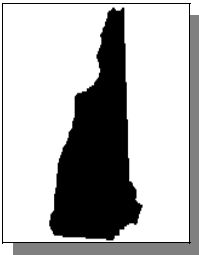


WHICH STATE IS THE MOST LIVABLE?



New Hampshire once again tops the Most Livable State rankings. This is the fifth consecutive year that the Granite State has earned this honor. New Hampshire excels in a number of important quality of life measures. The state boasts low crime, low poverty, high income levels, and a well educated population. Trailing New Hampshire at the top of the rankings list were Utah, Wyoming, Minnesota, and Iowa.

At the opposite end of the Most Livable State rankings scale, Mississippi holds on firmly to last place. It has held this position for nine of the last ten years. Preceding Mississippi were South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Arkansas.

Background and Methodology

Now in its 18th year, the Most Livable State Award is issued in conjunction with the publication of each year's new edition of *State Rankings*. Annually we reexamine our collection of data and select the factors that reflect a state's basic quality of life.

The 2008 award is based on 44 factors ranging from median household income to crime rate, sunny days to infant mortality rate. The factors used for this year's award are the same as those used last year.

To determine a state's "livability rating" (see page five for state-by-state scores) the 44 categories were divided into two groups: those that are "negative" for which a high ranking would be considered bad for a state, and those that are positive for which a high ranking would be considered good for a state. Since a high livability rating is best, the rankings for the "positive factors" were inverted. Thus the state with the highest median income (ranking 1st in our

book) would rank 50th for this award.

Once these calculations were made, each state's rankings for the 44 categories were averaged. All factors were given equal weight.

Unique among the various rankings of states, our Most Livable State Award does not focus on any one category of data. Instead it takes into account a broad range of economic, educational, health-oriented, public safety, and environmental statistics.

The award for the Most Livable State is one of six annual announcements made in conjunction with the publication of our state and city reference books. The Healthiest State Award is based on factors derived from *Health Care State Rankings*. The Most Dangerous and Safest State designations are announced with our *Crime State Rankings* volume. The Safest City and Metro Area Awards are based on data from the *City Crime Rankings* volume. The Smartest State Award is determined using data from *Education State Rankings* and the Most Improved State Award is based on statistics from our *State Trends* volume.

While we strive to make our books as objective as possible, these awards give us the opportunity to choose the factors we think tell an interesting story about quality of life in the 50 United States.

Congratulations to the citizens and leaders of New Hampshire on their continued success!

- THE EDITORS

The 2008 Most Livable State Award:

New Hampshire Wins Again

ALPHA ORDER

| RANK | STATE | LIVABILITY RATING | 07 RANK | CHANGE |
|------|----------------|-------------------|---------|--------|
| 44 | Alabama | 19.98 | 42 | -2 |
| 29 | Alaska | 23.57 | 24 | -5 |
| 36 | Arizona | 22.64 | 32 | -4 |
| 46 | Arkansas | 19.27 | 48 | 2 |
| 30 | California | 23.48 | 30 | 0 |
| 14 | Colorado | 29.43 | 18 | 4 |
| 11 | Connecticut | 29.91 | 10 | -1 |
| 27 | Delaware | 24.68 | 21 | -6 |
| 28 | Florida | 24.02 | 27 | -1 |
| 40 | Georgia | 21.11 | 41 | 1 |
| 21 | Hawaii | 27.25 | 19 | -2 |
| 9 | Idaho | 30.74 | 14 | 5 |
| 26 | Illinois | 24.80 | 26 | 0 |
| 30 | Indiana | 23.48 | 35 | 5 |
| 5 | Iowa | 31.57 | 6 | 1 |
| 17 | Kansas | 28.36 | 17 | 0 |
| 48 | Kentucky | 17.95 | 47 | -1 |
| 45 | Louisiana | 19.37 | 49 | 4 |
| 20 | Maine | 27.32 | 16 | -4 |
| 16 | Maryland | 28.86 | 15 | -1 |
| 13 | Massachusetts | 29.84 | 8 | -5 |
| 38 | Michigan | 22.16 | 38 | 0 |
| 4 | Minnesota | 31.82 | 2 | -2 |
| 50 | Mississippi | 15.89 | 50 | 0 |
| 39 | Missouri | 22.02 | 34 | -5 |
| 19 | Montana | 27.36 | 22 | 3 |
| 6 | Nebraska | 31.32 | 11 | 5 |
| 35 | Nevada | 23.02 | 25 | -10 |
| 1 | New Hampshire | 33.61 | 1 | 0 |
| 7 | New Jersey | 31.27 | 5 | -2 |
| 33 | New Mexico | 23.14 | 37 | 4 |
| 24 | New York | 25.14 | 29 | 5 |
| 42 | North Carolina | 20.98 | 42 | 0 |
| 10 | North Dakota | 30.57 | 13 | 3 |
| 40 | Ohio | 21.11 | 36 | -4 |
| 32 | Oklahoma | 23.27 | 40 | 8 |
| 22 | Oregon | 27.05 | 23 | 1 |
| 34 | Pennsylvania | 23.11 | 33 | -1 |
| 25 | Rhode Island | 24.89 | 28 | 3 |
| 49 | South Carolina | 17.73 | 46 | -3 |
| 15 | South Dakota | 29.11 | 9 | -6 |
| 47 | Tennessee | 18.77 | 44 | -3 |
| 37 | Texas | 22.27 | 39 | 2 |
| 2 | Utah | 32.95 | 4 | 2 |
| 8 | Vermont | 30.91 | 7 | -1 |
| 12 | Virginia | 29.89 | 12 | 0 |
| 18 | Washington | 27.61 | 31 | 13 |
| 43 | West Virginia | 20.05 | 45 | 2 |
| 23 | Wisconsin | 25.68 | 20 | -3 |
| 3 | Wyoming | 32.16 | 3 | 0 |

