

ARIZONA

Capital: Phoenix

Population: 4,668,631 (1998 estimate)

Total area: 114,006 square miles

Land area: 113,642 square miles

Home to more national parks and monuments than any other state in the Union, Arizona displays spectacular natural history. The Colorado River has etched through 2 billion years of geologic time, creating the 446-kilometer- (277-mile-) long Grand Canyon, which is 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) deep in places.

Integral to the visual experience of the northern Arizona Colorado Plateau region are the Painted Desert's rainbow-colored rock arches and other formations. The Petrified Forest is similarly spectacular with its square miles of downed trees, which turned to stone over some 200 million years. Arizona also felt the impact of a large meteorite that slammed into the earth 49,000 years ago, leaving the 570-foot-wide Meteor Crater as evidence of where the extraterrestrial rock struck land west of Winslow.

Forested mountains rise south of the Grand Canyon, including Humphreys Peak (3,851 meters/12,633 feet) and Baldy Peak (3,532 meters/11,588 feet), the state's two tallest summits. The landscape changes significantly where the Colorado Plateau merges with the Mogollon Rim, a series of cliffs that rise 600 meters (1,970 feet) and stretch southeast from central Arizona to the Mogollon Plateau. Known as the Transition Zone, this volcanic area separates northern Arizona's valleys, mesas, and mountains from the arid Basin and Range Zone commonly called the Sonoran Desert. Hot and dry, the Sonoran Desert extends from Yuma, which registers record-setting summer temperatures for the United States, through Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona's biggest cities.

Human history has deep roots in Arizona. Derived from the Tohono O'odham arizonac, or "place of the small spring," Arizona's name and demographics reveal a significant southwest Native American cultural heritage. The oldest still-inhabited human settlement in the United States is Oraibi, where the Hopi established a village around 1100 AD. Archaeological evidence suggests that humans lived in Arizona more than 25,000 years ago. Architectural remains of cliff-dwelling civilizations such as the Anasazi, who had all but disappeared by the 14th century, are found in some plateau areas. Archaeological evidence has also been discovered from the pre-14th-century river-valley Hohokam people, who used sophisticated irrigation systems for farming.

Spanish explorers, seeking gold in the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola, made the first European expeditions into Arizona in the early 16th century but encountered Native American resistance and returned to Mexico. In the mid-16th century, Hopi guides led Spanish explorer and gold-hunter Antonio de Espejo to the area now occupied by Jerome, where he found only copper.

In the 20th century the state's rapid population growth is largely from newcomers seeking Arizona's sunshine, clean air, and year-round warmth. Because of its climate, Arizona is a highly rated destination for retirees and has been marketed for years as a land of five C's: copper, cattle, cotton, citrus, and climate.

The state's population has sustained an average growth rate of nearly 50 percent every decade since the 1940s. Because Arizona has little ground water in its most populous areas, many urban areas have encountered water supply problems. Heavy use of this precious resource has caused Arizona's water table to drop 73 meters (240 feet) since 1945.

Eleven dams now stand along the Colorado River, creating large reservoirs that provide water for agricultural, residential, and industrial use. In 1991 construction of the Central Arizona Project, designed to route Colorado River water through 541 kilometers (336 miles) of pumps and canals to Phoenix and Tucson's residents, was completed to help meet growing demand for water.

Flagstaff

Population: 56,657 (1998 estimate)

Flagstaff is a tourist resort situated at an elevation of 2,105 meters (6,907 feet) at the base of the San Francisco Mountain. Extensive pine forests are nearby.

Industries of the city produce forest products (especially lumber), paper goods, construction materials, pet food, and clothing. Northern Arizona University, founded in 1899, and Lowell Observatory, founded in 1894, are here.

Prehistoric Native American ruins—including some at Walnut Canyon and Wupatki national monuments—and the scenic Sunset Crater National Monument are in the area. The city's name is derived from a flagstaff erected here for the 1876 Independence Day celebrations.

Phoenix

Population: 1.20 million (1998 estimate)

Phoenix, the capital of Arizona, is a commercial, manufacturing, and financial center and a distribution point for the agricultural products of the irrigated Salt River valley. Among the major industries of the metropolitan area are aerospace and electronic equipment, processed food, metal products, cosmetics, sporting goods, paper items, and clothing. Government operations, tourism, construction, and research and development concerns are also important to the city's economy, as is nearby Luke Air Force Base.

Phoenix is an educational and cultural center. Among the city's museums are Heard Museum, the Phoenix Art Museum, the Pueblo Grande Museum, the Arizona Mineral Museum, the Arizona State Capitol Museum, and the Arizona Museum. Other points of interest include the Desert Botanical Garden, the Phoenix Zoo, Civic Plaza, and America West Arena. Phoenix is the site of the University of Phoenix, Grand Canyon University, Devry Institute of Technology, Southwestern College, and Arizona College of the Bible.

