The Symbols of Hyogo

Prefectural Flag
The Chinese character “Hy” of “Hyogo” stands out as white waves against a cerulean background, representing Hyogo Prefecture facing seas on both its north and south sides.

Prefectural Flower: Nojigiku
The Wild Chrysanthemum, or Nojigiku in Japanese, which produces white flowers in November, was chosen as the flower of Hyogo Prefecture when NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) held an event to name a symbolic flower for each prefecture.

Prefectural Flag
The Chinese character “Hyo” of “Hyogo” stands out as white waves against a cerulean background, representing Hyogo Prefecture facing seas on both its north and south sides.

Prefectural Tree: Kusu-no-ki
With a form full of vigor and vitality, the Camphor Tree, or Kusu-no-ki in Japanese, is a fitting representation of the image of Hyogo Prefecture. Some trees that are particularly big in size and have beautiful shapes are made nature monuments of Hyogo.

Prefectural Bird: Kounotori
The Oriental White Stork, or Kounotori in Japanese, was designated by the Japanese Government as a specially protected animal in 1956. Captive breeding of storks and research for releasing them back to the wild is currently being conducted in the Prefectural Homeland for the Oriental White Stork in Toyooka City.

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Published by: Kobe Shimbum general printing Co., ltd.
Hyogo Prefecture - Gateway to the Asia-Pacific Region

Hyogo Prefecture, situated in the geographical center of Japan, is easily accessible to the world by sea and air. Within Japan, Hyogo Prefecture offers smooth and uninterrupted passage to various cities by extensive expressway, railway, and airline networks.

The Japanese archipelago, shaped like a bow, is located at the eastern end of the Eurasian Continent. Japan consists of four major islands and many smaller ones. Its land extends considerably both east to west and north to south, resulting in a diversity of climatic conditions around the country. The Kansai region, in which Hyogo Prefecture is located, has its own economic and cultural features that are distinct from those of the Tokyo metropolitan area.

Blessed with a central location, Hyogo Prefecture has developed quick and easy access to various places throughout Japan and around the world. Moreover, since the opening of the Port of Kobe in 1868, Hyogo has served as a gateway to Japan for the outside world. As access to the Prefecture developed, so did the exchange of cultures. Many aspects of Western culture, such as movies and golf, entered Japan through Hyogo and later have spread throughout the country. At the same time, karaoke, anime, and other aspects of Japanese culture have spread from Hyogo to the world.

### Airport Access

Kansai International Airport, or KIX, is Japan’s only 24-hour airport. Kobe, Hyogo’s capital, is one of the closest cities to the Airport. The Airport can be reached in approximately one hour from Kobe by express bus.

Kobe Airport, or UKB, is a domestic airport which has easier access. It is as little as 16 minutes from downtown Kobe via the Portliner train service and is also just half an hour away from KIX via a shuttle ferry service.

### The Port of Kobe

The Port of Kobe is a major international trade port that is connected to more than 130 countries and regions as well as over 500 ports globally through its various international liner routes to places such as North America, Europe, Australia, Asia and China. The port is equipped with a high-standard container terminal, playing an important role as a strategic international container port.

It is also one of the most popular cruise ports of call in Asia, with over 1,000 passenger boats calling at the port annually.

### Road Network

Major expressways that traverse Japan from east to west and from north to south pass through Hyogo Prefecture. Excellent access is available from Hyogo to cities outside of the Prefecture. Construction of the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge, the world’s longest suspension bridge, was completed in April of 1998, linking Hyogo Prefecture to the island of Shikoku.

### Railway Access

One of the world’s fastest trains, the Shinkansen, or bullet train, runs from Kobe to destinations east and west, making the travel time from Kobe to Tokyo only about two and a half hours. In combination with those of Osaka and Kyoto, Hyogo’s extensive transportation system, including various railways such as JR, Hankyu, Hohin, Sanyo, Kobe Dentetsu, and the Kobe Municipal Subway, make up an integrated commuter sphere in the larger Kansai metropolitan area.

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**Major networks in Japan**

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**Air routes and time between KIX and the world**

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**Kansai International Airport**

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**Port of Kobe**

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**Shinkansen**
Hyogo, Kansai, and the World

Hyogo Prefecture has developed into a highly internationalized region centered around the Port of Kobe, and now it serves as home to many international institutions. Hyogo forms the Kansai economic region together with Osaka and Kyoto.

A World Metropolis, Kansai

The area centered around Hyogo, Osaka, and Kyoto is called the Kansai region, and it was the center of Japan for over 1,000 years until the capital was moved to Tokyo in 1868. As a result, Kansai is rich with shrines, temples, and historic sites. About half of Japan’s designated national treasures and important cultural properties are located in the Kansai region. The area is also known for its diversified natural beauty, including forests, lakes, and the sea.

Unlike the Tokyo metropolitan area, Kansai is a decentralized region consisting of the three major cities of Osaka, Kobe, and Kyoto. The three cities respectively display features of a commercial city, an international city, and a historic city, forming a great economic sphere. Other large cities as well as smaller cities and towns all contribute to the area’s attractiveness and prosperity. With the global access of Kansai International Airport, the Kansai region is expected to become an international exchange base, mainly for the Asia-Pacific region.

