

## USA

- The United States is one of the biggest and most well-known countries on earth! From McDonalds to Hollywood movies, American culture has spread far and wide. But the USA is so much more than what you can see in a movie.
  - <https://www.globaladmissions.com/blog/fun-facts-about-the-usa/>

### When was it founded?

- On September 9, 1776, the Second Continental Congress adopted a new name for what had been called the "United Colonies." The moniker United States of America has remained since then as a symbol of freedom and independence. Also, the words "United States of America" appeared in the first draft of the Articles of Confederation on July 8, 1776, as it was submitted to Congress. The Articles weren't ratified by the states until March 1781.
  - <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/today-the-name-united-states-of-america-becomes-official>

### Best City?

- New York City is the most populous, and the most densely populated, city in the United States of America. In fact, New York City is at the center of the New York metropolitan area, which is the largest metropolitan area globally in terms of urban landmass. The city can trace its beginnings to a trading post established by Dutch colonists in 1624 on Lower Manhattan. However, despite all we might think we know about this fantastic cosmopolitan metropolis, New York still continues to surprise us.
  - <https://www.affluent-society.com/post/20-interesting-facts-about-new-york-city>

### Food/National Dish

- The USA is a huge melting pot so saying that it has its own popular National dish is a stretch. But besides that, there are a lot of foods that some would consider "American" such as Hamburgers, Apple Pie, and Corndogs.

### Popular Landmark

- Gifted by France to the United States in 1886, *Liberty Lighting the World*, commonly known as The Statue of Liberty, stands 93 meters above Upper New York Bay. She has come to symbolize freedom and opportunity for immigrants arriving by sea seeking new opportunity, and is a triumphant symbol of American identity for those at home. The Statue is recognized worldwide.
  - <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/5-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-statue-of-liberty/hgWBLOYeOkTxmQ?hl=en>

### Fun Fact

- You can get a unicorn hunting license from Michigan's Lake Superior State University. The late W.T. (Bill) Rabe, known for clever PR stunts when working as a Detroit-area publicist, created the Unicorn Hunters in 1971 shortly after being hired as LSSU's director of public relations. Assisted by LSSU Professors of English Peter Thomas, John McCabe, John Stevens, and others, Rabe envisioned the Unicorn Hunters as one way to garner more publicity for LSSU, which had just established itself as an independent school after being a branch of what is now Michigan Technological University. The gambit worked. For instance, an ABC News crew once came to campus to film students on a quest for unicorns in these wooded parts. Through its magical Department of Natural Unicorns, LSSU regularly continues to receive—and grant—requests for unicorn hunting licenses.
  - <https://www.lssu.edu/resources/about-lssu/traditions/unicornhunters/> and <https://www.cntraveler.com/gallery/50-strange-but-true-facts-about-the-us>

## Spain

- Spain is a storied country of stone castles, snow capped mountains, vast monuments, and sophisticated cities, all of which have made it a favored travel destination. The country is geographically and culturally diverse. Its heartland is the Meseta, a broad central plateau half a mile above sea level.
  - <https://www.britannica.com/place/Spain>

When was it founded?

- 1492 - The Christian Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon conquer the Emirate of Granada, ending nearly 800 years of Muslim rule in the south and founding modern Spain as a united state. Christopher Columbus arrives in the Americas, heralding the conquest of much of South and Central America.
  - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17955805#:~:text=1492%20-%20The%20Christian%20Kingdoms%20of,of%20South%20and%20Central%20America.>

Best City?

- It's impossible to talk about cities in Spain without talking about the capital city. Madrid offers a variety of cuisine, suitable to almost any palette. And because of the large number of people that move into the city, you will also find a mix of citizens from all over the world. The city also supports a robust nightlife with everything from tapas bars to flamenco theaters and nightclubs.
  - <https://mispainvisa.com/most-visited-cities-spain/>

Food/National Dish

- Food is a big part of Spanish culture, families use meals to socialize and meet at the end of the day. Many consider Paella as the National dish of Spain, that has as many variations as there are

cooks! One thing every variation of paella has in common besides the rice and saffron is that it is a very social culinary occasion. Families congregate to eat paella not only in restaurants; but also at their homes, at mountain picnic sites and, on the beach.

- <https://www.toursofdistinction.net/blog/popular-paella-one-of-spains-iconic-national-dishes/#:~:text=Paella%20-%20Take%20Time%20to%20Enjoy!&text=Many%20consi der%20Paella%20as%20the,a%20very%20social%20culinary%20occasion.>

#### Popular Landmark

- **The Alhambra** is perhaps the most famous monument in Spain. You'll find it in Granada, and you'll be amazed at its palaces and gardens. Don't miss the Courtyard of the Lions. Designed as a military zone at the beginning, the Alhambra became the royal residence and court of Granada in the mid-13th century after the establishment of the Nasrid Kingdom and the construction of the first palace by the founding king Mohammed ibn Yusuf Ben Nasr, better known as Alhamar.

