

## WASHINGTON AND OTHER AMERICAN CITIES

### Washington, D. C.

Washington, D.C. is the **capital city** of the United States. The letters D.C. stand for "District of Columbia". That means that Washington is not part of any of the 50 American states. The city is named after **George Washington**, who was the first president of the USA. Washington himself also chose the location of the city. It is situated between Maryland and Virginia. The population of Washington is **almost 700,000 people**.

Washington is the seat of many important American institutions. **The President** of the United States lives there in **the White House**. **The Supreme Court** and **the Congress** are located there. There are a lot of international organizations and foreign embassies in Washington.

Washington is also the home of many American monuments. Most of them are located in a park called **the National Mall**. There are the **Washington Monument**, the **Thomas Jefferson Memorial**, the **Lincoln Memorial**, the **Martin Luther King Memorial**, and others. There are also war memorials – the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial** and the **Korean War Veterans Memorial**.

There are also a lot of **national museums** in Washington. There are the **National Air and Space Museum**, the **International Spy Museum**, the **National Gallery of Art**, the **National Museum of African American History and Culture**, the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**, and others. **The Smithsonian Institution** is the largest museum complex in the world. It consists of 19 museums and the National Zoo.

**Arlington National Cemetery** is not actually located in Washington but in Virginia. However, it is just across the Potomac River from Washington so you can visit it when you are there. **American soldiers who died in war** are buried in Arlington Cemetery.

### New York

New York is **the biggest city of the United States**. It is located on the **east coast**. It had been the capital city before Washington was built. It is often called The Big Apple. The population of New York is **about 8.5 million people** and a lot of people live around New York and travel there for work every day.

The city has five parts which are called boroughs /baraz/. The most famous of these parts is probably **Manhattan**. It where most of **the tallest buildings** in New York are. The other four boroughs are **Brooklyn, Queens, The Bronx, and Staten Island**.

The first people who live in the place where New York stands today were the **Indians**. The first Europeans who settled in the area were the **Dutch**. They built a town there and called it **New Amsterdam**. When the British took it from them, they changed the name of the city to New York.

People from many different parts of the world came to live in New York. Some parts of New York are connected with people from one country – for example, there is a place called **Chinatown** and a place called **Little Italy**. You can also find food from all over the world in New York. There are **more than 25,000 restaurants, cafés, and fast food shops**.

There are also a lot of famous sports clubs in New York. There are two famous baseball teams – **the Yankees** and **the Mets**. There are two famous football teams – **the New York Giants** and **the New York Jets**. There are also two NHL ice hockey teams – **New York Rangers** and **New York Islanders**. The **US Open Tennis Championship** takes place in New York every year.

There are many famous places and sights in New York. Here are just a few.

#### Central Park

Central park is located **in Manhattan**. It is one of the symbols of New York City. There are a lot of attractions in Central Park. There are a few small lakes, a zoo, an ice-skating rink, an open-air theatre, athletic playing fields, children's playgrounds, lots of small monuments, and other things. The **Metropolitan Museum of Art** is located in the park. People can go there for a walk or to have a picnic. They can also go cycling or inline skating.

### **Statue of Liberty**

The Statue of Liberty is one of the most famous symbols of America. It is 93 metres tall. It is **a woman who is holding a torch** in one of her hands and a tablet with the date of the Declaration of Independence in the other hand. It was given to America **by France**.

### **Ellis Island**

Ellis Island was an **immigration station** from 1892 to 1954. More than 12 million immigrants went through it. They came mostly from southern and eastern Europe. Today, there is a **museum of immigration** on the island.

### **Empire State Building**

New York is famous for its tall buildings called **skyscrapers**. One of the most famous New York skyscrapers is the **Empire State Building**. It was opened in 1931. It has 102 floor and it is 381 metres high. For a long time, it was the tallest building in New York and the tallest building in the world. You can see it in the movie *King Kong*.

### **Ground Zero**

From 1972 to 2001, the tallest skyscraper in New York was the **World Trade Center**, also called the **Twin Towers**. Each of the two towers was more than 400 metres high. There were offices, shops and restaurants inside. Many people worked there. **On 11 September, 2001, a terrorist attack happened**. Two planes stolen by Osama bin Laden's Islamist organization Al-Qaeda crashed into the towers and **the towers fell down**. Thousands of people died. Today, the place where the Twin Towers used to stand is called **Ground Zero**.

### **Greenwich Village**

Greenwich Village is a part of New York famous for its restaurants, bar, and cafés. It is popular with **artists and bohemians**.

### **Los Angeles**

Los Angeles is **the second largest city** in the USA. It is located on the **west coast** of the USA, in **southern California**. The population of Los Angeles is **about 4 million people**. Because of Hollywood, it is **the film capital of the United States**. The Olympic Games have taken place twice there.

The main tourist attraction of Los Angeles is probably **Hollywood**. It is the seat of the American movie industry. Many of the most famous film studios have their seats there: **Universal Studios, Twentieth-Century Fox, Warner Brothers, Columbia Pictures, Paramount Pictures**, and others. Many famous writers moved there for some time to write scripts for movies based on their books, form example Aldous Huxley, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, or Vladimir Nabokov.

Many of the famous people who work in Hollywood live in **Beverly Hills**. It is a city in the Los Angeles area. The houses in this place are very luxurious but also very expensive. Some of the famous people who lived there are for example **Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, and Charlie Chaplin**.

Young people from other parts of the USA of **dream of becoming successful actors or directors** and try to get to Hollywood and try their luck. If they fail, there are always lots of drugs in the streets of Los Angeles to help them forget about it. Maybe that is one of the reasons why there are about **50,000 homeless people** in L. A. The street where most of these people live is called **Skid Row**.

