

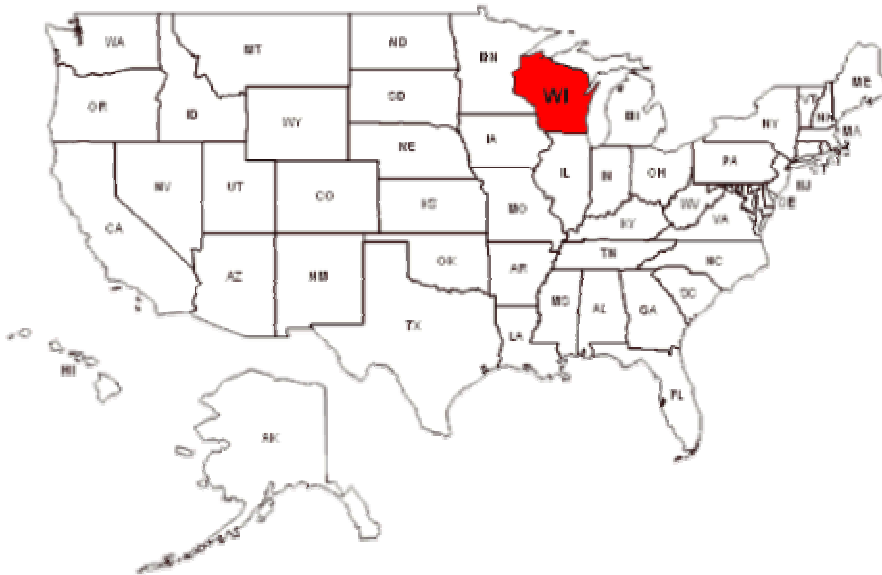
# United States of America

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I have chosen to write about the United States because I find the country to be quite fascinating. In order to spare both you and me from a text a man could write for his entire life and still not be finished, I'm going to focus on one specific state. That state is Wisconsin.

## Wisconsin

Wisconsin is located in the north-central part of the United States and is part of the Midwest. It borders to the three neighboring states Iowa, Minnesota and Michigan.



## Madison

Wisconsin's capital is Madison, which can be found in the south-central part of the state. Madison is often called "the people's republic of Wisconsin" because its inhabitants are known for voting on the Democratic Party for the last century. The people of Madison seem to generally be much more politically liberal than the rest of the nation. For example, there was a vote in 2006 about banning gay marriage in the state. More than 76% of Madison's population voted no.

*The Freedom from Religion Foundation* was founded in Madison. Their mission is to make every government differ between religion and state. They are known for their lawsuits against religious displays on public property, and for trying to get rid of "In God We Trust" from American currency.

Madison is also known for its vast educational system. According to the *Forbes* magazine, Madison is rated second in the nation in education. It is home to the University of Wisconsin which currently has about 40 000 students enrolled. They have several other institutes and colleges, and a student population of 50 000. Maybe now you realize how big the University of Wisconsin really is! They do not only have the second most enrolled students in the nation, but also the highest numbers of Ph.D.'s per capita.



It looks like a city but basically all of the buildings in the picture are the university's campus.

## History

The first European explorer to set foot in Wisconsin was a Frenchman named Jean Nicolet. He was a fur trader canoeing in the great lakes of Wisconsin, looking for potential clients. In 1634 he found them near the shores of Green Bay. The local Native American tribes proved quite eager to trade with the French. They traded peacefully with each other until both parties were forced to leave because of the American revolutionary war.

In 1812 Wisconsin fell under American control. The fur trading was gradually replaced by lead mining. The idea to become rich through digging for minerals was appealing to quite a lot of people. Tens of thousands of immigrants rushed to Wisconsin hoping to finally catch a break. Not all were so lucky. Some even had to seek shelter in the very holes they had dug. These people were referred to as "badgers" and that is why people still often call Wisconsin "the badger state".

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, slavery was on the agenda. Well, the abolition of , that is. Wisconsin was a free state from its foundation and this was reflected in its citizens. Wisconsin was what you might call the center for northern abolitionism. Here you did not have to worry about being struck down by an angry mob if you spoke out against slavery. It was quite the contrary actually.

The subject of slavery was especially hot in 1854. A runaway slave was captured by local authorities in Racine (A small mining town in Wisconsin), but was broken out by an angry mob of abolitionists. In the aftermath of this incident, the Supreme Court of Wisconsin declared the fugitive slave law<sup>1</sup> invalid. It was no coincidence that a few months later, in

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<sup>1</sup> A law which declared that all runaway slaves should be brought back to their masters.

March of 1854, the Republican Party was founded by anti-slavery activists. When the civil war came, Wisconsin immediately joined... This part should be pretty obvious if you have been paying attention, but for clarification -purposes I'm going to say it anyway. They joined the Union. They played a vital role in the war, supplying more than 90 000 troops to the American battlefields.

Wisconsin never strayed from its highly innovative path. They kept pushing new ideas throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and were first in the nation with a workplace injury compensation law, and a primary election system for government officials. They were also first with state income tax. Basically, they made taxes proportional to how much money you actually made, instead of a lump sum.

## Heritage

In the beginning the entire population of Wisconsin consisted of Native Americans (Obviously). After its discovery by Nicolet, some French fur traders decided to make their homes there. Sometime Later, "Yankees"<sup>2</sup> rushed to join in the founding of this new state. There were no waves of new settlers until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, then they came with a vengeance. Prior to WW1, a lot of people in Europe tried to escape the misery and the building hostilities. Primarily Germans and Scandinavians immigrated. In fact, a little over 40 % of Wisconsin's inhabitants have a German heritage. The 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest group is Norwegians, with about 11% of the state inhabitants.

## Crime

The people of Wisconsin being so free and liberal in their actions are great if you ask me. However, there seems to be a dark side to it. This dark side seems to especially reflect the sexual desires of Wisconsin's inhabitant. Last year, Wisconsin had more than 1 100 rapes, and 4 600 sexual assaults. Unfortunately a lot of these atrocities happened to juveniles. It's actually a very big problem. In Wisconsin, 11-15 year-olds are the highest victimized age group. These young people of Wisconsin are nearly three times more likely to be the victim of a sexual assault than adults in the rest of the nation.

## Personal notes

Geographically speaking I think Wisconsin has a favorable location. It's not too cold, and not too warm. The climate resembles Sweden's a lot, but it's somewhat warmer in Wisconsin. I really like their liberality. I think that's why they are so innovative. I mean, if you believe in freedom and the right to do what you want (within acceptable boundaries, of course) then you probably won't shoot down new ideas on a regular basis like we do here in Sweden. The more I read about Wisconsin, the more I felt like "hey... this seems like a pretty nice place". Maybe even some seeds were planted as to moving there someday. Maybe not, who knows. I can tell you something I do know though. When I read about the pedophile "issues" they had there, I have to say that was a deal breaker for me. I am not going to move and maybe get a family in a city with the biggest pedophilia problem in the US.

If you can (somehow) disregard that fact it seems wonderful. Boatloads of smart people, a lot of jobs, low taxes (5 %!) and a good location. If someone asked me about Wisconsin, I

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<sup>2</sup> American immigrants of English origin.

would not recommend it. Well, maybe for adults on a vacation, but there are probably more amusing places you can travel to than the “badger state”.