



The Beaver State

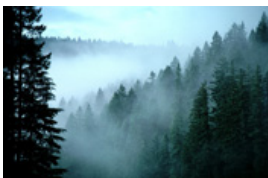
Established 1859
33rd State

Did You Know?

- The largest meteorite in the United States was discovered in Oregon in 1902. It weighed about 40,000 pounds.
- Oregon is the only state with a two-sided flag. The reverse side features a beaver, the state animal.
- The Columbia River Gorge is considered to be one of the best windsurfing spots in the world.
- Eugene was the first city in the state to have one-way streets.
- At 8,000 feet (2,400 meters) deep, Hells Canyon is the deepest river gorge in North America.
- Stark's Vacuum Cleaner Museum in Portland has vacuums dating back to the 1870s.
- Oregon is one of only a few states that has an official state nut. Oregon's state nut is the hazelnut, also known as the filbert.
- Oregon's state birthday is on Valentine's Day.
- The nation's most photographed lighthouse is the Heceta Head Lighthouse.
- In Oregon, there are no self-serve gas stations. The law states an attendant must pump your gas for you.
- At 1,943 feet (592 meters) deep, Crater Lake is the deepest lake in the United States.

The Place

Climate



Oregon has basically two climates. In the western part of the state, ocean breezes help create a mild climate by cooling the land in the summer and warming it in the winter. Summer temperatures along the coast average about 60°F (16°C) and winter temperatures average around 45°F (7°C). Western Oregon also receives a lot of rain, between 50 and 130 inches (1–3 meters) a year! But by the time the ocean breezes cross the Cascade Mountains, they have already dropped most of their moisture. So the eastern side of the state is very dry. Some areas receive only about 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain a year. Summers in eastern Oregon are hot and winters are cold.

Average Seasonal High and Low Temperatures

Spring: 60/39°F
Summer: 78/51°F
Fall: 63/41°F
Winter: 45/30°F

Geography



One of three Pacific Coast states, Oregon covers 98,386 square miles (254,819 square kilometers). Its landscape includes rain forests, mountains, deserts, valleys, rivers, canyons, waterfalls, plains, and *plateaus* (high, flat areas). Much of western Oregon is mountainous. Between the Coast Ranges and the Cascade Mountains in the western part of the state lies the Willamette Valley. More than half of the state's population and most of its major cities are located in this valley. The valley also contains rich farmland. The Columbia *Plateau* covers most of eastern Oregon. It is made up of rolling hills and

desert plains. Much of this area must be irrigated to make farming possible. Southeastern Oregon is part of the Great Basin, an area that also includes four other states. Mountains and valleys extend across this region.



Resources and Economy



Because of its many forests, Oregon is not only a leading producer of lumber but also of paper products. Other important manufactured items include metalwork, machinery, aluminum, and chemicals. Food processing and high-tech industries also contribute to the state's economy. Oregon's rivers help make manufacturing possible because they provide cheap *hydroelectric power* (water-powered electricity). They also allow for irrigation and provide purer water for industrial use, which is especially important for high-tech industries. In agriculture, farmers raise such crops as hazelnuts, peppermint, grass seed, wheat, and a variety of berries, as well as ornamental trees and shrubs. The salmon-fishing industry is one of the largest in the world. Even the state's scenic beauty contributes to the economy by supporting a successful tourist industry.

History

Time Line

	Thousands of years before the arrival of European explorers, small, mobile bands of Native American hunters move into what will become Oregon	
AD 1700		
AD 1778	Captain James Cook's voyage to the northwest coast starts the <i>maritime</i> (by the sea) fur trade	
1792	Robert Gray is the first white person to record entering the Columbia River, which he named	
1800		
1805	The Lewis and Clark Expedition reaches the Oregon coast	
1811	John Astor's Pacific Fur Trading Company is organized	
1843	More than eight hundred pioneers arrive via wagon trains on the Oregon Trail	
1848	Oregon becomes a territory of the United States	
1850	The Oregon Land Donation Act offers free land to settlers	
1859	Oregon becomes a state and tries to keep African Americans out	

1877 A band of the Nez Percé tribe is ordered to leave their land in Oregon; war breaks out and the Nez Percé are forced to go to Oklahoma

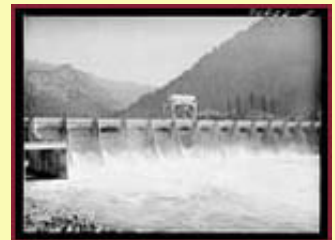
1883 The Northern Pacific Railroad reaches the state