- <https://www.alhambra.org/en/alhambra-history.html#:~:text=Designed%20as%20a%20military%20zone,Nasr%2C%20better%20known%20as%20Alhamar> and <https://www.spain.info/en/top/essential-sights/>

#### Fun Fact

- Spain has the **Largest fresh produce market in Europe. If you travel to little Valencia City, you will find Europe's largest fresh produce market. Mercat Central boasts more than 1200 stalls, and is situated in the city's charming old town. On a bigger scale in terms of produce, Spain is the world's largest producer and consumer of olive oil. In January 2022, Spain produced around 7682 tons of olive oil.**
  - <https://balcellsgroup.com/15-interesting-facts-spain/>

#### India

- India has a unique culture and is one of the oldest and greatest civilizations of the world. India has achieved all-round socio-economic progress since its Independence. India covers an area of 32,87,263 sq. km, extending from the snow-covered Himalayan heights to the tropical rain forests of the south. As the 7th largest country in the world, India stands apart from the rest of Asia, marked off as it is by mountains and the sea, which give the country a distinct geographical entity.
  - <https://knowindia.india.gov.in/profile/india-at-a-glance.php#:~:text=India%20has%20a%20unique%20culture,rain%20forests%20of%20the%20south.>

When was it founded?

- The United States recognized the Union of India as an independent state on August 15, 1947, when President Harry S. Truman sent a congratulatory message to Lord Louis Mountbatten, Governor General of the Dominion of India. It was on this date that, in accordance with the British Parliament's India Independence Act of July 18, 1947, the Union of India and Pakistan were created from the former "British India" that had been a part of the British Empire.
- <https://history.state.gov/countries/india>

Best City?

- The most interesting fact about Delhi is its vibrancy – from the food to the people. If Delhi is the heart of the country, then its heart beat is always racing. And there's no way you can escape this energy that comes with all the many things Delhi has to offer. Yup, the capital of the country is also the capital of good things. From historical monuments to street food. From the best colleges to the best coliving residences.
- <https://www.stanzaliving.com/blog/facts-about-delhi>

Food/National Dish

- India does not currently have a national dish, which makes sense since it is such a huge country and has so many dishes to pick from, but they do have many delicious dishes that could be considered national dishes. There are **Samosas, Tandoori Chicken, Rogan Josh, Hyderabadi Biryani, and Butter Chicken.**
- <https://freshtandooriflavour.ca/blog/top-dishes-try-if-you-are-new-indian-food>

Popular Landmark

- Easily India's most famous landmark, the Taj Mahal is an undeniable emblem of the country's culture. Located in the city of Agra in Uttar Pradesh, it exemplifies the Mughal architectural style and is known the world over as a symbol of love. It's also one of the most visited sites in India.
- <https://www.jacadatravel.com/indian-subcontinent/india/travel-guides/top-landmarks-to-visit-in-india/>

Fun Fact

- 'Snakes and Ladders' comes from India
- One of the most popular games of all time, not many people know that this household classic emerged from the nation of India, with a history dating back to the 2nd century BC. Some historians place its history even further back, to the 13th century BC! The game was used. The ladders represented virtues such as generosity, faith, and humility, while the snakes represented vices such as lust, anger, murder, and theft.

- <https://www.civitatis.com/blog/en/facts-about-india/?srsId=AfmBOooT8G4uQOgqbgvJU0U9SxJypqy9m6s2MDFAUjF63Nit3ex9MrL#snakes-and-ladders>

## Japan

- Japan is a fascinating country of economic and business prowess, rich culture, technical wizardry, spatial conundrums and contradictions. Japan held onto the title of the world's second largest economy for more than 40 years from 1968 to 2010. Tokyo, Japan's capital city, is the world's largest metropolitan area, with a population of 32.5 million people.

- <https://globalsherpa.org/japan/>

When was it founded?

- While reliable records date only to about 400 A.D., legend has it that Japan was founded in 600 B.C. by Emperor Jimmu, a direct descendent of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, and ancestor of the present ruling dynasty. In the early fifth century, the Japanese court officially adopted the Chinese writing system, and Buddhism was introduced to Japan during the sixth century. These two events revolutionized Japanese culture and marked the beginning of a long period of strong Chinese cultural influence in Japan.

- [https://1997-2001.state.gov/regions/eap/japan/fs-japan\\_history\\_000626.html#:~:text=While%20reliable%20records%20date%20only,of%20the%20present%20ruling%20dynasty](https://1997-2001.state.gov/regions/eap/japan/fs-japan_history_000626.html#:~:text=While%20reliable%20records%20date%20only,of%20the%20present%20ruling%20dynasty)

Best City?

