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exploration  
guide

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# Explore JAPAN



Explore The World  
In Your Kitchen

# Explore Japan

## Himeji Castle

UNESCO World Heritage Site; it is one of the few surviving original castles in Japan located in the city of Himeji.



## JIGOKUDANI MONKEY PARK



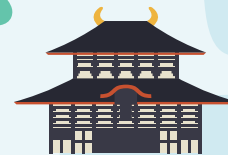
## Mount Fuji

This majestic mountain, located about 100 kilometers southwest of Tokyo, is the highest mountain in Japan. It is one of the most iconic natural landmarks of Japan.



## Japanese temple

There are more than 50,000 Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines in Japan.



## Fun facts

- Japan has more than 6,800 islands
- Japan is home to more than 110 active volcanoes

Where would you like to visit in Japan and why?

## KINKAKU-JI TEMPLE



## KUMAMOTO CASTLE



KYUSHU

SHIKOKU

KINKI

HONSHU

HOKKAIDO

World Map



official name

日本" (Nihon or Nippon)



capital

Tokyo

national language

Japanese



population

126.3 million

currency

Japanese Yen  
(JPY)



## Popular Ingredients



soy sauce



short grain  
rice



panko



udon noodles



soba noodles



wasabi



white rectangle  
with a big red  
circle in the  
middle, which  
signifies the sun.  
The official  
name of the  
Japanese flag is  
"Nisshoki" which  
means  
"sun-mark flag"



## Location

- Japan is an archipelago (group of islands) in the eastern part of Asia.
- It sits along the "Pacific Ring of Fire", a volcanically active region



## Animals & Their Habitats



Iriomote  
wild cat



Tanuki  
(raccoon dogs)





Ussuri  
brown bear



Japanese  
serow

## Mathematics

Complete the math problems below. Decide if you want to do addition +, subtraction -, or multiplication x. Once you decide, insert the sign into the red box. Then place your answer on the green line.

1.    = \_\_\_\_\_

2.    = \_\_\_\_\_

3.    = \_\_\_\_\_

## Word Search

A U Y D P J X F K S A N S O B  
E L F F I U P T Y R A T A N E  
T W W A O R W R A P Q G S O N  
B L O S S O M N A J R I H M T  
F A U A I O O J T E F K I I O  
F U R E R Y M E E K M A M K Q  
B L H I A U M N J H C Y I I B  
E W W S K P K U M X X N I J Y  
D Y R O U A X A X X I A M O I  
E C I R B R T D S K F P S B U  
E U A Q E S A O L Y P P O T T  
I Y S U S H I M Y R R E H C M  
K W C C Q H V C E L T T V B O  
O E V D M S P C A N Z M Q C H  
J S W C U G B L I E C Z Y Y Z

Find and circle the words below in the Word Search:

ARIKATO  
BENTO  
BLOSSOM  
BOWL  
CHERRY  
GREEN  
JAPAN  
KIMONO  
OBI  
RAMEN  
RICE  
SAKURA  
SASHIMI  
SAYONARA  
SUSHI  
TEA  
TEMPURA  
TEPPANYAKI

## Language Arts

Japan is known \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ the world for its cherry blossom festivals, also known as hanami which means "viewing flowers". the celebration of enjoy\_c\_ the blooming cherry blossoms has been celebrated for thousands of years. There are three mistakes in the paragraph above. Answer the following questions to correctly edit the paragraph.

1. What word is missing where you see the lower case a?

- A. forever B. around C. near

2. What is wrong with the word the that is underlined?

- A. It does not belong in the sentence.  
B. The entire word needs to be in upper case letters.  
C. The "t" should be changed to a capital "T".

3. What needs to be added to the word "enjoy" to correct the sentence?

- A. Add -ed to the end of the word.  
B. Add -ing to the end of the word.  
C. Add an -s to the end of the word.

