



Essentials

Origin of the Name: The Dakota Indian name for the region was *minisota*, or *Mini-sotah*. *Mini* or *minne* means ‘water’. *Sota* means ‘a sky filled with fleecy white clouds that slowly float by’. Together they translated as ‘sky-tinted water’ and described the Minnesota River when it rose quickly in the spring and the banks caved in, giving the water the appearance of a beclouded sky.

State Nicknames: “Gopher State”: Political cartoonist R.O. Sweeney drew corrupt railroad officials standing in a cart being drawn by gophers, ridiculing the five million loan of 1857,” solidifying the gopher name.

“Land of 10,000 Lakes” (there are actually 11,842 lakes greater than 10+ acres) was a slogan used to promote the territory of Minnesota to immigrants “Bread and Butter State” came out of the 1902 Pan-American Exposition, where Minnesota promoted its wheat, flour, and dairy products.

Motto: “L’Etoile du Nord” or “Star of the North.” Gov. Henry Sibley added the motto to the state seal during his tenure, replacing the misspelled Latin motto, *Quo sursum velo videre* ‘I want to see what lies beyond’.

License Plate: “10,000 Lakes.” Minnesota’s license plate bore no slogan until 1950, when it adopted its current motto.

Statehood: Minnesota was designated a territory on March 3, 1849, and admitted into the Union on March 11, 1858, as the 32nd state.

State Seal: Designed in 1861 by accomplished artist and Fort Snelling commanding officer, Capt. Seth Eastman, the seal shows a barefoot farmer plowing a field near St. Anthony Falls to the right, with pine trees growing beyond them. To the left is an American Indian astride a white horse and the sun on the horizon.

State Flag: Royal blue with a gold fringe, the center is the state seal, wreathed with lady slippers and 19 stars. Excluding the original 13 states, Minnesota was 19th to join the Union. The large north star represents “North Star State.” The dates, 1819, 1858, and 1893, indicate, respectively, the year Fort Snelling was established, the year of statehood, and the year the flag adopted. Amelia Hyde Center’s design was chosen from among 200 entries for the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair.

State Capital: St. Paul

Largest City: Minneapolis

Location: Minnesota is in the Upper Midwest; it lies south of the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Ontario, east of the Dakotas, north of Iowa, and west of Wisconsin and Lake Superior. Minnesota is the second most northern state, behind Alaska: Its Northwest Angle, a finger of land in Lake of the Woods, pops across the 49th parallel and can only be reached by crossing the lake or going through Manitoba.

Time Zone: Central

TAKE 5 PROPOSED, BUT NOT ADOPTED, STATE SYMBOLS

1. **State amusement ride:** Tilt-A-Whirl, proposed 2007.
2. **State beer:** Schell's Deer Brand beer and Cold Spring beer, proposed 1987.
3. **State candy:** licorice, proposed 1997.
4. **State folk dance:** square dance, proposed 1992.
5. **State sport:** ice hockey, proposed 2008.

Source: Minnesota State Legislature

Legal Holidays: Minnesotans mark New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. By law, no public business, including schools, can operate on these days. The state school board can decide to make Christopher Columbus Day a school holiday.

Area Codes: 218, 320, 507, 612, 651, 763, 952

System of Measurement: U.S. Customary System of Units , which is Imperial units.

Voting Age: 18

Drinking Age: In 1973, the legal drinking age lowered from 21 to 18; in 1976, it rose to 19; in 1986, it reverted back to 21, where it remains.

Did you know. . .

that according to a University of Minnesota study, 93 percent of Minnesotans wouldn't live anywhere else?

