

GLOBAL CULTURES

Japanese Culture



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Teresa Heapy





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Some words are shown in bold, **like this**. You can find out what they mean by looking in the glossary.





INTRODUCING JAPANESE CULTURE

What do you picture when you think of Japanese **culture**? Beautiful gardens of cherry blossom trees, or *manga* cartoons? High-rise buildings or ancient **temples**?

Japan is in Eastern Asia, and is made up of a long string of islands. It stretches for around 2,414 kilometres (1,500 miles). It has four main islands: Hokkaido, Shikoku, Kyushu, and Honshu, where you will find the capital city, Tokyo. Japan also has about 4,000 other islands!

What is culture?

Culture is the values, beliefs, and attitudes of a particular place. It is about how people live and worship, and about the music, art, and literature they produce. Japan is an astonishing, exciting country with a unique culture that embraces both Western influences and Eastern traditions. It is also one of the world's most economically and technologically advanced societies.

Japan has theatre, art, games, and **ceremonies** which go back centuries. It is also at the cutting edge of new computer technologies. The simple beauties of nature are much prized, but Japan is also famous for its intricate designs on fabrics and pottery. There are traditional ceremonies and customs that can seem formal and controlled, but the Japanese people also have a huge sense of fun!