The Hohokam civilization of desert farmers flourished in the area that is now Phoenix from the 8th to the 14th century. The completion in 1911 of Theodore Roosevelt Dam on the Salt River assured the city of an adequate water supply and provided power necessary for the development of industries. The desert climate of Phoenix has encouraged the development of planned communities for senior citizens.

Tombstone

Population: 1,460 (1998 estimate)

Tombstone is a popular tourist center and health resort with a colorful history as a lawless mining town. Points of interest include Boot Hill cemetery, containing the graves of many outlaws; the O.K. Corral, the scene in 1881 of a famous gun battle, mainly between the Clanton gang and the Earp brothers; and Tombstone Courthouse Historic Park, Monument, and Museum.

Tucson

Population: 460,466 (1998 estimate)

Situated in a high desert valley in southeastern Arizona and surrounded by mountains, Tucson has a pleasant, dry, sunny climate and is a tourist, retirement, and health center. It is the second largest city in the state and has industries based on regional mining, especially copper, and the manufacture of electronic and electric equipment. It is also a market, processing, and shipping center for the cattle and cotton produced in the area.

Tucson is the seat of the University of Arizona, founded in 1885, and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base is in the area. Of interest in the city are the Tucson Museum of Art, Saint Augustine Cathedral, and several historic districts.

Nearby are the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson Mountain County Park, Saguaro National Park, the 18th-century San Xavier del Bac Indian Mission, and Old Tucson, a movie set recreating the city in the 1860s. Kitt Peak National Observatory and Colossal Cave are also in the area.

The Spanish Jesuit Eusebio Kino encountered a Native American settlement on this site in the early 1690s. The name Tucson is derived from a Papago term for “foot of the mountain.”

Yuma

Population: 62,433 (1998 estimate)

Yuma, on the Colorado River, is an agricultural center in an irrigated region, where cotton, citrus fruit, and truck crops are grown. A United States Marine Corps air station is nearby. Also of interest in Yuma are the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, constructed in 1863, and a prison dating from 1876 and in use until 1909.

Two missions were established here in 1779, but permanent white settlement did not begin until about 1850, when the community was a stop for travelers to California. The community was known as Colorado City and Arizona City before being renamed Yuma, for the Yuma people, in 1873.

Colorado River

Length: 1,450 miles

The Colorado River rises just west of the Continental Divide, in northern Colorado, and, for the first 1,600 kilometers (about 1,000 miles) of its course, passes through a series of deep gorges and canyons that were created by the eroding force of its current. After flowing across Colorado into southeastern Utah, and crossing the northern portion of Arizona, the Colorado flows west for 436 kilometers (271 miles) through the majestic Grand Canyon. It then flows in a generally southerly direction and crosses into Mexico. To control the tremendous flow of the Colorado, particularly under flood conditions, an extensive series of dams, many of them constructed by the United States Bureau of Reclamation, has been built along the river and its tributaries.

Gila River

Length: 649 miles

The Gila River rises in the mountains of southwestern New Mexico and flows westward across Arizona to join the Colorado River near Yuma. For the greater part of its total course, the Gila flows through mountain canyons, but the lower part of its course is through open and comparatively level country.

Coolidge Dam, on the Gila in eastern Arizona, impounds water for the irrigation of the Casa Grande Valley around Florence and Casa Grande. Numerous remains of prehistoric dwellings, among which are those contained in the Gila Cliff Dwellings and Casa Grande national monuments, are situated along the banks of the river and its tributaries.

Grand Canyon

Maximum depth: 5,000 feet

Length: 277 miles

Excavated by the Colorado River over the past 6 million years, the Grand Canyon cuts steeply through an arid plateau that lies about 1,500 to 2,700 meters (about 5,000 to 9,000 feet) above sea level. Outdoor enthusiasts and photographers are drawn to the towering buttes, mesas, and valleys located within the main gorge. A section of the canyon, together with plateau areas on either side of it, is preserved as the Grand Canyon National Park, which receives about 4 million visitors a year.

The plateau surrounding the canyon has a general downward slope to the southwest, and is sparsely covered in its upper reaches with evergreens such as juniper and piñon. Parts of the northern rim of the canyon are forested. Vegetation in the depths of the valley consists principally of agave, Spanish bayonet, and other desert plants.

The climate of the plateau region above the canyon is severe, with extremes of both heat and cold. The canyon floor also becomes extremely hot in summer, sometimes reaching 46°C (115°F), but seldom experiences frost in the wintertime.

Although the canyon itself is of comparatively recent origin, the rocks exposed in its walls are not. In a typical section of the canyon, toward its eastern end, nine separate rock layers can be seen, ranging in age from 225 million years near the top to half a billion years at the

bottom. Most of the strata were originally deposited as marine sediment, indicating that for long periods of time the canyon area was the floor of a shallow sea.

The Havasuw 'Baaja (Havasupai) people have inhabited the area of the Grand Canyon for centuries. Their name means “People of the Blue-Green Waters,” possibly a reference to the vividly colored mineral pools below Havasu Falls and other waterfalls. About 640 Havasupai live in the Grand Canyon today.

