

UTAH

Hello! I'm Kya, an intern in the political and economic section of the US Embassy in Vienna. Today I'm going to talk about my home state of Utah, which is also known as the Beehive State. Utah is America's 45th state. We are the 13th largest by area and have a population of less than 3 million.

The large land area and low population means that Utah has a very low population density and lots of open space. A lot of Utah is at a high altitude, which coincides nicely with our state slogan: Life Elevated.

Anasazi and Fremont tribes lived in Utah for thousands of years before the arrival of any Europeans.

The name "Utah" comes from the Ute tribe, and the word means "people of the mountains". The first people of European descent to visit Utah were Spanish explorers in 1540, but the first Europeans to settle in Utah were the Mormon pioneers in 1847. Led by Brigham Young, the pioneers settled in what would become known as the Salt Lake Valley on July 24th, 1847. The 24th of July is a state holiday in Utah, officially known as Pioneer Day and also Pie and Beer Day to the non-Mormon population. The site of the original Mormon settlement in Salt Lake, called *This is the Place State Park*, can be explored and enjoyed to this day.

The best part about living in Utah is the variety of outdoor activities we can enjoy. Our five national parks have awe-inspiring landforms and vistas and are unlike anything else in the world. The parks are called Zion, Canyonlands, Arches, Capitol Reef, and Bryce Canyon and are all located in Southern Utah.

Only two states have more national parks than Utah. In addition to the national parks, Utah has seven national monuments, six national forests, 31 national wilderness areas, three national wildlife refuges, and 43 state parks. All these areas are publically owned and will be protected for generations to come.

Many Utahns enjoy camping, hiking, climbing, and skiing in our protected lands. When visitors tire of the desert land in the south, they can simply come north to escape into the mountains.

That way they can take advantage of Utah's snow, which is known around the world as the Greatest Snow on Earth. This designation is thanks to the extremely low humidity and the lake effect off the Great Salt Lake. Some places in Utah average over 500 inches of snow every year!

In addition to this impressive snowpack, you can count on nice weather for skiing; we average more than 220 days of sunshine every year.

Utah is home to a number of impressive mountain ranges, most prominently the Wasatch and Uinta ranges. The Wasatch Range is located directly adjacent to our capital, Salt Lake City, and is home to 11 out of Utah's 13 ski resorts. The high

concentration of ski areas and their proximity to Utah's only international airport means that visitors can fly into Utah in the morning and be skiing before lunchtime!

You can also enjoy world class sporting events when you come to Utah. Our most famous team is the Utah Jazz, but those who are not fans of basketball can go cheer on our hockey team the Utah Grizzlies, or go to a baseball game and watch the Salt Lake Bees, or go to a soccer match and see Real Salt Lake.

Utah is also home to the prestigious Sundance Film Festival, which is held every January in my hometown of Park City. Some events of the 2002 Winter Olympics were also held in Park City and the surrounding mountains. Utah only has nine four-year colleges and universities, but the University of Utah in Salt Lake City is our flagship research institution and has a student body of over 30,000. Forbes ranked Utah the best state in which to do business thanks to low energy costs and a robust employment outlook. Tourism is a big part of our economy, but so are mining, high tech industry and manufacturing, finance, and agriculture. It's hard to believe with Utah's cool climate, but summer peaches, tomatoes, and cherries from the Cache Valley are almost too good to be true!

Like any other state, Utah has plenty of quirks. For example, our unofficial state food is green jell-o. And some Utah cities have an interesting pronunciation, like Hurricane, Duchesne, Tooele, Moab, and Hooper. Despite this strangeness, Utah is home to friendly, welcoming people and I encourage you to travel there to experience it for yourself.

This brings me to the end of my overview of Utah, although I could go on for hours about my love for this remarkable state. I hope you'll take the time to visit us someday.