[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Redirect](/wiki/Template:Redirect) [Template:Pp-pc1](/wiki/Template:Pp-pc1) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates) [Template:US state](/wiki/Template:US_state)

**Montana** [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) is a [state](/wiki/U.S._state) in the [Western](/wiki/Western_United_States) region of the [United States](/wiki/United_States). Its northern border is international with Canada. The state's name is derived from the Spanish word [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) (mountain). Montana has several nicknames, although none official,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) including "Big Sky Country" and "The Treasure State", and slogans that include "Land of the Shining Mountains" and more recently "The Last Best Place".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montana is ranked [4th in size](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_area), but [44th in population](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_population) and [48th in population density](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_population_density) of the [50 United States](/wiki/50_United_States). The western third of Montana contains numerous mountain ranges. Smaller [island ranges](/wiki/Island_range) are found throughout the state. In total, 77 named ranges are part of the [Rocky Mountains](/wiki/Rocky_Mountains).

The economy is primarily based on agriculture, including [ranching](/wiki/Ranching) and cereal grain farming. Other significant economic activities include oil, gas, coal and hard rock mining, [lumber](/wiki/Lumber), and the fastest-growing sector, tourism.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The health care, service, and government sectors also are significant to the state's economy.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Millions of tourists annually visit [Glacier National Park](/wiki/Glacier_National_Park_(U.S.)), the [Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument](/wiki/Little_Bighorn_Battlefield_National_Monument), and [Yellowstone National Park](/wiki/Yellowstone_National_Park).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

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## Etymology and naming history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

The name Montana comes from the Spanish word *Montaña*, meaning "mountain", or more broadly, "mountainous country".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) *Montaña del Norte* was the name given by early Spanish explorers to the entire mountainous region of the west.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The name Montana was added to a bill by the [United States House Committee on Territories](/wiki/United_States_House_Committee_on_Territories), which was chaired at the time by Rep. [James Ashley](/wiki/James_Mitchell_Ashley) of [Ohio](/wiki/Ohio), for the territory that would become [Idaho Territory](/wiki/Idaho_Territory).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The name was successfully changed by Representatives [Henry Wilson](/wiki/Henry_Wilson) (Massachusetts) and [Benjamin F. Harding](/wiki/Benjamin_F._Harding) (Oregon), who complained that Montana had "no meaning".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) When Ashley presented a bill to establish a temporary government in 1864 for a new territory to be carved out of Idaho, he again chose [Montana Territory](/wiki/Montana_Territory).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) This time Rep. [Samuel Cox](/wiki/Samuel_S._Cox), also of Ohio, objected to the name.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Cox complained that the name was a [misnomer](/wiki/Misnomer) given that most of the territory was not mountainous and that a [Native American](/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States) name would be more appropriate than a Spanish one.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Other names such as [Shoshone](/wiki/Shoshone) were suggested, but it was eventually decided that the Committee on Territories could name it whatever they wanted, so the original name of Montana was adopted.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|left|Map of Montana](/wiki/File:Montana_Map.jpg)

With a total area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert),<ref name=census/> Montana is slightly larger than [Japan](/wiki/Japan).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It is the fourth largest state in the United States after [Alaska](/wiki/Alaska), [Texas](/wiki/Texas), and [California](/wiki/California);[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) the largest [landlocked](/wiki/Landlocked) U.S. state; and the 56th largest national state/province subdivision in the world.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) To the north, Montana shares a [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) border with three Canadian [provinces](/wiki/Provinces_of_Canada): [British Columbia](/wiki/British_Columbia), [Alberta](/wiki/Alberta), and [Saskatchewan](/wiki/Saskatchewan), the only state to do so.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It borders [North Dakota](/wiki/North_Dakota) and [South Dakota](/wiki/South_Dakota) to the east, [Wyoming](/wiki/Wyoming) to the south and [Idaho](/wiki/Idaho) to the west and southwest.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Topography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

The [topography](/wiki/Topography) of the state is roughly defined by the [Continental Divide](/wiki/Continental_Divide_of_the_Americas), which splits much of the state into distinct eastern and western regions.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Most of Montana's 100 or more named mountain ranges are concentrated in the western half of the state, most of which is geologically and geographically part of the Northern [Rocky Mountains](/wiki/Rocky_Mountains).[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Absaroka](/wiki/Absaroka_Mountains) and [Beartooth](/wiki/Beartooth_Mountains) ranges in the south-central part of the state are technically part of the Central Rocky Mountains.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Rocky Mountain Front](/wiki/Rocky_Mountain_Front) is a significant feature in the north-central portion of the state,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and there are a number of isolated [island ranges](/wiki/Island_range) that interrupt the [prairie](/wiki/Prairie) landscape common in the central and eastern parts of the state.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) About 60 percent of the state is prairie, part of the northern [Great Plains](/wiki/Great_Plains).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The [Bitterroot Mountains](/wiki/Bitterroot_Mountains)—one of the longest continuous ranges in the entire Rocky Mountain chain from Alaska to [Mexico](/wiki/Mexico)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)—along with smaller ranges, including the [Coeur d'Alene Mountains](/wiki/Coeur_d'Alene_Mountains) and the [Cabinet Mountains](/wiki/Cabinet_Mountains), divide the state from Idaho. The southern third of the Bitterroot range blends into the Continental Divide.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Other major mountain ranges west of the Divide include the [Cabinet Mountains](/wiki/Cabinet_Mountains), the [Anaconda Range](/wiki/Anaconda_Range), the [Missions](/wiki/Mission_Range), the [Garnet Range](/wiki/Garnet_Range), [Sapphire Mountains](/wiki/Sapphire_Mountains), and [Flint Creek Range](/wiki/Flint_Creek_Range).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[thumb|Montana terrain](/wiki/File:Montana_Relief_1.jpg) The northern section of the Divide, where the mountains give way rapidly to prairie, is part of the [Rocky Mountain Front](/wiki/Rocky_Mountain_Front).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The front is most pronounced in the [Lewis Range](/wiki/Lewis_Range), located primarily in [Glacier National Park](/wiki/Glacier_National_Park_(U.S.)).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Due to the configuration of mountain ranges in Glacier National Park, the [Northern Divide](/wiki/Northern_Divide) (which begins in Alaska's [Seward Peninsula](/wiki/Seward_Peninsula))[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) crosses this region and turns east in Montana at [Triple Divide Peak](/wiki/Triple_Divide_Peak_(Montana)).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It causes the [Waterton River](/wiki/Waterton_River), [Belly](/wiki/Belly_River), and [Saint Mary](/wiki/St._Mary_River_(Montana-Alberta)) rivers to flow north into [Alberta](/wiki/Alberta), Canada.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) There they join the [Saskatchewan River](/wiki/Saskatchewan_River), which ultimately empties into [Hudson Bay](/wiki/Hudson_Bay).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

East of the divide, several roughly parallel ranges cover the southern part of the state, including the [Gravelly Range](/wiki/Gravelly_Range), the [Madison Range](/wiki/Madison_Range), [Gallatin Range](/wiki/Gallatin_Range), [Absaroka Mountains](/wiki/Absaroka_Mountains) and the [Beartooth Mountains](/wiki/Beartooth_Mountains).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The Beartooth Plateau is the largest continuous land mass over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) high in the continental United States.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It contains the highest point in the state, [Granite Peak](/wiki/Granite_Peak_(Montana)), [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) high.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) North of these ranges are the [Big Belt Mountains](/wiki/Big_Belt_Mountains), [Bridger Mountains](/wiki/Bridger_Mountains_(Montana)), [Tobacco Roots](/wiki/Tobacco_Root_Mountains), and several island ranges, including the [Crazy Mountains](/wiki/Crazy_Mountains) and [Little Belt Mountains](/wiki/Little_Belt_Mountains).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:St_Mary_Lake.jpg)[St. Mary Lake](/wiki/St._Mary_Lake) in Glacier National Park Between many mountain ranges are rich river valleys. The [Big Hole Valley](/wiki/Big_Hole_River),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Bitterroot Valley](/wiki/Bitterroot_Valley),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Gallatin Valley](/wiki/Gallatin_Valley),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Flathead Valley](/wiki/The_Flathead),[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and [Paradise Valley](/wiki/Paradise_Valley_(Montana))[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) have extensive agricultural resources and multiple opportunities for tourism and recreation.

East and north of this transition zone are the expansive and sparsely populated [Northern Plains](/wiki/Great_Plains), with [tableland](/wiki/Tableland) prairies, smaller island mountain ranges, and [badlands](/wiki/Badlands).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The isolated island ranges east of the Divide include the Bear Paw Mountains,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Bull Mountains](/wiki/Bull_Mountains),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Castle Mountains](/wiki/Castle_Mountains_(Montana)),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Crazy Mountains](/wiki/Crazy_Mountains),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Highwood Mountains](/wiki/Highwood_Mountains),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Judith Mountains](/wiki/Judith_Mountains),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Little Belt Mountains](/wiki/Little_Belt_Mountains),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Little Rocky Mountains](/wiki/Little_Rocky_Mountains),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) the [Pryor Mountains](/wiki/Pryor_Mountains),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Snowy Mountains](/wiki/Snowy_Mountains),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Sweet Grass Hills](/wiki/Sweet_Grass_Hills),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and—in the southeastern corner of the state near [Ekalaka](/wiki/Ekalaka)—the [Long Pines](/wiki/Long_Pines).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Many of these isolated eastern ranges were created about 120 to 66 million years ago when [magma](/wiki/Magma) welling up from the interior cracked and bowed the earth's surface here.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The area east of the divide in the north-central portion of the state is known for the [Missouri Breaks](/wiki/Upper_Missouri_River_Breaks_National_Monument) and other significant [rock formations](/wiki/Rock_formation).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Three [buttes](/wiki/Butte) south of [Great Falls](/wiki/Great_Falls,_Montana) are major landmarks: Cascade, Crown, Square, Shaw and Buttes.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Known as [laccoliths](/wiki/Laccolith), they formed when [igneous rock](/wiki/Igneous_rock) protruded through cracks in the sedimentary rock.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The underlying surface consists of [sandstone](/wiki/Sandstone) and [shale](/wiki/Shale).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Surface soils in the area are highly diverse, and greatly affected by the local geology, whether glaciated plain, intermountain basin, mountain foothills, or tableland.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Foothill regions are often covered in weathered stone or broken [slate](/wiki/Slate), or consist of uncovered bare rock (usually igneous, [quartzite](/wiki/Quartzite), sandstone, or shale).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The soil of intermountain basins usually consists of [clay](/wiki/Clay), [gravel](/wiki/Gravel), [sand](/wiki/Sand), [silt](/wiki/Silt), and [volcanic ash](/wiki/Volcanic_ash), much of it laid down by lakes which covered the region during the [Oligocene](/wiki/Oligocene) 33 to 23 million years ago.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Tablelands are often topped with [argillite](/wiki/Argillite) gravel and weathered quartzite, occasionally underlain by shale.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The glaciated plains are generally covered in clay, gravel, sand, and silt left by the [proglacial](/wiki/Proglacial_lake) [Lake Great Falls](/wiki/Lake_Great_Falls) or by [moraines](/wiki/Moraine) or gravel-covered former lake basins left by the [Wisconsin glaciation](/wiki/Wisconsin_glaciation) 85,000 to 11,000 years ago.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Farther east, areas such as [Makoshika State Park](/wiki/Makoshika_State_Park) near [Glendive](/wiki/Glendive) and [Medicine Rocks State Park](/wiki/Medicine_Rocks_State_Park) near Ekalaka contain some of the most scenic [badlands](/wiki/Badlands) regions in the state.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[thumb|250px|The](/wiki/File:MK02256_2257_Belly_River.jpg) [Belly River](/wiki/Belly_River) in [Waterton Lakes National Park](/wiki/Waterton_Lakes_National_Park) The [Hell Creek Formation](/wiki/Hell_Creek_Formation) in Northeast Montana is a major source of [dinosaur](/wiki/Dinosaur) [fossils](/wiki/Fossil).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Paleontologist](/wiki/Paleontologist) [Jack Horner](/wiki/Jack_Horner_(paleontologist)) of the [Museum of the Rockies](/wiki/Museum_of_the_Rockies) in [Bozeman](/wiki/Bozeman,_Montana) brought this formation to the world's attention with several major finds.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Rivers, lakes and reservoirs[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Montana contains thousands of named rivers and creeks,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of which are known for ["blue-ribbon"](/wiki/Blue_Ribbon_fishery) [trout](/wiki/Trout) fishing.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montana's water resources provide for recreation, [hydropower](/wiki/Hydropower), crop and forage irrigation, mining, and water for human consumption. Montana is one of few geographic areas in the world whose rivers form parts of three major [watersheds](/wiki/Drainage_basin) (i.e. where two [continental divides](/wiki/Continental_divide) intersect). Its rivers feed the Pacific Ocean, the [Gulf of Mexico](/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico), and [Hudson Bay](/wiki/Hudson_Bay). The watersheds divide at [Triple Divide Peak](/wiki/Triple_Divide_Peak_(Montana)) in Glacier National Park.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

