

United States

United States of America



Flag



Great Seal

Motto

"In God We Trust" (since 1956)

"*E Pluribus Unum*" ("From Many, One"; Latin, traditional)

Anthem

"The Star-Spangled Banner"



Capital Washington, D.C.

Largest city New York City

National language English (*de facto*)¹

Demonym American

Government Federal constitutional republic

President George W. Bush (R)

Vice President Dick Cheney (R)

Speaker of The House Nancy Pelosi (D)

History

The **United States of America** is a [federal constitutional republic](#) comprising [fifty states](#), one [federal district](#), and [fourteen territories](#). The country is situated almost entirely in the [western hemisphere](#): its forty-eight [contiguous states](#) and [Washington, D.C.](#), the capital district, lie in central North America between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, bordered by [Canada to the north](#) and [Mexico to the south](#); the state of [Alaska](#) is in the northwest of the continent with Canada to its east, and the state of [Hawaii](#) is in the mid-Pacific. U.S. territories, or [insular areas](#), are scattered around the Caribbean and Pacific.

At 3.7 million square miles (9.6 million km²) and with over 300 million people, the United States is the [third or fourth](#) largest country by total area, and third largest by land area and [population](#).^[4] The United States is one of the world's most ethnically diverse nations, the product of large-scale [immigration from many countries](#).^[5] Its national economy is the largest in the world, with a nominal 2006 [gross domestic product](#) (GDP) of more than [US\\$13 trillion](#).^[2]

The nation was founded by [thirteen colonies](#) of [Great Britain](#) located along the [Atlantic seaboard](#). Proclaiming themselves "states," they issued the [Declaration of Independence](#) on [July 4, 1776](#). The rebellious states defeated Britain in the [American Revolutionary War](#), the first successful [colonial war of independence](#).^[6] A [federal convention](#) adopted the current [United States Constitution](#) on [September 17, 1787](#); its ratification the following year made the states part of a single republic. The [Bill of Rights](#), comprising ten [constitutional amendments](#), was ratified in 1791. In the nineteenth century, the United States acquired land from France, Spain, Mexico, and Russia, and annexed the [Republic of Texas](#) and the [Republic of Hawaii](#). The [American Civil War](#) ended [slavery in the United States](#) and prevented a permanent split of the country. The [Spanish-American War](#) and [World War I](#) confirmed its status as a military power. In 1945, the United States emerged from [World War II](#) as the [first country with nuclear weapons](#) and a permanent member of the [United Nations Security Council](#). The sole remaining [superpower](#) in the post-[Cold War](#) era, it is the dominant economic, political, cultural, and military force in the world.^[7]

The [indigenous peoples](#) of the U.S. mainland, including [Alaska](#), [migrated from Asia](#). They began arriving at least 12,000 and as many as 40,000 years ago.^[20] Several indigenous communities in the [pre-Columbian](#) era developed advanced agriculture, grand architecture, and state-level societies. European explorer [Christopher Columbus](#) arrived at [Puerto Rico](#) on [November 19, 1493](#), making [first](#)

[contact](#) with the Native Americans. In the years that followed, the majority of the Native American population was killed by epidemics of [Eurasian](#) diseases.^[21]



The [Mayflower](#) in Plymouth Harbor, by William Halsall, 1882. The *Mayflower* transported [Pilgrims](#) to the New World in 1620.

Spaniards established the earliest European colonies on the mainland, in the area they named Florida; of these, only [St. Augustine](#), founded in 1565, remains. Later Spanish settlements in the present-day [southwestern United States](#) drew thousands through Mexico. French fur traders established outposts of [New France](#) around the Great Lakes; France eventually claimed much of the North American interior as far south as the Gulf of Mexico. The first successful British settlements were the [Virginia Colony](#) in [Jamestown](#) in 1607 and the [Pilgrims' Plymouth Colony](#) in 1620. The 1628 chartering of the [Massachusetts Bay Colony](#) resulted in a wave of migration; by 1634, [New England](#) had been settled by some 10,000 [Puritans](#). Between the late 1610s and the revolution, the British shipped an estimated 50,000 convicts to its American colonies.^[22] Beginning in 1614, the Dutch established settlements along the lower [Hudson River](#), including [New Amsterdam](#) on [Manhattan Island](#). The small settlement of [New Sweden](#), founded along the [Delaware River](#) in 1638, was taken over by the Dutch in 1655.

