



The Evergreen State

Established 1889

42nd State

Did You Know?

- Washington is the only state named after a U.S. president (George Washington).
- Nearly one hundred Orca whales, in three family pods, reside in the San Juan Islands during the summer months.
- The Space Needle in Seattle, built for the 1962 World's Fair, attracts more than a million visitors each year.
- Mount St. Helens is the only volcano in the continental United States to erupt in recent history. The 1980 eruption devastated an area of 250 square miles (400 sq km).
- Washington's Grand Coulee Dam is one of the largest hydroelectric facilities in the world.
- Washington's state flag is the only state flag that is green.
- Lake Chelan was once a river, but glaciers blocked the river with dirt and rock, thus creating a lake.
- One of the world's largest totem poles is in Tacoma. It is 105 feet (32 m) high.

The Place

Climate

When many people think of Washington, they think of rain. But the amount of rain that falls each year varies a lot depending on where you are. Western Washington is a lot wetter than the eastern half of the state. The reason for the difference is that clouds dump most of their moisture as they move over the Cascade Mountains. So the average annual rainfall in Seattle, on the western side of the Cascade Mountains, is 36 inches (91 cm). By comparison, yearly precipitation in Spokane is around 17 inches (43 cm). Temperatures in the western half of the state are generally mild throughout the year. In eastern Washington, winters



are cold and summers are hot.

Average Seasonal High and Low Temperatures

- *Spring:* 60/39°F
- *Summer:* 78/52°F
- *Fall:* 61/40°F
- *Winter:* 43/30°F

Geography



Washington is the 18th largest state in the United States, at about 71,303 square miles (184,674 sq km). Much of Washington is mountainous. The Olympic Mountains lie in the northwest, the Cascade Mountains are in the center, and the Rocky Mountains are in the northeast. Some of these mountains used to be active volcanoes. Between the Olympic and Cascade mountains is the Puget Sound lowland. Because the Sound is connected to the Pacific Ocean, it became an important area for shipping and commerce. Olympia, the state capital, and Seattle are both located on Puget Sound. The Columbia Plateau covers most of eastern Washington. Dry plains and rolling hills make up this region.

Resources and Economy



Technology industries are an important part of Washington's economy. Aerospace is a leading industry. The Boeing Company, founded in Seattle, manufactures airplanes and is one of the state's largest employers. High-tech companies such as Microsoft also make their home in the state. Other critical industries are biotechnology, food processing, international trade, fishing, and tourism. Because of its forests, which cover about half of the state, Washington is a leading lumber producer. Farmland covers more than one-third of the state. Main farm products include apples, potatoes, wheat, and barley.

History

Time Line

Washington is inhabited by various Native American tribes thousands of years before the arrival of European explorers and missionaries

AD 1700

AD 1774 Juan Pérez leads the first Spanish expedition to explore the northwest coast

1775 Bruno de Hezeta lands on the Washington coast and claims the area for Spain



1778 James Cook explores Washington's coast for England

1792 American Robert Gray reaches the mouth of the Columbia River; George Vancouver explores the Washington coast for Great Britain



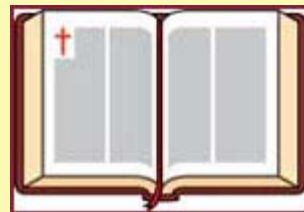
1800

1805 Lewis and Clark reach Washington



1811 The first U.S. settlement in Washington (Fort Okanogan) is established

1836 Marcus and Narcissa Whitman establish the first Christian mission in Washington



1847 Cayuse Native Americans kill the Whitmans and 12 other whites

1853 The Washington Territory is created

1883 The Northern Pacific Railroad is the first transcontinental railroad to reach the state

1889 Washington becomes the 42nd state



1897–99 The Klondike Gold Rush: Seattle grows quickly because it is a point of departure for miners to go to the gold fields

1900

1910 Women gain the right to vote in Washington



1941 The Grand Coulee Dam is finished

1962 The Seattle World's Fair is held



1975 Microsoft is founded



1976 Dixy Lee Ray becomes the first female governor of Washington

1980 Mount St. Helens erupts



2000

2001 A 6.8 magnitude earthquake causes billions of dollars in damage

PRESENT

Early Inhabitants



Before Europeans arrived in the area now known as Washington, Native American tribes lived there for thousands of years. These natives lived very different lifestyles depending on whether they were west or east of the Cascade Mountains. The tribes on the coast (Quileute, Quinault, Chinook, etc.) enjoyed a milder climate and had plenty of food. They gathered fruits and nuts, and they caught salmon and other fish. Many lived in houses made of cedar. The tribes on the east side of the Cascades (Okanogan, Spokane, Wenatchee, Yakima, etc.) faced more difficult conditions. The climate tended to be drier and more extreme. These people lived in portable houses made of logs and woven grass, and they moved from place to place depending on the weather and the food supply. Once a year, the coastal and inland tribes met on the Columbia River to exchange goods, dance, and feast.