## Word scramble

Using the letters give to you, unscramble the letters to make words related to Japan

○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
NPAJA

○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
ISHUS

○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
NMRAE

Use the Hiragana Chart to try and write some of the words on this page, using the Japanese characters

あ	い	う	え	お
か	き	く	け	こ
が	ぎ	ぐ	げ	ご
さ	し	す	せ	そ
ざ	じ	ず	ぜ	ぞ
た	ち	つ	て	と
だ	ぢ	づ	で	ど
な	に	ぬ	ね	の
は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ
ば	び	ぶ	べ	ぼ
ぱ	ぴ	ぷ	ぺ	ぽ
ま	み	む	め	も
や	ゆ	よ		
ら	り	る	れ	ろ
わ	を	ん		
		n/m		



## Traditional Japanese cuisine - Nine essential seasonings

Japanese's *washoku* is made up of 4 elements – 1) cooked rice, 2) soup, 3) pickled seasonal vegetables and 4) three main/side dishes. The main/side dishes are always cooked with seasonal vegetables in one or more of the following essential seasonings of the traditional Japanese cuisine:



### Japanese soy sauce (*shoyu*)

The main ingredients are soybeans, wheat, salt, and water. The liquid goes through a fermentation and aging process before bottling. Unlike its Chinese counterpart, Japanese soy sauce has a slightly sweeter taste.



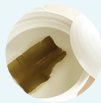
### Miso

Miso is a paste made from soybeans fermented with a large percentage of rice. The different fermentation time determines the color and taste. White miso's fermentation time is shorter than darker varieties, making it mild and slightly sweet.



### Mirin

Mirin is a type of rice wine similar to sake, but with a low alcohol content and a high sugar content. The sugar content is formed naturally from the fermentation process and so it is not processed sugar.



### Dashi

Dashi is a simple fish broth made from *kombu* (edible kelp) and *katsuobushi* (shavings of preserved skipjack tuna) or *niboshi* (dried sardines).



### Japanese vinegar (*su*)

There are white, red, and black varieties of Japanese vinegar. Lighter white rice vinegar is often used for the preparation of sushi rice and salad dressing.



### Sake

Sake is a Japanese alcoholic beverage made from fermented rice and it is often used in Japanese cooking. Unlike wine in which the alcohol is produced by fermenting sugar from the grapes, sake is produced by a brewing process more like that of beer.



### Wasabi

Wasabi, also known as Japanese horseradish, is used as a condiment and has an extremely pungent and spicy aftertaste. Its spiciness is akin to that of a hot mustard.



### Sea salt

For centuries in Japan, salt production has been an important activity along the coastal communities. It symbolizes holiness and it is used to keep away bad omens.



### Sugar "*wasanbonto*"

Japanese *wasanbonto* sugar is made from a domestic species of sugar cane called *chikuto*, and it is only grown in parts of the Tokushima and Kagawa regions. It is produced using traditional techniques that have passed down since the mid-eighteenth century.

# Explore Japan



Welcome to Explore Japan with eat2explore! Here is a how to on how to navigate pages 10-14. In this exploration guide you'll find ways to incorporate history, literature, geography, cultural studies, art, music, and more as we take you on a multi-subject tour of the Japan, all while enjoying delicious foods from Japan.

Find your entire exploration guide at [eat2explore.info/guides/Japan.pdf](https://eat2explore.info/guides/Japan.pdf)

## How to Use This Exploration Guide

1

This is your exploration guide! You can **pick a subject each day** for a week's worth of exploring, or change it up to make it work for your family and your schedule.

2

**Read the entire exploration guide** before you begin. Some subjects overlap to provide a deeper understanding of the country as a whole. You can bring together reading, writing, listening and hands-on activities to make this an adventure to remember!

3

**Check the QR codes** for awesome online resources and additional activities! There, you will also find book links so you can explore more! Many of these books will be available at your local library, and some are on Amazon Kindle for free.

