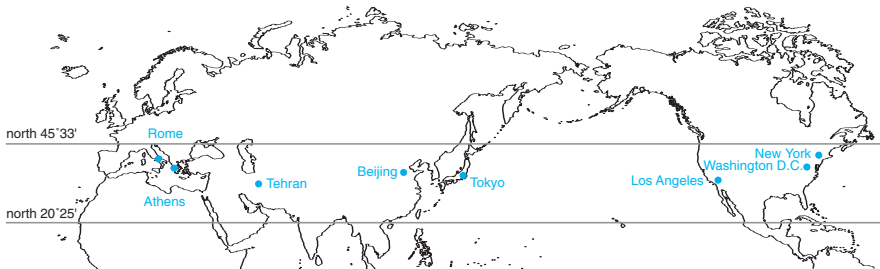


Location

Japan is a long, narrow chain of islands stretching 3,300 kilometers north to south. Its northernmost point (in the Russian-occupied Northern Territories) is located at 45°33' north latitude, and its southernmost point is at 20°25' north latitude. The four islands that constitute the main part of Japan lie almost at the latitudinal center of the Northern Hemisphere. Japan's capital, Tokyo, lies at 35°41' north latitude and 139°46' east longitude, almost the same latitude as Tehran, Athens, and Los Angeles.

Cities with Similar Latitudes



Deviation from Japan Standard Time

(hours)

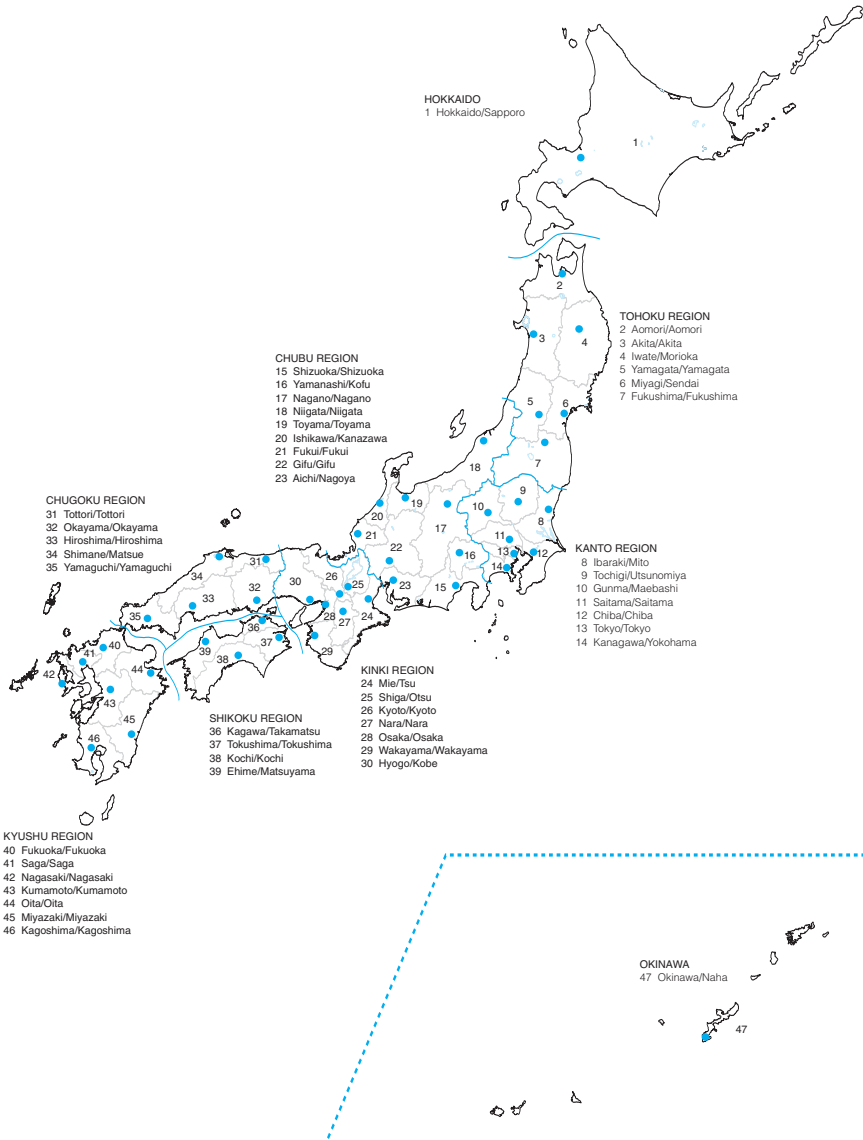
Wellington	+ 3.0	Tehran	- 5.5	Santiago	- 13.0
Sydney	+ 1.0	Moscow	- 6.0	New York	- 14.0
Seoul	0.0	Nairobi	- 6.0	Chicago	- 15.0
Beijing	- 1.0	Cairo	- 7.0	Mexico City	- 15.0
Singapore	- 1.0	Berlin	- 8.0	Denver	- 16.0
Bangkok	- 2.0	Paris	- 8.0	Los Angeles	- 17.0
New Delhi	- 3.5	London	- 9.0	Anchorage	- 18.0
Kabul	- 4.5	Buenos Aires	- 12.0	Honolulu	- 19.0

