



My Drift

Title: Iowa

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Continuing with my plan to write something about all 50 states, this article is about Iowa. The reason I picked Iowa has to do with the University of Iowa's football team. Last week I was listening to sports talk shows, and they were talking stink about Iowa who was undefeated and ranked #3 in the country at the time. Alabama was ranked #1 and they were saying if Iowa played Alabama on a neutral field, Alabama would be favored by 13 or 14 points. Well, then they played their scheduled games on Saturday.



#3 Iowa beats #4 Penn State 23-20, fans storm field – This win might be Iowa's greatest victory ever!



So, how did #1 Alabama do? Unranked Texas A&M beat Alabama 41-38 on last-play field goal. As I'm writing this article, Iowa 6-0 is ranked #2 behind only Georgia 6-0 who beat Auburn 34-10. Alabama dropped to #5.

Alabama and coach Nick Saban get all the best players and I'm happy to see them lose once in a while. I would love to see Iowa win the national championship this season. Here is a little known fact: Iowa was selected national champion by NCAA-designated major selectors in 1921, 1922, 1956, 1958, and 1960. Alabama has won 18 – Six of these since the year 2000. It is about time somebody else besides Alabama won the championship.

Some General Information

- **Iowa is the only US state bordered by two navigable rivers: the Missouri River to the west and the Mississippi River to the east.**
- **The capital of Iowa is Des Moines.**
- **Iowa's nickname is the Hawkeye state.**
- **Iowa has 3 state universities: Iowa State University, University of Iowa, and University of Northern Iowa.**
- **Iowa is bordered by six states: Wisconsin to the northeast, Illinois to the east and southeast, Missouri to the south, Nebraska to the west, South Dakota to the northwest, and Minnesota to the north.**
- **The five largest cities in Iowa are:**
 - **Des Moines (210,723)**
 - **Cedar Rapids (134,268)**
 - **Davenport (100,934)**
 - **Sioux City (83,193)**
 - **Iowa City (73,998)**

Rivers, Lakes, and Mountains



Major rivers (from left to right)

- **Big Sioux River** drains into the **Missouri River** which eventually merges into **Mississippi River**.
- The **Des Moines River** is the largest river that flows across the state. It begins in southern Minnesota, and eventually drains into the **Mississippi River**.



Des Moines River

- The Cedar River is a 338-mile-long river in Minnesota and Iowa. It is a tributary of the Iowa River, which flows into the Mississippi River.
- The Mississippi River. This is the most famous river in the United States.



Davenport Iowa on the shores of the Mississippi River

Time for a personal story

In 1967, I was hired as a GS-5 Computer Programmer at Tooele Army Depot in Utah. The government sent me TDY to attend 4 weeks of extensive computer programming training at Rock Island Arsenal. Rock Island Arsenal is located on an island in the middle of the Mississippi River between Davenport, Iowa and Rock Island, Illinois. I had my choice whether to stay in Davenport or Rock Island – I picked Davenport. I stayed at a hotel in downtown Davenport. I found a great restaurant and bar (with a pool table) a half block from my hotel. I didn't have a car and had to take the shuttle to and from Rock Island Arsenal where the training was held.



Rock Island Arsenal

This was my first TDY and I went to Davenport by myself. I soon made friends with some classmates and had a great time in the Davenport area. I even played tourist and went on a Mississippi River boat cruise.



Mississippi River Boat Cruise

The Two Largest Lakes in Iowa

Lake Red Rock is Iowa's largest lake with more than 15,000 acres of water and 35,000 acres of land for visitors to enjoy. Lake Red Rock, also referred to as Red Rock Reservoir is formed by Red Rock Dam on the Des Moines River, about 41 miles southeast of the city of Des Moines. The dam was completed in 1969 as a Flood control project by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Various recreational activities are available on the lake's shores like camping, boating, hiking, fishing, etc. Several wilderness areas including the Elk Rock State Park are nearby.



