[Template:Redirect](/wiki/Template:Redirect" \o "Template:Redirect) [Template:Pp-move](/wiki/Template:Pp-move) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates) [Template:Infobox U.S. state](/wiki/Template:Infobox_U.S._state) **Virginia** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) [Template:Respell](/wiki/Template:Respell), [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) [Template:Respell](/wiki/Template:Respell)), officially the **Commonwealth of Virginia**, is a [state](/wiki/U.S._state) located in the [South Atlantic region](/wiki/South_Atlantic_States) of the [United States](/wiki/United_States). Virginia is nicknamed the "Old Dominion" due to its status as the first colonial possession established in mainland [British America](/wiki/British_America),<ref name=encolddominion>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> and "Mother of Presidents" because [eight U.S. presidents](/wiki/List_of_Presidents_of_the_United_States_by_home_state#Places_of_birth) were born there, more than any other state. The geography and climate of the [Commonwealth](/wiki/Commonwealth_(U.S._state)) are shaped by the [Blue Ridge Mountains](/wiki/Blue_Ridge_Mountains) and the [Chesapeake Bay](/wiki/Chesapeake_Bay), which provide habitat for much of its flora and fauna. The capital of the Commonwealth is [Richmond](/wiki/Richmond,_Virginia); [Virginia Beach](/wiki/Virginia_Beach,_Virginia) is the most populous city, and [Fairfax County](/wiki/Fairfax_County,_Virginia) is the most populous political subdivision. The Commonwealth's estimated population [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) is over 8.3 million.<ref name=PopEstUS/>

The area's history begins with [several indigenous groups](/wiki/Native_American_tribes_in_Virginia), including the [Powhatan](/wiki/Powhatan). In 1607 the [London Company](/wiki/London_Company) established the [Colony of Virginia](/wiki/Colony_of_Virginia) as the first permanent [New World](/wiki/New_World) [English](/wiki/Kingdom_of_England) colony. Slave labor and the land acquired from displaced Native American tribes each played a significant role in the colony's early politics and plantation economy. Virginia was one of the [13 Colonies](/wiki/Thirteen_Colonies) in the [American Revolution](/wiki/American_Revolution) and joined the [Confederacy](/wiki/Confederate_States_of_America) in the [American Civil War](/wiki/American_Civil_War), during which Richmond was made the Confederate capital and Virginia's northwestern counties [seceded](/wiki/Wheeling_Convention) to form the state of [West Virginia](/wiki/West_Virginia). Although the Commonwealth was under [one-party rule](/wiki/Solid_South) for nearly a century following [Reconstruction](/wiki/Reconstruction_era_of_the_United_States), both major national parties are competitive in modern Virginia.<ref name=purple/>

The [Virginia General Assembly](/wiki/Virginia_General_Assembly) is the oldest continuous law-making body in the New World.[[1]](#cite_note-1) The state government was ranked most effective by the [Pew Center on the States](/wiki/Pew_Research_Center) in both 2005 and 2008.<ref name=pew/> It is unique in how it treats cities and counties equally, manages local roads, and prohibits its governors from serving consecutive terms. Virginia's economy has many sectors: agriculture in the [Shenandoah Valley](/wiki/Shenandoah_Valley); federal agencies in [Northern Virginia](/wiki/Northern_Virginia), including the headquarters of the [Department of Defense](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Defense) and [CIA](/wiki/Central_Intelligence_Agency); and military facilities in [Hampton Roads](/wiki/Hampton_Roads), the site of the [region's main seaport](/wiki/Virginia_Port_Authority). Virginia's economy changed from primarily agricultural to industrial during the 1960s and 1970s, and in 2002 [computer chips](/wiki/Integrated_circuit) became the state's leading export.<ref name=chips/>

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## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|262px|Geographically and geologically, Virginia is divided into five regions from east to west:](/wiki/File:Virginia_painted_relief.png) [Tidewater](/wiki/Tidewater_region), [Piedmont](/wiki/Piedmont_(United_States)), [Blue Ridge Mountains](/wiki/Blue_Ridge_Mountains), [Ridge and Valley](/wiki/Ridge-and-Valley_Appalachians), and [Cumberland Plateau](/wiki/Cumberland_Plateau).<ref name=eov>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb)</ref>|alt=Terrain map of Virginia divided with lines into five regions. The first region on the far left is small and only in the state's panhandle. The next is larger and covers most of the western part of the state. The next is a thin strip that covers only the mountains. The next is a wide area in the middle of the state. The left most is based on the rivers which diffuse the previous region. Virginia has a total area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), including [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of water, making it the 35th-[largest state](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_by_area) by area.[[2]](#cite_note-2) Virginia is bordered by [Maryland](/wiki/Maryland) and [Washington, D.C.](/wiki/Washington,_D.C.) to the north and east; by the [Atlantic Ocean](/wiki/Atlantic_Ocean) to the east; by [North Carolina](/wiki/North_Carolina) and [Tennessee](/wiki/Tennessee) to the south; by [Kentucky](/wiki/Kentucky) to the west; and by [West Virginia](/wiki/West_Virginia) to the north and west. Virginia's boundary with Maryland and Washington, D.C. extends to the low-water mark of the south shore of the [Potomac River](/wiki/Potomac_River).[[3]](#cite_note-3) The southern border is defined as the [36° 30′ parallel north](/wiki/36°30'_parallel_north), though surveyor error led to deviations of as much as three [arcminutes](/wiki/Arcminute).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The border with Tennessee was not settled until 1893, when [their dispute](/wiki/Virginia_v._Tennessee) was brought to the [U.S. Supreme Court](/wiki/U.S._Supreme_Court).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

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

The [Chesapeake Bay](/wiki/Chesapeake_Bay) separates the contiguous portion of the Commonwealth from the two-county peninsula of Virginia's [Eastern Shore](/wiki/Eastern_Shore_of_Virginia). The bay was formed from the drowned river valleys of the [Susquehanna River](/wiki/Susquehanna_River) and the [James River](/wiki/James_River).<ref name=bay>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Many of [Virginia's rivers](/wiki/List_of_rivers_of_Virginia) flow into the Chesapeake Bay, including the [Potomac](/wiki/Potomac_River), [Rappahannock](/wiki/Rappahannock_River), [York](/wiki/York_River_(Virginia)), and James, which create three peninsulas in the bay.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[4]](#cite_note-4) [thumb|upright|left|Deciduous and evergreen trees give the Blue Ridge Mountains their distinct color.](/wiki/File:Golden_Sunset_--Timber_Hollow_Overlook_(22014263936).jpg)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)|alt=The rays of a sunset spread over mountain ridges that turn from green to purple and blue as they progress toward the horizon. The [Tidewater](/wiki/Tidewater_(geographic_term)) is a [coastal plain](/wiki/Atlantic_coastal_plain) between the Atlantic coast and the [fall line](/wiki/Atlantic_Seaboard_fall_line). It includes the Eastern Shore and major [estuaries](/wiki/Estuary) of Chesapeake Bay. The Piedmont is a series of [sedimentary](/wiki/Sedimentary_rock) and [igneous rock](/wiki/Igneous_rock)-based [foothills](/wiki/Foothills) east of the mountains which were formed in the [Mesozoic](/wiki/Mesozoic) era.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The region, known for its heavy clay soil, includes the [Southwest Mountains](/wiki/Southwest_Mountains) around [Charlottesville](/wiki/Charlottesville,_Virginia).<ref name=agriculture>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The Blue Ridge Mountains are a [physiographic province](/wiki/Physiographic_regions_of_the_world) of the [Appalachian Mountains](/wiki/Appalachian_Mountains) with the highest points in the state, the tallest being [Mount Rogers](/wiki/Mount_Rogers) at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The Ridge and Valley region is west of the mountains and includes the [Great Appalachian Valley](/wiki/Great_Appalachian_Valley). The region is [carbonate rock](/wiki/Carbonate_rock) based and includes [Massanutten Mountain](/wiki/Massanutten_Mountain).<ref name=regions>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The Cumberland Plateau and the [Cumberland Mountains](/wiki/Cumberland_Mountains) are in the southwest corner of Virginia, south of the [Allegheny Plateau](/wiki/Allegheny_Plateau). In this region, rivers flow northwest, with a [dendritic drainage system](/wiki/Drainage_system_(geomorphology)#Dendritic_drainage_pattern), into the [Ohio River](/wiki/Ohio_River) basin.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The [Virginia Seismic Zone](/wiki/Virginia_Seismic_Zone) has not had a history of regular [earthquake](/wiki/Earthquake) activity. Earthquakes are rarely above 4.5 in [magnitude](/wiki/Richter_magnitude_scale), because Virginia is located away from the edges of the [North American Plate](/wiki/North_American_Plate). The largest earthquake, at an estimated 5.9 magnitude, was in 1897 near [Blacksburg](/wiki/Blacksburg,_Virginia).[[5]](#cite_note-5) A [5.8 magnitude earthquake](/wiki/2011_Virginia_earthquake) struck central Virginia on August 23, 2011, near [Mineral](/wiki/Mineral,_Virginia). The earthquake was reportedly felt as far away as [Toronto](/wiki/Toronto), [Atlanta](/wiki/Atlanta) and [Florida](/wiki/Florida).[[6]](#cite_note-6) [Coal mining](/wiki/Coal_mining_in_the_United_States) takes place in the three mountainous regions at 45 distinct coal beds near Mesozoic basins.<ref name=mining>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Over 62 million tons of other non-fuel resources, such as [slate](/wiki/Slate), [kyanite](/wiki/Kyanite), sand, or gravel, were also mined in Virginia in 2012.[[7]](#cite_note-7) The state's carbonate rock is filled with more than 4,000 caves, ten of which are open for tourism.[[8]](#cite_note-8) 35 million years ago, a [bolide](/wiki/Bolide) impacted what is now eastern Virginia. The [resulting crater](/wiki/Chesapeake_Bay_impact_crater) may explain [sinking](/wiki/Subsidence) and [earthquakes](/wiki/Earthquake) in the region.[[9]](#cite_note-9)

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

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:Climate chart](/wiki/Template:Climate_chart)

The climate of Virginia becomes increasingly warmer and more humid farther south and east.<ref name=Burnham>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb)</ref> Seasonal extremes vary from average lows of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in January to average highs of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in July. The Atlantic ocean has a strong effect on eastern and southeastern coastal areas of the state. Influenced by the [Gulf Stream](/wiki/Gulf_Stream), coastal weather is subject to [hurricanes](/wiki/Tropical_cyclone), most pronouncedly near the mouth of Chesapeake Bay.<ref name=climatology>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> In spite of its position adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean, even the coastal areas have a significant continental influence with quite large temperature differences between summer and winter, particularly given the state climate's subtropical classification.

Virginia has an annual average of 35–45 days of thunderstorm activity, particularly in the western part of the state,<ref name=tstorms>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> and an average annual precipitation of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).<ref name=climatology/> Cold air masses arriving over the mountains in winter can lead to significant snowfalls, such as the [Blizzard of 1996](/wiki/Blizzard_of_1996) and [winter storms of 2009–2010](/wiki/Winter_storms_of_2009–2010). The interaction of these elements with the state's topography creates distinct [microclimates](/wiki/Microclimate) in the Shenandoah Valley, the mountainous southwest, and the coastal plains.[[10]](#cite_note-10) Virginia averages seven [tornadoes](/wiki/Tornado) annually, most F2 or lower on the [Fujita scale](/wiki/Fujita_scale).[[11]](#cite_note-11) In recent years, the expansion of the southern suburbs of [Washington, D.C.](/wiki/Washington,_D.C.) into [Northern Virginia](/wiki/Northern_Virginia) has introduced an [urban heat island](/wiki/Urban_heat_island) primarily caused by increased absorption of solar radiation in more densely populated areas.[[12]](#cite_note-12) In the [American Lung Association's](/wiki/American_Lung_Association) 2011 report, 11 counties received failing grades for air quality, with [Fairfax County](/wiki/Fairfax_County,_Virginia) having the worst in the state, due to automobile pollution.<ref name=polution>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[13]](#cite_note-13) Haze in the mountains is caused in part by coal power plants.[[14]](#cite_note-14)

### Flora and fauna[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

Forests cover 65% of the state, primarily with deciduous, broad leaf trees in the western part of the state and evergeens and conifers dominant the central and eastern part of Virginia.<ref name=forests>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Lower altitudes are more likely to have small but dense stands of moisture-loving hemlocks and mosses in abundance, with hickory and oak in the Blue Ridge.<ref name=Burnham/> However, since the early 1990s, [Gypsy moth](/wiki/Gypsy_moth) infestations have eroded the dominance of oak forests.[[15]](#cite_note-15) In the lowland tidewater and piedmont, yellow pines tend to dominate, with bald cypress wetland forests in the Great Dismal and Nottoway swamps. Other common trees and plants include red bay, wax myrtle, dwarf palmetto, [tulip poplar](/wiki/Liriodendron_tulipifera), [mountain laurel](/wiki/Kalmia_latifolia), [milkweed](/wiki/Asclepias), daisies, and many species of ferns. The largest areas of wilderness are along the Atlantic coast and in the western mountains, where the largest populations of [trillium wildflowers](/wiki/Trillium_grandiflorum) in North America are found.<ref name=Burnham/>[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The Atlantic coast regions are host to flora commonly associated with the South Atlantic pine forests and lower Southeast Coastal Plain maritime flora, the latter found primarily in eastern and central Virginia.

