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Why were italian city-states so economically prosperous?

When you decide to start your own business, where you live and the rules of small businesses is an important consideration. Some states and cities are friendlier than others to small business owners. Dear Lifehacker, I am tired of the rat race and have dreamed of starting my own business for Read MoreFor the third year in a row. Thumbtack and Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation asked small business owners (nearly 13,000 across the country) what their states' entrepreneurial environment is like. How easy is it to start a business, hire employees, follow the tax code and so on? You can filter by these individual factors on the interactive map of the results, but overall, business owners in Utah, Idaho, Texas, Virginia and Louisiana rated their states highest for small business friendliness. The three most important factors that determined how entrepreneurs viewed his or her location? Professional licensing requirements (at the local, county, state and/or federal level), tax laws that are easy to follow, and the training and network programs offered by government agencies for contractors. See the full results below or dig deeper into the methodology behind the survey (PDF). G/O Media can get a commissionUnited States Small Business Friendliness | Thumbtack Picture: Henryk Sadura/Moment/Getty Images With 50 states in the union, there are many cities out there. Without making it obvious, do you think you can choose the state if we present you with three of the state's lesser-known cities? While we promise that we haven't entered completely obscure cities with a population of 13 people, we've tried to challenge the beautiful brain between your ears. No matter how much of a geography whiz you are, you may feel a little challenged by some of our chosen cities. We could have given you the capitals to all of them, but what fun would it be? We know you probably covered those cities back in elementary school. As we travel around the country through this quiz, you can see how many of them you can get right without needing a hint. You may think you have the bragging rights to be called the world's geography champion, but can you prove it? Out of 35 states, how many cities can you place correctly? When you're done, we'll tell you how well you did! Will it be as good as you think you want to do, or do you need to go back to the books? TRIVIA can you guess the state from the names of three cities? 6 minute quiz 6 min TRIVIA We give you three cities, you tell us the state! 6 minute quiz 6 min trivia if we give you a capital, can you give us the right state? 6 minute quiz 6 min TRIVIA the ultimate state disposition quiz! 6 minute quiz 6 min TRIVIA can you mention these American cities from three clues? 6 minute quiz 6 min TRIVIA we will show you three sports team logos, you tell us what condition they belong to 6 minute quiz My TRIVIA can you name these American states by their forms? 5 minute quiz 5 min TRIVIA can you identify the Us state from a crossword Clue? 6 minute quiz 6 my personality which state matches your temperament? 5 minute quiz 5 min TRIVIA if we give you the text, can you fill out the state? 6 Minute Quiz 6 How Much Do You Know About Dinosaurs? What is an octane rating? And how do you use a proper noun? Luckily for you, HowStuffWorks Play is here to help. Our award-winning website offers reliable, easy-to-understand explanations about how the world works. From fun quizzes that bring joy to your day, to compelling photography and fascinating lists, HowStuffWorks Play offers something for everyone. Sometimes we explain how things work, other times we ask you, but we always explore in the name of fun! Because learning is fun, so stick with us! Playing quizzes is free! We send trivia questions and personality tests every week to your inbox. By clicking Sign Up, you agree to our Privacy Policy and confirm that you are 13 years of age or over. Copyright © 2020 InfoSpace Holdings, LLC, a System1 Company EQRoy/ShutterstockAsk someone to name the quirkiest city in America, and you'll probably hear New York City, New Orleans, Key West, or even Austin, Texas or Portland, Oregon - as the latter two have weird in their city mottos. But quirkiness is in the eye of the container, and examples can be found in some places you would never guess. Scroll on to learn about the range of charming oddities that can make a city seem quirky. So come back to discover how these 8 American cities got their quirky nicknames. Alabama: MobileNew Orleans may be the hottest Mardi Gras destination now, but the first Mardi Gras celebration held in America actually took place in Mobile, Alabama. This is