Red Rock Lake



Rathbun Lake

Rathbun Lake with 11,000 acres of gorgeous water and 150 miles of shoreline, it's Iowa's second largest lake. Visitors to the lake can enjoy boating, camping, sightseeing, picnicking, and other recreational activities. Many species of mammals, birds, and fish like white-tailed deer, wild turkey, Canada geese, channel catfish, walleye, etc., live in and around the lake.

Tallest Mountains in Iowa

Although the state isn't particularly well-known as the site of rugged, rocky peaks, Iowa is home to 28 named mountains, the highest of which is Hawkeye Point (1,673 feet) and the most prominent of which is Pilot Knob (1,453 feet).



Hawkeye Point



Pilot Knob

Okay, as far as I can tell, there are no real mountains in Iowa.

What is Iowa best known for?

Well, did you think about it and come up with an answer? I thought of corn fields and hogs. Here is what I found out on the Internet:

There are a lot of farms in Iowa, and more than 97 percent of those farms are owned by farm families. Iowa ranks number one in producing corn, soybeans, hogs, eggs, ethanol, and Dry Distillers Grain Solubles (DDGS) which serve as a premium source of protein for livestock. It also ranks fourth in beef cattle.

While officially nicknamed "The Hawkeye State," Iowa is also known as "The Corn State" due to 90% of its land devoted to agriculture. Iowa produced 2,296,200,000 bushels of corn in 2020, more than 16% of the total U.S. production. Most of the corn you see growing in Iowa is field corn - not the sweet corn that we all love to eat. Field corn is used to make fuel, feed, food, and thousands of other everyday products.

Iowa soybean farmers produce nearly 550 million bushels of soybeans, or roughly 13% of the nation's total. The value of Iowa's soybean crop routinely exceeds \$4.5 billion. There are 42,000 farmers growing soybeans in Iowa.



Field Corn



Soybeans



Hogs

Millions of acres of corn and soybeans are grown every year in Iowa, raised primarily to feed the millions of hogs that reside in the state. Here are some Iowa pork industry facts:

- **Nearly one-third of the nation's hogs are raised in Iowa.**
- **Iowa has more than 5,400 pig farms.**
- **There are pig farmers in every Iowa county. The top five Iowa counties for pig production are Washington, Sioux, Lyon, Hamilton, and Plymouth.**
- **At any one time, there are approximately 24 million pigs being raised in Iowa.**

Egg production is big business in Iowa. The state's roughly 60 million laying hens generate a remarkable 16 billion eggs each year, making Iowa the No. 1 egg-producing state in the nation.



Five scenic places in Iowa

#1 The Covered Bridges of Madison County

The bridges were covered to protect the roadway, because it was cheaper to replace the boards of the roof and walls, then the heavy beams of the actual bridge. The 6 covered bridges which remain in Madison County, Iowa, were made famous by the Clint Eastwood movie “The Bridges of Madison County”.

The bridges in Madison County include:

- **Cedar Covered Bridge**
- **Cutler–Donahoe Bridge**
- **Hogback Covered Bridge**
- **Holliwell Covered Bridge**
- **Imes Bridge**
- **Roseman Covered Bridge**



Holliwell Covered Bridge

#2 Pappajohn Sculpture Park

This is a 4.4-acre within Western Gateway Park in Des Moines, Iowa. It opened in 2009 with 24 sculptures, with four more acquired later. The sculpture park is administered by the Des Moines Art Center and contains works by artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Jaume Plensa, Ai Weiwei, and Barry Flanagan. It is considered "one of the most significant collections of outdoor sculptures in the United States". The most visited and iconic pieces in the Pappajohn Sculpture Park is “Nomade” by Spanish sculptor Jaume Plensa, which dominates the landscape over Locust Street.