4

Make sure to follow our blog post at [eat2explore.com/blogs/news](https://eat2explore.com/blogs/news) for more information on how to get the most out of your eat2explore box!



Are you ready to begin your eat2explore adventure?



## Let's get started!



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## Geography & Science



## Language Arts & Literature

### Where is Japan located?

Japan is a group of 4 major islands and several smaller islands located in East Asia. It is considered an archipelago.

### What water bodies surround Japan?

The island of Japan is bordered by the North Pacific Ocean, the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea.

### What kinds of landforms are found in Japan?

Japan is a volcanic archipelago consisting of volcanic mountains, fertile

plains, and coastal regions. The highest mountain in Japan is Mount Fuji, a dormant volcano that last erupted in 1707.

### What are the major bodies of water in Japan?

The Shinano, Tone, and Ishikari are the three longest rivers in Japan. The largest freshwater lake is Lake Biwa, one of the oldest lakes in the world.

### The Ring of Fire

Japan is located in an active tectonic region known as the Ring of Fire. This makes Japan prone to earthquakes. The ring of fire surrounds the Pacific ocean along the line where tectonic plates meet.

There are over 100 volcanoes on the islands of Japan that are considered active, several of which have erupted in the last decade.

Although quiet since 1707, Mount Fuji is one of the most recognizable features of Japan's geography. Currently, 50 of Japan's volcanoes are being closely monitored for potential activity.

Since Japan experiences so many earthquakes, the engineers and building contractors have worked hard to create buildings that can withstand the shaking and rolling of earth movements.

Because of all this geothermal activity, Japan has numerous hot springs. Visitors can have a soak in the hot water, which has been said to have healing properties although some of the springs smell like rotten eggs from all the sulfur in the water!

In the steamy Jigokudani park, you can find a population of Japanese macaques, or snow monkeys. These monkeys like to come down out of their mountain habitat in the winter to sit in the warm springs.



**SIMPLE SCIENCE:  
EARTHQUAKE EXPERIMENT**



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The official language of Japan is Japanese, but there are nearly 50 dialects around the nation.

Japanese uses a beautiful script alphabet composed of three different types of characters. The Kanji script was borrowed from Chinese writing, and two others developed in Japan: the Hiragana and Katakana scripts.

Writing in Japan can be done left-to-right horizontally or right-to-left vertically. Both directions are interchangeable. The Japanese turn their script into beautiful art.

### Literature of Japan

Japan has a rich history of literature including folktales and fables passed down orally for generations. Written down around 700 AD in the Kojiki, these tales have survived through the centuries to educate and delight.

One of the most beloved tales of Japanese folklore is the story of Momotaro, or "the eldest son of the peach."

The story tells of an old couple without children. The woman finds a peach floating in a river when she goes to fish. When she brought the peach home for the old man to eat, they discovered a small boy inside.

The old couple tended the boy as he grew into a fine young man. One day, Momotaro announced he was going on a journey.

His parents bid him farewell, and the remainder of the tale describes his adventures. On the way to defeat a band of ogres, Momotaro befriends several talking animals, including a monkey, a pheasant, and a dog.

This merry band of adventurers arrives at Ogre Island where they proceed to defeat the ogres. Momotaro takes the ogres' treasure and heads home where he and his parents live well and happy until the end of their days.



What is your favorite Japan Folklore story?

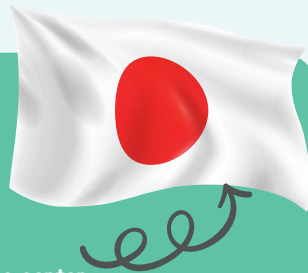
**Explore more!**  
**Learn most about the history of the haiku and write your own descriptive poems!**

Check out our online exploration guide!

## History

The official name for Japan is the State of Japan and its capital is Tokyo. The country is called Nippon by Japanese and also "The Land of the Rising Sun". February 11, National Foundation Day commemorates the day the nation of Japan was founded.

