

## 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 **Mississippi**, **Missouri** and **Ohio**, **Colorado**, **Columbia**, **Rio Grande** or **Sacramento** rivers are some of the longest and largest rivers in the world.

The **Grand Canyon** is a large canyon system in Arizona.

### AMERICAN NATIONAL PARKS

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.



### THE FLAG

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**. That is the 50 neighbouring states. There are actually two more states, **plus Alaska and Hawaii**.

### 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**.



### YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

**Yellowstone National Park** is about 9 thousand square metres of lakes, canyons, rivers and mountains. Located on the largest ever recorded volcano on the continent – supervolcano. There is also **half of the world's geysers**.

**Yellowstone is protected by UNESCO**. You can *go hiking, camping, boating, fishing, and sightseeing* there. *Forest fires* occur there every year.



### CLIMATE [klajmit]

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.

### THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The USA is a federal republic.

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

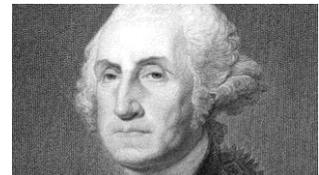
The United States of America/the US/the USA is made up of 50 states. The head of each state is the governor.

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).

### GEORGE WASHINGTON

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. America was a British



THE NIAGARA FALLS [najagara] There are **five Great Lakes**, lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, 4 of them – except Ontario are shared with Canada. Niagara Falls are between Ontario and New York states. People say the Canadian side of the falls called **HORSE SHOE** is prettier, than the American side (in the picture on the left, the straight falls – rovné vodopády

nalevo). The Canadian falls are larger.

colony. 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.

### INDEPENDENCE DAY

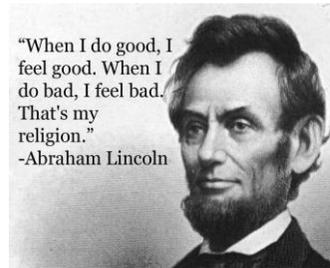
On **4th July 1776** declared independence. The Americans became independent from Britain. On 4th July there are **fireworks, parades, barbecues, concerts, carnivals, political speeches, ceremonies and other public and private events.**



**Thomas Jefferson** was **one of the main authors [óSrs]** of the **Declaration of Independence.** He became the 3rd president of the USA.

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN

**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

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. He got **the Nobel Peace Prize** for his vision and work for the world **WITHOUT nuclear weapons.** He got it for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples. (národy/ lidi všech národností)



### DONALD TRUMP

Donald Trump is the **current** [karent] (=současný) **president of the USA.** He is famous for his business skills and hated for his sexist, arrogant and racist 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.



### CITIES

#### WASHINGTON, DC

is the **capital** city. Washington, D.C. is one of America's most visited cities. It is **the seat** [sít] (=sídlo) **of the federal government** [gavrmnt] (=vláda), **the Court** [kórt] (=soud)

and the President of the United States. there are memorials to important presidents and events in American history, superb museums and many other things to see. Most of the sites are located on the National Mall, area simply called the Mall.

#### THE WHITE HOUSE

is **the symbol of the American presidency and the official residence and workplace of the President of the United States.** It was built between 1792 and 1800 and was not always white. After the British burned the building in the War of 1812, it was restored and painted its present color.



#### THE CAPITOL

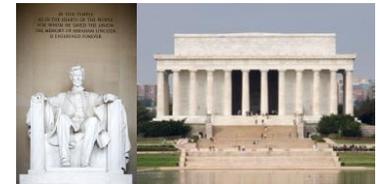
is the political center of the US government, where the Senate and House of Representatives meet to make the country's laws. Some of the largest cities are New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Houston, Detroit.



THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT was built to honor [anr] the country's first president, George Washington. This **170 m tall obelisk** is **the world's tallest stone structure.** The monument is constructed from 36,000 blocks of stones (marble and granite). It is visible from almost all over the city and has become one of America's symbols.



LINCOLN MEMORIAL is a memorial to Abraham Lincoln. It is a **30 metre-tall statue of sitting president.** Abraham Lincoln ended slavery.



### NEW YORK

New York City is the largest city, it is an important centre of business, finance, art, media.

The **"city that never sleeps"** is one of the most exciting, cosmopolitan cities in the US. More than **8 million people** live there, it's **one of the largest cities in the country.**



THE STATUE OF LIBERTY is one of the main symbols of the USA. It represents friendship with France, that helps the Americans in the war for independence against Britain in 1776. France sent soldiers. Smaller copy of the statue stands in Paris, in France. There is a restaurant with a spectacular view over the city.



The city is made up of 5 boroughs [borous]/ areas – **Manhattan, The Bronx, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens.**

CARNEGIE HALL is a concert venue in Manhattan known not only for its beauty and history, but also for its artistic programming. About 100 concerts usually classical, but sometimes popular music, are performed there each year, some of the most famous bands there were the Beatles or the Rolling Stones. Czech musicians who had concerts there were e.g. Helena Vondráčková, K.Gott, Pavel Šporcl, Dagmar Pecková or Štěpán Margita.

Many tourists also like to visit Central Park, the theatre district on Broadway, or Ellis Island, where millions of immigrants



## LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles is a city in **CALIFORNIA**, it has more than 4 million people, with many residents from Latin America and Asia. The name „Los Angeles“ **comes from Spanish**, it means „the Angeles“. People call it with the initials L.A.

