Geography of Japan
Map of Japan
The World
Japan & surrounding countries
Emergence of Japanese Land

- During the glacier age (about 1,000,000 – 10,000 BC), Japan was connected to the Asian continent. About 10,000 years ago Japanese islands were separated from the continent as a result of earth movements.

- Thus, the Japanese islands are connected to the Asian mainland by the relatively shallow-lying continental shelf.
• The 4 main islands, Okinawa and thousands of small islands. 6,852 islands (2006 survey) inhabited islands: 400, others un-inhabited
Japan is an island country

- Close enough to the Asian Continent.
- 31 miles (ca. 50km) from Tsushima, Japan to Busan, Korea
- 26 miles from the tip of Hokkaido to Sakhalin
- Several miles to Kuril Islands from Nosappu cape (2.5 miles)
Latitude - from Montreal in the north to Florida in the south.
Japan latitude comparison to Brunswick, ME

US latitude comparison to Tokyo, Japan
Tokyo is about the same latitude as Raleigh, North Carolina
Total Land Area

- 378,000 km$^2$ – 1/25$^{th}$ the size of the U.S.
- Slightly smaller than the State of California
• 3,800 km (2375 miles) from the northern tip to the southern island
• Country of many volcanoes
• 80% of Japan’s surface is mountainous
• Less than 15% is arable
• Situated along the circum-Pacific volcanic belt – numerous earthquakes
Pacific Volcanic Belt

Active Volcanoes, Plate Tectonics, and the "Ring of Fire"

- Eurasian Plate
- North American Plate
- Arabian Plate
- African Plate
- Indo-Australian Plate
- Pacific Plate
- Antarctic Plate
- Cocos Plate
- Nazca Plate
- South American Plate
- Mid-Atlantic Ridge
- East Pacific Rise
- Aleutian Trench
- Hawaiian "Hot Spot"
- San Andreas Fault

Other facts

• The nation’s capital: Tokyo, 36° North latitude
• Population:
  • Tokyo: 13,754,000 (Jan. 2018)
  • Japan: 126,420,000 (Apr. 2018) (less than half of the US)
• The highest mountain: Mt. Fuji: 3776 meters (12388 feet)

• The longest river: Shinano River: 367 kilometers (230 miles)
Rivers are short and steep, thus flow fast.
Land Disputes

- Kuril Islands including, the islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan, and the Habomai are in dispute between Russia and Japan. These islands were originally under Japanese administration and traditionally inhabited by the Ainu people, the Japanese aborigines.
- From the end of World War II, they have been under Russian control.
- Japan considers them to be Japanese territories.
- The closest island of these islands to Hokkaido is less than 3 miles.

![Map of Kuril Islands](image)
Another dispute

- Takeshima, north west of Shimane prefecture, is in dispute between South Korea & Japan
Senkaku Islands

Dispute between Taiwan, China and Japan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>春</td>
<td>節分  ひな祭り  こどもの日  受験シーズン  恵方巻  バレンタインデー</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>夏</td>
<td>七夕  土用のうなぎ  お盆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>秋</td>
<td>月見  彼岸  七五三  ハロウィン  ヴォジョレーヌーポー</td>
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<tr>
<td>冬</td>
<td>お正月  七草粥  年越しそば  クリスマス</td>
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</tbody>
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Spring
March, April, May
Summer
June, July, August
Autumn

September, October, November
Typhoons from the end of summer
  to September & October
Winter

December, January, February

Heavy snow in the Hokuriku district (Niigata, Fukui, Toyama, Ishikawa)

Tohoku

Hokkaido
Rainy Season

Except for Hokkaido
Climate – By Region

- Hokkaido – sub arctic (22-68F)
- Tokyo – temperate (40-80F)
- Okinawa – subtropical (60-80F)
Japanese sense of seasons

- Climate-four distinct seasons
- Agricultural background
- Seasonal greetings
- Annual events
  - cherry blossom viewing, tanabata, autumn festivals, etc.
- Haiku-season words (kigo)
Sakura (cherry blossom) front
Hanami (cherry blossoms viewing)
Hanami
Tanabata (July 7th)
tanabata
Moon viewing (o-tsukimi)

A full moon night around the middle of September in the new calendar.
Mochitsuki (Rice cake making)
Kadomatsu: New Year’s decorations placed in front of the house gate
Kagami mochi