

## Life in the USA: US Regions and US States

The United States covers over 9 million square kilometers, so it is not surprising to learn that the regions which are separated by large distances can be very different. There are great differences in climate and landscape, and also in the people who live in these regions. The fifty states of the United States can be divided into six separate regions which are described below.

### 1) The Northeast

- Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island

The first immigrants (or settlers) to the United States came to the Northeast region in the 17th century. These were mostly English Protestants, looking for freedom to practice their religion and political reform. Because the winters are cold and harsh, and the land not very flat or fertile, this region is not well suited for farming. Eventually manufacturing and trade became the most important contributors to the regional economy. This region is well known for its culture (with excellent theaters and museums) as well as its educational system (with some of the most highly rated and respected universities in the country). This region is also known for its mix of ethnic groups, including Irish, Italian, and many eastern Europeans.

### 2) The Middle Atlantic (or Mid-Atlantic)

- New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Washington, DC, and Maryland

The first settlers in this region were more diverse than in the Northeast. Not only were English Protestants included, but also English Catholics, Dutch, and Swedes. Although the weather is not quite as cold, farming was still difficult, so manufacturing and shipping became the dominant industries. Some of the most highly populated American cities (including the largest, New York City) are located in the Mid Atlantic, as is the nation's capital (Washington, DC). Today finance, communications, and pharmaceuticals are some of the most important industries in the region.

### 3) The South

- Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and parts of Missouri, Texas and Oklahoma

The first southerners were English Protestants, like the northeasterners, but they were less independent and revolutionary in their nature. With temperate weather and sprawling lands, the south was very conducive to farming and soon agriculture became the primary industry. Southerners are probably the most distinctive of all American regional groups, with more relaxed attitudes and traditional ways than their neighbors to the north. They are known for their hospitality. The climate and the landscape have led this region to become popular with American tourists, and also with retirees. Today farming has become less prominent, and manufacturing and tourism have contributed greatly to the economy.

#### 4) The Midwest

- Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, parts of Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska and eastern Colorado

The Midwest is the largest of the regions, with the most variation in weather. However, the land is almost entirely flat, and also very fertile, making it ideal for farming. The region is known as the nation's "breadbasket" because of its abundant production of oats, wheat, and corn. The first immigrants were Americans from the east coast, as well as Europeans from Sweden, Norway, and Germany. Midwesterners are known for being honest, straightforward people of traditional values. The area is not densely populated, with fewer big cities than its neighbors to the east. The largest city is Chicago, known for its port, and for being a connection (through railroad lines and airline hubs) between the eastern and western United States.

#### 5) The Southwest

- western Texas, parts of Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada

This region has had the least influence by European immigrants. Much of its culture has been defined by Native Americans (also known as American Indians) and by the Spanish (most of the Southwest previously belonged to Mexico). The land is generally flat and dry, and the weather is very hot. The region has many deserts. The nation's greatest natural wonder, the Grand Canyon, is located in this region. Also located here is Las Vegas, one of the world's premier gambling centers.

#### 6) The West

- western Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Utah, California, Nevada, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii

The first settlers in the West were the Spanish who established Catholic missions along the coast. This region has probably the most variation in landscape and climate. Mountain chains run from north to south, creating temperate, wet areas to the west, and harsher, drier areas to the east. This region contains much undeveloped land which is enjoyed by the locals for recreation. The west has the most varied mixture of immigrants of all the other regions. In some areas, Mexican and Asian influences are dominant over European influences. Westerners are known as the least traditional of Americans, and the most tolerant of change and differences. California is the nation's most populous state, and is famous for its movie and high-technology industries.

Adapted from: <http://www.usastudyguide.com/regionaldifferences.htm>