People like to see **L.A.** because of **Hollywood**, where films are made, but there are lots of other interesting things to see.

WALK OF FAME is a sidewalk in front of the Mann's Chinese Theater, the world's greatest cinema. It's famous for the autographs of wellknown **movie stars written in cement** in the theater's courtyard.

## SAN FRANCISCO

in **California**, it is known for its **steep hills** [stýp] (=příkrý), historic cable cars and **foggy days**.

On a clear day you can see **Golden Gate Bridge** – a **suspension bridge** [s-spenšn] (=zavěšený) that marks the beginning of San Francisco Bay. When it was built in 1937, it was the largest suspension (zavěšený) bridge in the US. More than 100,000 cars cross the bridge every day.

You can see it in all the US catastrophic films, where it breaks in the middle. ☺

In San Francisco Bay, you can take a ferry ride to visit Alcatraz Island.

Visitors can see the old **prison** [prizn] (=vězení), military ruins and the lighthouse (=maják).



**TEXAS** has lots of cities.

**HOUSTON** is home to **NASA's Space Center** and the largest fine arts museum in the Southwest.

**DALLAS** was known for its **real-life cowboys**, or **ranchers**. Now is famous for the Dallas Cowboys who play American football. The Sixth Floor Museum, dedicated to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

**SAN ANTONIO** is probably **one of Texas' prettiest cities**.



**MIAMI, ATLANTA** and **NEW ORLEANS** are probably the three **most well-known cities in the American South**.

**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. In **Las Vegas** a town of casinos, weddings and night life. **Elvis Presley** had some popular and crazy concerts in Las Vegas. **MIAMI** is famous for its **parties, beaches, and Cuban food** because there are many immigrants from Cuba. **ATLANTA** is the largest city in the South and has unique attractions, such as **a museum dedicated to Coca Cola**.

## 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** (they do not come from America, they are from Hamburg/ Germany, but the Americans love them, there are many varieties of a hamburger), **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, **roasted turkey** – traditionally eaten at Xmas and on Thanksgiving Day..



## Interesting facts connected to the USA

In **1492**, an Italian explorer **Christopher Columbus** completed, under the Catholic Monarchs of Spain, 4 voyages [vojidžis] (=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.



## 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 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)** was an American fiction author and journalist of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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). Hemingway wrote e.g. **The Old Man and the Sea**.

**Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962)** was an actress and a major sex symbol of the 1950's.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, Jr. (1929-1968)** was an African American minister, the most visible spokesman, leader of the civil rights movement and a **preacher** [prí-čr](kněz) in church in Alabama. He got the **Nobel Peace Prize** 1964 as **the youngest person** to get it. He was assassinated [esesinejtyd](=zavražděn).



## NEIL ARMSTRONG (1930 -2012)

Was a famous American astronaut, Armstrong was the first person to walk on the moon. He flew with Apollo 11. Armstrong was the 1st man to step on the Moon, test pilot, engineer and professor. On the Moon he said his famous sentence: That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.



## THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CONTEMPORARY AMERICANS

(současní, žijící, nejvlivnější)

**BILL GATES (1955)** is a chairman and **a co-founder of Microsoft**, the world's largest personal-computer software company. His salary is about \$ 966 667 ( American dollars), he has a fortune of over 108 billion dollars.



**MICHAEL JACKSON (1958-2009)** was an American singer, dancer, and songwriter. He **donated** (at least) a remarkable **500,000,000 dollars to charity**. Michael is also known as **The King of Pop** (a title given to him by Elizabeth Taylor). He is the owner of **the best selling album of all time**, Thriller (1982) which was **awarded 30 times platinum** at

the beginning of 2016. His other albums Bad, Dangerous and History are all among the best charting albums of all time and all reached the number one position in the US charts. Jackson was **the first black artist whose music video (Billie Jean) was aired on MTV**. Jackson is very **well known for his signature dance moves (moonwalk, lean, sidewalk, Thriller dance)**, his **famous clothing (black hat, white sequined glove, military jackets)**, his unique singing voice, and songs like Off the Wall, Don't Stop 'till You Get Enough, Thriller, Billie Jean, Beat It, Bad, The Way You Make Me Feel, Man In the Mirror, Heal the World. Black or White, Remember the Time, Earth Song and They Don't Care About Us. He also is **the best entertainer of all time according to the Guinness Book of Records** and **one of the best selling solo artists of all time**.



**STEVEN KING** is a popular novelist, **author of horror,**

**supernatural, crime, fantasy, fiction books**. There are films based on his books. **Shining** – with Jack Nicolson starring, **It, Misery** – about a nurse - won an Oscar, He wrote books e.g. **Dead Zone, Running man**



## ROBERT DOWNEY JR. (junior)

Robert Downey Jr is **Ironman** in Marvel films. He stars in **Sherlock Holmes** as well alongside with British actor Jude Law.

**KEANU REEVES** is an American actor, very **humble person**, he sends money to charities. His friend River Phoenix died of drug abuse in his lap, his sister died of leukemia, he donates money to help others. He travels by the city buses, the underground, he is a very humble man. He stars in films **Matrix, John Wick, Pointbreak** and others.



## 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?**