

To inspire local group activities related to our 2022 theme country of the United States of America, here are...

# Fabulous facts about the fifty US states

## Alabama

The colourful festival of Mardi Gras was first celebrated in Mobile, Alabama in 1703, not New Orleans where it is commonly associated. Literally meaning 'Fat Tuesday', Mardi Gras begins on Shrove Tuesday and traditionally is when all forbidden foods are consumed prior to Ash Wednesday.

## Alaska

The largest state in the US by area, and bigger than Texas, California and Montana combined, Alaska also has more coastline than all the other 49 states put together. It also has some unusual laws; we understand it is illegal to whisper in someone's ear whilst they are moose hunting in Alaska!

## Arizona

The Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona is one of the Seven Wonders of the World, and the only Wonder located in the United States. Home to the iconic Saguaro Cactus, unique to the Sonoran Desert, this tree-like cactus has roots of only 10-15 cm supporting its arms, which take 50 to 75 years to grow to maturity.

## Arkansas

Known as the 'Natural State', Arkansas lives up to its name. The Crater of Diamonds State Park allows prospectors access to search for precious gems such as diamond, amethyst, garnet, jasper, agate and quartz. The Magnet

Cove region claims over 102 varieties of minerals can be found there. The Arkansas state flag was first created in a 1913 design contest and features a diamond as it is the only US state where diamonds have been found.

## California

Nicknamed the 'Golden State', California is home to Hollywood, the Walk of Fame and the highest population of any US state. It is estimated that annually there are in the region of 500,000 detectable seismic tremors, with the San Andreas fault system to the west, the Garlock fault to the south and the Sierra Nevada faults to the east of the state.

## Colorado

Best known for the Rocky Mountains and having the perfect winter sports conditions with numerous peaks over 14,000 feet, this is the only US state to have turned down hosting of the Winter Olympics. The Four Corners Monument in the south west of the state allows you to stand at the meeting point of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah.

## Connecticut

One of the original 13 states of the Union, Connecticut is known as the 'Constitution State'. In 1639, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut were first adopted and these served as a model for the US Constitution. The Orders were the first laws that acknowledged the people as the true foundation of public authority and gave voters the right to elect government officials for the first time.

## Delaware

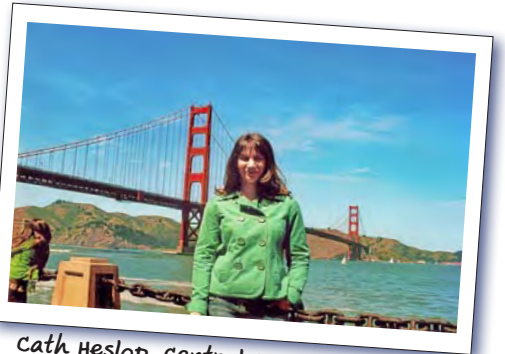
With the state motto 'Liberty and Independence', Delaware is another of the original 13 states of the Union and is often called the 'First' or 'Diamond State'. Its name comes from the original governor of Virginia, Thomas West, Lord De La Warr. Only three counties make up Delaware - New Castle, Kent and Sussex.

## Florida

The 'Sunshine State' is not only home to Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, but also features the Florida Keys, a group of about 1,700 tiny islands. South Florida is the only place in the world where both alligators and crocodiles are found in the wild.

## Georgia

The 'Peach State' is the nation's number one producer of peaches, peanuts and pecans. It hosts the annual Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta. The city of Atlanta is said to be the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement and was home to Dr Martin Luther King Jr.



*Cath Heslop, Central Region Membership Officer, at the Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, California*

## Hawaii

Hawaii is a group of volcanic islands in the central Pacific Ocean that together became the 50<sup>th</sup> state in 1959, and the only state made up entirely of islands. The state capital is Honolulu, the state flower is the colourful hibiscus and, did you know, there are only 12 letters in the Hawaiian alphabet?

## Idaho

Idaho's name is thought to derive from an Indian name, Ee-dah-hoe, which means 'gem of the mountains'. It is known for logging, mining, and potato growing and eating, accounting for almost one third of US potato consumption. There is even an Idaho Potato Museum!

## Illinois

Chicago was the starting point of Route 66, the iconic American highway, which opened in 1926 and extended to Los Angeles on the United States' west coast, covering a total distance of 2,448 miles. Its popularity has seen its demise as only parts of the historic route are now drivable.

## Indiana

Its largest city and state capital is Indianapolis, famous for the annual Indy 500 auto race first held in 1911. It is tradition that the winner



*Sam Bushell, Membership Administrator, at the Grand Canyon, Arizona*