Definition: **Jan Mayen Island** from *Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary*

Norwegian volcanic island in Arctic Ocean 300 mi. (483 km.) E of Greenland and 360 mi. (579 km.) NNE of Iceland, 71°N, 8°W; 33 mi. (53 km.) long and greatest width 10 mi. (16 km.); 144 sq. mi. (373 sq. km.); highest point extinct volcano of Beerenberg 7430 ft. (2265 m.); meteorological station at Jameson Bay; discovered by English navigator and explorer Henry Hudson 1607; often visited by explorers; annexed to Norway 1929.

Summary Article: **Jan Mayen**

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

Norwegian volcanic island in the Arctic Ocean, between Greenland and Norway, about 480 km/298 mi north of Iceland; area 380 sq km/147 sq mi. Its radio transmitter station (built in the 1950s) is important for shipping and air traffic. The island is named after the Dutchman Jan May, who landed in 1614 and claimed it as Dutch territory. It was annexed by Norway in 1929.

**Environment** Measuring about 54 km/34 mi long and 14 km/9 mi wide, it is a craggy island whose mossy cliffs are home to millions of sea birds, and whose slopes, when the winter snow recedes, are covered with Arctic plants and have populations of insects, spiders, and small animals. Scattered throughout the island are the craters of extinct volcanoes, many of recent origin. At one precipitous point, on Egg Bluff, steam still rises from the depths of the island. Nearby, dominating the whole island, the white Beerenberg, first climbed by J M Wordie in 1921, rises about 730 m/2,400 ft directly above the surf. From the ice-cap of this volcanic mountain, which is about 48 km/30 mi round the base and one of the biggest volcanic cones in the world, some 15 glaciers drop towards the sea. The island is a product of the Mid Atlantic Ridge and is known to have lava eruptions as in 1970 and 1985.

**History** There is now no economic activity on the island, but it was once a vital factory site in the centre of the Arctic whaling grounds. The whales were hunted to virtual extinction, but traces of the hunt and the hunters were found on every beach by an Oxford University expedition in 1947. Although Jan May was one of the first explorers of the island, it was probably discovered first by Henry Hudson in 1607, though others have also made that claim. The island is uninhabited except for the military personnel of a radio and meteorological station maintained by the Norwegian government since 1921.

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