

Michigan in Brief

Information about the State of Michigan



Michigan Facts

State Name: Michigan

Name Origin: Derived from the Indian word *Michigama*, meaning great or large lake.

Nickname: The Wolverine State

Statehood: Jan. 26, 1837 (26th)

Capital: Lansing, since 1847; prior to that, Detroit.

State Motto: *Si quaeris peninsulam amoenam circumspice*, which translates, "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you."

Population: According to the 2000 census, the population of Michigan is 9,938,444 (8th in the Union). The cities with the largest population:

1. Detroit, 951,270
2. Grand Rapids, 197,800
3. Warren, 138,247
4. Flint, 124,943
5. Sterling Heights, 124,471
6. Lansing, 119,128
7. Ann Arbor, 114,024
8. Livonia, 100,545

Area:

- Michigan is the 10th largest state in the Union (combined land and water area).
- 58,110 square miles of land
- 1,305 square miles of inland water
- 38,575 square miles of Great Lakes water area
- 3,288 miles of Great Lakes shoreline
- Length: 456 miles
- Width: 386 miles
- Distance from northwest to southeast corner: 456 miles
- 11,037 inland lakes

Members in the U.S. Congress: 17

State Senators: 38

State Representatives: 110

State Symbols

Flower: Apple Blossom (Joint Resolution 10 of 1897)

Bird: Robin (House Concurrent Resolution 30 of 1931)

Tree: White Pine (Act 7 of 1955)

Stone: Petoskey Stone (Act 89 of 1965)

Gem: Chlorastrolite (Act 56 of 1972)

Fish: Brook Trout (Act 5 of 1988)

Soil: Kalkaska Soil Series (Act 302 of 1990)

Reptile: Painted Turtle (Act 281 of 1995)

Game Mammal: White-tailed Deer (Act 15 of 1997)

Wildflower: Dwarf Lake Iris (Act 454 of 1998)

Fossil: Mastodon (Act 162 of 2002)

Great Seal and Flag

Adopted by the Legislature in 1911, Michigan's flag features the state's Great Seal. Lewis Cass—second governor of the Michigan Territory, from 1813 to 1831—designed the Seal, and it was approved at the 1835 constitutional convention.

The Great Seal depicts Michigan's great animals, with the elk on the left and the moose on the right supporting a shield that reads *Tuebor*, which translates as "I will protect," referencing Michigan's role as a pioneer state. The interior of the shield shows a sun rising over a lake, calling attention to a man standing on a peninsula. The figure has his right hand raised, symbolizing peace. He holds a rifle in his left hand, meaning that he also stands ready to defend the state and nation. Written below the shield is the inscription, *Si quaeris peninsulam amoenam circumspice*, which translates, "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you." Above the shield with the American eagle is the motto of the United States, *E pluribus unum*, which means, "Out of many, one."

Selected Dates in Michigan History

1622: French explorer Étienne Brulé and his companion Grenoble are probably the first white men to see Lake Superior.

1668: Fathers Jacques Marquette and Claude Dablon establish the first mission at Sault Ste. Marie.

1701: Detroit is founded as Fort Pontchartrain by Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac.

1715: The French establish Fort Michilimackinac at the Straits of Mackinac.

1760: The French surrender Fort Pontchartrain to the British, ending French rule in Detroit.

1763: During the Indian wars in the area, Pontiac, an Ottawa chief, leads a 135-day siege of Detroit. Indians capture all the forts in Michigan, except Detroit.

1787: The (Northwest) Ordinance of 1787 defines the procedure for obtaining statehood in the Northwest Territory, of which Michigan is a part.

1792: Under the British Parliament's Constitutional Act, the first election is held in Michigan.

1796: The British evacuate Detroit and abandon their posts on the Great Lakes.

1805: The Michigan Territory is created, with Detroit designated as the seat of government. William Hull is appointed governor. Fire destroys Detroit.

1812: Detroit and Fort Mackinac are surrendered to the British during the War of 1812.

1813: American forces re-enter Detroit. Lewis Cass is appointed governor of the Michigan Territory.

1819: The Treaty of Saginaw cedes nearly 6 million acres of Indian lands to Michigan settlers. Michigan sends a delegate to Congress.

1828: The Territorial Capitol is built at Detroit for a cost of \$24,500.