The first Europeans to see the canyon were a group of soldiers led by Garcia Lopez de Cordeñas in 1540. They were members of a party headed by the Spanish explorer Francisco Vásquez de Coronado. Because access to the canyon was difficult, it was not fully explored by people of European descent until more than three centuries later; in 1869 geologist John Wesley Powell and ten companions made the difficult journey through the length of the gorge in four rowboats.

Grand Canyon National Park

Area: 1,902 square miles

Grand Canyon National Park contains the world-famous Grand Canyon of the Colorado River and includes the river's entire course from the southern end of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area to the eastern boundary of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area. The great chasm has a maximum width of 29 kilometers (18 miles) within the park, and its multicolored walls rise to a height of nearly 1.5 kilometers (nearly 0.9 mile).

The north rim of the canyon is on the average about 365 meters (about 1,200 feet) higher than the south rim and is closed to sightseers by heavy snows from October to May. Paved roads wind around the rims of the Grand Canyon, and trails descend into the canyon, although only one of them, the Kaibab Trail, crosses the gorge from rim to rim.

The extreme variations in elevation from the depths of the canyon to the north rim have produced four distinct zones of climate and plant life. Dense virgin forests of aspen, pine, fir, and spruce grow on the colder north rim, and the south rim is sparsely covered with piñon and juniper. Wildlife includes deer, antelope, cougar, and mountain sheep. Prehistoric Native American groups lived in the canyon and on its rims, and ruins of pueblos and cliff dwellings remain.

Hoover Dam

Height: 726 feet

Length: 1,244 feet

A major engineering achievement, Hoover Dam spans the Colorado River between Arizona and Nevada. Its reservoir, Lake Mead, is one of the largest artificial lakes in the world.

Construction began in 1931 as part of the Boulder Canyon project and was completed in 1936. Originally named after President Herbert Hoover, the dam was later called Boulder Dam, but in 1947 its initial name was restored.

COLORADO

Capital: Denver

Population: 3,970,971 (1998 estimate)

Total area: 104,100 square miles

Land area: 103,729 square miles

With a higher average elevation than any other state, Colorado evokes an image of rugged, snow-packed crests stretching as far as the eye can see. Although it is true that the western section of the state is blanketed by the tallest peaks in the Rocky Mountains—including 53 that soar above 4,250 meters (14,000 feet)—a lower and somewhat flatter Great Plains landscape typifies eastern Colorado.

The level prairies of the east gradually gain elevation as they slope westward toward a more fractured region of steep escarpments and flat-topped mesas known as the Colorado Piedmont. Facing the Piedmont's western border are two of the most prominent ranges in the Colorado Rockies—the Front Range in the north and the Sangre

de Cristo Mountains of the south. These and the other main mountain ranges of the Colorado Rockies—the Park Range, the Sawatch Range, and the San Juan Mountains—are laced with valleys and a number of broad, nearly treeless grasslands known as parks. Much of the Continental Divide snakes its way along the crest of the Rockies in a north-south direction, separating waters that drain westward from those that run off to the east. Resting between the Rockies and the boundary with Utah is the Colorado Plateau, a tangled assortment of jagged hills, mesas, low mountains, and deep-cut canyons.

It was the discovery of gold in the Colorado Rockies that sparked the region's initial economic growth. But the gold supplies were soon depleted, and today the state's mining industry is centered around its sizable reserves of coal, oil, and natural gas. Nearly all of the state's agricultural activity occurs in either the river valleys of the western mountains or on the eastern plains. Most farm income derives from livestock and livestock products, but significant wheat, corn, and hay crops are harvested as well.

Manufacturing, which was once based primarily on the processing of raw mineral and agricultural products, now sports a more diversified mix that includes the production of scientific instruments, industrial machinery, and fabricated metals. Tourism also plays a vital role in the Colorado economy. Each year, millions of winter visitors flock to world-class ski resorts such as Vail, Aspen, and Steamboat Springs. During the summer months, both Rocky Mountain National Park and Mesa Verde National Park serve as compelling vacation destinations.

The cliff dwellings preserved in Mesa Verde National Park sheltered the region's first known residents, the Anasazi. By the 18th century a number of Native American groups inhabited the rolling plains of Colorado, among them the Arapaho, the Cheyenne, and the Comanche. Before moving to the plains themselves, the Ute had lived in western mountain communities that were 3,000 meters (10,000 feet) above sea level—higher than the homes of any other Native Americans.

The area that is now Colorado became United States territory as a result of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase and a treaty with Mexico in 1848. But it was only after the 1858 discovery of gold near present-day Denver that European settlement of the region began in earnest. Problems between thousands of frenzied, fortune-seeking Midwesterners and the area's Native Americans surfaced almost immediately. In 1864 soldiers of the Third Colorado Cavalry ravaged a Sand Creek village of sleeping Arapaho and Cheyenne, slaying several hundred men, women, and children. Even though the Sand Creek Massacre, as it came to be known, heightened nationwide awareness of the injustices being done to Native Americans, by 1867 nearly all had been forced off the Colorado plains and onto reservations in Oklahoma.