Pappajohn Sculpture Park



Sculpture called “Nomade”

#3 Maquoketa Caves State Park

With more caves (13) than any state park in Iowa, Maquoketa Caves is one of Iowa’s most unique outdoor attractions. Enormous bluffs tower throughout the park, and a six-mile trail system winds through geologic formations and forests brimming with natural beauty. As one of the state’s earliest state parks, Maquoketa Caves has been a popular destination for picnickers and hikers since the 1860s. Grab your hiking shoes and a flashlight before traveling to Maquoketa Caves, because this state park is nothing short of adventure.



Maquoketa Caves State Park

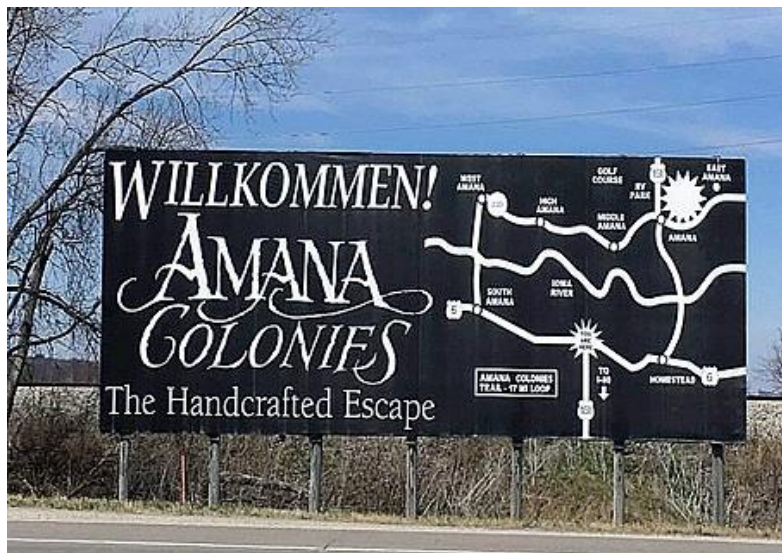
#4 State Capitol Building



The gold dome of the State Capitol building in Des Moines is quite the sight to see. The surrounding campus is also well-manicured, with statues, memorials, and big trees. The interior of the State Capitol is equally as ornate with several eye-catching details like wood carvings and murals. For more than a century, the golden dome of the Capitol has been a symbol of Iowa government and politics. The 23-karat gold-covered dome rises 275 feet above the Capitol grounds.

#5 The Amana Colonies

The Amana Colonies of Eastern Iowa comprises seven villages that take visitors into the past and away from the hustle and bustle. The history of the Amana Colonies dates to the mid-19th century, when German Pietists first broke soil in this isolated Iowa location. For many years, no outside influences interfered with their communal lifestyle.



Today, the Amana Colonies is listed as a National Historical Landmark, and the community encourages tourists to experience this slower pace of life by visiting their historical structures, shopping, and dining in their local establishments, and exploring the scenic surroundings on bike paths and walkways.

Annual festivals at Amana Colonies also beckon tourists from across the state. From the sausage-making Wurstfest to the springtime Maifest to Oktoberfest in the fall, it's fun to explore the German traditions at Amana Colonies.

A few more interesting facts about the state of Iowa

Iowa is home to the world's most crooked street



Snake Alley in Burlington boasts five half-curves and two quarter-curves that span 275 feet, located between Columbia and North Sixth streets. It's that twisting and turning that earned it the designation of 'Crookedest Street in the World,' according to Ripley's Believe It or Not. You and me thought the crookedest road was located in San Francisco. Right?



