












Japan - Low



Japan Country Map

-  POLITICAL
-  ARMED CONFLICT
-  TERRORISM
-  CRIME
-  CIVIL UNREST
-  MARITIME AND PIRACY
-  HEALTH
-  ENVIRONMENTAL
-  TRANSPORTATION

Last Published: 22 January 2026

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Japan is a low threat travel destination. The largest threat to travellers is the environmental risk. Japan suffers from lower levels of crime and civil unrest.

Environmental risks are the largest threat to people visiting Japan. Japan is susceptible to typhoons, volcanoes and earthquakes. The typhoon season runs between July and September and these can cause secondary hazards including flash flooding and landslides. Earthquakes are a common occurrence in Japan and these can cause tsunami warnings to be issued.

Japan has a relatively low crime rate, petty crimes such as pickpocketing are the most commonly recorded crimes in Japan. There is also low rates of civil unrest, whilst protests do occur, these rarely escalate into violence.

CULTURAL INFORMATION

Cultural Tips

- Japanese is the official language. English is widely taught in school, but proficiency levels are low. Learning a few phrases in Japanese will be extremely helpful.
- Foreigners are sometimes referred to as "gaijin" (foreigners). Foreigners are not expected to know all Japanese cultural rules, but are advised to remain respectful of local culture and norms.
- Although a bow is the traditional Japanese greeting, handshakes are expected with Westerners.
- Sitting with an ankle over a knee is impolite.
- Shoes are always removed before entering a Japanese home, or any room covered in tatami mats. Shoes are customarily left with the toes pointed away from the door.
- Foreigners should be aware that tattoos are generally considered taboo. Exposed tattoos are banned in some gyms, pools and public baths and may affect travellers' entry into popular tourist attractions.
- Japan is a fairly conservative society, and although homosexuality is legal, same-sex marriages are not recognized nationally. LGBTQ travellers may face harassment.
- Some "women only" subway cars operate in the greater Tokyo area during rush hour.

KEY FACTS	
CAPITAL	Tokyo
CAPITAL CITY PHONE CODE	3
COUNTRY PHONE CODE	81
CURRENCY	Yen
ELECTRICITY	100 V, 50-60 Hz
GMT	+9
LANGUAGES	Japanese
LEADERSHIP	Emperor Naruhito; Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi
OFFICE WORK WEEK	Monday-Friday
OFFICIAL COUNTRY NAME	Japan
PLUG STYLES	Types A, B
RELIGION	Shintoism 48.6%, Buddhism 46.4%, Christianity 1.1%, other 4%
TIME ZONE OFFSET	UTC +9
TYPE OF GOVERNMENT	Constitutional Monarchy with a Parliamentary Government

RISK SUMMARY

Political - Low

Japan's democratic system is a constitutional monarchy, with the emperor, Naruhito, as head of state. Political power is exercised by the prime minister, who is currently Sanae Takaichi. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has led most Japanese governments since 1945. The LDP consists of several factions whose leaders exercise significant control over political decisions.

In October 2025, Sanae Takaichi won the leadership of the LDP, and was later elected by both chambers of Japan's parliament to become Japan's first female Prime Minister. On 19 January 2026, it was announced that Prime Minister Takaichi will call a national election on 8 February in attempts to seek support for increased spending, tax cuts, and a new security strategy.

Recent political corruption scandals have centred around politicians pocketing money earned at government fundraisers. These accusations have led to multiple politicians resigning from their posts.

Armed Conflict - Low

The armed conflict risk in Japan is low. Japan is currently not engaged in any armed conflict, though tensions are present between Japan and China over disputed territorial claims in the East China Sea. Japan and China both claim the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea and this could be a potential trigger for conflict in the future. Chinese coast guard vessels commonly enter the waters near the islands, prompting Japanese protests.

North Korea is another country Japan has tensions with. North Korea's continued development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles are a concern for the nation. North Korea routinely tests ballistic missiles, firing them into the Sea of Japan, with rare occasions where the missiles travel over Japanese airspace before impacting in the sea. There have been multiple instances in previous years where Japanese residents have been ordered to shelter immediately due to a North Korean missile fire which travels over Japanese airspace.

Terrorism - Low

Japan has not been targeted by international terrorist groups. However, two Japanese nationals were captured abroad and killed by ISIS in 2015. There is currently, no known indigenous terrorist organisation in Japan.

Crime - Low

Crime levels are very low in Japan. The most prevalent crimes in Japan are petty, opportunistic crimes such as theft or vandalism. Pickpocketing is common in crowded areas such as shopping centres and on trains and in airports.

Crime in Tokyo is highest in the following districts: Kabukicho, Roppongi, Shibuya, and Ikebukuro. Within these districts, physical and sexual assaults, drug overdoses, and the theft of purses, cash, cards, and wallets are common in the entertainment and nightlife areas. Drink spiking is also an issue in the entertainment districts. Foreigners are targeted for extortion, robbery, assault, and sexual assault. Travellers are known to be arrested following disputes with bar staff over refusal to pay extortionate bar bills.

Authorities in Japan have strict drug laws; if asked to conduct a drug test, comply, as refusing to can lead to being arrested and detained for 'obstructing police duties'.

There is a low risk of kidnapping in Japan. While there is some organised crime in the country, there have been no reported kidnappings of foreign travellers in the country in recent months. Remain vigilant and avoid travelling alone at night to be safe.

The risk of cybercrimes are increasing in Japan. Record numbers of phishing and financial scams were reported in 2025, with over a million incidents reported in the first six months of 2025.

Civil Unrest - Low

Political demonstrations are rare in Japan; demonstrations require a government application and an official permit and these are usually conducted peacefully. Protests against the actions of foreign powers, especially China, are common. However, the chances of them turning violent are extremely low. Protests are generally well-policed but should still be avoided as a precaution.