YOU KNOW YOU'RE *FROM*

- You've gone trick-or-treating in three feet of snow.
- You know there's no such thing as a "Snow Day."
- You know summer and construction season occur simultaneously.
- You know where all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average.
- The Elf Tree has nothing to do with cookies.
- You know what SPAM is, how it's made, and you still enjoy it. On occasion.
- You know that Iowa's Corn Palace is no match for Minnesota's State Fair Crop Art.
- You know what Eveleth's claim to fame is.
- You know where Lake Wobegon is located.
- You elected a pro wrestler to the highest state office.
- You know what the "Opener" is, when it happens, and what you do.
- You've witnessed real people enjoying chocolate-covered bacon.
- You know that Minnesota blazed the trail for butter sculpting.
- You know the Minnesota hockey mom isn't *that* kind of hockey mom.
- It is a sport to gather food by drilling through 18 inches of ice and sitting there until, hopefully, it swims by.
- You are proud your state makes the national news 96 nights each year because International Falls is the "Icebox of the Nation."
- In March, as a child, you've called your mom or dad at work to ask if it's warm enough to wear shorts yet.
- You have refused to buy something because it's too "spendy."
- You're a card-carrying member of both the NRA and the ACLU.
- You have apologized to a telemarketer.
- You have had an entire telephone conversation with someone who dialed a wrong number.
- You beam with pride when royalty or a Hollywood celebrity comes to the Mayo Clinic to be treated.
- You were delighted to get a miniature snow shovel for your 5th birthday.
- Your birthday was in April, and you still got to use the shovel right away.
- You know how to say Wayzata, Mahtomedi, Chisholm, and Shakopee.

MINNESOTA WHEN . . .

- You support the preservation of forests, farmland and wetlands because that's where you hunt deer, pheasants, and geese.
- You voted for Walter Mondale.
- You never had to rewind any part of *Fargo* because you missed some of the dialogue.
- Your town isn't being ironic when it plans a winter carnival.
- Vacation means "going up north."
- You know where the Iron Range is located.
- You laugh out loud every time you see a news report about a blizzard shutting down the entire East Coast.
- You understand, and can explain, illegal defense, the infield fly rule, and icing.
- You measure distance in minutes.
- People from other states love to hear you say words with Os in them.
- You know what Mille Lacs is and how to spell it.
- The only reason you go to Wisconsin is to get fireworks, to fish, or to buy beer on Sunday.
- You drink pop, not soda.
- You call highways "freeways."
- Every time you see moonlight on a lake, you think of a dancing bear, and sing, gently, "From the land of sky-blue waters ... Hamm's the beer that's so refreshing ..."
- Someone has waved you through a four-way stop even though they stopped long before you.
- Weather tops the news headlines. Daily.
- The Dairy Queen is closed from December through February.
- Someone in a store offers you assistance, and that person doesn't work there.
- Your town has an equal number of bars and churches.
- Your daily meals are breakfast, dinner, and supper.
- Your gas station thinks "full service" means filling your gas tank, washing the windshield, checking the oil, and being friendly.
- Everyone has a cabin.

TAKE 5

PATRICK COLEMAN'S FIVE ESSENTIAL MINNESOTA BOOKS

Patrick Coleman is an historian who has been with the Minnesota Historical Society since 1979. In his role as curator, Coleman has added nearly 100,000 volumes to the library's collection. Fiction and poetry are particularly close to his heart: he lectures on many aspects of Minnesota literature and recently put out an iTunes podcast about the history of pulp fiction in the state. Here are his five favorite fictional works about Minnesota.

1. ***Giants in the Earth*** by O. E. Rolvaag, 1927. Critic James Grey wrote that "...the conviction is strong in the true believer's heart that when [the Heavenly Muse] finds herself in Minnesota, she wearily gets out her make-up kit and prepares for a lugubrious session celebrating the sorrows of the soil and the soul." No one celebrates the sorrows of the soil better than Norwegian American author O. E. Rolvaag, and there is no more powerful description of harsh pioneer life on the great plains of this region than this. I can think of no better example of how fiction can enhance historical understanding. If you do nothing else, read the last paragraphs of this beautiful novel. It is worth giving away the ending.

2. ***Main Street: The Story of Carol Kennicott*** by Sinclair Lewis, 1920. *Main Street* would be on anyone's list of favorite books about Minnesota. And for good reason! The town of Gopher Prairie (Sauk Centre, MN) is so iconic: "It was unprotected and unprotecting; there was no dignity in it nor any hope of greatness." Taught as a novel about the small-mindedness of small towns, it is, perhaps more importantly, one of the first great feminist novels. Carol asks, in chapter 16, "What is it we [women] want — and need? ... I think perhaps we want a more conscious life. We're tired of drudging and sleeping and dying. We're tired of seeing just a few people able to be individualists."