Fur Trappers

European explorers who visited the region early on bought otter, beaver, and other *pelts* (skins) from the coastal Native Americans and sold them for a profit. The furs were made into clothing. In the 1800s, American and English fur trading companies set up trading posts and forts where trappers came to sell their furs, meet other trappers, and replenish their supplies. An American trader, John Jacob



Astor, established Fort Okanogan in 1811. This was the first American settlement in Washington.

Early Missionaries



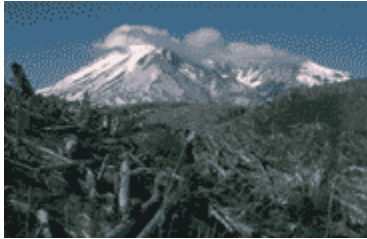
Some early settlers saw more than economic opportunity in the state of Washington. Missionaries came to the area in hopes of converting Native Americans to Christianity. In 1836, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman set up a mission near present-day Walla Walla, in the southeastern part of the state. At first, they were well received by the Cayuse in the area. The Whitmans taught religion and farming. However, the native peoples began to resent the growing white population in the northwest. Whites interfered with their traditional ways of life and often displaced them from their lands. Also, many Native Americans died from diseases brought by European settlers. In 1847, the Whitmans and 12 others were massacred by a band of Cayuse.

Grand Coulee Dam



During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the federal government organized programs to provide jobs for those who couldn't find work. One of those programs included the building of the Grand Coulee Dam across the Columbia River. Completed in 1942, it is one of the world's biggest concrete dams. It is as tall as a 50-storey building. The dam created Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake, the state's largest lake (130 square miles, or 200 sq km). Grand Coulee Dam is one of many dams along the Columbia River providing cheap hydroelectric power, flood control, water for irrigation, and numerous opportunities for recreation such as fishing and boating.

Mount Saint Helens

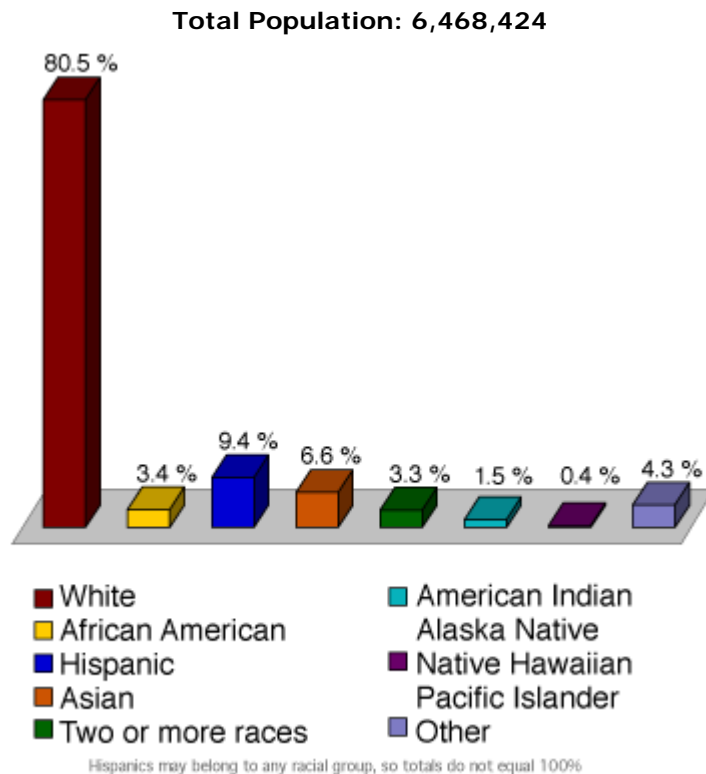


In May 1980, Mount St. Helens erupted in Washington, blasting more than 1,300 feet (400 m) off the mountaintop (the mountain went from being the state's fifth highest peak to the thirteenth highest) and sending volcanic ash across the state. Some towns were covered with as much as 7 inches (18 cm) of ash. The disaster killed 57 people and thousands of animals. It also caused billions of dollars of damage to property, crops, and livestock. In 1983, Mount St. Helens became a national monument.

The People

Population

Washington is the 14th most populated state in the country. It is also one of the fastest-growing states. More than half of Washingtonians live in the Puget Sound area, which includes Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympia. People move to Washington from other states such as California and from other countries in Europe, Asia, and North America. Population growth in the state has brought challenges in dealing with pollution, crime, and urban overcrowding.



Government

Capital: Olympia

State Abbreviation: WA

Governor: Christine Gregoire (Democrat)

U.S. Senators: 2

Maria Cantwell (Democrat)

Patty Murray (Democrat)

U.S. Representatives: 9

Democrats: 6

Republicans: 3

State Senators: 49

State Representatives: 98

Counties: 39



- Washington casts 11 electoral votes in presidential elections.
- A bill must be passed by a majority in both the state senate and the house of representatives.

