

Hiroshima:

Then: During the final stages of World War II in 1945, the United States conducted two atomic bombings against the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan.

After six months of intense strategic fire-bombing of 67 Japanese cities, the Japanese government ignored an ultimatum given by the Potsdam Declaration. By executive order of President Harry S. Truman, the U.S. dropped the nuclear weapon "Little Boy" on the city of Hiroshima on Monday, August 6, 1945, followed by the detonation of "Fat Man" over Nagasaki on August 9. These two events were the only active deployments of nuclear weapons in war. The target chosen, Hiroshima, was a city of considerable military importance, containing Japan's Second Army Headquarters, as well as being a communications center and storage depot.



Within the first two to four months of the bombings, the acute effects killed 90,000–166,000 people in Hiroshima and 60,000–80,000 in Nagasaki, with roughly half of the deaths in each city occurring on the first day. The Hiroshima Prefectural Health Department estimates that, of the people who died on the day of the explosion, 60% died from flash or flame burns, 30% from falling debris and 10% from other causes. During the following months, large numbers died from the effect of burns, radiation sickness, and other injuries, compounded by illness. In a more plausible estimate of the total immediate and short term cause of death, 15–20% died from radiation sickness, 20–30% from flash burns, and 50–60% from other injuries, compounded by illness. In both cities, most of the dead were civilians.

Six days after the detonation over Nagasaki, on August 15, Japan announced its surrender to the Allied Powers, signing the Instrument of Surrender on September 2, officially ending the Pacific War and therefore World War II. Germany had already signed its Instrument of Surrender on May 7, ending the war in Europe.

Hiroshima—1945



The bombings led, in part, to post-war Japan adopting Three Non-Nuclear Principles, forbidding the nation from nuclear armament. The role of the bombings in Japan's surrender and the U.S.'s ethical justification for them, as well as their strategical importance, is still debated. *[by historical revisionists...Ed.]*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atomic_bombings_of_Hiroshima_and_Nagasaki]

Then and Now

Now: On September 17, 1945, Hiroshima was struck by the Makurazaki Typhoon. Hiroshima suffered more than 3,000 deaths and injuries. More than half the bridges in the city were destroyed, along with heavy damage to roads and railroads, further devastating the city.



But, Hiroshima was rebuilt after the war, with the help from the national government through the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law passed in 1949. It provided financial assistance for reconstruction, along with land donated that was previously owned by the national government and used for military purposes. In 1949, a design was selected for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. Hiroshima was proclaimed a City of Peace by the Japanese parliament in 1949. As a result, the city received more international attention as a desirable location for holding international conferences on peace as well as social issues. The city government continues to advocate the abolition of all nuclear weapons and the Mayor of Hiroshima is the President of Mayors for Peace.

Today, Hiroshima is the center of industry for its region, and is by and large centered along the coastal areas. Hiroshima has long been a port city and Hiroshima port or Hiroshima International Airport can be used for the transportation of goods. Its largest industry is the manufacturing industry with core industries being the production of Mazda cars, car parts and industrial equipment. Mazda Motor Corporation is by far Hiroshima's dominant company. Another result of the concentration of industry is an accumulation of skilled personnel and fundamental technologies. This is considered by business to be a major reason for location in Hiroshima. Business setup costs are also much lower than other large cities in the country and there is a comprehensive system of tax breaks, etc. on offer for businesses which locate in Hiroshima. Hiroshima recently made it onto Lonely Planet's list of the top cities in the world. Commuting times rank amongst the shortest in Japan and the cost of living is lower than other large cities in Japan such as Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, or Fukuoka. [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiroshima>]

Hiroshima—today

“Today Hiroshima is a flourishing city once again. This is due to the testament of many Japanese that were unwilling to let the city become merely a memory. The government promotes development of the city focused around the living concept of peace in every dimension.” [<http://hiroshima.ws/modern.html>]

[Special thanks to Mike Hubbard, MI; and Stan Tombs, CAN., who supplied the covers for this article; and to Barbara Dixon, OH, for one of the photos]