Hyogo Within Kansai

According to ancient Japanese mythology, the Japanese archipelago came into existence with the formation of Awaji Island, which now belongs to Hyogo Prefecture. This legend shows Hyogo’s considerable contribution to the development of Japanese culture in ancient times. Hyogo has been left with a diversity of historical sites, including Himeji Castle, which was designated by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage site.

Historically, Hyogo has played a key role in developing transportation routes on land and by sea, and prospered from domestic and international exchange. Since the opening of the Port of Kobe in 1868, Hyogo has been a gateway to the world, serving as a center of international trade and a hub for international exchange. In 2018, Hyogo Prefecture marked the 150th anniversary of its establishment.

In terms of modern day attributes, Hyogo Prefecture serves as an international base for research projects that cover a wide range of areas. Research facilities that have been established in Hyogo include the world’s largest synchrotron radiation facility (SPring-8), the International EMIES Center for environmental management of enclosed coastal seas, and the WHO Kobe Centre, which conducts human health studies. Based on the lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, research activities for disaster management and prevention are under way at the Disaster Reduction and Human Revitalization Institution as well as the Asian Disaster Reduction Center. In addition, various other international research organizations are coming together in Hyogo Prefecture.
Hyogo Prefecture extends from the Japan Sea in the north to the Seto Inland Sea in the south, and further down to the Pacific Ocean through Awaji Island. Hyogo has an overall area of 8,401 square kilometers, with a population of about 5.5 million as of December 2017.

Hyogo Prefecture contains a rich variety of communities ranging from large cities to rural villages as well as isolated islands, and also has several diversified climatic and natural features. Various leisure activities can be enjoyed here, including swimming, skiing, and bathing in numerous hot springs. As a result, Hyogo Prefecture has become known as a Japan in Miniature. The Prefecture consists of five highly distinctive districts: Settsu (Kobe and Hanshin), Harima, Tajima, Tamba, and Awaji, each of which has its own unique history, climate, and industries.

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**Climate**

Due to the region’s vast land size, climates in Hyogo vary by region, and can be categorized into three different geographic zones - the southern area along the Seto Inland Sea, the northern area along the Japan Sea, and the mountainous area in the middle.

The climate in the south is moderate with little rain, while the cloudy and rainy north receives seasonal winds from Siberia in the winter and has a lot of snowfall.

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**Industries**

Most of the Prefecture’s population - over 90% - reside in the urban areas of Kobe, Hanshin, and Harima. Industries such as steel, shipbuilding, and machinery are concentrated in these large urban areas. In contrast, agricultural, forestry, and fishing industries are active in the districts of Tajima, Tamba, and Awaji, against the backdrop of beautiful rivers, mountains, and sea.

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**Leisure Activities**

As a result of Hyogo’s diversified climate and abundant natural features, swimming and other marine sports can be enjoyed in the summer in various places facing the Japan Sea and the Seto Inland Sea, while in the winter skiing can be enjoyed in the mountains of Tajima. Also, Arima hot springs, one of the oldest in Japan, as well as Kinosaki and Yumura hot springs, are all popular tourist attractions in Hyogo Prefecture.

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**Festivals and Events**

In various parts of the Prefecture, traditional culture has been passed down through the generations. Visitors can enjoy the traditional Awaji Ningyo Joruri puppet theater and the all-female Takarazuka Revue. There are also a variety of exciting events, such as the Nada Fighting Festival and Taka Ebisu as well as the Shumetsu Tai Festival (Chinese New Year festival) in Nankinmachi (Chinatown).

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**Map of Hyogo Prefecture**

Hyogo Prefecture extends from the Japan Sea in the north to the Seto Inland Sea in the south, and further down to the Pacific Ocean through Awaji Island. Hyogo has an overall area of 8,401 square kilometers, with a population of about 5.5 million as of December 2017.
Progress Toward Reconstruction From the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake

The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred in January 1995. Since the occurrence of this tragic disaster, various efforts have been made towards "Creative Reconstruction" with the aim of achieving more than merely returning the region to the pre-earthquake state.

Damage Caused by the Earthquake in Hyogo Prefecture (Finalized on May 19, 2006)

- Dead: 6,402
- Injured: 40,092
- Missing: 3
- Dead: 6,402

Amount and Breakdown of Damage (Estimated as of April 5, 1995)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Damage (in ¥ billions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>9,926.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railways</td>
<td>343.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressways</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public works (water, sewage)</td>
<td>285.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harbour</td>
<td>1,060</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reclaimed land</td>
<td>630</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities for education</td>
<td>450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities for agriculture, land</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities for drinking water</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas and electricity</td>
<td>94.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other public facilities</td>
<td>75.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9,926.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Restoration Process and Efforts Toward "Creative Reconstruction"

Despite difficult conditions, including severed traffic networks and paralyzed urban functions, steady restoration took place through the dedicated efforts of those involved and with generous assistance from around the world. In only six days following the Earthquake, amelioration of electricity was restored, with water and gas reconnected in three months.