Another famous place located in the Los Angeles area is the **Disneyland Resort**. You can meet some of the most famous Walt Disney characters there: **Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy**, and others. It calls itself "The Happiest Place on Earth". That's only because they have never heard of SGAGY, right?

### **San Francisco**

San Francisco is a large city in **northern California**. Its population is **almost 900 million people**. The **largest Chinatown** in the United States is located in San Francisco. In the 1960s, San Francisco was one of the most popular cities where **the hippies** met to do their hippie things. It is one of the centres of the **LGBT community** in the United States and one of the cities with the highest concentration of gay people in the world. The city is also famous for its old-fashioned **cable cars**.

The most famous tourist attraction in San Francisco is the **Golden Gate Bridge**. It was opened to the public in 1937 and it is **almost two miles long**. The bridge is especially famous for its **orange colour**. It is also very popular with people who want to kill themselves. Sometimes, but not very often, they survive the jump and say they are very happy that they didn't die.

Another famous part of San Francisco is **Alcatraz**. It is an island which served as a **federal prison** in the past. One of the most famous criminals who had to stay there was **the gangster Al Capone**. He murdered a lot of people but he ended in prison for tax cheating. Today, the island is a popular tourist attraction.

The San Francisco Bay Area is also the centre of **American computer industry**. The industry is concentrated in the **Silicon Valley**. At the centre of the Silicon Valley is **San Jose**, is city with more than one million inhabitants. Some of the largest companies located in the Silicon Valley are **Apple, Google, and Facebook**.

### **Chicago**

Chicago is **the third largest city in the USA**. It is located **in the state of Illinois, in the Midwest**. The population of Chicago is **nearly three million people**. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the 20th century, Chicago was one of the places where most **Czech immigrants** to the USA lived. In 1931, **Anton Čermák from Kladno** became **the mayor of Chicago**.

### **New Orleans**

New Orleans is **the largest city in the state of Louisiana**. It is situated on **the Mississippi River**. About **400,000 people** live there. It is famous as the birthplace of **jazz music** and many famous jazz musicians were born there, for example **Louis Armstrong**.

New Orleans is the city where one of the most famous festivals in the United States takes place – the **Mardi Gras**. It is something like a **carnival** – people put on colourful masks and clothes and go through the streets. The centre of this festival is the **French Quarter** – probably the most famous part of New Orleans.

### **Seattle**

Seattle is **the largest city in the state of Washington**. The state of Washington is located on **the west coast** of the USA, very far away from Washington, D.C. About **700,000 people** live in Seattle. The city is the seat of **Amazon and Boeing** so it is very important for America's economy. The landmark of Seattle is the **Space Needle** – a tall tower which has a very strange shape.

### **Boston**

Boston is a large city on the **east coast** of the USA. It is located in the state of **Massachusetts**. It is **one of the oldest cities** in the USA and one of few cities where you can see some quite old buildings. It played an important role in the War of Independence. Boston was (and maybe still is) **one of the most important centres of cultural and intellectual life in America**. Some of the most famous American writers lived and wrote in Boston were for example **Nathaniel Hawthorne** and **Ralph Waldo Emerson**. **Harvard University** is not very far from Boston.

### **Houston**

Houston is the largest city in **Texas**. It is **the fourth largest city** in the USA. **More than two million people** live there. It is one of the centres of **American space programme**. The sentence "Houston, we have a problem" is famous all over the world.

### **Philadelphia**

Philadelphia is the **fifth largest city** in the United States. About **one and a half million people** live there. It is the largest city in **Pennsylvania** and the place where Benjamin Franklin spent most of his life. The **Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia** and it was **the first capital city** of the United States.

### **Denver**

Denver is the largest city and the capital of **Colorado**. It is located about **1,500 metres above the sea level** so it is nicknamed "**The Mile High City**". It is a great starting place for a **trip to the Rocky Mountains**. Denver is also famous for its **beer**.

## Detroit

Detroit is the largest city in **Michigan**. In the past, Detroit was the centre of **American automotive industry**. During the 20th century, many people moved there to work in car factories. When the production of cars became smaller, the city became poorer and uglier. Many people moved away.

## Miami

Miami is a famous city in **Florida**. It is situated **on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean**, not very far from the **Everglades National Park**. Almost **half a million people** live there. The city is famous for its **beaches**, its **nightlife**, its **restaurants** and its **Art Deco** architecture. People who live there love the city because of its **warm and pleasant weather**. It is also the centre of **Cuban immigration** to the USA – people who are running away from Castro's communist paradise often arrive there and stay there.

## Las Vegas

Las Vegas is a city located in **Nevada**. It is the largest city in Nevada and its economic centre. About **half a million people** live there. The nickname of Las Vegas is "**Sin City**" because of its nightlife. There are a lot of **casinos** in Las Vegas and people who want to **gamble** travel there because gambling is illegal in many other parts of the US. Gambling goes hand in hand with **heavy drinking**. If you want to waste even more money, you can visit fake Paris or fake Venice there. A lot of **illegal prostitution** is going on in Las Vegas as well.

## Honolulu

Honolulu is the capital city of **Hawaii**. Honolulu is a modern city located on the island of Oahu. About **350,000 people** live there. The word Honolulu means "protected bay". Because of the pleasant climate of Hawaii and the beautiful Pacific Ocean, Honolulu is **one of the most popular tourist destinations** in the USA. The most famous part of Honolulu is probably **Waikiki**. Waikiki's beach is one of the most famous beaches in the world and there are a lot of luxurious hotels.

The overview is largely based on the following sources:

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