Although the gold rush of 1858 proved to be short-lived, subsequent mining booms such as the massive silver strikes of the 1870s, the discovery of gold at Cripple Creek in 1891, and the accelerated exploitation of petroleum resources a number of times during the 20th century all served to buoy the growth and economic health of Colorado. Today the state strives to continue its economic development, while at the same time protecting the awesome natural surroundings that are intrinsic to the Colorado way of life.

Colorado Springs

Population: 344,987 (1998 estimate)

Situated on a plateau at the foot of Pikes Peak, in central Colorado, Colorado Springs is a year-round health and tourist resort. The city's economy relies heavily on defense-related activities and high-technology manufacturing, producing semiconductors and computer hardware and software.

Nearby military installations include Fort Carson; Peterson Air Force Base, home of the United States Space Command and the Air Force Space Command; Falcon Air Force Base; and Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Base, the operations center of the North American Defense Command. The city's many educational institutions include the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, the United States Air Force Academy, and Colorado College, founded in 1874.

Attractions in the area include Pikes Peak, Pike National Forest, Seven Falls, Cheyenne Canyon, and Garden of the Gods, a park with colorful rock formations. Several museums are also located in the vicinity. Colorado Springs was founded in 1871 as a resort by General William J. Palmer, the builder of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. It is named for a mineral spring at nearby Manitou Springs.

Denver

Population: 499,055 (1998 estimate)

Denver, the capital of Colorado, is known as the Mile High City because of its elevation of about 1 mile (1,609 meters/5,280 feet).

Denver is the commercial, manufacturing, financial, and transportation center for an important ranching and mining region of the Rocky Mountains. Military installations such as the Defense Finance and Accounting Center, the Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal provide important income to the city.

Denver is the site of the University of Denver, Regis University, and the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, founded in 1864, 1877, and 1883, respectively. Also here are the University of Colorado at Denver, Metropolitan State College of Denver, Saint Thomas Seminary, the Colorado Institute of Art, and the Iliff School of Theology, founded in 1889, as well as the Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary and Yeshiva Toras Chaim Talmudical Seminary.

Major cultural institutions in the city include the Denver Art Museum, the Museum of Western Art, the Denver Museum of Natural History, Gates Planetarium, the Denver Zoo, the State Historical Society of Colorado, the Colorado Heritage Center, and the Boettcher Memorial Conservatory and Denver Botanic Gardens.

Fort Collins

Population: 108,905 (1998 estimate)

Fort Collins, in the foothills of the Front Range on the Cache la Poudre River, is located in an agricultural and tourist region. High-technology research has become vital to the regional economy, and industries produce computer hardware and software, photographic materials and microelectric parts.

The city is the seat of Colorado State University, founded in 1870, and is the gateway to numerous scenic areas. The community grew around a fort commissioned by (and named for) Lieutenant Colonel William O. Collins in 1864.

Arkansas River

Maximum elevation: 14,000 feet

Length: 1,460 miles

A major tributary of the Mississippi River, the Arkansas River rises in the Sawatch Range of the Rocky Mountains, at an elevation of about 4,270 meters (about 14,000 feet). The river flows generally east and forms a turbulent stream passing over rocky beds and through deep canyons such as the Royal Gorge. Except for a large northern bend in Kansas, the Arkansas River follows a southeastern course, merging with the Mississippi River above Arkansas City, Arkansas.

The water levels of the river are extremely variable, and several dams have been built for flood control, irrigation, and hydroelectric power production. The Arkansas River Navigation System, completed in the early 1970s, made the river navigable to Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Rio Grande River

Length: 1,900 miles

The Rio Grande rises in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado and flows generally southeast for 3,100 kilometers (1,900 miles), emptying into the Gulf of Mexico at Brownsville, Texas.

The Rio Grande is one of the longest rivers in North America but is too shallow for commercial navigation. Major irrigation projects are centered at Elephant Butte and Caballo reservoirs in New Mexico. Among the crops raised in the river valley by irrigation are cotton, citrus fruits, and vegetables. In Mexico the river is known as the Río Bravo del Norte.

Pikes Peak

Maximum elevation: 14,110 feet

Although its elevation is not the highest in Colorado, Pikes Peak is noted for its commanding view and is one of the most famous peaks in the Rocky Mountains. Tourists can ascend the mountain by three different means: by horseback, by a cog railway approximately 14 kilometers (9 miles) long, or by automobile. Two towns, Manitou Springs and Colorado Springs, are located near the foot of the mountain, and there is a meteorological station on the summit.

