ARKANSAS

THE NATURAL STATE *Became a state June 15, 1836 (25th)*

Arkansas has forested mountains in the northwest and flat, rich farmland along the Mississippi River in the east. Its rivers, springs and woods earned it the nickname the Natural State.



How Do You Say Arkansas?

In 1686, French explorers built a trading post beside a village of the Quapaw people. It was the first European settlement in what is now Arkansas. The French wrote the name they had heard for the Quapaw as Arcansas, and in French the last s is silent. In 1881, state lawmakers made it official. The name is spelled Arkansas and said Arkansaw.



Finders, Keepers

In 1906, farmer John Huddleston spotted shiny stones in his field near Murfreesboro. They were diamonds. The field sat on top of an ancient volcano that had carried them up from deep in the earth. Today the field is a state park where visitors dig and keep whatever they find. The biggest diamond found there weighed 40.23 carats.



Rice on the Prairie

Rice grows in flooded fields, so it needs land that holds water. East of Little Rock lies the Grand Prairie, where a layer of hard clay sits just under the soil and keeps water from draining away. Farmer William Fuller grew his first good rice crop there in 1904. Today Arkansas grows more rice than any other state.



Older Than Yellowstone

Rain that falls on the mountains near Hot Springs sinks about a mile into the earth, where hot rock warms it. More than 4,000 years later it flows back out at 143 degrees. In 1832, Congress set the springs aside so they would belong to everyone. That was 40 years before Yellowstone became the first national park.



A River From Underground

The water of Mammoth Spring starts as rain in southern Missouri. It sinks into the ground and flows south through hidden caves. Just across the Arkansas line it comes back up, more than nine million gallons every hour, always at 58 degrees. Nobody can see the opening. It lies more than 70 feet down at the bottom of a pool.



The River That Stayed Wild

For 135 miles, the Buffalo River runs free through the Ozark Mountains. For years, Army engineers planned to build two dams across it. People who loved the river fought the plan for years. In 1972, Congress made the Buffalo the country's first national river and kept it free of dams.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 3.1 million (33rd most)
Size	About 53,200 square miles (29th largest)
Highest point	Mount Magazine, 2,753 feet
Counties	75
Neighbors	Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. How many gallons flow from Mammoth Spring every hour?
2. How many springs does the hot water at Hot Springs flow from?
3. Which state is south of Arkansas?

Answers: 1. Over nine million 2. 47 3. Louisiana

DID YOU KNOW?

- In Texarkana, one post office sits in two states. Half is in Arkansas and half is in Texas.
- Plum Bayou Mounds used to be called Toltec Mounds. People once wrongly thought the Toltec of Mexico built them.
- Singer Johnny Cash grew up in Dyess, a farm town that the government started in 1934.
- The Ouachita Mountains run east and west. Most big ranges in the United States run closer to north and south.