



## The Bluegrass State

Established 1792  
15th State

### Did You Know?

- Mammoth Cave, the longest cave in the world, is more than 350 miles (563 km) long and is still being explored. The next longest cave is half the size of Mammoth.
- In 1817, Lexington became the first U.S. city to put on a performance of a Beethoven symphony.
- Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, the Union and Confederacy presidents, were both born in Kentucky, less than 100 miles (161 km) apart.
- Two sisters from Louisville wrote the song “Happy Birthday to You” in 1893.
- Thomas Edison first showed off his electric light in Louisville.
- Cynthiana is the only place where Post-it Notes are made.
- Fort Knox’s underground vaults hold more gold than any other place in the world.
- The largest peanut butter factory in the world is located in Lexington.
- Corbin boasts the first Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant, begun by Colonel Sanders.
- All Chevrolet Corvettes are manufactured in Bowling Green.
- The Louisville Extreme Park is a 40,000 square foot (3,716 sq m) concrete public skating park. The world-class park includes a street course, a vert ramp, and a 24-foot (7.3-m) full pipe!

### The Place

#### Climate

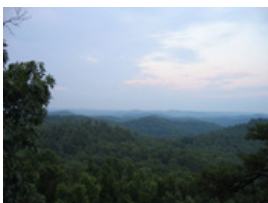


Temperatures in Kentucky don’t change much, but the mountains in the southeast are slightly cooler because of the altitude, while the southwest part of the state is the hottest. Summers are generally warm, though occasionally they can get hot and humid. July’s average daytime temperature is 87°F (31°C). Winters get chilly, but temperatures usually hover above freezing. Kentucky receives plenty of rain each year, which keeps the land green.

#### Average Seasonal High and Low Temperatures

*Spring:* 66/46°F  
*Summer:* 87/66°F  
*Fall:* 68/47°F  
*Winter:* 44/27°F

#### Geography



Kentucky has a total area of 40,411 square miles (104,664 square kilometers). Rivers run throughout Kentucky and form most of the state’s borders. The northern border is set by the twisting Ohio River, which meets the Mississippi in the western corner. In the east, the Big Sandy River separates Kentucky from West Virginia. In the southeast, the land is forested and mountainous. In this area lies Cumberland Falls, which claims North America’s only *moonbow* (a rainbow caused by the moon). As you travel from east to west, the land gets lower and less hilly. Kentucky’s famous Bluegrass Region is

in the northern center area of the state. The grass in this area got its name because of its bluish blooms in the springtime. In northwest Kentucky is the Western Coal Field, where there are many caves.

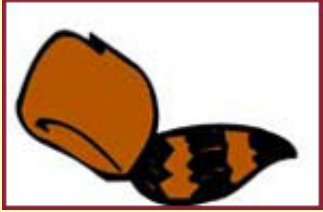

**Resources and Economy**



Kentucky is one of the nation's top coal producers. Coal helps provide electricity to the state's residents and its industries. Other natural resources include small deposits of oil and natural gas. In the past, Kentucky has relied on farming to earn money. Tobacco, corn, and soybeans are still grown and sold there today. However, in the last century, the state has slowly moved from being a farm-based economy to an economy based on manufacturing. Kentucky produces cars, chemicals, industrial machinery, clothing, and electronics. Another well-known product of the state is its thoroughbred horses, which are specially bred for racing. For years, the thoroughbreds raised on the bluegrass plains have brought in millions of dollars.

**History**

**Time Line**

|         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
| AD 1700 |  |   |
| AD 1750 | Dr. Thomas Walker enters what is now Kentucky through Cumberland Gap |   |
| 1767    | Daniel Boone makes his first trip to explore Kentucky                |  |
| 1774    | James Harrod begins Kentucky's first permanent non-native settlement |   |
| 1775    | Daniel Boone establishes a fort in Kentucky called Boonesborough     |   |
| 1776    | Kentucky becomes Virginia's westernmost county                       |   |
| 1792    | Kentucky becomes the 15th state                                      |  |
| 1800    |  |   |
| 1809    | Abraham Lincoln is born in a log cabin near Hodgenville              |   |
| 1818    | The remaining Kentucky land is purchased from the Native Americans   |   |

1860 Lincoln is elected U.S. president



1875 The first Kentucky Derby is run



1900

1900 William Goebel becomes the first (and only) governor in United States history to die in office as a result of assassination



