

Fascinating Ohio Facts for Kids

State Nickname: Buckeye State

Date of Statehood: March 1, 1803

State Bird: Northern Cardinal

State Flower: Red Carnation

State Capital: Columbus

State Motto: With God All Things Are Possible

State Song: Beautiful Ohio

State Tree: Ohio Buckeye

State Beverage: Tomato Juice

State Amphibian: Spotted Salamander

State Insect: Ladybug

State Mammal: White-Tailed Deer

State Flag: Ohio Burgee

Did You Know?

Ohio's flag is the only non-rectangular state flag in the U.S. Its pennant shape is known as a "burgee." It has 17 stars, because Ohio was the 17th state to join the Union. The red circle with the white center represents both the "O" in Ohio as well as the shape of one of the state's most well-known symbols, the buckeye.



Fun Facts About Ohio

Fun Fact #1: Ohio is #35 on the list of U.S. states by size, at 40,953 square miles. It's the 7th most populous state, with around 11.8 million residents.

Fun Fact #2: The first electric traffic light was installed in Cleveland, Ohio on August 5, 1914. Early traffic signals included only red and green lights; yellow lights were added a few years later.

Fun Fact #3: The first man to walk on the moon, Neil Armstrong, and the first American to orbit the Earth, John Glenn, were born in Ohio.

Fun Fact #4: The Buckeye State earned its nickname during William Henry Harrison's presidential campaign, when his supporters used buckeye nut decorations to emphasize his country beginnings.

Fun Fact #5: Seven U.S. presidents were born in Ohio: Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, William McKinley, William Howard Taft, and Warren G. Harding. Some also count William Henry Harrison in the mix—he was born in Virginia but lived in Ohio for many years.

Fun Fact #6: Outdoor scenes for the movie A Christmas Story were filmed in and around Cleveland. Fans can visit Ralphie's family house and neighborhood, today a museum dedicated to the holiday favorite.

Fun Fact #7: The first professional football game under the NFL was played in Dayton, Ohio.

Fun Fact #8: Sugarcreek, Ohio boasts the world's largest cuckoo clock. It's 23 feet tall and 24 feet wide, with a bird and figures that dance to polka music every half hour.

Fun Fact #9: Ohio takes its name from the major river along its southern border, known to the indigenous Seneca (Iroquoian) people as *ohi:yo'*

Fun Fact #10: Several well-known inventors called Ohio home. Thomas Edison was born in Milan, Ohio. Wilbur and Orville Wright spent most of their lives in Dayton, Ohio (though they flew their first successful plane in North Carolina).

Geography Facts About Ohio

Regions: Great Lakes Plains (Northwest), Till Plains (Central), Glaciated Appalachian Plateau (Northeast), Unglaciated Appalachian Plateau (Southeast), Bluegrass Region (Southwest)

Climate: Humid Continental

Location: Ohio is bordered by Pennsylvania to the east, West Virginia to the southeast, Kentucky to the south (across the Ohio River), Indiana to the west, and Michigan to the northwest. Its northern border lies mainly along Lake Erie, across the water from Ontario, Canada.

Landmarks: Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Pro Football Hall of Fame, Serpent Mound, Newark Earthworks, Lake Erie Islands, Hocking Hills State Park, Cleveland Museum of Art, Toledo Museum of Art

National Parks: Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Glacial Grooves: Huge glaciers helped to shape Ohio's terrain over millions of years. The glacial grooves on Kelleys Island are a vivid reminder of their effects.

Ohio Canal System: Two major canals were built in the 19th century to connect Lake Erie to the Ohio River: the Ohio and Erie in the east, and the Miami and Erie in the west.

Major Caves: Ohio Caverns, Seneca Caverns, Crystal Cave, Perry's Cave, Olentangy Caverns, Ash Cave

Rio Grande: This river forms the border between the U.S. and Mexico along the southern edge of Texas. It's the only major river system in the Chihuahuan Desert, and the longest in Texas.

Lake Erie Islands: Located in the western part of Lake Erie, north of Sandusky and between Toledo and Cleveland, this area contains more than a dozen small islands, some of which belong to Canada. The most well-known are Kelleys Island and South Bass Island, where summer visitors flock to the town of Put-in-Bay.

Major Rivers: Ohio, Cuyahoga, Scioto, Maumee, Great Miami

Selected State Parks: Hocking Hills State Parks, Mohican State Park, Maumee Bay State Park, East Harbor State Park, Kelleys Island State Park

Watersheds: A drainage basin divide caused by glaciers splits Ohio into the Lake Erie watershed in the north, and the Ohio River watershed in the south.

Highest and Lowest Points: Campbell Hill (Bellefontaine) 1,550 feet; Extreme southwest corner of the state at the Ohio River, 455 feet

Did You Know? Did You Know? During the War of 1812, Oliver Hazzard Perry fought and won the Battle of Lake Erie in the area around these islands. Perry's Monument in Put-in-Bay celebrates his victory, with a 350+ foot tower that offers amazing views of the surrounding vistas.

