

Japan

Japan performs favourably in several measures of well-being, and ranks close to the average or higher in several topics in the Better Life Index.

Money, while it cannot buy happiness, is an important means to achieving higher living standards. In Japan, the average household earns 23 458 USD a year, more than the OECD average of 22 387 USD a year. But there is a considerable gap between the richest and poorest – the top 20% of the population earn more than five times as much as the bottom 20%.

In terms of employment, 70% of people aged 15 to 64 in Japan have a paid job, above the OECD employment average of 66%. Some 80% of men are in paid work, compared with 60% of women, suggesting that women encounter difficulties in balancing work and family life. People in Japan work 1 733 hours a year, less than most people in the OECD who work 1 749 hours on average.

Having a good education is an important requisite for finding a job. In Japan, the **average student scored 529 in reading literacy, maths and science in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)**. This score is higher than the OECD average of **497, making Japan one of the strongest OECD countries in students' skills**. On average in Japan, girls outperformed boys by 14 points, wider than average OECD gender gap of 9 points.

In terms of health, life expectancy at birth in Japan is almost 83 years, two years higher than the OECD average of 80 years. Life expectancy for women is 86 years, compared with 80 for men. The level of atmospheric PM10 – tiny air pollutant particles small enough to enter and cause damage to the lungs – is 27 micrograms per cubic meter, higher than the OECD average of 22 micrograms per cubic meter. Japan also does well in terms of water quality, as 88% of people say they are satisfied with the quality of their water.

Concerning the public sphere, there is a strong sense of community and moderate levels of civic participation in Japan, where 92% of people believe that they know someone they could rely on in time of need, higher than the OECD average of 91%. Voter turnout, a measure of public trust in government and of citizens' participation in the political process, was 67% during recent elections; below the OECD average of 73%. There is little difference in voting levels across society; voter turnout is the same for the top 20% of the population and for the bottom 20%, at 67%, suggesting there is **broad social inclusion in Japan's democratic institutions**.

In general; the Japanese are less satisfied with their lives than the OECD average, with 70% of people saying they have more positive experiences in an average day (feelings of rest, pride in accomplishment, enjoyment, etc) than negative ones (pain, worry, sadness, boredom, etc). This figure is lower than the OECD average of 72%.