##### Pacific Ocean drainage basin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Missouri_River_breaks.jpg)[Missouri Breaks](/wiki/Upper_Missouri_River_Breaks_National_Monument) region in central Montana West of the divide, the [Clark Fork](/wiki/Clark_Fork_(river)) of the Columbia (not to be confused with the [Clarks Fork](/wiki/Clarks_Fork_Yellowstone_River) of the Yellowstone River) rises near [Butte](/wiki/Butte,_Montana)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and flows northwest to [Missoula](/wiki/Missoula,_Montana), where it is joined by the [Blackfoot River](/wiki/Blackfoot_River_(Montana)) and [Bitterroot River](/wiki/Bitterroot_River).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Farther downstream, it is joined by the [Flathead River](/wiki/Flathead_River) before entering Idaho near [Lake Pend Oreille](/wiki/Lake_Pend_Oreille).[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Pend Oreille River](/wiki/Pend_Oreille_River) forms the outflow of Lake Pend Oreille. The Pend Oreille River joined the [Columbia River](/wiki/Columbia_River), which flows to the Pacific Ocean—making the [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) long Clark Fork/Pend Oreille (considered a single river system) the longest river in the Rocky Mountains.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The Clark Fork discharges the greatest volume of water of any river exiting the state.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Kootenai River](/wiki/Kootenai_River) in northwest Montana is another major tributary of the Columbia.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

##### Gulf of Mexico drainage basin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

East of the divide the [Missouri River](/wiki/Missouri_River), which is formed by the confluence of the [Jefferson](/wiki/Jefferson_River), [Madison](/wiki/Madison_River) and [Gallatin](/wiki/Gallatin_River) rivers near [Three Forks](/wiki/Three_Forks,_Montana),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) flows due north through the west-central part of the state to [Great Falls](/wiki/Great_Falls,_Montana).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) From this point, it then flows generally east through fairly flat agricultural land and the Missouri Breaks to [Fort Peck reservoir](/wiki/Fort_Peck_Lake).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The stretch of river between Fort Benton and the [Fred Robinson Bridge](/wiki/Fred_Robinson_Bridge) at the western boundary of Fort Peck Reservoir was designated a [National Wild and Scenic River](/wiki/National_Wild_and_Scenic_Rivers_System) in 1976.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The Missouri enters [North Dakota](/wiki/North_Dakota) near [Fort Union](/wiki/Fort_Union_Trading_Post_National_Historic_Site),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) having drained more than half the land area of Montana ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Nearly one-third of the Missouri River in Montana lies behind 10 dams: [Toston](/wiki/Toston_Dam), [Canyon Ferry](/wiki/Canyon_Ferry_Dam), [Hauser](/wiki/Hauser_Dam), [Holter](/wiki/Holter_Dam), [Black Eagle](/wiki/Black_Eagle_Dam), [Rainbow](/wiki/Rainbow_Dam), [Cochrane](/wiki/Cochrane_Dam), [Ryan](/wiki/Ryan_Dam), [Morony](/wiki/Morony_Dam), and Fort Peck.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The [Yellowstone River](/wiki/Yellowstone_River) rises on the continental divide near [Younts Peak](/wiki/Younts_Peak) in Wyoming's [Teton Wilderness](/wiki/Teton_Wilderness).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It flows north through [Yellowstone National Park](/wiki/Yellowstone_National_Park), enters Montana near [Gardiner](/wiki/Gardiner,_Montana), and passes through the Paradise Valley to [Livingston](/wiki/Livingston,_Montana).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It then flows northeasterly[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) across the state through Billings, [Miles City](/wiki/Miles_City,_Montana), [Glendive](/wiki/Glendive,_Montana), and [Sidney](/wiki/Sidney,_Montana).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The Yellowstone joins the Missouri in North Dakota just east of Fort Union.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It is the longest undammed, free-flowing river in the contiguous United States,[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and drains about a quarter of Montana ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Other major Montana tributaries of the Missouri include the [Smith](/wiki/Smith_River_(Montana)),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Milk](/wiki/Milk_River_(Montana-Alberta)),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Marias](/wiki/Marias_River),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Judith](/wiki/Judith_River),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and [Musselshell Rivers](/wiki/Musselshell_River).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montana also claims the disputed title of possessing the world's shortest river, the [Roe River](/wiki/Roe_River), just outside [Great Falls](/wiki/Great_Falls,_Montana).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Through the Missouri, these rivers ultimately join the [Mississippi River](/wiki/Mississippi_River) and flow into the [Gulf of Mexico](/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Major tributaries of the Yellowstone include the [Boulder](/wiki/Boulder_River_(Sweet_Grass_County,_Montana)),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Stillwater](/wiki/Stillwater_River_(Stillwater_County,_Montana)),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Clarks Fork](/wiki/Clarks_Fork_Yellowstone_River),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Bighorn](/wiki/Bighorn_River),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Tongue](/wiki/Tongue_River_(Montana)),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and [Powder Rivers](/wiki/Powder_River_(Montana)).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

##### Hudson Bay drainage basin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

The [Northern Divide](/wiki/Northern_Divide) turns east in Montana at Triple Divide Peak, causing the [Waterton River](/wiki/Waterton_River), [Belly](/wiki/Belly_River), and [Saint Mary](/wiki/St._Mary_River_(Montana-Alberta)) rivers to flow north into Alberta. There they join the [Saskatchewan River](/wiki/Saskatchewan_River), which ultimately empties into [Hudson Bay](/wiki/Hudson_Bay).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

##### Lakes and reservoirs[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

There are at least 3,223 named lakes and reservoirs in Montana, including [Flathead Lake](/wiki/Flathead_Lake), the largest natural freshwater lake in the western United States. Other major lakes include [Whitefish Lake](/wiki/Whitefish_Lake_State_Park) in the Flathead Valley and Lake McDonald and St. Mary Lake in Glacier National Park. The largest reservoir in the state is [Fort Peck Reservoir](/wiki/Fort_Peck_Lake) on the Missouri river, which is contained by the second largest earthen dam and largest hydraulically filled dam in the world.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Other major reservoirs include [Hungry Horse](/wiki/Hungry_Horse_Dam) on the Flathead River; [Lake Koocanusa](/wiki/Lake_Koocanusa) on the Kootenai River; [Lake Elwell](/wiki/Lake_Elwell) on the Marias River; [Clark Canyon](/wiki/Clark_Canyon_Dam) on the Beaverhead River; [Yellowtail](/wiki/Yellowtail_Dam) on the Bighorn River, [Canyon Ferry](/wiki/Canyon_Ferry_Lake), [Hauser](/wiki/Hauser_Dam), [Holter](/wiki/Holter_Dam), [Rainbow](/wiki/Rainbow_Dam); and [Black Eagle](/wiki/Black_Eagle_Dam) on the Missouri River.

### Flora and fauna[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Popi_ownpillar.jpg)[Pompey's Pillar National Monument](/wiki/Pompey's_Pillar_National_Monument) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Vegetation of the state includes [lodgepole pine](/wiki/Lodgepole_pine), [ponderosa pine](/wiki/Ponderosa_pine); [Douglas fir](/wiki/Douglas_fir), [larch](/wiki/Larch), [spruce](/wiki/Spruce); [aspen](/wiki/Aspen), [birch](/wiki/Birch), [red cedar](/wiki/Thuja_plicata), [hemlock](/wiki/Tsuga), [ash](/wiki/Ash_tree), [alder](/wiki/Alder); rocky mountain [maple](/wiki/Maple) and [cottonwood](/wiki/Populus_sect._Aegiros) trees. Forests cover approximately 25 percent of the state. Flowers native to Montana include [asters](/wiki/Aster_(genus)), [bitterroots](/wiki/Bitterroot), [daisies](/wiki/Asteraceae), [lupins](/wiki/Lupin), [poppies](/wiki/Papaveraceae), [primroses](/wiki/Primula), [columbine](/wiki/Aquilegia), [lilies](/wiki/Lily), [orchids](/wiki/Orchid), and [dryads](/wiki/Dryas_(plant)). Several species of [sagebrush](/wiki/Sagebrush) and [cactus](/wiki/Cacti) and many species of grasses are common. Many species of [mushrooms](/wiki/Mushroom) and [lichens](/wiki/Lichen)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) are also found in the state.

