

## **Arkansas**

Hi there! My name is Amanda Flöckner and today I'm going to tell you about my home state of Arkansas.

First of all, have you ever wondered how to correctly pronounce Arkansas? The name Arkansas derives from a French term and was initially applied to the Arkansas River. In 1881, the pronunciation of Arkansas with the final "s" being silent was made official by an act of the state legislature after a dispute arose between Arkansas's two U.S. senators.

Okay, now that we know how to pronounce it, let's find out where it is located! Arkansas is a state in the southeastern region of the United States, bordering along the Mississippi river on the east. It is home to around 3 million people and its capital and most populous city is Little Rock, located in the central portion of the state.

Indeed, Arkansas has a lot to offer geographically! The state's diverse geography ranges from the mountainous regions of the Ozark and the Ouachita Mountains to the densely forested land in the south known as the Arkansas Timberlands. The Hot Springs National Park as well as the Buffalo National River in the Ozarks are major state attractions. Who doesn't enjoy soothing thermal waters from 47 hot springs at an average temperature of 62 degree celsius? Now, guess what!? Although Arkansas is only the 29th largest state by area of the 50 United States, it contains over 600,000 acres of lakes, two-and-a half million acres of national forests, seven national scenic byways and six national park sites. Not surprisingly, Arkansas is officially known as the Natural State.

But enough about the geography, let's talk about Arkansas's rich cultural and historical background! Did you know that Bill Clinton, the 42<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States was born in Hope, a city in the South-West of the state? He also served as the Governor of Arkansas for almost 12 years!

Talking about politics, J. William Fulbright, founder of one of the most prestigious international exchange programs worldwide, was also a United States Senator representing Arkansas from 1945 to 1974. To this day, the Fulbright program fulfills its mission to promote mutual understanding, cooperation, and knowledge transfer between the United States and more than 155 countries all around the world by sponsoring educational and cultural exchange programs for individuals and institutions.

Arkansas is also a pioneer state when it comes to equality for women and men in politics. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hattie Wyatt Caraway was an American politician who became the first woman ever elected to serve a full term as a United States Senator. She represented the state of Arkansas and was also the first woman to preside over the Senate.

And finally, for all of you country music and rock 'n 'roll fans out there, Arkansas is THE place for you to visit! Why? Well, the American singer-songwriter and guitarist Johnny Cash was born in Kingsland, Arkansas! He is one of the best-selling music artists of all time, having sold more than 90 million records worldwide. Cash was known for his deep, calm bass-baritone voice and traditionally began his concerts by simply introducing himself, "Hello, I'm Johnny Cash," followed by his signature song "Folsom Prison Blues".

Last but not least, American bestselling author politician, and activist John Grisham, best known for his popular legal thrillers, was also born in Arkansas. His books have been translated into 42 languages and published worldwide.

So whether you're a nature junkie, a die-hard rock 'n 'roll fan, a history lover or simply love a good book – pay Arkansas a visit, it's definitely worth it!