RANK ORDER

| RANK | STATE | LIVABILITY RATING | 07 RANK | CHANGE |
|------|----------------|-------------------|---------|--------|
| 1 | New Hampshire | 33.61 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | Utah | 32.95 | 4 | 2 |
| 3 | Wyoming | 32.16 | 3 | 0 |
| 4 | Minnesota | 31.82 | 2 | -2 |
| 5 | Iowa | 31.57 | 6 | 1 |
| 6 | Nebraska | 31.32 | 11 | 5 |
| 7 | New Jersey | 31.27 | 5 | -2 |
| 8 | Vermont | 30.91 | 7 | -1 |
| 9 | Idaho | 30.74 | 14 | 5 |
| 10 | North Dakota | 30.57 | 13 | 3 |
| 11 | Connecticut | 29.91 | 10 | -1 |
| 12 | Virginia | 29.89 | 12 | 0 |
| 13 | Massachusetts | 29.84 | 8 | -5 |
| 14 | Colorado | 29.43 | 18 | 4 |
| 15 | South Dakota | 29.11 | 9 | -6 |
| 16 | Maryland | 28.86 | 15 | -1 |
| 17 | Kansas | 28.36 | 17 | 0 |
| 18 | Washington | 27.61 | 31 | 13 |
| 19 | Montana | 27.36 | 22 | 3 |
| 20 | Maine | 27.32 | 16 | -4 |
| 21 | Hawaii | 27.25 | 19 | -2 |
| 22 | Oregon | 27.05 | 23 | 1 |
| 23 | Wisconsin | 25.68 | 20 | -3 |
| 24 | New York | 25.14 | 29 | 5 |
| 25 | Rhode Island | 24.89 | 28 | 3 |
| 26 | Illinois | 24.80 | 26 | 0 |
| 27 | Delaware | 24.68 | 21 | -6 |
| 28 | Florida | 24.02 | 27 | -1 |
| 29 | Alaska | 23.57 | 24 | -5 |
| 30 | California | 23.48 | 30 | 0 |
| 30 | Indiana | 23.48 | 35 | 5 |
| 32 | Oklahoma | 23.27 | 40 | 8 |
| 33 | New Mexico | 23.14 | 37 | 4 |
| 34 | Pennsylvania | 23.11 | 33 | -1 |
| 35 | Nevada | 23.02 | 25 | -10 |
| 36 | Arizona | 22.64 | 32 | -4 |
| 37 | Texas | 22.27 | 39 | 2 |
| 38 | Michigan | 22.16 | 38 | 0 |
| 39 | Missouri | 22.02 | 34 | -5 |
| 40 | Georgia | 21.11 | 41 | 1 |
| 40 | Ohio | 21.11 | 36 | -4 |
| 42 | North Carolina | 20.98 | 42 | 0 |
| 43 | West Virginia | 20.05 | 45 | 2 |
| 44 | Alabama | 19.98 | 42 | -2 |
| 45 | Louisiana | 19.37 | 49 | 4 |
| 46 | Arkansas | 19.27 | 48 | 2 |
| 47 | Tennessee | 18.77 | 44 | -3 |
| 48 | Kentucky | 17.95 | 47 | -1 |
| 49 | South Carolina | 17.73 | 46 | -3 |
| 50 | Mississippi | 15.89 | 50 | 0 |

METHODOLOGY: To determine a state's "Livability Rating," each state's rankings for 44 categories were averaged. The scale is 1 to 50, the higher the number, the better. Data used are for the most recent year in which comparable numbers are available from most states. All factors were given equal weight. States with no data available for a given category were ranked based only on the remaining factors. In our book, data are listed from highest to lowest. However, for purposes of this award, we inverted rankings for those factors we determined to be "positive." Thus the state with the highest median income in the book (ranking 1st) would be given a number 50 ranking for this award.