[thumb|left|White-tailed deer, also known as Virginia deer, graze at](/wiki/File:Deer_Big_Meadow_(13082497565).jpg) [Big Meadows](/wiki/Big_Meadows) in [Shenandoah National Park](/wiki/Shenandoah_National_Park)|alt=Two red-brown colored deer graze among tall grass and purple flowers in a meadow. Mammals include [white-tailed deer](/wiki/White-tailed_deer), [black bear](/wiki/American_black_bear), [beaver](/wiki/Beaver), [bobcat](/wiki/Bobcat), [coyote](/wiki/Coyote), [raccoon](/wiki/Raccoon), [skunk](/wiki/Skunk), [groundhog](/wiki/Groundhog), [Virginia opossum](/wiki/Virginia_opossum), [gray fox](/wiki/Gray_fox), [red fox](/wiki/Red_fox), and [eastern cottontail rabbit](/wiki/Eastern_cottontail_rabbit).[[16]](#cite_note-16) Other mammals include: nutria, fox squirrel, gray squirrel, flying squirrel, chipmunk, brown bat, and weasel. Birds include cardinals (the state bird), barred owls, Carolina chickadees, red-tailed hawks, ospreys, brown pelicans, quail, seagulls, bald eagles, and wild turkeys. Virginia is also home to the pileated woodpecker as well as the red-bellied woodpecker. The [peregrine falcon](/wiki/Peregrine_falcon) was reintroduced into Shenandoah National Park in the mid-1990s.[[17]](#cite_note-17) Walleye, brook trout, Roanoke bass, and blue catfish are among the 210 known species of freshwater fish.[[18]](#cite_note-18) Running brooks with rocky bottoms are often inhabited by plentiful amounts of crayfish and salamanders.<ref name=Burnham/> The [Chesapeake Bay](/wiki/Chesapeake_Bay) is host to many species, including [blue crabs](/wiki/Callinectes_sapidus), clams, oysters, and rockfish (also known as striped bass).[[19]](#cite_note-19) Virginia has 30 [National Park Service](/wiki/National_Park_Service) units, such as [Great Falls Park](/wiki/Great_Falls_Park) and the [Appalachian Trail](/wiki/Appalachian_Trail), and one national park, the [Shenandoah National Park](/wiki/Shenandoah_National_Park).[[20]](#cite_note-20) Shenandoah was established in 1935 and encompasses the scenic [Skyline Drive](/wiki/Skyline_Drive). Almost 40% of the park's area (79,579 acres/322 km2) has been designated as wilderness under the [National Wilderness Preservation System](/wiki/National_Wilderness_Preservation_System).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Additionally, there are 34 [Virginia state parks](/wiki/List_of_Virginia_state_parks) and 17 [state forests](/wiki/List_of_Virginia_state_forests), run by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Forestry.<ref name=forests/>[[21]](#cite_note-21) The Chesapeake Bay, while not a national park, is protected by both state and federal legislation, and the jointly run [Chesapeake Bay Program](/wiki/Chesapeake_Bay_Program) which conducts restoration on the bay and its watershed. The [Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge](/wiki/Great_Dismal_Swamp_National_Wildlife_Refuge) extends into North Carolina, as does the [Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge](/wiki/Back_Bay_National_Wildlife_Refuge), which marks the beginning of the [Outer Banks](/wiki/Outer_Banks).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|The story of](/wiki/File:John_Smith_Saved_by_Pocahontas.jpg) [Pocahontas](/wiki/Pocahontas), an ancestress of many of the [First Families of Virginia](/wiki/First_Families_of_Virginia), was romanticized by later artists.[[22]](#cite_note-22)|alt=A painting of a young dark-haired Native American woman shielding an Elizabethan era man from execution by a Native American chief. She is bare-chested, and her face is bathed in light from an unknown source. Several Native Americans look on at the scene. "Jamestown 2007" marked Virginia's quadricentennial year, celebrating 400 years since the establishment of the Jamestown Colony. The celebrations highlighted contributions from [Native Americans](/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States), Europeans, and Africans, each of which had a significant part in shaping Virginia's history.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[23]](#cite_note-23) Warfare, including among these groups, has also had an important role. Virginia was a focal point in conflicts from the [French and Indian War](/wiki/French_and_Indian_War), the [American Revolution](/wiki/American_Revolution) and the [Civil War](/wiki/American_Civil_War), to the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War) and the [War on Terrorism](/wiki/War_on_Terrorism).[[24]](#cite_note-24) Stories about historic figures, such as those surrounding [Pocahontas](/wiki/Pocahontas) and [John Smith](/wiki/John_Smith_(explorer)), [George Washington's](/wiki/George_Washington) childhood, or the plantation elite in the slave society of the [antebellum period](/wiki/Antebellum_Era_in_the_United_States), have also created potent myths of state history, and have served as rationales for Virginia's ideology.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Colony[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The first people are estimated to have arrived in Virginia over 12,000 years ago.[[25]](#cite_note-25) By 5,000 years ago more permanent settlements emerged, and farming began by 900 AD. By 1500, the [Algonquian peoples](/wiki/Algonquian_peoples) had founded towns such as [Werowocomoco](/wiki/Werowocomoco) in the [Tidewater region](/wiki/Tidewater_region_of_Virginia), which they referred to as [*Tsenacommacah*](/wiki/Tsenacommacah). The other major language groups in the area were the [Siouan](/wiki/Siouan_languages) to the west, and the [Iroquoians](/wiki/Iroquoian_languages), who included the [Nottoway](/wiki/Nottoway_Tribe) and [Meherrin](/wiki/Meherrin), to the north and south. After 1570, the Algonquians consolidated under [Chief Powhatan](/wiki/Chief_Powhatan) in response to threats from these other groups on their trade network.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Powhatan controlled more than 30 smaller tribes and over 150 settlements, who shared a common [Virginia Algonquian](/wiki/Powhatan_language) language. In 1607, the native Tidewater population was between 13,000 and 14,000.[[26]](#cite_note-26) Several European expeditions, including a [group of Spanish Jesuits](/wiki/Ajacán_Mission), explored the Chesapeake Bay during the 16th century.[[27]](#cite_note-27) In 1583, Queen [Elizabeth I of England](/wiki/Elizabeth_I_of_England) granted [Walter Raleigh](/wiki/Walter_Raleigh) a charter to plant a colony north of [Spanish Florida](/wiki/Spanish_Florida).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1584, Raleigh sent an expedition to the [Atlantic coast of North America](/wiki/East_Coast_of_the_United_States).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The name "Virginia" may have been suggested then by Raleigh or Elizabeth, perhaps noting her status as the "Virgin Queen," and may also be related to a native phrase, "Wingandacoa," or name, "Wingina."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Initially the name applied to the entire coastal region from South Carolina to Maine, plus the island of [Bermuda](/wiki/Bermuda).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [London Company](/wiki/London_Company) was incorporated as a joint stock company by the proprietary [Charter of 1606](/wiki/Charter_of_1606), which granted land rights to this area. The Company financed the first permanent English settlement in the "[New World](/wiki/New_World)", [Jamestown](/wiki/Jamestown,_Virginia). Named for [King James I](/wiki/James_I_of_England), it was founded in May 1607 by [Christopher Newport](/wiki/Christopher_Newport).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1619, colonists took greater control with an elected legislature called the [House of Burgesses](/wiki/House_of_Burgesses). With the bankruptcy of the London Company in 1624, the settlement was taken into royal authority as an English [crown colony](/wiki/Crown_colony).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:The_Governor's_Palace_--_Williamsburg_(VA)_September_2012.jpg)[Williamsburg](/wiki/Williamsburg,_Virginia) was Virginia's capital from 1699 to 1780.|alt=A three-story red brick colonial style hall and its left and right wings during summer. Life in the colony was perilous, and many died during the [Starving Time](/wiki/Starving_Time_(Jamestown)) in 1609 and the [Anglo-Powhatan Wars](/wiki/Anglo-Powhatan_Wars), including the [Indian massacre of 1622](/wiki/Indian_massacre_of_1622), which fostered the colonists' negative view of all tribes.[[28]](#cite_note-28) By 1624, only 3,400 of the 6,000 early settlers had survived.[[29]](#cite_note-29) However, European [demand for tobacco](/wiki/Tobacco_in_the_American_Colonies) fueled the arrival of more settlers and servants.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [headright](/wiki/Headright) system tried to solve the labor shortage by providing colonists with land for each [indentured servant](/wiki/Indentured_servant) they transported to Virginia.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) African workers were first imported to Jamestown in 1619 initially under the rules of indentured servitude. The shift to a system of African [slavery in Virginia](/wiki/History_of_slavery_in_Virginia) was propelled by the legal cases of [John Punch](/wiki/John_Punch_(slave)), who was sentenced to lifetime slavery in 1640 for attempting to run away,[[30]](#cite_note-30) and of [John Casor](/wiki/John_Casor), who was claimed by [Anthony Johnson](/wiki/Anthony_Johnson_(colonist)) as his servant for life in 1655.[[31]](#cite_note-31) Slavery first appears in Virginia statutes in 1661 and 1662, when a law made it hereditary based on the mother's status.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Tensions and the geographic differences between the working and ruling classes led to [Bacon's Rebellion](/wiki/Bacon's_Rebellion) in 1676, by which time current and former indentured servants made up as much as 80% of the population.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Rebels, largely from the colony's frontier, were also opposed to the conciliatory policy towards [native tribes](/wiki/Native_American_tribes_in_Virginia), and one result of the rebellion was the signing at [Middle Plantation](/wiki/Middle_Plantation_(Virginia)) of the [Treaty of 1677](/wiki/Treaty_of_1677), which made the signatory tribes [tributary states](/wiki/Tributary_state) and was part of a pattern of appropriating tribal land by force and treaty. Middle Plantation saw the founding of [The College of William & Mary](/wiki/The_College_of_William_&_Mary) in 1693 and was renamed [Williamsburg](/wiki/Williamsburg,_Virginia) as it became the colonial capital in 1699.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1747, a group of Virginian speculators formed the [Ohio Company](/wiki/Ohio_Company), with the backing of the British crown, to start English settlement and trade in the [Ohio Country](/wiki/Ohio_Country) west of the [Appalachian Mountains](/wiki/Appalachian_Mountains).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [France](/wiki/France), which claimed this area as part of their colony of [New France](/wiki/New_France), viewed this as a threat, and the ensuing [French and Indian War](/wiki/French_and_Indian_War) became part of the [Seven Years' War](/wiki/Seven_Years'_War) (1756–1763). A militia from several British colonies, called the [Virginia Regiment](/wiki/Virginia_Regiment), was led by then-Lieutenant Colonel [George Washington](/wiki/George_Washington).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Statehood[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[thumb|upright|1851 painting of](/wiki/File:Patrick_Henry_Rothermel.jpg) [Patrick Henry's](/wiki/Patrick_Henry) speech before the [House of Burgesses](/wiki/House_of_Burgesses) on the [Virginia Resolves](/wiki/Virginia_Resolves) against the [Stamp Act of 1765](/wiki/Stamp_Act_of_1765)|alt=Upper-class middle-aged man dressed in a bright red cloak speaks before an assembly of other angry men. The subject's right hand is raise high in gesture toward the balcony.

The [British Parliament's](/wiki/Parliament_of_Great_Britain) efforts to levy new taxes following the [French and Indian War](/wiki/French_and_Indian_War) were deeply unpopular in the colonies. In the [House of Burgesses](/wiki/House_of_Burgesses), opposition to [taxation without representation](/wiki/No_taxation_without_representation) was led by [Patrick Henry](/wiki/Patrick_Henry) and [Richard Henry Lee](/wiki/Richard_Henry_Lee), among others.[[32]](#cite_note-32) Virginians began to [coordinate their actions](/wiki/Committee_of_correspondence) with other colonies in 1773, and sent delegates to the [Continental Congress](/wiki/Continental_Congress) the following year.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) After the House of Burgesses was dissolved by the royal governor in 1774, Virginia's revolutionary leaders continued to govern via the [Virginia Conventions](/wiki/Virginia_Conventions). On May 15, 1776, the Convention declared Virginia's independence from the British Empire and adopted [George Mason's](/wiki/George_Mason) [Virginia Declaration of Rights](/wiki/Virginia_Declaration_of_Rights), which was then included in a new constitution.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Another Virginian, [Thomas Jefferson](/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson), drew upon Mason's work in drafting the national [Declaration of Independence](/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence).<ref name=mason>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref>

When the [American Revolutionary War](/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War) began, [George Washington](/wiki/George_Washington) was selected to head the [colonial army](/wiki/Continental_Army). During the war, the capital was moved to [Richmond](/wiki/Richmond,_Virginia) at the urging of Governor Thomas Jefferson, who feared that Williamsburg's coastal location would make it vulnerable to British attack.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1781, the combined action of [Continental](/wiki/Continental_Army) and French land and naval forces trapped the British army on the [Virginia Peninsula](/wiki/Virginia_Peninsula), where troops under George Washington and [Comte de Rochambeau](/wiki/Comte_de_Rochambeau) defeated British [General Cornwallis](/wiki/General_Cornwallis) in the [Siege of Yorktown](/wiki/Siege_of_Yorktown). His surrender on October 19, 1781 led to [peace negotiations in Paris](/wiki/Peace_of_Paris_(1783)) and secured the independence of the colonies.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Virginians were instrumental in writing the [United States Constitution](/wiki/United_States_Constitution). [James Madison](/wiki/James_Madison) drafted the [Virginia Plan](/wiki/Virginia_Plan) in 1787 and the [Bill of Rights](/wiki/United_States_Bill_of_Rights) in 1789.<ref name=mason/> [Virginia ratified](/wiki/Virginia_Ratifying_Convention) the Constitution on June 25, 1788. The [three-fifths compromise](/wiki/Three-fifths_compromise) ensured that Virginia, with its large number of slaves, initially had the largest bloc in the [House of Representatives](/wiki/United_States_House_of_Representatives). Together with the [Virginia dynasty](/wiki/Virginia_dynasty) of presidents, this gave the Commonwealth national importance. In 1790, both Virginia and Maryland ceded territory to form the new [District of Columbia](/wiki/Washington,_D.C.), though the Virginian area was [retroceded](/wiki/District_of_Columbia_retrocession) in 1846.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Virginia is called "Mother of States" because of its role in being carved into states like [Kentucky](/wiki/Kentucky), which became the 15th state in 1792, and for the numbers of [American pioneers](/wiki/American_pioneer) born in Virginia.<ref name=Robertson/>

### Civil War and aftermath[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|Union soldiers before Marye's Heights,](/wiki/Image:Union_soldiers_entrenched_along_the_west_bank_of_the_Rappahannock_River_at_Fredericksburg,_Virginia_(111-B-157).jpg) [Fredericksburg](/wiki/Second_Battle_of_Fredericksburg) in May 1863|alt=Dozens of soldiers in coats and hats crowd a trench while two others stand tall to the right of the trench. In addition to agriculture, slave labor was increasingly used in mining, shipbuilding and other industries.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The execution of [Gabriel Prosser](/wiki/Gabriel_Prosser) in 1800, [Nat Turner's slave rebellion](/wiki/Nat_Turner's_slave_rebellion) in 1831 and [John Brown's Raid on Harpers Ferry](/wiki/John_Brown's_Raid_on_Harpers_Ferry) in 1859 marked the growing social discontent over slavery and its role in the [plantation economy](/wiki/Plantation_economy). By 1860, almost half a million people, roughly 31% of the total population of Virginia, were enslaved.<ref name=hc>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) This division contributed to the start of the [American Civil War](/wiki/American_Civil_War).