In the [French and Indian War](#), the colonial extension of the [Seven Years War](#), Britain seized Canada from the French, but the [francophone](#) population remained politically isolated from the southern colonies. By 1674, the British had won the former Dutch colonies in the [Anglo-Dutch Wars](#); the province of [New Netherland](#) was renamed [New York](#). With the 1729 division of the [Carolinas](#) and the 1732 colonization of [Georgia](#), the thirteen British colonies that would become the United States of America were established. All had active local and colonial governments with elections open to most free men, with a growing devotion to the ancient [rights of Englishmen](#) and a sense of self government that stimulated support for [republicanism](#). All had legalized the [African slave trade](#). With high birth rates, low death rates, and steady immigration, the colonies doubled in population every twenty-five years. The Christian [revivalist](#) movement of the 1730s and 1740s known as the [Great Awakening](#) fueled interest in both religion and religious liberty. By 1770, the colonies had an increasingly [Anglicized](#)

population of three million, approximately half that of Britain itself. Though [subject to British taxation](#), they were given no representation in the [Parliament of Great Britain](#).



The formerly [endangered bald eagle](#), the [national bird](#) of the United States.

New York

State of New York



Flag of New York



Seal

Nickname(s): The Empire State

Motto(s): Excelsior!



Official language(s)	None
Capital	Albany
Largest city	New York City
Largest metro area	New York metropolitan area
Area	Ranked 27 th
- Total	54,520 sq mi (141,205 km ²)
- Width	285 miles (455 km)
- Length	330 miles (530 km)
Population	Ranked 3 rd
- Total (2000)	18,976,457
- Density	401.92/sq mi 155.18/km ² (6 th)

Time zone	Eastern: UTC-5/-4
Abbreviations	NY US-NY
Web site	www.ny.gov

History

New York (IPA: /nu ˈjɔrk/) is a [state](#) in the [Mid-Atlantic](#) and [Northeastern](#) regions of the [United States of America](#). With 62 counties, it is the country's [third most populous](#) state. It is bordered by [Vermont](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Connecticut](#), [New Jersey](#), and [Pennsylvania](#), and shares a water border with [Rhode Island](#) as well as an international border with the Canadian provinces of [Quebec](#) and [Ontario](#). Its five largest cities are [New York City](#) (also the largest city in the United States), [Buffalo](#), [Rochester](#), [Yonkers](#), and [Syracuse](#).

[New York City](#) is known for its history as a [gateway for immigration](#) to the United States and its status as a financial, cultural, transportation, and manufacturing center.

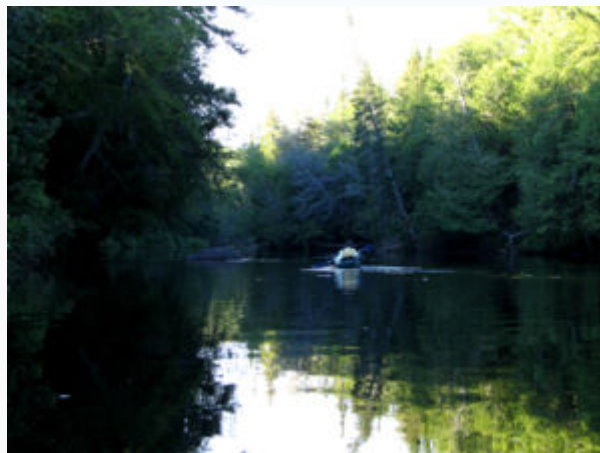
New York was inhabited by [Algonquian](#), [Iroquois](#), and [Lenape indigenous people](#) at the time [Dutch](#) and [French](#) nationals moved into the region in the very early 17th century. First claimed by [Henry Hudson](#) in 1609, the region came to have Dutch [forts](#) in [Fort Orange](#), present day [Albany, NY](#), in 1614 and was colonized by the Dutch in 1624, at both Albany and [Manhattan](#); it later fell to British annexation in 1664. About one third of all of the battles of the [Revolutionary War](#) took place in New York. The state ratified the [United States Constitution](#) in 1788, the 11th state to do so; its own constitution was enacted in 1777.

The area was long inhabited by the [Lenape](#); Lenape in canoes met [Giovanni da Verrazzano](#), the first European explorer to enter [New York Harbor](#), in 1524. [Giovanni da Verrazzano](#) named this place *Nouvelle Angoulême* (New [Angouleme](#)) in honor of the [French](#) king [François I](#). A [French](#) explorer and mapper, [Samuel de Champlain](#), described his explorations through New York in

1608. A year later [Henry Hudson](#), an [Englishman](#) working for the [Dutch](#), claimed the area in the name of the [Netherlands](#). It was to be called [New Amsterdam](#).

The Dutch, who began to establish trading posts on the [Hudson River](#) in 1613, claimed jurisdiction over the territory between the [Connecticut](#) and the [Delaware Rivers](#), which they called [New Netherlands](#). The government was vested in "[The United New Netherland Company](#)", chartered in 1614, and then in "[The Dutch West India Company](#)", chartered in 1622.

In 1649, a convention of the settlers petitioned the "[Lords States-General of the United Netherlands](#)" to grant them "suitable burgher government, such as their High Mightinesses shall consider adapted to this province, and resembling somewhat the government of our Fatherland", with certain permanent privileges and exemptions, that they might pursue "the trade of our country, as well along the coast from [Terra Nova](#) to [Cape Florida](#) as to the [West Indies](#) and Europe, whenever our Lord God shall be pleased to permit."



