



Summary Article: **Illinois**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Image from: [Illinois in Philip's Encyclopedia](#)

Midwestern state of the USA, bordered to the east by Indiana, to the southeast by Kentucky, with the Ohio River serving as a boundary, to the west by Missouri and Iowa, with the Mississippi River as a boundary, and to the north by Wisconsin; area 143,962 sq km/55,584 sq mi; population (2010) 12,830,632; capital Springfield. The state is made up of three main physical areas: the Central Plains, the Shawnee Hills, and the Gulf Coastal Plain. In the northeast, Illinois has a shore of 101 km/63 mi on Lake Michigan, occupied by Chicago, the largest city in the state, and its northern suburbs. Illinois is a leading manufacturing state, producing machinery and electronic equipment, and is also a very important agricultural state, with major crops including corn and soybeans, as well as meat and dairy products. It also has an important mining industry. Other towns and cities include Rockford, Aurora, Naperville, Peoria, Joliet, Elgin, and Waukegan. The state is home to Algonquian Illinois, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Sac, and Fox, among other indigenous peoples. The growth of the railroads led to Chicago becoming the most important city in the Midwest in the 19th century; after the Civil War the state became a significant producer and there was heavy immigration, and the state experienced labour unrest at the end of the 19th century. After the decline of heavy industry in the 1950s, Chicago remained a major trade centre. Illinois was admitted to the Union in 1818 as the 21st US state.

Physical Much of Illinois forms part of the vast, glaciated Central Lowlands of the USA. Illinois was originally made up of a complex of black soil prairies, sand prairies, and dolomite prairies. Today prairie areas are heavily farmed for cereals and are home to Chicago, situated on the southwestern edge of Lake Michigan. Illinois has mainly open, flat, treeless, terrain. A small area of unglaciated hills exists in northwestern Illinois and here Charles Mound (377 m/1,235 ft), a Moundbuilder structure, forms the state's highest point. Bogs and other wetlands similar to those in Minnesota and Michigan are present in northeastern Illinois.

Illinois's forested land is concentrated in the south and constitutes only approximately 10% of the state. The Shawnee Hills in the extreme south stretch between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and form a complex region comprising rivers, valleys, bluffs, and wooded hills, with a large number of orchards, uncharacteristic of the rest of the state. The southern tip of Illinois contains cypress swamps resembling those of southern states. The Gulf Coastal Plain area in Illinois is often known as 'Egypt', owing to its floodplain landscape.

The shore of the Mississippi, at 85 m/279 ft, is the state's lowest point. The Mississippi forms the entire western border of Illinois and most Illinois rivers flow west or southwest into it. The largest river in the state is called the Illinois and its tributaries are the Sangamon, Spoon, Rock, and Fox rivers. The Wabash River forms part of the southern state boundary in the east. Lake Michigan forms the northeastern border of Illinois.

The most common trees found in Illinois are cottonwoods, hickories, maples, oaks, and walnuts. Only a small fraction of Illinois's original 22 million acres of prairie remains. Where original prairie survives, rarer flowers and grasses are found; the Driftless Section (an isolated area of rough, unglaciated terrain) has

pasque flower, plains buttercup, and June grass, while the sand prairies of the Illinois River and Mississippi River Sand Areas include prickly pear cactus, hairy grama grass, sand love grass, silvery bladderpod, and Patterson's bindweed. More common present-day wild flowers in Illinois include hepatica and nodding or white trillium in wooded areas, bloodroot, dogtooth violets, Dutchman's-breeches, milkweed, and toothwort.

Illinois has generally hot, dry summers and long, freezing winters. In northern Illinois, Lake Michigan influences the Chicago area weather, and snow and biting cold winds are common during winter months, while summers are often extremely humid and uncomfortable. Tornadoes are relatively frequent and have killed more people in Illinois than in any other US state. In March 1925 a tornado killed 606 people near Murphysboro.