The Priority Three-Year Reconstruction Plan was implemented to press toward the urgently needed reconstruction of living quarters for the victims, and also the restoration of industries and infrastructure such as roads, harbors, and railways. In addition, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Reconstruction Plan (Hyogo Phoenix Plan) was formulated with the aim of achieving "creative reconstruction" over a period of ten years. The Phoenix Plan calls for not only mere restoration but also the creation of urban communities that meet the needs of an increasingly aging society and Japan's highly maturing economy. As a result of efforts made in accordance with these plans, all railroad services were restored by August 1995, all expressways were reopened by the end of September 1995, and reconstruction work on harbor facilities at the Port of Kobe was completed at the end of March 1997. Also, construction of permanent housing for the victims is steadily progressing.

With the extent of restoration in housing, industries, and urban infrastructure accomplished thus far, the quantitative targets set in the Priority Three-Year Reconstruction Plan were successfully achieved.

The 10th and 20th anniversary memorial ceremonies of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake were held on January 17 in 2005 and 2015, both honored by the presence of Their Majesties The Emperor and Empress of Japan. As part of its comprehensive follow-up initiatives after reconstruction, Hyogo continues to exert utmost efforts to help disaster-hit elderly citizens regain their self-reliance, create sources of communal viability, and resolve other remaining challenges. At the same time, Hyogo is working toward forging a "disaster-ready culture," represented by people's activities for disaster risk reduction in everyday life, made possible by "remembering," "conveying," and "utilizing" the experience gained and lessons learned from the earthquake and by "preparing" for disasters to come.
The Best Location For Foreign-Affiliated Companies in Japan

(1) Foreign-Affiliated Companies Located in Hyogo

Aside from the Tokyo Metropolitan Area, Hyogo has been popular with foreign-affiliated companies and currently approximately eighty have established their Japanese headquarters here. The existence of a historically developed global personal network, an ideal living environment for foreigners, superior access to transportation and commodities distribution, and enhanced locational support services offered by the prefectural government are exceptional charms that make Hyogo an attractive business base.

Global companies such as Procter & Gamble, Nestlé, and Eli Lilly and Company have established their Japanese bases in Hyogo, and many other foreign-affiliated companies advance into Hyogo every year.

Recent case examples of advancement into Hyogo include Airbus Helicopters (France), the company with the top share in the global market for helicopters used by both the public and private sectors; DHL Global Forwarding Japan (Germany), which offers international cargo services using its global network; and Japan Pet Alliance, Inc. (China), which is engaged in the planning, development and manufacturing of supplementary food products, etc. for pet animals.

Hyogo offers opinion exchange meetings and seminars based on its network with foreign-affiliated companies within the prefecture. These measures are designed to reinforce the prefectural policy for the promotion of international economic exchange and to maintain and improve business location environment.

(2) The Best Locational Support Services by Hyogo Prefecture

(1) Locational Consultation at One-Stop Service Window

Hyogo Prefecture established the Hyogo-Kobe Investment Support Center (HKIS) with the cooperation of the City of Kobe and local economic organizations to offer comprehensive consultation service for companies investing in the prefecture. The HKIS provides very meticulous consultation services in response to each company’s needs, the main services include advice concerning administrative procedures for corporate registration and acquiring work visas, introduction of potential offices and industry infrastructure, presentation of local governments’ incentive measures for domestic and foreign companies that are considering investment in Hyogo. Furthermore, for companies that want specialized consultation regarding judicial affairs or tax services, the HKIS provides the opportunity for free consultation service by English speaking lawyers, CPAs, and judicial scriveners.

The HKIS also has a business office in Tokyo and provides information about the investment environment in Hyogo to companies that are considering branching out from the Tokyo metropolitan area.

HKIS Homepage: http://www.hyogo-kobe.jp/

(2) Locational Support Measures to Minimize Businesses’ Initial Investment

The Hyogo Prefectural Ordinance concerning Invigoration of Economy and Employment through Promotion of Business Establishment designates certain areas as International Economic Areas, or foreign and foreign-affiliated business cluster formation zones. For foreign-affiliated companies that are looking to invest in the area, Hyogo has prepared a wide array of incentives including a corporate enterprise tax reduction for large companies and subsidies for office rent and the new employment of local workers.

Hyogo provides offices during the preparation period for free for foreign companies that are considering starting up their businesses here. Furthermore, Hyogo has prepared buildings which are convenient for companies because they are equipped with spaces for different work purposes including assembly, R&D, and offices.

Hyogo offers some of the best locational support services in Japan; companies can set up their businesses quickly with the least investment risk here.

(3) Growing Business Benefited from Advanced R&D Facilities in Hyogo

Hyogo is home to research facilities that boast global top-class performance: the large-scale synchrotron radiation facility SPring-8 and the x-ray free electron laser facility SACLA in the Harima Science Garden City, as well as the supercomputer K on Kobe Port Island. Having this many world-leading research institutions within a mere 80 km area is rare, even globally. Around these facilities are a wealth of public and private research organizations as well as universities, making these areas two major, world-class bases for knowledge building both in quantity and quality. It is expected that more and more companies and researchers will continue to gather, inspiring the development of new technologies and creation of new industries.