MONTANA

Capital: Helena

Population: 880,453 (1998 estimate)

Total area: 147,046 square miles

Land area: 145,556 square miles

The legendary big sky of Montana stretches over the glaciers, mountain peaks, and vast expanses of this land of grandeur and diversity. Glacial action during the last Ice Age left its mark on the state's rugged topography, and some of the most inaccessible places in the country are found in the mountains of western Montana. More than 50 ranges of the Rocky Mountains blanket the western third of the state. Jagged, glacially carved peaks in the north are dissected by slender valleys and cloaked in thick forests of fir, cedar, and pine. Glaciers creep down mountain slopes in the higher elevations, and large stretches of land are perpetually snowbound. Moving south, the valleys grow broader, and the mountains rise higher. Granite Peak, at 3,901 meters (12,799 feet) the loftiest peak in Montana, stands near Yellowstone National Park along the border with Wyoming.

The southeast corner of the state harbors the badlands, a haunting, inhospitable landscape of weathered rock masses split by a series of narrow gullies. In most of eastern and central Montana, the grassy hills and flatlands of the Great Plains roll westward toward the Rocky Mountains, punctuated by small chains such as the Little Belt and Crazy mountains.

The North American Continental Divide, running north and south along the crest of the Rockies, splits the state's climate in two. The continental climate of the eastern plains produces long, cold winters and warm, dry summers. During the winter, frigid arctic winds, as well as warmer air masses known as chinooks, sweep the plains, causing a more extreme range of weather. Along the western edge of the state, however, more moderate temperatures and somewhat wetter conditions prevail.

The sharp distinctions in the climate and topography of Montana are mirrored in the split personality of its economy. Forest and metal-related mining operations are located almost exclusively in the mountains, and agriculture and fossil-fuel extraction are focused in the eastern half of the state. The sprawling farms and ranches of eastern Montana average more than 1,050 hectares (more than 2,600 acres) in size, and produce substantial quantities of wheat, barley, beef, and dairy products. Coal is the state's most valuable mineral product, dug out of the huge open-pit strip mines of southern Montana. Although petroleum production has dropped dramatically since the mid-1980s, eastern oil fields still account for about one-sixth of the state's mining income.

In western Montana, mines and forests supply the raw materials for industry. Dozens of sawmills scattered throughout the commercial forests of the northwest turn out a wide variety of wood products, making timber processing the state's leading manufacturing activity. And although the amount of ore excavated from western mines fluctuates from year to year according to market conditions, Montana traditionally produces significant quantities of copper, silver, gold, and other metals.

It was the discovery of gold in 1862 that incited the first sizable influx of European settlers into Montana. Before that time, the European presence in the area was limited to a few isolated trading posts established in territory that was also home to many Native American

groups, among them the Blackfoot, the Crow, the Salish, and the Cheyenne. Most of these people depended on buffalo hunting to supply food and other materials; they also gathered wild plants, but grew no crops except for tobacco, which they used as medicine and in religious rituals.

The Lewis and Clark expedition explored a good deal of the region in 1805 and 1806, just a few years after the United States had acquired most of present-day Montana as part of the Louisiana Purchase.

In the 1860s a series of gold strikes gave birth to raucous mining camps and a general lawlessness throughout the land. With no legal authorities to turn to for help, the citizens took the law into their own hands by forming vigilante committees. Congress attempted to establish order in the region through the creation of the Montana Territory in 1864. It was also during this period that large-scale ranching began in Montana. This development, combined with the intrusion of the mining operations, led to tragic confrontations between federal troops and Native Americans. In 1876 Sioux and Cheyenne warriors annihilated George Armstrong Custer's 7th Cavalry at the Battle of Little Bighorn. But by 1877 the surrender of Chief Joseph and the Nez Percé in northwestern Montana signaled the end of Native American resistance in the territory. Today about two-thirds of the state's Native Americans—who make up about 6 percent of the Montana population—live on one of the seven reservations of Montana.

Billings

Population: 91,750 (1998 estimate)

Billings is the commercial, shipping, and processing center of a region that produces cattle, wheat, and sugar beets. The city is also the site of three oil refineries, two large hospitals and related medical services, shopping centers, Eastern Montana College, and Rocky Mountain College. Logan International Airport is the largest airport in the state.

Billings functions as a gateway to Yellowstone National Park, the Crow Indian Reservation, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, and nearby ski and recreation areas. Points of interest include the city's historic district, several museums of area history, and nearby Pictograph Caves State Monument, with pictographs dating from the Paleo-Indian period, which ended around 5,000 BC. Native American groups such as the Crow and the Shoshone have also left pictographs which are displayed at the monument. East of the city is Pompey's Pillar, a rock formation with additional Native American pictographs and an inscription made by William Clark on 25 July 1806 on the return portion of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

The community, founded in 1882 by the Northern Pacific Railway as a home for its employees, is named for one of the railroad's presidents, Frederick Billings. The railroad's location at the navigable part of the Yellowstone River made Billings an early trading and shipping point.

Butte

Population: 33,994 (1998 estimate)

Butte, known in full as Butte-Silver Bow, is situated in a mineral-rich region on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains. Energy research, medicine, tourism, and copper and molybdenum mining are important to the economy.

The Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology and a sports center are in Butte. Points of interest include the Butte Historic Districts, the Copper King Mansion, the B'nai Israel Synagogue, and Our Lady of the Rockies, a 27-meter (90-foot) statue of the Madonna, which overlooks the city.

Settled by prospectors in the 1860s, it was originally a gold-mining and later a silver-mining center. During the 1880s, copper mining was begun and the city was reached by railroad. In 1977 Butte, which is named for a nearby butte, consolidated with Silver Bow County as Butte-Silver Bow city, sharing one government headed by an elected chief executive and other officials.

Great Falls

Population: 56,395 (1998 estimate)

Great Falls is located near falls of the Missouri River that empower a large hydroelectric project.

Great Falls is an agricultural and commercial center for the region, and its manufactured products include flour and refined petroleum. Important to the city's economy is nearby Malmstrom Air Force Base.

The College of Great Falls, the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind, and the Charles M. Russell Museum Complex are here. The city has a substantial Native American population. Nearby are Lewis and Clark National Forest and Giant Springs, one of the largest freshwater springs in the world.

The Lewis and Clark expedition portaged around the falls here in 1805.

Helena

Population: 28,306 (1998 estimate)

Helena, the capital of Montana, is located in the Prickly Pear Valley, a fertile region surrounded by hills and mountains. Helena is a commercial, financial, and transportation center for an agricultural and mining district. Government, the insurance industry, and tourism are important to the city's economy. Products manufactured in the area include refined lead, processed food, paint, building materials, and metal goods. Carroll College, site of a vocational education center, is in Helena.

The city's points of interest include the Helena Historic District around Last Chance Gulch; the State Capitol, completed in 1902; the former governor's mansion; the Montana Historical Society Museum; and the Gothic-style Saint Helena Cathedral, dedicated in 1914. Other cultural institutions include the Holter Museum of Art and the Helena Symphony and Choral. A dogsled race is held in the city annually.

The region was explored in 1805 by members of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The community, probably named for Helena, Minnesota, was established in 1864 shortly after gold was discovered in Last Chance Gulch, which is now the site of the city's main street.

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

Area: 1.20 square miles

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, established in 1886, commemorates the battle commonly known as Custer's Last Stand. The engagement, in which a regiment of the Seventh United States Cavalry led by Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer was defeated by a force of Sioux and Northern Cheyenne warriors, was fought on 25 June 1876.

The monument features portions of the battlefield, Custer National Cemetery, and a museum and interpretive center. Until 1991 the battlefield was known as the Custer Battlefield National Monument.

NEW MEXICO

Capital: Santa Fe

Population: 1,736,931 (1998 estimate)

Total area: 121,598 square miles

Land area: 121,364 square miles

From scraggly deserts in the south to snow-capped crests in the north, New Mexico offers a rough-hewn landscape of striking contrasts. The Great Plains sweep across the state's eastern third, giving way to the jagged skyline of the Rocky Mountains in the north, and to the broad, parched lowlands of the Basin and Range Region in the south. The Colorado Plateau, a fractured expanse of wide valleys, gaping canyons, and coarse, flattened heights called mesas, rests in the northwestern part of the state. Both the Continental Divide and the region's major river, the Rio Grande, stretch the length of New Mexico in a north-south direction. Wheeler Peak, of the Sangre de Cristo range, is the highest point in the state at 4,011 meters (13,161 feet).

Such topographic diversity contributes to the wide range of annual and daily temperatures that prevail throughout much of New Mexico.

Respite from scorching summer days that can top 50°C (122°F) comes by way of refreshingly cool evenings, generated by a statewide elevation that averages 1,700 meters (5,700 feet). Winters bring sub-freezing temperatures and annual snowfall varying between 50 millimeters (2 inches) in the lower Rio Grande Valley to as much as 7,620 millimeters (300 inches) in the lofty mountains in northern New Mexico.

A simple pre-1940s economy based mainly on cattle ranching and mining metamorphosed in 1943 with the completion of the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. Los Alamos, where the world's first atomic bomb was developed, heralded an era of massive federal expenditures in New Mexico. Today the state's many scientific and military facilities establish New Mexico as a world leader in high technology research, most notably in the fields of nuclear energy, space exploration, and ballistic rocketry. Mining continues to play an important role in the state's economy—today New Mexico is a leader among U.S. states in production of petroleum, natural gas, copper, uranium, and potash.

Tourism is also a major industry, as Carlsbad Caverns National Park and other natural attractions lure millions of visitors, who contribute about \$2.2 billion in annual revenues to the state's economy. Because water is scarce and more than half of the state's soil is stony and shallow, agriculture's contribution to the economy is limited.

The percentage of Hispanic Americans and Native Americans is higher in New Mexico than in any other U.S. state. Of the Hispanic Americans who make up almost 40 percent of the state's populace, about one-half are Hispanos, descended from the original Spanish settlers. Around 9 percent of the people in New Mexico are Native American, most of whom belong to the Pueblo, Navajo, Ute, or Apache groups. Nearly half of all New Mexicans live within the state's three largest metropolitan areas of Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Santa Fe. And despite a steady growth rate since the mid-1940s, New Mexico remains one of the most sparsely populated states in the country.

