



The Mini Page

Next Week:
It's World Cup time!

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Founded by Betty Debnam



Big Sky Country

photo by Rem Koc

"Montana" comes from the Spanish word for mountain. But only the western half of the state actually has the Rocky Mountains.

The east is made up of wide-open plains, giving our 41st state the nickname "Big Sky Country." Its northern border is shared with the Canadian provinces Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Montana became a state in 1889.



Montana history

Native American tribes including the Crow, the Cheyenne, the Blackfeet and the Salish once lived where Montana is. After the Lewis and Clark Expedition, fur traders moved in, sometimes bringing diseases that killed native people.

Most of Montana was part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Fifty years later, gold was discovered at Gold Creek, and soon miners also found silver, copper, lead and coal. More and more settlers arrived, and native people were driven onto reservations.

Montana's capital is in Helena, but the biggest city in the state is Billings, with about 200,000 in the metro area.

Natural Montana

Along with the Rocky Mountains, 10 national forests cover about a quarter of the state. The large Missouri River has its start in southwestern Montana. Yellowstone National Park, famous for its geysers, lies partially

in Montana, and Glacier National Park, with beautiful lakes, glaciers and meadows, is in the state.

Montanans enjoy mild summer temperatures but have to endure cold winter weather, with snowfall averaging 30 to 50 inches each year in the bigger cities.

Living in Montana

People in the state work in tourism, lumber, mining and farming, raising animals and crops such as wheat and barley.

For fun, Montanans like to hike, downhill and cross-country ski, hunt, ride horses and snowmobile.

Montana has the most grizzly bears of any of the lower 48 states. During the 1800s, bison were hunted nearly to extinction, with only about 500 animals left in the United States. In more recent years, about 31,000 wild bison roam in Montana and other areas. It is the national mammal of the United States.



photo by Daniel Mayer

The Continental Divide is an imaginary line running partly through Montana that separates the flow of our continent's rivers. On one side, the rivers flow east into the Atlantic Ocean. On the other side, rivers flow west into the Pacific.



Fly fishing is especially popular in Montana.

Meet a Montana artist

Charles M. Russell (1864-1926) is famous for his paintings and sculptures of cowboys and Indians in the Old West. He also wrote stories about that life.

Russell grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. From the time he was a child, he loved watching the fur trappers, explorers and soldiers who came to St. Louis from the frontier. He dreamed of becoming a cowboy. He was constantly drawing or making small sculptures of animals with wax and clay.

At 16, he went to work on a Montana sheep ranch. He fell in love with the area and stayed in Montana for 46 years.

Respecting Native Americans

Russell was as interested in Native American cultures as he was in cowboys. He lived during the summer and winter



Russell's painting A Cree was painted in 1910.

of 1888 with a band of Blood Indians. He learned their language, stories and customs.

He defended Native American rights even though this was often an unpopular stand. He also fought to preserve the environment of the Great Plains and Montana.

The C.M. Russell Museum is in Great Falls, Montana.

Resources



On the Web:

- montanakids.com

At the library:

- "Montana Wildlife: Animals and Mammals" by Billy Grinslott and Kinsey Marie

Try 'n' Find

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



BIG SKY, BISON, BLACKFEET, CHEYENNE, COAL, COPPER, CROW, DIVIDE, FOREST, GEYSER, GOLD, GRIZZLY, HELENA, LEAD, MONTANA, RIVER, RUSSELL, SALISH, SILVER, SNOW, TOURISM.

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

Cook's Corner

Pretzel Chicken

You'll need:

- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 cup pretzels
- 2 boneless chicken breasts, cut into 3/4-inch strips

What to do:

1. Place melted butter in a medium bowl.
2. Place pretzels in a plastic bag and crush with a rolling pin.
3. Dip each piece of chicken in butter to coat on both sides.
4. Drop strips, one at a time, in bag of crushed pretzels. Shake well to coat.
5. Place strips on a greased baking sheet. Cook in a preheated 350-degree oven for 15 minutes or until done. Serves 4.



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

Mini Jokes



Molly: What do you call bears with no ears?

Mason: B!

Mikey: What's as big as a bison but weighs nothing?

Mary Anne: Its shadow!

Eco Note



An unusually warm and dry winter in northwestern Wyoming has prompted large numbers of elk to leave the National Elk Refuge weeks earlier than normal. Observers reported that at least 1,600 elk had already migrated toward Grand Teton National Park by early January, with more herds departing through late winter. Little snow cover and abundant forage at higher elevations reduced the need for the animals to remain on the refuge, where 6,000 to 8,000 elk typically winter. There was no supplemental feeding this season because snowpack was so low. The early migration may be another sign of a warming climate reshaping seasonal wildlife patterns.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

For later:

Look in your local newspaper for news about the Rocky Mountains.

1. Big area of space above the Earth (3-letter noun)

□ □ □

2. The business of digging in the earth to find minerals, such as coal (6-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □

3. Reptiles that lived millions of years ago (9-letter plural noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

4. Catching aquatic animals for food, business or sport (7-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

1. Wide open plains in Montana are known as Big _____ Country.

2. _____ in Montana includes copper, gold, silver, lead and oil.

3. People at the Museum of the Rockies study _____ bones.

4. _____ for trout, bass, salmon, etc. is a popular sport.

ROOTONYM®
by Jan & Carey Orr Cook

photo by Greg Goebel

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

Answers: Sky, Mining, Dinosaurs, Fishing.

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KidSpot by Dan Thompson 5-30

Flower
How many words of two or more letters can you make from the letters in the word FLOWER? Use each of the six letters only once in each new word.

ANS: ELF, FEW, FLOW, FLOW, FLOW, LOW, LOWER, OF, ORE, OWE, OWL, ROE, ROLE, ROW, WE, WOLF, WORE.