Montana is home to a diverse array of fauna that includes 14 [amphibian](/wiki/Amphibian),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) 90 fish,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) 117 [mammal](/wiki/Mammal),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) 20 [reptile](/wiki/Reptile)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and 427 [bird](/wiki/Bird)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) species. Additionally, there are over 10,000 [invertebrate](/wiki/Invertebrate) species, including 180 [mollusks](/wiki/Mollusk) and 30 [crustaceans](/wiki/Crustacean). Montana has the largest [grizzly bear](/wiki/Grizzly_bear) population in the lower 48 states.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montana hosts five federally [endangered species](/wiki/Endangered_species)–[black-footed ferret](/wiki/Black-footed_ferret), [whooping crane](/wiki/Whooping_crane), [least tern](/wiki/Least_tern), [pallid sturgeon](/wiki/Pallid_sturgeon) and [white sturgeon](/wiki/White_sturgeon) and seven [threatened species](/wiki/Threatened_species) including the [grizzly bear](/wiki/Grizzly_bear), [Canadian lynx](/wiki/Canadian_lynx) and [bull trout](/wiki/Bull_trout).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks](/wiki/Montana_Department_of_Fish,_Wildlife_and_Parks) manages fishing and hunting seasons for at least 17 species of [game fish](/wiki/Game_fish) including seven species of [trout](/wiki/Trout), [walleye](/wiki/Walleye) and [smallmouth bass](/wiki/Smallmouth_bass)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and at least 29 species of game birds and animals including [ring-neck pheasant](/wiki/Common_pheasant), [grey partridge](/wiki/Grey_partridge), [elk](/wiki/Elk), [pronghorn antelope](/wiki/Pronghorn), [mule deer](/wiki/Mule_deer), [whitetail deer](/wiki/Whitetail_deer), [gray wolf](/wiki/Gray_wolf) and [bighorn sheep](/wiki/Bighorn_sheep).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Protected lands[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Bison_herd_grazing_at_the_National_Bison_Range.jpg)[Bison](/wiki/Bison) herd grazing at the [National Bison Range](/wiki/National_Bison_Range) Montana contains [Glacier National Park](/wiki/Glacier_National_Park_(U.S.)), "The Crown of the Continent"; and portions of [Yellowstone National Park](/wiki/Yellowstone_National_Park), including three of the park's five entrances. Other federally recognized sites include the [Little Bighorn National Monument](/wiki/Battle_of_the_Little_Bighorn), [Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area](/wiki/Bighorn_Canyon_National_Recreation_Area), [Big Hole National Battlefield](/wiki/Big_Hole_National_Battlefield), and the [National Bison Range](/wiki/National_Bison_Range). Approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), or 35 percent of Montana's land is administered by federal or state agencies. The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Agriculture) [Forest Service](/wiki/United_States_Forest_Service) administers [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of forest land in ten [National Forests](/wiki/United_States_National_Forest). There are approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of [wilderness](/wiki/Wilderness) in 12 separate [wilderness areas](/wiki/Wilderness_area) that are part of the [National Wilderness Preservation System](/wiki/National_Wilderness_Preservation_System) established by the [Wilderness Act of 1964](/wiki/Wilderness_Act). The [U.S. Department of the Interior](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_the_Interior) [Bureau of Land Management](/wiki/Bureau_of_Land_Management) controls [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of federal land. The U.S. Department of the Interior [Fish and Wildlife Service](/wiki/United_States_Fish_and_Wildlife_Service) administers [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of 1.1 million acres of [National Wildlife Refuges](/wiki/National_Wildlife_Refuge) and waterfowl production areas in Montana. The U.S. Department of the Interior [Bureau of Reclamation](/wiki/United_States_Bureau_of_Reclamation) administers approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of land and water surface in the state. The [Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks](/wiki/Montana_Department_of_Fish,_Wildlife_and_Parks) operates approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of state parks and access points on the state's rivers and lakes. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation manages [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of [School Trust Land](/wiki/State_Trust_Lands) ceded by the federal government under the [Land Ordinance of 1785](/wiki/Land_Ordinance_of_1785) to the state in 1889 when Montana was granted statehood. These lands are managed by the state for the benefit of public schools and institutions in the state.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Quakelakemontana.jpg)[Quake Lake](/wiki/Quake_Lake) was created by a landslide during the [1959 Hebgen Lake earthquake](/wiki/1959_Hebgen_Lake_earthquake)

Areas managed by the [National Park Service](/wiki/National_Park_Service) include:[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

* [Big Hole National Battlefield](/wiki/Big_Hole_National_Battlefield) near [Wisdom](/wiki/Wisdom,_Montana)
* [Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area](/wiki/Bighorn_Canyon_National_Recreation_Area) near [Fort Smith](/wiki/Fort_Smith,_Montana)
* [Glacier National Park](/wiki/Glacier_National_Park_(U.S.))
* [Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site](/wiki/Grant-Kohrs_Ranch_National_Historic_Site) at [Deer Lodge](/wiki/Deer_Lodge,_Montana)
* [Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail](/wiki/Lewis_and_Clark_National_Historic_Trail)
* [Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument](/wiki/Little_Bighorn_Battlefield_National_Monument) near [Crow Agency](/wiki/Crow_Agency,_Montana)
* [Nez Perce National Historical Park](/wiki/Nez_Perce_National_Historical_Park)
* [Yellowstone National Park](/wiki/Yellowstone_National_Park)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[thumb|Left|Temperature and precipitation for](/wiki/File:Helena,_Montana_1961-1990_Climate_data.gif) [Montana's capital city, Helena](/wiki/Helena,_Montana) Montana is a large state with considerable variation in geography, and the climate is, therefore, equally varied. The state spans from below the [45th parallel](/wiki/45th_parallel_north) (the line equidistant between the equator and [North Pole](/wiki/North_Pole)) to the [49th parallel](/wiki/49th_parallel_north), and elevations range from under [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to nearly [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) above sea level. The western half is mountainous, interrupted by numerous large valleys. Eastern Montana comprises plains and badlands, broken by hills and isolated mountain ranges, and has a [semi-arid](/wiki/Semi-arid_climate), [continental](/wiki/Continentality) climate ([Köppen climate classification](/wiki/Köppen_climate_classification) [*BSk*](/wiki/Cold_steppe)). The [Continental Divide](/wiki/Continental_Divide) has a considerable effect on the climate, as it restricts the flow of warmer air from the Pacific from moving east, and drier continental air from moving west. The area west of the divide has a modified northern Pacific coast climate, with milder winters, cooler summers, less wind and a longer growing season.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Low clouds and fog often form in the valleys west of the divide in winter, but this is rarely seen in the east.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Average daytime temperatures vary from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in January to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in July.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Verification needed](/wiki/Template:Verification_needed) The variation in geography leads to great variation in temperature. The highest observed summer temperature was [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) at [Glendive](/wiki/Glendive) on July 20, 1893, and Medicine Lake on July 5, 1937. Throughout the state, summer nights are generally cool and pleasant. Extremely hot weather is less common above [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Snowfall has been recorded in all months of the year in the more mountainous areas of central and western Montana, though it is rare in July and August.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[right|thumb|The](/wiki/File:Big_Drift.jpg) [Big Drift](/wiki/Big_Drift) covering the [Going-to-the-Sun Road](/wiki/Going-to-the-Sun_Road) in [Glacier National Park](/wiki/Glacier_National_Park_(U.S.)) as photographed on March 23, 2006

The coldest temperature on record for Montana is also the coldest temperature for the entire contiguous U.S. On January 20, 1954, [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) was recorded at a gold mining camp near Rogers Pass. Temperatures vary greatly on such cold nights, and [Helena](/wiki/Helena,_Montana), [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to the southeast had a low of only [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) on the same date, and an all-time record low of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Winter cold spells are usually the result of [cold continental air](/wiki/Cold_front) coming south from Canada. The front is often well defined, causing a large temperature drop in a 24-hour period. Conversely, air flow from the southwest results in “[chinooks](/wiki/Chinook_wind)”. These steady [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) (or more) winds can suddenly warm parts of Montana, especially areas just to the east of the mountains, where temperatures sometimes rise up to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) for periods of ten days or longer.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[Loma](/wiki/Loma,_Montana) is the location of the most extreme recorded temperature change in a 24-hour period in the United States. On January 15, 1972, a [chinook wind](/wiki/Chinook_wind) blew in and the temperature rose from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:Grinnell_overlook.jpg) [Grinnell Glacier](/wiki/Grinnell_Glacier) receives [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of precipitation per year [thumb|left|Clark Fork River, Missoula, in autumn](/wiki/File:Fall_Clark_Fork.jpg)

Average annual precipitation is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), but great variations are seen. The mountain ranges block the moist Pacific air, holding moisture in the western valleys, and creating [rain shadows](/wiki/Rain_shadow) to the east. [Heron](/wiki/Heron,_Montana), in the west, receives the most [precipitation](/wiki/Precipitation_(meteorology)), [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). On the eastern (leeward) side of a mountain range, the valleys are much drier; [Lonepine](/wiki/Lonepine,_Montana) averages [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and [Deer Lodge](/wiki/Deer_Lodge,_Montana) [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of precipitation. The mountains themselves can receive over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), for example the [Grinnell Glacier](/wiki/Grinnell_Glacier) in [Glacier National Park](/wiki/Glacier_National_Park_(U.S.)) gets [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) An area southwest of Belfry averaged only [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) over a sixteen-year period. Most of the larger cities get [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of snow each year. Mountain ranges themselves can accumulate [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of snow during a winter. Heavy [snowstorms](/wiki/Snowstorm) may occur any time from September through May, though most snow falls from November to March.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The climate has become warmer in Montana and continues to do so.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The glaciers in Glacier National Park have receded and are predicted to melt away completely in a few decades.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Many Montana cities set heat records during July 2007, the hottest month ever recorded in Montana.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Winters are warmer, too, and have fewer cold spells. Previously these cold spells had killed off [bark beetles](/wiki/Bark_beetle), but these are now attacking the forests of western Montana.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The warmer winters in the region have allowed various species to expand their ranges and proliferate.[[1]](#cite_note-1) The combination of warmer weather, attack by beetles, and mismanagement during past years has led to a substantial increase in the severity of forest fires in Montana.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) According to a study done for the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](/wiki/United_States_Environmental_Protection_Agency) by the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Science, portions of Montana will experience a 200-percent increase in area burned by wildfires, and an 80-percent increase in related air pollution.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The table below lists average temperatures for the warmest and coldest month for the seven largest cities in Montana. The coldest month varies between December and January depending on location, although figures are similar throughout.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Average daily maximum and minimum temperatures for selected cities in Montana[[2]](#cite_note-2) | | | | |
| **Location** | **July (°F)** | **Coldest month (°F)** | **July (°C)** | **Coldest month (°C)** |
| [Billings](/wiki/Billings,_Montana) | 89/54 | 32/14 | 32/15 | 4/–9 |
| [Missoula](/wiki/Missoula,_Montana) | 86/51 | 30/11 | 31/16 | –0/–8 |
| [Great Falls](/wiki/Great_Falls,_Montana) | 83/51 | 28/11 | 34/15 | 1/–9 |
| [Bozeman](/wiki/Bozeman,_Montana) | 81/51 | 27/10 | 31/12 | –0/–11 |
| [Butte](/wiki/Butte,_Montana) | 80/45 | 27/7 | 30/5 | –1/–15 |
| [Helena](/wiki/Helena,_Montana) | 86/54 | 30/12 | 31/12 | –0/–11 |
| [Kalispell](/wiki/Kalispell,_Montana) | 81/48 | 27/9 | 29/14 | –1/–10 |