3. ***Staggerford*** by Jon Hassler, 1977. Hassler is spot-on in capturing the people and place of Minnesota. The protagonist Miles Pruitt teaches English in the high school he had attended in the town of Staggerford, loosely based on Park Rapids in north-central Minnesota. Hassler describes the believable but eccentric characters in the town with a grace, humanity, and humor that is lacking in so many contemporary authors; one reviewer pointed out Hassler's unusual ability of "making good people interesting."

4. ***Northern Lights*** by Tim O'Brien, 1975. O'Brien's first work of fiction contains his best descriptions of Minnesota, in this case the region known as the Arrowhead. *Northern Lights* is set in the fictional town of Sawmill Landing (somewhere between Grand Marais and Two Harbors), on the North Shore of Lake Superior. The novel is a psychological examination of siblings who work out their conflicts and bond while skiing through the wilderness lost in a blizzard. The story is yet another reminder that in Minnesota, Mother Nature is often trying to kill you.

5. ***The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*** by Max Shulman, 1951. Shulman's Dobie Gillis is perhaps better known from the TV series of the same name that ran from 1959 to 1963. *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* was probably even sexist by the standards of its own time, but the references to local people and places will be enjoyable to readers. The stories are centered on the University of Minnesota, which, the author says in a note in the sequel, "is, of course, wholly imaginary."

TAKE 5 MOST LIVABLE STATES

1. **New Hampshire**
2. **Utah**
3. **Wyoming**
4. **Minnesota**
5. **Iowa**

Source: CQ Press. CQ Press livability ratings are based on 44 factors, such as crime rates, unemployment rates and per capita gross state product.

POPULATION

There are over 5.2 million people residing in the Gopher State, making it the 21st most populous state in the Union—right between Colorado (5 million) and Wisconsin (5.6 million), and about the same population as Finland. It is expected to reach 6.2 million by 2030, 6.6 million by 2040. Eight of its 87 counties have more than 100,000 residents. Of the 853 towns and cities, 14 have over 50,000 residents and more than 61% have fewer than 1,000. Approximately 73% of the population lives in urban centers. Minneapolis is the largest city, with close to 400,000 people, followed by St. Paul at around 300,000, then Duluth, Rochester, and Bloomington, which have approximately 85,000 residents each.

Population Density: There are 60.5 Minnesotans per square mile. By way of comparison, there is one person in Alaska per square mile, five people in Wyoming, nine in North Dakota, and 11 in South Dakota. Iowa is a little less crowded than Minnesota, with 54 people per square mile, while Wisconsin is elbow-to-elbow at 104. The US average is 86.

Where the Heart Is

"Welcome to Lake Wobegon, where all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average." To the world outside Minnesota, that single sentence is their introduction to the state and the Minnesota sensibility. The man behind those famous words may be one the state's most famous living citizens.

Garrison Keillor is, for all intents and purposes, "A Prairie Home Companion." Although writer credits often tip their hat to such folks as Sandy Beach, Sara Bellum, and Warren Peace, it is a wink to the fact that Keillor has written large tracts of the show and has done so since its inception in 1974. The show airs on public radio stations around the country and is heard in the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand.

Minnesotans of all stripes have opinions on Keillor one way or the other, often both. Senators may represent the state in Washington, but, like it or not, Keillor is Minnesota's emissary to the world. Sometimes citizens feel the emissary has gotten it terribly wrong, or that he's simply too powerful or, in that most famous of local traditions, sometimes he just needs to be taken down a peg or two. The relationship is such that Minnesotans have opinions on Keillor's marriages (of which there have been three), his choice of home and his relationship with neighbors, and even the courageous act of opening his own bookstore.

What Keillor has been very clear about is that Minnesota nourishes his soul and provides him with his identity. He is a son of Anoka and now his beloved St. Paul. He is clearly a student of Sinclair Lewis and devoted to F. Scott Fitzgerald. For Keillor, these authors represent not only what talent a people can produce, but more importantly confirmed for him that Minnesota was worthy of being written about, and that those stories would hold interest around the world. They just had to be told.