1835: The Toledo War ensues over the Michigan-Ohio boundary. Michigan previously was denied admission to the Union because it would not surrender its claim to the Toledo strip. The area eventually is surrendered in exchange for the western section of the Upper Peninsula. The first constitutional convention is held. Stevens T. Mason is inaugurated as governor.

1837: Michigan is admitted to the Union as the 26th state.

1841: The University of Michigan moves from Detroit to Ann Arbor.

1842: Copper mining operations begin near Keweenaw Point.

1844: Iron ore is discovered in the Upper Peninsula at Negaunee.

1847: The Legislature passes a law to locate the state capital in Lansing.

1854: The Republican Party is organized in Jackson.

1855: The ship canal at Sault Ste. Marie opens.

1861-1865: More than 90,000 Michigan men are mustered into service during the Civil War.

1879: The new Capitol is dedicated in Lansing; the structure cost \$1,510,130.

1908: Ford begins manufacturing the Model T.

1910: The first primary election in Michigan is held.

1920: Detroit's WWJ begins commercial broadcasting of regular programs, the first such radio station in the United States.

1930: The Detroit-Windsor Tunnel opens to automobile traffic.

1935: The United Automobile Workers of America is organized in Detroit.

1941: Auto plants are converted for the production of war materials, and Michigan becomes known as the "Arsenal of Democracy."

1957: The five-mile Mackinac Bridge opens Nov. 1.

1959: Berry Gordy Jr. founds Motown Records in Detroit.

1963: Michigan's fourth constitution is ratified at the April election.

1967: Riots erupt in Detroit amid racial tensions.

1974: Gerald R. Ford of Grand Rapids becomes the 38th president of the United States, and the first Michiganiaan to serve as president.

1976: Throwaway bottles are banned by a referendum vote.

1977: The Renaissance Center is dedicated in Detroit.

1980: The Republican National Convention is held in Detroit.

1981: The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum are dedicated in Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids, respectively.

1987: Michigan celebrates 150 years of statehood.

1992: Michigan State University hosts the third and final presidential debate of the election year. The Capitol is fully restored and rededicated. A constitutional amendment is adopted limiting the number of terms an official can serve as governor or as a federal or state senator or representative.

1998: Chrysler Corporation merges with the German auto company Daimler-Benz, forming DaimlerChrysler.

2001: Detroit celebrates its 300th anniversary.

2002: Jennifer M. Granholm becomes Michigan's first female governor.

People

Following the prehistoric inhabitants, Michigan's residents were the tribal groups of Ojibwa, Ottawa and Potawatomi Native Americans. The first Europeans were the French and French-Canadians in the 1600s and early 1700s, followed by the British in the late 1700s. The great waves of immigration into Michigan began in the early 1800s, as New Englanders moved into Michigan's southern counties in large numbers. Attracted to the state's lumber, mining and automobile industries, at least 40 national and ethnic groups arrived in sizeable numbers during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Dutch, Germans and Poles were among the largest of these later groups.

In more recent migrations, many African-Americans and people of Asian, Near Eastern or Spanish origin have made Michigan their home. So many ethnic groups are present in the state that weekly ethnic festivals in Detroit begin in May and continue through September each year.

Today's population of 9,938,444 is a highly centralized one:

- Thirty-five of the 83 counties have populations of more than 50,000.

- Twenty Michigan counties have more than 100,000 people.
- All but two of these counties are in the southern half of the Lower Peninsula.
- Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties alone account for more than 40 percent of the state's population.

Industry

The three largest income-producing industries in Michigan are manufacturing, tourism and agriculture. The total workers in the Michigan labor force number 5,686,180 (State Profile, 2005).

Manufacturing

Michigan leads the nation in automobile manufacturing and is the home of the Big Three automakers: General Motors Corp., DaimlerChrysler AG and Ford Motor Co. Michigan also manufactures a wide variety of other products. These include non-electric machinery, furniture and appliances, cereal, baby food, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and lumber. The number of workers in manufacturing jobs totals 885,040 (State Profile, 2005).

Tourism

The tourist business is one of Michigan's largest income producers. Travelers to and in Michigan spent about \$17.5 billion in 2004; generating \$971 million in state and local taxes and accounting for 193,000 jobs statewide (Travel Michigan). At one time, tourism was primarily a summer season activity, along with several weeks of bird and deer hunting in the fall. Winter brings skiing, skating, ice fishing, small game hunting and snowmobiling. Spring still means trout and bass fishing and getting the boat ready for summer and its traditional sports.