1900

1912 Oregon gives women the right to vote

1938 The Bonneville Dam is completed



1942–43 The city of Vanport is created to house thousands of war workers

1971 Oregon has the nation's first effective bottle-return program

1973 Oregon adopts a land-use plan, establishing rules for the development of forests and farmlands near cities

1980 Hispanics become Oregon's largest minority group

1989 The federal government limits logging to protect the spotted owl



1991 Barbara Roberts becomes Oregon's first female governor

1999 Oregon Legislature's Day of Acknowledgment addresses the state's history of *racism* (the belief that some races are better than others)

2000

2006 The U.S. Supreme Court upholds Oregon's Death with Dignity law, giving terminally ill patients the option of assisted suicide

2014 Oregon legalizes same-sex marriage

PRESENT

Lewis and Clark Expedition



Two of the earliest visitors to the region were Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, explorers who were sent west from Saint Louis, Missouri, by President Thomas Jefferson in hopes of finding an all-water transportation route connecting the Mississippi River Valley to the Pacific Ocean. Although Lewis and Clark and their party failed to discover such a waterway, their expedition succeeded in providing people with valuable information about the geography of the west. They wrote in their journals about their adventures with bad weather, hunger, Native Americans, and grizzly bears. Also, they established peaceful relations with many of the Native American tribes they encountered. Lewis and Clark reached the Oregon coast in 1805. They built Fort Clatsop, near what is now Astoria, and spent the winter there before returning eastward.

Trappers



The first white person to record setting foot on land in Oregon was fur trader Robert Gray, who sailed into Tillamook Bay in 1788 to trade with the Chinook tribe, though Spanish explorers had been in the waters off the Oregon coast much earlier. Other American, British, and French traders soon followed Gray in the 1800s. They traded beads, knives, blankets, and other objects to Native Americans for furs from seals and sea otters. These furs were then sold for a big profit in China. By 1810, they also traded fur from land animals such as beaver and marten. Astoria, a trading post founded by John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company, became Oregon's first white settlement. Other trading companies followed.

Oregon Trail



In the early 1840s, groups of settlers began heading west along the Oregon Trail. The Oregon Trail stretched about 2,000 miles (3,200 kilometers) from Independence, Missouri, to Oregon, and it took about four to six months to cover the distance by wagon. Trappers, missionaries, and explorers were the first ones to travel this path, but it would eventually become one of the most important routes to the northwest. In 1843, more than eight hundred people arrived in Oregon as part of several groups of wagon trains.

Nez Percé War



As more white settlers moved to Oregon, these newcomers settled on Native American lands, disrupted their food supply, and spread diseases that killed the native populations. This sometimes led to conflict between whites and Native Americans. One example was the Nez Percé War. When gold was discovered in the 1860s in what is now Idaho, the Nez Percé were ordered to move to a reservation. Many were also displaced by white settlers hungry for pasture land for cattle. But some of the Nez Percé refused to sign treaties or to move and fought back.

In 1877 Chief Joseph was the last chief to lead his people, including women and children, through northern Montana in an attempt to escape to Canada. They traveled more than 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers), chased by federal troops. About a day away from the safety of the Canadian border, Chief Joseph and his band surrendered because of the poor conditions of his people and the overwhelming power of the U.S. military. They were sent to reservations. By 1880, all of Oregon's Native American tribes were living on reservations.

