MONTANA

THE TREASURE STATE *Became a state November 8, 1889 (41st)*

Montana is the fourth-largest state, but only about a million people live there. The Rocky Mountains fill the west, and wide plains stretch across the east under what people call the Big Sky.



Why the Treasure State?

Montana's nickname comes from the riches in its mountains. Gold brought a rush of miners in the 1860s and silver mines followed. The motto on the state seal still says "gold and silver" in Spanish. Later, gold miners at Yogo Creek kept finding blue pebbles. In the 1890s the pebbles turned out to be sapphires.



A Gold Rush Ghost Town

In July 1862, prospectors found gold in Grasshopper Creek. A town called Bannack quickly grew beside it, named for the Bannock people of the region. In 1864 it was the first capital of Montana Territory. When the gold ran low, people moved away. More than 50 buildings still stand there, empty, as a state park.



The Richest Hill on Earth

Butte began as a gold and silver camp. Then electricity spread across the country, and electricity travels through copper wire. The hill at Butte was full of copper. Miners came from Ireland, England, Finland, Italy, China and many other places. So much ore came out of the ground that Butte was nicknamed the Richest Hill on Earth.



The Buffalo Jump

For at least a thousand years, Native hunters near today's Great Falls worked together to hunt bison, also called buffalo. They drove a herd toward a sandstone cliff about a mile long, and the animals ran over the edge. Blackfeet, Salish, Shoshone and other nations used this cliff. Bones lie deep in the ground below it.



Tyrant Lizard Country

In 1902 a fossil hunter named Barnum Brown dug dinosaur bones out of the hills of Montana. In 1905 scientists gave the animal a name, Tyrannosaurus rex, which means tyrant lizard king. In 1988 a rancher named Kathy Wankel spotted T. rex bones near Fort Peck Lake. In 2000, crews found five more T. rex skeletons near the lake.



Rivers of Ice

Glacier National Park was created in 1910 in the Rocky Mountains of northern Montana. A glacier is a mass of ice so big that it slowly flows under its own weight. Around 1850 the area had about 80 glaciers. By 2015 only 26 were still big enough to count, and every one had shrunk since 1966.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 1.1 million (8th fewest)
Size	About 147,000 square miles (4th largest)
Highest point	Granite Peak, 12,807 feet
Counties	56
Neighbors	Idaho, Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota and Canada to the north

DID YOU KNOW?

- The name Montana comes from a Spanish word for mountain.
- Rain that falls on Triple Divide Peak can flow to the Pacific Ocean, Hudson Bay or the Atlantic by way of the Gulf.
- Montana touches three Canadian provinces: British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.
- In 1895 a cigar box full of Montana sapphires reached Tiffany's, a New York jeweler, which paid $3,750 for them.

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. What does Montana's motto mean in English?
2. Which city is closest to Little Bighorn?
3. How many miles of shore does Fort Peck Lake have?

Answers: 1. Gold and silver 2. Billings 3. 1,520 miles