

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Japan (Nippon)

**CAPITAL:** Tokyo

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Constitutional Monarchy

**AREA:** 377,576 Sq Km (145,783 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION** 126,994,100

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**LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY:** Japan is an island state comprising a group of four principal islands and several smaller ones, off the east coast of Asia. It is bound by the Sea of Japan, the Korea Strait and the East China Sea to the west, the Pacific Ocean to the east and the La Perouse Strait to the north. The four principal islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. The islands of Japan are extremely mountainous with the plains and intermontane basins only accounting for 25% of the national territory. Central Japan is marked by the convergence of three mountain chains that form the Hida Mountains or Japanese Alps. The dormant volcano of Mt. Fuji is the country's highest point and the territory has 265 known volcanoes, of which around 20 are still active. Major Cities (pop. est.); Tokyo 8,021,900, Yokohama 3,300,500, Osaka 2,575,000, Nagoya 2,153,300, Sapporo 1,744,800, Kobe 1,519,000, Kyoto 1,448,400 (1994). Land Use; forested 67%, pastures 2%, agricultural-cultivated 12%, other 19% (1993).

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**CLIMATE:** The climate of Japan is quite distinct for each region, but it is generally of two major types. (1.) A marine or oceanic climate that is influenced by the Kuroshio or Black Current and the Oyashio or Parent Current. (2.) A tropical climate that is regulated by the Asian monsoons while the Asian mainland climate also controls the temperature and precipitation in Japan. Two periods of heavy rains occur, the Plum Rains in June and the other in September. Between these two periods the country is hot, humid and rainless with typhoons occurring from the end of summer through to October. The cycle and length of the seasons also varies depending on each region. Average temperature ranges in Tokyo are from -2 to 8 degrees Celsius (28 to 46 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 22 to 30 degrees Celsius (72 to 86 degrees Fahrenheit) in August.

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**PEOPLE:** The principal ethnic majority are the Japanese who account for 99.2% of the population while the remainder are the Burakumin, the Ainu and the Koreans.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 328 persons per sq km (849 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 77.4% urban, 22.6% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 49.1% male, 50.9% female (1991). Life Expectancy at Birth; 76.1 years male, 82.1 years female (1991). Age Breakdown; 18% under 15, 22% 15 to 29, 22% 30 to 44, 20% 45 to 59, 10% 60 to 69, 8% 70 and over (1991). Birth Rate; 10.0 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 6.7 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 3.3 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 4.4 per 1,000 live births (1991).

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**RELIGIONS:** The majority of Japanese have beliefs shared from Shintoism and Buddhism with 79% of the population Shinto, 81% Buddhist and 1% Christian.

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**LANGUAGES:** The official language is Japanese with two chief dialects, Hondo and Nanto while it also has three forms of writing, Kanji, Hiragana and Katakana.

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**EDUCATION:** Aged 15 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 0.3%, primary and lower secondary 38.5%, upper secondary 38.0%, college and vocational 5.7%, university 8.0% (1980). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over virtually 100% (1990).

