

JAPAN

Japan is a nation in East Asia, made up of approximately 6,852 islands! The name Japan means 'Sun-Origin', which is why you might hear the country referred to as the 'Land of the Rising Sun'. The four largest islands are Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu and Shikoku, making up 97% of Japan's land area. It is the world's tenth-largest population, with over 127 million people. Honshu's Greater Tokyo Area (which includes the capital city of Tokyo), is the largest metropolitan area in the world with over 30 million residents!



Inspired by the Eiffel Tower in France, Tokyo Tower serves as a communications tower and is the second tallest man-made structure in Japan. It is often lit up in a variety of colours to commemorate special events.

EXCITING HISTORY

Few nations on Earth have had a more colourful history than Japan. Settled around 35,000 years ago by the Palaeolithic people from the Asian mainland, hunter-gatherers fashioned fur clothing, wooden houses, and elaborate clay vessels. Around the year 600, the Chinese writing system and Buddhism were introduced to Japan, and society began to divide into clans (or groups), ruled from the Yamato Province.

Adopting many Chinese customs and innovations over the years, Japan has seen the rise and fall of emperors, rule by samurai warriors, isolation from the outside world, expansion over most of Asia, defeat and rebound.



NINJAS

It is difficult to pin down the date that ninjas (more properly called Shinobi) were first seen... after all, people around the world have always used spies and assassins. Japanese folklore states that ninjas descended from a demon that was half man and half crow! It is said that the earliest use of ninjutsu (the ninja's art of stealth) was by Otomono Sahito, a spy hired by Prince Shotoku around 600 AD.



INTERESTING FACTS

LANGUAGE

Unlike many languages, the Japanese language is made up of many symbols instead of letters.

こんにちは
Konnichiwa Hello

お元気ですか
O-Genki desu ka How are you?

はい、元気です。
Hai, Genki desu I'm fine, Thank you!

もしもし
Moshi Moshi Hello (this is used to answer the phone or get someone's attention).

Animated Japanese films and television shows (Anime) account for 60% of the world's animation-based entertainment. Animation is so successful in Japan that there are almost 130 voice-acting schools in the country.

21% of the Japanese population is elderly, the highest proportion in the world.

Some men in Japan shave their heads as a form of apology.

Over 70% of Japan consists of mountains. The country also has over 200 volcanoes.

In Japan, a muskmelon (similar to a cantaloupe) can sell for over 10,000 yen (\$125).



Raised floors help indicate when to take off slippers or shoes. At the entrance to a home in Japan, the floor will usually be raised about 15 cm indicating you should take off your shoes and put on slippers. If the house has a tatami mat room, its floor may be raised 2.5-5 cm, indicating you should take off your slippers!