Sightseeing at historic and natural landmarks continues to increase. Among the best-known tourist attractions are:

- Cranbrook Educational Community.
- Detroit's auto plants.
- Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village.
- Holland's Tulip Festival and Windmill Island.
- Isle Royale.
- Pictured Rocks.
- Porcupine Mountains.
- Sleeping Bear Dunes.

- Soo Locks.
- State Capitol.
- Straits area, which features Fort Michilimackinac, the Mackinac Bridge and Mackinac Island.
- Tahquamenon Falls.

Agriculture

In spite of urban expansion into farm acres, the state still has about 53,000 farms with a total of 10.1 million acres (Michigan Agricultural Statistics 2004-2005). The state ranks first nationally in the production of:

- Dry black beans.
- Blueberries.
- Pickling cucumbers.
- Flowering hanging baskets, impatiens and geraniums.

In addition to beans and wheat, principal field crops are oats, hay, corn, rye, potatoes, soybeans and sugarbeets. The state is a major producer of apples, plums, grapes, carrots, sweet cherries, fresh-market and processing vegetables, and it long has been a major supplier of spearmint. Michigan ranked 8th nationally in milk production in 2004, with 3.7 percent of U.S. production. This was Michigan's highest-ranking agricultural commodity in cash receipts for the year, at \$1.03 billion.

Livestock in Michigan in 2005 totaled 1 million cattle, 83,000 sheep and lambs, and 960,000 swine. In 2005, the state's sheep yielded 480,000 pounds of wool. In 2004, the value of poultry production from eggs, turkeys and other chickens was \$164 million.

Government

Michigan's government follows the federal plan of three branches—executive, legislative and judicial. In both the executive and legislative branches, elected state officials are limited in the number of terms they can serve in particular positions.

Executive Branch

The Constitution of 1963 provided that the chief executive officer, the governor (and lieutenant governor), be elected for four years, and that the executive branch be grouped into no more than 20 administrative departments. The governor's chief responsibility is to enforce state laws and maintain

order. The governor submits a suggested legislative program and a proposed budget to the Legislature, and appoints certain officials to various state boards and commissions with the consent of the Senate. Most state employees work under a comprehensive Civil Service plan.

Legislative Branch

Michigan's bicameral legislature consists of a 38-member Senate elected for four-year terms and a 110-member House of Representatives elected for two-year terms. The lieutenant governor acts as president of the Senate; members of the majority party elect the Speaker of the House. The Legislature exercises its law-making function through a system of standing committees and with the assistance of the bipartisan legislative council.

Judicial Branch

The State Supreme Court is Michigan's highest court. It has final jurisdiction over other courts in the state. Immediately below it is the Court of Appeals, established by the Constitution of 1963 as an intermediate appellate court between the Supreme Court and lower courts.

Circuit courts have original jurisdiction over major civil and criminal cases. The state is divided into 57 judicial circuits, each of which consists of from one to four counties. There are 78 probate courts to handle juvenile matters, guardianships, wills and estates. Courts of limited jurisdiction such as the Court of Claims were provided for in the Constitution of 1963. Public Act 154 of 1968 established a district court system that replaced justices of the peace and most municipal courts. There are 104 district courts and five municipal courts (Michigan Manual 2003-2004).

Resources

Mineral Resources

From 1845 to 1877, Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula mines produced more native copper ore than any other mining area in North America. The quantity of Michigan's native copper was unsurpassed in the world. These easily mined copper deposits have been greatly exhausted, and Michigan's last copper mine closed in October 1995. Michigan's Lake Superior region has geologic formations containing large concentrations of iron. Most surface iron has been depleted, requiring the use of underground mines.

Today, only one company performs the costly extraction of iron from two mines in the Upper Peninsula (The Mitten, April 2005).

Oil and gas fields are found in 63 of Michigan's 83 counties. More than 1.2 billion barrels of oil and 4.5 trillion cubic feet of gas have been withdrawn from Michigan's rock formations.

