

Topic Page: [Xiamen Shi \(China\)](#)

Definition: **Xiamen or Hsia-men** from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate(R) Dictionary*

 [pronunciation](#)

city & port SE China in S Fujian on two islands pop 308,000

Summary Article: **Xiamen**

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

Industrial port in Fujian province, southeast China, on **Xiamen Island**; population (2010) 3,531,400. Products include electronics, machinery, textiles, foods, and chemicals. It was one of the original five treaty ports used for trade under foreign control from 1842 to 1943, and a special economic zone from 1979 offering incentives and special privileges to foreign investors.

Location and communications Xiamen Island is situated at the mouth of the Jiulong River, and connected to the mainland by a long causeway. To the west are the Quemoy Islands and Taiwan.

The port has a good harbour, but its communications inland were poor until it was connected to the national railway network in 1956. It is also served by the coastal national highway.

Economy Xiamen's traditional trading links, particularly with Taiwan, went into decline after 1949. Since offering incentives and special privileges to foreign investors after 1979, and with renewed links to Taiwan, new export-oriented light industries have developed in the city, the harbour facilities have been improved, and Xiamen has resumed its role as an important regional port.

Migration A long-standing connection existed between Xiamen and Malaysia, and many people from Xiamen moved there in search of work. Many of the Chinese settlers in Taiwan came from the area around Xiamen, and the Taiwanese dialect is still very similar to that of southern Fujian.

History The Portuguese were the first Europeans to visit Xiamen in the 1540s, and later the English, Dutch, and Spanish also traded here, when the port was known by its local name, **Amoy**. In 1730 the port was closed to European traders, and was reopened to foreign trade by a treaty in 1842. It became an important centre for the export of tea.

The former foreign settlement is on Gulangyu, a little rocky island opposite the main port. Xiamen University was founded in 1921. The Japanese captured the port in 1938.

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Xiamen. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/xiamen>



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