Recently, demonstrations have been against proposed arms export policy changes. Protests have occurred in Tokyo outside the LDP headquarters and other location opposing the relaxing of weapons exports.

The US embassy in Japan frequently faces numerous protests regarding historical grievances, but these are usually peaceful. On 29 October, more than 100 residents of Kagoshima held a protest rally against the planned deployment of US military drones at a Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (MSDF) base. The US Embassy in Tokyo, as well as the consulate general locations in Osaka-Kobe, Naha, Fukuoka, and Sapporo all experience demonstrations on occasion.

Maritime and Piracy - Low

Japan maintains claims over several disputed islands in the East China Sea, the Sea of Japan and the Sea of Okhotsk. These include the Kuril Islands (controlled by Russia), the Liancourt Rocks (controlled by South Korea), the Senkaku/Diaoyu

Islands (claimed by China but under Japanese control) and the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands (controlled by Japan and claimed by South Korea). Control over these seemingly insignificant maritime territories grants exclusive access to fishing grounds and undersea resources, explaining the significant political capital invested by the claimant nations.

The current risk of armed conflict over these disputes is low. There have also been standoffs between Chinese and Japanese maritime units and airforces, as each side has sought to establish sovereignty over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.

China's growing military presence in the region has meant there is an increased frequency of Chinese vessels and aircraft near Japan's waters, particularly around the East China Sea and the disputed Senaku Islands. Military exercises are conducted regularly in the region by Japan, the US, and other regional powers.

Piracy is not a concern in Japan's immediate waters. Japan's proximity to North Korea, China and other neighbouring countries increases the likelihood of smuggling, including drugs, weapons, and human trafficking, occurring in the waters.

Cybercriminals typically target Japan's ports, shipping lanes, and maritime traffic control systems due to Japan's heavy reliance on maritime trade. These attacks can disrupt shipping and cause economic damage. Japan has one of the largest and most advanced port infrastructures globally. Japan's major ports such as those in Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe, and Osaka are equipped with advanced security infrastructure including monitoring systems such as CCTV, drones, and radar. The ports also utilise x-ray scanning technology to inspect cargo for contraband.

North Korea has been firing short-range ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan on a regular basis since September 2022.

Health - Low

The health risk in Japan is low, health provision in major Japanese cities is excellent, with world-class facilities and well-trained staff. Healthcare facilities may be more limited in rural areas. Travellers should make sure they have adequate medical and travel insurance, as medical care can be expensive.

Japan reports rare outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever, so effective preventive measures should be employed. Mitigation strategies include using loose-fitting clothing and insect repellent.

Any traveller intending to bring more than a one-month supply of prescription drugs, is required to complete a Yunyu Kakunin sho import certificate, which is available online from the Japanese Embassy websites.

The following medications are banned in Japan: Adderall, amphetamines, codeine, methamphetamines, and pseudoephedrine.

Environmental - Moderate

The environmental risk in Japan is the most threatening risk. Japan is susceptible to typhoons, volcanoes, and earthquakes. The typhoon season runs from June to December, with the most activity between July and September. Typhoons can cause flooding and landslides, especially in coastal zones. Typhoons in the past have caused dozens of casualties and impacted aviation and public transportation operations.

Japan also sits in a major earthquake zone, and there are 110 active volcanoes. As a result, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions all occur with some regularity. Japan experiences high magnitude earthquakes quite regularly, and so the nation has invested heavily in earthquake defence measures. The nation's earthquake preparation and response systems are constantly reviewed due to the high threat, despite this large-magnitude earthquakes still cause casualties, building damages and impacts on transportation. In April 2025, the Japanese government forecasted that a 'megaquake' could cause as many as 298,000 fatalities in Japan and cause damages of up to \$2 trillion. The 'megaquake' would also likely cause the evacuation of roughly 10% of Japan's population. This is the first advisory since August 2024. The advisory warns that the Nankai Trough has a 70-80% probability of producing a magnitude 8-9 earthquake within the next 30 years.

Japan can also experience heavy snowfall during the winter months, which can cause avalanche warnings to be issued in select areas. Heavy snowfall can cause disruptions to domestic transportation as well as air travel in severe cases.

The following stations broadcast emergency information in English: US Armed Forces Station (810 AM) and Inter FM (76.1) in Tokyo.

Transportation - Low

Japan has several international airports. These airports are secure and among the most sophisticated in the world. Air travel is also used to fly between major cities in the country. Services are frequent and can be faster and more convenient than travelling by train. Japanese airports usually run on time and are very efficient. However, tropical storms and typhoons between May and October and heavy snowfall in the winter can periodically result in heavy delays and even prolonged closures of some airports.

Rail travel in the country is extremely efficient and popular; the Japanese rail network carries the most passengers globally every year. The railway system consists of subways, local trains, and high-speed inter-city trains. Japan is a pioneer of the high-speed shinkansen or 'bullet train'. Services now link Japan's largest cities at speeds of up to 320kph (200mph). However, due to the age of Japan's rail network, conventional trains, known as zairaisen, remain relatively slow, operating at between 130-160 kph. Due to women being targeted on trains, there are 'women-only' cars located on some trains during rush hours.

Roads are in very good condition throughout most of Japan. However, roads can be narrow in places and city traffic is often congested. All major hire car companies are available at airports, in cities, and in most towns. Taxis are also widely available but are relatively expensive. The left rear door of the majority of taxis is operated by the driver. Tipping taxi drivers is frowned upon. Bus services are also extensive and safe to use. To drive on the roads in Japan you need an International Driving Permit, a current UK licence, and insurance. You drive on the left-hand side of the road. Highway tolls can be expensive.

