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Columbus Backgrounder

About the Area

With a population of 730,657* covering more than 210 square miles, Columbus is the largest city in Ohio and the 15th largest city in the United States. Franklin County has a population of 1,090,771 and the eight-county metropolitan area (Franklin, Delaware, Fairfield, Licking, Madison, Morrow, Union and Pickaway) has a combined population of 1,708,625. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2005.

Attractions

- The Arena District, a 95-acre planned development, surrounds Nationwide Arena. It features restaurants, nightclubs and office space, as well as the Arena Grand Theatre, an upscale first-run movie theater, and the LC Pavilion, an indoor/outdoor music hall styled after the House of Blues. The home of the Columbus Clippers baseball team, Huntington Park, opened in 2009.
- The Columbus Museum of Art features works from an outstanding collection of Impressionists, German Expressionists, Cubists, American Modernists and contemporary artists, including works by Degas, Monet, Matisse, Picasso, Bellows, Hopper, Marin and O'Keeffe. Highlights include Eye Spy: Adventures in Art, which takes key works from the museum's collection and fuses them with fun interactive games for children.
- Voted the favorite zoo of America by USA Travel Guide, the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium plays host to more than 2.5 million visitors each year, and has received national recognition for its success in breeding cheetahs and lowland gorillas. Located along the banks of the Scioto River, the zoo is a picturesque setting of naturalistic wildlife habitats, including an endangered manatees exhibit, gardens, picnic areas, recreational facilities and a golf course. The newest exhibit, Asia Quest features some of the most endangered and magnificent animals in the world. The zoo opened the new 22.7-acre water park Zoombezi Bay in May 2008, and will open a Polar Frontier exhibit in 2010.
- Ranked the No. 1 science center in the country for families by Parents Magazine, COSI features more than 300 interactive exhibits throughout its discovery-based and themed exhibition areas, including Ocean, Space, Gadgets, Life, little kidspace®, Progress and the outdoor Big Science Park. Exhibition areas provide experiences for all age levels to creatively combine science facts and learning through play. COSI also hosts world-class traveling exhibitions throughout the year.
- The Franklin Park Conservatory features horticulture from a wide variety of climate zones, as well as large bonsai and orchid collections. Its signature 1895 Victorian glass Palm House and 73,000 square feet of greenhouse is situated in a 90-acre park just east of downtown. As part of its focus on combining fine arts with horticulture, the Conservatory is the only botanical garden in the world to own a signature collection from the internationally acclaimed glass artist Dale Chihuly and a permanent light installation from world-renowned artist James Turrell. Special exhibits include an annual living butterfly display.
- Just south of downtown, this 233-acre restored neighborhood was originally settled in the mid-1800s by German immigrants and today is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Along its tree-

lined, brick-paved streets you'll find lovingly restored red-brick homes, wrought iron fences, glorious urban gardens and some of the city's finest restaurants and specialty retailers.

- The King Arts Complex is located on the Near East side of Columbus, one of the oldest African-American neighborhoods in the city. It celebrates the contributions of African Americans throughout history with dynamic artistic and educational offerings, including art exhibitions, indoor and outdoor concerts, theater and dance performances. The permanent, interactive exhibit Cargo: The Middle Passage is designed to look, sound and feel like a slave ship to provide a sense of the hardships of the long journey from Africa to the New World.
- Described by the 1989 Smithsonian Guide to Historic America as "probably the finest museum in America devoted to pre-European history," the Ohio Historical Center is both the headquarters of the Ohio Historical Society and a museum showcasing Ohio's history from the Ice Age to 1970. The Ohio Historical Center also hosts a number of exciting temporary exhibits throughout the year, and the adjacent Ohio Village is open to the public for special public events, school groups and private events.
- A National Historic Landmark and a masterpiece of 19th-century Greek Revival architecture, the Ohio Statehouse was completed in 1861 and restored in 1996. Tours of the Statehouse are given daily.
- Short North Arts District visitors will find the city's largest and most eclectic collection of art galleries, with works by local, national and international artists. The district also has a variety of restaurants, pubs and specialty shops. Most businesses stay open late the first Saturday of each month for the popular Gallery Hop. The Short North is on the northern edge of downtown and is marked by 17 lighted arches spanning High Street.
- The Wexner Center for the Arts is an internationally-known contemporary arts center on the campus of The Ohio State University. The center serves as a laboratory for the arts, with exhibitions, performances, films, artistic residencies and educational programs. The building, a landmark of postmodern architecture, houses galleries, performance spaces, a film video theater, a store and a cafe.

