



Georgia

The Peach State

Established 1788
4th state

EXTREMES

Coldest: The lowest temperature was -17°F (-27°C) in CCC Camp, Floyd County, on 27 January 1940.

Highest: Brasstown Bald Mountain in the Blue Ridge Mountains is the state's highest point at 4,784 feet (1,458 m).

Climate

Georgians enjoy warm, pleasant weather most of the year. Winters are short and mild. Snow only falls in the north and is usually very rare. However, the same tropical air currents that keep Georgia so warm can sometimes bring terrible storms. Hurricanes and tropical storms develop over the Atlantic Ocean and can strike Georgia with their high winds and heavy rain. Even more common are destructive tornadoes and flooding. Despite these challenges, Georgians feel that their warm climate makes their state a great place to live.

Geography

If you travel from northern Georgia to the Atlantic coast, you will see a range of beautiful landscapes. The Blue Ridge Mountains reach down across Georgia's northern border. Covered with pine trees, some of these mountains are more than 4,500 feet (1,370 m) above sea level. South of the mountains are the rolling hills of the Piedmont region. This is the most densely populated section of the state, with large cities like Atlanta and Athens. The Coastal Plains make up the southern two-thirds of Georgia. The rich soils of this region produce most of the state's biggest crops. A unique subtropical swamp called the Okefenokee lies on the southern border. The swamp is 45 by 25 miles large (72 by 40 km) and holds moss-covered trees, water lilies, and animals like flying squirrels and alligators. Georgia's 58,977 square miles (152,750 sq km) of total area make it the 24th largest state.

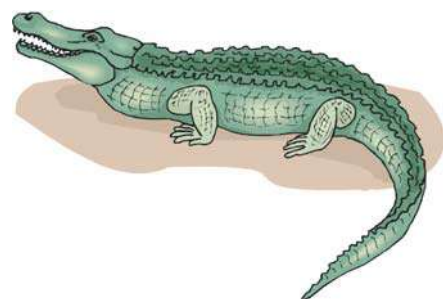


Hottest: The state's high temperature was 112°F (44°C) in Greenville on 20 August 1983.

Lowest: The lowest elevation is sea level on the Atlantic Ocean.

Resources and Economy

The cotton industry dominated Georgia 150 years ago. Although cotton is still grown there today, Georgia has developed from a one-crop state into a strong economy with many different sources of income. Factories throughout Georgia manufacture products like cars and airplanes. Textile plants make rugs and carpets, and mills turn trees into paper. Atlanta has become the financial and trading capital of the southeast. Large corporations like Coca-Cola base their headquarters there. Poultry is the most important agricultural product. With many different soil types, the state also grows delicious watermelons, peanuts, pecans, and the famous Georgia peaches.



History

Deadly Diseases

In search of gold, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto and his nine hundred soldiers crossed through what is now Georgia in 1540. They were the first of many Europeans to come. They brought with them European diseases like measles and smallpox. The Creek and the Cherokee were the largest Native American tribes living in Georgia at the time, and half of them died because they had no immunity to these diseases.

The Colonial Years

Almost two hundred years later, James Edward Oglethorpe arrived with a group of British settlers. They founded the city of Savannah and named their new colony after the British king, George II. Oglethorpe hoped to create a colony where poor people could get a fresh start. The colony would support cooperation and religious freedom. The settlers ended Spanish influence in the region by defeating Spanish soldiers. However, the new colony struggled. By 1752, Oglethorpe had given back the colonial



charter so that the British government could control it directly. Almost three decades later, the Revolutionary War brought fierce fighting to Savannah. After the Americans won the war with the British, Georgia and the other colonies formed the new nation of the United States.

