



## California Fun Facts

**Fun Fact #1:** California is the third largest state, with only Alaska and Texas beating in size.

**Fun Fact #2:** The first email, or rather the first message sent over the internet, was sent in California from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to Stanford Research Institute in 1969.

**Fun Fact #3:** After New York City, Los Angeles is the second most populous city in America.

**Fun Fact #4:** The two cities in California with the largest populations are Los Angeles and San Francisco.

**Fun Fact #5:** California is the only state to host both the Summer and Winter Olympics, hosting the Summer Olympics in 1932 and 1984 and the Winter Olympics in 1960.

**Fun Fact #6:** California's name comes from a 1510 Spanish novel *Las Sergas de Esplandián*, which tells the story of Queen Calafia, who ruled over the island of California.

**Fun Fact #7:** California is known for its almonds, avocados, and wine.

**Fun Fact #8:** The wetsuit was invented in California in 1952 by Hugh Bradner, a physicist at the University of California, Berkeley.

**Fun Fact #9:** California's major industries include technology, entertainment, and agriculture.

**Fun Fact #10:** The #1 downloaded kids' education app, ABCmouse, was created in California.

## California Geography Facts

**Regions:** Coast, mountains, valleys, and deserts

**Climate:** Includes cold and snowy mountains, hot and dry deserts, fertile valleys, and warm sunny beaches

**Location:** California is on the West Coast of the United States, bordered by Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, the country of Mexico, and the Pacific Ocean.

**Landmarks:** Golden Gate Bridge, Death Valley, Alcatraz, Disneyland, Hollywood Sign, Pacific Coast Highway, Hollywood Walk of Fame, Pacific Coast Highway



**National Parks:** Sequoia National Park, Redwoods National Park, Yosemite National Park, Joshua Tree National Park, Channel Islands National Park, Death Valley National Park, Kings Canyon National Park, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Pinnacles National Park

**San Andreas Fault:** California experiences earthquakes because the Pacific and North American tectonic plates (San Andreas Fault) are constantly moving against each other, creating stress in the rocks that's sometimes released as an earthquake.

**Ocean Front:** California has the third longest coastline of all US states.

**River Systems:** California has more than 100 rivers.

**Lakes:** California's Clear Lake is said to be among the oldest lakes in North America.

**Deserts:** California is home to the Mojave Desert, the smallest and driest desert of North America.

**Lowest Point:** California's Death Valley in the Mojave Desert is the lowest point in North America.

**Highest Point:** California's Mount Whitney in the Sierra Nevada mountains is the highest point in the contiguous U.S.

## California Wildlife & Nature Facts

**Common Wildlife:** Sea Otters, Sea Lions, Blue and Fin Whales, Alligator Lizards, Newts, Garter Snakes, Raccoons, Squirrels, Bobcats, and Black Bears.

**Common Birds:** Robin, Gold Finch, Quail, Towhee, Dark-Eyed Junco, Allen's Hummingbird, Cooper's Hawk, and the Golden Eagle.

**Common Vegetation:** Sunflower, Arroyo Lupine, Purple Chinese Houses, Blue Flax, Birdfoot Trefoil, Moss Verbena, Toad Flax

**Endangered species:** The Californian Condor (largest land bird in US and largest wingspan in US), Gray Wolf, Desert Slender Salamander, Giant Kangaroos Rat, San Joaquin Kit Fox, Franklin's Bumblebee, Lange's Metalmark Butterfly

### *Did You Know?*

According to the California Fish and Wildlife Department, "California hosts approximately 6,500 species, subspecies, and varieties of native plants, many of which are found nowhere else in the world."

California is home to the highest and biggest trees in the world (Redwoods), located in the Sequoia National Forest, as well as the oldest trees in the world (Bristlecone Pines).

California Quail



## California History Facts

**First Inhabitants:** The first people to arrive in California were from Asia, crossing the Bering Strait over 20,000 years ago.

*Did You Know?* The Bering Land Bridge was a strip of land that connected Asia to Alaska during the last ice age. It was exposed when sea levels dropped due to glaciers forming and trapping water.

According to The Library of Congress, "It has been estimated that when Europeans first came to California, the native population was probably close to 300,000—13 percent of the indigenous peoples in North America."

**Native Americans:** Many Native American tribes lived in California, including the Chumash, Hupa, Pomo, Tolowa, Maidu, Miwok, Wintun, and Cahuilla, and continue to reside there today.

**First European Visitor:** Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was the first European to visit California in 1542. Cabrillo was a Portuguese explorer who led a Spanish expedition from the port of Navidad, Mexico.

**First Claims:** Spain ruled California from 1769 to 1821, at which point Mexico took control. Mexico ruled California until 1848, when it was ceded to the United States after the Mexican-American War.

**Early Seaports:** San Francisco was California's first major seaport and was originally known as "Yerba Buena."

**Discovery of Gold:** In 1848, James Marshall discovered gold in the river while helping to construct Sutter's Mill, which started the California Gold Rush.

**The Gold Rush:** In 1849, thousands of people poured into California searching for gold. Due to the date of their arrival, they earned the nickname 49ers.

**The Railroad:** The expansion of the railroad in the 1880s brought people towards Southern California and Los Angeles.

**The Film Industry:** California became a movie center in the early 1900s, when major film companies built production facilities in Los Angeles. The city's warm climate, diverse landscapes, and cost-effective opportunities drew filmmakers.

**Natural Disasters:** In 1906, a major earthquake destroyed much of San Francisco.

The earliest known wildfire in California was the Santiago Canyon Fire, which occurred in 1889 and burned around 300,000 acres in parts of Orange, San Diego, and Riverside Counties.

**Population Increase:** In the late 1930s and early 1940s, California's population increased significantly as people left states impacted by severe drought (The Dust Bowl) and more jobs became available in the state.

**Technological Advancement:** While California's history of innovation dates back to the 40s and 50s, the state became widely recognized for its technological advancements in the 1970s—an association that remains today.

California  
Railroad