Harima Science Garden City

Located in the south-western region of Hyogo, Harima Science Garden City is home to a cluster of nanoscale analysis and research facilities, centered around one of the world’s largest synchrotron radiation facilities, SPring-8 (Super Photon Ring-8 Gev). SPring-8 is not only for academic research, but also for industrial use by companies, which accounts for approx. 20% of the total use. SPring-8 is expected to produce a synergetic increase in capability when used with SACLA, a facility which has been developed as a national key technology project and that produces the world’s best-performance X-ray laser beam.

Kobe Port Island

Advanced medical technology R&D bases and health care companies have been converging on Kobe Port Island, a man-made island offshore of Kobe City Center, to form the Kobe Biomedical Innovation Cluster. In addition, the supercomputer K, an ultra high-speed computational system developed as a national key technology project, has been widely used by companies to support state-of-the-art research activities related to drug development, industrial product design, and more.

Hyogo Prefecture offers the best support for the success of incoming businesses and an optimal living environment to welcome foreign-affiliated companies to the region.

Hyogo Prefecture
Products

Ranging from natural bounties such as agricultural products cultivated in the region's vast land area and seafood from the surrounding bodies of waters, to traditional crafts and delicious sake and confectionery, Hyogo's local products make memorable souvenirs and are enjoyed by many visitors.

Agricultural Products

Various parts of the region have devised unique ways of cultivating agricultural products according to their local climates. The Tamba District produces black soybeans called kuro-mame, which are widely used for meals and confectioneries. Imushiri Soba noodles in the Tajima District, often called San Soba as they are served on locally made white porcelain china (sara in Japanese), are popular among visitors, who often enjoy competing with each other over the number of plates they can eat. Cattle bred in the Tajima District are known as the origin of several top beef brands, such as the world-famous Kobe Beef, Sanda Beef, and Awaji Beef. The rich taste of this beef can be enjoyed in several different dishes such as steaks, shabu-shabu, and sukiyaki.

Fishery Products

Hyogo is one of the very few prefectures in Japan that face two bodies of water—the Japan Sea and the Seto Inland Sea. Because of this excellent location, Hyogo is blessed with abundant marine resources. The Matsuba Crab from the Japan Sea is called the king of winter delicacies. Its sweet and delicious taste, enjoyed raw, baked, or boiled, always gives a sense of satisfaction. Octopus from the Seto Inland Sea is well known for its taste and chewy texture. Moreover, Akashiyaki, locally known as takoyaki, is a ball-shaped baked batter made of flour, soup, and egg that contains chopped octopus, and is enjoyed by people throughout Japan. Anago (conger eel) from the Seto Inland Sea is known for its soft meat and melting texture, while fresh and tough tai (sea bream) that comes from the strong current of the Akashi Straits and Naruto Straits is a delight for the eyes as well as the taste buds.

Traditional Crafts

The colorful climates of Hyogo have been the backdrop for a variety of traditional crafts that are unique to each locality. The Harima District is home to various superb crafts such as soroban (Japanese abacus) made in Ono City using high quality timbers and bamboo, wrought tools in Miki City often used as carpenter tools, and Banshu fishhooks that resemble bait. The Tamba District is famous for the production of Tamba Earthenware, one of Japan's six oldest potteries, while the Tajima District produces the beautiful white Imushiri Earthenware and Toyooka woven willow products. The traditional skills and professionalism of the craftworkers have been passed down for generations, and still remain in various parts of Hyogo.

Sake

There are many places famous for sake (Japanese rice wine) production in Hyogo. In particular, Nada Gogo (literally the “five quarters of the Nada area”), located in the coastal area east of Kobe, is one of the biggest sake brewing communities in Japan. As many as forty breweries are located in an area extending 12 km from west to east. The perfect combination of subterranean mineral water flowing through Mt. Rokko, or miyamizu, the brewer's rice called Yamada-nishiki harvested in the Harima District, chilly winds called Rokko Oroshi blowing from Mt. Rokko, and the seasoned techniques of ashi, chief brewers from the Tamba and Tajima Districts, helped Nada Gogo establish their renowned brands. Moreover, the area's excellent location facing the Seto Inland Sea has also contributed to the development of Nada Gogo by making the shipping of products easier. With Nada Gogo, in addition to many other sake breweries producing unique brands, Hyogo Prefecture is often called the sake brewery of Japan. These sake brands allow visitors to enjoy their stay drinking, talking, and laughing.

Confectioneries

Since the opening of the Port of Kobe in the mid-19th century, Hyogo has functioned as the gateway of Japan to the world. People from western countries introduced their style of sweets through this port, and western-style confectioneries have now grown to represent Hyogo's confection business. There are many major confectionary factories as well as cozy cake and sweets shops in and around Kobe City. On the other hand, traditional Japanese sweets made from local ingredients, conveying old-fashioned flavors, are still common in various parts of the region.