King Cotton

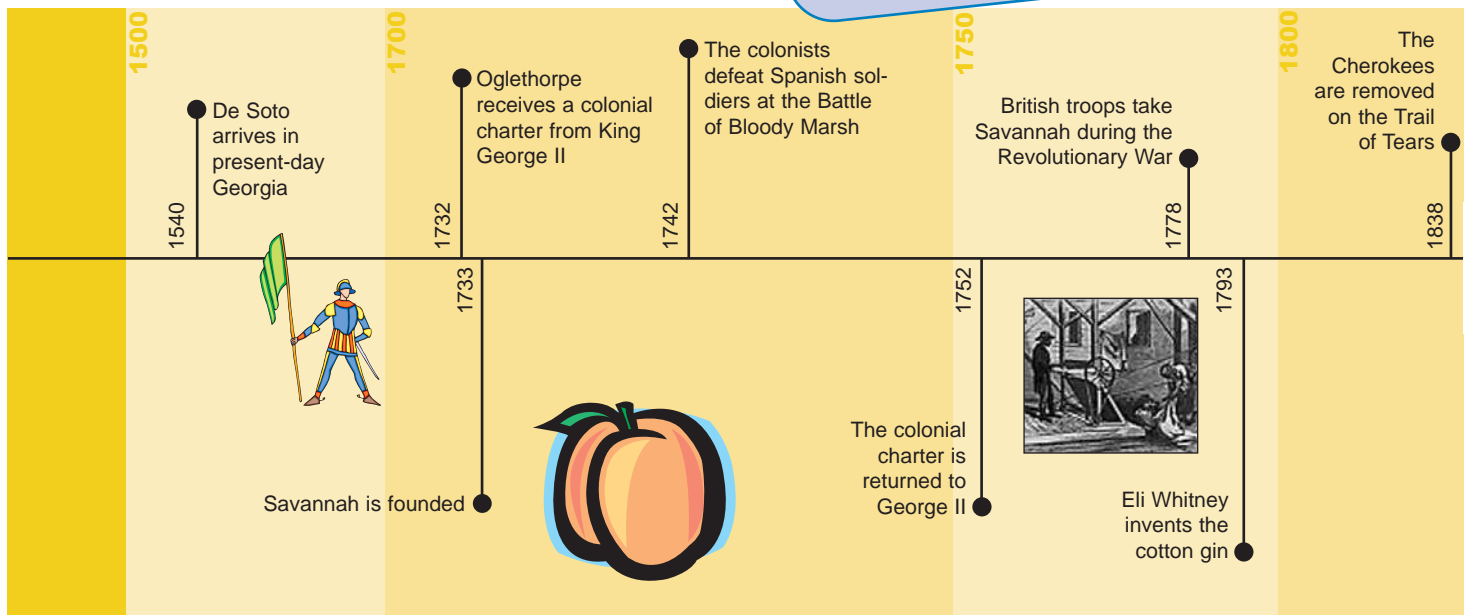
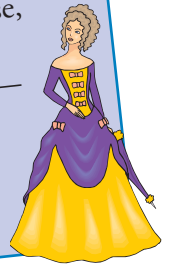
During the 1700s, slaves were brought to Georgia to work in the cotton fields. The slaves had to accomplish the slow and difficult task of separating the cotton fibers from the seeds. In 1793, Eli Whitney invented a machine called the cotton gin. It separated the cotton in a fraction of the previous time. Cotton production suddenly exploded. Georgia was producing thousands of times more cotton than it had before!

The Trail of Tears

Although many Native Americans had already lost their lands by the 1800s, the Cherokee tribe still maintained a successful society in Georgia. However, the whites' desire for more land, and especially gold, led the U.S government to (cont. next page)

Cultural Note

Margaret Mitchell grew up in Atlanta listening to relatives tell her about their Civil War experiences. In 1926, Mitchell began writing a novel based on these stories. Entitled *Gone with the Wind*, the book describes the war from a Southern woman's perspective. Its heroine, Scarlett O'Hara, struggles with the war's tragedies in Georgia. To Mitchell's surprise, the novel was hugely successful when it was published. It sold millions of copies—more than any other book except the Bible. It was then made into one of America's most popular movies.



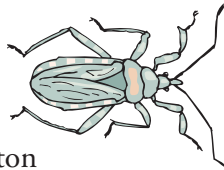
force the Cherokee out of the state. The Cherokee did not want to leave, but soldiers made them travel to Indian Territory far away in the west. Thousands of Cherokee died along the way so they named the tragic event the Trail of Tears.