1904–14 The Black Patch War is fought among tobacco farmers in Western Kentucky

1930s Miners and coal owners fight over working conditions



1936 Fort Knox becomes the U.S. Treasury's gold vault

1983 Kentucky elects Martha Layne Collins as its first female governor

1987 Toyota begins manufacturing Camrys in Georgetown



1988 Voters approve changing the constitution to allow a lottery to raise money for state government

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| 1990    | The Kentucky Education Reform Act is passed  |
| 2000    |  |
| 2005    | The United States Supreme Court rules against displaying the Ten Commandments inside two Kentucky courtrooms |
| 2010    | Lexington hosts the World Equestrian Games   |
| 2013    | Kentucky is the first state to put the Affordable Care Act (the new federal healthcare system) into practice |
| PRESENT |  |

## Early Inhabitants



About twelve thousand years ago, Native Americans began settling what is now Kentucky. They farmed, hunted, and built ceremonial mounds of dirt, where they buried their dead. Most of these people moved away by 1700, but they left behind remnants of pottery and tools. Other tribes began to use the rich lands as hunting grounds. Eventually, many of the region's Native Americans died from diseases brought to the continent by European explorers and settlers.

## Settling the Frontier



Some trappers explored Kentucky, but the Appalachian Mountains kept many settlers from entering the region. In 1750, Dr. Thomas Walker found a way through the mountains. The Cumberland Gap, as he called it, allowed people to get to Kentucky. Daniel Boone and other *long hunters* (18th-century explorers and hunters) examined the area; in the 1770s, he and another man named James Harrod began settlements. The colonists found the land rich and inviting, but the Native American tribes in the region didn't want to give up their hunting grounds. Each side fought fiercely over the land. During the American Revolution, the British encouraged Native Americans to fight against the Kentuckians. Nine years after the Revolution ended, Kentucky became the 15th state.

## Early Growth and Progress



After Kentucky became a state, settlers streamed in. Cities and farming communities grew, and steamboats carried Kentucky goods along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. The state contributed leaders to the national government, among them Henry Clay and Abraham Lincoln. In 1818, the last bit of Kentucky land occupied by Native Americans was bought in the Jackson Purchase.

## The Civil War



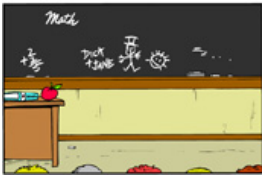
When the Civil War began, Kentucky's citizens had mixed feelings. Some slave owners wanted to *secede* (leave the Union) because they were angry at Lincoln's election. However, many others felt tied to the North. The *legislature* (lawmaking body) declared *neutrality* (didn't take sides), but the citizens didn't listen. Thousands joined the Confederate army, and about twice as many joined the Union army. Families were often split by the issue, with brothers facing each other on the battlefield. In fact, the

opposing sides were both run by men who were born in Kentucky. Abraham Lincoln led the Union, and Jefferson Davis headed the Confederacy.

### The Night Riders

After the war, Kentucky began to identify more with the South. Most Kentuckians were involved in farming. At one point, a group of large tobacco companies tried to force farmers to sell their tobacco at a low price. Many farmers banded together and refused to sell. This resulted in what was called the Black Patch War, lasting from about 1904 to 1914. A group called the Night Riders, which represented the farmers refusing to sell, terrorized anyone who sold their tobacco at a lower price. Eventually the price of tobacco rose and violence ended. Conflicts also arose in the 1930s between coal miners and mine owners. Sometimes the conflicts turned bloody, and for decades after, miners continued to fight for better working conditions. The Great Depression in the 1930s didn't help matters, and many workers found themselves out of work.