- The National Flag of Japan was adopted on August 5, 1854, but the general form of the flag dates back to around 700 AD.
- The Japanese parliament formally adopted the flag on August 13, 1999.
- It is called Nisshoki, which means sun-mark flag.
- The flag is a white rectangle with a red circle in the center.
- White represents the integrity and honesty of the Japanese people. The red circle symbolizes the sun and also Amaterasu, the sun goddess said to have founded Japan.



### Ancient Japan to Today

Ancient Japan hosted inhabitants as early as 13,000 BC. Once agriculture began, the rice culture arose around 100 BC along with a fishing culture, and the country flourished. Organized political areas arose and grew through the 8th century AD.

During this time, Buddhism was introduced to Japan, as well as Confucianism and Taoism from China. Writing, customs, and philosophy also flowed into Japan from China.



### Technological Inventions of Japan

Here are 6 Japanese inventions that have changed our world. Instant Ramen - 1958 - Created to give longer shelf-life to cooked noodles, dehydrated ramen became a staple around the world for its convenience and ease of preparation.

**Bullet train (shinkansen)** - 1964 - This electric train system allows passengers to travel at over 200 miles per hour.

**Karaoke** - 1969 - A fun machine that plays instrumental music and allows a performer to sing along with the tune with the help of scrolling lyrics.

**Pocket calculator** - 1970 - Using a few microchips and a plastic housing.

**Walkman** - 1979 - Instead of carting around a handheld radio and listening to whatever the stations played, the Walkman allowed music buffs to create playlists and listen to the songs they wanted, wherever they wanted.

**Camcorder** - 1983 - Before smartphones, videos were made with portable cameras that rested on the shoulder. As technology improved, the size of the cameras shrunk.

Japan is known for other technological inventions and improvements that have changed our world.



EXPLORE MORE! HOW DID HAVING  
DUTCH TRADERS IN JAPAN  
INFLUENCE JAPANESE GROWTH?

[eat2explore.info/guides/Japan](http://eat2explore.info/guides/Japan)

## Social Studies / Cultural Studies

A lot of the early Japanese culture was influenced by China throughout several centuries BC to about 700 AD. The writing, political systems, religions, social customs, architecture, and philosophy of China was brought back to Japan by visiting Japanese dignitaries.



What are two main religions in Japan?  
**Shintoism and Buddhism**

### What are some of the major celebrations in Japanese culture??

- **Oshogatsu (New Year)** - This is celebrated on January 1, but the preparation begins in the middle of December. Houses are cleaned and decorated, and businesses send good New Year wishes to their customers.
- **Obon** - The annual Festival for the Dead is held in the middle of August. Since some Japanese hold the belief that spirits of the dearly departed come back for a visit during this time, houses and shrines are cleaned and lanterns are hung to light the way for the spirits.
- **Golden Week (April 29-May 8)** - This week merges four holidays into one week-long celebration. Constitution Day, Greenery Day, Children's Day, and Showa Day, also called Emperor's Day.
- **Labor Day/Thanksgiving** - Held November 23, this day celebrates workers and shows gratitude for the goods and services they produce.
- **Hanami (Flower Viewing)** - In the spring, from the middle of March through May, the Japanese people take time to admire the fleeting cherry blossoms and plum blossoms. They hold picnics outside under the trees and enjoy the blooms.



Find out about these famous people and so many others from Japan in your online Exploration Guide!



What is your favorite Japan holiday and why?

- **Kobo Daishi (Kukai)** - religious leader
- **Matsuo Basho** - poet
- **Meiji** - emperor
- **Ino Tadataka** - surveyor and mapmaker
- **Hayao Miyazaki** - animated movie director
- **Taishi Shotoku** - prince and author
- **Ichiro Suzuki** - baseball player
- **Osamu Tezuka** - manga artist
- **Yayoi Kusama** - artist
- **Sakamoto Ryoma** - samurai



## Japanese Art

A side from gorgeous paintings, elaborate sculpture, and intricate pottery, Japanese art styles extend into many other sectors of life in Japan. Many of Japan's art styles such as calligraphy and jade carvings were influenced by early trips to China and Korea. But Japan developed its own styles right within its borders.