Wildlife and Nature Facts About Ohio

Common Reptiles and Amphibians: American bullfrog, common water-snake, eastern box turtle, spotted salamander, American toad, midland painted turtle, little brown skink

Common Birds: American robin, northern cardinal, mourning dove, blue jay, black-capped chickadee, house sparrow, red-tailed hawk, great horned owl, Canada goose, tufted titmouse, red-bellied woodpecker, American goldfinch, ruby-throated hummingbird

Common Mammals: White-tailed deer, coyote, eastern gray squirrel, eastern fox squirrel, red squirrel, raccoon, red fox, eastern cottontail rabbit, big brown bat, striped skunk, eastern chipmunk

Common Fish: Walleye, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, bluegill, crappie, yellow perch, green sunfish, channel catfish, striped bass

Common Trees: Sugar maple, white oak, eastern white pine, American beech, tulip poplar, white ash, black walnut, northern red cedar, American elm

Common Plants and Flowers: Black-eyed susan, common milkweed, tall ironweed, purple coneflower, wild strawberry

Selected Invasive Species: Emerald ash borer, spotted lanternfly, purple loosestrife, Callery pear, Asian carp, sea lamprey, zebra mussels

Selected Endangered Species: Karner blue butterfly, blue crawfish, lake sturgeon, Indiana bat, copper-belly water snake

Did You Know? Lake Erie is known as the Walleye Capital of the World. These fish swim upriver in the spring to spawn, and sportfishers line up shoulder to shoulder in shallow areas of rivers like the Maumee to catch them.

Ohio History Facts

First Inhabitants: First Inhabitants: Humans have lived in what is now Ohio since at least 12,000 B.C.E. The earliest studied culture is the Adena, who began the rich history of mound building in the region.

Mound Builders: The Hopewell continued the mound building tradition, flourishing from 200 B.C. to A.D. 500. They built the Newark Earthworks, a 30-acre complex of walls and other structures built by hand using baskets of dirt. Later, the Fort Ancient culture built impressive mound structures as well.

Did You Know? Did You Know? The Serpent Mound in southeast Ohio is the largest effigy mound in the U.S., stretching 1,348 feet (that's more than 1.3 football fields). It's shaped like a curving snake, with a circle in the head that may be an eye or an egg.

First European Visitors: French fur trappers were the first to push their way into the Ohio area in the 1600s, and France officially claimed it in 1749. Around the same time, British settlers began to colonize the area under King George II's Ohio Company. This soon led to multiple conflicts.

French and Indian War: In 1754, Ohio was part of the territories fought over by the French and British in what became known as the French and Indian War or the 7 Years War. This ended in 1763 with the Treaty of Paris, when France ceded Canada and all lands east of the Mississippi River to the British.

Native American Territory: As Europeans made their way further into North America, they forced other Native American tribes from their original homes. Ohio became the adopted home of migrated peoples like the Erie, the Kickapoo, the Iroquois, and the Shawnee.

Toledo War: In 1835, Ohio nearly went to war with the nearby Michigan territory over the small strip of land containing present-day Toledo. In 1836, Michigan agreed to let Ohio keep the land, in exchange for Michigan becoming the 26th state and being awarded the Upper Peninsula area as well.

Ohio History Facts

Underground Railroad: In the years leading up to the Civil War, Ohio was home to many outspoken abolitionists who fought against the practice of enslavement in the South. Many locations in the state became active participants in the Underground Railroad system, and today you can follow the Ohio Historical Underground Railroad Trail to learn more about their vital efforts to ferry enslaved people to freedom.

Civil War Service: More than 300,000 Ohioans served in the Civil War, the 3rd highest number from any Union State. Future presidents Rutherford B. Hayes and William McKinley both served in 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Several spots in the state (Johnson Island and Camp Chase) housed Confederate prisoners.

Cincinnati Reds: In 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings became the first professional baseball team. Today known as the Cincinnati Reds, the team is one of Ohio's two professional MLB teams (the other is the Cleveland Guardians).

Industrial State: In the 19th and 20th centuries, Ohio became an industrial powerhouse, with its major cities heavily involved in manufacturing. Steel was a major industry in Cleveland and Youngstown, while Akron became known as the Rubber Capital of the World. Cincinnati was a major meat-packing center, known as "Porkopolis," and Toledo was known for glass and automobile manufacturing.

Major Floods: In 1913, southwest Ohio (including Dayton and Cincinnati) experienced major flooding from the Great Miami and Ohio rivers. More than 400 people died, and damages were estimated at more than \$100 million (that's over \$3.2 billion in 2025 dollars!). The river beat its own record in 1937, this time flooding to 80 feet, surpassing the 1913 flood by 10 feet.

Did you Know? Ohio played an important role in the War of 1812, with a major U.S. victory at Lake Erie, securing control of the Great Lakes. By blocking British supply lines, the win shifted momentum and played a key role in the negotiations that brought the war to an end.

Ohio History Facts

Did you Know? Oberlin College, founded in 1833, admitted women from the beginning and Black students beginning in 1835. In 1862, the college was the first in the country to award a bachelor's degree to a Black woman.

Cuyahoga River Fire: Cleveland's heavy industrial activity led to extremely high levels of water pollution throughout the region. Oil slicks floating on the river caught fire multiple times in the 1950s and 60s. In 1969, Time magazine published a story that brought the issue to national attention. Incidents like this led to the founding of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970. Today, the river is healthier, though some parts are still considered "Areas of Concern."