### Antipodes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

Montana is one of only two continental US states (along with [Colorado](/wiki/Geography_of_Colorado#Antipodes)) which is [antipodal](/wiki/Antipodes) to land. The [Kerguelen Islands](/wiki/Kerguelen_Islands) are antipodal to the Montana–Saskatchewan–Alberta border. No towns are precisely antipodal to Kerguelen, though [Chester](/wiki/Chester,_Montana) and [Rudyard](/wiki/Rudyard,_Montana) are close.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Assinniboine2.jpg)[Assiniboine](/wiki/Assiniboine_people) family, Montana, 1890–91 Various [indigenous peoples](/wiki/Indigenous_peoples) lived in the territory of the present-day state of Montana for thousands of years. Historic tribes encountered by Europeans and settlers from the United States included the [Crow](/wiki/Crow_tribe) in the south-central area; the [Cheyenne](/wiki/Cheyenne) in the southeast; the [Blackfeet](/wiki/Blackfeet), [Assiniboine](/wiki/Assiniboine_people) and [Gros Ventres](/wiki/Gros_Ventres) in the central and north-central area; and the [Kootenai](/wiki/Ktunaxa) and [Salish](/wiki/Bitterroot_Salish) in the west. The smaller [Pend d'Oreille](/wiki/Pend_d'Oreille) and [Kalispel](/wiki/Pend_d'Oreilles_(tribe)) tribes lived near [Flathead Lake](/wiki/Flathead_Lake) and the western mountains, respectively.

The land in Montana east of the [continental divide](/wiki/Continental_divide) was part of the [Louisiana Purchase](/wiki/Louisiana_Purchase) in 1803. Subsequent to and particularly in the decades following the [Lewis and Clark Expedition](/wiki/Lewis_and_Clark_Expedition), American, British and French [traders](/wiki/Fur_trader) operated a [fur trade](/wiki/Fur_trade_in_Montana), typically working with indigenous peoples, in both eastern and western portions of what would become Montana. These dealings were not always peaceful, and though the fur trade brought some material gain for indigenous tribal groups it also brought exposure to European diseases and altered their economic and cultural traditions.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Until the [Oregon Treaty](/wiki/Oregon_Treaty) (1846), land west of the continental divide was disputed between the British and U.S. and was known as the [Oregon Country](/wiki/Oregon_Country). The first permanent settlement by Euro-Americans in what today is Montana was [St. Mary's](/wiki/St._Mary's_Mission_(Montana)) (1841) near present-day [Stevensville](/wiki/Stevensville,_Montana).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1847, [Fort Benton](/wiki/Fort_Benton,_Montana) was established as the uppermost fur-trading post on the Missouri River.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In the 1850s, settlers began moving into the [Beaverhead](/wiki/Beaverhead_River) and [Big Hole](/wiki/Big_Hole_River) valleys from the [Oregon Trail](/wiki/Oregon_Trail) and into the Clark's Fork valley.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The first gold discovered in Montana was at [Gold Creek](/wiki/Gold_Creek,_Montana) near present-day [Garrison](/wiki/Garrison,_Montana) in 1852. A series of major mining discoveries in the western third of the state starting in 1862 found gold, silver, copper, lead, coal (and later oil) that attracted tens of thousands of miners to the area. The richest of all gold placer diggings was discovered at Alder Gulch, where the town of [Virginia City](/wiki/Virginia_City,_Montana) was established. Other rich placer deposits were found at Last Chance Gulch, where the city of Helena now stands, [Confederate Gulch](/wiki/Confederate_Gulch_and_Diamond_City), Silver Bow, Emigrant Gulch, and [Cooke City](/wiki/Cooke_City,_Montana). Gold output from 1862 through 1876 reached $144 million; silver then became even more important. The largest mining operations were in the city of [Butte](/wiki/Butte,_Montana), which had important silver deposits and gigantic copper deposits.

### Montana territory[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

Before the creation of [Montana Territory](/wiki/Montana_Territory) (1864–1889), various parts of what is now Montana were parts of [Oregon Territory](/wiki/Oregon_Territory) (1848–1859), [Washington Territory](/wiki/Washington_Territory) (1853–1863), [Idaho Territory](/wiki/Idaho_Territory) (1863–1864), and [Dakota Territory](/wiki/Dakota_Territory) (1861–1864). Montana became a [United States territory](/wiki/Political_divisions_of_the_United_States) ([Montana Territory](/wiki/Montana_Territory)) on May 26, 1864. The first territorial capital was at [Bannack](/wiki/Bannack,_Montana). The first territorial governor was [Sidney Edgerton](/wiki/Sidney_Edgerton). The capital moved to [Virginia City](/wiki/Virginia_City,_Montana) in 1865 and to [Helena](/wiki/Helena,_Montana) in 1875. In 1870, the non-Indian population of Montana Territory was 20,595.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Montana Historical Society](/wiki/Montana_Historical_Society), founded on February 2, 1865, in Virginia City is the oldest such institution west of the [Mississippi](/wiki/Mississippi_River) (excluding Louisiana).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1869 and 1870 respectively, the [Cook–Folsom–Peterson](/wiki/Cook–Folsom–Peterson_Expedition) and the [Washburn–Langford–Doane Expeditions](/wiki/Washburn–Langford–Doane_Expedition) were launched from Helena into the Upper Yellowstone region and directly led to the creation of [Yellowstone National Park](/wiki/Yellowstone_National_Park) in 1872.

### Conflicts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) As white settlers began populating Montana from the 1850s through the 1870s, disputes with Native Americans ensued, primarily over land ownership and control. In 1855, Washington Territorial Governor [Isaac Stevens](/wiki/Isaac_Stevens) negotiated the [Hellgate treaty](/wiki/Hellgate_treaty) between the United States Government and the [Salish](/wiki/Bitterroot_Salish_(tribe)), [Pend d'Oreille](/wiki/Pend_d'Oreilles_(tribe)), and the [Kootenai](/wiki/Kootenai_(tribe)) people of western Montana, which established boundaries for the tribal nations. The treaty was ratified in 1859.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) While the treaty established what later became the [Flathead Indian Reservation](/wiki/Flathead_Indian_Reservation), trouble with interpreters and confusion over the terms of the treaty led whites to believe that the Bitterroot Valley was opened to settlement, but the tribal nations disputed those provisions.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The Salish remained in the Bitterroot Valley until 1891.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The first U.S. Army post established in Montana was [Camp Cooke](/wiki/Camp_Cooke_(Montana)) in 1866, on the Missouri River, to protect steamboat traffic going to [Fort Benton, Montana](/wiki/Fort_Benton,_Montana). More than a dozen additional military outposts were established in the state. Pressure over land ownership and control increased due to discoveries of gold in various parts of Montana and surrounding states. Major battles occurred in Montana during [Red Cloud's War](/wiki/Red_Cloud's_War), the [Great Sioux War of 1876](/wiki/Great_Sioux_War_of_1876), the [Nez Perce War](/wiki/Nez_Perce_War) and in conflicts with [Piegan Blackfeet](/wiki/Piegan_Blackfeet). The most notable of these were the [Marias Massacre](/wiki/Marias_Massacre) (1870), [Battle of the Little Bighorn](/wiki/Battle_of_the_Little_Bighorn) (1876), [Battle of the Big Hole](/wiki/Battle_of_the_Big_Hole) (1877) and [Battle of Bear Paw](/wiki/Battle_of_Bear_Paw) (1877). The last recorded conflict in Montana between the U.S. Army and Native Americans occurred in 1887 during the [Battle of Crow Agency](/wiki/Crow_War) in the Big Horn country. Indian survivors who had signed treaties were generally required to move onto [reservations](/wiki/Indian_reservation).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [thumb|Chief Joseph and Col. John Gibbon met again on the Big Hole Battlefield site in 1889](/wiki/File:Chief_Joseph_and_Col._John_Gibbon.jpg)

Simultaneously with these conflicts, [bison](/wiki/American_bison), a [keystone species](/wiki/Keystone_species) and the primary protein source that Native people had survived on for centuries were being destroyed. Some estimates say there were over 13 million bison in Montana in 1870.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1875, General [Philip Sheridan](/wiki/Philip_Sheridan) pleaded to a joint session of [Congress](/wiki/United_States_Congress) to authorize the slaughtering of herds in order to deprive the Indians of their source of food.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) By 1884, commercial hunting had brought bison to the verge of extinction; only about 325 bison remained in the entire United States.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Cattle ranching[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

Cattle ranching has been central to Montana's history and economy since [Johnny Grant](/wiki/Grant-Kohrs_Ranch_National_Historic_Site) began wintering cattle in the Deer Lodge Valley in the 1850s and traded cattle fattened in fertile Montana valleys with emigrants on the [Oregon Trail](/wiki/Oregon_Trail).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Nelson Story](/wiki/Nelson_Story) brought the first Texas [Longhorn cattle](/wiki/Texas_longhorn_(cattle)) into the territory in 1866.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Granville Stuart](/wiki/Granville_Stuart), [Samuel Hauser](/wiki/Samuel_Hauser) and [Andrew J. Davis](/wiki/Andrew_J._Davis) started a major [open range](/wiki/Open_range) cattle operation in Fergus County in 1879.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site](/wiki/Grant-Kohrs_Ranch_National_Historic_Site) in [Deer Lodge](/wiki/Deer_Lodge,_Montana) is maintained today as a link to the ranching style of the late 19th century. Operated by the [National Park Service](/wiki/National_Park_Service), it is a [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) working ranch.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Railroads[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

Tracks of the [Northern Pacific Railroad](/wiki/Northern_Pacific_Railway) (NPR) reached Montana from the west in 1881 and from the east in 1882. However, the railroad played a major role in sparking tensions with Native American tribes in the 1870s. [Jay Cooke](/wiki/Jay_Cooke), the NPR president launched major surveys into the Yellowstone valley in 1871, 1872 and 1873 which were challenged forcefully by the [Sioux](/wiki/Sioux) under chief [Sitting Bull](/wiki/Sitting_Bull). These clashes, in part, contributed to the [Panic of 1873](/wiki/Panic_of_1873), a financial crisis that delayed construction of the railroad into Montana.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Surveys in 1874, 1875 and 1876 helped spark the [Great Sioux War of 1876](/wiki/Great_Sioux_War_of_1876). The transcontinental NPR was completed on September 8, 1883, at [Gold Creek](/wiki/Gold_Creek,_Montana).