Sports

- The Columbus Blue Jackets is Ohio's only National Hockey League team. Games are played downtown at Nationwide Arena, which was ranked in 2004 as the No. 1 stadium experience in professional sports by ESPN The Magazine.
- The Columbus Clippers, the Triple-A affiliate of the Cleveland Indians, play home games at Huntington Park, a 10,000 seat, state of the art stadium opened in April 2009. Baseball America magazine recognized the Clippers as the top minor league franchise in its 20th anniversary issue.
- The Columbus Crew is a charter member of Major League Soccer and the 2008 MLS Cup Champions. Since May 1999, the Crew has played in the 22,500-seat Columbus Crew Stadium, the first soccer-specific MLS stadium in the United States. It was named the 2000 Foremost Sports Facility of the Year by the International Sports Summit. Crew Stadium has hosted a wide variety of national and international events, including the MLS All-Star Game, MLS Cup, Women's World Cup and the U.S.-Mexico World Cup qualifier.
- The Schottenstein Center, a 20,000-seat multi-purpose arena which opened in October 1998, hosts The Ohio State University men's and women's basketball teams, the men's ice hockey team and a variety of other sporting events, concerts and shows. The football team, a perennial national powerhouse, plays its home games in the famed Ohio Stadium, one of the largest in college football. Ohio State fields teams in 36 varsity sports.

- Scioto Downs features late-night simulcast and live harness racing May-September. Founded in 1923, Beulah Park holds the distinction of being Ohio's first Thoroughbred race track. It runs late-night simulcast and live Thoroughbred racing October through May, with a two-week break in December.

Shopping

- Easton Town Center features entertainment, dining and retail in an indoor/outdoor setting. Easton offers a wide variety of upscale home stores, specialty shops, fashion retailers and restaurants and nightclubs.
- The Mall at Tuttle Crossing is located just off I-270 on the city's northwest side. Highlights include more than 150 specialty shops. A number of family-oriented features are also located at The Mall at Tuttle Crossing.
- Polaris Fashion Place, one of the region's largest indoor malls, features six anchor stores and 150 other specialty shops.
- The Short North Arts District's eclectic galleries and shops are all within walking distance of the convention center. Shoppers can find fine art, antiques, clothing, furniture, books, jewelry, candles and even gourmet food all along one amazing stretch of High Street.

Annual Events

Columbus Arts Festival

Asian Festival

German Village Oktoberfest

Jazz & RibFest

Festival Latino

Pride Festival

Red, White & Boom!

Dublin Irish Festival

Italian Festival

Ohio State Fair

First Night Columbus

Arnold Sports Festival & Fitness Weekend

PGA Memorial

Tournament at Muirfield

The Columbus Marathon

New Albany Classic Grand Prix

Location/Getting Here

Columbus is located in Central Ohio and is conveniently located at the intersection of interstates 70 and 71, within a one-day drive or a one-hour flight of half the population of the United States and Canada.

Columbus is centrally located conveniently at the intersection of interstates 70 and 71. Once in the city, the Central Ohio Transit Authority offers regular bus service throughout the city. A variety of taxi and limousine services also are available.

Port Columbus International Airport

Port Columbus International Airport, located just 10 minutes east of downtown, is served by 11 airlines and their regional affiliates providing more than 300 daily arrivals and departures to 33 airports, including 155 non-stop flights. Major carriers include Air Canada Jazz, AirTran, American, Continental, Delta, Midwest/Connect, Northwest, Southwest, United, US Airways & USA3000.

Cultural History/Diversity

The 2000 U.S. Census revealed the racial breakdown of Columbus as 67.9 percent white, 24.5 percent African-American, 3.4 percent Asian and 2.5 percent Hispanic. Columbus also has the second-largest Somali population in the United States. People from nearly 100 different countries come to Columbus to receive an education or to live.

Climate

Columbus has four distinct seasons. The average temperatures for the seasons are: Spring (March-May) 50.9; summer (June-August) 71.6; fall (September-November) 53.9; and winter (December-February) 29.3. Average annual rainfall is 37.8 inches. The average annual snowfall is 28 inches per year.

Economy

Columbus is among the more economically stable metropolitan areas in the United States and is one of just a handful of cities in the northeastern quadrant of the country whose economy and population both grew steadily through the last three decades of the 20th century. The eight-county Columbus metropolitan area has a labor force of about 900,000, with about half of the jobs concentrated in service businesses (29.6 percent) and retail (20.5 percent). Others work in government (16 percent), manufacturing (10.2 percent), finance/insurance/real estate (8.8 percent), wholesale trade (5.3 percent), transportation/utilities (4.8 percent) and construction (4.7 percent).

Lodging

Total number of hotel rooms in Franklin County: 25,005 (As of June 2008); 3,280 in Downtown Columbus

Room Tax: 10 percent

Sales Tax: 6.75 percent

Did You Know?

Headquartered here:

- Many nationally recognized companies began in Columbus, including Wendy's International, Worthington Industries, CompuServe, Red Roof Inns, Bank One, Huntington Bancshares, Limited Brands, Nationwide Insurance, the Longaberger Company and Bob Evans Farms, Inc.
- The Krema Nut Company is the oldest commercial peanut butter manufacturer in the United States.
- The American Whistle Corporation in Columbus is the only maker of metal whistles in the United States