a big part of the city's rich history, which you can see at the Mobile Carnival Museum. Preserved floats, crowns and extravagant costumes help make Mobile a place of a ton of character. There are many other places to celebrate Mardi Gras in addition to New Orleans, you know! Kit Leong/ShutterstockYes, as in the place where Santa Clause lives! In this Alaska town, it's Christmas 24/7. The city used to be called Davis, but its name was legally changed in 1952 to reflect the whimsical and enjoyment of the Christmas stories that children of all ages value. If you want to be impressed, check out these photos of Alaska you've probably never seen before. Chris Curtis/ShutterstockBisbee's present has very little to do with the past. Once a copper mining town, Bisbee is today a cultural enclave, full of quirky and imaginative artists and works of art. For a reminder of its past, visit the many historical sites and museums, or even book yourself a creepy ghost tour. Tim Zurowski/ShutterstockHot Arkansas houses an alligator farm and petting zoo. The has a fossilized merman on display. Is it real? Find out for yourself. If it's your thing to be up close and personal with the animals, check out the 49 other best zoos in all states. See Apart/ShutterstockLet is honest, there are hundreds of places in California that can be described as quirky: Hollywood, San Francisco, Laguna Beach, and more. But no one will deny Venice Beach tops the list. Venice Beach is home to a world-famous seafont dominated by skateboarders, graffiti artists and artists, and nothing is too strange for this locality. Beaches tend to be the best place for people watching; Don't miss the 12 best beaches in the United States. Faina Gurevich/ShutterstockWidely known for the prevalence of cannabis, this city hosts the only known temple of the intoxicating hemp plant, aka the International Church of Cannabis. Open since April 20, 2017 (pot smoking holiday, 4 / 20), this establishment treats the facility as a sacred sacrament. Churchgoers follow a unique religion known as Elevationism, arguing that the use of cannabis raises one to higher self-understanding. melissamn/ShutterstockNew Haven is known for being home to one of the country's (and the world's) best universities: Yale. But while the school is full of promising brains going around, there are actually many dead brains on campus as well: A historical collection of brains can be found at the Cushing Brain Collection. The collection specializes in sick, tumor-infected brains, and hosts hundreds of specimens in a two-story house under Yale's medical school library. If you are an aficionado of macabre, read on for 10 more completely bizarre collections. WilshireImages/Getty ImagesMilton is a beloved place for a very important reason: beer! Dogfish Head Brewery is located here - one of the most popular IPAs in the country. What makes the locality extra quirky is the giant, futuristic sculpture called Steampunk Treehouse. Now discover the best craft beer from any state. Chuck Wagner/ShutterstockYou'll be hard-pressed to find quirkiest than Fantasy Fest in Key West, where your imagination is the only limitation. The ten-day extravaganza features off-the-wall artists, costumes, music, and more. Key West is definitely not your typical city and this is not your typical parade. Discover the wildest parties from all over the world. Erik S Lesser/EPA-EFE/ShutterstockATL may be best known as a sports town, but it's no stranger to whimsical. Case in point: Tiny Doors Atlanta, an art project that places small decorative doors in random outdoor areas throughout Atlanta. The wee doors when placed on a stone or a tree look like portals to a wonderland. The project has sparked a community movement of copycat artists, turning the installation into a bit of a sweet, quirky public scavenger hunt. Osuigi/ShutterstockHonolulu is a destination with an incredible history, culture ... and some little-known beads. Built in 1922 but fell into disrepair in the 1980s, The Hawaii Theatre, once known as Pride of the Pacific, was restored and reopened to the public in 1996 and is now a successful performing arts center. Located in Chinatown, Honolulu, the theater has put on everything from vaudeville to musicals to silent movies. If you're a theater buff, don't miss these 10 hidden lessons popular musicals have taught us. txking/ShutterstockThere are many bike races and tracks all over the world, but the Tour de Fat in Boise, Idaho was unique. It wasn't just a bunch of seriously athletic people wearing spandex on bikes trampling as their lives depended on it; This was a festival filled with fun and booze provided by New Belgium Brewery. After 16 years, the festival ended, but is being replaced by Boise Goahead Fest, which