Mammals in Illinois include deer, grey and red foxes, minks, muskrats, opossums, rabbits, raccoons, squirrels, and skunks. The Illinois River valley attracts many different kinds of duck. Illinois's birds include hawk and heron, partridge, grouse, dove and pigeon, and owl, as well as robins, jays, cuckoos, swifts, swallows, warblers, and wrens.

The shoreline along Lake Michigan has no natural harbours – Chicago and Waukegan have artificial harbours. The land in this area is extremely flat and includes many sandy beaches. Bass, buffalo fish, carp, catfish, perch, pike, sunfish, and trout are found in Lake Michigan and in many of the rivers and streams of Illinois.

Features Illinois is home to the Cahokia Mounds, the largest group of prehistoric earthworks in the USA, and a World Heritage Site. Other historic features are the town of Nauvoo, founded in 1839 by the Mormons, and their point of departure in 1846 on the trek that led them to Utah; Abraham Lincoln's home in Springfield; the Abraham Lincoln National Historic Park; Galena, a lead-mining town dating from the 1820s, with pre-Civil War buildings, including the Dowling House (1826), the Belvedere Mansion and Gardens (1857), and the Ulysses S Grant House (1860); the state memorial of Bishop Hill, near Galva, a former religious community founded in 1846 by Swedish settlers with a collection of American primitive paintings; the Dana Thomas House, Springfield, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1903; gambling casinos on replicas of 19th-century Mississippi paddle boats; and the Illinois and the Michigan National Heritage Corridor, stretching from Chicago to LaSalle-Peru and running alongside a canal dating from 1848.

Chicago, a former manufacturing and industrial city, has many different ethnicities and neighbourhoods, and is home to the Willis Tower (formerly the Sears Tower), the second tallest building in the USA. Chicago is rich in architectural variety and history with many historically notable examples of modernist buildings and design, including early skyscrapers. The Rookery (1886) has a lobby designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1905 and Frank Lloyd Wright's home and studio are situated in a western suburb of Chicago, Oak Park. Other significant places in Chicago include Ernest Hemingway's boyhood home, also in Oak Park; the University of Illinois, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago; the site of the first McDonald's restaurant (1955) in Des Plaines just outside Chicago, a museum since 1985; the Baha'i House of Worship; and one of the world's finest zoos, Brookfield Zoo, in downtown Chicago.

Illinois has a strong reputation for excellent education, with a number of colleges and universities including Northwestern University (1851), the University of Illinois (1867), and the University of Chicago (1890).

Illinois has 73 state parks, six state forests, and one national forest. Prairie wild flowers can be seen at Mississippi Palisades near Savanna, Illinois Beach State Park at Zion, Starved Rock near Ottawa, Pere Marquette near Grafton, and Giant City near Carbondale. Morton Arboretum, near Lisle, has thousands of different kinds of trees and plants.

Culture Cultural life in Illinois centres on the cosmopolitan and ethnically diverse city of Chicago. A relatively new city when compared to New York or Los Angeles, Chicago has a history of waves of immigration dating from a time when its industries attracted workers from all around the world. Chicago's newer neighbourhoods include Hispanic, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, and Chinese. Older neighbourhoods include German, Irish, Swedish, Polish, and Italian and these ancestries are common among Chicago natives. Chicago has a large and historic area of African-American neighbourhoods, mainly situated on the south and west side of the city. These neighbourhoods date from the mass migration of African Americans from rural southern states to industrial cities, and are home to Chicago's famous blues music.

Chicago has many venues for live music performances on both the south and north sides of the city. Chicago's symphony orchestra and opera company are rated world-class. Chicago also has an international reputation for architectural innovation and is home to many architectural and design companies. The city is a major centre for sport with two major league baseball teams, the Cubs of the National League and the White Sox of the American League; a professional hockey team, the Blackhawks of the National Hockey League; a professional National Football League team, the Bears; and a professional National Basketball Association team, the Bulls.

