Forces that rank as one of the world's major military forces.

Fun Facts: Japan has

- *the world's greatest life expectancy- 81 years; the 2 oldest people in world (117) live in Okinawa*
- *more pets than children*
- the highest number of vending machines in the world*
- more than 1,500 earthquakes each year – it is in the “Pacific Ring of Fire”*