promises all the same fun - only bigger. Admission is free, but the proceeds from beer and merchandise will benefit all bike nonprofits that want to get involved, organizers say. Pamela Brick/ShutterstockChicago may be best known for gangsters, windy weather and deep-right pizzas, but did you know that the city has a three-foot statue dedicated to... shit? That's right, the beautiful Sh*t Fountain, is the brainchild of the famous sculptor, Jerzy Kenar, and is dedicated to the city's many dogs. If this public monument hits your funny leg, don't miss the strangest road side attractions in each state. Stephen B. Goodwin/ShutterstockThe company of Fifers and Drummers has been hosting Hunter's Moon's party for over half a century. The marching musicians and local craftsmen gather every year at Fort Ouiaatenon to honor the founding of the fort, a fur trade outpost, more than 300 years ago with a re-establishment of the annual gathering of the French and Native Americans. Nagel Photography/ShutterstockArt has an impact on the city's culture and reputation: in Des Moines there is John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park. The vast green landscape of 4.4 hectares is dotted with installations from 25 of the world's most famous artists - sculptures range from spooky to modern to simply funky. Find out the hidden gems in every state. KSwinick/ShutterstockDon't you expect to find more than just airplanes in an aviation museum? The Kansas Aviation Museum is home to many ghosts as well. The museum even offers paranormal tours. If the ghost isn't quirky enough for you, Wichita's growing steampunk subculture has given rise to installations such as Steampunk Grassroots Art of Gary Pendergrass, steampunk conventions and other events that definitely carry a look-see. Vicki L. Miller/ShutterstockWhile Salt Lake City probably isn't a locality most people will associate with KFC, it's home to the very first Kentucky Fried The colonel, however, came from Louisville, where the size and splendour of the man's tombstone can give some hints about how locals feel about him. The Colonel Sanders statue is an official monument to the man and is located in nearby Corbin. GTS Productions/ShutterstockMardi Gras is more than just a one-off event for the people of New Orleans, who structure the year and their businesses around Fat Tuesday. Whether it's costume-making, songwriting, or fundraising, the residents of this city are always working to ensure that the festival they are known (and loved) for is nothing short of spectacular. Here's what native New Orleanians really think of Mardi Gras. Nagel Photography / ShutterstockThere are so many cool things to see in Bangor that make it a must-visit if you're ever in the area. Stephen King's house with the Gothic, bat-ornate gateway is a fun first stop for horror lovers. There's also Wild Blueberry Land, a farm that pays homage to all things blueberries, with a geodesic (blueberry-shaped) bakery/gift shop and a 31-foot-tall, 3,700-pound statue of the great Paul Bunyan. Dominionart / ShutterstockDes guesses for what makes this place quirky! Salem is notorious for its historical witch trials, and the city is like a major monument to that history. Halloween here is absolutely crazy, but the city is worth a visit at any time of the year. Don't miss the 10 things you need to stop believing in the Salem Witch Trials. Linda Parton/ShutterstockDetroit is about more than just cars. There are some pretty crazy places to check out in this city, and a lot of people revolve around art. Every October there is a must-see event called Theatre Bizarre that includes everything from flame-swallowers to burlesque dancers. And the Heidelberg Project and Hamtramck Disneyland are two other distinctive folk art installations. Don't miss the huge fist sculpture dedicated to boxer Joe Louis - it provides a great selfie opportunity. Ken Wolter/ShutterstockThe Weisman Art Museum in Minneapolis is a wonderful sight to see: Before you even enter the museum, the eye is confronted with what looks like a large Jenga made of metal. And it's not the only zany museum worth checking out in Minneapolis: The House of Balls is the bizarre, funny and truly unique funhouse of found art. You will see sculptures of practically everything, made of practically everything, from robots to sculptures made of clothespin. Justin Eaves/ShutterstockVicksburg has a lot of history and local color that makes it unique among the other Mississippi cities. The American Cairo, a former gunboat that is now a museum, was the first ship in the world ever sunk by an electrically detonated torpedo. After years of speculation, search and hard work, the remains of Cairo were brought to the surface, refurbished and put back together. History