Illinois's museums are mainly located in Chicago and include the Art Institute of Chicago, with an important collection of French Impressionist painting; the Museum of Contemporary Art; the Museum of Contemporary Photography; the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago; the Smith Museum of Stained Glass Windows at Navy Pier; the Terra Museum of American Art; the Textile Arts Center; the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art; Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture; Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center; Swedish American Museum Center; the DuSable Museum of African-American History; Chicago Historical Society; Oriental Institute Museum; Spertus Museum/Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies; the Philip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum and Gallery; the Peace Museum; Intuit: the Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art; the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, the largest Latino cultural institution in the nation and the only Latino museum accredited by the American Association of Museums; the Museum of Broadcast Communications; the Museum of Science and Industry; the Chicago's Adler Planetarium; the John G Shedd Aquarium and the Field Museum of Natural History. Other museums include Chicago's oldest house, the Clarke House Museum; the National Historic Landmark Glessner House Museum, designed by Henry Hobson Richardson and built in 1887. Other museums in Illinois include the Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences in Peoria; and the Burpee Museum of Natural History in Rockford. The Illinois State Museum in Springfield includes collections and exhibits in natural history and art.

Festivals in Chicago include Taste of Chicago at Grant Park; Ravinia Music Festival in Highland Park; the summertime Chicago Blues Festival and the Chicago Jazz Festival; the International Folk Fair; a very large St Patrick's Day Parade and the annual Boat and Sports Show at McCormick Place.

The Central Illinois Jazz Festival takes place in January–February in Decatur. Jordbruksdagarna, or Swedish Agricultural Days, take place in Bishop Hill in September.

Illinois has two state fairs – one in Springfield during August and one in Du Quoin in late August through early September. Hunting, boating, picnics, cycling, and walking are the main recreational activities in Illinois. There are several theme parks and the Great Lakes area is popular for camping. Starved Rock has an annual wild flower pilgrimage during the first weekend in May.

Government**Illinois's state constitution** The present constitution of Illinois was adopted in 1970. The state had three earlier constitutions, adopted in 1818, 1848, and 1870.

Structure of state government The legislature of Illinois comprises a Senate of 59 members and a House of Representatives of 118 members. Senators serve terms of either two or four years and representatives serve two-year terms. Illinois is represented in the US Congress by two senators and 18 representatives, and has 20 electoral votes in presidential elections.

The governor of Illinois and other key officials serve four-year terms. Democrat Pat Quinn took the governorship in January 2009.

Illinois has three kinds of court: supreme, appellate, and circuit. The Supreme Court has seven justices, elected to ten-year terms, who elect their own chief justice. The appellate court has 24 judges, also elected to ten-year terms. Circuit court judges are elected to six-year terms and appoint associate judges to four-year terms.

Illinois has the highest number of units of local government in the USA at over 8,000, including counties, townships, school districts, conservation districts, and sanitation districts. Most cities use the mayor-council form of government and municipalities with over 25,000 people have home rule status, giving them considerable financial autonomy.

Economy Illinois has a service industry-led economy, centred on Chicago. It is also a leading manufacturing state and Chicago ranks second to Los Angeles as a manufacturing region. Production includes chemicals, machinery, construction equipment, processed food, pharmaceuticals, electrical equipment, printed materials, books, and newspapers. Chicago boasts the second largest international airport in the USA, O'Hare, and is home to many large hotels. It also has one of the largest medical complexes in the world, Rush-Presbyterian-St Luke's Medical Center, as well as many other hospitals. Chicago is the financial capital of the Midwest and the Chicago Board of Trade is the largest and oldest commodities exchange in the world.

Illinois is also an extremely important agricultural state and its major crops are corn, soybeans, hay and wheat, hogs, and dairy products. The state also has a substantial mining industry, with deposits of bitumen, mainly in the south. Other products include clay, gravel, limestone, sand, and sandstone, silica sand, tripoli, and fluorspar.