### The 21st Century



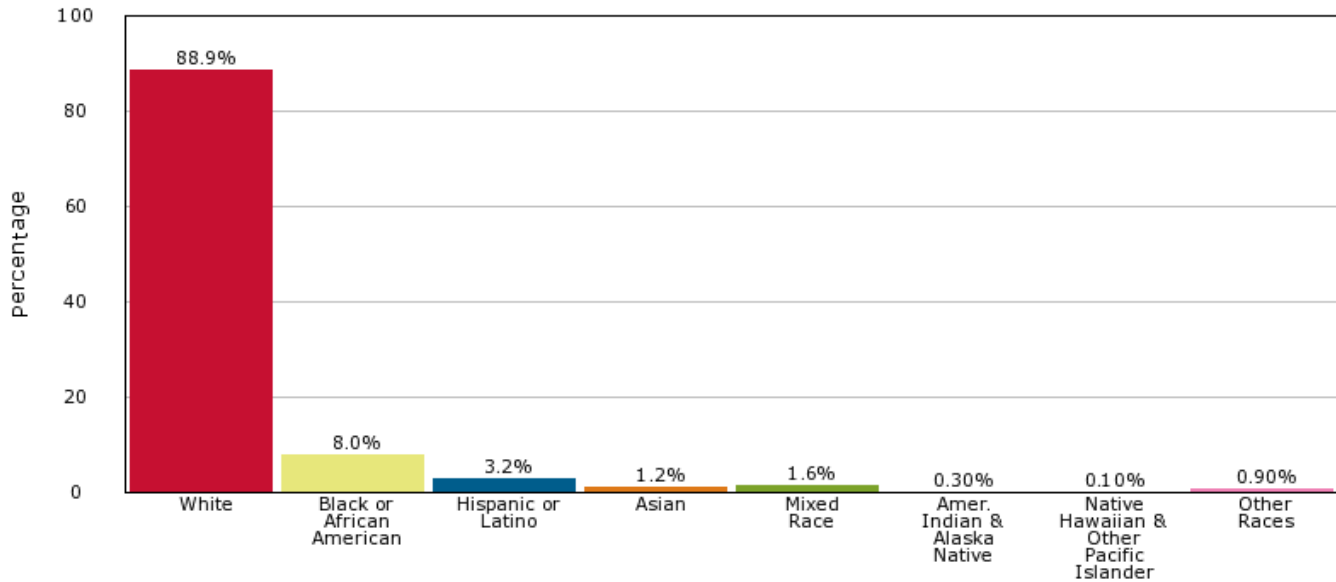
Kentuckians have faced many struggles while building their economy. Jobs haven't always been available, causing many citizens to move to other states in search of work. The state has tried to expand its economy, instead of relying so heavily on farming and mining. Kentucky's economy benefits from federal and state programs but still struggles to provide its citizens with a comfortable living. In the past few decades, the state has made improvements in education and looks forward to the future.

## The People

### Population

Although Kentuckians feel a deep love for their home state, some are forced to move elsewhere to find better-paying jobs. For decades, the state's population growth rate has been behind the U.S. average. However, the economy is improving, which encourages residents to stay in the state. Up until just a few decades ago, most Kentuckians lived in *rural* (countryside) areas. Now, a little more than half of all the state's citizens live in cities. The biggest cities are Louisville and Lexington.

Total Population: 4,369,356



Hispanics may belong to any racial group. Totals may not equal 100%.

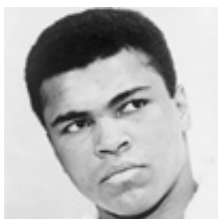
### Government



**Capital:** Frankfort  
**State Abbreviation:** KY  
**Governor:** Matt Bevin (Republican)  
**U.S. Senators:** 2  
 Rand Paul (Republican)  
 Mitch McConnell (Republican)  
**U.S. Representatives:** 6  
 Republicans: 5  
 Democrats: 1  
**State Senators:** 38  
**State Representatives:** 100  
**Counties:** 120

- Even though Kentucky is the 14th smallest state, only two other states have more counties.
- The governor serves four-year terms. A law passed in 1849 keeps anyone who has fought a duel from serving in this office.

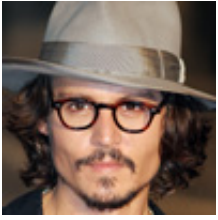
### Famous People



**Muhammad Ali**

*Muhammad Ali* — Boxer  
*William Wells Brown* — Escaped slave and abolitionist (person who works to end slavery)  
*Henry Clay* — Statesman  
*George Clooney* — Academy Award-winning actor  
*Jefferson Davis* — Confederate president  
*Johnny Depp* — Actor  
*Wynonna Judd* — Singer  
*Naomi Judd* — Country singer  
*Barbara Kingsolver* — Novelist, essayist, and poet  
*Abraham Lincoln* — 16th U.S. president





Johnny Depp

*Loretta Lynn* — Country singer  
*Bill Monroe* — Father of bluegrass  
*Thomas Hunt Morgan* — Nobel Prize–winning geneticist  
*Diane Sawyer* — Broadcast journalist  
*Zachary Taylor* — 12th U.S. president