Virginia voted to secede from the United States on April 17, 1861, after the [Battle of Fort Sumter](/wiki/Battle_of_Fort_Sumter) and [Abraham Lincoln's](/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln) call for volunteers. On April 24, Virginia joined the [Confederate States of America](/wiki/Confederate_States_of_America), which chose Richmond as its capital.<ref name=Robertson>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb)</ref> After the 1861 [Wheeling Convention](/wiki/Wheeling_Convention), 48 counties in the northwest separated to form a new state of [West Virginia](/wiki/West_Virginia), which chose to remain loyal to the [Union](/wiki/Union_(Civil_War)). Virginian general [Robert E. Lee](/wiki/Robert_E._Lee) took command of the [Army of Northern Virginia](/wiki/Army_of_Northern_Virginia) in 1862, and led invasions into Union territory, ultimately becoming commander of all Confederate forces. During the war, more battles were fought in Virginia than anywhere else, including [Bull Run](/wiki/First_Battle_of_Bull_Run), the [Seven Days Battles](/wiki/Seven_Days_Battles), [Chancellorsville](/wiki/Battle_of_Chancellorsville), and the concluding [Battle of Appomattox Court House](/wiki/Battle_of_Appomattox_Court_House).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) After the [capture of Richmond](/wiki/Siege_of_Petersburg) in April 1865, the state capital was briefly moved to [Lynchburg](/wiki/Lynchburg,_Virginia),[[33]](#cite_note-33) while the Confederate leadership fled to [Danville](/wiki/Danville,_Virginia).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Virginia was formally restored to the United States in 1870, due to the work of the [Committee of Nine](/wiki/Committee_of_Nine).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

During the post-war [Reconstruction era](/wiki/Reconstruction_era_of_the_United_States), Virginia adopted a constitution which provided for free public schools, and guaranteed political, civil, and [voting rights](/wiki/Voting_rights_in_the_United_States).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The populist [Readjuster Party](/wiki/Readjuster_Party) ran an inclusive coalition until the conservative white [Democratic Party](/wiki/Democratic_Party_of_Virginia) gained power after 1883.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It passed segregationist [Jim Crow laws](/wiki/Jim_Crow_laws) and in 1902 rewrote the [Constitution of Virginia](/wiki/Constitution_of_Virginia) to include a [poll tax](/wiki/Poll_tax_(United_States)) and other voter registration measures that effectively [disfranchised](/wiki/Disfranchisement_after_the_Civil_War) most African Americans and many poor whites.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Though their schools and public services were segregated and underfunded due to a lack of political representation, African Americans were able to unite in communities and take a greater role in Virginia society.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Modern era[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[thumb|Many](/wiki/File:USS_Virginia_in_port.jpg) [Pre-Dreadnought](/wiki/Pre-Dreadnought) and [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I)-era warships were built in [Newport News](/wiki/Newport_News,_Virginia), including the [USS *Virginia*](/wiki/USS_Virginia_(BB-13)).|alt=A white battleship with three smokestacks and two tall masts sitting in port. New economic forces also changed the Commonwealth. Virginian [James Albert Bonsack](/wiki/James_Albert_Bonsack) invented the tobacco cigarette rolling machine in 1880 leading to new industrial scale production centered on Richmond. In 1886, railroad magnate [Collis Potter Huntington](/wiki/Collis_Potter_Huntington) founded [Newport News Shipbuilding](/wiki/Newport_News_Shipbuilding), which was responsible for building six major [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I)-era battleships for the [U.S. Navy](/wiki/U.S._Navy) from 1907–1923.[[34]](#cite_note-34) During the war, [German](/wiki/German_Empire) submarines like [U-151](/wiki/SM_U-151) attacked ships outside the port.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1926, Dr. [W.A.R. Goodwin](/wiki/W.A.R._Goodwin), rector of Williamsburg's [Bruton Parish Church](/wiki/Bruton_Parish_Church), began restoration of colonial-era buildings in the historic district with financial backing of [John D. Rockefeller, Jr.](/wiki/John_D._Rockefeller,_Jr.)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Though their project, like others in the state, had to contend with the [Great Depression](/wiki/Great_Depression) and [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II), work continued as [Colonial Williamsburg](/wiki/Colonial_Williamsburg) became a major tourist attraction.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:Virginia_Civil_Rights_Memorial_wide.jpg) [Virginia Civil Rights Memorial](/wiki/Virginia_Civil_Rights_Memorial) was erected in 2008 to commemorate the protests which led to school desegregation.|alt=Bronze sculptures of seven figures marching stand around a large rectangular block of white engraved granite. Protests started by [Barbara Rose Johns](/wiki/Barbara_Rose_Johns) in 1951 in [Farmville](/wiki/Farmville,_Virginia) against segregated schools led to the lawsuit [*Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*](/wiki/Davis_v._County_School_Board_of_Prince_Edward_County). This case, filed by Richmond natives [Spottswood Robinson](/wiki/Spottswood_William_Robinson_III) and [Oliver Hill](/wiki/Oliver_Hill), was decided in 1954 with [*Brown v. Board of Education*](/wiki/Brown_v._Board_of_Education), which rejected the segregationist doctrine of "[separate but equal](/wiki/Separate_but_equal)". But, in 1958, under the policy of "[massive resistance](/wiki/Massive_resistance)" led by the influential segregationist Senator [Harry F. Byrd](/wiki/Harry_F._Byrd) and his [Byrd Organization](/wiki/Byrd_Organization), the Commonwealth prohibited [desegregated](/wiki/Desegregation) local schools from receiving state funding.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The [Civil Rights Movement](/wiki/African-American_Civil_Rights_Movement_(1955–1968)) gained many participants in the 1960s. It achieved the moral force and support to gain passage of national legislation with the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](/wiki/Civil_Rights_Act_of_1964) and the [Voting Rights Act](/wiki/Voting_Rights_Act) of 1965. In 1964 the [United States Supreme Court](/wiki/United_States_Supreme_Court) ordered [Prince Edward County](/wiki/Prince_Edward_County,_Virginia) and others to [integrate](/wiki/Racial_integration) schools.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1967, the Court also struck down the state's ban on [interracial marriage](/wiki/Interracial_marriage_in_the_United_States) with [*Loving v. Virginia*](/wiki/Loving_v._Virginia). From 1969 to 1971, state legislators under Governor [Mills Godwin](/wiki/Mills_Godwin) rewrote the constitution, after goals such as the repeal of [Jim Crow laws](/wiki/Jim_Crow_laws) had been achieved. In 1989, [Douglas Wilder](/wiki/Douglas_Wilder) became the first African American elected as governor in the United States.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War) led to the expansion of national defense government programs housed in offices in Northern Virginia near Washington, D.C., and correlative population growth.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Central Intelligence Agency](/wiki/Central_Intelligence_Agency) in [Langley](/wiki/Langley,_Virginia) was involved in various [Cold War events](/wiki/Timeline_of_events_in_the_Cold_War), including as the target of [Soviet espionage activities](/wiki/History_of_Soviet_and_Russian_espionage_in_the_United_States). Also among the federal developments was [the Pentagon](/wiki/The_Pentagon), built during World War II as the headquarters for the Department of Defense. It was one of the targets of the [September 11 attacks](/wiki/September_11_attacks); 189 people died at the site when a jet passenger plane was crashed into the building.[[35]](#cite_note-35)

## Cities and towns[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:Largest cities](/wiki/Template:Largest_cities) [thumb|300px|Virginia counties and cities by population in 2010.](/wiki/File:Virginia-Population.svg) Virginia is divided into 95 [counties](/wiki/List_of_counties_in_Virginia) and 38 [independent cities](/wiki/Independent_city), the latter acting in many ways as [county-equivalents](/wiki/County-equivalent).[[36]](#cite_note-36) This general method of treating cities and counties on par with each other is unique to Virginia, with only three other [independent cities in the United States](/wiki/Independent_city_(United_States)#Other_states) outside Virginia, in three different states.[[37]](#cite_note-37) Virginia limits the authority of cities and counties to countermand laws expressly allowed by the [Virginia General Assembly](/wiki/Virginia_General_Assembly) under what is known as [Dillon's Rule](/wiki/Dillon's_Rule).[[38]](#cite_note-38) In addition to independent cities, there are also [incorporated *towns*](/wiki/List_of_towns_in_Virginia) which operate under their own governments, but are part of a county. Finally there are hundreds of [unincorporated communities](/wiki/List_of_unincorporated_towns_in_Virginia) within the counties. Virginia does not have any further political subdivisions, such as villages or townships.

Virginia has 11 [Metropolitan Statistical Areas](/wiki/Virginia_census_statistical_areas); [Northern Virginia](/wiki/Northern_Virginia), [Hampton Roads](/wiki/Hampton_Roads), and [Richmond-Petersburg](/wiki/Richmond-Petersburg) are the three most populous. Richmond is the capital of Virginia, and its metropolitan area has a population of over 1.2 million.<ref name=popnews/> [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), [Virginia Beach](/wiki/Virginia_Beach,_Virginia) is the most populous city in the Commonwealth, with [Norfolk](/wiki/Norfolk,_Virginia) and [Chesapeake](/wiki/Chesapeake,_Virginia) second and third, respectively.<ref name=c2009>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Norfolk forms the urban core of the Hampton Roads metropolitan area, which has a population over 1.6 million people and is the site of the world's largest naval base, [Naval Station Norfolk](/wiki/Naval_Station_Norfolk).<ref name=popnews>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref><ref name=hr/> [Suffolk](/wiki/Suffolk,_Virginia), which includes a portion of the [Great Dismal Swamp](/wiki/Great_Dismal_Swamp), is the largest city by area at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[39]](#cite_note-39) [Fairfax County](/wiki/Fairfax_County,_Virginia) is the most populous locality in Virginia, with over one million residents, although that does not include its [county seat](/wiki/County_seat) Fairfax, which is one of the independent cities.[[40]](#cite_note-40) Fairfax County has a major urban business and shopping center in [Tysons Corner](/wiki/Tysons_Corner), Virginia's largest office market.[[41]](#cite_note-41) Neighboring [Loudoun County](/wiki/Loudoun_County,_Virginia), with the county seat at [Leesburg](/wiki/Leesburg,_Virginia), is both the fastest-growing county in Virginia and has the highest median household income ($114,204) in the country [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).<ref name=ltm>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> [Arlington County](/wiki/Arlington_County,_Virginia), the smallest self-governing county in the United States by land area, is an urban community organized as a county.[[42]](#cite_note-42) The [Roanoke](/wiki/Roanoke,_Virginia) area, with an estimated population of 300,399, is the largest Metropolitan Statistical Area in western Virginia.[[43]](#cite_note-43)

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

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:US Census population](/wiki/Template:US_Census_population) [Template:Stack](/wiki/Template:Stack)

The [United States Census Bureau](/wiki/United_States_Census_Bureau) estimates that the state population was 8,382,993 on July 1, 2015, a 4.77% increase since the [2010 United States Census](/wiki/2010_United_States_Census).[[44]](#cite_note-44) This includes an increase from net migration of 381,969 people into the Commonwealth since the [2010 census](/wiki/2010_United_States_Census). [Immigration](/wiki/Immigration_to_the_United_States) from outside the United States resulted in a net increase of 159,627 people, and migration within the country produced a net increase of 155,205 people.[[45]](#cite_note-45) Outside of Virginia, the top birth state for Virginians was [New York](/wiki/New_York), with the [Northeast](/wiki/Northeastern_United_States) accounting for the largest number of migrants into the state by region.<ref name=nytmigrationanddiaspora>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The [center of population](/wiki/Center_of_population) is located in [Louisa County](/wiki/Louisa_County,_Virginia) outside of [Richmond](/wiki/Richmond,_Virginia).<ref name=census>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Fifteen Largest Ancestries in Virginia (2013)** [[46]](#cite_note-46) | |
| **Ancestry** | **Percent** |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [German](/wiki/German_American) | 11.8% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [American](/wiki/American_ethnicity) | 11.0% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [English](/wiki/English_American) | 10.7% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Irish](/wiki/Irish_American) | 10.0% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Italian](/wiki/Italian_American) | 4.0% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Scottish](/wiki/Scottish_American) | 2.1% |
| [Subsaharan African](/wiki/African_Americans) | 2.0% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Polish](/wiki/Polish_American) | 1.9% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Template:Flagicon image](/wiki/Template:Flagicon_image) [French](/wiki/French_Americans) | 1.9% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Scotch-Irish](/wiki/Scotch-Irish_American)/[Ulster Scots](/wiki/Ulster_Scots_people) | 1.7% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Dutch](/wiki/Dutch_Americans) | 1.0% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Arab](/wiki/Arab_American) | 0.8% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Russian](/wiki/Russian_American) | 0.7% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Welsh](/wiki/Welsh_American) | 0.7% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Norwegian](/wiki/Norwegian_American) | 0.6% |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [French Canadian](/wiki/French_Canadian_American) | 0.4% |