History**Exploration** The original prehistoric peoples of Illinois were Moundbuilders. Later indigenous peoples were known as the Illinois Indians, a confederacy of tribes mainly concentrated in southern Illinois. The first European visitors to Illinois were Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet, who explored the region for France in 1673. Missions in Cahokia and Kaskaskia in the 1700s formed the first permanent settlements and officially belonged to the French colony of Louisiana. The Mississippi Scheme, a plan to exploit French colonial areas, brought many more French settlers to the area during the 18th century. French Illinois settlers combined forces to aid the American Indian chief Pontiac in a rebellion against the British in 1763 but after the British had defeated them, these settlers left Illinois, moving westward across the Mississippi River.

In 1778 George Rogers Clark of Virginia took Cahokia and Kaskaskia from the British and in 1784 Virginia passed Illinois to US government control, during the ratification of the Articles of Confederation. Initially a part of the Indiana Territory, the Illinois Territory was created in 1809, but remained a frontier region populated only by missionaries, fur traders, French and British settlers, and British troops.

During the War of 1812 against the British, the Indian people of Illinois fought on the British side in a bid to keep their lands. Vicious attacks by Indians on Illinois settlers included a raid on Fort Dearborn in 1812, at the mouth of the Chicago River.

Early statehood Illinois became the 21st state of the Union on 3 December 1818 and the border was extended further north to its current boundary, to include rich mining terrain near Galena and dairy lands south of the Wisconsin border. In 1810 Vandalia was created as the new capital. Much settlement in northern Illinois began in 1825 following the opening of the Erie Canal. During the 1830s Illinois militiamen, with assistance from the US Army, defeated the Sac and Fox Indians in the Black Hawk War. In 1837 Springfield was named as the new state capital. The construction of the Illinois Waterway in the 1840s was followed almost immediately by an explosion in railroad building and Chicago rapidly became the chief city of the Middle West, the hub from which transport systems reached across the USA, and to which the country's products, especially grain and cattle, were brought for processing. Immigrants from Germany, Sweden, and Ireland and many other parts of Europe poured into the state to farm and to work on the railways.

The Civil War Illinois's native Abraham Lincoln's fierce debating against Stephen A Douglas (the Lincoln–Douglas debates), during the 1858 campaign for the US Senate, raised Lincoln's profile and made his position against the further expansion of slavery clear. His eventual election as president of the USA in 1860 sparked the secession of the six Southern States from the Union, triggering the American Civil War (1861–65).

Although there were Confederate sympathizers in the southern part of the state, Illinois supplied many thousands of soldiers to the Union side, including General Ulysses S Grant. After the Civil War, Chicago became one of the nation's largest grain- and meat-packing centres, and Illinois became a major agricultural and industrial state. Chicago was successful in recovering from a devastating fire in 1871. Anarchism and industrial unrest developed during the 1880s, with the Haymarket Riot (1886) and the Pullman Strike (1894) prompted by low wages and poor working conditions. In the 1890s Governor John P Altgeld established reforms in industry and in prisons. The World's Columbian Exposition took place in Chicago in 1893 during a major depression, but after 1898 industry grew rapidly, and trade was further boosted by completion of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, connecting Lake Michigan with the Des Plaines River, by way of the Chicago River.

The early 1900s Social reform continued throughout the 1900s, limiting working hours and providing poverty funds, which made Illinois one of the most progressive states in the USA. Mass migration of African Americans from the Deep South took place and the majority settled in a district of Chicago called Bronzeville. Racial tension emerged, however, and race riots took place in Springfield in 1908, in East St Louis in 1917, and in Chicago in 1919. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded as a result.