buffs will enjoy it, read on learn about the most beautiful shipwrecks around the world. Meanwhile, art lovers may prefer to transition to Margaret's Grocery, a former country history that has become a large, thriving and bright art installation. EQRoy/ShutterstockKansas City has many museums dedicated to topics that no one would ever think a museum would be dedicated. Leila's Hair Museum houses an eccentric collection of Victorian hair wreaths, as well as objects made entirely of hair (jewelry and symbols of love and remembrance.). And if this is just the right taste of wonder for you, don't miss the strangest museum in your state. Zack Frank/ShutterstockBillings is home to some amazing history, including this evidence of Lewis and Clark's epic journey across America carved into Pompey's Pillar. Should you wish to go on the alien side, however, there is a visit to the two-headed calf at the Yellowstone County Museum called for. Nati Harnik/AP/ShutterstockSome statues in our country are dedicated to presidents and war heroes, and then there are others - like this one in Omaha - who are dedicated to people like Chef Boyardee, whom you might not even realize was a real person. If you're in Omaha, you may want to stop for lunch at the Alpine Inn, a top-rated fried chicken restaurant known for serving leftovers every night to hordes of lucky raccoons. f11photo/ShutterstockLas Vegas is almost synonymous with everything outrageous and quirky. From costumed artists and lounge performances to gamblers and casinos, Vegas is the live theater for people viewers. If you're not in the mood for gambling, there are plenty of other must-see Las Vegas attractions. Wangkun Jia/ShutterstockTheories, reports and conspiracies about extraterrestrial abductions may be common now, but the first account of a close encounter came from a Portsmouth, New Hampshire, couple. In 1961, Betty

and Barney Hill were driving through Lincoln on their way back from a trip to Canada claiming to be abducted by extraterrestrial beings. The two immediately became known as the result of the media frenzy that their story evoked. Read on to hear details of their story, one of the most terrifying UFO sightings ever recorded. Mikhail Leonov/ShutterstockNew York City can be considered strange mecca for some. It may certainly seem as if every person in the Big Apple has their own unique style, culture and opinions - and is not afraid to broadcast it - making this one of the most colorful, noisy and idiosyncratic destinations in the world. Don't be limited to the sights and sounds of Times Square and Broadway the next time you visit; be sure to check out these hidden gems of NYC. Astrid Stawiarz/Getty ImagesModern artist David Ellis has had his work on display around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. But while he may be a bit of a big deal in world, he has not forgotten where he came from: Cameron, North Carolina. Ellis and a group of his friends return annually to Cameron to freshen up the landscape by painting murals on the sides of old barns and abandoned farm equipment. Ace Diamond/ShutterstockBismarck is known for its many sculptures, such as The Pioneer Family, several Lewis and Clark and Sacagawea statues, and Reflections - a sculpture of an eagle cradling a giant shiny ball. The most interesting sculpture, however, may be Thunderbirds, depicting a myth that persists through the Dakotas: A giant bird believed by Native Americans to cause thunderstorms and lightning. ShutterstockKnown for agriculture and the meat production industry, Cincinnati was once so overrun by pigs that it was affectionately called Porkopolis. The theme of pigs - especially flying - has stuck. There are statues dedicated to flying pigs throughout the city, as well as an annual Flying Pig Marathon. If pigs aren't your thing, the city is also home to the country's largest sign museum, a cool and quirky stop worth visiting. Sterling Munksgard/ShutterstockThe Factory Obscura artist collective of artists sought help from The Flaming Lips frontman Wayne Coyne to launch an immersive audiovisual installation at The Womb in Oklahoma City. The building is covered from head to toe in psychedelic colors and visual concepts, giving the city a splash of weirdness. Joshua Rainey Photography/ShutterstockHipster culture runs deep in this Oregon city, reminiscent of the quirky sketch comedy show Portlandia. The city's liberal culture and famous Keep Portland Weird attract visitors from all over the country. Gabor Kovacs Photography/ShutterstockPhiladelphia could easily have made this list, but visiting Lancaster, Pennsylvania - aka Amish Country - is like going back in time to an earlier time before the car. Visitors to Lancaster go there to learn about