The state's most populous ethnic group, [Non-Hispanic White](/wiki/Non-Hispanic_White), has declined from 76% in 1990 to 62.7% in 2015.[[47]](#cite_note-47)<ref name=2015CensusQuickFacts>[http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/51</ref>](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/51%3c/ref%3e) In 2011, non-Hispanic Whites were involved in 50.9% of all the births.[[48]](#cite_note-48) People of [English heritage](/wiki/English_Americans) settled throughout the Commonwealth during the colonial period, and others of British and Irish heritage have since immigrated.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Those who self-identify as having "[American ethnicity](/wiki/American_ethnicity)" are predominantly of English descent, but have ancestry that has been in North America for so long that they choose to identify simply as American.[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[50]](#cite_note-50) Of the English immigrants to Virginia in the 17th century, 75% came as [indentured servants](/wiki/Indentured_servant).[[51]](#cite_note-51) The western mountains have many settlements that were founded by [Scots-Irish immigrants](/wiki/Scots-Irish_American) before the [American Revolution](/wiki/American_Revolution).[[52]](#cite_note-52)[[53]](#cite_note-53) There are also sizable numbers of people of German descent in the northwestern mountains and [Shenandoah Valley](/wiki/Shenandoah_Valley),<ref name=dutch/> and German ancestry was the most popular response on the 2010 [American Community Survey](/wiki/American_Community_Survey), with 11.7%.<ref name=ancestry>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> 2.9% of Virginians also describe themselves as [biracial](/wiki/Biracial).<ref name=demographics/>

The largest minority group in Virginia is African American, at 19.7% [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).<ref name=2015CensusQuickFacts/> Most African American Virginians have been descendants of enslaved Africans who worked on tobacco, cotton, and [hemp](/wiki/Hemp) plantations. These men, women and children were brought from West and West-Central Africa, primarily from [Angola](/wiki/Angola) and the [Bight of Biafra](/wiki/Bight_of_Bonny). The [Igbo](/wiki/Igbo_American) ethnic group of what is now southern [Nigeria](/wiki/Nigeria) were the single largest African group among slaves in Virginia.[[54]](#cite_note-54) Though the black population was reduced by the [Great Migration](/wiki/Great_Migration_(African_American)), since 1965 there has been a reverse migration of blacks [returning south](/wiki/New_Great_Migration).[[55]](#cite_note-55) According to the [Pew Research Center](/wiki/Pew_Research_Center), the state has the highest concentration of black and white interracial marriages.<ref name=blackwhite>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

More recent immigration in the late 20th century and early 21st century has fueled new communities of Hispanics and Asians. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), 9.0% of Virginians are [Hispanic](/wiki/Hispanic_and_Latino_Americans) or Latino (of any race), and 6.5% are [Asian](/wiki/Asian_people).<ref name=2015CensusQuickFacts/> The state's Hispanic population rose by 92% from 2000 to 2010, with two-thirds of Hispanics living in [Northern Virginia](/wiki/Northern_Virginia).<ref name=demographics>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Hispanic citizens in Virginia have higher median household incomes and educational attainment than the general Virginia population.<ref name=hispanics>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> As far as Hispanic groups, there is a large [Salvadoran](/wiki/Salvadoran_American) population in the DC suburbs of Northern Virginia,[[56]](#cite_note-56) and a large [Puerto Rican](/wiki/Puerto_Rican_American) population in the [Hampton Roads](/wiki/Hampton_Roads) region of Southeast Virginia.[[57]](#cite_note-57) Northern Virginia also has a significant population of [Vietnamese Americans](/wiki/Vietnamese_American), whose major wave of immigration followed the [Vietnam War](/wiki/Vietnam_War),[[58]](#cite_note-58) and [Korean Americans](/wiki/Korean_American), whose migration has been more recent and was induced in part by the quality school system.[[59]](#cite_note-59) The [Filipino American](/wiki/Filipino_American) community has about 45,000 in the Hampton Roads area, many of whom have ties to the [U.S. Navy](/wiki/U.S._Navy) and armed forces.[[60]](#cite_note-60) Additionally, 0.5% of Virginians are [American Indian](/wiki/American_Indian) or [Alaska Native](/wiki/Alaska_Native), and 0.1% are [Native Hawaiian](/wiki/Native_Hawaiian) or other [Pacific Islander](/wiki/Pacific_Islander).<ref name=2015CensusQuickFacts/> Virginia has extended state recognition to eight [Native American tribes](/wiki/Native_American_tribes_in_Virginia) resident in the state, though some lack federal recognition status. Most Native American groups are located in the [Tidewater region](/wiki/Tidewater_region_of_Virginia).[[61]](#cite_note-61)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Ethnicity<ref name=2015CensusQuickFacts/>** | |  | **Largest ancestries by county** | **Ancestry (**[**2010**](/wiki/#CITEREFancestry)**)** | | | | Non-Hispanic White | align=right|62.7% | [270px|alt=Virginia counties colored either red, blue, yellow, green, or purple based on the populations most common ancestry. The south-east is predominately purple for African American, while the west is mostly red for American. The north has yellow for German, with two small areas green for Irish. Yellow is also found in spots in the west. A strip in the middle is blue for English.](/wiki/File:Virginia_Ancestries_by_County_2010.svg) [American Community Survey](/wiki/American_Community_Survey) 5-year estimate |  | German | align=right|11.7% | | Black or African American | align=right|19.7% |  | English | align=right|10.7% | | Hispanic or Latino (of any race) | align=right|9.0% |  | Irish | align=right|9.8% | | Asian | align=right|6.5% |  | American | align=right|9.7% | | American Indian and Alaska Native | align=right|0.5% |  | Subsaharan African | align=right|1.7% | |

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

The [Piedmont](/wiki/Piedmont_region_of_Virginia) region is known for its dialect's strong influence on [Southern American English](/wiki/Southern_American_English). While a more homogenized [American English](/wiki/American_English) is found in urban areas, various accents are also used, including the [Tidewater accent](/wiki/Tidewater_accent), the [Old Virginia accent](/wiki/Old_Virginia_accent), and the anachronistic [Elizabethan](/wiki/Early_Modern_English) of [Tangier Island](/wiki/Tangier_Island).[[62]](#cite_note-62)[[63]](#cite_note-63) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), 85.87% (6,299,127) of Virginia residents age 5 and older spoke [English](/wiki/English_language) at home as a [primary language](/wiki/Primary_language), while 6.41% (470,058) spoke [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_language), 0.77% (56,518) [Korean](/wiki/Korean_language), 0.63% (45,881) [Vietnamese](/wiki/Vietnamese_language), 0.57% (42,418) [Chinese](/wiki/Chinese_language) (which includes [Mandarin](/wiki/Standard_Mandarin)), and [Tagalog](/wiki/Tagalog_language) was spoken as a [main language](/wiki/Main_language) by 0.56% (40,724) of the population over the age of five. In total, 14.13% (1,036,442) of Virginia's population age 5 and older spoke a [mother language](/wiki/Mother_language) other than English.[[64]](#cite_note-64) English was passed as the Commonwealth's official language by statutes in 1981 and again in 1996, though the status is not mandated by the [Constitution of Virginia](/wiki/Constitution_of_Virginia).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

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

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Religion (2008)** | | |
| [Christian](/wiki/Christianity)<ref name=aris/> | | align=right|76% |
|  | [Baptist](/wiki/Baptist) | align=right|27% |
| [Roman Catholic](/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_the_United_States) | align=right|11% |
| [Methodist](/wiki/Methodism) | align=right|8% |
| [Presbyterian](/wiki/Presbyterianism) | align=right|3% |
| [Lutheran](/wiki/Lutheranism) | align=right|2% |
| [Other Christian](/wiki/List_of_Christian_denominations) | align=right|28% |
|  | | |
| colspan=2|[Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism) | align=right|1% |  |
| colspan=2|[Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism) | align=right|1% |  |
| colspan=2|[Judaism](/wiki/Judaism) | align=right|1% |  |
| colspan=2|[Islam](/wiki/Islam) | align=right|0.5% |  |
| colspan=2|[Unaffiliated](/wiki/Irreligion) | align=right|18% |  |

Virginia is predominantly Christian and [Protestant](/wiki/Protestantism); [Baptists](/wiki/Baptists) are the largest single group with 27% of the population [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).<ref name=aris>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Baptist congregations in Virginia have 763,655 members.[[65]](#cite_note-65) Baptist denominational groups in Virginia include the [Baptist General Association of Virginia](/wiki/Baptist_General_Association_of_Virginia), with about 1,400 member churches, which supports both the [Southern Baptist Convention](/wiki/Southern_Baptist_Convention) and the moderate [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship](/wiki/Cooperative_Baptist_Fellowship); and the [Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia](/wiki/Southern_Baptist_Conservatives_of_Virginia) with more than 500 affiliated churches, which supports the Southern Baptist Convention.[[66]](#cite_note-66)[[67]](#cite_note-67) [Roman Catholics](/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_the_United_States) are the second-largest religious group with 673,853 members.[[65]](#cite_note-65) The [Roman Catholic Diocese of Arlington](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Diocese_of_Arlington) includes most of Northern Virginia's Catholic churches, while the [Diocese of Richmond](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Diocese_of_Richmond) covers the rest.

[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Christchurchalexandria.jpg)[Christ Church in Alexandria](/wiki/Christ_Church_(Alexandria,_Virginia)) was frequented by [George Washington](/wiki/George_Washington) and [Robert E. Lee](/wiki/Robert_E._Lee).|alt=An 18th-century red brick church with white steeple behind a modern road in autumn. The Virginia Conference is the [regional body](/wiki/Annual_Conference) of the [United Methodist Church](/wiki/United_Methodist_Church) in most of the Commonwealth, while the Holston Conference represents much of extreme Southwest Virginia. The [Virginia Synod](/wiki/Virginia_Synod) is responsible for the congregations of the [Lutheran Church](/wiki/Evangelical_Lutheran_Church_in_America). [Presbyterian](/wiki/Presbyterianism), [Pentecostal](/wiki/Pentecostalism), [Congregationalist](/wiki/Congregational_church), and Episcopalian adherents each composed less than 2% of the population [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[65]](#cite_note-65) The [Episcopal Diocese of Virginia](/wiki/Episcopal_Diocese_of_Virginia), [Southern Virginia](/wiki/Episcopal_Diocese_of_Southern_Virginia), and [Southwestern Virginia](/wiki/Episcopal_Diocese_of_Southwestern_Virginia) support the various [Episcopal churches](/wiki/Episcopal_Church_(United_States)).

In November 2006, 15 conservative Episcopal churches voted to split from the Diocese of Virginia over the ordination of openly [gay bishops](/wiki/Gay_bishops) and clergy in other dioceses of the Episcopal Church; these churches continue to claim affiliation with the larger [Anglican Communion](/wiki/Anglican_Communion) through [other bodies outside the United States](/wiki/Anglican_realignment). Though Virginia law allows parishioners to determine their church's affiliation, the diocese claimed the secessionist churches' buildings and properties. The resulting property law case, ultimately decided in favor of the mainline diocese, was a test for Episcopal churches nationwide.[[68]](#cite_note-68) Among other religions, adherents of [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) constitute 1% of the population, with 197 [congregations in Virginia](/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints_in_Virginia) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[69]](#cite_note-69) [Fairfax Station](/wiki/Fairfax_Station,_Virginia) is the site of the [Ekoji Buddhist Temple](/wiki/Ekoji_Buddhist_Temple), of the [Jodo Shinshu](/wiki/Jodo_Shinshu) school, and the Hindu [Durga](/wiki/Durga) Temple. While the state's Jewish population is small, organized Jewish sites date to 1789 with [Congregation Beth Ahabah](/wiki/Congregation_Beth_Ahabah).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Muslims](/wiki/Muslims) are a growing religious group throughout the Commonwealth through immigration.[[70]](#cite_note-70) [Megachurches](/wiki/Megachurch) in the Commonwealth include [Thomas Road Baptist Church](/wiki/Thomas_Road_Baptist_Church), [Immanuel Bible Church](/wiki/Immanuel_Bible_Church), and [McLean Bible Church](/wiki/McLean_Bible_Church).[[71]](#cite_note-71) Several Christian universities are also based in the state, including [Regent University](/wiki/Regent_University), [Liberty University](/wiki/Liberty_University), and [Lynchburg College](/wiki/Lynchburg_College).