EMERGENCY DETAILS

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY CONTACT SOLACE GLOBAL 24/7 OPERATIONS CENTRE AT +44 (0)1202 795 801. LOCAL EMERGENCY

EMERGENCY DETAILS	
SERVICES CAN BE REACHED BY DIALLING: POLICE - 110, FIRE AND AMBULANCE – 119.	
POLICE NUMBER	110
AMBULANCE NUMBER	119
FIRE NUMBER	119
EMERGENCY DETAILS	

TRAVEL

TRAVEL ADVICE

The Japanese government retains an established exclusion zone in the areas surrounding the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear facility. Travel to these areas is only allowed with express permission from the Japanese government. Travel may be allowed through the exclusion zone via main highways.

There have been many reports of inappropriate touching of women on public transport, particularly the Tokyo Metro, and in crowded places. Police advise shouting and drawing attention to the groping as a way of stopping the assault and helping to apprehend the culprit.

Smoking is illegal on the streets of Tokyo, and some other cities. Smoke is only allowed in designated areas.

Same-sex sexual activity is not illegal but Japanese law does not protect against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

SIGNIFICANT DATES

FEBRUARY 11, 2026

- **National Foundation Day:** Japan - National

FEBRUARY 14, 2026

- **Valentine's Day:** Japan - Observance

FEBRUARY 23, 2026

- **Emperor's Birthday:** Japan - National

MARCH 03, 2026

- **Dolls' Festival/Girls' Festival:** Japan - Observance

MARCH 20, 2026

- **March Equinox:** Japan - Seasonal
- **Spring Equinox:** Japan - National

APRIL 29, 2026

- **Showa Day:** Japan - National

MAY 03, 2026

- **Constitution Memorial Day:** Japan - National

SIGNIFICANT DATES

MAY 04, 2026

- **Greenery Day:** Japan - National

MAY 05, 2026

- **Children's Day:** Japan - National

JUNE 21, 2026

- **June Solstice:** Japan - Seasonal

JULY 07, 2026

- **Star Festival:** Japan - Observance

JULY 20, 2026

- **Sea Day:** Japan - National

AUGUST 06, 2026

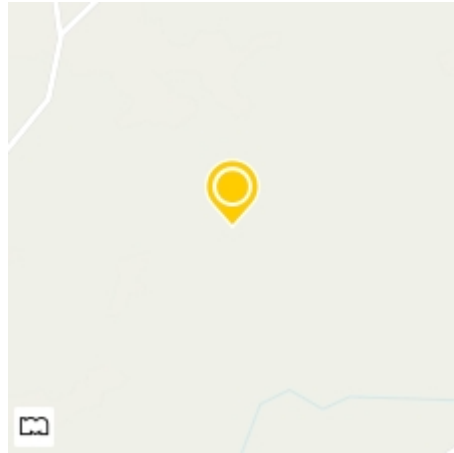
- **Hiroshima Memorial Day:** Japan - Observance

AUGUST 09, 2026

- **Nagasaki Memorial Day:** Japan - Observance

RECENT ALERTS

UPDATE: MAGNITUDE 4.6 AFTERSHOCK DETECTED SOUTH-SOUTHEAST OF TATEYAMA



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate

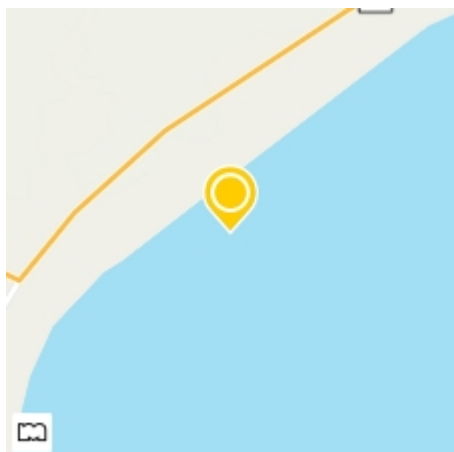


29-Jan-2026 03:24

The United States Geological Society (USGS) has detected a magnitude 4.6 aftershock four kilometres south-southeast of Tateyama, Japan. The tremor was recorded at 02:47 UTC at a depth of 45 kilometres, and follows an initial magnitude 4.6 earthquake at 01:25 UTC. There continue to be no reports of any damages or casualties. Further aftershocks remain possible.

MAGNITUDE 4.6 EARTHQUAKE DETECTED SOUTH-SOUTHEAST OF TOKYO

RECENT ALERTS



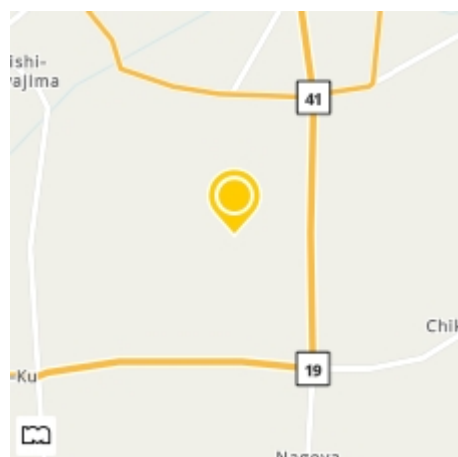
Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



29-Jan-2026 02:00

The United States Geological Society (USGS) has detected a magnitude 4.6 earthquake 75 kilometres south-southeast of Tokyo, Japan. The earthquake was recorded at 01:25 UTC at a depth of 10 kilometres. No damages or casualties have been reported; however, shaking has been felt in Chiba and Tokyo Prefectures. Aftershocks remain possible.