Naomi Judd



Diane Sawyer

## Native America



After the ancient inhabitants of what is now Kentucky disappeared, the Shawnee and the Cherokee came to the area. Driven south by the Iroquois, these tribes lived in temporary settlements or villages and spent much of their time out hunting. The Shawnee were known for their pottery. Both Shawnee and Cherokee children loved playing games and sports such as stickball, lacrosse, and archery. The Cherokee lived in what is now the Cumberland Gap region, while the Shawnee roamed across a larger area including what is now Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio. At one point, the Chickasaw tribe occupied a section of southwest Kentucky. These tribes were led by chiefs, with the title passing from father to son.

When European explorers reached the area, the tribes traded with them but fought to protect their lands. During the Revolutionary War, many natives fought on the side of the British. The United States government later forced almost all of them to leave Kentucky.

Today, there are no federally recognized tribes in Kentucky. A small group known as the Southern Cherokee Nation of Kentucky is recognized by the state government and is based in Henderson. They are the descendants of the few Cherokee who remained in Kentucky, many of them marrying European settlers and establishing homes there.

## Cultural Notes

### Kentucky Derby



Kentucky has long been known for its lightning-swift horses. The first thoroughbred horses were brought to the region in the 17th century. Almost a century later, a young American named Lewis Clark was touring Europe when an idea struck him. He would build a track in Kentucky to race the fine thoroughbreds raised there. When he returned, he raised some money and obtained 80 acres of land from his uncles, the Churchills. In 1875, the track, which came to be known as Churchill Downs, officially opened. The Kentucky Derby has been held in Louisville on the first Saturday in May every year since then. Kentucky horses have won about three-fourths of all Derbys!

## Bluegrass



In Kentucky, folk music is very regional, tied to the roots of the people who settled the land. Many immigrants to the Appalachian region were from England, Ireland, and Scotland, and the music that has developed in that region reflects the traditional music from those countries. Bluegrass is a form of music that developed in Kentucky and that includes elements of folk, blues, jazz, and gospel in addition to the music of the British Isles.

Bill Monroe is widely known as the father of bluegrass music. Monroe's band, the Blue Grass Boys, formed in 1939. They used what have become the traditional bluegrass instruments: a fiddle, banjo, bass, guitar, and mandolin. In a typical bluegrass piece, each instrument takes a turn playing the melody while the others perform in the background. Traditionally, acoustic instruments are preferred to electric ones, and bluegrass performers enjoy harmonizing the vocals together and making up the music as they go.

## Fun Facts & Contacts

### State Symbols

#### State Bird

Kentucky cardinal—This bird sticks around all year to serenade the state.



#### State Tree

Tulip tree—The blossoms of this tree look like yellow-green tulips, which is where it got its name.



#### State Flower

Goldenrod—You can see this flower growing wild along the roadsides of Kentucky.





**State Horse**

Thoroughbred—Kentucky’s thoroughbreds are known throughout the nation for their speed.



**Other Symbols**

- Wild Game Animal: Gray squirrel
- Butterfly: Viceroy butterfly
- Fish: Kentucky spotted bass
- Fossil: Brachiopod
- Gemstone: Freshwater pearl
- Mineral: Coal
- Musical Instrument: Appalachian dulcimer
- Rock: Kentucky agate
- Song: “My Old Kentucky Home”

**State Motto**

United We Stand, Divided We Fall—This phrase comes from an old song written around the time of the Revolutionary War.

**Major League Sports Teams**

There are currently no Major League sports teams in Kentucky.

**For More Information**

See [www.kentucky.gov](http://www.kentucky.gov) or contact the Kentucky Department of Travel, 100 Airport Road, 2nd Floor, Frankfort, KY 40601; phone (800) 225-8747; web site [www.kentuckytourism.com](http://www.kentuckytourism.com).

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# Kentucky

## EXTREMES

Lowest: Kentucky's lowest point, 257 feet (78 m) above sea level, is near the Mississippi.

Coldest: On 28 January 1963, the temperature in Cynthiana dipped to -34°F (-37°C).

Hottest: Greensburg reached a record 114°F (46°C) on 28 July 1930.

Highest: In the southeast, Black Mountain stands at 4,145 feet (1,263 m).