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

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|300px|Virginia counties and cities by median household income (2010).](/wiki/File:Virginia-Median_household_income.svg) Virginia is an [employment-at-will](/wiki/At-will_employment) state;[[72]](#cite_note-72) its economy has diverse sources of income, including local and federal government, military, farming and business. Virginia has 4.1 million civilian workers, and one-third of the jobs are in the [service sector](/wiki/Service_sector).<ref name=energy>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref><ref name=ng>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The unemployment rate in Virginia is among the [lowest in the nation](/wiki/List_of_US_states_by_unemployment_rate), at 4.8%, [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[73]](#cite_note-73) The second fastest job growth town in the nation is [Leesburg](/wiki/Leesburg,_Virginia), [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[74]](#cite_note-74) The Gross Domestic Product of Virginia was $452 billion in 2013.[[75]](#cite_note-75) According to the [Bureau of Economic Analysis](/wiki/Bureau_of_Economic_Analysis), Virginia had the most counties in the top 100 [wealthiest in the United States](/wiki/Highest-income_counties_in_the_United_States) based upon median income in 2007.[[76]](#cite_note-76) [Northern Virginia](/wiki/Northern_Virginia) is the [highest-income region](/wiki/Highest-income_counties_in_the_United_States) in Virginia, having six of the twenty [highest-income counties in the United States](/wiki/Highest-income_counties_in_the_United_States), including the three highest [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[77]](#cite_note-77) According to CNN Money Magazine the highest-income town in the nation is [Great Falls](/wiki/Great_Falls,_Virginia), [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[78]](#cite_note-78) According to a 2013 study by Phoenix Marketing International, Virginia had the seventh-largest number of millionaires per capita in the United States, with a ratio of 6.64%.[[79]](#cite_note-79)

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

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:The_Pentagon_January_2008.jpg) [Department of Defense](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Defense) is headquartered in [Arlington](/wiki/Arlington_County,_Virginia) at [The Pentagon](/wiki/The_Pentagon), the world's largest office building.[[80]](#cite_note-80)|alt=Aerial view of the huge five-sided building and its multiple rings. Parking lots and highways stretch away from it. Virginia has the highest defense spending of any state per capita, providing the Commonwealth with around 900,000 jobs.<ref name=lovehate>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref><ref name=fedspend/> 12% of all [U.S. federal procurement](/wiki/Government_procurement_in_the_United_States) money is spent in Virginia, the second-highest amount after California.<ref name=fedspend>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref><ref name=weighdefense>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Many Virginians work for [federal agencies](/wiki/List_of_United_States_federal_agencies) in Northern Virginia, which include the [Central Intelligence Agency](/wiki/Central_Intelligence_Agency) and the [Department of Defense](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Defense), as well as the [National Science Foundation](/wiki/National_Science_Foundation), the [United States Geological Survey](/wiki/United_States_Geological_Survey) and the [United States Patent and Trademark Office](/wiki/United_States_Patent_and_Trademark_Office). Many others work for [government contractors](/wiki/Government_contractor), including defense and security firms, which hold more than 15,000 federal contracts.<ref name=fedjobs>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

Virginia has one of the highest concentrations of veterans of any state,[[81]](#cite_note-81) and is second to [California](/wiki/California) in total Department of Defense employees.[[82]](#cite_note-82)[[83]](#cite_note-83) The [Hampton Roads](/wiki/Hampton_Roads) area has the largest concentration of military personnel and assets of any metropolitan area in the world,[[84]](#cite_note-84) including the largest naval base in the world, [Naval Station Norfolk](/wiki/Naval_Station_Norfolk).<ref name=hr>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> In its state government, Virginia employs 106,143 public employees, who combined have a median income of $44,656 [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[85]](#cite_note-85)

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

[thumb|right|Ocean tourism is an important sector of](/wiki/File:Virginia_Beach_waterfront.jpg) [Virginia Beach's](/wiki/Virginia_Beach,_Virginia) economy.|alt=High-rise hotels line the ocean front covered with colorful beach-goers. Virginia has the highest concentration of technology workers of any state,[[86]](#cite_note-86) and the fourth-highest number of technology workers after [California](/wiki/California), [Texas](/wiki/Texas), and [New York](/wiki/New_York).[[87]](#cite_note-87) [Computer chips](/wiki/Integrated_circuit) became the state's highest-grossing export in 2006, surpassing its traditional top exports of coal and tobacco combined.<ref name=chips>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> [Northern Virginia](/wiki/Northern_Virginia), once considered the state's dairy capital, now hosts software, communication technology, defense contracting companies, particularly in the [Dulles Technology Corridor](/wiki/Dulles_Technology_Corridor).

The state has the highest average and peak Internet speeds in the United States, with the third-highest worldwide.[[88]](#cite_note-88) Northern Virginia's [data centers](/wiki/Data_center) can carry up to 70% of the nation's internet traffic,[[89]](#cite_note-89) with [Loudoun County](/wiki/Loudoun_County,_Virginia) alone home to as much data center space as [northern California](/wiki/Northern_California).[[90]](#cite_note-90)[[91]](#cite_note-91) Virginia companies received the fourth-highest amount of venture capital funding in the first half of 2011 after California, [Massachusetts](/wiki/Massachusetts), and New York.[[92]](#cite_note-92) In 2009, [*Forbes*](/wiki/Forbes) magazine named Virginia the best state in the nation for business for the fourth year in a row,[[93]](#cite_note-93) while [CNBC](/wiki/CNBC) named it the [top state for business](/wiki/America's_Top_States_For_Business) in 2007, 2009, and 2011.[[94]](#cite_note-94) Additionally, in 2014 a survey of 12,000 small business owners found Virginia to be one of the most friendly states for small businesses.[[95]](#cite_note-95) Virginia has 20 [Fortune 500](/wiki/Fortune_500) companies, ranking the state eighth nationwide.[[96]](#cite_note-96) [Tysons Corner](/wiki/Tysons_Corner) is one of the largest business districts in the nation.

Tourism in Virginia supported an estimated 210,000 jobs and generated $21.2 billion in 2012.[[97]](#cite_note-97) [Arlington County](/wiki/Arlington_County,_Virginia) is the top tourist destination in the state by domestic spending, followed by [Fairfax County](/wiki/Fairfax_County,_Virginia), [Loudoun County](/wiki/Loudoun_County,_Virginia), and [Virginia Beach](/wiki/Virginia_Beach,_Virginia).<ref name=fairfaxnarrowly>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

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

[thumb|U.S. Navy sailors unload oysters to help establish an](/wiki/File:US_Navy_100428-N-3154P-149_Sailors_assigned_to_Amphibious_Construction_Battalion_(ACB)_2,_use_heavy_machinery_to_load_oyster_shells_for_two_new_artificial_oyster_reef_sites_in_the_mud_flats_of_Little_Creek_Cove.jpg) [artificial oyster reef](/wiki/Artificial_reef). Virginia is the third largest producer of seafood in the nation, after [Alaska](/wiki/Alaska) and [Louisiana](/wiki/Louisiana).[[98]](#cite_note-98) Agriculture occupies 32% of the land in Virginia. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), about 357,000 Virginian jobs were in agriculture, with over 47,000 farms, averaging [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), in a total farmland area of 8.1 million acres (12,656 sq mi; 32,780 km2). Though agriculture has declined significantly since 1960 when there were twice as many farms, it remains the largest single industry in Virginia.[[99]](#cite_note-99) Tomatoes surpassed soy as the most profitable crop in Virginia in 2006, with peanuts and hay as other agricultural products.[[100]](#cite_note-100) Although it is no longer the primary crop, Virginia is still the fifth-largest producer of tobacco nationwide.[[101]](#cite_note-101) Virginia is the largest producer of seafood on the [East Coast](/wiki/East_Coast_of_the_United_States), with [scallops](/wiki/Scallop), [oysters](/wiki/Oyster), [blue crabs](/wiki/Blue_crab), and [clams](/wiki/Clam) as the largest seafood harvests by value, and [France](/wiki/France), [Canada](/wiki/Canada), and [Hong Kong](/wiki/Hong_Kong) as the top export destinations.[[98]](#cite_note-98)[[102]](#cite_note-102) [Eastern oyster](/wiki/Eastern_oyster) harvests have increased from 23,000 bushels in 2001 to over 500,000 in 2013.[[98]](#cite_note-98) Wineries and vineyards in the [Northern Neck](/wiki/Northern_Neck) and along the [Blue Ridge Mountains](/wiki/Blue_Ridge_Mountains) also have begun to generate income and attract tourists.<ref name=wine>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Virginia has the fifth-highest number of wineries in the nation.[[103]](#cite_note-103)

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

Virginia collects personal [income tax](/wiki/Income_tax) in five income brackets, ranging from 3.0% to 5.75%. The state sales and [use tax](/wiki/Use_tax) rate is 4.3%, while the tax rate on food is 1.5%. There is an additional 1% local tax, for a total of a 5.3% combined [sales tax](/wiki/Sales_tax) on most Virginia purchases and 2.5% on most food.[[104]](#cite_note-104) Virginia's [property tax](/wiki/Property_tax) is set and collected at the local government level and varies throughout the Commonwealth. Real estate is also taxed at the local level based on 100% of fair market value. Tangible personal property also is taxed at the local level and is based on a percentage or percentages of original cost.[[105]](#cite_note-105)

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Colonial Virginian culture, language, and style are reenacted in](/wiki/File:Colonial_Williamsburg_ladies.jpg) [Williamsburg](/wiki/Colonial_Williamsburg).|alt=Five women dressed in long colonial style clothing sit on the stairs of tan and beige buildings talking. In front of them is a wooden wheelbarrow full of wicker baskets. Virginia's culture was popularized and spread across America and the [South](/wiki/Southern_United_States) by figures such as [George Washington](/wiki/George_Washington), [Thomas Jefferson](/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson), and [Robert E. Lee](/wiki/Robert_E._Lee). Their homes in Virginia represent the birthplace of America and the South.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Modern Virginia culture has many sources, and is part of the [culture of the Southern United States](/wiki/Culture_of_the_Southern_United_States).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Smithsonian Institution](/wiki/Smithsonian_Institution) divides Virginia into nine cultural regions.[[106]](#cite_note-106) Besides the general [cuisine of the Southern United States](/wiki/Cuisine_of_the_Southern_United_States), Virginia maintains its own particular traditions. [Virginia wine](/wiki/Virginia_wine) is made in many parts of the state.<ref name=wine/> [Smithfield ham](/wiki/Smithfield_ham), sometimes called "Virginia ham", is a type of [country ham](/wiki/Country_ham) which is [protected by state law](/wiki/Geographical_indication), and can only be produced in the town of [Smithfield](/wiki/Smithfield,_Virginia).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Virginia furniture](/wiki/Virginia_furniture) and architecture are typical of [American colonial architecture](/wiki/American_colonial_architecture). Thomas Jefferson and many of the state's early leaders favored the [Neoclassical architecture](/wiki/Neoclassical_architecture) style, leading to its use for important state buildings. The [Pennsylvania Dutch](/wiki/Pennsylvania_Dutch) and their style can also be found in parts of the state.<ref name=dutch>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref>

Literature in Virginia often deals with the state's extensive and sometimes troubled past. The works of [Pulitzer Prize](/wiki/Pulitzer_Prize) winner [Ellen Glasgow](/wiki/Ellen_Glasgow) often dealt with social inequalities and the role of women in her culture.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Glasgow's peer and close friend [James Branch Cabell](/wiki/James_Branch_Cabell) wrote extensively about the changing position of gentry in the [Reconstruction era](/wiki/Reconstruction_era_of_the_United_States), and challenged its moral code with [*Jurgen, A Comedy of Justice*](/wiki/Jurgen,_A_Comedy_of_Justice).[[107]](#cite_note-107) [William Styron](/wiki/William_Styron) approached history in works such as [*The Confessions of Nat Turner*](/wiki/The_Confessions_of_Nat_Turner_(1967)) and [*Sophie's Choice*](/wiki/Sophie's_Choice_(novel)).[[108]](#cite_note-108) [Tom Wolfe](/wiki/Tom_Wolfe) has occasionally dealt with his southern heritage in bestsellers like [*I Am Charlotte Simmons*](/wiki/I_Am_Charlotte_Simmons).[[109]](#cite_note-109) [Mount Vernon](/wiki/Mount_Vernon,_Virginia) native [Matt Bondurant](/wiki/Matt_Bondurant) received critical acclaim for his [historic novel](/wiki/Historical_fiction) [*The Wettest County in the World*](/wiki/The_Wettest_County_in_the_World) about moonshiners in [Franklin County](/wiki/Franklin_County,_Virginia) during [prohibition](/wiki/Prohibition_in_the_United_States).[[110]](#cite_note-110) Virginia also names a [state Poet Laureate](/wiki/Poet_Laureate_of_Virginia), currently [Ron Smith](/wiki/Ron_Smith_(American_poet)) of [Richmond](/wiki/Richmond,_Virginia), who will serve until mid-2016.[[111]](#cite_note-111)