Water Resources

Michigan's water resources provide the state with a mild climate, a ready source of power and transportation, and a growing tourist industry. The state's two peninsulas are almost surrounded by four of the Great Lakes: Huron, Michigan, Erie and Superior. Michigan has 11,037 inland lakes:

- The largest is Houghton Lake, with an area of 31.3 square miles.
- Torch Lake, the second largest, is also the deepest, reaching a 297-foot depth at one point.
- Lake Gogebic is the largest lake in the Upper Peninsula.

Michigan has 36,350 miles of rivers, most of which are not very long. Generally they flow through shallow valleys. In the Lower Peninsula, there are many rapids but only one major waterfall, Ocqueoc Falls. In the Upper Peninsula, where the streams flow over upthrust rocky strata, there are about 150 waterfalls, the largest being Tahquamenon Falls.

The Saginaw River is only 20 miles long, but with its tributaries it is the largest drainage system in the state. The Grand River has the second largest drainage basin and is the longest in actual length. Other important streams include the Muskegon and the AuSable rivers, famed in logging days and now noted fishing streams. Three short rivers are vital to the economy of the state as they carry goods among the Great Lakes: Detroit River, St. Clair River and St. Mary's River, where the Soo Locks are located.

Forests

About 50 percent of the state's land is covered with 19.3 million acres of forests, two-thirds of which are birch, aspen and oak. Michigan timberland, or forest lands capable of producing commercial timber, accounts for 18.6 million acres of forest land, representing the fifth-largest timberland acreage in the continental United States. Softwoods cover 25

percent and hardwoods 75 percent of the timberland. From an economic perspective, forest-based industries, recreation and tourism support 200,000 jobs statewide and contribute more than \$12 billion to the state's economy.

Wildlife

The wildlife of Michigan has from the earliest period been a major asset of the state. The fur-bearing animals brought the French and British while the game provided food and clothing for the pioneers. Michigan still has a wealth of big game, small game, fowl and fish. The white-tailed deer and black bear are probably the most common large animals; some moose and timber wolves live on Isle Royale. Coyotes, bobcats and red fox are other animals in both peninsulas.

Rabbits and squirrels are the chief small game animals in Michigan. Other small animals include opossum, mink, otter, muskrat, skunk and porcupine. Michigan is home to 351 species of birds:

- Ruffed grouse or partridge, ring-necked pheasant and sharptail grouse are important game birds.
- Many waterfowl, such as ducks, geese and loons, live in or migrate through Michigan.
- Land birds outnumber waterfowl in numbers of species with nearly 200 species of nongame land birds found in the state.
- The Jackpine or Kirtland's warbler is Michigan's own bird, as the plains of Oscoda and Crawford counties are its only breeding grounds.

Because of its Great Lakes location and large number of lakes and streams, Michigan has an abundance of fish. Of the 149 types of native fish, about 25 species are pursued for sport. Lake trout and whitefish were important food for early Native Americans. Brook, brown and rainbow trout are popular game fish. After being introduced, coho and chinook salmon rapidly became important game fish.

Education

Michigan's educational system dates back to its first Constitution, which provided for a superintendent to develop a state system of education. That system of primary grades, grammar schools, high schools and state universities continues in Michigan education.

Education is compulsory for Michigan children ages 6 to 16. In fall 2005, there were 1,685,484 pupils enrolled in 575 public elementary and secondary school districts with 105,085 classroom teachers (QED State School Guide, 23rd ed.).

The state university system dates to territorial days when the University of Michigan was chartered in 1817 in Detroit. It was re-established in Ann Arbor in 1837. In 1855, Michigan pioneered in agricultural education when it started a state agricultural college (now Michigan State University). It was the first land-grant college under the Morrill Act.

The state's 15 public, four-year higher education institutions enrolled 282,896 students in fall 2000, while the 28 public community colleges enrolled 191,688 students in fall 2000 (Michigan Manual). Michigan's 54 private colleges reported 84,974 students in fall 1999 (Michigan Center for Geographic Information).

Further Reading

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Web Sites

MeL, the Michigan eLibrary
mel.org/

Michigan Authors and Illustrators
<https://web.mel.org/miai/miai.html>
Biographies and booklists.

Michigan Facts and History
www.michigan.gov/hal
Famous Michiganians, state symbols and more.

Michigan History Magazine
www.michiganhistorymagazine.com

Michigan Legislature
michiganlegislature.org

Office of the Governor
www.michigan.gov/gov

Rearview Mirror
info.detnews.com/history/index.cfm
Detroit News articles on Detroit history.

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