

photo by Dick Thomas Johnson

## Mini Fact:

“Tokyo” means “east capital” in Japanese.

# Welcome to Tokyo

After a year’s delay because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Games of the XXXII Olympiad will take place in Tokyo, Japan, starting on July 23.

Next week, we’ll look more closely at the games, but this week The Mini Page learns more about this huge Asian city.

## Getting to know Japan

Japan is a nation of 6,852 islands in the Pacific Ocean, near the coast of Asia. Most of its land is mountainous, and most people live near the coasts.

More than 125 million people live in Japan, although the country is slightly smaller than the state of California (where about 40 million people live). About 30% of Japanese people live in the capital of Tokyo.

The country lies along the Ring of Fire, an active area of volcanoes and earthquakes in the Pacific Ocean. Japan has 111 volcanoes and often experiences **tsunamis**, or large sea waves caused by an earthquake.

The prime minister and cabinet are the leaders of Japan’s government. There is also an emperor, but he plays a mostly ceremonial role.



Image courtesy Tokyo2020

## The capital city

Tokyo is home to about 37 million people. Centuries ago, it was a fishing village called Edo.

Today, the city is a global business center, with a wide variety of companies headquartered there.

Tokyo is also a popular place for tourists, with museums and restaurants to visit. Theaters offer Japanese drama and music, and the city is home to many festivals during the year.

People move around the city on trains and subways.

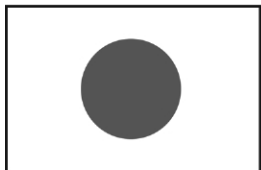
## Past Olympics

Tokyo hosted the 1964 Summer Olympics; Nagano, Japan, hosted the 1998 Winter Olympics, and Sapporo hosted the 1972 Winter Olympics.



photos by Luca Sartoni

Tokyo has busy, bright, modern city streets, but visitors also enjoy its traditional sights, such as the Hozomon, or Treasure House Gate (below), outside the Senso-ji Buddhist temple, Tokyo’s oldest temple.



The flag of Japan

## Try ‘n’ Find

Words that remind us of Tokyo are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

ASIA, COAST, EDO, GAMES, ISLANDS, JAPAN, KANJI, MODERN, MOUNTAINS, OCEAN, OLYMPICS, PACIFIC, STUDENTS, TEMPLE, TOKYO, TRADITIONAL, TSUNAMI, VOLCANO.

B B P P A C I F I C I J N A K  
T S A O C O N A C L O V E J N  
L V I S L A N D S S T Y V W S  
A S I A T R A D I T I O N A L  
Q B S N R E D O M N O D Z Y B  
M O U N T A I N S E X D U J H  
Y H I L O Y K O T D O C E A N  
H N A P A J O T S U N A M I G  
E L P M E T C Z N T V O W K H  
N O L Y M P I C S S E M A G B



## Cook’s Corner

### Rice Balls

#### You’ll need:

- 1 cup Japanese rice, uncooked
- 2 cups water
- salt
- sesame seeds

#### What to do:

1. Wash rice in water (not the 2 cups used in cooking). Drain well.
2. Place in a medium saucepan.
3. Add water. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat.
4. Keep covered and lower heat to medium. Cook 10 minutes.
5. Lower heat to low and cook 10 minutes. Do not stir.
6. After rice has cooled, shape into small balls. Sprinkle salt or sesame seeds on the outside.

Rice balls are popular Japanese treats. The Japanese eat them at home, in restaurants and at picnics. You must use Japanese rice, which can be found in many grocery stores.



\* You’ll need an adult’s help with this recipe.

## 7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

1. big rock (7)\_\_\_\_\_
2. look up to (6)\_\_\_\_\_
3. iced tea container, maybe (7)\_\_\_\_\_
4. dancer in a tutu (9)\_\_\_\_\_
5. anxious (7)\_\_\_\_\_
6. boy in “The Jungle Book” (6)\_\_\_\_\_
7. person in orbit (9)\_\_\_\_\_

INA	MOW	RON	DER
ADM	CHER	NER	AUT
LER	AST	BAL	IRE
VOUS	BOUL	GLI	PIT

Answers: boulder, admire, pitcher, ballerina, nervous, Mowgli, astronaut.



©2017 Blue Ox Technologies Ltd. Download the app on Apple and Amazon devices.

## Kids in Japan

Being a Japanese kid is very much like being an American kid. But there are a few differences.

• Doing well in school is important to kids and their families. Since students have to pass hard exams if they are to get into certain schools, many take extra classes after school and on the weekends.



photo by Eric Parker

• Children go to school five days a week. School starts at 8:30 a.m. and goes to about 3:30 p.m. Their classes are large, with 30 to 40 in each room. Most study English from the seventh grade up.

• Japanese kids have to work hard to learn **kanji**, or written characters. These symbols are used instead of spelling out words. Before finishing the sixth grade, students must learn more than 1,000 of them.

• Children take off their shoes when they arrive at school and put on slippers. Students are also responsible for cleaning the school. This teaches them respect and responsibility.

• At school, the kids eat lunch in their classrooms. Students help serve the meals. Rice and fish are favorite foods.



This is the kanji symbol for water.

## Resources



### On the Web:

- [bit.ly/MP-Japan](https://bit.ly/MP-Japan)

### At the library:

- “The Story of the Olympic Games” by The Olympic Museum

## Mini Jokes



**Toshi:** What kind of tree fits in your hand?

**Tamako:** A palm tree!

## Eco Note



Climate change and pollution are being blamed for the growing marine threat known as sea snot, mucuslike organic matter that currently threatens coral and the fishing industry in parts of the Mediterranean Sea. Globes of sea snot can also be found elsewhere in the planet’s waterways. When the marine mucilage forms a layer over the water’s surface, it prevents fish from being able to breathe. This kills them and depletes oxygen levels in the water, eventually choking other marine life.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

## For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about Japan and the Olympics.

**Teachers:** Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!



The **NEW Mini Spy Booklets** volumes 4 and 5! Features 48 of your favorite puzzles from The Mini Page! Volumes 1, 2 and 3 are still available!

Help Mini Spy and other classic characters from The Mini Page find hidden objects from a list of clues.

The 8.5x11-inch booklet is just \$4, plus \$1 shipping and handling.

Visit **MiniPageBooks.com**, or call **844-426-1256** for more information.

Mail payment to: Andrews McMeel Universal, Mini Page Books, 1130 Walnut, Kansas City, MO 64106.