Tracks of the [Great Northern Railroad](/wiki/Great_Northern_Railway_(U.S.)) (GNR) reached eastern Montana in 1887 and when they reached the northern Rocky Mountains in 1890, the GNR became a significant promoter of tourism to [Glacier National Park](/wiki/Glacier_National_Park_(U.S.)) region. The transcontinental GNR was completed on January 6, 1893, at [Scenic, Washington](/wiki/Scenic,_Washington).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In 1881, the [Utah and Northern Railway](/wiki/Utah_and_Northern_Railway) a branch line of the [Union Pacific](/wiki/Union_Pacific) completed a [narrow gauge](/wiki/Narrow_gauge) line from northern [Utah](/wiki/Utah) to [Butte](/wiki/Butte,_Montana).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) A number of smaller spur lines operated in Montana from 1881 into the 20th century including the [Oregon Short Line](/wiki/Oregon_Short_Line_Railroad), [Montana Railroad](/wiki/Montana_Railroad) and [Milwaukee Road](/wiki/Chicago,_Milwaukee,_St._Paul_and_Pacific_Railroad).

### Statehood[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Buffalo_soldiers1.jpg)[Buffalo Soldiers](/wiki/Buffalo_Soldier), Ft. Keogh, Montana, 1890. The nickname was given to the "Black Cavalry" by the Native American tribes they fought. Under Territorial Governor [Thomas Meagher](/wiki/Thomas_Francis_Meagher), Montanans held a constitutional convention in 1866 in a failed bid for statehood. A second [constitutional convention](/wiki/Constitutional_convention_(political_meeting)) was held in Helena in 1884 that produced a constitution ratified 3:1 by Montana citizens in November 1884. For political reasons, Congress did not approve Montana statehood until 1889. Congress approved Montana statehood in February 1889 and President [Grover Cleveland](/wiki/Grover_Cleveland) signed an omnibus bill granting statehood to Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Washington once the appropriate state constitutions were crafted. In July 1889, Montanans convened their third constitutional convention and produced a constitution accepted by the people and the federal government. On November 8, 1889 President [Benjamin Harrison](/wiki/Benjamin_Harrison) proclaimed Montana the forty-first state in the union. The first state governor was [Joseph K. Toole](/wiki/Joseph_Toole).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In the 1880s, [Helena](/wiki/Helena,_Montana) (the current state capital) had more millionaires per capita than any other United States city.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Homesteading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

The [Homestead Act of 1862](/wiki/Homestead_Acts#Homestead_Act_of_1862) provided free land to settlers who could claim and "prove-up" [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of federal land in the midwest and western United States. Montana did not see a large influx of immigrants from this act because 160 acres was usually insufficient to support a family in the arid territory.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The first homestead claim under the act in Montana was made by David Carpenter near Helena in 1868. The first claim by a woman was made near Warm Springs Creek by Gwenllian Evans, the daughter of Deer Lodge Montana pioneer, Morgan Evans.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) By 1880, there were farms in the more verdant valleys of central and western Montana, but few on the eastern plains.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The [Desert Land Act of 1877](/wiki/Desert_Land_Act) was passed to allow settlement of arid lands in the west and allotted [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to settlers for a fee of $.25 per acre and a promise to irrigate the land. After three years, a fee of one dollar per acre would be paid and the land would be owned by the settler. This act brought mostly cattle and sheep ranchers into Montana, many of whom grazed their herds on the Montana prairie for three years, did little to irrigate the land and then abandoned it without paying the final fees.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Some farmers came with the arrival of the [Great Northern](/wiki/Great_Northern_Railway_(U.S.)) and [Northern Pacific Railroads](/wiki/Northern_Pacific_Railroad) throughout the 1880s and 1890s, though in relatively small numbers.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Mennonite_family_in_Montana_1937.jpg)[Mennonite](/wiki/Mennonite) family in Montana, c. 1937

In the early 1900s, [James J. Hill](/wiki/James_J._Hill) of the Great Northern began promoting settlement in the Montana prairie to fill his trains with settlers and goods. Other railroads followed suit.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1902, the [Reclamation Act](/wiki/Reclamation_Act) was passed, allowing irrigation projects to be built in Montana's eastern river valleys. In 1909, Congress passed the Enlarged Homestead Act that expanded the amount of free land from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) per family and in 1912 reduced the time to "prove up" on a claim to three years.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1916, the [Stock-Raising Homestead Act](/wiki/Stock-Raising_Homestead_Act) allowed homesteads of 640 acres in areas unsuitable for irrigation. [Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) This combination of advertising and changes in the Homestead Act drew tens of thousands of homesteaders, lured by free land, with World War I bringing particularly high wheat prices. In addition, Montana was going through a temporary period of higher-than-average precipitation.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Homesteaders arriving in this period were known as "Honyockers", or "scissorbills."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Though the word "honyocker", possibly derived from the ethnic slur "hunyak,"[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) was applied in a derisive manner at homesteaders as being "greenhorns", "new at his business" or "unprepared",[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) the reality was that a majority of these new settlers had previous farming experience, though there were also many who did not.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

However, farmers faced a number of problems. Massive debt was one.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Also, most settlers were from wetter regions, unprepared for the dry climate, lack of trees, and scarce water resources.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In addition, small homesteads of fewer than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) were unsuited to the environment. Weather and agricultural conditions are much harsher and drier west of the 100th meridian.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Then, the droughts of 1917–1921 proved devastating. Many people left, and half the banks in the state went bankrupt as a result of providing mortgages that could not be repaid.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) As a result, farm sizes increased while the number of farms decreased[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

By 1910, homesteaders filed claims on over five million acres, and by 1923, over 93 million acres were farmed.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1910, the Great Falls land office alone saw over 1,000 homestead filings per month,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and the peak of 1917– 1918 saw 14,000 new homesteads each year.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) But significant drop occurred following drought in 1919.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[Template:Quotation](/wiki/Template:Quotation)

### Montana and World War I[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

As [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I) broke out, [Jeannette Rankin](/wiki/Jeannette_Rankin), the first woman in the United States to be a member of Congress, was a [pacifist](/wiki/Pacifist) and voted against the United States' declaration of war. Her actions were widely criticized in Montana, where public support for the war was strong, and wartime sentiment reached levels of hyper-[patriotism](/wiki/Patriotism) among many Montanans.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1917–18, due to a miscalculation of Montana's population, approximately 40,000 Montanans, ten percent of the state's population,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) either volunteered or were [drafted](/wiki/Conscription) into the armed forces. This represented a manpower contribution to the war that was 25 percent higher than any other state on a [per capita](/wiki/Per_capita) basis. Approximately 1500 Montanans died as a result of the war and 2437 were wounded, also higher than any other state on a per capita basis.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montana's [Remount station](/wiki/U.S._Army_Remount) in [Miles City](/wiki/Miles_City,_Montana) provided 10,000 [cavalry horses](/wiki/Horses_in_World_War_I) for the war, more than any other Army post in the US. The war created a boom for Montana mining, lumber and farming interests as demand for war materials and food increased.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In June 1917, the U.S. Congress passed the [Espionage Act of 1917](/wiki/Espionage_Act_of_1917) which was later extended by the [Sedition Act of 1918](/wiki/Sedition_Act_of_1918), enacted in May 1918.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In February 1918, the Montana legislature had passed the [Montana Sedition Act](/wiki/Montana_Sedition_Act), which was a model for the federal version.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In combination, these laws criminalized criticism of the U.S. government, military, or symbols through speech or other means. The Montana Act led to the arrest of over 200 individuals and the conviction of 78, mostly of German or Austrian descent. Over 40 spent time in prison. In May 2006, then-Governor [Brian Schweitzer](/wiki/Brian_Schweitzer) posthumously issued full pardons for all those convicted of violating the Montana Sedition Act.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The Montanans who opposed U.S. entry into the war included certain immigrant groups of German and Irish heritage as well as pacifist [Anabaptist](/wiki/Anabaptist) people such as the [Hutterites](/wiki/Hutterite) and [Mennonites](/wiki/Mennonite), many of whom were also of Germanic heritage. In turn, pro-War groups formed, such as the Montana Council of Defense, created by Governor [Samuel V. Stewart](/wiki/Samuel_V._Stewart) as well as local "loyalty committees."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

War sentiment was complicated by labor issues. The [Anaconda Copper Company](/wiki/Anaconda_Copper_Company), which was at its historic peak of copper production,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) was an extremely powerful force in Montana, but also faced criticism and opposition from [socialist](/wiki/Socialism) newspapers and unions struggling to make gains for their members.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In Butte, a multi-ethnic community with significant European immigrant population, labor unions, particularly the newly formed [Metal Mine Workers' Union](/wiki/Metal_Mine_Workers'_Union), opposed the war on grounds that it mostly profited large lumber and mining interests.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In the wake of ramped-up mine production and the [Speculator Mine disaster](/wiki/Speculator_Mine_disaster) in June 1917,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Industrial Workers of the World](/wiki/Industrial_Workers_of_the_World) organizer [Frank Little](/wiki/Frank_Little_(unionist)) arrived in Butte to organize miners. He gave some speeches with inflammatory anti-war rhetoric. On August 1, 1917, he was dragged from his boarding house by masked [vigilantes](/wiki/Vigilante), and hanged from a railroad trestle, considered a [lynching](/wiki/Lynching).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Little's murder and the strikes that followed resulted in the [National Guard](/wiki/National_Guard_of_the_United_States) being sent to Butte to restore order.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Overall, anti-German and anti-labor sentiment increased and created a movement that led to the passage of the Montana Sedition Act the following February.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In addition, the Council of Defense was made a state agency with the power to prosecute and punish individuals deemed in violation of the Act. The Council also passed rules limiting public gatherings and prohibiting the speaking of German in public.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In the wake of the legislative action in 1918, emotions rose. U.S. Attorney [Burton K. Wheeler](/wiki/Burton_K._Wheeler) and several District Court Judges who hesitated to prosecute or convict people brought up on charges were strongly criticized. Wheeler was brought before the Council of Defense, though he avoided formal proceedings, and a District Court judge from [Forsyth](/wiki/Forsyth,_Montana) was [impeached](/wiki/Impeached). There were burnings of German-language books and several near-hangings. The prohibition on speaking German remained in effect into the early 1920s. Complicating the wartime struggles, the [1918 Influenza epidemic](/wiki/1918_Influenza_epidemic) claimed the lives of over 5,000 Montanans.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The period has been dubbed "Montana's Agony" by some historians due to the suppression of [civil liberties](/wiki/Civil_liberties) that occurred.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Depression era[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