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** After Japan's World War II surrender the US led allied occupation of Japan until 1952 led to the establishment of a democratic constitution as well as various socioeconomic reforms. As communist power rose in China, the US signed a self defense Security Treaty with Japan and proceeded to rearm the country. From 1950 to 1953 the Korean War boosted Japan's war torn economy through US procurement orders. In 1960 widespread riots erupted in protest to the renewal of the US Security Treaty. In 1964 the summer Olympic Games were held in Tokyo and the Bullet Train was also established. In 1970 Japan held the World Expo near Osaka, the first time such an event was held in Asia. In 1972 Japan reestablished full diplomatic relations with China and in the same year the US returned the Ryukyu island chain which it had held since World War II. In 1973 Japan experienced an oil crisis which exposed the country's deficiency of local energy supplies, however, by the second oil crisis of 1979 Japan was a world leader in energy saving technology. In 1974 former Prime Minister Sato was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In Jan. 1989 Emperor Hirohito died and was acceded by Emperor Akihito in Nov. 1990. In 1989 there were political revelations of corruption and sexual misconduct which forced the resignation of Prime Minister Takeshita and Prime Minister Uno who was succeeded by Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu. In Feb. 1990 Prime Minister Kaifu and his government, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) were re-elected. During the 1991 Gulf War, political unrest escalated as Prime Minister Kaifu proposed the establishment and deployment of Japanese UN peace keeping troops, however, no troops were sent due to constitutional difficulties over the military role, although the government provided billions of dollars in financial aid. On Jan. 17, 1991 US trade representatives warned Tokyo that the opening of their closed rice market in the Uruguay round of GATT talks was important. On March 6, 1991 the US Rice Council was threatened with arrest over a rice display at a Japanese trade show and forced to remove it that resulted in a letter of protest to the Japanese Agriculture Minister Motoji Kondo on March 21, 1991. On April 5, 1991 following a two hour meeting between US President George Bush and Prime Minister Kaifu agreements were made to seek a "successful conclusion" to the rice issue. In Apr. 1991 the former USSR Pres. Mikhail Gorbachev became the first Soviet head of state to visit Japan. In June 1991 the country was

rocked by another stock scandal involving secret compensation payments worth US \$936 million over two years by the "Big Four", Nomura, Daiwa, Yamaichi and Niko investment firms for stock losses. On July 10, 1991 the government ordered the largest brokers to suspend business with corporate clients for four days. In Aug. 1991 Finance Minister Ryutaro Hahimoto's senior secretary was implicated in an illegal loan transaction that put in doubt his most likely to status of acceding to the LDP Presidency. On Oct. 27, 1991 Kiichi Miyazawa was elected head of the LDP and succeeded Toshiki Kaifu as Prime Minister while in the same month finance minister Ryutaro Hahimoto resigned over a securities financial scandal involving the Tokyo Stock Exchange. On Jan. 8, 1992 US President Bush met with Prime Minister Miyazawa in Tokyo with issues focused strongly on trade issues and resulting in the signing of a two-part economic "global partnership" that called on Japan to make sacrifices to assist the US economy. On Jan. 9, 1992 Yasushi Akashi, the highest ranking UN official, was appointed to head the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). On Jan. 24, 1992 Prime Minister Miyazawa urged the nation to make a greater commitment to the international community that resulted in June 1992, after four days and nights of intense debate, of the passing of the LDP's legislation that allows the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to participate in UN peace-keeping missions. On June 15, 1992 and in response to the passing of the bill 141 opposition members tendered their collective resignation, although it wasn't accepted by the government. On July 27, 1992 the LDP regained lost ground by winning 69 of the 127 contested upper house seats with the campaign based in principal of the single issue of Japanese involvement in overseas peace-keeping missions. On Aug. 27, 1992 the LDP's Vice President and main power broker Shin Kanemaru resigned following his admission that he had received US \$4 million from the arrested President of the Tokyo Sagawa Kyubin, a major trucking company. On Sept. 6, 1992 the Cabinet officially approved a plan to send some 1,800 SDF and civilian personnel to Cambodia. On Dec. 11, 1992 Prime Minister Miyazawa reshuffled his cabinet following the split of the Noboru Takeshita faction. Also during 1992 some 100 politicians were named as recipients by a leading newspaper of "donations" from the Sagawa trucking company while the continuation of territorial dispute with Russia continued over the four southern Kuril islands north of Hokkaido. Russia had proposed in accordance with a 1956 declaration to return two of the four islands it had annexed at the end of WWII, although Japan rejected this proposal and with the backing of the G7 called on Russia to settle the problem on the basis of "law and justice". On Feb. 11, 1993 during meetings in Washington, Pres. Clinton urged Foreign Minister Watanabe to cut the US \$46 billion trade surplus with them. On April 16, 1993 Pres. Clinton following a meeting with Prime Minister Miyazawa in Washington reported that he wanted "specific results" in the trade arena. Prime Minister Miyazawa responded that good relations couldn't exist under the threat of "unilateralism" or with "managed trade". On April 27, 1993 the Cabinet approved a second contingent of SDF on a UN peacekeeping mission in Mozambique. On June 9, 1993 Crown Prince Naruhito married Masako Owada, a former Foreign Ministry employee. On June 18, 1993 members of Parliament passed a motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister resulting in snap elections being announced. On July 10, 1993 following the G7 talks held in Tokyo, Japan and the US agreed on a "framework" for improved trade relations. On July 22, 1993 Miyazawa resigned as leader of the LDP and was succeeded by Yohei Kono. On July 29, 1993 seven anti-LDP parties formed a coalition and chose Mirihiro Hosokawa of the Japan New Party (JNP) as their candidate for Prime Minister.

