SHIMANE PREFECTURE

Main City: Matsue
Population: 703,000 people, ranking 46/47 prefecture (2013) [1]
Area: 6,707 km² [2]

Geographical / Landscape description

The prefecture has an area elongated from east to west facing the Chugoku Mountain Range on the south side and to the Sea of Japan on the north side. It is divided into the Izumo Region in the east, the Iwami Region in the west and the Oki Region, a small group of islands off the northern coast. Most of the cities are near the shoreline of the Sea of Japan. Forest area is 80% of the land making it one of the highest rates in Japan. [2]

Climate

The prefecture has a sub-tropical climate. Winter is cloudy with some snow and summer is humid. [2]

Time zone

GMT +7 in summer (+8 in winter)

International dialling code: 0081

Recent history, culture

Shimane was the first place of residence in Japan of Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) an Irish-Greek writer who became one of the first foreigners to take Japanese citizenship due to his passion for the country. With a passionate interest in Japanese traditional culture, he used Matsue as a stage to introduce Japanese culture to the world through his writings; he is also the “exporter” of Judo to America. Still today, his history and fame are well known in the area and his museum and the villa where he lived are two tourist attractions not to be missed. [3][4]

Economic overview

The service industry, and predominantly the retail sector, makes the largest contribution to the prefecture’s economy. Thanks to a relatively cheap land and easy access to water resources, manufacturing industries of electronic components and IT products are well implemented in the prefecture. Recently the prefecture has implemented various means of support for the IT industry. [2][5]

Economic Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Shimane Prefecture</th>
<th>All Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (2013) [1]</td>
<td>703,000</td>
<td>127,350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (2012) [6]</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPD (2010) [7]</td>
<td>0.46% of Japan’s</td>
<td>495 trillion Yen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Infrastructure

**Road/railways**
The prefecture is 3 hours drive from Osaka and Hiroshima, and nearly 6 hours by train from Tokyo. [8]

**Shipping**
Hamada Port is growing as the largest physical distribution centre in Shimane. It has been taking on an increasingly important role as a gateway for international trade with the Japan Sea Rim region. [8]

**Civil Aviation**
Shimane Prefecture has three airports at Izumo, Hagi-Iwami, and Oki all managing inland flights to major Japanese cities. [8]

### Living Environment
Shimane has the highest percentage of home owners in Japan. Compared to urban areas, the average land price is low, making the dream of owning a home more realistic. Commuting to work or school in a crowded train does not happen here. Compared to urban areas, women and elderly people use cars for everyday living. The average commute time of Shimane Prefecture is approximately half of that in Tokyo, allowing people more leisure time. This is one of the key benefits of living in Shimane. [9]

### Major types of economic activities

**Agriculture, natural resources**
With forest areas covering 80% of the prefecture, forestry plays an important role. Agriculture is mostly focused on rice farming. With abundant fishing waters, energy is put into developing resource management techniques to protect and nurture the local fishing industry. [4]

**Manufacturing, construction**
The prefecture is characterized by its cluster of primary materials manufacturing industries, with recent years witnessing the increased participation of companies from the telecommunications equipment, electronic component, general machinery and other processing and assembly sectors. [10]

In 2011, the manufacturing industry's shipment value was principally composed of iron & steel (15.4%), electronic components (13.6%), and information & communication (13.4%). [11]

**R&D, Innovation, Scientific research**
The Shimane Institute for Industrial Technology provides support for R&D conducted towards the creation of new industries and technical assistance to already established business organisations. [12]

### Opportunities for EU Investors / Exporters / Importers

**Promising sectors for cooperation**
Long-established industries: agriculture, forestry, fisheries, manufacturing industries (machinery, metal, processed marine products, precision machinery), IT-related industries. [4] [5]
Financial/logistic support

No recent incentive-related information is available on English-language sites.

- Shimane Industrial Promotion Foundation: one-stop support and consulting service for businesses
- Specific supports for IT industries

More information: http://www.joho-shimane.or.jp/english.html
http://www.pref.shimane.lg.jp/krichi/yugusuido/
http://www.pref.shimane.lg.jp/itsangyo/

Setting up a business in Shimane

Shimane Industrial Promotion Foundation
Techno Arc-shimane, Hokuryo-cho 1
Matsue 690-0816
TEL: +81(0)852-60-5110  FAX: +81(0)852-60-5105
http://www.joho-shimane.or.jp/english.html

Other contacts:

Shimane Prefecture
Shimane Institute for Industrial Technology
http://www.shimane-iit.jp/english/english.htm
Shimane Style
http://www.shimane-style.com/
Shimane Prefectural Tourism Federation

Sources and footnotes

Garden of the Adachi Museum of Art

Matsue Castle

Pictures copyright: Wikipedia under the GNU Free Documentation License

Disclaimer

Neither the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation, nor any person acting on its behalf is responsible for any consequences which may arise from the use by third parties, whether individuals or organizations, of the information contained in this report, or any possible errors which, despite careful checking of the text, could remain. The authors retain the copyright of the information published in this report. Reproduction is authorized except for commercial purposes, provided the source is acknowledged. All logos and figures published in this report are copyrighted and cannot be reproduced without the full consent of their respective author.