

Table 1**Population Distribution**

Prefectural Population		Major Cities	
Fukuoka	4 790 000	Fukuoka	1 182 700
Kumamoto	1 848 000	Kita-kyushu	1 023 900
Kagoshima	1 810 000	Kumamoto	563 900
Yamaguchi	1 588 000	Kagoshima	529 400
Nagasaki	1 577 000	Nagasaki	442 400
Oita	1 243 000		
Okinawa	1 222 000		
Miyazaki	1 176 000		
Saga	880 000		

Labour is more available and less expensive in Kyushu, one of the principal incentives behind the relocation of a number of companies, foremost among which was Toyota's decision to move a major manufacturing facility from Nagoya.

There are 53 universities and colleges in Kyushu with a combined enrolment of 170 000 students, as well as 67 vocational schools and junior colleges. Several recently founded advanced technical high schools are now educating another 8 000 students.

The population is a little older than the national average, and the university entrance rate somewhat lower. However, highly educated employees are easily attracted to Kyushu by its lifestyle advantages over the congestion of Tokyo.

The people of Kyushu are traditionally known for their relaxed approach to life and their pleasant disposition. Many of Kyushu's integrated circuit manufacturers came to the island precisely because they were able to offer this lifestyle to employees.

The commercial centres of Fukuoka and Kita-kyushu are bustling cosmopolitan areas with an eye on the future, including ties with the international community. Kyushu has one twin-city in Canada; the town of Obama-cho in Nagasaki prefecture is twinned with Banff, Alberta.

Geography and Transportation

Kyushu is mountainous and has an abundance of natural harbours which have been the source of a thriving transportation business, prosperous fishing fleets and aquaculture farms, and hold future promise for marine recreation. The coal mines and steel mills which fostered Japan's rapid industrialization are all located in one mountain range stretching from the northern part of Kyushu to Yamaguchi prefecture in southern Honshu.

For many years the mountains have also isolated many communities from the rest of the country. In fact, a major highway system that will finally provide efficient north/south and east/west land-transportation corridors is just now being completed. The road link between Fukuoka and Kagoshima will reduce travelling time to five hours.

Of Japan's 12 international airports, four are located in Kyushu, which offers direct links to most of Japan and 15 major centres in Asia. Each day 126 flights operate between Kyushu's various cities and Tokyo, including 48 from Fukuoka alone.

The rail system blankets the region, and the bullet train runs 63 round-trip connections between Fukuoka and Tokyo/Osaka every day. However, the service does not yet extend to the southern part of the island.

Kyushu's climate is milder than that of the other main islands in the Japanese archipelago. The pleasant climate has attracted a number of retirement-community developments, and is one of the advantages of building resorts in the area. The average temperature for Fukuoka in the north is 16°C, and 17.3°C for its southerly neighbour, Kagoshima. Rainfall is plentiful as in all parts of Japan; most of the island receives over 195 cm (78 in.) annually.