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# US States & Capitals

(Plus tricks for remembering them)

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# Alabama

**State Capital:** Montgomery

**Mnemonic:** Bam! Al (Alabama) popped Monty's gum (Montgomery) bubble.

**Fascinating fact:** Montgomery is one of the most important cities along the Civil Rights Trail. Rosa Parks' arrest here led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led three famous civil rights marches from Selma to Montgomery in 1965.

# Alaska

**State Capital:** Juneau

**Mnemonic:** D'you know (Juneau) how cold it is in Alaska?

**Fascinating fact:** Juneau is the largest state capital by area, with a municipal area of 3,255 square miles (which includes part of a glacier field). That makes it larger than Rhode Island!



# Arizona

**State Capital:** Phoenix

**Mnemonic:** A phoenix emerged from the blazing sun in Arizona.

**Fascinating fact:** Phoenix is the most populous state capital, with more than 1.625 million people living there as of 2021. It's also the sunniest, receiving an average of 334 days of sunshine each year.

# Arkansas

**State Capital:** Little Rock

**Mnemonic:** The captain of the ark saw (Arkansas) the little rock just before the boat hit it.

**Fascinating fact:** In 1957, the “Little Rock Nine” helped desegregate schools across the South. These nine Black teenagers faced down angry mobs and their own state’s National Guard (ordered out by the governor), finally entering Little Rock High School accompanied by police and military guards. Their actions paved the way for the end of “separate but equal” in education.

# California

**State Capital:** Sacramento

**Mnemonic:** California surfers wear sacred mementos (Sacramento) around their necks.

**Fascinating fact:** Beneath the streets of modern Sacramento lies the old underground city, dating back to 1839. Due to frequent severe flooding, the entire city was raised in the 1860s by filling in the streets with walls of dirt.

# Colorado

**State Capital:** Denver

**Mnemonic:** Stay warm in chilly Colorado by wearing dense fur (Denver).

**Fascinating fact:** Known as the “Mile-High City,” Denver is exactly 5,280 feet above sea level. If you travel west of the city into the mountains themselves, you’ll find peaks that soar as high as 13,000 feet.

# Connecticut

**State Capital:** Hartford

**Mnemonic:** Connect the dots and cut out (Connecticut) the four hearts (Hartford).

**Fascinating fact:** While it's not the oldest state capital, Hartford is home to the country's oldest newspaper (*The Hartford Courant*), oldest public art museum (Wadsworth Atheneum), and oldest publicly funded park (Bushnell Park).



# Delaware

**State Capital:** Dover

**Mnemonic:** Did Della wear (Delaware) her doe fur (Dover) coat today?

**Fascinating fact:** The city is home to Delaware Motor Speedway, aka “The Monster Mile.” It hosts at least one NASCAR race each year, as well as the well-known Firefly Music Festival.



# Florida

**State Capital:** Tallahassee

**Mnemonic:** I sit on the floor in the (Florida) tall house by the sea (Tallahassee).

**Fascinating fact:** Tallahassee sits on one of the highest points in Florida, at 203 feet above sea level. Snow is rare in this subtropical city, but in 1958, a winter storm dropped nearly 3 inches!



# Georgia

**State Capital:** Atlanta

**Mnemonic:** Georgia loves to sail on the Atlantic at (Atlanta) sunset.

**Fascinating fact:** In 1996, Atlanta hosted the Summer Olympics. Events were disrupted when Eric Rudolph planted a bomb in Centennial Olympic Park, killing two people and injuring more than 100 others.

# Hawaii

**State Capital:** Honolulu

**Mnemonic:** They honored Lulu (Honolulu) with a trip to Hawaii.

**Fascinating fact:** Honolulu is home to the only royal palace in the United States, 'Iolani Palace. Home to native monarchs from King Kamehameha III in 1845 to the overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani in 1893, the palace is now a museum open to the public.



# Idaho

**State Capital:** Boise

**Mnemonic:** If I'd a hoe (Idaho), I'd make those boys see (Boise) the right way to weed a garden.

**Fascinating fact:** Boise's state house is heated by geothermal energy from a source 3,000 feet belowground. More than 20 miles of pipeline distribute naturally heated water throughout the city, melting snow on sidewalks and warming public swimming pools. Locals pronounce this state capital "BOY-see," not "BOY-zee."