The Great Depression and World War II Chicago's reputation for crime led to a federal Prohibition of alcohol manufacture and sales during the 1920s that only served to increase gang warfare and

promote the violent activities of gangster Al Capone's illegal bootlegging ring. The Great Depression in the 1930s saw a major decline in manufacturing in Illinois, but the opening of the Illinois Waterway and the discovery of oil in southeastern Illinois aided the state's recovery, as did federal aid programmes. During World War II Enrico Fermi and other scientists at the University of Chicago set off the first controlled nuclear chain reaction. The importance of heavy industry in Illinois declined after 1950, but Chicago remained a major transport, trade, and finance centre, and a leader in agricultural income. Illinois continued to play a key role the development of atomic energy with the creation of Fermilab, a centre for particle physics, near Batavia, in 1972.

The 1960s saw intense political struggle between Democrats and Republicans and Chicago also became a centre of radical civil-rights activities. In April 1968, after Martin Luther King, Jr, was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, riots on the west side of Chicago saw nine African Americans killed and twenty blocks burned. Mayor Richard J Daley announced a crackdown on radicalism, and troops were used during the turbulent rioting that took place at the Democratic National Convention held in Chicago in August 1968. The Chicago Seven conspiracy trials followed, and in 1969 Chicago police shot and killed Illinois Black Panther party chair Fred Hampton and party member Mark Clark, in a house raid.

Chicago has remained a racially segregated city and during the recession years of the 1980s poverty, drug dealing and use, and related violent gang activities in the city reached a new level. In 1985 the first Farm Aid concert to benefit family farmers was held, in Champaign, and in 1993 a flood of the Mississippi River devastated thousands of acres of farmland. The 1990s saw a property boom in Chicago, triggering inner city gentrification. George Ryan (1933–), Republican governor 1999–2003, heightened the national debate over capital punishment when he called for a moratorium on the death penalty in Illinois in 2000, commuting the death sentences of all inmates on death row in 2003.

Politically, Illinois had a succession of Republican party governors between 1976 and 2002, but moved towards the Democrats at national and state level from the 1990s. State politics have long been tainted by corruption scandals, and in 2006 George Ryan was convicted of racketeering and bribery when governor.

In 2005 Democratic politician Barack Obama (1961–) became a senator for Illinois, and in 2009 the 44th and first African-American president of the USA.

Famous people**the arts** Florenz Ziegfeld (1867–1932), theatrical producer; Frank Norris (1870–1902), author; Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875–1950), author; Carl Sandburg (1878–1967), poet; Franklin Pierce Adams (1881–1960), humorist and social critic; Raymond Chandler (1888–1959), author; Gloria Swanson (c. 1897–1983), film actor; Preston Sturges (1898–1959), film director; Alfred Wallenstein (1898–1983), conductor; Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961), author; Walt Disney (1901–1966), film animator; Benny Goodman (1909–1986), band-leader; Walter Kerr (1913–1996), drama critic; Irving Wallace (1916–1990), author; Gwendolyn Brooks (1917–2000), author; Ray Bradbury (1920–2012), author; Gower Champion (1921–1980), choreographer; Miles Davis (1926–1991), jazz musician; Shel Silverstein (1930–1999), writer; Melvin Van Peebles (1932–), playwright; Quincy Jones (1933–), producer and composer; Roger Ebert (1942–2013), film critic; Harrison Ford (1942–), actor; Sam Shepard (1943–), playwright and actor; David Mamet (1947–), playwright; Bill Murray (1950–), actor

science George E Hale (1868–1938), astronomer; Robert A Millikan (1868–1953), physicist; Stanley Mazor (1941–), inventor

society and education Clarence Darrow (1857–1938), lawyer; Jane Addams (1860–1935), social reformer; Carl Van Doren (1885–1950), writer and critic; Studs Terkel (1912–2008), social historian; Betty Friedan (1921–2006), feminist activist and writer

politics and law Black Hawk (1767–1838), American Indian Sac leader; Richard J Daley (1902–1976), mayor of Chicago; Ronald Reagan (1911–2004), 40th president of the USA; Fred Hampton (1949–1969), Black Panther leader; Barack Obama (1961–), 44th president of the USA

images

Illinois – flag

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Chicago

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