Sherman's March to the Sea

When the Civil War broke out between the Northern and Southern states, Georgia's state convention voted to join the South's Confederacy. The Civil War was devastating for the state. Thousands of Georgians died. The North's troops captured Atlanta in 1864 and burnt it almost entirely to the ground. Then Northern general William Tecumseh Sherman marched his troops across the state from Atlanta to Savannah, destroying everything along a path 50 miles (80 km) wide. A few months later, the Confederacy surrendered.

Boll Weevil Blues

Georgia recovered slowly from the effects of the Civil War. Georgians once again grew cotton and other crops. However, in the 1920s an insect called the boll weevil ruined millions of acres of the state's cotton. Georgians tried to fight the plague, but one-fifth of the state's population left during those difficult years.



The Civil Rights Movement

In the 1960s Atlanta native Martin Luther King Jr. led a campaign to end racial segregation. He spoke in

Georgia and in other parts of the nation. Because of the efforts of King and others, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. People of different races no longer had to go to different schools or sit in separate places at public events. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work.



Young



Carver



Mitchell

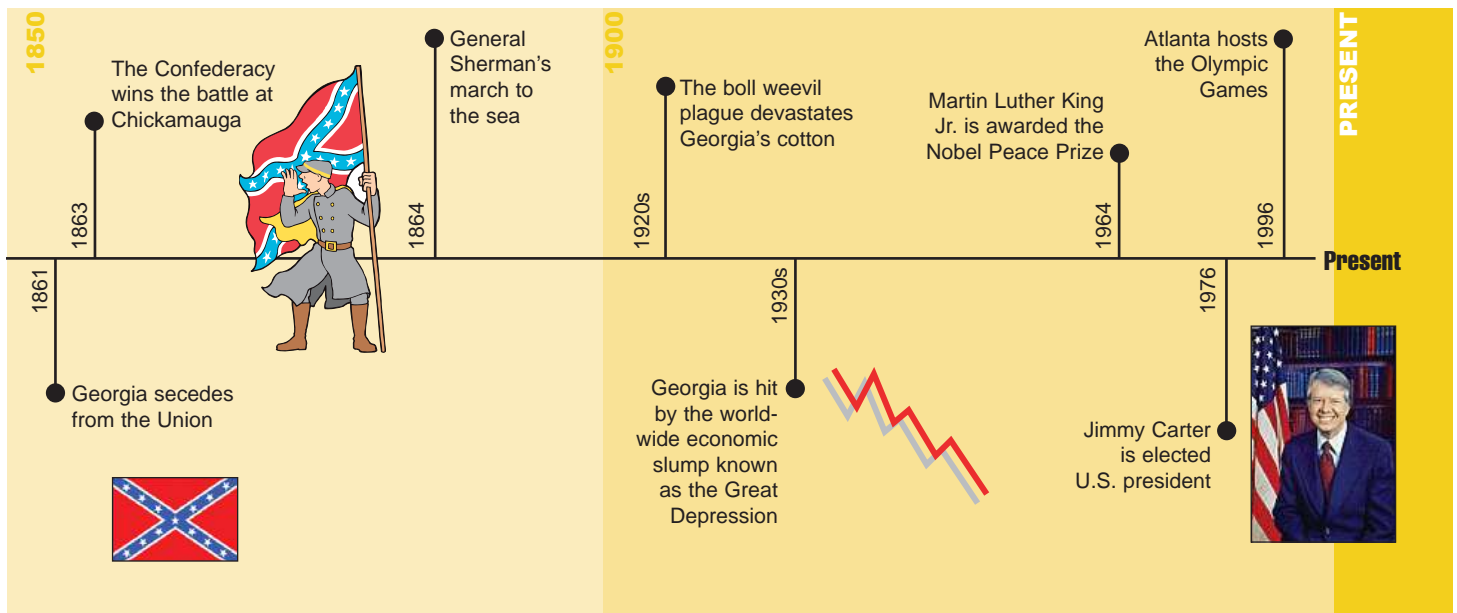


Harris



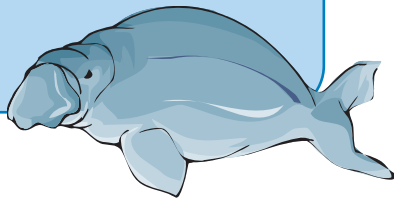
Famous People

- Joel Chandler Harris: Author of the Uncle Remus stories
- Margaret Mitchell: Novelist
- Ted Turner: Broadcasting executive
- Jimmy Carter: Georgia governor and 39th U.S. president
- Nancy Morgan Hart: Revolutionary War heroine
- Ty Cobb: Baseball legend known as the "Georgia peach"
- Flannery O'Connor: Novelist and short story writer
- Andrew Young: Civil rights activist and politician
- George Washington Carver: Agriculturalist
- Alice Walker: Author of *The Color Purple*

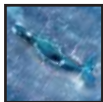


Did You Know?

