



JAPAN



Size: A collection of 6,852 islands, in total slightly smaller than California. The four largest islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku.

Population: Tenth most populous nation with over 127 million residents

Languages: Japanese

Religion: Shintoism, Buddhism, and Christianity

Currency: Yen

Two-thirds of the population lives in urban areas.

Literacy rates in Japan are 99%.

Almost 70 percent of population works in services, with less than 4 percent working in agriculture.

About 16% of Japanese live below the poverty level.

Climate: Weather varies widely with the regions. Japan has four distinct seasons, and the summer is very hot and humid. It snows in the winter, particularly in western Japan, along the Sea of Japan. The eastern side, adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, is dry.

Clothing & Fashion: Most Japanese wear western clothing for everyday life. The kimono, a traditional garment for men and women, is still worn for special occasions.

Food: A typical Japanese meal includes rice, miso soup, pickled vegetables, and fish or meat. As an island nation, fish and seafood are very important. The cuisine is not hot and spicy, with the exception of wasabi, the Japanese horseradish that accompanies sushi. Although the Japanese consume a great deal of tofu, vegetarians are rare. Also, while Japanese do cook with a wok, their cuisine often uses less oil than Chinese.