Oregon and World War II



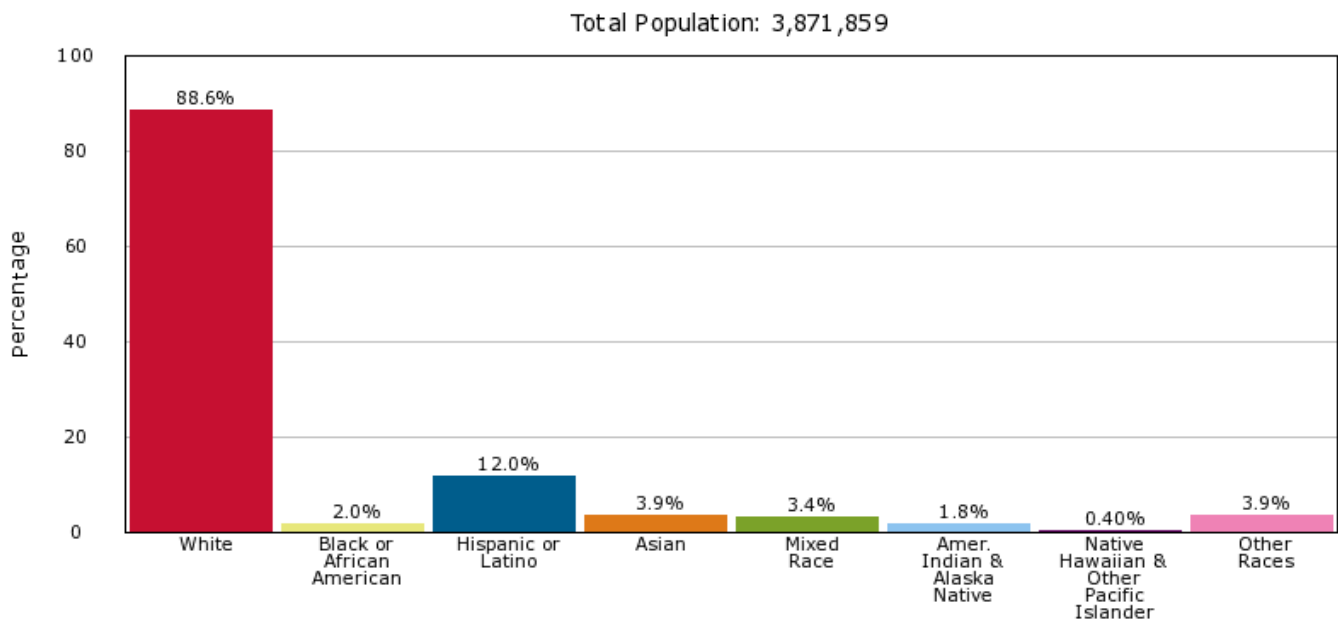
When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 7 December 1941, the United States was thrust into World War II. Many Oregonians quickly became involved in the war effort. They enlisted in the military, worked in defense industries, participated in *rationing* (allowing each person a limited amount of items), and gathered scrap metal.

Unfortunately, after Japan's surprise attack on the United States, many in the country were suspicious of Japanese Americans. By order of the president of the United States, more than 120,000 Japanese living in Oregon, Washington, and California were forced to move to *internment camps* (camps people of Japanese ancestry were sent to for the duration of the war) further inland. Many of these Japanese Americans lost their homes, businesses, savings, and personal possessions.

The People

Population

Oregon's *population density* (people per square mile) is less than half of the national average. The majority of the people live in three *urban* (city) areas—Portland, Eugene, and Salem. Portland is Oregon's largest city.



Hispanics may belong to any racial group. Totals may not equal 100%.

Government



Capital: Salem
State Abbreviation: OR
Governor: Kate Brown (Democrat)
U.S. Senators: 2
 Ron Wyden (Democrat)
 Jeff Merkley (Democrat)
U.S. Representatives: 5
 Democrats: 4
 Republicans: 1
State Senators: 30
State Representatives: 60
Counties: 36

- Oregon's Legislative Assembly (lawmaking body) has a 30-member Senate and a 60-member House of Representatives. The assembly meets every two years on odd-numbered years.
- Oregon has nine federally recognized Native American tribes, each of which has power to govern itself.

Famous People



Ann Curry

Mel Blanc — Voice of cartoon characters such as Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck
Beverly Cleary — Author of the *Ramona* books
Ann Curry — Television journalist
Robert Gray — Explorer
Matt Groening — Cartoonist and creator of *The Simpsons*
Ken Kesey — Author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
Phil Knight — Cofounder and CEO of Nike, Inc.
Ursula K. LeGuin — Author of *A Wizard of Earthsea*
Chief Joseph — Nez Percé chief
Linus Pauling — Two-time Nobel Prize-winning chemist
Ahmad Rashad — Professional football player and television sportscaster
Pat Schroeder — Politician
Doc Severinsen — Bandleader



Ursula K. LeGuin



Chief Joseph



Ahmad Rashad

Native America



Dozens of Native American tribes lived in what is now Oregon before European contact. The Chinook of the northwest coast relied heavily on salmon and traded widely. They lived in large, wooden houses and used canoes to travel long distances. The Nez Percé of the Columbia Plateau moved with the seasons and became much more mobile once horses arrived around 1700. They relied on roots, fish, and wild game, including buffalo and deer. The Paiute of the Great Basin lived in small, mobile groups that traveled hundreds of miles every year in search of a wide variety of foods.