# Illinois

**State Capital:** Springfield

**Mnemonic:** He felt ill from the noise (Illinois) of the children jumping on a field of squeaky springs (Springfield).

**Fascinating fact:** Many people visit Springfield to see historic sites associated with 16th president Abraham Lincoln, who lived here from 1837 to 1861. Barack Obama stood on the steps of the Old State Capital in Springfield when he announced his presidential candidacy in 2007.



# Indiana

**State Capital:** Indianapolis

**Mnemonic:** If you need help, ask an Indiana police (Indianapolis) officer.

**Fascinating fact:** Elvis Presley gave his last concert at Indianapolis's Market Square Arena in 1977, less than three months before his death.



# Iowa

**State Capital:** Des Moines

**Mnemonic:** Give the coins (Des Moines) to my sister, because I owe her (Iowa).

**Fascinating fact:** People have been drawn to the Des Moines area for more than 7,000 years. A site known as “The Palace” has provided archaeologists with thousands of incredibly well-preserved specimens of this early culture.



# Kansas

**State Capital:** Topeka

**Mnemonic:** We went to Kansas to peek at (Topeka) Dorothy's house from *The Wizard of Oz*.

**Fascinating fact:** In 2010, Topeka temporarily renamed itself "Google" for a month, in an effort to earn a spot in the company's Fiber for Communities program. In response, Google changed its logo to "Topeka" as an April Fool's Day prank that year.

# Kentucky

**State Capital:** Frankfort

**Mnemonic:** Kentucky Fried Chicken doesn't serve frankfurters (Frankfort).

**Fascinating fact:** American frontiersman and folk hero Daniel Boone was originally buried in Missouri, but his remains were later moved to the Frankfort Cemetery. Some say this never happened, though, and both the Frankfort Cemetery and the Old Bryan Farm Graveyard in Missouri claim to be his final resting place.



# Louisiana

**State Capital:** Baton Rouge

**Mnemonic:** I can't believe Louise and Ana put rouge on a bat!

**Fascinating fact:** The Battle of Baton Rouge, fought in 1779, was the only Revolutionary War battle to take place outside the original 13 colonies. The battle lasted for three hours and ended in the surrender of the British troops.

# Maine

**State Capital:** Augusta

**Mnemonic:** A gust of (Augusta) wind blew the lion's mane (Maine) around his face.

**Fascinating fact:** Augusta is the easternmost capital in the United States but not the northernmost (Juneau, Alaska, and Olympia, Washington, are both farther north).

# Maryland

**State Capital:** Annapolis

**Mnemonic:** Mary gave Ann a police (Annapolis) hat.

**Fascinating fact:** Founded in 1654, Annapolis played an important part in early American history. It served as the temporary U.S. capital from 1783 to 1784, when the Treaty of Paris was signed to officially end the Revolutionary War.

# Massachusetts

**State Capital:** Boston

**Mnemonic:** My boss has a ton (Boston) of massive chew sticks (Massachusetts) for his dog.

**Fascinating fact:** In 1919, the Great Molasses Flood took place in Boston. A giant storage tank burst, releasing millions of gallons of molasses onto city streets. The flood killed 21 people and injured many more.

# Michigan

**State Capital:** Lansing

**Mnemonic:** The knight with the lance sings (Lansing) a song about missing one's (Michigan) friends.

**Fascinating fact:** Lansing was the childhood home of such famous residents as actor Burt Reynolds and basketball star Magic Johnson.

# Minnesota

**State Capital:** Saint Paul (St. Paul)

**Mnemonic:** Paul was a saint and brought mini sodas (Minnesota) for everyone!

**Fascinating fact:** Charles M. Schultz was born in St. Paul. His beloved *Peanuts* characters can be found scattered around the city as giant decorated sculptures.





# Mississippi

**State Capital:** Jackson

**Mnemonic:** Jack's on (Jackson) a raft, headed down the Mississippi River.

**Fascinating fact:** The first human lung transplant happened at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson in 1963.

# Missouri

**State Capital:** Jefferson City

**Mnemonic:** Miss Ouri (Missouri) and Mr. Jefferson went to the City.

**Fascinating fact:** Jefferson City was specifically built to be Missouri's state capital. Named for Thomas Jefferson, it's called "Jeff City" by locals.