SECTIONS OF SHIN-MEISHIN AND MEISHIN EXPRESSWAYS CLOSED DUE TO WINTRY WEATHER CONDITIONS



RECENT ALERTS

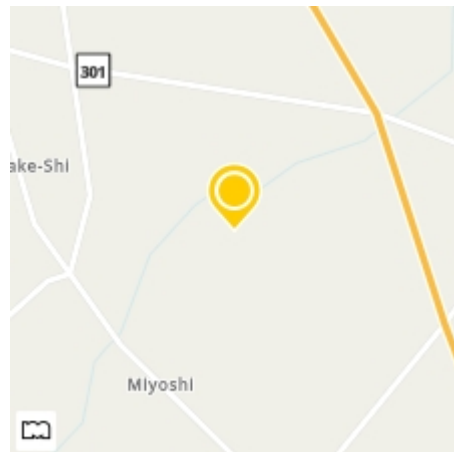
Category: Travel Information - **Risk:** Moderate



25-Jan-2026 03:17

According to local media sources, parts of the Shin-Meishin (E1A) and Meishin (E1) Expressways have been closed due to an ongoing snowstorm. Ground sources report that a layer of snow has settled on the road surface, which has prompted local authorities to implement road closures for safety reasons. Traffic disruption, as well as reduced speeds on the Tokaido Shinkansen has also been reported. Wintry conditions are expected to last at least until the evening of 25 January local time.

ONGOING MULTI-BUILDING FIRE IN MIYOSHI CITY, AICHI



Category: Caution - **Risk:** Moderate



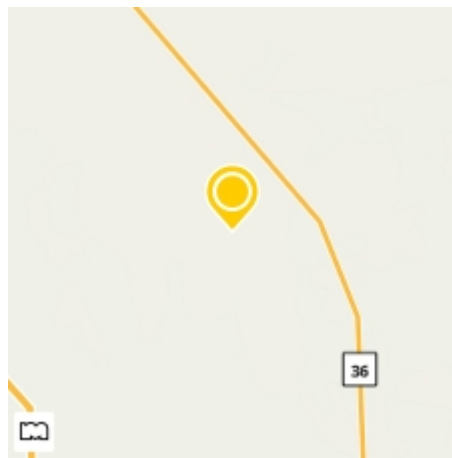
20-Jan-2026 10:05

Local media reports that a fire is ongoing throughout multiple buildings in Miyoshi City, Aichi. According to the fire department, reports of smoke emanating from a warehouse were received at around 1600 local time on 20 January.

RECENT ALERTS

Firefighters are currently working to extinguish the fire. There have been no reports of injuries at this time. Footage taken from a helicopter at around 1700 local time shows fire and smoke coming from several buildings.

FLIGHTS CANCELLED IN HOKKAIDO AND AOMORI REGIONS FOLLOWING HEAVY SNOWFALL



Category: Travel Information - **Risk:** Moderate

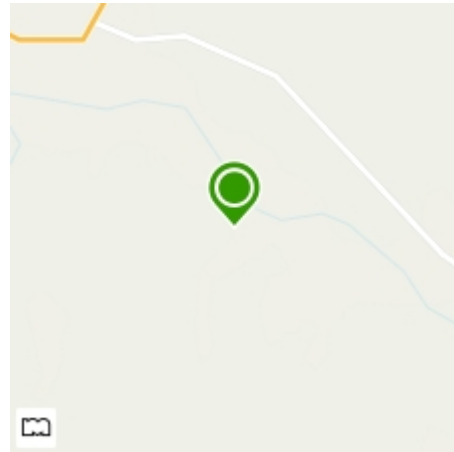


20-Jan-2026 03:51

According to local media, numerous flights arriving at and departing from airports in the Hokkaido and Aomori regions, including New Chitose Airport (CTS), have been cancelled following heavy snowfall, affecting more than 5,000 passengers. Further disruptions are possible as weather conditions persist. It's unclear when normal services will resume. Further information is limited.

STRONG WINTER-TYPE ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE PATTERN EXPECTED ACROSS PARTS OF JAPAN FROM 21 TO 25 JANUARY

RECENT ALERTS



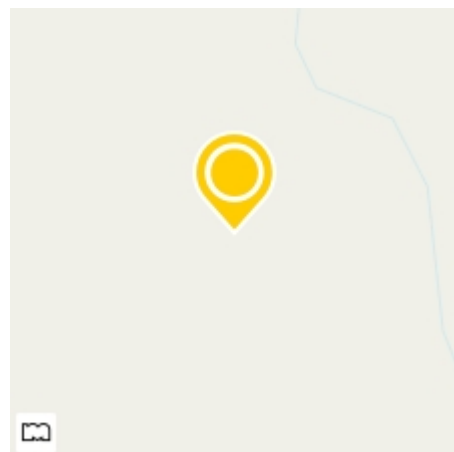
Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Low



19-Jan-2026 09:52

The Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism has reported that heavy snowfall and cold air due to a strong winter-type atmospheric pressure pattern is expected across Japan and surrounding areas from 21 to 25 January. The areas affected the most are in the northern and western regions as it is expected along the coast of the Sea of Japan side of western Japan. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates when necessary.

AVALANCHE WARNING ISSUED FOR MULTIPLE MUNICIPALITIES IN HOKKAIDO



RECENT ALERTS

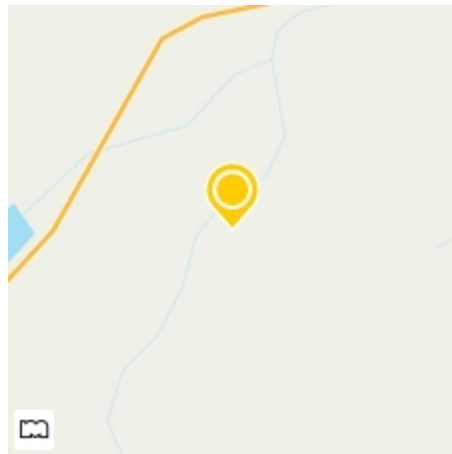
Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



17-Jan-2026 19:39

According to Japan's Meteorological Observatory, an avalanche warning was issued at 0331 local time on 18 January for several municipalities in Hokkaido, including Date City, the Otaki area of Date City, Toyoura Town, Sobetsu Town, and Toyako Town. The warning is active until 19 January. In addition, strong winds are forecast across the Iburi and Hidaka regions, with heavy snow and avalanche risk in Iburi, and high waves expected in Hidaka. Further information is limited.