The [Hudson River](#) has long been an essential transportation corridor for the state.

The directors of the West India Company resented this attempt to shake their rule and wrote their director and council at New Amsterdam: "We have already connived as much as possible at the many impertinences of some restless spirits, in the hope that they might be shamed by our discreetness and benevolence, but, perceiving that all kindnesses do not avail, we must, therefore, have recourse to God to Nature and the Law. We accordingly hereby charge and command your Honors whenever you shall certainly discover any Clandestine Meetings, Conventicles or machinations against our States government or that of our country that you proceed against such malignants in proportion to their crimes."

These grants embraced all the lands between the west bank of the [Connecticut River](#) and the east bank of the [Delaware River](#).

In 1663 the [Duke of York](#) purchased the grant of [Long Island](#) and other islands on the [New England](#) coast made in 1635 to the [Earl of Stirling](#). The following year, the Duke equipped an armed expedition, which took possession of [New Amsterdam](#), which was thenceforth called New York, after him.^{[3][4]} This conquest was confirmed by the [treaty of Breda](#), in July 1667. In July 1673, a Dutch fleet recaptured New York and held it until it was restored to the English by the [treaty of Westminster](#) in February, 1674.

New York was established by its [colonial charter](#). This constitution was framed by a [convention](#) which assembled at [White Plains, New York](#) on [July 10, 1776](#), and after repeated adjournments and changes of location, terminated its labors at [Kingston, New York](#) on Sunday evening, [April 20, 1777](#), when the constitution was adopted with but one dissenting vote. It was not submitted to the people for ratification. It was drafted by [John Jay](#).



The [Woolworth Building](#), in [New York City](#), was one of the world's first skyscrapers (1913).

The western part of New York had been settled by the six nations of the [Iroquois Confederacy](#) for at least 500 years before Europeans came. The Iroquois had maintained the area between [Seneca](#) and Cayuga Lakes as a grassland prairie, which abounded in wild game including grazing [American Bison](#) herds. In colonial times, the Iroquois were prosperously growing corn, vegetables and orchards, and keeping cows and hogs; fish were also abundant.

The colonial charter of New York granted unlimited westward expansion, despite Native American presence in the Area. [Massachusetts'](#) charter had the same provision, causing territorial disputes between the colonies and with the Iroquois.

During the [revolution](#), four of the Iroquois nations fought on the side of the British, with one exception the Oneidas. In 1779, Major General [John Sullivan](#) was sent to defeat the Iroquois. The [Sullivan Expedition](#) moved northward through the [Finger Lakes](#) and [Genesee Country](#), burning all the Iroquois communities and destroying their crops and orchards. Refugees fled to [Fort Niagara](#) where they spent the following winter in hunger and misery. Hundreds died of exposure, hunger and disease. After the war, many moved to [Canada](#).

For the Oneida nation's assistance in defeating the British, primarily assisting General Washington's army at Valley Forge, then President Washington while on tour of the Mohawk Valley signed the [Treaty of Canandaigua](#). This Treaty promised the Oneidas among other things a large swath of land from Pennsylvania to Canada, forever. The Treaty was violated in the mid-1800s by New York State. This became the basis for the present land claim dispute.

New York was one of the original [thirteen colonies](#) that became the [United States](#). It was the 11th state to ratify the [United States Constitution](#), on [July 26, 1788](#).



The creation of the [Erie Canal](#) led to rapid industrialization in New York.

Transportation in western New York was difficult before canals were built in the early part of the nineteenth century. The [Hudson](#) and [Mohawk](#) Rivers could be navigated only as far as Central New York. While the [St. Lawrence River](#) could be navigated to [Lake Ontario](#), the way westward to the other [Great Lakes](#) was blocked by [Niagara Falls](#), and so the only route to western New York was over land. Governor [DeWitt Clinton](#) strongly advocated building a canal to connect the Hudson River with [Lake Erie](#), and thus all the [Great Lakes](#). Work commenced in 1817, and the [Erie Canal](#) was finished in 1825. The canal opened up vast areas of New York to commerce and settlement, and enabled port cities such as [Buffalo](#) to grow and prosper. The [Welland Canal](#) was completed in 1972.

Sullivan's men returned from the campaign to [Pennsylvania](#) and [New England](#) to tell of the enormous wealth of this new territory. Many of them were given [land](#)

[grants](#) in gratitude for their service in the Revolution. From 1786 through 1797 several groups of wealthy land speculators entered into agreements with one another, with neighboring states, and with the [Indians](#) to obtain title to vast tracts of land in western New York. Some purchases of [Iroquois](#) lands are the subject of numerous modern-day land claims by the individual nations of the six nations.