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Different climates

Japan is a very long country, stretching for more than 1,864 mi. (3,000 km) from north to south. If you traveled from northern Japan to southern Japan, you would pass through a number of different climates. Hokkaido, the most northerly island, has very cold, snowy winters and cool summers. Honshu, Japan's largest island, has a milder climate. Farther south, the island of Kyushu enjoys mild winters and hot, humid summers.

Much of Japan enjoys hot summers during which fields of colorful flowers, such as these marigolds, come into bloom.



Cold winters, wet summers

If you spent the winter in Japan, you'd probably prefer to stay on the eastern side of the country. The winters there tend to be clear, dry, and mild. Winters on the western side of the country are much more fierce. The people who live there have to dress warmly to protect themselves against bitterly cold winds blowing in from Russia and heavy snows. Japan's summers can be very wet, with many rainy days. In late summer, Japan is often hit by revolving tropical storms, known as typhoons. Typhoon winds can blow at up to 124 mph (200 kph). That's almost twice as fast as cars can travel on the highway! Typhoon winds can cause a lot of damage to buildings.



During the annual Sapporo Snow and Ice Festival on the island of Hokkaido, people carve giant statues out of ice.

During the rainy season in the summer, downpours are common and people carry umbrellas to stay dry.



YOU'VE GOT MAIL

Yokohama, where I live, is a port on the east coast of Honshu. In June, it rains almost every day. You have to wear plastic shoes and a raincoat to keep dry when you go out. When it has been raining a lot, the streets are filled with puddles, which are fun to splash around in. Sometimes the winds are very strong. Then, it can be difficult to walk and you have to stay indoors. When you look out of the window, you can see people's umbrellas being blown inside out by the wind.

Keiko