Ranging from natural bounties such as agricultural products cultivated in the region's vast land area and seafood from the surrounding bodies of waters, to traditional crafts and delicious sake and confectionery, Hyogo's local products make memorable souvenirs and are enjoyed by many visitors.
Tourism

Hyogo has a variety of tourist locations, including scenic sites created by abundant nature, hot springs loved by famous writers and artists, and historic and cultural heritage sites such as Himeji Castle.

- **Nature**
Hyogo Prefecture enjoys multi-faceted climate and geographical features due to its vast land area extending vertically from the Japan Sea in the north to the Seto Inland Sea in the south.

The northern part of the Tajima District, showing beautiful geological features and landslides of great value, constitutes the San’in Kaigan Geopark, which has been admitted to the Global Geoparks Network. The Yotakujū Temple in Sanda City is famous for a major flower viewing spot, where as many as 1.5 million azaleas of about 650 species blossoms in June and July. The Maya View Line is a cable car moving over downtown Kobe from which both the scenic cityscape of Kobe and the panoramic view of the sea can be enjoyed. Across the Akashi Straits from the Honshū mainland toward Awaji Island is Awaji Yumebutai, where gazing was beautifully transformed to a former gravel quarry used for reclaiming land for the Kansai International Airport. The Awaji Yumebutai consists of a luxury hotel, international conference center, greenhouse, restaurants, and a national government park. In Awaji Island people can also visit a museum preserving the Nojima Fault, which was exposed to the ground surface when the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred, and the Awajishima Bokkoji farm park, where visitors can pet various animals. In the Naruto Straits lying between Awaji Island and Shikoku, large-scale whirlpools are major tourist attractions.

- **Hot Springs**
There are many famous hot springs in Hyogo. Arima Hot Spring is one of the oldest hot springs in Japan. It was allegedly fancied by a famous feudal warlord, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and there still remains in Arima various remnants of his days. Kinosaki Hot Spring, located in the Tajima District, has a history of about 1,400 years. There, visitors enjoy touring the seven public baths while strolling through old and nostalgic streets lined with willow trees. Also in the Tajima District is Yumura Hot Spring, which has an 1,170-year-old history. There, the 90°C water from the springhead can even be used to boil eggs.

There are many other hot spring resorts of various sizes in many parts of Hyogo and they are all prepared to welcome visitors in a hospitable manner.

- **Sports**
Many golf courses have been established within Hyogo, including the Kobe Golf Club that was opened in 1903 as Japan’s first golf course. As of the end of December 2016, there are 167 golf courses in Hyogo, more than any other prefecture in Japan. Hyogo’s quality golf courses are popular among many golf players.

The Hachi Highlands in the Tajima District is a famous ski resort in Hyogo, where off-season activities such as camping and hiking are also available.

Along the Sea of Japan and the Seto Inland Sea are beautiful coasts boasting excellent water and sand quality, which attract many sea-bathers in the summer.

- **History / Culture**
In Hyogo Prefecture, there are many old and cultural sites that often played a role in Japanese history. Such tangible and intangible cultural and traditional heritages still remaining in various parts of the region appeal to many visitors.

Himeji Castle, also known as the White Heron Castle, still preserves the original exterior appearance and interior structure that have been kept unchanged since its construction. This national treasure was also inscribed on the World Heritage List of UNESCO. The Kogorō Temple constructed in the Tamba District some 690 years ago in famous for its beautiful turning of the leaves. A maple tree that is said to have been brought back from China turns its color to a particularly beautiful bright red. Built in Inakadai Town of the Tajima District in 1871, the Shikoku-in drum tower, which was used to announce the time by beating the drum every hour, is now preserved as a symbolic chukoden of the Town.

The Nankinmachi Shire is known for enduring the god of happiness and business success. More than a million people visit the Nankinmachi Shire for the famous Taka Hina Festival held on or around January 10 ("Hina" in Japanese every year. The Nada Festival is the autumn festival of the Matsubara Yahata Shrine in Himeji City. It is also known as the Nada Fighting Festival due to the wild movement of portable shrines that frequently run into each other. Those portable shrines as well as special stands lining up along streets attract many visitors every year. Ako City is a venue for a popular two-life story from the Edo era, known as the "Ichiwa-gumi," which has also been featured in various novels and films. The parade of the Ako Loyal Samurai Festival called the Ako Gishi-sai, which reenacts the old days of Ako, is a must-see attraction for visitors. The Awaji Puppet Theater, a classical art in which a group of three skillful puppeteers manipulate one puppet, is an important Tangible Cultural Heritage of Japan.

- **Metropolis / City / Town**
Metropolitan, city, and town areas of Hyogo pride themselves on their colorful characteristics that are unique to each locality.

Kitano Tenjin in the northern mountainside of Kobe City, which used to be the residential area for foreign residents, still gives many tourists a western atmosphere. In the southern bayside, Kobe Harborland, consisting of an amusement park and shopping zones, draws many visitors of all ages, while in the central area the Nankinmachi Chinatown adds to the multicultural attractiveness of Kobe City.

