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Definition: **Iowa** from *Collins English Dictionary*

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1 a state of the N central US, in the Midwest: consists of rolling plains crossed by many rivers, with the Missouri forming the western border and the Mississippi the eastern. Capital: Des Moines. Pop: 2 944 062 (2003 est). Area: 144 887 sq km (55 941 sq miles) Abbreviation: **Ia.** or *with zip code IA*



Summary Article: **Iowa**

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

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

State of Midwestern USA, bordered to the south by Missouri, to the west by Nebraska and South Dakota, to the north by Minnesota, and to the east by Wisconsin and Illinois, with the Mississippi River forming the state boundary; area 144,700 sq km/55,869 sq mi; population (2010) 3,046,355; capital Des Moines. It is nicknamed the Corn State owing to its prodigious yields of the crop, and the Hawkeye State probably in honour of Black Hawk, an American Indian chief. Iowa lies in the Central Lowlands and has large, fertile prairies intersected by tributaries of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. There are glaciated plains in the south, and high, rocky lands in the northeast. There are many lakes in the northwest. Iowa is a leading agricultural state in the USA, with about 90% of its area being arable farmland. It is a major part of the Corn Belt, and other produce includes soybeans, apples, and livestock, especially hogs. Food processing and service industries, such as finance and healthcare, are also economically significant. Major cities include Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Sioux City, Waterloo, and Iowa City. The temperance movement was particularly influential in the state, its effects lasting from the 1830s to the 1960s. Since 1972, Iowa has attracted international media attention for its January caucuses, which comprise the first electoral event in the US presidential nominating process. Iowa was admitted to the Union in 1846 as the 29th US state.

Physical Iowa lies entirely within the vast Central Lowlands of the USA, rising from under 150 m/500 ft along the Mississippi River to a high of 509 m/1,670 ft at Ocheyedon Mound in the northwest. There are three main areas of land: the Dissected Till Plains, the Young Drift Plains, and the Driftless Area. The Dissected Till Plains lie to the south of the state and form a region of glaciated till (sediment) plain, intersected by many streams, low hills, and ridges. Wind-blown bluffs are a feature of this region.

The Young Drift Plains lie in central and northern Iowa, and constitute glaciated drift-covered plains and rolling, fertile prairies. This area has been drained of swamps and hollows in order to maximize crop yields. Most of Iowa's lakes lie in northern and northwestern Iowa, and these include lakes Clear, East Okoboji, West Okoboji, Spirit, and Storm.

In the northeast is a small extension of Wisconsin's Driftless Area (an isolated area of rough, unglaciated terrain), lying parallel to the Mississippi, with high rocky ground and thin soils. Tributaries of the Mississippi flow across most of the state, and the Mississippi and Missouri rivers form Iowa's eastern and western borders respectively. Other major rivers include the Maquoketa, the Wapsipinicon, the Cedar, the Iowa, the Skunk, and the Des Moines, of which the Des Moines is the longest.

Iowa is subject to long, hard winters with heavy snows. Iowa's summers are hot but droughts are rare. Most precipitation falls in the southeast and eastern parts of the state.

Common hardwoods in Iowa include elms, hickories, maples, oaks, and walnuts. Cottonwoods and willows grow close to rivers and lakes. Iowa's wild flowers include blue pasque flowers, marsh marigolds, and violets.

Partridges, quails, and ring-necked pheasants live in the wild in Iowa and are also raised as game birds; geese, ducks, and other waterfowl migrate along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Iowa's flat, open countryside is home to smaller mammals such as cottontail and jack rabbits, coyotes, foxes, and opossums. Iowa's rivers and lakes contain bass, bluegill, catfish, crappies, northern pike, and walleye.

Features The Effigy Mounds National Monument at Harpers Ferry in the Upper Mississippi River Valley marks the site of a prehistoric American Indian burial ground. There are 191 known prehistoric mounds in Iowa, 29 in the form of bear and bird effigies and the remainder conical or linear in shape.

The Grout Museum of History and Science (1956) in Waterloo features exhibits on American Indian as well as pioneer life, and includes a planetarium. In Fort Dodge, the Fort Museum and Frontier Village features American Indian and pioneer artefacts, displays about military history and local industry, and period furniture and clothing.

Immigrant architecture and history of the 19th century are well preserved in the Cedar Rapids area: the Amana colonies are seven villages founded by German-Swiss immigrants in the 19th century as a Utopian religious community, which came to an end in 1932. The Pella Historic Dutch Village is a former Dutch community with tourist attractions including clog makers, tulip festivals and flower shows, traditional Dutch crafts, steam engines, and a churning gristmill; and the Czech Village is a restored Czech shopping district with Czech bakeries, butchers, and jewellers and the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library (1974). The Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum (1964) in Decorah is devoted to Norwegian culture in the USA. The Danish Immigrant Museum (1983) is located in Elk Horn.

The Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad in Boone crosses one of the highest bridges in the USA, in the Des Moines River Valley. Des Moines is home to the postmodern state building of Iowa; the Court Avenue District, with 19th-century commercial buildings and warehouses; Sherman Hill historic district with Victorian houses; and Living History farms that preserve and demonstrate old-time crafts and skills. Also in Des Moines is the Science Center of Iowa (1970), the state historical museum, and Hoyt Sherman Place (1877), a grand manor home built by a prominent businessman, which houses a museum and performing arts centre.

There are Victorian river merchants' houses at Dubuque, and in Davenport the Putnam Museum (1867) and IMAX Theater feature displays of local and regional history and natural science. Davenport also has casino riverboat gambling, including the President Riverboat Casino (1991). Former president Herbert Hoover's birthplace is in West Branch and features an extensive park and restored blacksmith shop, as well as the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum (1962), which contains Hoover's public papers.

The University of Iowa (1847), Iowa State University (1858), and Grinnell College (1846) are the principal academic and research institutions. Iowa has over 80 state parks; the De Soto National Wildlife Refuge near Missouri Valley and the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge are important conservation areas. The Sanford Museum and Planetarium (1951) in Cherokee features educational

exhibits on archaeology, astronomy, and geology.

Culture During the 19th century Iowa attracted many European immigrants seeking to own land and farm the state's fertile plains. Many Iowans are of a mixed central and eastern European and Scandinavian heritage. Ethnic festivals are commonly held, and rural folk crafts, traditions, and cuisines reflecting the range of European ethnicities is a strong feature of the state's culture.

Iowa has a range of art museums, many of which focus on Midwestern schools of art. The Cedar Rapids Museum of Art (1905) has a collection featuring works by Grant Wood, examples of Regionalist painting from the 1930s and 1940s, and early 20th-century prints. The Figge Art Museum (1925) in Davenport has a permanent collection that includes American colonial painting and works from the Hudson River School. The museum also houses a European collection spanning the Renaissance to Fauvism.

The Des Moines Art Center building was designed by architects Eliel Saarinen, I M Pei, and Richard Meier, and houses a collection of US and European works. The Brunner Art Museum (1975) in Iowa City has a permanent collection of ceramics, glass, dolls, ivory, jade, and enamelled metals and other fine and decorative art objects. The Blanden Memorial Art Museum (1932) in Fort Dodge features early 20th-century US works, as well as Oriental, African, and European works. The Waterloo Art Museum has collections including Midwestern paintings, drawings, original prints, photographs, and sculpture.

Des Moines is also home to an opera company, a symphony orchestra, a playhouse, and a Civic Music Association. The Civic Center of Greater Des Moines (1979) stages live theatre and music events. Arts festivals include the Grant Wood Art Festival in Stone City; the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival in Davenport; the Bluesmore Blues Festival in Cedar Rapids; a Blues Festival and Boat Race in Keokuck; and the Des Moines annual Arts Festival. The National Sprint Car Race Championship takes place in Knoxville in August.

Iowa's ethnic festivals include the Mesquakie Indian Powwow in Tama in August; the Tulip Festival in Orange City and Tulip Time in Pella in May; and Nordic Fest in Decorah in July. One of the oldest and largest agricultural expositions in the USA, known as 'America's classic state fair', the Iowa State Fair features a 20-acre Farm Machinery Show, a wide variety of livestock shows, and the largest foods department of any state fair. It takes place in Des Moines each August.

Government**Iowa's state constitution** The constitution was adopted in 1857, replacing a constitution adopted in 1846, when the state first entered the Union.

Structure of state government The legislature of Iowa consists of a 50-member Senate and a 100-member House of Representatives. Senators serve four-year terms, and representatives two-year terms. Iowa has six electoral votes in presidential elections, and sends four representatives and two senators to the US Congress.

The governor of Iowa is elected to a four-year term, can serve an unlimited number of terms, and has unusual powers. He or she can veto legislation, although a two-thirds vote in each house of the legislature can override this veto. The governor may also selectively veto the parts of any bill that pertain to finance and has the power to appoint the state agency and department chiefs. Republican Terry Branstad took the governorship in January 2011.

Iowa's electoral process is different from other states. Every four years in January, Iowa receives national attention when it holds the first caucuses (gathering of voters to select delegates to state

conventions) in the Democrat and Republican party contests for their presidential nominations. Caucuses are held in nearly 1,800 precincts to elect delegates to the 99 county conventions. These county conventions then select delegates for district and state conventions, which finally select delegates for the national conventions. The national conventions nominate the party's presidential candidate.

The highest court in Iowa is the Supreme Court with seven justices, serving eight-year terms. Iowa's court of appeals has nine judges who serve six-year terms.

Iowa has 99 counties governed by a board of supervisors. Iowa's cities have both the mayor-council form of government and a council-manager system. Home rule is permissible for Iowa cities and counties.