Amish culture, admire their farms and woodworking shops, and take part in delicious homemade jams and pies for sale. But be sure to leave the local gentry out of some pictures; Amish religion forbids photography. Jon Bilous/ShutterstockGothic horror writer H.P. Lovecraft is beloved for horror stories like The Rats in the Walls with the monumental sci-fi character Cthulhu. The author is called Rhode Island home and is buried there, so you will find many tributes to him all over the city of Providence. One of the places Lovecraft fans flock to is the Fleur-de-Lys building, the strange brown and bright yellow house depicted in this image of Thomas Street. It serves as the home of one of the author's most famous characters, Anthony Wilcox, who first appeared in The Call of Cthulhu. Nagel Photography/ShutterstockAs most cities track and catalogue Columbia actually its street art. There is a proud of their local artists and their public works of art and murals, such as the ever popular Tunnel Vision mural. It's just one of the American cities known for amazing street art. Nagel Photography/ShutterstockNot surprisingly, the city aptly named Deadwood is known for creepy, and sometimes criminal landmarks. The main attraction here is Mount Moriah Cemetery, home to the tombs of many notorious outlaws, including Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickok. Other historic and popular sites in Deadwood make the city an epicenter of paranormal activity, such as Adams House and bullock hotel. Visit several of America's most haunted places. f11photo/ShutterstockDe says everything is bigger in Texas, and the city of Austin certainly has several large sculptures: a giant spider, giant couch potatoes and a giant Olmec head, to name a few. There is also The Cathedral of Junk, a towering structure made of industrial pipes, rusty wheels and old watches. Note: The slogan Keep Austin Weird started here; Portland is a spin off. Johnny Adolphson / ShutterstockWhen you think of Utah you probably think of Mormons, but in Spanish Fork you will find a gorgeous Krishna Temple named Sri Sri Radha, whose architecture was inspired by Rajasthani in India. The temple is a practicing place of worship, offering tours and yoga classes and hosts seven festivals each year. The most dramatic of these is Holi or Festival of Colors which is a must-see in the spring. The temple also rents llamas to hikers and campers. ChristineMinato/ShutterstockBe due to its many large quarries, Barre, Vermont is known as the granite capital of the world. The Rock of Ages granite quarry is the largest in the world, with a depth of 200 feet. There are tours available on this absolutely awe-inspiring site. Sean Pavone/ShutterstockRichmond is one of the oldest cities in America, but if you're not a history buff, there are many other things to see and do here. Don't miss the giant milk bottles, a controversial mural featuring a beaver and a girl outside an adult bookstore - it's worth a selfie. Richmond also has one of the ugliest buildings in the world, inspired by a baked potato. VDB Photos/ShutterstockSeattle is known for its music scene, especially as the birthplace of Sub Pop Records and the humble beginnings of the famous grunge band Nirvana. However, that's not all Seattle has to offer. What would this city be without its Giant Shoe Museum or its beloved Toe Truck (yes, toe) for example? It's strange enough to be included in this list of weird museums you never knew existed. kjarrett/ShutterstockThe whole city is dedicated to the local legend of Mothman. Eyewitness accounts of a large, flying, unknown creature, later called Mothman, were the basis for the blockbuster film The Mothman Prophecies. And yes, the city hosts Festival every year. Lynn friedman/ShutterstockSparta is perhaps best known for a large field filled with strange fiberglass sculptures. Well, they are not exactly sculptures: You could say they refuse. An organization called FAST Corporation (Fiberglass Animals, Shapes and Trademarks) produces giant fiberglass statues and when they are finished they throw the shapes into an open nearby field. Anyone who drives past the place without knowing the story behind it must get a strange jolt. Traveller70/ShutterstockThermopolis is all about hot springs and Bison. Come to take a soak in the naturally occurring hot springs that have a temperature of 104 degrees Fahrenheit. The water is rich in healing minerals. But over time, some of these mineral deposits have built up, resulting in giant mineral piles like the one depicted here. Now that you know the strangest places in each state, read on to discover the most charming places in America. Originally published: January 28, 2020 2020

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