



Broadly speaking, there are three types of Japanese housing: "owned housing," "public subsidized housing," and "private rental housing." This section explains the features of each type of housing, size and layout of Japanese housing, description of floors, and community associations, as well as other details.

1 Housing

1-1 About Japanese housing

(1) Owned housing

House with ownership is called mochi-ie (literally, owned housing) in Japan. There are various kinds of building such as stand-alone housing and apartment. In order to own a house, you need to undergo a series of procedures and sign various contracts concerning purchase. When building your own house, there are various requirements that need to be kept. For details, please refer to ["2 Owned Housing"](#) in this chapter.

(2) Public subsidized housing

Public subsidized housing (koteki jutaku) is provided by the local authorities (metropolitan or prefectural government, municipal government, etc.) and public corporations. They are rented at lower rent for people who have difficulty finding a house, and include todofuken-ei jutaku (administrated by the metropolitan or prefectural government), kumin jutaku (administrated by the ward), shi-ei jutaku (administrated by the city), cho-ei jutaku (administrated by the town), UR chintai jutaku (rental housing administrated by the Urban Renaissance Agency). Each of them has specific eligibility rules for residency, and only those meeting these requirements can move in. For details, please refer to ["3 Public Subsidized Housing."](#)

(3) Private rental housing

Private rental housing (chintai jutaku) refers to houses, apartments and other condominium units for rent. Rent is prepaid every month. Some housing requires extra fees such as maintenance fees and common area fees in addition to rent, which are paid together with the rent. For details, please refer to ["4 Private rental housing."](#)

(4) Size and layout of the housing

The size of the housing is indicated as "senyu menseki (footprint) Xm^2 ," which includes the toilet, bathroom and kitchen besides various rooms. The size of each room is measured by the number of tatami mats used, with the unit called jo for every tatami mat. One jo is basically about $1.6m^2$ (180cm x 90cm, approximately), but there are some variations including apartment-adjusted size (170cm x 85cm) and the one in between (176cm x 88cm). The number of rooms and types of room are shown by a combination of numbers and alphabets.

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Rooms fitted with tatami mats are called "washitsu" (Japanese-style room) and those with floorings and carpets are called "yoshitsu" (Western-style room).

Examples:

2DK: Housing consisting of two separate rooms and one large space combining the functions of a living room, dining room and kitchen

2: number of bedrooms

L: living room

D: dining room

LDK: a space combining living room, dining room and kitchen

DK: a space combining dining room and kitchen



* Layout above is an example.



(5) Description of floors

In Japan, the ground floor is described as "1F" and first basement level as "B1."

1F - 5F: ground floor to the 5th floor

B2: second basement level

(6) Town associations/neighborhood associations

In Japan, most municipalities (city, ward, town or village) have community association called chonai-kai (town association) or jichi-kai (neighborhood association). Their function is to pass a bulletin (called kairanban, to pass on notification from the municipal administrative office or public health center door-to-door) and to play an active role in anti-crime activities, disaster drills, and neighborhood social events such as festivals. These activities are funded by resident member fees. Foreign citizens, too, can become a member if they are residents. It is a good idea to ask your neighbors about it.