Economy About 90% of Iowa's land is farmed. The state's main agricultural product is corn, but other cereals, soybeans, grasses and grains, pigs and cattle, poultry, and dairy farming are also important. Food processing also plays a large role in the state economy and products include corn oil, cornstarch, corn sugar, and glucose. The largest cereal mills in the USA are situated at Cedar Rapids; Sioux City is home to the USA's largest popcorn-processing plant. Apples are the chief fruit crop and many different kinds of vegetables are also grown. Iowa is the leading hog-raising state in the USA. It is also a leading state in dairy, turkey, and egg production.

Despite this national reputation as a farm state, Iowa's economy is primarily service-led, with finance and healthcare playing a central role. The hardwood lumber industry and the mining of limestone and other minerals are also important. The manufacturing sector is significant; Iowa's main industrial products include farm machinery, chemicals, and electrical goods.

History**Early settlement and exploration** Iowa's first inhabitants were Moundbuilders. Woodland and Plains Indians lived in the region and included the Illinois, Iowa, Miami, Ottawa, and Sioux as well as the Omaha, Oto, and Missouri peoples. In 1673, French explorers Louis Jolliet and Jacques Marquette were the first European visitors, travelling by canoe along the Wisconsin and the Mississippi rivers. French-Canadian explorer René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle sent an expedition led by Michel Aco and Louis Hennepin to explore the upper Mississippi River in 1680. Iowa subsequently formed part of the French colony of Louisiana until the Louisiana Purchase (1803).

During French colonial rule, fur-trading posts were established throughout the region but there were no permanent white settlements. Julien Dubuque, a French-Canadian adventurer, mined in Dubuque with permission from the Fox Indians and was Iowa's first permanent white settler. After the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804–06 explored the territory. Zebulon Pike visited Julien Dubuque's settlement while exploring the Mississippi River in 1805 and 1806. Iowa was for some time considered part of the Missouri Territory until Missouri achieved statehood in 1821. Iowa then became part of a vaguely delineated US frontier territory. After the Black Hawk War of 1832, American Indians of the Sac and Fox peoples were forced to cede their lands in what is now eastern Iowa.

Statehood The Territory of Iowa was created on 4 July 1838 but many settlers resented bureaucratic constraints and resisted progress to statehood. Iowa did not adopt its present constitution until 1857, after numerous boundary disputes. In the same year a late outbreak of resistance against the white advance resulted in a massacre by the Sioux at Spirit Lake in the northwest. Iowans feared the event would discourage further settlement but the state rapidly developed as an agricultural centre, its

famously rich soils attracting immigrants from the eastern and southern US states, as well as from northern Europe, during the mid-19th century. Iowa supported the Union during the American Civil War.

Expansion of the transport network Between 1867 and 1870 newly constructed railways crossed Iowa for the first time. Opposition between Iowan farmers, who resented paying high rates for freight, and the exploitative tactics of railway owners soon arose. The Anti-Monopoly Party was founded in 1873 to confront this issue and rapidly became a shaping force in the state legislature. Steamboat traffic and trade spurred the lumber industry and helped improve house building. During the 1830s there was a committed temperance movement in Iowa, the effects of which lasted well into the 1960s.

20th century Iowan farmers fell into heavy debt during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Farming cooperatives and measures taken by the legislature helped to prevent widespread bankruptcy. Prohibition was a strong feature of the 1930s, when taverns were not permitted to serve alcohol. Only in 1963 did the sale of liquor in taverns become legal, and even today permission to serve alcohol in any of Iowa's counties is subject to a vote by the people.

The Republican party dominated state politics until the mid-1950s, after which a competitive two-party system developed, and Iowa has been a 'swing state' in presidential elections. Democrat Al Gore won Iowa in 2000, but Republican George W Bush won in 2004.

During the 1940s and 1960s Iowa's industry expanded and the state's economy diversified; many Iowans moved from the countryside to Iowa's larger cities. The deep recession of the 1980s with its decline in agricultural prices caused many local farmers to go bankrupt. All related industries were affected and many were forced to migrate from the state. Riverboat gambling in Iowa was legalized in 1989 in an effort to attract tourism and further diversify the state's economy.

Famous people**the arts** William Cody (1846–1917), performer known as 'Buffalo Bill'; Lillian Russell (1881–1922), singer; Grant Wood (1891–1942), painter; Bix Beiderbecke (1903–1931), jazz musician; Glenn Miller (1904–1944), bandleader; John Wayne (1907–1979), actor; Ann Landers (1918–2002), journalist; Johnny Carson (1925–2005), television talk show host; Tim Arnold (1959–), actor; Ashton Kutcher (1978–), actor; Elijah Wood (1981–), actor

science Norman E Borlaug (1914–2009), microbiologist and recipient of the 1970 Nobel Prize for Peace

politics and law Josiah Bushnell Grinnell (1821–1891), politician and Congregationalist minister; Herbert Hoover (1874–1964), 31st president of the USA; Henry Wallace (1888–1965), US vice president.

images

Iowa – flag

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Chicago

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