### Fine and performing arts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|The Meadow Pavilion is one of the theaters at](/wiki/File:Wolf_Trap_(national_park)_meadow_pavilion.jpg) [Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts](/wiki/Wolf_Trap_National_Park_for_the_Performing_Arts).|alt=A small, boxy, wooden stage with a trapezoidal overhang stands in the center of meadow. In the foreground is a running stream with a stone embankment. Rich in cultural heritage, Virginia however ranks near the bottom of U.S. states in terms of public spending on the arts, at nearly half of the national average.[[112]](#cite_note-112) The state government does fund some institutions, including the [Virginia Museum of Fine Arts](/wiki/Virginia_Museum_of_Fine_Arts) and the [Science Museum of Virginia](/wiki/Science_Museum_of_Virginia). Other museums include the popular [Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center](/wiki/Steven_F._Udvar-Hazy_Center) of the [National Air and Space Museum](/wiki/National_Air_and_Space_Museum) and the [Chrysler Museum of Art](/wiki/Chrysler_Museum_of_Art).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Besides these sites, many open-air museums are located in the Commonwealth, such as [Colonial Williamsburg](/wiki/Colonial_Williamsburg), the [Frontier Culture Museum](/wiki/Frontier_Culture_Museum_of_Virginia), and various historic battlefields.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Virginia Foundation for the Humanities](/wiki/Virginia_Foundation_for_the_Humanities) works to improve the Commonwealth's civic, cultural, and intellectual life.[[113]](#cite_note-113) Theaters and venues in the Commonwealth are found both in the cities and suburbs. The [Harrison Opera House](/wiki/Harrison_Opera_House), in [Norfolk](/wiki/Norfolk,_Virginia), is home of the [Virginia Opera](/wiki/Virginia_Opera). The [Virginia Symphony Orchestra](/wiki/Virginia_Symphony_Orchestra) operates in and around [Hampton Roads](/wiki/Hampton_Roads).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Resident and touring theater troupes operate from the [American Shakespeare Center](/wiki/American_Shakespeare_Center) in [Staunton](/wiki/Staunton,_Virginia).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [Barter Theatre](/wiki/Barter_Theatre), designated the State Theatre of Virginia, in [Abingdon](/wiki/Abingdon,_Virginia) won the first ever [Regional Theatre Tony Award](/wiki/Regional_Theatre_Tony_Award) in 1948, while the [Signature Theatre](/wiki/Signature_Theatre_(Arlington,_Virginia)) in [Arlington](/wiki/Arlington,_Virginia) won it in 2009. There's also a Children's Theater of Virginia, [Theatre IV](/wiki/Theatre_IV), which is the second largest touring troupe nationwide.[[114]](#cite_note-114) Virginia has launched many award-winning traditional musical artists and internationally successful popular music acts, as well as Hollywood actors.<ref name=factpack/> Virginia is known for its tradition in the music genres of [old-time string](/wiki/Old-time_music) and [bluegrass](/wiki/Bluegrass_music), with groups such as the [Carter Family](/wiki/Carter_Family) and [Stanley Brothers](/wiki/Stanley_Brothers), as well as [gospel](/wiki/Gospel_(music)), [blues](/wiki/Blues), and [shout bands](/wiki/Shout_band).[[115]](#cite_note-115) Contemporary Virginia is also known for [folk rock](/wiki/Folk_rock) artists like [Dave Matthews](/wiki/Dave_Matthews) and [Jason Mraz](/wiki/Jason_Mraz), [hip hop](/wiki/Hip_hop) stars like [Pharrell Williams](/wiki/Pharrell_Williams) and [Missy Elliott](/wiki/Missy_Elliott), as well as [thrash metal](/wiki/Thrash_metal) groups like [GWAR](/wiki/GWAR) and [Lamb of God](/wiki/Lamb_of_God_(band)).[[116]](#cite_note-116) Notable performance venues include [The Birchmere](/wiki/The_Birchmere), the [Landmark Theater](/wiki/Landmark_Theater_(Richmond,_Virginia)), and [Jiffy Lube Live](/wiki/Jiffy_Lube_Live).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts](/wiki/Wolf_Trap_National_Park_for_the_Performing_Arts) is located in [Vienna](/wiki/Vienna,_Virginia) and is the only national park intended for use as a performing arts center.<ref name=wolftrap>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb)</ref>

### Festivals[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[thumb|The annual](/wiki/File:Chincoteague_pony_swim_2007.jpg) [Chincoteague Pony](/wiki/Chincoteague_Pony) Swim features over 200 wild ponies swimming across the [Assateague Channel](/wiki/Assateague_Channel) into [Chincoteague](/wiki/Chincoteague,_Virginia).|alt=Dozens of brown and white ponies surge out of the shallow water onto a grassy shore crowded with onlookers. Many counties and localities host [county fairs](/wiki/County_fair) and festivals. The [Virginia State Fair](/wiki/Virginia_State_Fair) is held at the [Meadow Event Park](/wiki/Meadow_Event_Park) every September. Also in September is the [Neptune Festival](/wiki/Neptune_Festival) in [Virginia Beach](/wiki/Virginia_Beach,_Virginia), which celebrates the city, the waterfront, and regional artists. [Norfolk's Harborfest](/wiki/Norfolk,_Virginia#Parks_and_recreation), in June, features boat racing and [air shows](/wiki/Air_show).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Fairfax County](/wiki/Fairfax_County,_Virginia) also sponsors [Celebrate Fairfax!](/wiki/Celebrate_Fairfax!) with popular and traditional music performances.[[117]](#cite_note-117) The Virginia Lake Festival is held during the third weekend in July in [Clarksville](/wiki/Clarksville,_VA).[[118]](#cite_note-118) Wolf Trap hosts the [Wolf Trap Opera Company](/wiki/Wolf_Trap_Opera_Company), which produces an opera festival every summer.<ref name=wolftrap/> Each September, Bay Days celebrates the Chesapeake Bay as well as Hampton's 400-year history since 1610, and Isle of Wight County holds a County Fair on the second week of September as well. Both feature live music performances, and other unique events.

On the [Eastern Shore](/wiki/Eastern_Shore_of_Virginia) island of [Chincoteague](/wiki/Chincoteague,_Virginia) the annual Pony Swim & Auction of [feral](/wiki/Feral) [Chincoteague ponies](/wiki/Chincoteague_Pony) at the end of July is a unique local tradition expanded into a week-long carnival. The [Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival](/wiki/Shenandoah_Apple_Blossom_Festival) is a six-day festival held annually in [Winchester](/wiki/Winchester,_Virginia) that includes parades and [bluegrass](/wiki/Bluegrass_music) concerts. The [Old Time](/wiki/Old-time_music) Fiddlers' Convention in [Galax](/wiki/Galax,_Virginia), begun in 1935, is one of the oldest and largest such events worldwide. Two important film festivals, the [Virginia Film Festival](/wiki/Virginia_Film_Festival) and the [VCU French Film Festival](/wiki/VCU_French_Film_Festival), are held annually in [Charlottesville](/wiki/Charlottesville,_Virginia) and Richmond, respectively.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

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

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:USA_Today_building.jpg)[*USA Today*](/wiki/USA_Today), the nation's most circulated newspaper, has its headquarters in McLean.|alt=Two geometric all glass towers connected by a central atrium stand in front of a grassy walkway and under a dark and cloudy sky The [Hampton Roads](/wiki/Hampton_Roads) area is the 45th-largest [media market](/wiki/Media_market) in the United States as ranked by [Nielsen Media Research](/wiki/Nielsen_Media_Research), while the [Richmond-Petersburg](/wiki/Richmond-Petersburg) area is 57th and [Roanoke](/wiki/Roanoke,_Virginia)-[Lynchburg](/wiki/Lynchburg,_Virginia) is 66th [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[119]](#cite_note-119) Northern Virginia is part of the much larger Washington, D.C. media market.

There are 36 [television stations in Virginia](/wiki/List_of_television_stations_in_Virginia), representing each major [U.S. network](/wiki/List_of_United_States_over-the-air_television_networks), part of 42 stations which serve Virginia viewers.[[120]](#cite_note-120) More than 720 [FCC](/wiki/Federal_Communications_Commission)-licensed FM [radio](/wiki/Radio) [stations broadcast in Virginia](/wiki/List_of_radio_stations_in_Virginia), with about 300 such AM stations.[[121]](#cite_note-121)[[122]](#cite_note-122) The nationally available [Public Broadcasting Service](/wiki/Public_Broadcasting_Service) (PBS) is headquartered in [Arlington](/wiki/Arlington,_Virginia). Independent PBS affiliates exist throughout Virginia, and the Arlington PBS member station [WETA-TV](/wiki/WETA-TV) produces programs such as the [*PBS NewsHour*](/wiki/PBS_NewsHour) and [*Washington Week*](/wiki/Washington_Week).

The most circulated [native newspapers in the Commonwealth](/wiki/List_of_newspapers_in_Virginia) are [Norfolk's](/wiki/Norfolk,_Virginia) [*The Virginian-Pilot*](/wiki/The_Virginian-Pilot) (142,476 daily subscribers), the [*Richmond Times-Dispatch*](/wiki/Richmond_Times-Dispatch) (108,559), and [*The Roanoke Times*](/wiki/The_Roanoke_Times) (78,663), [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[123]](#cite_note-123) Several [Washington, D.C.](/wiki/Washington,_D.C.) papers are based in [Northern Virginia](/wiki/Northern_Virginia), such as [*The Washington Examiner*](/wiki/The_Washington_Examiner) and [*Politico*](/wiki/Politico_(newspaper)). The paper with the nation's widest circulation, [*USA Today*](/wiki/USA_Today), with 1.83 million daily subscriptions, is headquartered in [McLean](/wiki/McLean,_Virginia).[[124]](#cite_note-124) Besides traditional forms of media, Virginia is the home base for telecommunication companies such as [Voxant](/wiki/Voxant) and [XO Communications](/wiki/XO_Communications). In Northern Virginia, [*The Washington Post*](/wiki/The_Washington_Post) is the dominant newspaper, since Northern VA is located in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

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

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Rotunda-dusk.jpg) [University of Virginia](/wiki/University_of_Virginia), a [World Heritage Site](/wiki/World_Heritage_Site), was founded by President [Thomas Jefferson](/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson).[[125]](#cite_note-125)|alt=A red brick, Neoclassical dome with a large portico on the front and covered walkway on the sides lit up at dusk. Dark trees border the building on both sides. Virginia's educational system consistently ranks in the top ten states on the [U.S. Department of Education's](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Education) [National Assessment of Educational Progress](/wiki/National_Assessment_of_Educational_Progress), with Virginia students outperforming the average in all subject areas and grade levels tested.[[126]](#cite_note-126) The 2011 [*Quality Counts*](/wiki/Education_Week#Quality_Counts) report ranked Virginia's K–12 education fourth best in the country.[[127]](#cite_note-127) All school divisions must adhere to educational standards set forth by the [Virginia Department of Education](/wiki/Virginia_Department_of_Education), which maintains an assessment and accreditation regime known as the [Standards of Learning](/wiki/Standards_of_Learning) to ensure accountability.[[128]](#cite_note-128) In 2010, 85% of high school students graduated on-time after four years.[[129]](#cite_note-129) Between 2000 and 2008, school enrollment increased 5%, the number of teachers 21%.[[130]](#cite_note-130) [Public](/wiki/Public_school_(government_funded)) [K–12 schools](/wiki/K–12_(education)) in Virginia are generally operated by the counties and cities, and not by the state. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), a total of 1,267,063 students were enrolled in 1,873 local and regional schools in the Commonwealth, including three [charter schools](/wiki/Charter_school), and an additional 109 alternative and special education centers across 132 [school divisions](/wiki/List_of_school_divisions_in_Virginia).[[131]](#cite_note-131)[[132]](#cite_note-132) Besides the general public schools in Virginia, there are [Governor's Schools](/wiki/Governor's_Schools_(Virginia)) and selective [magnet schools](/wiki/Magnet_school). The Governor's Schools are a collection of more than 40 regional high schools and summer programs intended for gifted students.[[133]](#cite_note-133) The Virginia Council for Private Education oversees the regulation of 320 state accredited and 130 non-accredited private schools.[[134]](#cite_note-134)[[135]](#cite_note-135) An additional 24,682 students receive homeschooling.[[136]](#cite_note-136) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), there are 176 [colleges and universities in Virginia](/wiki/List_of_colleges_and_universities_in_Virginia).<ref name=nces>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> In the [*U.S. News & World Report*](/wiki/U.S._News_&_World_Report) ranking of public colleges, the [University of Virginia](/wiki/University_of_Virginia) is second, [The College of William & Mary](/wiki/The_College_of_William_&_Mary) is sixth, and [Virginia Tech](/wiki/Virginia_Tech) is 25th.[[137]](#cite_note-137)[[138]](#cite_note-138) [Virginia Commonwealth University](/wiki/Virginia_Commonwealth_University) is ranked the top public graduate school in fine arts, while [James Madison University](/wiki/James_Madison_University) has been recognized as the top regional public master's program in [The South](/wiki/Southern_United_States) since 1993.[[139]](#cite_note-139)[[140]](#cite_note-140) The [Virginia Military Institute](/wiki/Virginia_Military_Institute) is the oldest state [military college](/wiki/Military_academy) and a top ranked public [liberal arts college](/wiki/Liberal_arts_college).[[141]](#cite_note-141)[[142]](#cite_note-142) [George Mason University](/wiki/George_Mason_University) is the largest university in Virginia with over 32,000 students.[[143]](#cite_note-143) [Virginia Tech](/wiki/Virginia_Tech) and [Virginia State University](/wiki/Virginia_State_University) are the state's [land-grant universities](/wiki/Land-grant_university). Virginia also operates 23 [community colleges](/wiki/Virginia_Community_College_System) on 40 campuses serving over 260,000 students.[[144]](#cite_note-144) There are 129 private institutions, including [Hampton University](/wiki/Hampton_University), [Washington and Lee University](/wiki/Washington_and_Lee_University), [Randolph College](/wiki/Randolph_College), [Hampden–Sydney College](/wiki/Hampden–Sydney_College), [Emory & Henry College](/wiki/Emory_&_Henry_College), [Roanoke College](/wiki/Roanoke_College), the [University of Richmond](/wiki/University_of_Richmond), and [Randolph-Macon College](/wiki/Randolph-Macon_College).<ref name=nces/>