MAGNITUDE 5.1 EARTHQUAKE RECORDED WEST NORTHWEST OF SHIOJIRI, JAPAN



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



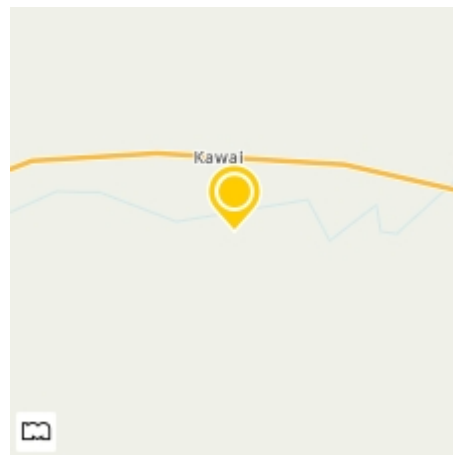
15-Jan-2026 06:11

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has recorded a magnitude 5.1 earthquake 16 kilometres west northwest of Shiojiri, Japan. The tremor occurred

RECENT ALERTS

at 05:48 UTC and at a depth of 6.7 kilometres. There have been no reports of any casualties, damages or tsunami warnings at this time.

MAGNITUDE 5.2 EARTHQUAKE DETECTED WEST-SOUTHWEST OF MIYAKO



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate

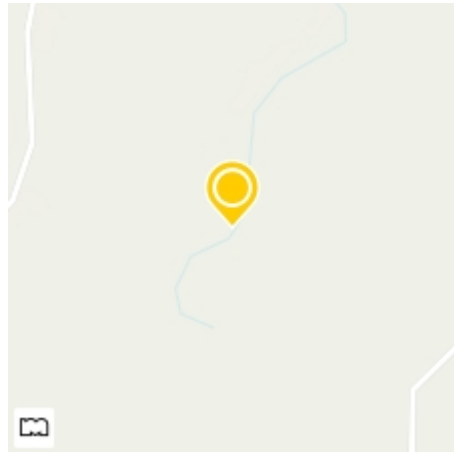


11-Jan-2026 04:51

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has detected a 5.2 earthquake west-southwest of Miyako. The tremor occurred at 0415 UTC at a depth of 79.7 kilometres. There have been no reports of casualties, damage, or tsunami warnings at this time. Aftershocks remain possible.

UPDATE: MAGNITUDE 5.0 EARTHQUAKE SOUTH OF MATSUE

RECENT ALERTS



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



06-Jan-2026 01:47

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has detected a 5.0 earthquake 14 kilometres south of Matsue, Japan. The tremor occurred at 01:28 UTC at a depth of 12 kilometres. This comes as a 5.8 earthquake was previously recorded 14 kilometres south southeast of Yasugi, Shimane. There have been no reports of casualties, damages, or tsunami warnings at this time. Further aftershocks remain possible.

FCDO SUMMARY

Last updated: 01/06/2026 14:10:22

Warnings and insurance

Before you travel

No travel can be guaranteed safe. Read all the advice in this guide. You may also find it helpful to:

- see [general advice for women travellers](#)
- read our [guide on disability and travel abroad](#)
- see [general advice for LGBT+ travellers](#)
- read about [safety for solo and independent travel](#)
- see [advice on volunteering and adventure travel abroad](#)

Travel insurance

If you choose to travel, research your destinations and [get appropriate travel insurance](#). Insurance should cover your itinerary, planned activities and expenses in an emergency.

About FCDO travel advice

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) provides advice about risks of travel to help you make informed decisions. Find out [more about FCDO travel advice](#).

Get travel advice updates

Sign up to [get email notifications](#) when this travel advice is updated.

Follow FCDO:

- [travel advice on X](#)
- [travel advice on Facebook](#)
- [Travel Aware on Instagram](#)

Entry requirements

This information is for people travelling on a full [‘British citizen’ passport](#) from the UK. It is based on the UK government’s understanding of the current rules for the most common types of travel.

The authorities in Japan set and enforce entry rules. If you’re not sure how these requirements apply to you, contact the [Japanese Embassy in the UK](#).

Passport validity requirements

If you’re visiting Japan, your passport must be valid for the length of your stay. No additional period of validity is required. You need a blank page for your visa stamp.

Check with your travel provider that your passport and other travel documents meet requirements. [Renew your passport](#) if you need to.

You will be denied entry if you do not have a valid travel document or try to use a passport that has been reported lost or stolen.

Dual nationals

When returning to the UK, British citizens must carry a valid [British passport](#) or [certificate of entitlement](#). See [Dual citizenship](#).

Visa requirements

You can get a visa on arrival in Japan for tourism or business for up to 90 days. You do not need to apply before you travel.

If you need a multiple-entry visa, you must ask the immigration officials when you arrive.

If you want to stay longer, you can apply at your nearest immigration office for an extension for another 90 days. Your passport must be valid for the period of the extension.

For long-term stays or to work or study, you must meet the Japanese government’s entry requirements. Check [which type of visa you need](#). It is illegal

to work in Japan without the correct visa no matter how informal or temporary the work.

If you overstay your permission to remain in Japan, you risk arrest, detention and a heavy fine.

For residency information, see the [Japanese Immigration Services Agency](#) website and read about [living in Japan](#).

Vaccine requirements

For details about medical entry requirements and recommended vaccinations, see [TravelHealthPro's Japan guide](#).

Customs rules

There are strict rules about [goods you can take into or out of Japan](#). You must declare anything that may be prohibited or subject to tax or duty.

Taking food into Japan

It is [illegal to bring meat products including sausages, bacon and ham](#) to Japan without permission from the [Japanese Animal Quarantine Service](#). Penalties include a heavy fine and prison sentence.