On Aug. 6, 1993 Hosokawa was elected Prime Minister and Takako Doi was elected as the country's first female speaker of the Diet (Parliament). On Aug. 23, 1993 Prime Minister Hosokawa announced his intention to overhaul the economy to revitalize domestic demand and to cut Japan's massive current account surplus. In the same address he announced electoral reforms that included a ban on corporate donations and expressed "remorse and apologies" for the Pacific conflict. On Dec. 14, 1993 Prime Minister Hosokawa following a decision to allow the importation of a modest amount of rice announced that he had made the "regrettable" choice despite the obvious opposition, although he felt it was necessary to foster international relations and free trade. In 1993 meetings were held between Prime Minister Miyazawa and Russian Pres. Boris Yeltsin, although no progress was made over their territorial dispute and the possibility of further financial aid for Russia. Also during the year the Japanese government officially apologized to Philippine Pres. Ramos over the forced prostitution of Filipino women during WWII and the Japanese Cabinet officially admitted that the military had been in control of the "comfort women" that include Korean, Australian and other Asian women.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Yen (Y) .

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$4,693,200,000,000 (1994). Public Debt; USD \$2,166,400,000,000 (1994). Imports; Y 28,100,000,000,000 (1994). Exports; Y 40,500,000,000,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$3,557,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; Y 14,738,000,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 66,430,000 or 53.2% of total population (1994). Unemployed; 2.9% (1994).

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are the USA, the UK, other EU countries as well as East European, South East Asian and Middle Eastern countries.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Coal, Edible Seaweeds, Fish, Fruit, Potatoes, Poultry, Rice, Shellfish, Silk, Sulfur, Sweet Potatoes, Tea, Timber, Vegetables.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Cement, Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Fertilizers, Fishing, Food Processing, Forestry, Iron and Steel, Motor Cycles, Motor Vehicles, Non Ferrous Metals, Oil Refining, Optical Goods, Petrochemicals, Ships, Textiles, Watches.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Chemicals, Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Instruments, Iron and Steel, Machinery, Metal Goods, Motor Vehicles, Ships, Textiles.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; route length 27,454 km (17,059 mi) (1988), passenger-km 361,795,000,000 (224,809,000,000 passenger-mi) (1988), cargo ton-km 23,478,000,000 (16,080,000,000 short ton-mi) (1988). Roads; length 1,110,000 km (689,722 mi) (1990).

Vehicles; cars 36,621,085 (1990), trucks and buses 22,476,409 (1990). Merchant Marine; vessels 10,000 (1990), deadweight tonnage 40,828,199 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 95,383,000,000 (59,268,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 13,232,579,000 (9,062,993,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 121 with a total circulation of 71,924,000 (1994). Radio; receivers 110,000,000 (1994). Television; receivers 100,000,000 (1994). Telephones; units 58,459,000 (1993).

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**MILITARY:** 239,500 (1995) total active duty personnel with 63.1% army, 18.3% navy and 18.6% air force while military expenditure accounts for 1.0% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).