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

[thumb|The A.D. Williams Clinic and West Hospital at](/wiki/File:West_Hospital_Top.jpg) [VCU Medical Center](/wiki/VCU_Medical_Center) in Richmond|alt=A red brick high-rise building with several wings and levels in front of a bright blue sky. Virginia has a mixed health record, and is ranked as the 26th overall healthiest state according to the 2013 United Health Foundation's Health Rankings.<ref name=ahr>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Virginia also ranks 21st among the states in the rate of premature deaths, 6,816 per 100,000. In 2008, Virginia reached its lowest ever rate of [infant mortality](/wiki/Infant_mortality), at 6.7 deaths per 1,000.[[145]](#cite_note-145) There are however racial and social health disparities, in 2010 African Americans experienced 28% more premature deaths than whites, while 13% of Virginians lack any [health insurance](/wiki/Health_insurance). According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's](/wiki/Centers_for_Disease_Control_and_Prevention) 2009 survey, 26% of Virginians are obese and another 35% are overweight. 78% of residents claim to have exercised at least once in the past three months.[[146]](#cite_note-146)[[147]](#cite_note-147) About 30% of Virginia's 10- to 17-year-olds are overweight or obese.[[148]](#cite_note-148) Virginia banned smoking in bars and restaurants in January 2010.[[149]](#cite_note-149) 19% of Virginians smoke tobacco.<ref name=ahr/> Residents of [Virginia's 8th congressional district](/wiki/Virginia's_8th_congressional_district) share the longest average [life expectancy](/wiki/Life_expectancy) rate in the nation, over 83 years.[[150]](#cite_note-150) There are 89 [hospitals in Virginia](/wiki/List_of_hospitals_in_Virginia) listed with the [United States Department of Health and Human Services](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Health_and_Human_Services).[[151]](#cite_note-151) Notable examples include [Inova Fairfax Hospital](/wiki/Inova_Fairfax_Hospital), the largest hospital in the [Washington Metropolitan Area](/wiki/Washington_Metropolitan_Area), and the [VCU Medical Center](/wiki/VCU_Medical_Center), located on the medical campus of [Virginia Commonwealth University](/wiki/Virginia_Commonwealth_University). The University of Virginia Medical Center, part of the [University of Virginia Health System](/wiki/University_of_Virginia_Health_System), is highly ranked in [endocrinology](/wiki/Endocrinology) according to [*U.S.News & World Report*](/wiki/U.S.News_&_World_Report).[[152]](#cite_note-152) [Sentara Norfolk General Hospital](/wiki/Sentara_Norfolk_General_Hospital), part of the [Hampton Roads](/wiki/Hampton_Roads) based [Sentara Health System](/wiki/Sentara_Health_System) and a teaching institution of [Eastern Virginia Medical School](/wiki/Eastern_Virginia_Medical_School), was the site of the first successful [in-vitro fertilization](/wiki/In-vitro_fertilization) birth.[[153]](#cite_note-153)[[154]](#cite_note-154) Virginia has a ratio of 127 [primary care physicians](/wiki/Primary_care_physician) per 10,000 residents, which is the 16th highest nationally.<ref name=ahr/> Virginia was one of five states to receive a perfect score in disaster preparedness according to a 2008 report by the [Trust for America's Health](/wiki/Trust_for_America's_Health), based on criteria such as detecting pathogens and distributing vaccines and medical supplies.[[155]](#cite_note-155)

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

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|right|The](/wiki/File:In_Push_Mode.jpg) [Virginia Railway Express](/wiki/Virginia_Railway_Express) runs commuter lines in Northern Virginia.|alt=Blue and silver train engine with red and white accent lines moves closer leading a series of similarly colored passenger cars with shrubs and a sound wall in the background.

Because of the 1932 [Byrd Road Act](/wiki/Byrd_Road_Act), the state government controls most of Virginia's roads, instead of a local county authority as is usual in other states.[[156]](#cite_note-156) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), the [Virginia Department of Transportation](/wiki/Virginia_Department_of_Transportation) owns and operates [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of the total [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of roads in the state, making it the third largest state highway system in the United States.<ref name=vdot>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Although the Washington Metropolitan Area, which includes [Northern Virginia](/wiki/Northern_Virginia), has the second worst traffic in the nation, Virginia as a whole has the 21st-lowest congestion and the average commute time is 26.9 minutes.[[157]](#cite_note-157)[[158]](#cite_note-158) Virginia hit [peak car](/wiki/Peak_car) usage before the year 2000, making it one of the first such states.[[159]](#cite_note-159) Virginia has [Amtrak](/wiki/Amtrak) passenger rail service along several corridors, and [Virginia Railway Express](/wiki/Virginia_Railway_Express) (VRE) maintains two commuter lines into Washington, D.C. from [Fredericksburg](/wiki/Fredericksburg,_Virginia) and [Manassas](/wiki/Manassas,_Virginia). VRE is one of the nation's fastest growing commuter rail services, handling nearly 20,000 passengers a day.[[160]](#cite_note-160) The [Washington Metro](/wiki/Washington_Metro) rapid transit system serves Northern Virginia as far west as communities along I-66 in Fairfax County, with [expansion plans](/wiki/Silver_Line_(Washington_Metro)) to reach [Loudoun County](/wiki/Loudoun_County,_Virginia) by 2017.[[161]](#cite_note-161) Major freight railroads in Virginia include [Norfolk Southern](/wiki/Norfolk_Southern) and [CSX Transportation](/wiki/CSX_Transportation). Commuter buses include the [Fairfax Connector](/wiki/Fairfax_Connector) and the [Shenandoah Valley Commuter Bus](/wiki/Shenandoah_Valley_Commuter_Bus). The Virginia Department of Transportation operates several free ferries throughout Virginia, the most notable being the Jamestown-Scotland ferry which crosses the James River in [Surry County](/wiki/Surry_County,_Virginia).[[162]](#cite_note-162) Virginia has five major airports: [Washington Dulles International](/wiki/Washington_Dulles_International_Airport) and [Reagan Washington National](/wiki/Ronald_Reagan_Washington_National_Airport) in Northern Virginia, both of which handle over 20 million passengers a year; [Richmond International](/wiki/Richmond_International_Airport); and [Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport](/wiki/Newport_News/Williamsburg_International_Airport) and [Norfolk International](/wiki/Norfolk_International_Airport) serving the Hampton Roads area. Several other airports offer limited commercial passenger service, and sixty-six public airports serve the state's aviation needs.[[163]](#cite_note-163) The [Virginia Port Authority's](/wiki/Virginia_Port_Authority) main seaports are those in [Hampton Roads](/wiki/Hampton_Roads), which carried [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of bulk cargo in 2007, the sixth most of United States ports.[[164]](#cite_note-164) The [Eastern Shore of Virginia](/wiki/Eastern_Shore_of_Virginia) is the site of [Wallops Flight Facility](/wiki/Wallops_Flight_Facility), a rocket testing center owned by [NASA](/wiki/NASA), and the [Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport](/wiki/Mid-Atlantic_Regional_Spaceport), a commercial spaceport.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[165]](#cite_note-165) [Space tourism](/wiki/Space_tourism) is also offered through [Vienna](/wiki/Vienna,_Virginia)-based [Space Adventures](/wiki/Space_Adventures).[[166]](#cite_note-166)

## Law and government[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Va_State_Capitol.JPG) [Virginia State Capitol](/wiki/Virginia_State_Capitol), designed by [Thomas Jefferson](/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson) and begun by Governor [Patrick Henry](/wiki/Patrick_Henry) in 1785, is home to the [Virginia General Assembly](/wiki/Virginia_General_Assembly).|alt=All white Neoclassical building with pediment and six columns rises on a grassy hill with a large American elm tree in the left foreground. Two boxier, but similarly styled wings are attached at the building's rear. In colonial Virginia, free men elected the lower house of the legislature, called the [House of Burgesses](/wiki/House_of_Burgesses), which together with the Governor's Council, made the "General Assembly". Founded in 1619, the [Virginia General Assembly](/wiki/Virginia_General_Assembly) is still in existence as the oldest legislature in the Western Hemisphere.<ref name=burgesses>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> In 2008, the government was ranked by the [Pew Center on the States](/wiki/Pew_Research_Center) with an A− in terms of its efficiency, effectiveness, and infrastructure, tied with [Utah](/wiki/Utah) and [Washington](/wiki/Washington_(state)). This was the second consecutive time that Virginia received the highest grade in the nation.<ref name=pew>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

Since 1971, the government has functioned under the seventh [Constitution of Virginia](/wiki/Constitution_of_Virginia), which provides for a strong legislature and a unified judicial system. Similar to the [federal structure](/wiki/Federal_government_of_the_United_States), the government is divided in [three branches](/wiki/Separation_of_powers): legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislature is the [General Assembly](/wiki/Virginia_General_Assembly), a bicameral body whose 100-member [House of Delegates](/wiki/Virginia_House_of_Delegates) and 40-member [Senate](/wiki/Senate_of_Virginia) write the laws for the Commonwealth. The Assembly is stronger than the executive, as it selects judges and justices. The Governor and [Lieutenant Governor](/wiki/Lieutenant_Governor_of_Virginia) are elected every four years in separate elections. Incumbent [governors](/wiki/List_of_Virginia_Governors) cannot run for re-election, however the Lieutenant Governor and [Attorney General](/wiki/Attorney_General_of_Virginia) can, and governors may serve non-consecutive terms.<ref name=constitution>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref> The judicial system, the oldest in America, consists of a hierarchy from the [Supreme Court of Virginia](/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_Virginia) and the [Court of Appeals of Virginia](/wiki/Court_of_Appeals_of_Virginia) to the [Circuit Courts](/wiki/Virginia_Circuit_Court), the trial courts of general jurisdiction, and the lower [General District Courts](/wiki/Virginia_General_District_Court) and [Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts](/wiki/Virginia_Juvenile_and_Domestic_Relations_District_Court).[[167]](#cite_note-167) The [Code of Virginia](/wiki/Code_of_Virginia) is the statutory law, and consists of the codified legislation of the General Assembly. The [Virginia State Police](/wiki/Virginia_State_Police) is the largest [law enforcement agency in Virginia](/wiki/List_of_law_enforcement_agencies_in_Virginia). The [Virginia Capitol Police](/wiki/Virginia_Capitol_Police) is the oldest police department in the United States.[[168]](#cite_note-168) The [Virginia National Guard](/wiki/Virginia_National_Guard) consists of 7,500 soldiers in the [Virginia Army National Guard](/wiki/Virginia_Army_National_Guard) and 1,200 airmen in the [Virginia Air National Guard](/wiki/Virginia_Air_National_Guard).[[169]](#cite_note-169) Since the resumption of [capital punishment in Virginia](/wiki/Capital_punishment_in_Virginia) in 1982, [107 people have been executed](/wiki/List_of_individuals_executed_in_Virginia), the second highest number in the nation.[[170]](#cite_note-170) The "total crime risk" is 28% lower than the national average.<ref name=quick>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Since Virginia ended prisoner parole in 1995, the rate of [recidivism](/wiki/Recidivism) has fallen to 28.3%, among the lowest nationwide.[[171]](#cite_note-171) Virginia is an [open-carry state](/wiki/Open_carry_in_the_United_States).

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

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Presidential elections results**[[172]](#cite_note-172) | | |
| **Year** | [**Republicans**](/wiki/Republican_Party_(United_States)) | [**Democrats**](/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)) |
| [2012](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_in_Virginia,_2012) | 47.28% *1,822,522* | **51.16%** *1,971,820* |
| [2008](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_in_Virginia,_2008) | 46.33% *1,725,005* | **52.63%** *1,959,532* |
| [2004](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_in_Virginia,_2004) | **53.68%** *1,716,959* | 45.48% *1,454,742* |
| [2000](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_in_Virginia,_2000) | **52.47%** *1,437,490* | 44.44% *1,217,290* |
| [1996](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_in_Virginia,_1996) | **47.10%** *1,138,350* | 45.15% *1,091,060* |
| [1992](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_in_Virginia,_1992) | **44.97%** *1,150,517* | 40.59% *1,038,650* |
| [1988](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_in_Virginia,_1988) | **59.74%** *1,309,162* | 39.23% *859,799* |
| [1984](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_in_Virginia,_1984) | **62.29%** *1,337,078* | 37.09% *796,250* |
| [1980](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1980) | **53.03%** *989,609* | 40.31% *752,174* |
|  |  |  |