Whale meat is available in Japan but importing it into the UK and EU is illegal. If you import whale meat to the UK, you can get a fine of up to £5,000 and a prison sentence. Customs officers will seize the meat.

Taking money into Japan

Japan is still a predominantly cash-based society. You may have difficulty using credit and debit cards issued outside Japan. Cirrus, Maestro, Link and Delta cash cards are not widely accepted. Japanese post offices, 7-Eleven stores and JP Post Bank have cash machines that will accept some foreign cards during business hours.

Safety and security

This guide also has safety advice for [regions of Japan](#).

Terrorism

There is a high threat of terrorist attack globally affecting UK interests and British nationals, including from groups and individuals who view the UK and British nationals as targets. Stay aware of your surroundings at all times.

UK Counter Terrorism Policing has information and advice on [staying safe abroad](#) and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack. Find out [how to reduce your risk from terrorism while abroad](#).

Terrorism in Japan

Although there's no recent history of terrorism in Japan, attacks cannot be ruled out.

Political situation

Civil disturbance and violent demonstrations are rare in Japan. Occasionally, there are pro-nationalist demonstrations that express hostility towards foreign countries. If you become aware of protests, leave the area immediately.

Japan and the Korean Peninsula

The level of tension and security situation in the Korean Peninsula can change with little notice. Tensions can rise after missile tests by North Korea and during the regular South Korea-US military exercises, which take place throughout the year.

North Korea frequently launches missiles towards Japan as part of missile testing, and is likely to continue doing so.

You should follow the advice of local authorities and check [NHK World](#) for the latest information. See [advice on missile alerts from the Japanese government](#).

See also [travel advice for South Korea](#).

Crime

Take the same precautions you would at home and get local advice on areas where you might need to be more alert.

Tokyo's entertainment districts carry a higher risk of crime, particularly at night in and around clubs and bars. Foreign nationals have been targeted for extortion, robbery, assault and sexual assault.

Protecting your belongings

Be aware of your surroundings and keep your belongings in sight when travelling. Place valuables in a secure place such as a hotel safe when you can.

Rape and sexual assault

Rape and sexual assault are rare but can happen. Japanese law puts a high burden of proof on victims to demonstrate sexual relations were not consensual and committed through assault, intimidation or force.

Female passengers travelling on commuter trains have experienced inappropriate behaviour. This includes touching and upskirting – taking photos or videos from below when women walk or stand nearby. Police advise you should shout at the perpetrator to attract attention and ask a fellow passenger to call train or station staff.

Drink spiking and credit card fraud

There is a risk of drink spiking and credit card fraud. Victims have described waking up with no memory of what happened and discovering large amounts of money billed to their credit card. Risks are higher in all entertainment and nightlife districts across Japan. In particular, the Japanese police have identified the following areas in Tokyo as high-risk zones:

- Kabukicho
- Roppongi
- Shibuya
- Ikebukuro

You can reduce the risk of spiking by:

- not accepting drinks from strangers
- not leaving drinks unattended or asking a trusted friend to keep an eye on your unfinished drink

Card fraudsters may skim or clone bank cards when you pay for food or drink. You may need a police report before your credit card company will consider processing a fraud claim.

Illegal drugs

Japan has strict laws around drug use. If the police find an illegal substance in your bloodstream, you may be charged, regardless of whether you consented or were aware of taking the drugs. If you refuse to take a test if asked to by the police, you could be arrested and detained for 'obstructing police duties'.

If you take blood tests at medical institutions, they are usually obliged to report to the police if they detect any illegal substances.

Disputes over bar bills

British nationals have been arrested at clubs and bars following disputes with staff and doorpersons over excessive bar bills. These disputes are often seen in the high risk areas outlined above. Ensure you see a menu with prices before you enter a bar or restaurant. Keep track of what you order and confirm the price of admission to clubs on entry.

Prostitution and street touts

Prostitution and street touts are illegal but commonplace, especially in the high risk areas outlined above. Do not accompany street touts to bars or clubs. Street touts often encourage people to enter an establishment by misrepresenting the services on offer. You may incur an entry charge so do not enter on the promise of a free drink or to have a look, as you may not be free to leave.

Laws and cultural differences

Personal ID

You must always carry your passport or Japanese residence card with you. The police can arrest you if you cannot show proof of your visa or residence status.

Alcohol bans

In general, drinking alcohol in public places is not illegal. However, there are bans on drinking alcohol in specific areas on certain days, for example New Year's Eve.

Smoking in public places

Smoking is illegal on the streets of Tokyo and some other cities. Smoke only in designated areas.

Illegal drugs and prison sentences

There is zero tolerance of drug crime and the penalties are severe. British nationals have been arrested and detained for receiving small quantities through the post or if they test positive when the police raid clubs or bars. British nationals convicted of drug trafficking have received sentences ranging from 6 to 17 years and fines of 3 to 4 million yen. Prisoners in Japan are assigned labour or factory work as part of their sentences.

LGBT+ travellers

Same-sex sexual activity is not illegal, but Japanese law does not protect against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. Same-sex marriages are not recognised, but some local authorities issue certificates of recognition that can be used for civil issues, such as hospital visitation rights.

Shinjuku Nichome in Tokyo and Doyamacho in Osaka are well-known LGBT+ areas.

Read more [advice for LGBT+ travellers](#).

Medication bans

It is illegal to possess or use some common prescription and over-the-counter medicines under Japan's strictly enforced law on anti-stimulant drugs. Ignorance of the law does not count as a defence. See [Health](#).

Custody disputes

Japanese family law is very different from UK law. Joint custody of a child after divorce is not a legal option, and access for a non-custodial parent is extremely difficult, especially if you live outside of Japan. Legal custody disputes can be lengthy and expensive, and rulings to return a child or to secure access to a child are often not enforced. See [child abduction, custody and parental rights in Japan](#).

