

JAPAN

Region: East Asia (Global North)

Population (2022): 125 million (11th)

Life Expectancy at Birth (Women): 86.94 years

Governance System: Constitutional Monarchy with a parliamentary system

Capital: Tokyo

Land Area (km²): 364,500 (60th)

Major Language: Japanese

Select Global Rankings

GDP (2022): 3rd (4,231,141 US\$ Millions)

Human Development Index: 19th (Very High)

Fragile States Index - Inverted: 19th (Cat. 3)

Good Country Index: 34th

Human Freedom Index: 15th

World Happiness Ranking: 47th

Select Global Rankings (Gender-Focus)

Gross National Income Per Capita (Women): 29th

Gender Social Norms Index: 16th

Women's Power Index: 150th

Social Institutions and Gender Index (World Cup rank): 28th

Gender Inequality Index: 22nd

Global Gender Gap Index: 125th

Women Peace & Security Index: 35th

Elite Sport System Rankings

2020 Summer Olympic Women's Medals (% of Total): 31.5 (54%)

2022 Winter Olympic Women's Medals (% of Total): 8.5 (47%)

Global Cup Ranking (Women): 6th

Football/World Cup Profile

FIFA Region: AFC

FIFA Ranking: 11th

World Cup Appearance: 9th

Best World Cup Performance(s): 2nd (finalists in 2011 and 2015)

Qualification: Asian Cup semi-finalist

World Cup Group: C

Last World Cup Appearance: 2019

NATION in International Affairs (by Jacob Benjamin)

Japan is a high-functioning democracy. After generations of Japanese monarchs that had divine authority; today, the Japanese monarch is ceremonial. The Diet is Japan's national legislature and main governing body. The Diet is bicameral with both a lower and an upper house. The current governing party is the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP); the LDP is typically attributed to conservatism and neoliberal economic policy.

The main religions in Japan are Shintō and Buddhism. The most popular sport in Japan is baseball, with Sumo wrestling in second, and soccer (football) in third.

Japan has the 11th largest population, and the third highest GDP. The Japan Exchange Group is the [fourth largest stock exchange](#) in the world in terms of market capitalization. The story of Japan's economic success starts with the reforms and advancements made in Meiji Restoration (1866); the Meiji Restoration catalyzed Japan's turn with the Industrial Revolution and propelled its national

power to a status akin to those in the Concert of Europe. The Empire of Japan began after the Meiji Restoration and until defeat in World War II. After a brutal record of conquest in World War II, post-War, Japan reconstructed remarkably with corporations like Sony, Toyota, and Canon leading the way. U.S. financial and human resources were essential to this post-War reconstruction.

While Japan remains a very prosperous country, it currently faces [a demographic challenge](#) regarding its ageing population and shrinking workforce. [28% of the Japanese population is 65 and above](#), which is the highest in the world.

Historically and contemporarily, Japan's main geopolitical competitor is China. Both ancient civilizations, Japan and China have gone through ebbs and flows in their relationship with different political entities at the helm. Of note in the modern era, The First Sino-Japanese War took place between 1894-1895 over the Korean Peninsula (this occurred during the Qing Dynasty and the Meiji Emperor, respectively). Fierce adversaries in World War II, Japan and China began fighting in 1937 which is two years before war broke out on the European Continent. Today, Japan (a parliamentary democracy) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) (an authoritarian one-party state) remain competitors. China and Japan are territorial disputants over the [Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea](#), which can fuel nationalist sentiments that strongly exist in both countries.

Japan's relations with the Republic of Korea also deserve highlighting. After an atrocious colonial and imperial record in Korea, such as the institutional employment of ["comfort women"](#), Japan has still yet to truly make amends (Imperial Japanese war crimes committed in China are also a factor in the Japan-China relationship). Apart from these embedded historical grievances, the Republic of Korea and Japan both have aligning interests: they both believe in democratic values, are suspicious of the PRC, and have like-minded visions for the liberal rules-based international order. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and newly elected South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol have maintained cool relations with one another, although there are some signs of hope for a détente.

The principal security partner of Japan is the United States. They are formal allies through the 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. Through the uncertainty of the Cold War, the Japanese home islands were defended by U.S. security guarantees, as the Japanese constitution ruled out robust military buildups. Over roughly the past decade, Japan has begun a process of reestablishing stronger military capabilities—a controversial political issue within Japan.

Finally, in the weeks ahead, one must remember that Japan is mourning longtime Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was tragically assassinated on 8 July, 2022.

Gender Equity (by Alanna Harman)

In the World Economic Forum's 2022 Gender Gap Index, Japan ranked 125th of 146 countries, "the country's worst recorded result and the lowest in the East Asia and Pacific [region](#)". This is a drop

from the previous year in which Japan was ranked at 116, contributing to Japan's poor ranking is "women's participation in politics and the economy continues to lag severely. The country also remained in last place among the Group of Seven industrialized [countries](#)". While Japan lags in politics and economic contribution it has almost achieved full parity in education and health the same report shows. "The nation is ranked 138th in political empowerment, below Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which ranked 131st and 137th, [respectively](#)". In response to the latest report Momoko Nojo, from No Youth No Japan noted that gender roles are still strongly engrained, with the lack of diversity in government this has led to unfocused efforts to address the country's low birthrate, as women are forced to choose between careers or [family](#). "In Japanese families with a child or children younger than 6, women spend about seven and half hours a day on chores and child care, while men spend less than an hour and a half on the same type of [work](#)".

For fans of Japan's women's national football team they should be relieved that a broadcast deal was agreed to, one week before the Women's World Cup begins, avoiding a TV [blackout](#). Japan who is a previous World Cup winner (2011) risked not having their games broadcast back home as negotiations between FIFA and Japan's national broadcaster (NHK) reached a stalemate. This is the first time that the broadcast right for the Women's World Cup are being sold independently from the Men's World [Cup](#). "Japan was the last major holdout after FIFA last month announced that it had struck a deal with the European Broadcasting Union to televise games, avoiding a controversial blackout in the "Big Five" European [nations](#).