An economic depression began in Montana after WWI and lasted through the [Great Depression](/wiki/Great_Depression_in_the_United_States) until the beginning of [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II). This caused great hardship for farmers, ranchers, and miners. The wheat farms in eastern Montana make the state a major producer; the wheat has a relatively high protein content and thus commands premium prices.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Montana and World War II[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

When the U.S. entered World War II on December 8, 1941, many Montanans already had enlisted in the military to escape the poor national economy of the previous decade. Another 40,000-plus Montanans entered the armed forces in the first year following the declaration of war, and over 57,000 joined up before the war ended. These numbers constituted about 10 percent of the state's total population, and Montana again contributed one of the highest numbers of soldiers per capita of any state. Many Native Americans were among those who served, including soldiers from the [Crow Nation](/wiki/Crow_Nation) who became [Code Talkers](/wiki/Code_Talkers). At least 1500 Montanans died in the war.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montana also was the training ground for the [First Special Service Force](/wiki/First_Special_Service_Force) or "Devil's Brigade," a joint U.S-Canadian commando-style force that trained at [Fort William Henry Harrison](/wiki/Fort_William_Henry_Harrison) for experience in mountainous and winter conditions before deployment.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Air bases were built in Great Falls, Lewistown, Cut Bank and [Glasgow](/wiki/Glasgow,_Montana), some of which were used as staging areas to prepare planes to be sent to allied forces in the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union). During the war, about 30 Japanese [balloon bombs](/wiki/Balloon_bombs) were documented to have landed in Montana, though no casualties nor major forest fires were attributed to them.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In 1940, [Jeannette Rankin](/wiki/Jeannette_Rankin) was again elected to Congress. In 1941, as she had in 1917, she voted against the United States' declaration of war after the [Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor](/wiki/Japanese_attack_on_Pearl_Harbor). Hers was the only vote against the war, and in the wake of public outcry over her vote, Rankin required police protection for a time. Other pacifists tended to be those from "peace churches" who generally opposed war. Many individuals claiming [conscientious objector](/wiki/Conscientious_objector) status from throughout the U.S. were sent to Montana during the war as [smokejumpers](/wiki/Smokejumper) and for other forest fire-fighting duties.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Other military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

During World War II, the planned [battleship](/wiki/Battleship) [USS *Montana*](/wiki/USS_Montana) was named in honor of the state. However, the battleship was never completed. Montana is the only one of the first 48 states lacking a completed battleship being named for it. [Alaska](/wiki/Alaska) and Hawaii have both had nuclear submarines named after them. Montana is the only state in the union without a modern naval ship named in its honor. However, in August 2007 Senator [Jon Tester](/wiki/Jon_Tester) made a request to the Navy that a [submarine](/wiki/Submarine) be christened USS *Montana*.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced on September 3, 2015 that Virginia Class attack Submarine [SSN-794](/wiki/USS_Montana_(SSN-794)) will bear the state's namesake. This will be the second commissioned warship to bear the name *Montana.*[[3]](#cite_note-3)

### Cold War Montana[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

In the post-World War II [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War) era, Montana became host to [U.S. Air Force](/wiki/United_States_Air_Force) [Military Air Transport Service](/wiki/Military_Air_Transport_Service) (1947) for airlift training in [C-54 Skymasters](/wiki/Douglas_C-54_Skymaster) and eventually, in 1953 [Strategic Air Command](/wiki/Strategic_Air_Command) air and missile forces were based at [Malmstrom Air Force Base](/wiki/Malmstrom_Air_Force_Base) in [Great Falls](/wiki/Great_Falls,_Montana). The base also hosted the [29th Fighter Interceptor Squadron](/wiki/29th_Training_Systems_Squadron#Air_Defense_Command), [Air Defense Command](/wiki/Aerospace_Defense_Command) from 1953 to 1968. In December 1959, Malmstrom AFB was selected as the home of the new [Minuteman I](/wiki/LGM-30_Minuteman) [ballistic missile](/wiki/ICBM). The first operational missiles were in-place and ready in early 1962. In late 1962 missiles assigned to the [341st Strategic Missile Wing](/wiki/341st_Missile_Wing) would play a major role in the [Cuban Missile Crisis](/wiki/Cuban_Missile_Crisis). When the Soviets removed their missiles from Cuba, President [John F. Kennedy](/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) said the Soviets backed down because they knew he had an "Ace in the Hole," referring directly to the Minuteman missiles in Montana. Montana eventually became home to the largest ICBM field in the U.S. covering [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[thumb|Montana population density map](/wiki/File:Montana_population_map.png) [Template:US Census population](/wiki/Template:US_Census_population)

The [United States Census Bureau](/wiki/United_States_Census_Bureau) estimates that the population of Montana was 1,032,949 on July 1, 2015, a 4.40% increase since the [2010 United States Census](/wiki/2010_United_States_Census).[[4]](#cite_note-4) The 2010 census put Montana's population at 989,415 which is an increase of 43,534 people, or 4.40 percent, since 2010.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) During the first decade of the new century, growth was mainly concentrated in Montana's seven largest counties, with the highest percentage growth in [Gallatin County](/wiki/Gallatin_County,_Montana), which saw a 32 percent increase in its population from 2000-2010.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The city seeing the largest percentage growth was [Kalispell](/wiki/Kalispell,_Montana) with 40.1 percent, and the city with the largest increase in actual residents was Billings with an increase in population of 14,323 from 2000-2010.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

On January 3, 2012, the Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC) at the Montana Department of Commerce estimated Montana had hit the one million population mark sometime between November and December 2011.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The United States Census Bureau estimates that the population of Montana was 1,005,141 on July 1, 2012, a 1.6 percent increase since the 2010 United States Census.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

According to the 2010 Census, 89.4 percent of the population was White (87.8 percent Non-Hispanic White), 6.3 percent American Indian and Alaska Native, 2.9 percent Hispanics and Latinos of any race, 0.6 percent Asian, 0.4 percent Black or African American, 0.1 percent Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 0.6 percent from Some Other Race, and 2.5 percent from two or more races.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The largest European ancestry groups in Montana as of 2010 are: German (27.0 percent), Irish (14.8 percent), English (12.6 percent), Norwegian (10.9 percent), French (4.7 percent) and Italian (3.4 percent).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Montana Racial Breakdown of Population** | | | |
| **Racial composition** | **1990**[**[5]**](#cite_note-5) | **2000**[**[6]**](#cite_note-6) | **2010**[**[7]**](#cite_note-7) |
| [White](/wiki/White_American) | 92.7% | 90.6% | 89.4% |
| [Native](/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States) | 6.0% | 6.2% | 6.3% |
| [Asian](/wiki/Asian_American) | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.6% |
| [Black](/wiki/African_American) | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.4% |
| [Native Hawaiian](/wiki/Native_Hawaiian) and [other Pacific Islander](/wiki/Pacific_Islander) | - | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| [Other race](/wiki/Race_and_ethnicity_in_the_United_States_Census) | 0.5% | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| [Two or more races](/wiki/Multiracial_American) | - | 1.7% | 2.5% |

### Language[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[English](/wiki/English_language) is the [official language](/wiki/Official_language) in the state of Montana, as it is in many [U.S. states](/wiki/U.S._state). According to the [2000 U.S. Census](/wiki/2000_United_States_Census), 94.8 percent of the population aged 5 and older speak English at home.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Spanish is the language most commonly spoken at home other than English. There were about 13,040 Spanish-language speakers in the state (1.4 percent of the population) in 2011.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) There were also 15,438 (1.7 percent of the state population) speakers of Indo-European languages other than English or Spanish, 10,154 (1.1 percent) speakers of a Native American language, and 4,052 (0.4 percent) speakers of an Asian or Pacific Islander language.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Other languages spoken in Montana (as of 2013) include Assiniboine (about 150 speakers in the Montana and Canada), Blackfoot (about 100 speakers), Cheyenne (about 1,700 speakers), Plains Cree (about 100 speakers), Crow (about 3,000 speakers), Dakota (about 18,800 speakers in Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota), German Hutterite (about 5,600 speakers), Gros Ventre (about 10 speakers), Kalispel-Pend d'Oreille (about 64 speakers), Kutenai (about 6 speakers), and Lakota (about 6,000 speakers in Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [United States Department of Education](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Education) estimated in 2009 that 5,274 students in Montana spoke a language at home other than English. These included a Native American language (64 percent), German (4 percent), Spanish (3 percent), Russian (1 percent), and Chinese (less than 0.5 percent).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Top 14 Non-English Languages Spoken in Montana** | |
| **Language** | **Percentage of population (as of 2000)**[**[8]**](#cite_note-8) |
| [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_language) | 1.5% |
| [German](/wiki/German_language) | 1.1% |
| [French](/wiki/French_language) and [Crow](/wiki/Crow_language) (tied) | 0.4% |
| [Scandinavian languages](/wiki/Scandinavian_languages) (including [Danish](/wiki/Danish_language), [Norwegian](/wiki/Norwegian_language), and [Swedish](/wiki/Swedish_language)) | 0.2% |
| [Italian](/wiki/Italian_language), [Japanese](/wiki/Japanese_language), [Russian](/wiki/Russian_language), [Native American languages](/wiki/Native_American_languages) (other than Crow; significantly [Cheyenne](/wiki/Cheyenne_language)),[[9]](#cite_note-9) |  |
|  |  |

### Intrastate demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

Montana has a larger Native American population numerically and percentage-wise than most U.S. states. Although the state ranked 45th in population (according to the 2010 U.S. Census), it ranked 19th in total native people population.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Native people constituted 6.5 percent of the state's total population, the sixth highest percentage of all 50 states.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montana has three counties in which Native Americans are a majority: Big Horn, Glacier, and Roosevelt.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Other counties with large Native American populations include Blaine, Cascade, Hill, Missoula, and Yellowstone counties.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The state's Native American population grew by 27.9 percent between 1980 and 1990 (at a time when Montana's entire population rose just 1.6 percent),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and by 18.5 percent between 2000 and 2010.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) As of 2009, almost two-thirds of Native Americans in the state live in urban areas.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Of Montana's 20 largest cities, Polson (15.7 percent), Havre (13.0 percent), Great Falls (5.0 percent), Billings (4.4 percent), and Anaconda (3.1 percent) had the greatest percentage of Native American residents in 2010.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Billings (4,619), Great Falls (2,942), Missoula (1,838), Havre (1,210), and Polson (706) have the most Native Americans living there.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The state's seven reservations include more than twelve distinct Native American [ethnolinguistic](/wiki/Ethnolinguistic) groups.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