Public behaviour

Most Japanese people are welcoming and friendly, but can be reserved. Loud, boisterous behaviour may receive negative attention. Showing affection in public is less common than in the UK.

Tattoos

Tattoos have a historical association with organised crime in Japan. While acceptance is increasing, some public facilities do not admit people with tattoos – for example, public swimming pools, hot springs, beaches and some gyms. Other establishments request you cover tattoos while using the facilities.

Outdoor activities and adventure tourism

Wildlife

Bear sightings and attacks have increased in parts of Japan, especially in mountainous and forested areas, including near populated zones.

Follow local advice and alerts, and take precautions if travelling in these areas.

You should

- research the region to learn about the local wildlife
- avoid walking alone in areas where bears have been sighted
- take all rubbish with you, including food waste
- report any sightings to local authorities

Transport risks

Road travel

If you're planning to drive in Japan, see [information on driving abroad](#) and check the rules of the road in the [Japan Automobile Federation driving guide](#).

You'll need the [1949 version of the international driving permit \(IDP\)](#) plus your UK driving licence and insurance documents with you in the car. You could be arrested and fined for driving without the correct documents.

You cannot buy an IDP outside the UK, so get one before you travel. You can use an IDP for one year, regardless of its expiry date. See [information on driving and the IDP from the Tokyo police](#).

If you plan to stay longer than one year, see how to [apply for a Japanese driving licence](#).

Hire car companies often have stricter requirements for their customers, such as a year of driving experience and a minimum age.

There are 2 types of driving insurance available in Japan: compulsory insurance ('jibaisekihoken') and voluntary insurance ('nin'i no jidosahoken'). The compulsory insurance on its own may be insufficient in cases of personal liability.

Drink-driving is a serious offence in Japan, and the legal limit of alcohol in your system is about a third of the UK limit. If you are found to be over the limit, you may get a fine and possible imprisonment. There are also penalties for allowing someone to drink and drive. The passenger could face arrest if the police suspect they were aware of the driver's alcohol consumption.

Driving standards

Roads are well maintained, and driving is on the left. Watch out for:

- pedestrians crossing roads at green lights, especially at junctions
- cyclists riding on the wrong side of the road and without lights at night
- other drivers braking suddenly

Extreme weather and natural disasters

Find out what you can do to [prepare for and respond to natural disasters in Japan](#).

Tropical cyclones

In Japan the tropical cyclone (typhoon) season is between June and December, peaking between July and September. The highest risk is in southern parts of the country. Monitor any approaching storms using [Japan Meteorological Agency forecasts](#). Follow the advice of the local authorities and emergency services, including any evacuation orders.

Tropical cyclones in Japan often come with damaging high tides, increasing the risk of landslides and flooding. The dangers increase when an earthquake occurs shortly after a tropical cyclone has saturated an area.

See [weather safety tips](#) from the Japan National Tourism Agency.

Earthquakes and tsunamis

Japan is in a major earthquake zone. The [Japan Meteorological Agency](#) provides a list of [helpful apps and websites in the event of disaster](#). See further [earthquake safety tips](#) from the Japan National Tourism Agency.

Monitor [earthquake information, including tsunami and aftershock warnings](#), from the Japan Meteorological Agency. See further news on earthquakes at [NHK World](#).

Take note of instructions in hotel rooms and at train stations and follow the advice of local authorities.

Volcanic eruptions

There are several active volcanoes in Japan. Monitor local media reports and follow the advice of local authorities. Check for [volcano warnings](#) from the Japanese Meteorological Agency. See [volcano safety tips](#) from the Japan National Tourism Agency.

Regional risks

This section has safety advice for regions of Japan. It only covers regions where [FCDO](#) has specific advice.

You should also read [FCDO's overall travel advice](#) and [safety and security advice](#).

Fukushima

There is a [restricted area around the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant](#) where only authorised persons can enter. Areas where evacuation orders are ready to be lifted are still subject to some restrictions – for example, visitors are not allowed to stay overnight. Follow local guidance.

The Japanese authorities carry out comprehensive checks to monitor radiation in the area around Fukushima Daiichi and to monitor possible [contamination of water and food and produce](#). They impose strict controls where necessary.

Although the decommissioning of the Fukushima Daiichi site and full clean-up of the surrounding area will take many years, the risks are gradually declining.

Noto Peninsula

A series of earthquakes hit the Noto Peninsula on 1 January, causing a minor tsunami and fires in various parts of Ishikawa Prefecture. Infrastructure damage was extensive, and some transport links remain disrupted. Take care in affected areas and follow local guidance.

Health

Before you travel check that:

- your destination can provide the healthcare you may need
- you have appropriate travel insurance for local treatment or unexpected medical evacuation

This is particularly important if you have a health condition or are pregnant.

Emergency medical number

Dial 119 and ask for an ambulance.

Contact your insurance company quickly if you're referred to a medical facility for treatment.

Vaccine recommendations and health risks

At least 8 weeks before your trip:

- check the latest [vaccine recommendations for Japan](#)
- see where to get vaccines and whether you have to pay on the [NHS travel vaccinations page](#)

See [what health risks you'll face in Japan](#) including:

- dengue
- biting insects and ticks
- pertussis ('whooping cough')

Altitude sickness is a risk in parts of Japan. Read more about [altitude sickness on TravelHealthPro](#).

Medication

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or bought in the UK can be different in other countries.

Read [best practice when travelling with medicines on TravelHealthPro](#).

It is illegal to carry some common prescription and over-the-counter medicines under Japan's strictly enforced law on anti-stimulant drugs. This includes:

- Vicks inhalers
- medicines for allergies and sinus problems
- cold and flu medication containing pseudoephedrine
- some over-the-counter painkillers containing codeine

Foreign nationals have been detained and deported for these offences. If you're travelling with medication, check its status with the [Japanese Embassy in the UK](#).