In the Hanshin area extending between Kobe and Osaka, there is Takarazuka City, known as the home of the spectacular Takarazuka Revue performed by a unique all-women troupe. There is also Nishinomiya City, which accommodates a famous baseball mecca known as Koshien Stadium.

There are various historic places all around the Hanshin District, such as Tatsuno, Ako, and Himeji. In particular, Himeji City developed together with a world famous castle whose graceful appearance is often described as that of a white heron.

Toyooka City in the Tajima District is a place blessed with abundant nature. Here, various efforts have been made to release oriental white storks—the symbolic bird of Hyogo—back into the wild, and to create an environment where people and nature can coexist in harmony. Towns in the Tamba District are famous for their lush forest environment, where Awaji Island is known as an island of parks full of beautiful trees and flowers.

The energetic features of Hyogo’s metropolitan, city, and town areas, highlighted by such tourist sites, attract many visitors every day.
Hyogo’s Attractive Facilities

Hyogo Prefecture is home to a wide variety of attractive facilities, such as the cluster of international organizations located within HAT Kobe.

- **HAT Kobe**
  A model city based on health and welfare for the 21st century equipped with housing, commercial facilities, and disaster risk reduction facilities, being constructed in HAT Kobe. Established in the City are the WHO Kobe Centre, which conducts research for health promotion, the International EMCECS Center, which deals with the environmental management of coastal seas and coastal regions of the world, and the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution, which engages in disaster management based on the experiences and lessons learned from the Earthquake. The International Recovery Platform and the Asian Disaster Reduction Center were also established to provide support for reconstruction from natural disasters. Through these and other international organizations such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the City serves as a global hub for international institutions.

- **Hariima Science Garden City**
  Located in a rich natural environment, Hariima Science Garden City is a fascinating city designed to promote harmonious coexistence between people, nature, and science. The city is laid out in such a way that residential and recreational zones surround a concentration of research facilities and advanced technology industries. The City houses various facilities such as SPring-8 – the world’s largest third-generation synchrotron radiation facility and X-ray Free Electron Laser facility SACLA. In addition, it is also home to the Hyogo Prefectural Center for Advanced Science and Technology, the University of Hyogo as well as the Hyogo Ion Beam Medical Center, which conducts R&D of cutting-edge cancer treatment methods. SPring-8 is capable of producing extremely bright light by accelerating electrons to light speed while SACLA, a facility located adjacent to SPring-8 can instantaneously measure and analyze ultra-slow movement and changes in chemical reactions and nanostructures at an atomic level. Utilized together, the City’s facilities act as the world’s highest level performance research base with applications in a wide range of fields such as new materials and drugs.

- **Kobe Biomedical Innovation Cluster**
  The Kobe Biomedical Innovation Cluster on Kobe Port Island has grown into one of Japan’s largest medical clusters. The project was launched with the aim of integrating medical-related companies, one of the growing industrial fields in the 21st century.

- **Next-Generation Supercomputer Facility “K”**
  Developed by RIKEN, the construction of the next-generation supercomputer “K” was completed on June 29, 2012. Highlighted as a Key Technology of National Importance, the aim of “K” is to further raise the level of simulation science technology, which is now solidifying its footing as a method of modern scientific technology in line with theory and experimentation. K’s system can perform at the cutting-edge, high-performance level of ten petaflops (ten to the sixteenth power) per second, among the fastest in the world. With its exceptional performance capability, it is expected to lead the development of the nation’s scientific technology and industries by being available to comprehensive fields like life science, nanotechnology, geographic environmental research, nuclear power and more.

- **Awaji Yumebutai**
  Awaji Yumebutai is one of the ongoing projects aimed at the creation of a garden island open to the world, serving as a base for international exchange in the Osaka Bay Area. It is the core of Awaji Island International Garden City, which is intended to be a city of communication, where people from all over the world can interact under the general theme of “communication between people, nature, and the world.” Awaji Yumebutai was built on the site of a former gravel quarry whose greenery was restored, and utilizes the surrounding dynamic, sloping environment to host several types of international exchange facilities such as a hotel, an international conference center, a greenhouse, an open-air theater, and a park.

- **Hyogo Performing Arts Center**
  In addition to presenting world-renowned performing art productions and performances as well as introducing top-class foreign and domestic arts and culture, the Hyogo Performing Arts Center aims to broadly convey to the world information about arts and culture by acting as a center for the exchange of such.
International Exchange and Cooperation

Hyogo Prefecture has internationalized and modernized itself with the opening of the Port of Kobe. The Prefecture is making efforts to create cities where people from across the globe can live in comfort, and is addressing various challenges that are common to all of humanity in collaboration with various countries around the world.

Centered around the Port of Kobe, which was opened to the rest of the world in 1868, Hyogo Prefecture has developed into a cosmopolitan region leading the modernization and internationalization of Japan. Since the opening of the port, the Prefecture has become a more and more comfortable place to live for non-Japanese residents, offering such conveniences as many housing units designed to international standards, international schools that provide first-class education, hospitals and consulting institutions that offer multilingual services, and a number of churches. At present, almost 100,000 overseas residents from about 150 countries reside in Hyogo.

