

## Topic Page: [Hebei Sheng \(China\)](#)

Definition: **Hebei** from *Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary*

Province, NE China, bounded on NE by Liaoning, on SE by Bo Hai and by Shandong prov., on S by Henan, on W by Shanxi, and on NW by Nei Monggol (Inner Mongolia), with Beijing munic. forming an enclave in the center, and Tianjin munic. forming an enclave on Bo Hai; ❁ Shijiazhuang; mostly a level plain; contains part of the Great Wall and part of the Grand Canal (Da Yun-he). Produces coal, iron ore, and cotton. For centuries chief defense area against Mongols and Manchus to the N. Chief cities: Shijiazhuang, Tangshan, Handan. See table at china.

### Summary Article: **Hebei**

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

Province of north China, bounded to the north by Inner Mongolia, to the northeast by Liaoning, to the east by the Bohai Gulf, to the south by Shandong and Henan, and to the west by Shanxi; area 185,900 sq km/71,800 sq mi; population (2013 est) 73,326,100. The capital is Shijiazhuang; other major cities are Baoding, Tangshan, Handan, and Zhangjiakou. The province includes the special municipalities of Beijing and Tianjin. The main industries are coal mining and the manufacture of textiles, iron, steel, machinery, pharmaceuticals, and petroleum products; agricultural production is based on winter wheat, barley, maize, and cotton.

**History** Hebei was part of China from the earliest times. It was called **Yan** in the Warring States period (5th to 3rd centuries BC), and first called Hebei in the Tang dynasty (6th to 9th centuries). It did not contain China's capital city until the Liao, an early Mongol dynasty of the 10th to 12th centuries, established its capital in what is now Beijing. From the 13th to 20th centuries, under the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, Hebei was administered directly from the court; under the Qing dynasty it was called **Chihli** (modern transcription **Zhili**), meaning 'directly subordinate'. The name Hebei was revived in 1928.

**Topography** Most of the province forms part of the North China Plain but its northern section, beyond the Great Wall of China, is a transitional zone towards Inner Mongolia, where lack of rainfall has allowed comparatively little agriculture and there is therefore only a sparse population. Within the province are two large areas which are administered independently as the municipalities of Beijing and Tianjin. The greater part of the province is a fertile alluvial plain watered by several rivers and crossed by the Grand Canal.

**Flood control** Over the years the rivers of the province have caused much damage through flooding, and the government has carried out extensive water conservation works in order to control water flow. In the past the Huang He River has caused widespread destruction in this area.

**Climate** Hebei has cold, dry winters, with average January temperatures at or below 0°C/32°F; and hot, humid summers, with temperatures averaging around 26°C/79°F. Average annual rainfall ranges from 400 mm/16 in to 600 mm/24 in over the centre and south of the province, falling below 400 mm/16 in in the north. Most of the precipitation falls in the summer, with over 100 days without rain in the winter and spring. The amount of rain varies widely from year to year.

**Economy** Agriculture on the plain is extremely intensive. Winter wheat, barley, and maize are the principal crops. Sorghum and soybeans are grown and, in the southwest, cotton is an important crop. This is one of the principal agricultural areas of China but production is affected by frequent droughts; a drought in 1997 was the worst since 1949, affecting over half of the province's farmland.

Hebei has two important coalmining areas. The older is the Jidong area in the northeast of the province. This is centred on the Kailan Basin at the towns of Kaiping and Luanxian, which were exploited in historical times and developed with British capital in the 19th century. The second is the Hanxing district around Handan and Xingtai, in the south of the province. In this area, Fengfeng has developed as a major supplier of coking coal. The iron ore mines at Longyan are some of the most important in China. Copper, gold and salt are also mined. Several small oilfields have been opened up in the central part of the province and refineries built to process the oil. The province's extensive limestone deposits are quarried to make cement, used in the building of Beijing and Tianjin.

There is a major integrated iron and steel plant at Handan. Tangshan, Zhangjiakou, and Shijiazhuang have important machine-building industries. Hebei's pharmaceutical industry is China's leading producer of antibiotics. The province is an important cotton-growing area, and textiles are manufactured in many of its towns and cities.

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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