Healthcare in Japan

Medical facilities in Japan are of a high quality, but treatment is expensive. Expect to pay the whole cost of any treatment you receive.

Medical facilities may check your insurance, which could delay your treatment.

[FCDO](#) has a list of [medical providers in Japan](#) where some staff will speak English.

There is also [guidance on healthcare if you're living in Japan](#).

Getting help

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([FCDO](#)) cannot provide tailored advice for individual trips. Read this travel advice and carry out your own research before deciding whether to travel.

Emergency services in Japan

Ambulance: 119

Fire: 119

Police: 110

Contact your travel provider and insurer

Contact your travel provider and your insurer if you are involved in a serious incident or emergency abroad. They will tell you if they can help and what you need to do.

Refunds and changes to travel

For refunds or changes to travel, contact your travel provider. You may also be able to make a claim through insurance. However, insurers usually require you to talk to your travel provider first.

Find out more about [changing or cancelling travel plans](#), including:

- where to get advice if you are in a dispute with a provider
- how to access previous versions of travel advice to support a claim

Support from **FCDO**

FCDO has guidance on staying safe and what to do if you need help or support abroad, including:

- finding English-speaking [lawyers](#), [funeral directors](#) and [translators and interpreters](#) in Japan
- dealing with a [death in Japan](#)
- being [arrested or imprisoned](#) in Japan
- getting help if you're a [victim of crime](#)
- what to do if you're [in hospital](#)
- if you're [affected by a crisis](#), such as a terrorist attack

Contacting **FCDO**

Help abroad

See [how to get help from the UK government abroad](#) including in an emergency.

Help in the UK

You can call [ECDO](#) in London if you need urgent help because something has happened to a friend or relative abroad.

Telephone: 020 7008 5000 (24 hours)

[Find out about call charges](#)

Get travel advice updates

Sign up to [get email notifications](#) when this travel advice is updated.

Follow [ECDO](#):

- [travel advice on X](#)
- [travel advice on Facebook](#)

Risk information for British companies

The Overseas Business Risk service offers [information and advice for British companies operating in Japan](#) on how to manage political, economic, and business security-related risks.

PACK SMART

Only pack items you can replace, leave valuables at home. You will be less likely to attract criminals and if threatened, you won't be tempted to put up a fight to save your belongings.



Carry a duplicate wallet with small denomination notes and old cards that you could relinquish if threatened by robbers. Only pack items you can replace, leave valuables at home. You will be less likely to attract criminals and if threatened, you won't be tempted to put up a fight to save your belongings.



Always check the destination restrictions regarding medications when planning your trip.

STAY SAFE: Hotels



Request a hotel room between the third & seventh floor. Ground floor rooms should always be avoided as they are easily accessible from the outside. Higher levels mean in the event of a fire there are many stairs to navigate and in some countries firefighters may not have ladders capable of reaching higher than the seventh floor.



Check your room phone works in case you need to call reception for help.



Know where your fire exits are. Count the number of doors to the fire exit from your room so you can feel your way in the event of a fire and a smoke-filled corridor.



To prevent unauthorised entry into your hotel room, make sure the windows and doors lock. Bolt the deadbolt and use the door wedges you've brought with you from home to wedge the main door closed.

TRAVEL SAFE: Out & About



When you are out and about, be aware of your surroundings - don't display obvious wealth, such as expensive jewellery, watches and mobile phones.



Use ATMs inside banks and shopping centres, where there is greater security and CCTV. Safety in numbers. If you are travelling with colleagues, stay together for meals and trips out. If you are alone, avoid quiet areas and trust your instincts.

Road traffic accidents are still the greatest threat to travel safety.



- Use licensed taxis.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- Keep doors locked & windows up.
- Avoid night-time driving.
- If the driver is using a phone or driving dangerously, insist they slow down/stop using their phone.

Check in regularly. Use the 'Check In' button on the Solace Secure app so your location can be monitored and you can view all intelligence alerts within your vicinity.

SAFE TRAVEL: Health Tips

See a medical travel specialist at least 4 weeks before travel.

Ask about recommended vaccines for specific destinations.

First aid kit with regular & special medication for trip - carry in hand luggage.

Evacuation & travel insurance to cover health emergencies while abroad.



Take an extra month of prescribed medication for pre-existing conditions.
Risk of malaria - take precautions to prevent mosquito bites and take malaria pills as advised.



Avoid drinking alcohol and becoming dehydrated.
Verify & consume safe water and food. Have a supply of medicine for self-treatment of diarrhoea.



Excessive sun exposure should be minimised by the use of sunscreen - sun can be more intense over water, snow and at altitude.
Leave animals alone. Animal bites or scratches can transmit rabies.

THINK SAFE: Know Your Destination

Understand the culture of your destination. Dress and behave so as not to cause offence or draw attention.



Know if the tap water is suitable to drink if not; only accept water from a sealed bottle.
Avoid ice in your drinks & salad washed in tap water.

Research where you are travelling to. Make a note of the local emergency services number. Know the current security and medical threats and advice. See the FCO website for general information ([gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)).

DOCUMENT SAFE: Know Your Destination

Take photos/scans of your essential documents and email them to yourself.
You can then access them remotely if your belongings are stolen:

- Passport
- Driver's Licence
- Travel Insurance Document
- Visa
- Medical Certificates

For 24/7 travel risk advice and emergency assistance contact Solace Global
Risk operations: + 44 (0)1202 795 801

The Solace Secure desktop and app provide up-to-the-minute alerts, providing latest information on your travel location even when you are there.

CONTACT SOLACE GLOBAL RESPONSE TEAM

This report has been prepared for you by Solace Global Risk Ltd.

If you need urgent help, advice or assistance at any time please contact the 24/7 Response and Assistance Team.

If you have a question about this travel advice or any other location please email SGR@solaceglobal.com for further safety and security information.

For support using your Solace Secure platform or app please contact support@solaceglobal.com.

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