Source: National Astronomical Observatory, *Rika nenpyo* (Chronological Scientific Tables).

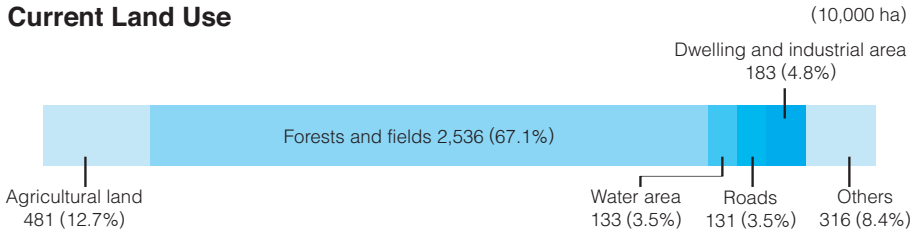
Size and Regional Divisions

Japan comprises four major islands—Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu—and 6,848 adjacent smaller islands. Their combined area as of 2006 is 377,921 square kilometers—slightly more than that of Germany (357,022 square kilometers) or Malaysia (329,847) and slightly less than that of Morocco (446,550) or Sweden (449,964). Administratively, the country is divided into 47 prefectures.

Names of Prefectures and Prefectural Capitals

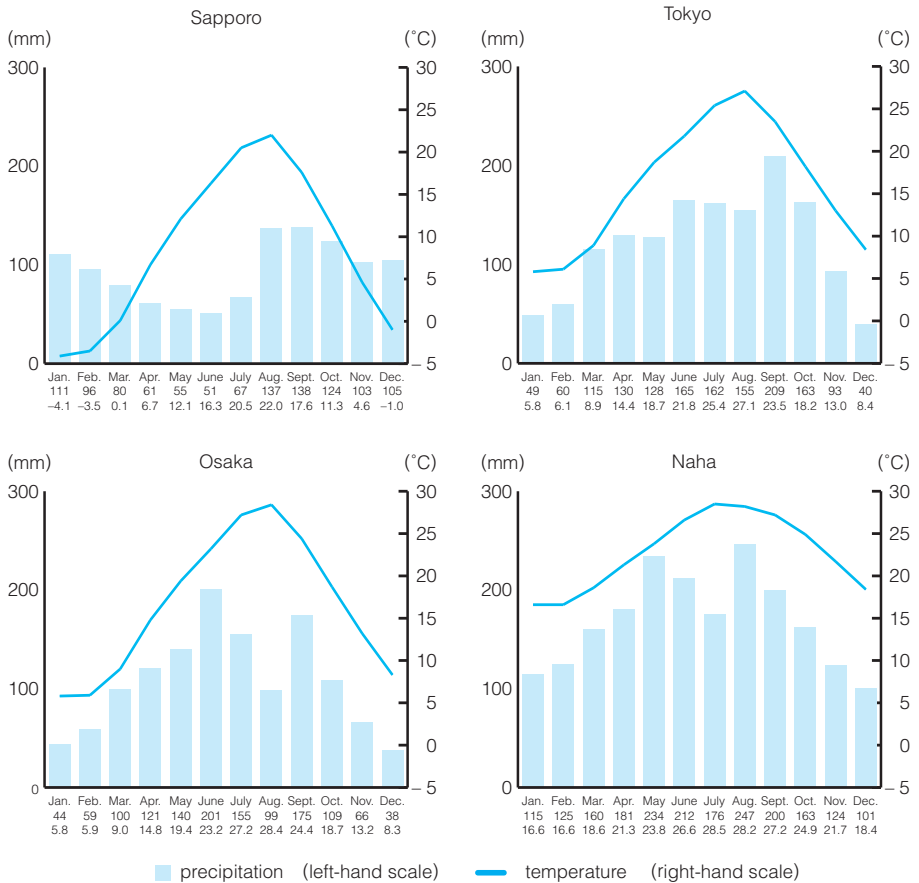


Current Land Use



Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, *Tochi hakusho* (White Paper on Land), 2006.
 Note: Figures are for 2004.