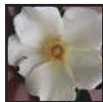
- Georgia is often called the Empire of the South.
- Georgia's current flag was adopted in January 2001. It features the state seal and smaller versions of three former Georgia flags.
- Early Native American ceremonial and burial mounds can be found in Georgia. The largest is 63 feet (19 m) tall.
- Juliette Low founded the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. in Savannah in 1912.
- Manatees, an endangered species, live off the Georgia coast and usually weigh about 3,000 pounds.
- The images of three Confederate Civil War leaders—Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and “Stonewall” Jackson—are carved into Stone Mountain 825 feet (250 m) above the ground.
- Georgia's Atlantic coastline is only 100 miles (161 km) long from border to border, but if you count all the bays and islands it totals a huge 2,344 miles (3,772 km).
- The state song is the popular hit “Georgia on My Mind.”



State Symbols



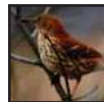
State Marine Mammal
Right whale—Found in Georgia's coastal waters, this endangered species is usually about 50 feet (15 m) long.



State Flower
Cherokee rose—It was chosen in 1916 to honor the Cherokee tribe forced out of the state in the 1830s.



State Tree
Live oak—This tree is common along Georgia's coast and islands.



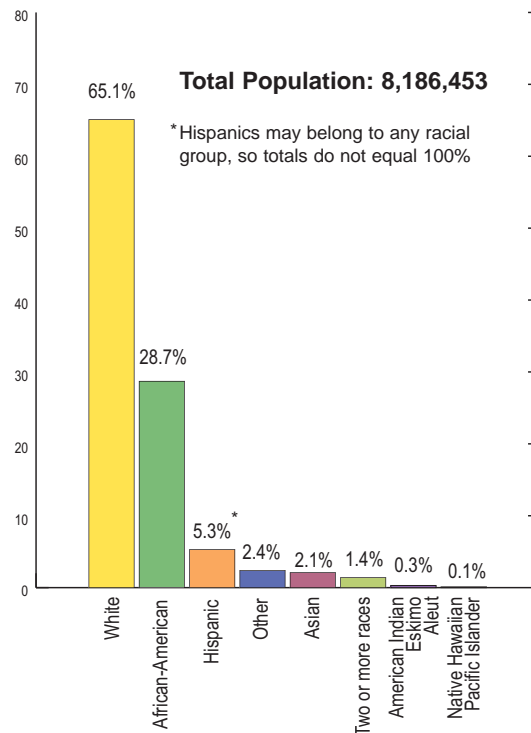
State Bird
Brown thrasher—The male bird sings more songs than any other bird on the continent.

State Motto: Wisdom, Justice, and Moderation—It is found on the front of the state seal. These words represent principles of the Constitution.

For more information: See www.state.ga.us or contact the Georgia Tourism Center, 285 Peachtree Center Avenue NE, Marquis Two Tower, Suite 1000, Atlanta, GA 30303-1230; phone (800) VISIT-GA.

Population

Many Georgians speak with what is called a *southern drawl*. That means that they speak a little bit slower and emphasize their vowels. They often greet people by saying “Hi, y’all.” Two-thirds of the state's population lives in cities, and almost half live in the area around Atlanta. Before the Civil War, half of all Georgians were African-Americans. Many moved to other states in the decades after the war, and today African-Americans make up just more than one-quarter of Georgia's population.



Government

Capital: Atlanta
U.S. Senators: 2
U.S. Representatives: 13
Counties: 159

- Georgia has used 10 different state constitutions since the first was adopted in 1777. The current constitution was adopted in 1982.
- Georgia's legislative body is made up of 56 state senators and 180 representatives.

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