The 21st century is a time of great exchange. Just as this new century was dawning, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake robbed us of many precious lives. During the reconstruction process from the disaster, graciously support was received from all over Japan and abroad, making us realize how important it is for us to live together with other people in the world and help each other.

Some of the problems local governments face today require collective efforts by many regions regardless of the boundaries of districts and nations. Therefore, Hyogo Prefecture is promoting multilateral cooperative frameworks in addition to the traditional bilateral exchange among our overseas sister states and affiliated regions.

Meanwhile, the newly developed HAT Kobe has become home to a collection of international institutions that address a wide range of global issues, such as disaster management, environment, health, and humanitarian affairs. In addition to the accumulation of international research institutions and collaboration with local governments abroad, the Prefecture encourages the participation and cooperation of non-governmental organizations and companies that engage in activities for international exchange and cooperation. Through such measures, Hyogo Prefecture hopes to contribute to the peace and stability of the world in the 21st century by advancing efforts to solve common issues for all humanity.

Hyogo’s Partners around the World

Sister Relationships of Cities and Towns

Hyogo Offices
Administration

Hyogo Prefecture is making a variety of efforts to create a "Beautiful Hyogo" where people can live their lives in caring communities that are rich in natural and cultural beauty.

The Constitution of Japan sets forth a system of local autonomous governance based on the concept that in a democracy it is important for local residents to have a strong voice in the management of local administration. This system of self-governance is founded on a dual structure of local authorities, which consists of municipalities and prefectural governments. Both of these public bodies maintain respective executive branches and assemblies and have the authority to establish regulations, manage property, and execute regional administrative work. The members of the assemblies and the heads of the executive branches are selected through direct election by residents in the regions where the local public bodies are located, and their term of office is four years each.

Municipal public bodies, of which there are approximately 1,700 in the entire nation, provide administrative services closely related to the daily living of residents. The 47 prefectural public bodies in Japan contain numerous municipalities and serve wide areas. These bodies are responsible for formulating regional projects in each prefecture, improving the health and welfare of prefectoral citizens including hygiene, executing administrative work entrusted by the national government, and coordinating the work done by the municipalities. Hyogo Prefecture, composed of 29 cities and 12 towns, employs approximately 60,000 civil servants, including police officers and teachers, who are engaged in public work. The organization for handling the administration of the Prefecture consists of a prefectural assembly (a legislative body), the Governor and his secretariat (executive body), and administrative commissions, such as the Prefectural Board of Education.

Urban Planning for Comfortable Living

Under the concept of creating a living environment complete with strong community ties and rich natural surroundings, the Prefecture offers guidance on regional planning, coordinates planning that involves multiple municipalities, and makes decisions for large-scale urban planning. The Prefecture is also responsible for the establishment and management of prefectural-run housing. In order to respond to the increasing importance placed on sports and leisure activities, the Prefecture is involved in the management, maintenance, and establishment of prefectural parks.

Health and Medical Services

In order to provide high-quality health and medical services, the Prefecture subsidizes the modernization of hospitals and promotes the construction of prefectoral medical institutions throughout its jurisdiction to create regional bases of medical services. In addition, Hyogo operates the "Wide-Area Disaster and Emergency Medical Information System," providing a medical hot-line throughout the Prefecture to reinforce emergency medical care on holidays and at night. The Prefecture also holds various health classes to raise health awareness among the public.

Infrastructure for Transportation and Daily Living

Hyogo Prefecture is constantly working to maintain and improve its wide-ranging transportation network, including roads, highways, airports, and seaports in the Prefecture. In order to prevent disasters and protect the lives and property of its citizens, the Prefecture is advancing projects to create thoroughly disaster-resistant cities, including river conservation works and dam construction.

Environmental Protection

The Prefecture reviews industrial activities and life-styles of the citizens in order to promote a creation of an environment-friendly society in which people live in harmony with nature. Its activities for raising environmental consciousness among citizens include support for recycling campaigns, efforts to stop unnecessary idling of automobiles, and promotion of low-emission cars. In order to conserve the environment on a global scale, the Prefecture established the International EMICS Center, an international organization for advancing the environmental management of enclosed coastal seas and coastal regions of the world, and has supported its activities. Another project for the environment put forward by the Prefecture is the protection and breeding of oriental white storks, an endangered and specially protected species, in an effort to return them to life in the wild.

Promotion of Welfare

By establishing the "Ordinance for the Creation of a Society Dedicated to Public Welfare" in 1992, the first of its kind among local governments in Japan, Hyogo Prefecture is promoting a welfare-conscious society in which compassion and consciousness prevail in the minds of the people. Construction of barrier-free public facilities and cooperative housing quarters is an example embodying the concept behind the ordinance. In order to realize an affluent and lively senior society and develop communities in which the elderly, people with disabilities, and other citizens can live in comfort and security, the Prefecture is advancing projects such as the construction of nursing homes for the elderly and the establishment of a system of home-visits by nursing services.