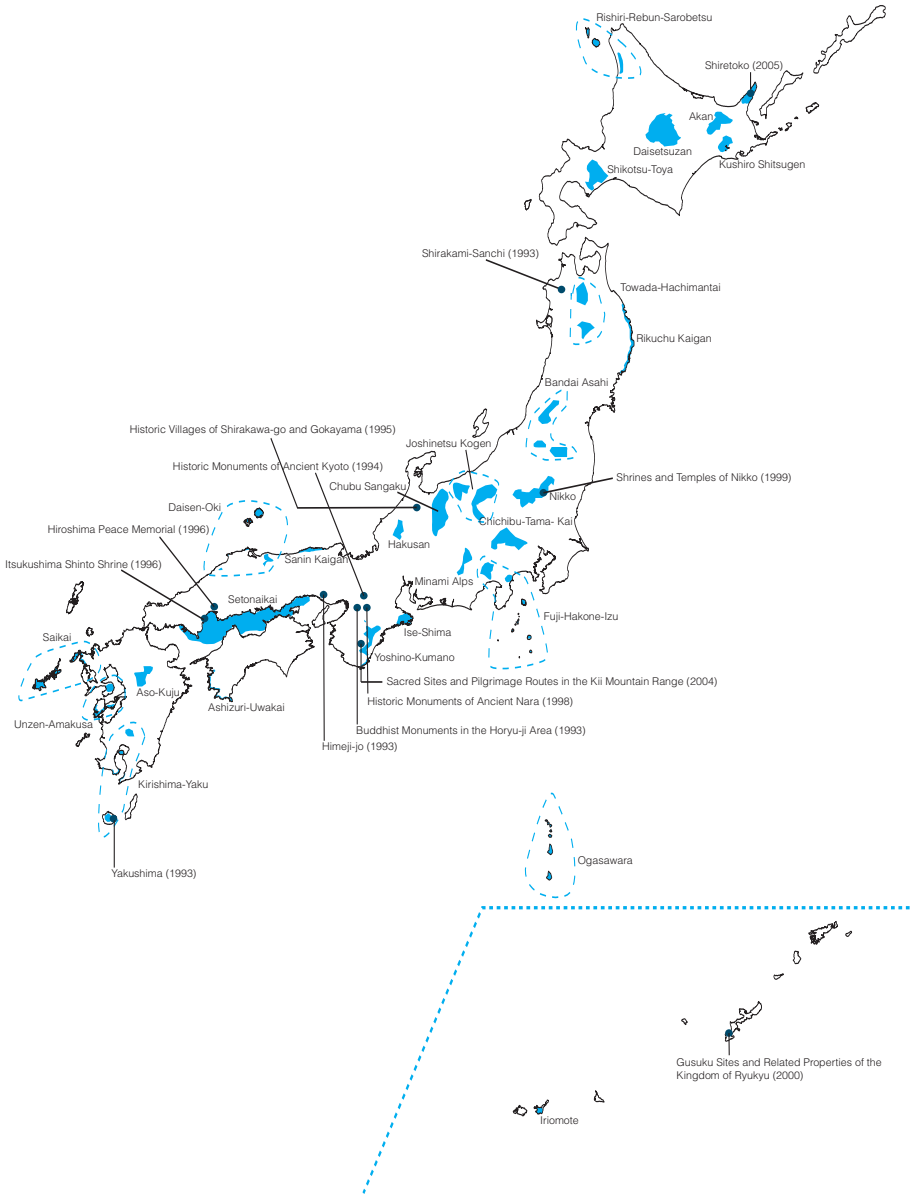
Temperature and Precipitation



Source: Japan Meteorological Agency.
 Note: Updates every 10 years. Figures are for 1970–2000.

National Parks and World Heritage Sites in Japan

- National Park
- World Heritage Site / Year of Registration



Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Natural Disasters

Several tectonic plates converge beneath the Japanese archipelago, giving rise to frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The country also sees a fair number of meteorological disasters, such as typhoons and storms. Some major natural disasters in recent years include the July 1990 eruption of Mt. Unzen in Kyushu that resulted in 43 dead or missing, the July 1993 earthquake off the southwestern coast of Hokkaido and the resultant tsunami that left 230 dead or missing, and the January 1995 Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake that killed more than 6,400 people and destroyed urban infrastructure, including homes, office buildings, roads, railroad tracks, and port facilities, in and around Kobe. Mt. Usu in southwestern Hokkaido erupted in March 2000, for the first time since 1977. Mt. Oyama on Miyake Island, one of the Izu Islands, also resumed volcanic activity in July 2000, and the island's residents were forced to take refuge on the mainland in Tokyo.