While the largest European-American population in Montana overall is German, pockets of significant [Scandinavian](/wiki/Scandinavia) ancestry are prevalent in some of the farming-dominated northern and eastern prairie regions, parallel to nearby regions of North Dakota and Minnesota. Farmers of Irish, Scots, and English roots also settled in Montana. The historically mining-oriented communities of western Montana such as [Butte](/wiki/Butte,_Montana) have a wider range of European-American ethnicity; [Finns](/wiki/Finns), [Eastern Europeans](/wiki/Eastern_European) and especially Irish settlers left an indelible mark on the area, as well as people originally from British mining regions such as [Cornwall](/wiki/Cornwall), [Devon](/wiki/Devon) and [Wales](/wiki/Wales). The nearby city of Helena, also founded as a mining camp, had a similar mix in addition to a small Chinatown.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Many of Montana's historic logging communities originally attracted people of Scottish, [Scandinavian](/wiki/Scandinavia), [Slavic](/wiki/Slavic_peoples), [English](/wiki/English-American) and [Scots-Irish](/wiki/Scots-Irish_American) descent.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

The [Hutterites](/wiki/Hutterite), an [Anabaptist](/wiki/Anabaptist) sect originally from Switzerland, settled here, and today Montana is second only to [South Dakota](/wiki/South_Dakota) in U.S. Hutterite population with several colonies spread across the state. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the state also saw an influx of [Amish](/wiki/Amish), who relocated to Montana from the increasingly urbanized areas of Ohio and Pennsylvania.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Montana's [Hispanic](/wiki/Hispanics_in_the_United_States) population is concentrated around the [Billings](/wiki/Billings,_Montana) area in south-central Montana, where many of Montana's Mexican-Americans have been in the state for generations. [Great Falls](/wiki/Great_Falls,_Montana) has the highest percentage of African-Americans in its population, although Billings has more African American residents than Great Falls.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The Chinese in Montana, while a low percentage today, have historically been an important presence. About 2000–3000 Chinese miners were in the mining areas of Montana by 1870, and 2500 in 1890. However, public opinion grew increasingly negative toward them in the 1890s and nearly half of the state's Asian population left the state by 1900.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Today, there is a significant [Hmong](/wiki/Hmong_people) population centered in the vicinity of Missoula.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montanans who claim [Filipino](/wiki/Filipino_American) ancestry amount to almost 3,000, making them currently the largest Asian American group in the state.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

According to the Pew Forum, the religious affiliations of the people of Montana are as follows: [Protestant](/wiki/Protestantism) 47%, [Catholic](/wiki/Catholicism_in_the_United_States) 23%, [LDS](/wiki/Latter-day_Saint) ([Mormon](/wiki/Mormon)) 5%, [Jehovah's Witness](/wiki/Jehovah's_Witnesses) 2%, [Buddhist](/wiki/Buddhism) 1%, [Jewish](/wiki/Jews) 0.5%, [Muslim](/wiki/Muslim) 0.5%, [Hindu](/wiki/Hindu) 0.5% and Non-Religious at 20%.[[10]](#cite_note-10)<ref name=Eriksmoen>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

* Montana has produced two [U.S. champions](/wiki/United_States_Figure_Skating_Championships) and Olympic competitors in [men's figure skating](/wiki/Men's_figure_skating), both from Great Falls: [John Misha Petkevich](/wiki/John_Misha_Petkevich), lived and trained in Montana before entering college, competed in the 1968 and 1972 [Winter Olympics](/wiki/Winter_Olympics).[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Scott Davis](/wiki/Scott_Davis_(figure_skater)), also from Great Falls, competed at the [1994 Winter Olympics](/wiki/1994_Winter_Olympics)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)
* Missoulian [Tommy Moe](/wiki/Tommy_Moe) won Olympic gold and silver medals at the [1994 Winter Olympics](/wiki/1994_Winter_Olympics) in [downhill skiing](/wiki/Downhill_skiing) and [super G](/wiki/Super_G), the first American skier to win two medals at any Winter Olympics.<ref name=Moe>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>
* [Eric Bergoust](/wiki/Eric_Bergoust), also of Missoula, won an Olympic gold medal in [freestyle aerial skiing](/wiki/Freestyle_skiing#Aerial_skiing) at the [1998 Winter Olympics](/wiki/1998_Winter_Olympics), also competing in 1994, 2002 and 2006 Olympics plus winning 13 World Cup titles.<ref name=Bergoust>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

### Sporting achievements[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

Montanans have been a part of several major sporting achievements:

* In 1889, [Spokane](/wiki/Spokane_(horse)) became the first and only Montana horse to win the [Kentucky Derby](/wiki/Kentucky_Derby). For this accomplishment, the horse was admitted to the [Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame](/wiki/Montana_Cowboy_Hall_of_Fame) in 2008.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)
* In 1904 a [basketball](/wiki/Basketball) team of young Native American women from [Fort Shaw](/wiki/Fort_Shaw,_Montana), after playing undefeated during their previous season, went to the [Louisiana Purchase Exposition](/wiki/Louisiana_Purchase_Exposition) held in St. Louis in 1904, defeated all challenging teams and were declared to be world champions.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)
* In 1923, the controversial [Jack Dempsey vs. Tommy Gibbons](/wiki/Jack_Dempsey_vs._Tommy_Gibbons) fight for the heavyweight boxing championship, won by Dempsey, took place in [Shelby](/wiki/Shelby,_Montana).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## Recreation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

Montana provides year-round recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. Hiking, fishing, hunting, watercraft recreation, camping, golf, cycling, horseback riding, and skiing are popular activities.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Fishing and hunting[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=43)]

Montana has been a destination for its world-class trout fisheries since the 1930s.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Fly fishing](/wiki/Fly_fishing) for several species of native and introduced [trout](/wiki/Trout) in rivers and lakes is popular for both residents and tourists throughout the state. Montana is the home of the [Federation of Fly Fishers](/wiki/Federation_of_Fly_Fishers) and hosts many of the organizations annual conclaves. The state has robust recreational [lake trout](/wiki/Lake_trout) and [kokanee salmon](/wiki/Kokanee_salmon) fisheries in the west, [walleye](/wiki/Walleye) can be found in many parts of the state, while [northern pike](/wiki/Northern_pike), [smallmouth](/wiki/Smallmouth_bass) and [largemouth bass](/wiki/Largemouth_bass) fisheries as well as [catfish](/wiki/Catfish) and [paddlefish](/wiki/Paddlefish) can be found in the waters of eastern Montana.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Robert Redford's](/wiki/Robert_Redford) [1992 film](/wiki/A_River_Runs_Through_It_(film)) of [Norman Mclean's](/wiki/Norman_Mclean) novel, [*A River Runs Through It*](/wiki/A_River_Runs_Through_It_(novel)), was filmed in Montana and brought national attention to fly fishing and the state.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Montana is home to the [Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation](/wiki/Rocky_Mountain_Elk_Foundation) and has a historic big game hunting tradition. There are fall bow and general hunting seasons for [elk](/wiki/Elk), [pronghorn antelope](/wiki/Pronghorn), [whitetail deer](/wiki/Whitetail_deer) and [mule deer](/wiki/Mule_deer). A random draw grants a limited number of permits for [moose](/wiki/Moose), [mountain goats](/wiki/Mountain_goat) and [bighorn sheep](/wiki/Bighorn_sheep). There is a spring hunting season for [black bear](/wiki/American_black_bear) and in most years, limited hunting of [bison](/wiki/American_bison) that leave Yellowstone National Park is allowed. Current law allows both hunting and trapping of a specific number of [wolves](/wiki/Wolf) and [mountain lions](/wiki/Mountain_lion). Trapping of assorted fur bearing animals is allowed in certain seasons and many opportunities exist for migratory waterfowl and upland bird hunting.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Winter recreation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=44)]

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Big_Sky_resort.jpg) [Big Sky Resort](/wiki/Big_Sky_Resort) [thumb|The Palisades area on the north end of the ski area at](/wiki/File:Red_Lodge_Palisades.jpg) [Red Lodge Mountain Resort](/wiki/Red_Lodge_Mountain_Resort) [thumb|Guided snowmobile tours in Yellowstone Park](/wiki/File:SnowmobilesYellowstone.jpg)

Both [downhill skiing](/wiki/Downhill_skiing) and [cross-country skiing](/wiki/Cross-country_skiing) are popular in Montana, which has 15 developed downhill ski areas open to the public,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) including;

* [Bear Paw Ski Bowl](/wiki/Bear_Paw_Ski_Bowl) near [Havre, Montana](/wiki/Havre,_Montana)
* [Big Sky Resort](/wiki/Big_Sky_Resort), at [Big Sky](/wiki/Big_Sky,_Montana)
* [Blacktail Mountain](/wiki/Blacktail_Mountain_Ski_Area) near [Lakeside](/wiki/Lakeside,_Montana)
* [Bridger Bowl Ski Area](/wiki/Bridger_Bowl_Ski_Area) near [Bozeman](/wiki/Bozeman,_Montana)
* [Discovery Basin](/wiki/Discovery_Basin) between [Philipsburg](/wiki/Philipsburg,_Montana) and [Anaconda](/wiki/Anaconda,_Montana)
* [Great Divide](/wiki/Great_Divide_Ski_Area) near [Helena, Montana](/wiki/Helena,_Montana)
* [Lookout Pass](/wiki/Lookout_Pass_Ski_and_Recreation_Area) off [Interstate 90](/wiki/Interstate_90) at the Montana-Idaho border
* [Lost Trail](/wiki/Lost_Trail_Powder_Mountain) near [Darby, Montana](/wiki/Darby,_Montana)
* [Maverick Mountain](/wiki/Maverick_Mountain_Ski_Area) near Dillon, Montana
* [Moonlight Basin](/wiki/Moonlight_Basin) near [Big Sky](/wiki/Big_Sky,_Montana)
* [Red Lodge Mountain Resort](/wiki/Red_Lodge_Mountain_Resort) near [Red Lodge](/wiki/Red_Lodge,_Montana)
* [Showdown Ski Area](/wiki/Showdown_Ski_Area) near [White Sulphur Springs, Montana](/wiki/White_Sulphur_Springs,_Montana)
* [Snowbowl](/wiki/Montana_Snowbowl) Ski Area near [Missoula](/wiki/Missoula,_Montana)
* [Teton Pass Ski Area](/wiki/Teton_Pass_Ski_Area) near [Choteau](/wiki/Choteau,_Montana)
* [Turner Mountain Ski Resort](/wiki/Turner_Mountain_Ski_Resort) near [Libby](/wiki/Libby,_Montana)
* [Whitefish Mountain Resort](/wiki/Whitefish_Mountain_Resort) near [Whitefish](/wiki/Whitefish,_Montana)