# Montana

**State Capital:** Helena

**Mnemonic:** Give Helen a (Helena) lemon tea, Anna (Montana).

**Fascinating fact:** The city got its start as a mining camp during the 1860s Montana Gold Rush. Its four owners called it “Last Chance Gulch,” but as the city filled with newly wealthy miners, they decided to change the name to Helena (pronounced HEL-ih-nuh).

# Nebraska

**State Capital:** Lincoln

**Mnemonic:** The statue of Lincoln has knees of brass (Nebraska).

**Fascinating fact:** The first American Arbor Day started in Lincoln, Nebraska. On April 10, 1872, an estimated 1 million trees were planted in the state. The tradition soon spread around the country and is still celebrated today.

# Nevada

**State Capital:** Carson City

**Mnemonic:** Never did I (Nevada) see so many cars on city (Carson City) streets.

**Fascinating fact:** From 1984 to 2014, Carson City's average temperature rose by 4.1 degrees, the largest increase in the United States. In the warmer summer months of June, July, and August, the average temperature rose by 6.8 degrees.



# New Hampshire

**State Capital:** Concord

**Mnemonic:** You can cut the cord (Concord) on the new ham, sir (New Hampshire).

**Fascinating fact:** Christa McAuliffe, who taught science at Concord High School, won a nationwide contest to fly into space aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger in 1986. She and six other crew members died when the shuttle tragically exploded shortly after liftoff.

# New Jersey

**State Capital:** Trenton

**Mnemonic:** Trent has on (Trenton) a new jersey for the game.

**Fascinating fact:** The famous painting *Washington Crossing the Delaware* memorializes the general leading his troops into a surprise attack against enemy troops at the Battle of Trenton on December 25-26, 1776. The Continental Army was successful, significantly boosting American morale.

# New Mexico

**State Capital:** Sante Fe

**Mnemonic:** Christmas in New Mexico was so hot that Santa fainted (Santa Fe)!

**Fascinating fact:** Santa Fe is the highest U.S. state capital, at more than 7,000 feet above sea level, and the oldest, first founded in 1610. Its full name is *La Villa Real de la Santa Fé de San Francisco de Asís*, which means “The Royal Town of the Holy Faith of Saint Francis of Assisi.”





# New York

**State Capital:** Albany

**Mnemonic:** All bunnies (Albany) enjoy springtime in New York.

**Fascinating fact:** Albany is the oldest continuously occupied settlement in the original 13 colonies, with an original fort built here before 1614. It's the second-oldest state capital, behind Santa Fe.



# North Carolina

**State Capital:** Raleigh

**Mnemonic:** Neither Caroline nor Anna (North Carolina) were at the pep rally (Raleigh).

**Fascinating fact:** Raleigh is known as the “Smithsonian of the South” for its incredibly large number of museums and historical attractions. Many of these are free to the public.

# North Dakota

**State Capital:** Bismarck

**Mnemonic:** What made this mark (Bismarck) on your North Face coat, eh (North Dakota)?

**Fascinating fact:** Bismarck was named for German chancellor Otto von Bismarck in an effort to attract German immigrant settlers in the late 1800s.



# Ohio

**State Capital:** Columbus

**Mnemonic:** Oh, hi (Ohio), Mr. Columbus!

**Fascinating fact:** Fast-food giant Wendy's got its start in Columbus in 1969. Other restaurants founded in the state's capital city include Buffalo Wild Wings and Charleys Philly Steaks.

# Oklahoma

**State Capital:** Oklahoma City

**Mnemonic:** Many city homes have oak trees in their yards.

**Fascinating fact:** In April 1995, Timothy McVeigh parked a truck loaded with explosives in front of the Alfred P. Murrah building in Oklahoma City. The resulting explosion killed 168 people, including 19 children, and damaged more than 300 buildings nearby. McVeigh was quickly caught and later convicted and executed.

# Oregon

**State Capital:** Salem

**Mnemonic:** Are your paper boats ready? Sail 'em (Salem) fast, or he's gonna (Oregon) beat you!

**Fascinating fact:** The Academy Award-winning film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was filmed at the Oregon State Hospital in Salem.