The year 2004 will be remembered for a series of natural disasters. An all-time high of 10 typhoons made landfall in Japan, and typhoon No. 23, which hit Japan in October, left 94 persons dead or missing. Heavy rainfall and flooding in July in Niigata, Fukushima, and Fukui Prefectures killed 20 people and damaged over 28,000 dwellings. In October a powerful earthquake hit central Niigata Prefecture, and 67 people were killed, over 4,800 injured, and more than 100,000 residents evacuated. It also caused the derailment of a Shinkansen bullet train for the first time in the line's 40-year history. In March 2005 a big earthquake hit Fukuoka Prefecture, killing one person and injuring over 1,000 people, and another big earthquake hit Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture in March 2007, killing one person and injuring more than 300 people.

Destruction Caused by Natural Disasters

	Human casualties		Housing (no. of units)			Farmland ^a (ha)
	Dead or missing	Injured	Totally destroyed	Partially destroyed	Flooded	
1985	105	487	200	542	4,153	38,064
1990	97	425	447	931	26,972	48,908
1995	6,449	43,949	93,312	108,654	3,147	7,349
2000	15	351	537	3,343	24,357	7,478
2004	263	7,773	4,112	28,046	42,897	20,066
2005	45	1,543	1,334	4,001	6,570	13,697
Breakdown for 2005						
Earthquakes, volcanoes	1	1,265	138	318	0	21
Storm surges	0	0	0	0	2	0
Gales	0	38	0	5	0	0
Rainstorms	13	27	9	5	2,057	1,187
Typhoons	31	213	1,187	3,673	4,511	12,489

Source: National Police Agency.

a. Swept away, buried, or water-covered.

Major Earthquake Disasters Since the Great Kanto Earthquake

Date	Name of earthquake	Magnitude	Destroyed structures	Fatalities
09/01/1923	Great Kanto Earthquake	7.9	576,262	142,807
01/15/1924	Tanzawa Sanroku Eq.	7.3	1,298	19
03/07/1927	Kita Tango Eq.	7.3	16,295	2,925
11/26/1930	Kita Izu Eq.	7.3	2,240	272
03/03/1933	Off Sanriku Eq.	8.1	7,479	3,008
09/10/1943	Tottori Eq.	7.2	7,736	1,083
12/07/1944	Higashi Nankai Eq.	7.9	29,189	998
12/21/1946	Nankai Eq.	8.0	15,640	1,443
06/28/1948	Fukui Eq.	7.1	40,035	3,769
03/04/1952	Off Tokachi Eq.	8.2	906	33
05/23/1960	Tsunami caused by Chile Eq.	8.5	2,830	139
06/16/1964	Niigata Eq.	7.5	2,250	26
05/16/1968	Off Tokachi Eq.	7.9	691	52
01/14/1978	Izu Oshima Near Sea Eq.	7.0	94	25
06/12/1978	Off Miyagi Pref. Eq.	7.4	1,383	28
03/21/1982	Off Urakawa Eq.	7.1	13	0
05/26/1983	Japan Sea Eq.	7.7	1,584	104
01/15/1993	Off Kushiro Eq.	7.5	53	2
07/12/1993	Off Southwest of Hokkaido Eq.	7.8	601	230
10/04/1994	Off East Hokkaido Eq.	8.2	61	0
12/28/1994	Far Off Sanriku Eq.	7.6	72	3
01/17/1995	Great Hanshin Awaji Eq. ^a	7.3	111,942	6,437
10/06/2000	Western Tottori Pref. Eq.	7.3	435	0
05/26/2003	Off Miyagi Eq.	7.1	2	0
09/26/2003	Off Tokachi Eq.	8.0	116	2
10/23/2004	Niigata Chuetsu Eq. ^b	6.8	3,175	67
03/20/2005	Off Western Fukuoka Eq. ^c	7.0	133	1
08/16/2005	Off Miyagi Eq.	7.2	1	0
03/25/2007	Noto Peninsula Eq. ^d	6.9	561	1

Source: Fire Defense Agency.

Note: Missing persons are included in fatalities.

The magnitude of earthquakes in 1923–24 is cited from the *Chronological Table of Science* (edited by the Tokyo Astronomical Observatory); that of earthquakes in 1927–60 has been recalculated by the Japan Meteorological Agency.

a. As of May 19, 2006.

b. As of September 22, 2006.

c. As of May 12, 2005.

d. As of April 13, 2007.