Big Sky, Moonlight Basin, Red Lodge, and Whitefish Mountain are [destination resorts](/wiki/Conference_and_resort_hotels), while the remaining areas do not have overnight lodging at the ski area, though several host restaurants and other amenities.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) These day-use resorts partner with local lodging businesses to offer ski and lodging packages.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Montana also has millions of acres open to cross-country skiing on nine of its national forests plus in Glacier National Park. In addition to cross-country trails at most of the downhill ski areas, there are also 13 private cross-country skiing resorts.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Yellowstone National Park also allows cross-country skiing.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[Snowmobiling](/wiki/Snowmobile) is popular in Montana which boasts over 4000 miles of trails and frozen lakes available in winter.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) There are 24 areas where snowmobile trails are maintained, most also offering ungroomed trails.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [West Yellowstone](/wiki/West_Yellowstone,_Montana) offers a large selection of trails and is the primary starting point for snowmobile trips into Yellowstone National Park,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) where "oversnow" vehicle use is strictly limited, usually to guided tours, and regulations are in considerable flux.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[Snow coach](/wiki/Snow_coach) tours are offered at Big Sky, Whitefish, West Yellowstone and into Yellowstone National Park.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Equestrian [skijoring](/wiki/Skijoring) has a niche in Montana, which hosts the World Skijoring Championships in Whitefish as part of the annual [Whitefish Winter Carnival](/wiki/Whitefish_Winter_Carnival).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=45)]

Montana does not have a [Trauma I](/wiki/Level_I_trauma_center) hospital, but does have [Trauma II](/wiki/Level_II_trauma_center) hospitals in Missoula, Billings, and Great Falls.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 2013 [*AARP The Magazine*](/wiki/AARP_The_Magazine) named the [Billings Clinic](/wiki/Billings_Clinic) one of the safest hospitals in the United States.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montana is ranked as the least obese state in the U.S., at 19.6%, according to the 2014 Gallup Poll.[[23]](#cite_note-23)

## Media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=46)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

As of 2010, Missoula is the 166th largest [media market](/wiki/Media_market) in the United States as ranked by [Nielsen Media Research](/wiki/Nielsen_Media_Research), while Billings is 170th, Great Falls is 190th, the Butte-Bozeman area 191st, and Helena is 206th.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) There are 25 [television stations in Montana](/wiki/List_of_television_stations_in_Montana), representing each major [U.S. network](/wiki/List_of_United_States_over-the-air_television_networks).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) As of August 2013, there are 527 [FCC](/wiki/Federal_Communications_Commission)-licensed FM [radio](/wiki/Radio) [stations broadcast in Montana](/wiki/List_of_radio_stations_in_Montana), with 114 such AM stations.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

During the age of the [Copper Kings](/wiki/Copper_Kings), each Montana copper company had its own newspaper. This changed in 1959 when [Lee Enterprises](/wiki/Lee_Enterprises) bought several Montana newspapers.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montana's largest circulating daily city newspapers are the [*Billings Gazette*](/wiki/Billings_Gazette) (circulation 39,405), [*Great Falls Tribune*](/wiki/Great_Falls_Tribune) (26,733), and [*Missoulian*](/wiki/Missoulian) (25,439).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## Transportation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=47)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:West_Yellowstone_MT_-_aerial_edit.jpg)[Yellowstone Airport](/wiki/Yellowstone_Airport), [West Yellowstone, Montana](/wiki/West_Yellowstone,_Montana) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

Railroads have been an important method of transportation in Montana since the 1880s. Historically, the state was traversed by the main lines of three east-west transcontinental routes: the [Milwaukee Road](/wiki/Milwaukee_Road), the [Great Northern](/wiki/Great_Northern_Railway_(U.S.)), and the [Northern Pacific](/wiki/Northern_Pacific_Railway). Today, the [BNSF Railway](/wiki/BNSF_Railway) is the state's largest railroad, its main transcontinental route incorporating the former Great Northern main line across the state. [Montana RailLink](/wiki/Montana_RailLink), a privately held [Class II railroad](/wiki/Class_II_railroad), operates former Northern Pacific trackage in western Montana.

In addition, [Amtrak's](/wiki/Amtrak) [*Empire Builder*](/wiki/Empire_Builder) train runs through the north of the state, stopping in [Libby](/wiki/Libby,_Montana), [Whitefish](/wiki/Whitefish,_Montana), [West Glacier](/wiki/West_Glacier,_Montana), [Essex](/wiki/Essex,_Montana), [East Glacier Park](/wiki/East_Glacier_Park_Village,_Montana), [Browning](/wiki/Browning,_Montana), [Cut Bank](/wiki/Cut_Bank,_Montana), [Shelby](/wiki/Shelby,_Montana), [Havre](/wiki/Havre,_Montana), [Malta](/wiki/Malta,_Montana), [Glasgow](/wiki/Glasgow,_Montana), and [Wolf Point](/wiki/Wolf_Point,_Montana).

[Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport](/wiki/Bozeman_Yellowstone_International_Airport) is the busiest airport in the state of Montana, surpassing [Billings Logan International Airport](/wiki/Billings_Logan_International_Airport) in the spring of 2013.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Montana's other major Airports include [Billings Logan International Airport](/wiki/Billings_Logan_International_Airport), [Missoula International Airport](/wiki/Missoula_International_Airport), [Great Falls International Airport](/wiki/Great_Falls_International_Airport), [Glacier Park International Airport](/wiki/Glacier_Park_International_Airport), [Helena Regional Airport](/wiki/Helena_Regional_Airport), [Bert Mooney Airport](/wiki/Bert_Mooney_Airport) and [Yellowstone Airport](/wiki/Yellowstone_Airport). Eight smaller communities have airports designated for commercial service under the [Essential Air Service](/wiki/Essential_Air_Service) program.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Historically, [U.S. Route 10](/wiki/U.S._Route_10) was the primary east-west highway route across Montana, connecting the major cities in the southern half of the state. Still the state's most important east-west travel corridor, the route is today served by [Interstate 90](/wiki/Interstate_90) and [Interstate 94](/wiki/Interstate_94) which roughly follow the same route as the Northern Pacific. [U.S. Routes 2](/wiki/U.S._Route_2) and [12](/wiki/U.S._Route_12) and [Montana Highway 200](/wiki/Montana_Highway_200) also traverse the entire state from east to west.

Montana's only north-south [Interstate Highway](/wiki/Interstate_Highway) is [Interstate 15](/wiki/Interstate_15_in_Montana). Other major north-south highways include [U.S. Routes 87](/wiki/U.S._Route_87), [89](/wiki/U.S._Route_89), [93](/wiki/U.S._Route_93) and [191](/wiki/U.S._Route_191). [Interstate 25](/wiki/Interstate_25) terminates into I-90 just south of the Montana border in Wyoming.

Montana and [South Dakota](/wiki/South_Dakota) are the only states to share a land border which is not traversed by a paved road. Highway 212, the primary paved route between the two, passes through the northeast corner of Wyoming between Montana and South Dakota.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## Law and government[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=48)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) The current Governor is [Steve Bullock](/wiki/Steve_Bullock_(Montana)), a Democrat elected in 2012 and sworn in on January 7, 2013. His predecessor in office was two-term governor, [Brian Schweitzer](/wiki/Brian_Schweitzer). Montana's two U.S. senators are [Jon Tester](/wiki/Jon_Tester) (Democrat) and Steve Daines (Republican). The state's congressional representative is currently Republican Ryan Zinke.

In 1914 Montana [granted women the vote](/wiki/Women's_suffrage) and in 1916 became the first state to elect a woman, [Progressive Republican](/wiki/Progressivism_in_the_United_States) [Jeannette Rankin](/wiki/Jeannette_Rankin), to [Congress](/wiki/Congress_of_the_United_States).[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Montana is an [Alcoholic beverage control state](/wiki/Alcoholic_beverage_control_state).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) It is an [equitable distribution](/wiki/Division_of_property) and [no-fault divorce](/wiki/No-fault_divorce) state. It is one of five states to have no [sales tax](/wiki/Sales_tax).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=49)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

Politics in the state has been competitive, with the Democrats usually holding an edge, thanks to the support among unionized miners and railroad workers. Large-scale battles revolved around the giant [Anaconda Copper](/wiki/Anaconda_Copper) company, based in Butte and controlled by Rockefeller interests, until it closed in the 1970s. Until 1959, the company owned five of the state's six largest newspapers.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Historically, Montana is a [swing state](/wiki/Swing_state) of cross-ticket voters who tend to fill elected offices with individuals from both parties. Through the mid-20th century, the state had a tradition of "sending the liberals to Washington and the conservatives to Helena." Between 1988 and 2006, the pattern flipped, with voters more likely to elect conservatives to federal offices. There have also been long-term shifts of party control. From 1968 through 1988, the state was dominated by the [Democratic Party](/wiki/United_States_Democratic_Party), with Democratic governors for a 20-year period, and a Democratic majority of both the national congressional delegation and during many sessions of the state legislature. This pattern shifted, beginning with the 1988 election, when Montana elected a [Republican](/wiki/United_States_Republican_Party) governor for the first time since 1964 and sent a Republican to the U.S. Senate for the first time since 1948. This shift continued with the [reapportionment](/wiki/Reapportionment) of the state's legislative districts that took effect in 1994, when the Republican Party took control of both chambers of the state legislature, consolidating a Republican party dominance that lasted until the 2004 reapportionment produced more swing districts and a brief period of Democratic legislative majorities in the mid-2000s.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In presidential elections, Montana was long classified as a swing state, though the state has voted for the Republican candidate in all but two elections from 1952 to the present.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The state last supported a Democrat for president in 1992, when [Bill Clinton](/wiki/Bill_Clinton) won a plurality victory. Overall, since 1889 the state has voted for Democratic governors 60 percent of the time and Democratic presidents 40 percent of the time, with these numbers being 40/60 for Republican candidates. In the [2008 presidential election](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2008), Montana was considered a [swing state](/wiki/Swing_state) and was ultimately won by Republican [John McCain](/wiki/John_McCain), albeit by a narrow margin of two percent.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

However, at the state level, the pattern of split ticket voting and divided government holds. Democrats currently hold one of the state's U.S. Senate seats, as well as four of the five statewide offices (Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Secretary of State and State Auditor). The lone congressional district has been Republican since 1996 and in 2014 [Steve Daines](/wiki/Steve_Daines) won one of the state's Senate seats for the GOP. The Legislative branch had split party control between the house and senate most years between 2004 and 2010, when the mid-term elections returned both branches to Republican control. The [state Senate](/wiki/Montana_State_Senate) is, as of 2015, controlled by the Republicans 29 to 21, and the [State House of Representatives](/wiki/Montana_House_of_Representatives) at 59 to 41.

Montana currently has only one representative in the U.S. House, having lost its second district in the 1990 census reapportionment, which makes it the poorest-represented U.S. state in the House (see [List of U.S. states by population](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_by_population)). Montana's population grew at about the national average during the 2000s, and it failed to regain its second seat in 2010. Like other states, Montana has two senators.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Current trends[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=50)]

An October 2013 [Montana State University Billings](/wiki/Montana_State_University_Billings) survey found that 46.6 percent of Montana voters supported the legalization of same-sex marriage, while 42.6 percent opposed it and 10.8 percent were not sure.[[24]](#cite_note-24)