And tell them he has. For more than three decades (with a brief interruption from 1987-93), "A Prairie Home Companion" has charmed its way into listeners' lives. Keillor is also the author of 10 books, six of them *New York Times* bestsellers. He wrote the screenplay for the 2006 Robert Altman-directed movie modeled on his show. He has also received every conceivable award his profession has to offer.

For all the attention, accolades, and national and international attention, Keillor is home when he is in Minnesota. He famously said that some writers need to go away to write about home. "Not me," he said. "To write about Lake Wobegon, I need to be around Minnesota."

POPULATION BY GENDER

	Total	% of state total
Male	2,588,258	49.8%
Female	2,609,363	50.2%

POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

- Under 5: 6.7%
- 5-19: 20.3%
- 20-64: 60.7%
- 65+: 12.2%
- Median age: 35.4 years
- US average: 36.4 years

Nobel Prize Winners

- Number of Nobel Prizes awarded: 758
- Number awarded to people with a connection to University of Minnesota: 20
- First Minnesotan to be awarded the prize: Arthur H. Compton, Physics, 1927
- Most recent Minnesotans to be awarded the prize: Leonid Hurwicz, Economic Sciences, 2007
- Number of prizes awarded to Minnesotans for physics: 7
- Number for economics: 4
- Number for chemistry: 3
- Number for medicine: 2
- Number for forestry: 1
- Number for literature: 1
- Number for biostatistics: 1
- Number for pharmacology: 1

Source: University of Minnesota

TAKE 5 PROPOSED, BUT NOT ADOPTED, STATE SLOGANS

1. Land of 10,000 Petersons.
2. Where the elite meet sleet.
3. Minnesota: Where visitors turn blue with envy.
4. Minnesota: Mosquito supplier to the free world.
5. I came, I thawed, I transferred.

Source: <http://www.surfminnesota.net/slogans.html>

MATCHED

- Marriage rate in Minnesota: 6.8 per 1,000
- Marriage rate in the US: 7.3 per 1,000

DETACHED

- Divorce rate in Minnesota: 3.2 per 1,000
- Divorce rate in the US: 3.6 per 1,000

HATCHED

- Birth rate in Minnesota: 2.14 per 1,000
- Birth rate in the US: 1.38 per 1,000

DISPATCHED

- Death rate in Minnesota: 715.4 per 100,000
- Death rate in the US: 838 per 100,000

CHRONOLOGICALLY GIFTED

Currently, 12% of the population of the Gopher State is 65 and older. By 2015, 15% will be in that age group, and by 2030, people over 65 will account for 19% of the state's population. Ninety-five percent of older Minnesotans receive social security benefits.

Source: Migration Policy Institute Data Hub (Migration Facts, Stats, and Maps).
Figures represent people aged 16 and older.

Did you know. . .

that Minnesota contains the northernmost town in the contiguous 48 states: Angle Inlet, at 49.22° north latitude?

LIFE EXPECTANCY OF MINNESOTANS

- Men: 77.9 years
- Women: 81.5 years
- Second-highest in the nation

Sources: Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota State Demographer and National Vital Statistics Reports; US Census Bureau

RELIGION & WORSHIP

The first church in Minnesota was organized by Presbyterians at Fort Snelling in 1835, while the first Roman Catholic church was set up in 1841. Protestants make up the largest percentage of Minnesotans and the state is home to the headquarters of three national Lutheran groups.

A 2009 study by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found the following characteristics of Minnesotans with regard to religious life:

- Belief that religion is important: 52% (US: 56%)
- Weekly attendance of worship services: 38% (US: 39%)
- Daily prayer: 52% (US: 58%)
- Belief in God: 70% (US: 71%)

Did you know. . .

that the climate-controlled skyway system in Minneapolis connects more than 8 miles of restaurants, hotels, shopping and entertainment opportunities, creating a second city one story above street level?