When European settlers arrived by way of the Oregon Trail in the 1840s, it soon became clear that they meant to take native people's land. Native groups in the Willamette Valley and on the Columbia Plateau were forced to sign treaties giving their land to the U.S. government.

There are nine remaining federally recognized tribes in Oregon today and seven reservations, most of them in western Oregon. Many Oregon tribes are working to strengthen their communities by providing health care for all their members and youth centers where kids can hang out after school, play sports, and make friends. Most of the reservations have museums featuring the tribes' history and culture, where visitors can come and learn about the people who lived in the area centuries before Europeans came.

Cultural Notes

The Environment



Since the 1960s, Oregon has been a leader in protecting the environment. For example, when the Willamette River became so polluted in the 1960s that fish couldn't live in it, the government passed laws to limit pollution of the state's waterways. Laws were created to protect Oregon's forests and coastline as well. Oregon also *banned* (outlawed) bottles and cans that aren't recyclable and outlawed the use of aerosol cans, which may damage the earth's *ozone layer* (the part of earth's stratosphere that absorbs most of the sun's ultraviolet radiation). The state attracted nationwide attention in the 1990s because of controversial efforts to save the spotted owl, an endangered species. Logging threatened the owl's habitat, but the federal government stepped in to limit the number of trees that could be cut. Oregonians continue to try to balance economic concerns with the need to protect the environment.

Beverly Cleary



Ramona Quimby has been one of the most beloved characters in children's literature for the past 50 years. When Beverly Cleary was growing up in Portland, she struggled with reading because she couldn't find any books about the kinds of ordinary kids she knew. Later, when she began working as a librarian, she realized kids were still having the same trouble, so she decided to start writing the kinds of books kids would actually enjoy reading.

Her first story was about an eight-year-old boy from Portland named Henry and his dog Spareribs, better known as Ribsy. Cleary went on to write five more books about Henry and Ribsy, as well as eight books about Ramona—Henry's neighbor on Klickitat Street.

Cleary's books have won several awards, including the Newbery Medal for *Dear Mr. Henshaw*. Because of their realistic and funny characters, her books have never gone out of print and remain popular with kids of all ages.

Fun Facts & Contacts

State Symbols

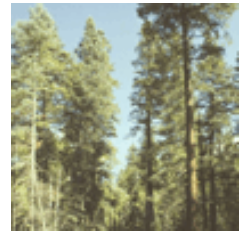
State Bird

Western meadowlark—Native throughout western North America, this bird is known for its beautiful song.



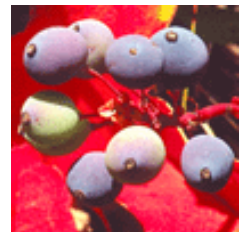
State Tree

Douglas fir—This tree is named after David Douglas, a 19th-century Scottish *botanist* (plant scientist).



State Flower

Oregon grape—A low-growing plant with yellow flowers, the Oregon grape is native to much of the Pacific Coast.



State Animal

American beaver—The beaver was prized for its fur by early fur trappers and traders.



Other Symbols

Beverage: Milk

Colors: Navy blue and gold

Dance: Square dance

Gemstone: Sunstone

Insect: Oregon swallowtail

Mushroom: Pacific golden chanterelle

Nut: Hazelnut

Rock: Thunderegg

Shell: Oregon hairy triton

Song: "Oregon, My Oregon"

State Motto

Alis Volat Propriis—This phrase is Latin for “She Flies with Her Own Wings.”

Major League Sports Teams

- Portland Trail Blazers (NBA)
- Portland Timbers (MLS)
- Portland Thorns FC (NWSL)

For More Information

See www.oregon.gov or contact the Oregon Tourism Commission, 670 Hawthorne SE, Suite 240, Salem, OR 97301; phone (800) 547-7842; web site www.traveloregon.com.

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Oregon

EXTREMES

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

Highest: Mount Hood is the highest point in the state at 11,239 feet (3,426 m) above sea level.

Hottest: The hottest temperature in Oregon was 119°F (48°C) at Pendleton in 1898.

Coldest: The coldest recorded temperature was -54°F (-48°C) at Seneca in 1933.

