



photo by Diann Bayes

Everything’s bigger in Texas! That’s just one slogan about this huge state — the second largest by area, after Alaska. Texas became our 28th state in 1845. Its capital is Austin, but the largest city is Houston. More than 31 million people live in the state.



photo by Kumar Appalath

The Texas state capitol

Texas history

Indigenous peoples lived in what is now Texas for more than 10,000 years. They included the Pueblo people, the Mound Builders of the Mississippian culture and other communities centered in southern and western Texas.

Spanish explorers arrived in the region in the early 1500s. After the Mexican War of Independence in 1821, Texas was part of Mexico. Texans declared independence from Mexico in 1836 and formed the Republic of Texas.



Texas joined the Confederate States of America in 1861, seceding from the U.S. Nine years later, it was returned to statehood.

Natural Texas

The state’s southern border with Mexico is the Rio Grande, a 1,900-mile-long river that starts in Colorado. Texas comprises 10 climatic regions, or areas of different

temperature and average rainfall. Forests, rolling hills, prairies, deserts, colorful wildflowers, vast ranchland and mountains are all found in Texas.



photo courtesy National Park Service

Big Bend National Park

Making a living

Beef is the biggest agricultural product in Texas, and it leads the nation in raising beef cattle. Texas is also first in producing cotton, horses, sheep, goats, wool, mohair and hay.

Texas is also known for oil production and wind energy production.

Texas fun

Sports fans will find many teams to support: two NFL teams, two MLB teams, three NBA teams and one NHL team, along with WNBA and Major League Soccer action. In addition, college sports are popular, with fans cheering for the University of Texas, Baylor University and Texas A&M University, among many others.



photo by Carol M. Highsmith

Longhorn cattle are a common symbol of Texas and the mascot for the University of Texas.

Many Texans also follow rodeo and NASCAR races.

Presidential Texas

Texas has been home to four U.S. presidents.

• **Dwight D. Eisenhower**, our 34th president, was born in Denison, Texas. He was a general in the U.S. Army before entering the race for president.



Eisenhower

• **Lyndon B. Johnson** was our 36th president, from 1963 to 1969. He was the vice president when John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas in 1963. Johnson was born in Stonewall, Texas. Before running for the U.S. House of Representatives, he was a teacher.



Johnson

• Our 41st president, **George H.W. Bush**, was born in Connecticut but lived much of his adult life in West Texas. He served in the U.S. Navy Reserve in World War II and as vice president with Ronald Reagan.



Bush 41

• **George W. Bush**, the eldest son of our 41st president, became our 43rd president in 2001. He, too, was born in Connecticut but was raised in Texas. Before becoming president, Bush 43 served as governor of Texas.



Bush 43

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPTexas

At the library:

- “The Alamo and the Birth of Texas” by JSB Morse
- “Animals of Texas!” by Hope Aicher

Try ‘n’ Find

Words that remind us of Texas are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



AUSTIN, BIG, BUSH, CATTLE, CLIMATIC, COTTON, EISENHOWER, ENERGY, HOUSTON, JOHNSON, LONGHORN, MEXICO, OIL, PUEBLO, REPUBLIC, RIVER, SPANISH, TEXAS, WAR, WILDFLOWERS.

S P A N I S H O L B E U P R T
P R A W E W O Y G R E N E E M
N O T S U O H R E V I R X W E
J O H N S O N A V K T A I O X
C L I M A T I C Q R S D S H I
R B I G H C I L B U P E R N C
H O G L O N G H O R N Z V E O
S A U S T I N O T T O C O S V
U B W E L T T A C R W I S I M
B S S R E W O L F D L I W E A



Cook’s Corner

Texas Enchiladas

You’ll need:

- 1 (16-ounce) can black beans, drained
- 4 tortillas
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese
- 1 cup salsa
- 1/2 cup sour cream

What to do:

1. Spread an equal amount of beans on each tortilla.
2. Sprinkle an equal amount of cheese on top.
3. Roll, starting from one side, to form enchiladas.
4. Place in an 8-by-8-inch baking dish. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 15 minutes.
5. Remove from oven and top with equal amounts of salsa and sour cream. Serves 4.



* You’ll need an adult’s help with this recipe.

Mini Jokes



Tom: What’s a Texan’s favorite subject in math?
Triana: Longhorn division!

Eco Note



Black squirrels, a color variation of the eastern gray squirrel, may be thriving in urban areas because they are more visible to drivers and less likely to be hit by cars, according to a new study. Researchers surveyed roadkill in Syracuse, New York, and found that black squirrels were 30% underrepresented among squirrels killed by motorists, suggesting natural selection may be favoring them in cities. Previous research shows that people detect black squirrels faster than gray ones, giving drivers more time to react and avoid collisions.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about Texas.

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1. Domestic animals with four feet: cows, calves, bulls (6-letter noun)
[][][][][][]

2. Large farm for raising livestock (5-letter noun)
[][][][][]

3. Greasy liquid used as fuel and food; petroleum (3-letter noun)
[][]

4. Sportsmen in a rodeo or workers with livestock (7-letter plural noun)
[][][][][][][]


1. Joey saw _____ eating grasses along the dusty trail.

2. The ____ had acres of land where animals grazed.

3. Brown ____ splashed from the rig's pump onto the ground.

4. _____ were in the corral giving horses a good workout.

ROOTONYM®
by Jan & Carey Ott Cook



Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Cattle, Ranch, Oil, Cowboys.

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