TOP 10 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

1. Mainline Protestant: 32%
2. Catholic: 28%
3. Evangelical Protestant: 21%
4. Unaffiliated: 13%
5. Black Protestant: 1%
6. Buddhist: 1%
7. Islamic: 1%
8. Jewish: 1%
9. Muslim: 1%
10. Don't know/Refused: 5%

Source: Pew Research Center

TO YOUR HEALTH

In *CQ Press'* annual list that assesses and compares, for instance, infant mortality rates, cancer rates, and health insurance coverage, Minnesota consistently ranks tops as one of the nation's healthiest states. In 2009, United Health Foundation ranked Minnesota the sixth-healthiest state. And, despite the bitterly cold winters, the Twin Cities regularly ranks high as an active and health-conscious city, thanks in part to an abundance of trails and lakes.

Did you know. . .

that the first open-heart surgery and the first bone-marrow transplant in the country were carried out at University of Minnesota medical facilities?

TAKE 5 FIVE HEALTHIEST STATES

1. **Minnesota**
2. **New Hampshire**
3. **Vermont**
4. **Maine**
5. **Massachusetts**

Source: *CQ Press*

SCHOOL DAYS

Minnesota has always stood out when it comes to education. In 2007, *Forbes* ranked Minneapolis-St. Paul No. 11 in its list of the top 20 places in the US to educate your children. Minnesota has led the nation for five consecutive years in academic achievement, and both fourth- and eighth-grade students in Minnesota continue to outperform a majority of the nation in math scores.

Did you know. . .

that Minnesota sent more athletes to Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics than any other state? Chisholm, Duluth, and Edina tie for most athletes from a single city.

Did you know. . .

that among the 50 cities with the most workers, Minneapolis held the No. 2 spot for the percentage of commuters who bike to work?

They said it

“I have no object and no interests which are not inseparably bound up with the welfare of the state.”

— Henry Hastings Sibley, Minnesota’s first governor, in his inaugural address

They said it

“[It is a] most miserable & uninteresting country” and an “out of the way part of the world.”

— Zachary Taylor, who served as U.S. President in 1849-50, writing of his experience as commander of Fort Snelling from May 24, 1828, to July 12, 1829

HIGHER EDUCATION

The percentage of people 25 years and older who graduated from high school is 87.9%, compared to 80.4% nationally. There are 27.4% of people with a bachelor’s degree, compared to 24.4% nationally. The graduation rate for the freshman class of 2005-6 was the fourth-highest in the country (86.2%), behind Wisconsin (87.5%), Nebraska (87.0%), and Iowa (86.9%).

Source: Minnesota Office of Higher Education, Kids Count Data Center. Figures are for full-time students.

Did you know. . .

that the metro area’s 18.3 million annual visitors make it one of *Forbes’* 30 most-visited cities in the US?

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

U of M was founded in 1851, but lack of funding and the Civil War hampered its educational efforts. The school got back on track with financial assistance from John Sergeant Pillsbury, state senator and governor, with the first students enrolling in 1867. The first two students graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1873. The numbers have grown a little since then. There are currently 67,364 students enrolled at the five campuses; 51,659 are at the Twin Cities campus, while the others are located in Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Rochester. The majority of those students — 42,309 — are undergraduates.

Undergraduate tuition ranges from \$9,988 to \$11,466, depending on campus. There are 16 schools and colleges to choose from, including agriculture, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, law, medicine, dentistry, nursing, public health, design, biological sciences, and liberal arts.

The university has 4,105 faculty members and brought in \$563.8 million in external research funding in 2009. *The Scientist* magazine ranked U of M Twin Cities fourth in the country for patent creation and innovation.

They said it

“Maybe it’s our ‘Lake Wobegon’ nature, where we’re not looking to crow about ourselves. There’s a very active non-profit community here, a vigorous civil society and a lot of people who are very active. It’s just been our tradition here.”

— Robert Hybben, Donor Services associate at the Minneapolis Foundation, quoted in “Most affordable places to live well.” *Forbes*.

SPORTS TEAMS

Basketball: Minnesota Timberwolves — one divisional championship (2004) and eight playoffs. Sister team: Minnesota Lynx.

Baseball: Minnesota Twins — two world championships and three World Series wins (1924, 1987, 1991).

Football: Minnesota Vikings — four Super Bowl appearances; eight NFL/NFC Championship games; fifth highest winning percentage in the NFL.

Hockey: Minnesota Wild — two playoff appearances.