

Topic Page: [Fujian](#)

Summary Article: **Fujian**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Maritime province of southeast China, lying opposite Taiwan, bounded to the southwest by Guangdong, to the west and northwest by Jiangxi, to the northeast by Zhejiang, and to the southeast by the Taiwan Strait on the China Sea; area 123,100 sq km/47,500 sq mi; population (2013 est) 37,740,000. The main cities are Fuzhou (capital), Xiamen, Zhangzhou, and Nanping. The main industries are steel-rolling, electrical goods, tourism, handicrafts, and leather goods. Agricultural products are rice, sweet potatoes, sugar, special aromatic teas, tobacco, timber, and citrus fruit.

Topography The terrain is hilly and mountainous, consisting essentially of the southeastern uplands of China. These run parallel to the coast in a northeast–southwest direction. There are few lowlands, the principal ones being in the valley of the Min River, which reaches the sea at Fuzhou. There are smaller coastal lowlands around Xiamen and Quanzhou.

Climate Fujian experiences cool winters, with January average temperatures ranging from 5°C/41°F in the north to 13°C/55°F in the south, and hot summers with July average temperatures of at least 28°C/82°F. Heavy rainfall occurs, concentrated in the spring and summer, with annual totals ranging between 800 mm/31 in and 2,000 mm/78 in. The coastal areas of the province are in a typhoon zone, and subject to storms in the summer and autumn; in August, 1997, for example, Typhoon Victor destroyed 10,000 homes in Fujian and Guangdong and caused widespread flooding and the deaths of 49 people.

Economy The principal crops are rice and sweet potatoes. In the northern parts of the province tea is also extensively grown. Citrus fruits, tobacco, and sugar cane are other commercial crops. The interior mountains are forested, and lumbering and associated papermaking industries are important to the province's economy.

Fujian's strategic location as a potential frontline in any armed conflict with Taiwan meant that the communist government was reluctant to develop heavy industry in the province. After 1979, industries developed for foreign trade and with foreign investment in Xiamen and Fuzhou, and in smaller cities along the coast such as Quanzhou, Shishi, and Putian. From 1997, oil refining and a petrochemical industry developed in co-operation with the US company, Exxon. Most of the industrial enterprises, however, are small-scale and light industries dominate, with electronics, garments, footwear, consumer durables, and construction materials being the most important products. In addition, many coastal towns have developed as tourist resorts.

Communications In the past Fujian was isolated from the rest of China because of its mountainous terrain. Railways linking the ports of Fuzhou and Xiamen with the interior provinces were completed in 1956. The modern road linking the two cities is part of a coastal highway between Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Migration As in neighbouring Guangdong, Fujian's cultivatable land is densely populated and, in the past, restricted agricultural opportunities caused considerable migration to Southeast Asia and Taiwan. With the recent development of industry, however, combined with government policies of controlling population numbers, the extent of migration has decreased.

Strategic importance Fujian's proximity to Taiwan gives it considerable strategic significance. Taiwan has retained control of two small islands near the coast, Matsu and Quemoy, from which nationalist forces could threaten invasion or cut off Fujian's sea-going trade. In the 1950s the mainland forces conducted frequent bombardments of the islands as a way of putting pressure on the nationalists.

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