Over the 20th century, Virginia shifted from a largely rural, [politically Southern](/wiki/Politics_of_the_Southern_United_States) and conservative state to a more urbanized, pluralistic, and politically moderate environment. Up until the 1970s, Virginia was a racially divided [one-party state](/wiki/One-party_state) dominated by the [Byrd Organization](/wiki/Byrd_Organization).[[173]](#cite_note-173) The [legacy of slavery in the state](/wiki/History_of_slavery_in_Virginia) effectively [disfranchised](/wiki/Disfranchisement) African Americans until after passage of civil rights legislation in the mid-1960s.[[174]](#cite_note-174) Enfranchisement and immigration of other groups, especially Hispanics, have placed growing importance on minority voting,[[175]](#cite_note-175) while voters that identify as "white working-class" declined by three percent between 2008 and 2012.<ref name=obama12/> Regional differences play a large part in Virginia politics.[[176]](#cite_note-176) Rural southern and western areas moved to support the [Republican Party](/wiki/Republican_Party_(United_States)) in response to its "[southern strategy](/wiki/Southern_strategy)", while urban and growing suburban areas, including much of [Northern Virginia](/wiki/Northern_Virginia), form the [Democratic Party](/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)) [base](/wiki/Base_(politics)).[[177]](#cite_note-177)[[178]](#cite_note-178) Democratic support also persists in union-influenced [Roanoke](/wiki/Roanoke,_Virginia) in [Southwest Virginia](/wiki/Southwest_Virginia), college towns such as [Charlottesville](/wiki/Charlottesville,_Virginia) and [Blacksburg](/wiki/Blacksburg,_Virginia), and the southeastern [Black Belt Region](/wiki/Black_Belt_Region).[[179]](#cite_note-179) [Political party strength in Virginia](/wiki/Political_party_strength_in_Virginia) has likewise been in flux. In the [2007 state elections](/wiki/Virginia_state_elections,_2007), Democrats regained control of the [State Senate](/wiki/Senate_of_Virginia), and narrowed the Republican majority in the [House of Delegates](/wiki/Virginia_House_of_Delegates) to eight seats.[[180]](#cite_note-180) Yet [elections in 2009](/wiki/Virginia_elections,_2009) resulted in the election of Republican [Bob McDonnell](/wiki/Bob_McDonnell) as [Governor](/wiki/Governor_of_Virginia) by a seventeen-point margin, the election of a Republican [Lieutenant Governor](/wiki/Lieutenant_Governor_of_Virginia) and [Attorney General](/wiki/Attorney_General_of_Virginia), as well as Republican gains of six seats in the House of Delegates.[[181]](#cite_note-181) In 2011, the Republican caucus took over two-thirds (68–32) of the seats in the House of Delegates, and a majority of the Senate based on the Lieutenant Governor [Bill Bolling](/wiki/Bill_Bolling) as the tie-breaker.[[182]](#cite_note-182) Following the [2013 elections](/wiki/Virginia_elections,_2013), Democrat [Terry McAuliffe](/wiki/Terry_McAuliffe) was elected Governor by two percentage points,[[183]](#cite_note-183)[[184]](#cite_note-184) and Democrat [Ralph Northam](/wiki/Ralph_Northam) was elected Lieutenant Governor by double digits.[[185]](#cite_note-185)[[186]](#cite_note-186) Republicans, however, maintained their super-majority (68–32) in the House of Delegates.[[185]](#cite_note-185)[[187]](#cite_note-187) State election seasons traditionally start with the annual [Shad Planking](/wiki/Shad_Planking) event in [Wakefield](/wiki/Wakefield,_Virginia).[[188]](#cite_note-188) In federal elections since 2006, both parties have seen successes. Republican Senator [George Allen](/wiki/George_Allen_(U.S._politician)) lost close races in [2006](/wiki/Virginia_United_States_Senate_election,_2006), to Democratic newcomer [Jim Webb](/wiki/Jim_Webb), and again in [2012](/wiki/United_States_Senate_election_in_Virginia,_2012), to Webb's replacement, former Governor [Tim Kaine](/wiki/Tim_Kaine).[[189]](#cite_note-189) In [2008](/wiki/United_States_Senate_election_in_Virginia,_2008), Democrats won both [United States Senate](/wiki/United_States_Senate) seats; former Governor [Mark Warner](/wiki/Mark_Warner) was elected to replace retiring Republican [John Warner](/wiki/John_Warner).[[190]](#cite_note-190) The state went Republican in 11 out of 12 [presidential elections](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election) from 1948 to 2004, including 10 in a row from 1968 to 2004. However, Democrat [Barack Obama](/wiki/Barack_Obama) carried Virginia's 13 [electoral votes](/wiki/Electoral_College_(United_States)) in both the [2008](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2008) and [2012](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2012) presidential elections.<ref name=obama12>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> In the [2010 elections](/wiki/Virginia_elections,_2010), Republicans won three [United States House of Representatives](/wiki/United_States_House_of_Representatives) seats from the Democrats. Of the state's [eleven seats](/wiki/List_of_United_States_Representatives_from_Virginia) in the House of Representatives, Republicans hold eight and Democrats hold three. Virginia is considered a "[swing state](/wiki/Swing_state)" in future presidential elections.<ref name=purple>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news) </ref>

## Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|alt=A receiver dressed in white with maroon and orange stripes is tackled by an opposing player in black and red.|The](/wiki/File:Greg_Stroman_at_the_2014_Military_Bowl.jpg) [Virginia Tech Hokies football](/wiki/Virginia_Tech_Hokies_football) team has the second-longest [bowl game streak](/wiki/List_of_Virginia_Tech_Hokies_bowl_games) in the nation.[[191]](#cite_note-191) Virginia is the most populous U.S. state without a [major professional sports league](/wiki/Major_professional_sports_leagues_in_the_United_States_and_Canada) franchise.[[192]](#cite_note-192) The reasons for this include the lack of any dominant city or market within the state, the proximity of [teams in Washington, D.C.](/wiki/Sports_in_Washington,_D.C.) and [North Carolina](/wiki/Sports_in_North_Carolina), and a reluctance to publicly finance stadiums.[[193]](#cite_note-193)[[194]](#cite_note-194) [Norfolk](/wiki/Norfolk,_Virginia) is host to two minor league teams: The [AAA](/wiki/Triple-A_(baseball)) [Norfolk Tides](/wiki/Norfolk_Tides) and the [ECHL's](/wiki/ECHL) [Norfolk Admirals](/wiki/Norfolk_Admirals_(ECHL)). The [San Francisco Giants'](/wiki/San_Francisco_Giants) [AA team](/wiki/Double-A_(baseball)), the [Richmond Flying Squirrels](/wiki/Richmond_Flying_Squirrels), began play at [The Diamond](/wiki/The_Diamond_(Richmond,_Virginia)) in 2010, replacing the AAA [Richmond Braves](/wiki/Richmond_Braves), who relocated after 2008.[[195]](#cite_note-195) Additionally, the [Washington Nationals](/wiki/Washington_Nationals), [Boston Red Sox](/wiki/Boston_Red_Sox), [Seattle Mariners](/wiki/Seattle_Mariners), [Chicago White Sox](/wiki/Chicago_White_Sox), and [Atlanta Braves](/wiki/Atlanta_Braves) also have Single-A and Rookie-level [farm teams](/wiki/Farm_team) in Virginia.[[196]](#cite_note-196) The [Washington Redskins](/wiki/Washington_Redskins) have Redskins Park, their headquarters, in [Ashburn](/wiki/Ashburn,_Virginia) and their training facility is in Richmond,[[197]](#cite_note-197) and the [Washington Capitals](/wiki/Washington_Capitals) train at [Kettler Capitals Iceplex](/wiki/Kettler_Capitals_Iceplex) in [Ballston](/wiki/Ballston,_Arlington,_Virginia). Virginia has many professional caliber golf courses including the [Greg Norman](/wiki/Greg_Norman) course at Lansdowne Resort and Kingsmill Resort, home of the [Kingsmill Championship](/wiki/Kingsmill_Championship), an [LPGA Tour](/wiki/LPGA_Tour) tournament. [NASCAR](/wiki/NASCAR) currently schedules [Sprint Cup](/wiki/Sprint_Cup_Series) races on two tracks in Virginia: [Martinsville Speedway](/wiki/Martinsville_Speedway) and [Richmond International Raceway](/wiki/Richmond_International_Raceway). Virginia natives currently competing in the series include [Denny Hamlin](/wiki/Denny_Hamlin) and [Elliott Sadler](/wiki/Elliott_Sadler).[[198]](#cite_note-198) Virginia does not allow state appropriated funds to be used for either operational or capital expenses for intercollegiate athletics.[[199]](#cite_note-199) Despite this, both the [Virginia Cavaliers](/wiki/Virginia_Cavaliers) and [Virginia Tech Hokies](/wiki/Virginia_Tech_Hokies) have been able to field competitive teams in the [Atlantic Coast Conference](/wiki/Atlantic_Coast_Conference) and maintain modern facilities. [Their rivalry](/wiki/Virginia-Virginia_Tech_rivalry) is followed statewide. [Twelve other universities](/wiki/List_of_college_athletic_programs_in_Virginia) compete in [NCAA](/wiki/National_Collegiate_Athletic_Association) [Division I](/wiki/NCAA_Division_I), particularly in the [Atlantic 10 Conference](/wiki/Atlantic_10_Conference), [Big South Conference](/wiki/Big_South_Conference), and [Colonial Athletic Association](/wiki/Colonial_Athletic_Association). Three [historically black schools](/wiki/Historically_black_colleges_and_universities) compete in the Division II [Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association](/wiki/Central_Intercollegiate_Athletic_Association), and two others compete in the Division I [Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference](/wiki/Mid-Eastern_Athletic_Conference). Several smaller schools compete in the [Old Dominion Athletic Conference](/wiki/Old_Dominion_Athletic_Conference) and the [USA South Athletic Conference](/wiki/USA_South_Athletic_Conference) of NCAA Division III. The NCAA currently holds its [Division III](/wiki/Division_III_(NCAA)) [championships in football](/wiki/NCAA_Division_III_national_football_championship), men's basketball, volleyball and softball in [Salem](/wiki/Salem,_Virginia).[[200]](#cite_note-200)

## State symbols[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The Virginia welcome sign at the Virginia welcome center on](/wiki/File:Virginia_new_sign.jpg) [I-95](/wiki/Interstate_95) employs the state bird, the [cardinal](/wiki/Northern_cardinal), and the state tree and flower, the [dogwood](/wiki/Cornus_florida).|alt=A large square metal sign, mostly white, with the words Virginia Welcomes You in blue and red. In the center a red cardinal bird sits on a branch with two white flowers around it. The state nickname is its oldest symbol, though it has never been made official by law. Virginia was given the title "[Dominion](/wiki/Dominion)" by King [Charles II of England](/wiki/Charles_II_of_England) at the time of [The Restoration](/wiki/The_Restoration), because it had remained loyal to the crown during the [English Civil War](/wiki/English_Civil_War), and the present moniker, "Old Dominion" is a reference to that title. Charles' supporters were called [Cavaliers](/wiki/Cavalier), and "The Cavalier State" nickname was popularized after the [American Civil War](/wiki/American_Civil_War) to romanticize the antebellum period. Sports teams from the [University of Virginia](/wiki/University_of_Virginia) are called the [Cavaliers](/wiki/Virginia_Cavaliers).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The other nickname, "Mother of Presidents", is also historic, as eight Virginians have served as [President of the United States](/wiki/Lists_of_United_States_Presidents_by_place_of_birth#By_state_of_birth), including four of the first five.<ref name=factpack/>

The state's motto, [*Sic Semper Tyrannis*](/wiki/Sic_semper_tyrannis), translates from Latin as "Thus Always to Tyrants", and is used on the state seal, which is then used on the flag. While the seal was designed in 1776, and the flag was first used in the 1830s, both were made official in 1930.<ref name=factpack>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The majority of the other symbols were made official in the late 20th century.[[201]](#cite_note-201) The [Virginia reel](/wiki/Virginia_reel_(dance)) is among the [square dances](/wiki/Square_dance) classified as the [state dance](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_dances).<ref name=eov/> In March 2015, after 20 years without a [state song](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_songs), Virginia received two: "[Our Great Virginia](/wiki/Our_Great_Virginia)" (official traditional state song) and "[Sweet Virginia Breeze](/wiki/Sweet_Virginia_Breeze)" (official popular state song).[[202]](#cite_note-202) In 1940, Virginia made "[Carry Me Back to Old Virginny](/wiki/Carry_Me_Back_to_Old_Virginny)" the state song, but it was retired in 1997 and reclassified as the state song emeritus.[[203]](#cite_note-203){|border="0" style="margin:auto;" |- |valign="top"|

* [Mammal](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_mammals): [Virginia big-eared bat](/wiki/Virginia_big-eared_bat)
* [Beverage](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_beverages): [Milk](/wiki/Milk)
* [Boat](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_ships): [Chesapeake Bay deadrise](/wiki/Chesapeake_Bay_deadrise)
* [Bird](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_birds): [Cardinal](/wiki/Northern_cardinal)

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* [Dance](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_dances): [Square dancing](/wiki/Square_dance) [Dog](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_mammals): [American Foxhound](/wiki/American_Foxhound)
* [Fish](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_fish): [Brook trout](/wiki/Brook_trout), [striped bass](/wiki/Striped_bass)
* [Flower](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_flowers)/[Tree](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_trees): [Dogwood](/wiki/Cornus_florida)

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* [Fossil](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_fossils): [*Chesapecten jeffersonius*](/wiki/Chesapecten_jeffersonius)
* [Insect](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_insects): [Tiger swallowtail](/wiki/Papilio_glaucus)
* [Motto](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_mottos): [Sic Semper Tyrannis](/wiki/Sic_semper_tyrannis)
* [Nickname](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_nicknames): The Old Dominion

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* [Shell](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_shells): [Eastern oyster](/wiki/Eastern_oyster)
* Slogan: [Virginia is for Lovers](/wiki/Virginia_is_for_Lovers)
* [Songs](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_songs): "[Our Great Virginia](/wiki/Our_Great_Virginia)", "[Sweet Virginia Breeze](/wiki/Sweet_Virginia_Breeze)"
* [Tartan](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_tartans): [Virginia Quadricentennial](/wiki/Virginia_Quadricentennial_Tartan)

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## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

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

* [National Register of Historic Places listings in Virginia](/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Virginia)
* [History of Virginia](/wiki/History_of_Virginia)
* [History of Virginia on stamps](/wiki/History_of_Virginia_on_stamps)
* [Virginia in the American Civil War](/wiki/Virginia_in_the_American_Civil_War)

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## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

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## Bibliography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Encyclopedia Virginia](http://encyclopediavirginia.org/about)

Government

* [State Government website](http://portal.virginia.gov/)
* [Virginia General Assembly](http://virginiageneralassembly.gov/)
* [Virginia's Judicial system](http://www.courts.state.va.us/)
* [Constitution of Virginia](http://legis.state.va.us/Laws/search/Constitution.htm)
* [Virginia State and County Government Websites](http://www.mycountycourthouse.com/virginia/)

Tourism and recreation

* [Virginia Tourism Website](http://www.virginia.org/)
* [Virginia State Parks](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/state_park.shtml)
* [Virginia Main Street Communities Travel](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/VAmainstreet/)

Culture and history

* [Virginia Historical Society](http://www.vahistorical.org/)
* [Virginia's First People](http://virginiaindians.pwnet.org/index.php)
* [WPA Guide to the Old Dominion](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/VAGuide/frame.html)
* [Library of Virginia](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/)

Maps and Demographics

* [USGS geographic resources of Virginia](http://www.usgs.gov/state/state.asp?State=VA)
* [Virginia State Climatology Office](http://climate.virginia.edu/)
* [Virginia State Facts from USDA, Economic Research Service](http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/state-fact-sheets/state-data.aspx?StateFIPS=51&StateName=Virginia#.U8BDivldUeo)
* [Template:Osmrelation](/wiki/Template:Osmrelation)

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