### Three Types of Japanese Art

#### Bonsai

The word "bonsai" was first mentioned in a poem from the mid-14th century. Bonsai simply means "planting in fray" and refers to a special kind of container gardening.



#### Textile arts

Using dye, embroidery, and beautiful inks, the Japanese invented new processes and created stunning textiles over the centuries. Used to create "kimono" which meant clothing, these textiles became a way for people to identify one another using patterns and colors.



#### Bento boxes

Food preparation has been raised to an art form in Japan with bento boxes. The word bento was coined to describe this convenient way to carry food for work or school, like a lunch box.



#### Origami

Paper folding is an ancient art, and paper has been around a long time. In China, paper and the art of folding it began in the 2nd century AD and made its way over to Japan. Since paper was very expensive, only the very wealthy had access to it. Decorative folding was usually limited to special occasions such as weddings.



### Music of Japan

Traditional Japanese music was influenced by China, and although instruments were also brought from China, musicians in Japan adapted these to suit their playing styles.

#### Stringed instruments

- Koto
- Taisho-goto
- Shamisen
- Biwa

#### Percussion instruments

- Wadaiko
- Kotsuzumi
- Kagura-suzu

#### Wind instruments

- Nohkan
- Shakuhachi



Some music is created without instruments at all. Shomyo, or chanting, is ritual music performed in Buddhist ceremonies.

Other types of musical art are performed with instruments and dancing. Gagaku is a type of dramatic interpretive dance used to celebrate the beauty of music and sing.



[eat2explore.info/guides/Japan](http://eat2explore.info/guides/Japan)

**LEARN HOW IN OUR ONLINE EXPLORATION GUIDE, PLUS SO MUCH MORE!**

- A kid chopstick is included in your ASIA cooking kit. It's a great tool for kids to learn how to pick up food with chopstick!
- Chopsticks are a pair of thin, elongated eating utensils that originated in China and are widely used throughout East Asia.
- It is typically made of wood, bamboo, metal, or plastic.

### Here's how to use chopsticks:



1. Hold chopstick in your dominant hand as you would hold a pencil, about one-third of the way from the top.
2. Hold the upper (active) chopstick between your thumb and index finger and rest the lower chopstick (stationary) on the base of your thumb.
3. Move the active chopstick up and down, using your thumb and index/middle fingers to control it, while keeping the stationary chopstick in place. This motion allows you to grip and hold the food.
4. Use the tips of the chopsticks to pick up a piece of food. Lift the food with the chopsticks and bring it to your mouth to eat!

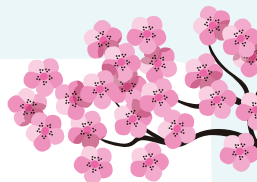


Use your chopstick in these other fun eat2explore boxes! Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand



## Discussion Prompts

- What was the best part of making the meal?
- What was the hardest part?
- Have you ever eaten anything similar?
- Have you been Japan? If so, what was the best place and why?
- Where might you like to visit in the Japan and why?
- What would be the first food you'd try there?
- What would you like to see there?



## Family Meal Review

Teriyaki (照り焼き)



Katsuretsu (カツレツ)



Okonomiyaki (お好み焼き)



Rate your meals by coloring in the stars. The more you color, the more you like it!

## Eat2explore families!

### Win a free eat2explore apron!

Make your meal and share on Instagram with **#eat2explore** or our Facebook Group **"eat2explore dinner club"** and you might be one of our featured families to win a free eat2explore apron! We pick a winner once a month!



Post your photos  
and tag **@eat2explore!**