

# Missouri

By Tom Kirvan

## A STATE IN THE HEART OF AMERICA'S HERITAGE

Set in the heart of the Midwest, Missouri is a state that beautifully blends historic charm with scenic variety and bustling city life.

Often called the "Show-Me State," Missouri offers something for everyone, including winding rivers, rolling hills, Civil War battlefields, musical legends, and culinary delights. With a population of approximately 6.1 million people, the state is a crossroads of American history, diverse culture, and natural beauty.

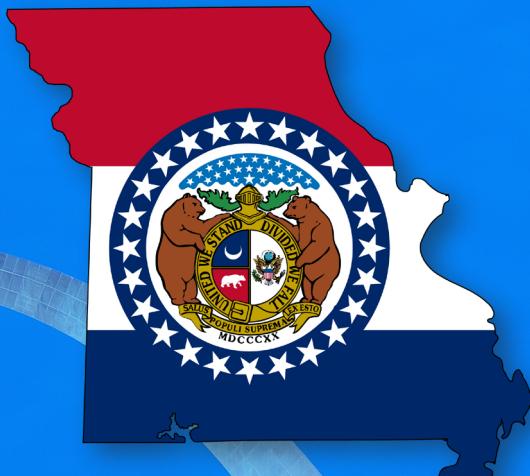
Missouri is bordered by eight states – more than any other state except Tennessee – making it a central hub for travelers and commerce. The mighty Mississippi River defines its eastern edge, while the Missouri River cuts through the state, shaping the land and the lives of those who call it home. Geographically, Missouri is incredibly varied, from the Ozark Mountains in the south to the fertile plains of the north, interspersed with forests, caves, lakes, and rivers.

The capital of Missouri is Jefferson City, named after Thomas Jefferson, the nation's third president and the primary author of the Declaration of Independence. Nestled along the Missouri River, this small yet stately city boasts impressive architecture, including the Missouri State Capitol with its massive dome and interior murals by famed Missouri artist Thomas Hart Benton. Though often overshadowed by the state's larger cities, Jefferson City exudes quiet charm and political importance.

Located in the St. Francois Mountains of southeastern Missouri, Taum Sauk Mountain is the state's highest natural point at 1,772 feet above sea level. It lies within Taum Sauk Mountain State Park, which is part of the larger Ozark Plateau. Hikers are drawn to its scenic trails, especially the path to Mina Sauk Falls, the tallest waterfall in Missouri, which offers breathtaking views.

Missouri's role in American history is vast and complex. As a border state during the Civil War, it was a site of both Union and Confederate allegiances and numerous battles. Earlier, Missouri was part of the Louisiana Purchase and became the "Gateway to the West," serving as the starting point for pioneers along the Oregon, Santa Fe, and California Trails.

In 1820, the Missouri Compromise made national headlines as the state entered the Union as a slave state, sparking decades of debate over slavery. The state is also known for political figures like Harry S. Truman, the 33rd President of the United States, born in Lamar, Missouri, and famed for his straightforward leadership during a pivotal time in world history.



### Fast Facts

Capital: Jefferson City

Population: 6.1 million

Highest Point: Taum Sauk Mountain (1,772 feet)

Trivia: It is the birthplace of the musical genres ragtime, Kansas City jazz and St. Louis blues.

### Primerus Members:

- **Roberts Perryman P.C., PBLI/PDI**  
(St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.)
- **Roberts Perryman P.C., PBLI/PDI**  
(Springfield, Missouri, U.S.)

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## Five Must-See Destinations

- **St. Louis and the Gateway Arch:** No trip to Missouri is complete without visiting St. Louis, the state's second most populous city on the banks of the Mississippi. The Gateway Arch, standing 630 feet tall, is the tallest man-made monument in the U.S. and symbolizes westward expansion. Take a tram to the top for panoramic views, explore the Museum of the Westward Expansion, and enjoy nearby attractions like Forest Park, St. Louis Zoo, and the vibrant Delmar Loop.
- **Kansas City and the National WWI Museum:** Known for its jazz heritage, fountains, and world-famous barbecue, Kansas City sits on Missouri's western edge. It's home to the National WWI Museum and Memorial, a striking and deeply moving tribute to the "War to End All Wars." While in town, enjoy live music in the 18th & Vine Historic Jazz District, visit the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, or savor burnt ends at a classic BBQ joint.
- **Branson and the Ozarks:** Branson, nestled in the Ozark Mountains, is Missouri's entertainment capital. With more than 100 live shows, from country music to magic and comedy, Branson draws families and retirees alike. The city is also an entree into the stunning natural beauty of Table Rock Lake and Silver Dollar City, a 19th-century-themed amusement park that combines thrilling rides with traditional crafts and music.
- **Hannibal (Mark Twain's Hometown):** On the banks of the Mississippi River lies Hannibal, the boyhood home of Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain. The town celebrates its most famous resident with attractions like the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum, Tom Sawyer's Fence, and even cave tours inspired by the author's tales. A steamboat cruise on the river completes the nostalgic journey into literary Americana.
- **Lake of the Ozarks:** A premier vacation destination in central Missouri, Lake of the Ozarks boasts more shoreline than the entire coast of California. It offers water sports, golf courses, shopping, and nightlife. Nature lovers can explore Ha Ha Tonka State Park, known for its ruins of a stone castle overlooking the lake, caves, and natural springs.