Ancient artifacts unearthed throughout the region indicate that New Mexico has been occupied by humans for more than 10,000 years. Folsom points, ancient stone spearheads found near the town of Folsom in the early 1900s, provided the first scientific evidence that humans inhabited North America as far back as the Ice Age. Thousands of years later the Pueblos, Native Americans who were highly advanced in architecture, the arts, and agriculture, flourished in sophisticated communities built along the Rio Grande.

The first Europeans to explore what is now New Mexico were Spanish treasure hunters who arrived around 1540. By 1610 the region's first permanent European settlement, called Santa Fe, was established by Spain. Two centuries of uneasy peace lacerated by violent conflict followed as zealous Spanish missionaries employed sword and cross to convert indigenous people. Spain ceded the area to the new Republic of Mexico in 1821, but Mexico's troubled rule of the territory, marred by violent clashes with Hispanos, Native Americans, and the fledgling Republic of Texas, ended in 1848 when the United States acquired it as a spoil of the Mexican War. For the next several decades, New Mexico was notorious as a crossroads of the Old West. Although its reputation was based as much on story as on fact, most Americans of the time fancied New Mexico a lawless land of cattle wars, boot hill graveyards, and Billy the Kid.

WYOMING

Capital: Cheyenne

Population: 480,907 (1998 estimate)

Total area: 97,818 square miles

Land area: 97,105 square miles

An expansive plateau punctuated by robust peaks and treeless basins, Wyoming has a mean elevation of 2,000 meters (6,700 feet)—second highest among the 50 states. The state's three main land

regions are the Rocky Mountains, the Intermontane Basins, and the Great Plains.

The Rocky Mountains sweep out from the state's northwest corner in a series of rugged ranges, most notably the spectacular Tetons. The state's highest point is Gannett Peak, which reaches 4,207 meters (13,804 feet) in the Wind River Range. Interspersed between the state's mountain ranges are flat, mostly arid, sparsely vegetated regions called the Intermontane Basins. The weather-beaten grasslands that are part of the Great Plains occupy the state's southeastern fringe, and the southern tail of the famous Black Hills trails down into its northeastern corner. The Continental Divide cuts a diagonal and breathtaking swath through Wyoming, and tributaries to three mighty river systems—the Missouri, Colorado, and Columbia—rise from its mountains.

The state's elevated topography partly accounts for the generally cool, semiarid climate. Although summer thunderstorms are common, the state is one of the driest in the United States. Winters can be long and bitingly cold. On the Great Plains, swirling winds sometimes whip dry, fallen snow into a blinding maelstrom known as a ground blizzard.

Despite its sometimes hostile weather and terrain, many different Native American groups were thriving in this region when European explorers first arrived around the turn of the 19th century. The Arapaho, the Shoshone, the Cheyenne, and others had long before developed a nomadic lifestyle based on hunting buffalo. In the mid-1880s these groups often assisted European settlers crossing Wyoming along such routes as the Overland, Mormon, and Oregon trails. But relations between settlers and Native Americans ultimately deteriorated into warfare, and by 1877 most surviving Native Americans had been removed to reservations.

Even though Wyoming struggled in its relations with Native Americans, in 1869 the state set an important precedent in a different area of human rights when its territorial legislature became the first political body in the United States to grant women the right to vote, hold public office, and serve on juries. The state's pride in this achievement is expressed in its self-given nickname, the "Equality State," while the name Wyoming comes from the Algonquian words meaning "at the big plains."

The plains of Wyoming are not only expansive, but sparsely inhabited as well, as is evident in its last-place population ranking among U.S. states. From 1970 to 1980 a soaring energy market produced a 50 percent increase in Wyoming's population, but that trend reversed the following decade when the oil market collapsed. Extraction of petroleum, coal, and a number of other minerals still remains the leading component of the state's economy, while ranching is the leading agricultural activity. Livestock production dominates crop production in Wyoming because the short growing season and arid climate make raising field crops difficult.

Also of economic importance to the state is its thriving \$1.5 billion tourist trade, which owes most of its success to the many natural wonders found here. Yellowstone is the nation's first and largest national park, featuring hot, bubbling mud pools and the dramatic eruptions of hot-water geysers as well as one of the world's most diverse wildlife habitats. Just south of Yellowstone is the similarly spectacular Grand Teton National Park, captured on film by renowned photographers such as Ansel Adams. The country's first national forest, the Shoshone, and the first national monument in the United States, at Devils Tower, both lie within Wyoming as well.

UTAH

Capital: Salt Lake City

Population: 2,099,758 (1998 estimate)

Total area: 84,904 square miles

Land area: 82,168 square miles

The varied landscape of Utah ranges from lofty mountain peaks to arid plains to fantastic sculpted rock formations. The greatest elevations are found in the northeast reaches of the state, where the majestic granite slopes and deep valleys of the Uinta and Wasatch mountains—part of the Middle Rockies—shape the land. A narrow strip lining the western edge of the Wasatch Range holds the state's largest population centers and its most fertile soils.

