

Japan electricity

The voltage in Japan is 100 Volt, which is different from North America (120V), Central Europe (230V) and most other regions of the world. Japanese electrical plugs and outlets resemble North American ones. Plugs come in various versions, but most commonly they are non-polarized and ungrounded with two pins. Grounded pins come either with three pins or with two pins and a ground wire.

Some North American equipment will work fine in Japan without an adapter and vice versa; however, certain equipment, especially equipment involving heating (e.g. hair dryers), may not work properly or even get damaged. If you intend to buy electronic appliances in Japan for use outside of Japan, you are advised to look for equipment specifically made for overseas tourists.

The frequency of electric current is 50 Hertz in eastern Japan (including Tokyo, Yokohama, Tohoku, Hokkaido) and 60 Hertz in western Japan (including Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Shikoku, Kyushu); however, most equipment is not affected by this frequency difference. A possible exception are timing devices, such as some clocks.

Japan is a major consumer of energy, ranking fifth in the world by primary energy use. Fossil fuels accounted for 88% of Japan's primary energy in 2019.¹; Japan imports most of its energy due to scarce domestic resources. As of 2022, the country imports 97% of its oil and is the largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) importer globally.³;

Japan is increasing its reliance on renewable energy to replace imported fossil fuels, and in 2019 renewable energy accounted for 7.8% of primary energy supply. Japan has committed to reaching net zero emissions by 2050, setting a target to reduce GHG emissions by 46% from 2013 levels by 2030.⁴;

Japan initiated its first commercial nuclear power reactor in 1966, establishing nuclear energy as a strategic national priority from 1973 onwards. Following the Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011, this strategy underwent re-evaluation but was ultimately upheld. Prior to the accident, nuclear reactors contributed about 30% of Japan's electricity, with the country now aiming for nuclear energy to account for at least 20% of its electricity production by 2030.⁵; The Fukushima accident also led to a 16% reduction in total primary energy supply (TPES) from 2010 to 2019.

2012R = CO2 calculation criteria changed, numbers updated

Japan's rapid industrial growth since the end of World War II doubled the nation's energy consumption every five years into the 1990s. During the 1960-72 period of accelerated growth, energy consumption grew much faster than GNP, doubling Japan's consumption of world energy. By 1976, with only 3% of the world's population, Japan was consuming 6% of global energy supplies.

Compared with other nations, electricity in Japan is relatively expensive,⁸; and, since the loss of nuclear power after the earthquake and tsunami disaster at Fukushima, the cost of electricity has risen significantly.⁹;

In 1950, coal supplied half of Japan's energy needs, hydroelectricity one-third, and oil the rest. By 2001, the contribution of oil had increased to 50.2% of the total, with rises also in the use of nuclear power and natural gas. Japan now depends heavily on imported fossil fuels to meet its energy demand.¹⁰;

In the wake of the two oil crises of the 1970s (1973 and 1979), Japan made efforts to diversify energy resources in order to increase energy security. Japan's domestic oil consumption dropped slightly, from around 5.1 million barrels (810,000 m³) of oil per day in the late 1980s to 4.9 million barrels (780,000 m³) per day in 1990. While the country's use of oil declined, its use of nuclear power and natural gas rose substantially. Several Japanese industries, for example electric power companies and steelmakers, switched from petroleum to coal, most of which is imported. Japan's proved oil reserves total an estimated 44 million barrels.¹³;

The state stockpile equals about 92 days of consumption and the privately held stockpiles equal another 77 days of consumption for a total of 169 days or 579 million barrels (92,100,000 m³).¹⁴;¹⁵; The Japanese SPR is run by the Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation.¹⁶;

Japan was the fifth-largest oil consumer and fourth-largest crude oil importer in the world in 2019.¹⁷;

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