Famous People



Linda Buck



Carol Channing



Bill Gates

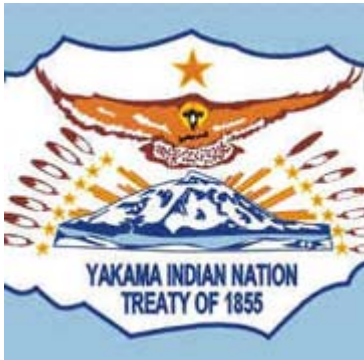
- *Bob Barker* — TV host
- *Eddie Bauer* — Entrepreneur
- *Linda Buck* — Nobel Prize-winning biologist
- *Carol Channing* — Actress
- *Kurt Cobain* — Lead singer of Nirvana
- *Judy Collins* — Singer
- *Bing Crosby* — Singer and actor
- *Merce Cunningham* — Choreographer
- *Bill Gates* — Cofounder of Microsoft
- *Jimi Hendrix* — Guitarist
- *Frank Herbert* — Author of *Dune*
- *Gypsy Rose Lee* — Entertainer
- *Mary McCarthy* — Author
- *Chief Seattle* — Native American chief
- *Francis Scobee* — Astronaut
- *John Stockton* — Professional basketball player
- *Hilary Swank* — Actress



Jimi Hendrix

Native America

Before European explorers arrived, more than a hundred separate tribes inhabited the land that is now Washington. The coastal and inland tribes lived very different lives because of the differences in their environments. When European explorers came to the area, some tribes traded with them, but many were not interested in European supplies. As more and more settlers and missionaries came to the area, the native people felt they were being crowded off their land. Many of the natives died from European diseases they could not fight off. A series of battles erupted between native tribes and U.S. army forces. The government signed treaties with the Washington tribes, but many times it was not even the tribal chiefs, the recognized leaders, who signed the treaties. The majority of the members did not understand what they were giving up by agreeing to the treaty. By the mid-1800s, most of the tribes were moved onto reservations to make room for the ever-growing white population.



Today, there are 29 federally recognized tribes living in Washington. Together they make up about 1.4 percent of the state's total population. There are more than 20 reservations in the state, including the large Yakama Reservation that covers around 1.3 million acres of southern Washington. The Yakama tribal council represents 14 different tribes, with close to nine thousand members. The reservation operates large forestry and fishing industries as well as a cultural heritage center, a casino, and health and educational facilities. The council also awards scholarships to students so they can afford to go to college.

Cultural Notes

Environmental Concern



Environmental issues are important to Washingtonians. Efforts to protect a rare spotted owl that lives in some of Washington's forests led to limitations on logging in the early 1990s. People are also working hard to protect salmon populations in the state, which have decreased in recent years because of hydroelectric dams, logging, water pollution, and chemicals used by farmers. The salmon are not only important to Washington's economy but also to the state's wildlife. Bears, bald eagles, otters, dolphins, and whales depend on the salmon for food. Other environmental concerns include reducing pollution, ensuring that nuclear waste storage is safe, and limiting the negative effects of population growth.

Starbucks



The largest coffee house chain in the world opened its first shop in Seattle, Washington, in 1971. Two teachers and a writer founded the company, naming it after the first mate from the novel *Moby Dick*. In the early 1980s, the company began modeling its coffee production after the espresso coffee bars of Italy, and Starbucks became highly popular. The company began expanding across the state and then the nation. Its menu of flavored lattes, mochas, frappuccinos, and other blended drinks attracted customers in droves. The company now has thousands of coffee shops around the world and also sells a line of ice cream and frozen coffees in grocery stores. Starbucks is widely recognized as one of the best companies to work for.

Fun Facts & Contacts

State Symbols

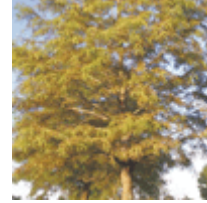
State Bird

American goldfinch—In 1951, Washington schoolchildren voted the goldfinch as the state bird.



State Tree

Western hemlock—This and other evergreens cover half the state.



State Flower

Coast rhododendron—Washington women chose this flower for the 1893 World's Fair.



State Fruit

Apple—The apple was named as the state fruit in 1989. Washington is the nation's leading producer of apples.



Other Symbols

Dance: Square dance

Day: Arbor Day

Fossil: Columbian mammoth

Grass: Bluebunch wheatgrass

Gemstone: Petrified wood

Insect: Green darner dragonfly

Song: "Washington, My Home"

State Motto

Al-ki, or *Alki*—This is a Native American word meaning "By and By."

Pro Sports Teams

- Seattle Mariners (MLB)
- Seattle Seahawks (NFL)
- Seattle Storm (WNBA)
- Seattle Sounders FC (MLS)

For More Information

See www.access.wa.gov or contact the Washington State Tourism Office, PO Box 42500, Olympia, WA 98504; phone (800) 544-1800; web site www.experiencewashington.com.

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Washington

EXTREMES

Hottest: The hottest recorded temperature in the state was 118°F (48°C) at Ice Harbor Dam in 1961.

Coldest: The lowest recorded temperature in the state was -48°F (-44°C) at Mazama and Winthrop in 1968.

Lowest: The lowest point in the state is at sea level (the Pacific Ocean).

Highest: The highest point in the state is Mount Rainier, at 14,410 feet (4,392 m).