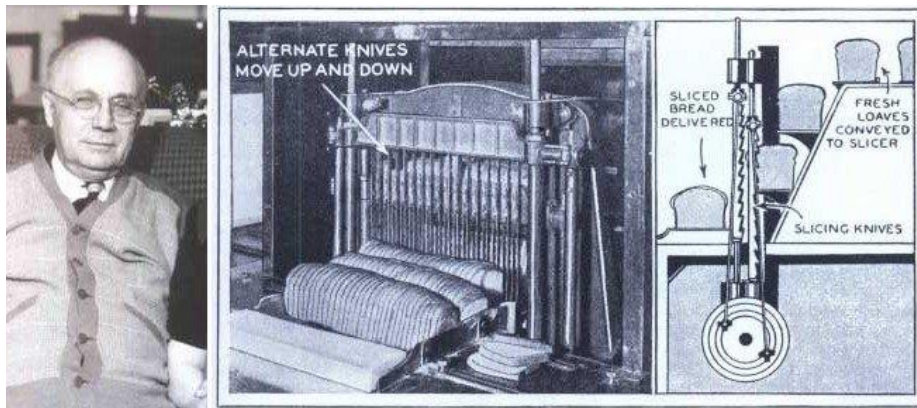
The state's flower is the Wild Rose, which can be found throughout the meadows, open woodlands, and prairie remnants throughout the state, where the Iowa state bird, the Eastern Goldfinch, also resides.

Iowa is birthplace of many important public figures including John Wayne.



Marion Robert Morrison (John Wayne) was born on May 26, 1907, in Winterset, Iowa

Sliced bread was invented in Iowa

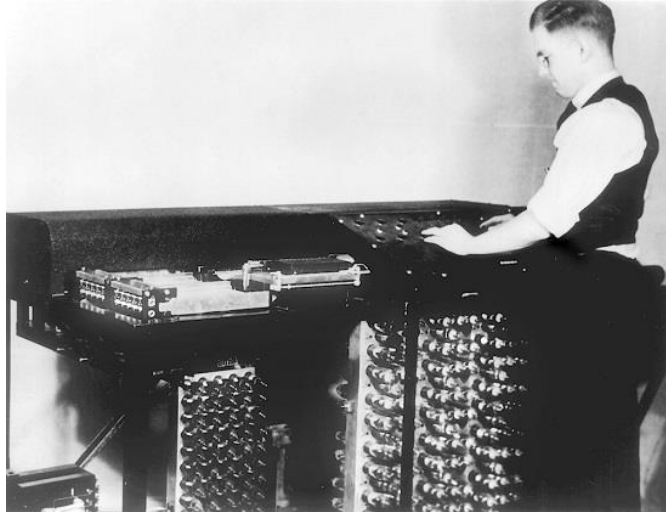


What was the best thing before sliced bread? Thanks to Iowa native Otto Frederick Rohwedder and his Bread-Slicing Machine, you don't have to worry about it. Made in his hometown of Davenport, Rohwedder's sliced bread first hit the shelves in Iowa where he perfected and eventually popularized his machine, and perhaps unknowingly helped start a popular catchphrase.

Iowa State University is home to the first electronic digital computer

The creation of the modern-day computer was not an overnight process, and way back at the beginning when computing power was just a hypothesis, one Iowa State professor and one graduate student played a pivotal role in developing the computer to what is today. In 1942, the professor, John Vincent

Atanasoff, and the student, Clifford Berry, created the first electronic digital computer, which weighed over 750 pounds, and whose innovations can still be seen in the computers of today.



The Atanasoff-Berry Computer

Iowa is home to the ice cream capital of the world

Le Mars, Iowa, has a rich history of civility and culture, once being noted in the 19th century as one of the most well-known cities in the United States, and today it still claims rank as the “Ice Cream Capital of the World.”

That Ice Cream Sundae looks good to me!



So, what did we learn about the state of Iowa?

I learned that Iowa is fairly flat with several large rivers running by or across it. In between the rivers are a lot of corn and soybean farms. There are also a lot of pigs (called hogs in Iowa) and chickens. During my research, I also found out that Iowa is always ranked high as one of the safest states to live in.

Lastly, I’m sorry to report that the Iowa football team lost to Purdue University and will not be the national champions this season.

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