

THE USA

Basic facts

The official name is **The United States of America**.

It is the third most populated country in the world, with more than 300 million inhabitants / people.

The main language in the US is **English**, but in many areas **Spanish** is spoken.

The capital city is **Washington, D.C.**

The flag of the United States is one of the world's oldest flags (only the flags of Austria, Denmark, Great Britain, Sweden, the Netherlands or the Switzerland are older). The flag consists of 13 red and white stripes representing the colonies that declared the independence and 50 white stars in a field of blue – the 50 states.

Geography

In the western part of the country there are mountain ranges, e.g. **the Rocky Mountains** or **the Sierra Nevada**; in the east it is **the Appalachian Mountains**. **Mount Mc Kinley in Alaska** is the largest point in the USA.

Central area [eria] is mostly **plains**. (**[plejns] planiny**) It is a flat, large country covered with tall grass.



There are **five Great Lakes**, lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, 4 of them – except Ontario are shared with Canada;

the Mississippi, Missouri and Ohio, Colorado, Columbia, Rio Grande or Sacramento rivers are some of the largest rivers.

The Grand Canyon is a large canyon system in Arizona.

The USA is also known for its great National Parks (there are 59 of them) like: **Rocky Mountains National Park, Yellowstone National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Yosemite National Park, Death Valley National Park** etc.

Climate

The country is very large, there's **various climate in various parts** of America.

The Pacific Ocean brings mild (mírný) summers and cool winters;

Inland **south-west desert** very hot in summer;

Alaska is arctic with snow and ice during most of the year and The south is subtropical; and **Florida and Hawaii** are tropical, they suffer from hurricanes, earthquakes and fires.

Political system

The USA is a federal republic.

The head of the country is a **president**, elected by people for four years.

The United States of America/the US/the USA is made up of 50 states. The head of each state is the governor.

The US's neighbours are to the north Canada and to the south Mexico.

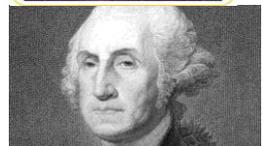
Two states, Alaska and Hawaii, are not directly attached to the continental US, they **are separate** [se-p-rt] (=samostatný).

Largest cities

Some of the largest cities are New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Houston, Detroit. **Washington, DC** is the capital city. **New York City** is the largest city, it is an important centre of business, finance, art, media. **Los Angeles** is famed for films and the famous actors, actresses. **New Orleans** is known as the birthplace of jazz and as the centre of French-American culture. It was badly damaged by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. **Atlanta**, in Georgia, is the home of Coca Cola and CNN.

Famous people

In 1492, an Italian explorer **Christopher Columbus** completed, under the Catholic Monarchs of Spain, 4 voyages [vojážis] (=cesty) across the Atlantic Ocean. During his first voyage, he reached the New World, landing on an island in the Bahamas that he named "San Salvador". He was the first European [juropijn] person to discover America. America became British territories. Large number of territories were French, some of them Spanish.



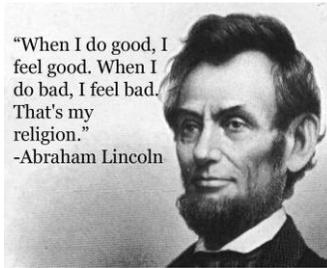
General George Washington became the **first president of the United States** in 1789, in the 18th century. He is connected to the Boston Tea Party. The British parliament rose tax on tea from America, as a political protest **Native Americans destroyed the whole shipment of tea by throwing it into the sea** in 1773. It **started** the American Revolutionary **War** in 1775.



Thomas Jefferson was one of the main authors [óSrs] of the **Declaration of Independence**. He became the 3rd president of the USA. **The Americans won its independence from Britain** on 4 July, 1776. It is now celebrated as

Independence Day / the Fourth of July.

Abraham Lincoln became the first Republican president in 1860. He took part in the American Civil War which was fought from 1861 to 1865. Also called The South against the North. Northern victory in the war ended slavery. [slejvry] (=otroctví) 625,000 people died during the war. often called the North against the South war that **abolished slavery** [ebolišt slej-v-ry].



Barack Obama was the 44th president of the USA. He was elected as **the first Afro-American president** in 2009. He, as well as his wife Michelle and his family, were very popular in the country.



Donald Trump is the **current** [karent] (=současný) **president of the USA**. He is famous for his business skills and hated for his sexist behaviour. His first wife was a Czech model, Ivana Trump. Donald Trump is a very rich person, his fortune is worth of over 3 billion US dollars.

Other famous people

Mark Twain (1835-1910)'s birth name was actually Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He was an American author and humorist made famous by his 'great American novel' *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. William Faulkner called Twain the father of American literature. **Henry Ford (1863-1947)** was a founder [faundr] (=zakladatel) of the Ford Motor Company. He became one of the richest and well known people of the world. **Elvis Presley (1935-1977)** was called 'the King of rock-n-roll', he was one of the most important cultural [kal-čr-l] icons of the 20th century. **Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)** was an American fiction author and journalist of the 20th century. In 1954 he won the Nobel Prize in literature. Today his works are known as American classics. Hemingway had four wives in his lifetime and tragically committed suicide [sjuisajd] (=sebevražda). **Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962)** was an actress and a major sex symbol of the 1950's. **Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)** was a clergyman [klerdžimen] (=duchovní), leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement. He was assassinated [esesinejtyd] (=zavražděn). **Neil Armstrong (1930 -2012)** was

a famous American astronaut, Armstrong was the first person to walk on the moon. **Bill Gates (1955)** chairman and former CEO of the world's largest personal-computer software company, Microsoft. **Michael Jackson (1958-2009)** the king of pop.

Sports

Baseball is called America's favourite pastime. It is a bat-and-ball sport. A person hits a ball thrown at them and tries to run around a playing field called a diamond. **American football** requires players to run with an egg-shaped ball over the line of the opposition. Players wear protective padding and helmets. Another popular sport is **basketball**. You throw a ball through a basket. People like watching NBA, the national basketball league (association - scores, news, games etc.)



Food

The first thing that comes to mind when you think of "American cuisine" ([kwizín]kuchyně) are classics like **burgers, fried chicken, hot dogs** and pancakes. Like many things American, the cuisine also has influences from elsewhere – German, British, Italian, Dutch, French, and Caribbean are only some of the cultures that have contributed to the food that is now considered typically American. **Apple pie, barbecue ribs, meatloaf** (sekaná) and **buffalo chicken wings** are popular all over the world.

Top 10 Tourist Attractions in the USA

- 1 Grand Canyon.
- 2 the Niagara Falls.
- 3 the Statue of Liberty in New York
- 4 White House the residence of the president
- 5 Yellowstone National Park.
- 6 Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida
- 7 the Times Square, in Manhattan, New York
- 8 Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco
- 9 Waikiki, popular beach in the Hawaiian islands
- 10 Las Vegas, mega resort, amusement park for adults



Would you like to visit the USA? Why? Why not? What places would you like to see there? Who would you like to meet?