The Basin and Range Region dominates the western third of Utah, where isolated peaks and ranges punctuate expanses of barren salt flats. In the north part of this region, the Great Salt Lake covers 5,200 square kilometers (2,000 square miles)—nearly the size of the state of Delaware. This massive saline lake is a desiccated remnant of the glacial Lake Bonneville, which covered much of Utah in prehistoric times. Southern Utah is part of the Colorado Plateau, where wind and water have carved into elevated plateaus for centuries. This erosion has produced deep canyons revealing layers of brilliant red, pink, purple, and yellow sandstone and shale.

The first inhabitants of Utah lived in the area during the Paleolithic period, arriving sometime after the end of the last Ice Age. Native American Pueblo and Fremont peoples cultivated maize and squash, and raised animals in many parts of the state until about 1300. The Pueblo left a rich legacy of rock paintings, stone buildings, and tools. The region was then populated by many other Native American groups, including the Ute, the Paiute, the Gosiute, the Shoshone, and the Navajo. The state's name is derived from that of the Ute people, which early European explorers mistakenly applied to all Native Americans living in the region.

Spanish explorers arrived in the late 18th century, soon followed by traders and fur trappers. Utah remained sparsely populated until 1847, when Mormons led by Brigham Young streamed into the area to escape religious persecution in other states. The settlers soon established a self-sufficient agricultural economy, but the Mormon political agenda and the practice of polygyny scuttled hopes for statehood for nearly half a century. Utah was finally admitted to the Union in 1896, after church leaders agreed to end these practices. The Mormons had originally applied for statehood under the name Deseret—a word from the Book of Mormon meaning "land of the honeybee," which is the source of the state's official nickname, the Beehive State.

The rich mineral resources of Utah remained largely undeveloped until 1869, when the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads were joined at Promontory, Utah, completing the transcontinental railroad. Before workers finished this key connection in the center of the country, it was not possible for passengers or freight to travel across the United States by rail. Branch lines soon linked the railroad to the state's vast deposits of copper, which are among the largest in the country. The construction of several large defense plants during World War II began to transform the state's economy, which had been dependent upon agriculture and mining up to that point. Soon many people worked at military bases and related government installations, and this trend continued after the war.

The economy of Utah continued to diversify, and today residents work in a varied array of industries, including aerospace, computer hardware and software, food processing, and printing. Cattle ranching is the foundation of the agricultural sector, but it supports only a small number of people. Mines employ far fewer Utahans than they once did, but they yield a much wider variety of minerals, including beryllium, gold, lead, molybdenum, and silver.

The state's fine ski resorts and dramatic desert vistas brought increasing numbers of tourists beginning in the 1960s, providing a further boost to the economy. Boaters, campers, and swimmers flock to Lake Powell, one of the largest artificial lakes in the world. Although skiing is the primary winter draw, scores of visitors come in the summer to enjoy sights such as the craggy pink-and-white limestone rock formations of Bryce Canyon National Park in the southwest corner of the state. Pueblo petroglyphs in Canyonlands National Park also attract visitors and tell some of the state's most ancient natural history in a manner that reflects the striking geography of the state.

At over 800 miles long, the Texas Colorado River is one of the longest rivers to start and end in the same state. (Note that it is NOT the same Colorado River that flows through Arizona, Utah, and other western states.) Because of its importance to our state's economy, our environment, our industry, our agriculture, and especially our lives as Texans, it is truly the lifeblood of our state. The Colorado River is an approximately 862-mile (1,387 km) long river in the U.S. state of Texas. It is the 18th longest river in the United States and the longest river with both its source and its mouth within Texas. Its drainage basin and some of its usually dry tributaries extend into New Mexico. It flows generally southeast from Dawson County through Ballinger, Marble Falls, Austin, Bastrop, Smithville, La Grange, Columbus, Wharton, and Bay City, before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico at Colorado River, major river of North America, rising in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, U.S., and flowing generally west and south for 1,450 miles (2,330 kilometers) into the Gulf of California in northwestern Mexico. Learn more about the Colorado River in this article. The Colorado River system, including the Colorado River, its tributaries, and the lands that these waters drain, is called the Colorado River basin, or watershed. It drains an area of 637,000 square kilometers (246,000 square miles), including parts of seven western U.S. states (Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, California) and Mexico. The Colorado River (Spanish: Río Colorado) is one of the principal rivers (along with the Rio Grande) in the Southwestern United States and northern Mexico. The 1,450-mile-long (2,330 km) river drains an expansive, arid watershed that encompasses parts of seven U.S. states and two Mexican states. Starting in the central Rocky Mountains of Colorado, the river flows generally southwest across the Colorado Plateau and through the Grand Canyon before reaching Lake Mead on the Arizona-Nevada border, where