# Pennsylvania

**State Capital:** Harrisburg

**Mnemonic:** Use a pencil (Pennsylvania) to draw a picture of a hairy burger (Harrisburg).

**Fascinating fact:** Harrisburg was a critical stop on the Underground Railroad in the years leading up to the Civil War. The city, just north of the Mason-Dixon Line, had a significant population of free Black residents who helped thousands of enslaved people find their own way to freedom.



# Rhode Island

**State Capital:** Providence

**Mnemonic:** I rode the bike around the island (Rhode Island), but you can't prove I dented (Providence) it.

**Fascinating fact:** Providence has more donut shops per person than any other city in the country.





# South Carolina

**State Capital:** Columbia

**Mnemonic:** Caroline's column of bees (Columbia) flew south for the winter.

**Fascinating fact:** Congaree National Park, just outside Columbia, is home to one of the world's few populations of synchronous fireflies. For a few weeks in early summer, these luminous insects put on a show as all of them flicker on and off at the same time. Columbia's minor league baseball team, the Fireflies, is named for them.



# South Dakota

**State Capital:** Pierre

**Mnemonic:** Take a coat (Dakota) if you're headed north, Pierre.

**Fascinating fact:** Though named for a Frenchman (Pierre Chouteau Jr.), this U.S. state capital is actually pronounced "PEER."



# Tennessee

**State Capital:** Nashville

**Mnemonic:** Often I see (Tennessee) a nasty villain (Nashville).

**Fascinating fact:** Nashville is home to the Grand Ole Opry radio show, which has been on the air since 1925. Today it broadcasts several times a week from the Nashville Opry House, where spectators can see major country music stars perform live.



# Texas

**State Capital:** Austin

**Mnemonic:** Texas is so big it's easy to get lost in (Austin) it.

**Fascinating fact:** The largest urban bat colony in the world lives under the Congress Avenue Bridge in Austin. Each evening during the summer, as many as 1.5 million bats emerge from beneath the bridge to hunt for food during the night hours. People gather nearby to watch the spectacle.



# Utah

**State Capital:** Salt Lake City

**Mnemonic:** You talk (Utah) about salt like city (Salt Lake City) chefs do.

**Fascinating fact:** People in Salt Lake City eat more Jell-O per person than anywhere else! This is also the city where KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) was founded in 1952.

# Vermont

**State Capital:** Montpelier

**Mnemonic:** That fake fur mound (Vermont) might peel your (Montpelier) skin off.

**Fascinating fact:** Montpelier is the smallest state capital, with just a little over 8,000 residents. It's also the only U.S. state capital without a McDonald's (although there's one just a few miles down the road in Barre.)

# Virginia

**State Capital:** Richmond

**Mnemonic:** Virginia's dad was a very rich man (Richmond).

**Fascinating fact:** During the U.S. Civil War, Richmond was the capital of the Confederacy. The Confederate States Congress shared space in the Virginia State Capitol with the Virginia General Assembly.

# Washington

**State Capital:** Olympia

**Mnemonic:** He worked at the Olympics (Olympia), washing tons (Washington) of clothes.

**Fascinating fact:** In 1949, Olympia experienced a 7.1 magnitude earthquake. It was the largest earthquake along Puget Sound in recorded history, killing eight people, injuring hundreds more, and causing massive damage to buildings.





# West Virginia

**State Capital:** Charleston

**Mnemonic:** Virginia headed west, dancing the Charleston as she went.

**Fascinating fact:** The first brick street in the world was laid in Charleston in 1870.

# Wisconsin

**State Capital:** Madison

**Mnemonic:** Wishing for concert (Wisconsin) tickets? Don't be mad, son (Madison).

**Fascinating fact:** Madison loves pink plastic flamingos so much they declared them the official city bird in 2015. This love dates back to a prank pulled at the University of Wisconsin in 1979, when 1,000 plastic flamingos appeared suddenly on campus one day. Now, the flamingo invasion is a yearly tradition!

# Wyoming

**State Capital:** Cheyenne

**Mnemonic:** Shy Anne (Cheyenne) doesn't know why old men (Wyoming) scare her.

**Fascinating fact:** In 1869, when the first session of the Wyoming Territorial Legislature met in Cheyenne, they passed an act giving women the right to vote. This made Wyoming the first U.S. territory or state to grant suffrage to women.