Promotion of Arts and Culture

In order to expand the base of artistic and cultural activities available to its citizens, Hyogo Prefecture promotes arts and culture by granting subsidies for organizations related with arts and culture, and actively supporting performances by the Piccolo Theater Company. The Hyogo Performing Arts Center serves as a base to showcase world-class artistic performances, promote international exchange between performing arts groups, and foster cultural activities of prefectoral residents.

Promotion of Sports and Leisures

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Comprehensive Promotions of the Industries

The Prefecture grants a variety of low-interest loans to small and medium-sized businesses for financing and modernizing their facilities. To promote regional industries, support is also offered for the group-transfer of facilities to industrial zones, development of new products, and holding of trade fairs. Regional businesses are also given assistance, through support for the maintenance and construction of shopping arcades and store buildings. Moreover, the Prefecture subsidizes and invests in venture arcades and store buildings. Furthermore, the Prefecture promotes the creation and development of new industries, encouraging the establishment and fostering of new entrepreneurs. In addition to the encouragement of businesses and the promotion of the future generation of industries, the Prefecture also subsidizes and invests in venture arcades and store buildings. Moreover, the Prefecture promotes the creation and development of next-generation industries. In addition to promoting trade and business attraction, the Prefecture has also been promoting tourist attractions, and tourism campaigns are underway to attract more domestic and foreign visitors.

Comprehensive Promotions of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

The Prefecture also promotes camp programs for students to learn through nature and outdoor activities. In order to encourage the creation and development of agricultural infrastructure such as the construction of drainage systems, the Prefecture has been promoting agricultural facilities, including the introduction of new farming machines. The Prefecture is also responsible for maintaining agricultural infrastructure in fisheries, including the installation of underwater reefs to promote the breeding and raising of marine resources. In the area of forestry, the Prefecture engages in forestry maintenance to conserve forest resources, prevent disasters, and secure the safety of the living environment.

Comprehensive Promotions of Education

The Prefecture establishes and manages educational facilities, including schools, libraries, and museums. The Prefecture also supports educational facilities, including schools, libraries, and museums. The Prefecture also supports and maintains schools for students to learn through nature and outdoor activities. In addition to the funding and operation of educational facilities, the Prefecture also offers subsidies and loans for the installation of new farming machines in the field of fish-culturing, including the construction of drainage systems. With regards to the fishing industry, a number of positive steps have been taken particularly in regards to the fishing industry, a number of positive steps have been taken particularly in the field of fish-culturing, including the introduction of new farming machines. The Prefecture also supports and maintains schools for students to learn through nature and outdoor activities.

History

Hyogo Prefecture was established in 1868 when the Port of Kobe was opened to the world. At that time, the Hyogo area consisted of four prefectures: Hyogo, Shikami, Toyooka, and Myodo, which were brought together into the single prefecture of Hyogo in 1876. Since then, Hyogo has contributed to the modernization of Japan as an important contact point with overseas countries.

- 1868: Hyogo Prefecture was established.
- 1874: Railway service started between Osaka and Kobe.
- 1876: The Red Kobe Prefectural Assembly was opened.
- 1882: The Kobe Port Island Exhibition “Portopia ‘81” was held.
- 1891: Hyogo Prefecture contained 2 cities, 26 towns, and 402 villages.
- 1902: The Hyogo Prefectural office building, the current Hyogo House, was completed.
- 1937: The first gubernatorial election was carried out.
- 1951: The 1st Kobe Marathon was held.
- 1952: “Hyogo: Make It Your Destination” was conducted.
- 1959: The Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Archaeology was opened.
- 1964: The 25th National Confectionary Exposition in Hyogo was held.
- 1972: The Akashi Kaikyo Bridge was opened.
- 1975: The Hyogo House, was completed.
- 1981: The Kobe Port Island Exhibition “Portopia ‘81” was held.
- 1989: The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake 10th Anniversary Memorial Service was held.
- 1990: The opening of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Memorial Park was held.
- 1991: The Akashi Kaikyo Bridge was opened.
- 1992: The SPring-8, a large-scale synchrotron radiation facility, began operations.
- 1993: Kobe Airport was opened.
- 1994: The Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Archaeology was opened.
- 1998: The Akashi Kaikyo Bridge was opened.
- 2000: The International Gardening and Landscaping Exhibition “Japan Flora 2000” was held.
- 2005: The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake 10th Anniversary Memorial Service was held.
- 2011: The 1st Kobe Marathon was held.
- 2012: The Kobe Port Island Exhibition “Portopia ‘12” was held.
- 2014: “Yume Taji 2014” project was carried out.
- 2015: The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake 20th Anniversary Memorial Ceremony was held.
- 2016: The G7 Kobe Health Ministers’ Meeting was held.
- 2018: The 150th anniversary of Hyogo Prefecture was marked.

The history of Hyogo Prefecture includes significant milestones in various fields such as transportation, industrial development, and tourism, reflecting the region’s contributions to the modernization of Japan and its role as a contact point with overseas countries.