- Tokyo, the capital of Japan, is vibrant as a city that leads Japan and the world. One of the attractions of Tokyo is that people from various regions and countries gather and interact with each other, and there is a tendency for many cultures to merge and to create new things. The Imperial Palace and Japanese state institutions are gathered together, occupying a particularly important position in Japan.

- <https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/why/47prefectures/kanto/tokyo.html>

Food/National Dish

- The "national dish" - curry-rice - is said to be eaten by many Japanese people once a week. It's more than 150 years since the Japanese came across this exotic dish that originated from India. This simple 'feast' of cooked rice covered in meat and vegetables boiled in a curry sauce has become one of the mainstays of the Japanese diet and is not only eaten at home and in restaurants around town, but has even made its way as far as space.

- [https://web-japan.org/trends/11\\_culture/pop140120.html](https://web-japan.org/trends/11_culture/pop140120.html)

Popular Landmark

- There are many but one that stands out is **Mount Fuji. Mount Fuji is a natural landmark that is synonymous with Japan. Standing at 3,776 meters tall, it is the highest**

**mountain in Japan and is considered a sacred site by the Japanese people. Mount Fuji is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that attracts thousands of visitors annually. Climbing Mount Fuji is a popular activity, and during the climbing season, which runs from July to September, the mountain is filled with hikers from all over the world.**

- <https://www.traveloka.com/en-au/explore/destination/famous-landmarks-in-japan-acc/269264>

#### Fun Fact

- KFC is sometimes eaten as a special Christmas Eve meal. Plenty of Japanese people celebrate Christmas, but the festive fare isn't what you might expect. In Japan, it's traditional to head to your local KFC on Christmas Eve. An estimated 3.6 million Japanese feast on the KFC Christmas Dinner and hours of queuing and ordering weeks in advance is expected.
- <https://www.rickshawtravel.co.uk/japan/blog/10-fun-facts-about-japan/>

#### Ethiopia

- The country lies completely within the tropical latitudes and is relatively compact, with similar north-south and east-west dimensions. The capital is Addis Ababa ("New Flower"), located almost at the center of the country. Ethiopia is the largest and most populated country in the Horn of Africa. With the 1993 secession of Eritrea, its former province along the Red Sea, Ethiopia became landlocked.
- <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ethiopia>

#### When was it founded?

- The Ethiopian Kingdom was founded in the 10th Century (BC). Ethiopia is even documented in the King James Version of the Bible. Archaeologists have found the oldest known human ancestors in Ethiopia, including *Ardipithecus Ramidus Kadabba* (c. 5.8/5.2 million years old) and *Australopithecus Anamensis* (c. 4.2 million years old) but it is also stated that Ethiopia was liberated from Italian control by British troops, and the British government recognized the independence of Ethiopia on January 31, 1942.
- <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/home/research-projects/dadm-project/sub-saharan-africa-region/ethiopia-1942-present/#::~text=Pre-Crisis%20Phase%20> and <https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/ethiopia>

#### Best City?

- Addis Ababa, the sprawling capital of Ethiopia, is a bustling hub that effortlessly combines tradition with modernity. As the political and economic heart of the country, it offers a diverse range of activities from exploring the National Museum of Ethiopia, home to the famous fossil Lucy, to savoring the city's vibrant culinary scene.
- <https://etichotels.com/journal/10-best-cities-to-visit-in-ethiopia/>

### Food/National Dish

- Doro wat was originally specific to Amhara culture, but researchers say that increased mobility within Ethiopia has diminished the cuisine's locality, and its food traditions have become more widespread. Doro wat thus became elevated as the quintessential Ethiopian dish. Although the stew is almost always on Ethiopian menus, this is more for the sake of diners who don't have the chance to eat this at home.
  - <https://www.eater.com/a/mofad-city-guides/dc-ethiopian-food>

### Popular Landmark

Lalibela occupies a dramatic position atop wide valleys and surrounded by weather-gouged escarpments beyond which jagged peaks rise. A place of faith, festivals, mystery and legends that will engage your heart as much as your mind. It is famous for its rock-hewn churches, the exact origins of the churches and their construction are still disputed, which is part of their attraction.

- <https://www.brilliant-ethiopia.com/historical-monuments-of-ethiopia>

### Fun Fact

- **6. Coffee was discovered in Ethiopia** You know your morning caffeine shot? You've got some Ethiopian goats to thank for that. As the story goes, a goat herder way back when noticed his flock's fondness for a certain bush and decided to give one of the fruits a nibble himself. His day's herding was notably more efficient for it – and the coffee industry took off from there.
  - <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/10-surprising-facts-ethiopia/>