

HYOGO PREFECTURE



Prefecture's Flag

Main City: Kobe

Population: 5,559,000 people, ranking 7/47 prefecture (2013) [1]

Area: 8,396 km² [2]

Latest update: August 2013



Geographical / Landscape description

Hyogo has coastlines on two seas: to the north lies the Sea of Japan and to the south, the Inland Sea. The northern portion is sparsely populated and the central highlands are only populated by tiny villages. Most of Hyogo's population lives on the southern coast, which is part of the Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto metropolitan area. Nearly 20% of the total land area of the prefecture is designated as Natural Parks. [2]

Climate

Due to the region's vast land size, climates in Hyogo vary by region. The climate in the south is moderate with little rain, while the cloudy and rainy north receives seasonal winds from Siberia in the wintertime and has a lot of snowfall. [2]

Time zone

GMT +7 in summer (+8 in winter)

International dialling code: 0081

Recent history, culture

The prefecture's most significant feature is certainly the 400 year-old Himeji Castle which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hyogo's traditional culture has been passed down through the generations in many forms and events that are still performed today like the Nada Fighting Festival (a "battle" between seven fabulously decorated palanquins called Yatai and three portable shrines, or Mikoshi that are smashed into each other) and the Awaji Ningyo Joruri (a traditional puppet theatre). [2] [3]

Economic overview

Hyogo Prefecture has served and grown as one of the main manufacturing centres of Japanese industry. As such, the prefecture has a broad spectrum of industrial clusters, including everything from heavy industries such as steel smelting and shipbuilding to SMEs trading in cutting edge technologies and expertise, and locally based industries.

In recent years, processing and assembling industries have increased their share of the local industrial landscape, increasing the prefecture's advantage in areas of processed and assembled products, such as automobiles, electrical/electronic machinery, and precision machinery. [4]

Economic Indicators

	Hyogo Prefecture	All Japan
Population (2013) [1]	5,559,000	127,350,000
Unemployment rate (2012) [5]	4.6%	4.3%
GPD (2010) [6]	3.6% of Japan's	495 trillion Yen

Infrastructure

Road/railways

The network of expressways crisscrossing Japan passes through Hyogo, giving the prefecture excellent transport links. In April 1998, the world's longest suspension bridge, the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge, was completed, creating a road link between Honshu and Shikoku Islands through Hyogo. By Shinkansen (bullet train), Kobe and Tokyo can be reached in 2h30mins. [7]

Shipping

Kobe Port is one of the world's premier international trade hubs, and is looking to solidify its position as Asia's "mother port". [7]

Civil Aviation

Hyogo Prefecture has three airports: the Osaka-Itami International Airport (despite the name it only manages domestic routes to 30 Japanese cities) located between Hyogo and Osaka prefectures, Kobe Airport which offers some domestic flights, and the smaller Tajima Airport. [8] [9]

Living Environment

As a port town, Kobe has long been open to the rest of the world. Thus, it is known as a comfortable city for foreigners to live and work in with an established infrastructure for foreign nationals such as international schools. For the purpose of streamlining the system where foreign residents can receive accessible support in their residential areas, Hyogo Prefecture is promoting the efforts together with municipal and town governments and NGOs, which is one of the notable characteristics of the prefecture. Indeed, one of Hyogo's strengths is leveraging the prefecture's unique qualities to create the platform and lifestyle environment for welcoming foreigners. [10]

Major types of economic activities

Manufacturing, construction

In 2011, the manufacturing industry's shipment value was principally composed of iron & steel 13.2%, chemicals 11.9%, and electrical machinery 10.8%. [11]

R&D, Innovation, Scientific research

The prefecture is extremely active in the R&D field, with on-going projects to improve the local nanotechnology and biotechnology industrial sectors.

The SPring-8 Super Photonring 8GeV was constructed here for the study of nanotechnology. Located in Harima Science Garden City, it is regarded as the world's most powerful synchrotron orbital radiation facility and was built in cooperation with the Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute and the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research. [12]

Located in the Himeji Institute of Technology, the New SUBARU is one of the country's world-class medium-sized synchrotron orbital radiation facilities. This institution has been in operation since January 2000, and conducts research on ultramodern technology and primarily optical technology. [13]

In order to promote industries that are related to health, welfare and medical care, which are considered to be growth industries for the twenty-first century, Kobe is establishing an R&D base for advanced medicine. Kobe is also promoting the Kobe Biomedical Innovation Cluster Project, which aims to develop a concentration of both Japanese and overseas medical-related companies and create new industries. [14]

Opportunities for EU Investors / Exporters / Importers

Promising sectors for cooperation

Long-established industries: manufacturing industries, steel, transportation equipment, machinery, electronic products, chemicals, pharmaceutical products. Growing industries: medical and biotech industry. [4][15]

Financial/ Logistic support

- *Various support services provided by the Hyogo-Kobe Investment Support Center: wide range of information and consultation, business matching, etc.
- *Industry-Academia-Government cooperation and mutual assistance, such as institutes in nanotechnology available to be consulted by private enterprises
- *Tax relief measures
- *Office rent subsidies applicable to both private and public spaces
- *Subsides for new employment
- *Subsidies for original and creative new businesses in a limited number of fields
- *Various types of low-interest loans

More information: http://www.hyogo-kobe.jp/best/modules/pico/index.php?content_id=120

Setting up a business in Hyogo

Hyogo-Kobe Investment Support Center
Kobe Chamber of Commerce and Industry Building 4F 6-1 Minatojima-Nakamachi, Chuo-ku, Kobe, 650-0046
TEL: +81(0)78-302-2072 FAX: +81(0)78-302-2265
<http://www.hyogo-kobe.jp/his/english/index.html>

Other contacts:

- Hyogo Prefecture
<http://web.pref.hyogo.lg.jp/fl/english/index.html>
- Hyogo International Business Center
<http://www.hyogo-kobe.jp/hibc/?lang=en>
- Kobe Medical Industry Development Project
<http://www.kobe-lsc.jp/eng/index.html>
- NewSUBARU
<http://www.lasti.u-hyogo.ac.jp/NS-en/>
- SPring-8
<http://www.spring8.or.jp/en/>
- Hyogo Tourism Association
<http://www.hyogo-tourism.jp/english/>

Sources and footnotes

- [1] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/jinsui/2.htm>
- [2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyogo_prefecture
- [3] <http://www.hyogo-tourism.jp/english/>
- [4] <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/invest/region/hyogo/>
- [5] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/roudou/pref/index.htm>
- [6] http://www.esri.cao.go.jp/jp/sna/sonota/kenmin/kenmin_top.html
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- [12] <http://www.spring8.or.jp/en/>
- [13] <http://www.lasti.u-hyogo.ac.jp/NS-en/>
- [14] <http://www.kobe-lsc.jp/eng/index.html>
- [15] <http://web.pref.hyogo.lg.jp/fl/english/index.html>

Kobe Port Tower



Himeji Castle

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