



US & Canada:  
**California Region**  
(Ch.16)

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What states are part  
of the region?

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What regions does it  
border?

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## Overview

- Diversity: population and the landscape
- Benign climate, but with natural hazards
- Rapid growth slowing

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## Physical setting

- “Young” terrain
- Along border of two major tectonic plates
- Three main areas
  - Sierra Nevada
  - Central Valley
  - Coastal Mountains



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## The Sierra Nevadas

- Parallel California – Nevada border
- Sharp border, especially on east
- Heavily glaciated
- Many lakes



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## Central Valley

- Flat
- Filled by vast quantities of sediment from Sierras and Coastal Mountains
- Excellent agricultural area



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## Coastal Mountains

- Parallel to coast down to Santa Barbara
  - Very definite coastline
- Southern California less organized



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## Earthquakes

Pacific plate moving transverse North American plate

~1 mile per 100,000 years



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## Earthquakes



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## Climate

- “Mediterranean” climate
- Only place in North America with dry summers
- Mild winters, except in mountains
- Relatively dry, except on west side of mountains

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### Average Annual Precipitation California

Copyright 2000 by Spatial Climate Analysis Service,  
Oregon State University



For information on the PRISM modeling system, visit the SCAS web site at <http://www.oregonstate.edu/prism>

The latest PRISM digital data sets created by the SCAS can be obtained from the Climate Source at <http://www.climatesource.com>

This is a map of annual precipitation averaged over the period 1961-1990. Station observations were collected from the NOAA Cooperative and USGS-NWS 2-metric networks, plus other state and local networks. The PRISM modeling system was used to create the gridded estimates from which this map was made. The site of each grid point is approximately 4-km. Support was provided by the NWS's Water and Climate Center.

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## Climate comparison

	Akron	San Francisco	Fresno	San Diego
Jan Temp	33 / 17	57 / 44	54 / 37	65 / 48
Jul Temp	82 / 61	69 / 55	98 / 64	76 / 66
Rainfall	38 in.	23 in.	10 in.	9 in.
Snowfall	45 in.	0 in.	0 in.	0 in.

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## Santa Ana winds

- Form when high pressure over Great Basin
- Incredibly strong winds race from desert to coast
- Hot and dry



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## Smog

- Benevolent summer weather stifles air circulation
- Significant problem in LA, Riverside, parts of Valley



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## Natural vegetation: Chaparral

- Shrubs that can withstand hot, dry summer



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## Natural vegetation: Forest and grasslands

- Forests along windward side of Sierras
  - Sequoias
- Grasslands in central valley



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## Native Settlement

- High density
- Mainly peaceful tribes
- Centered along coastline

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## Spanish Settlement

- Explorations in 16<sup>th</sup> century
- 1769-1823: Missions built, mostly along coast
  - Convert natives
  - Buffer against Russian advances down from Alaska
- After Mexican independence, settlements lapsed, few towns



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## American Annexation

- 1848: Mexico cedes California
- 1849: Gold rush
- 1850: Population increased 20-fold in 5 years
  - Became much more English, much less Spanish
- 1860: San Francisco increased from mission-size to 50,000 in 15 years



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## Immigration

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Petroleum
- Entertainment Industry
- Hi-tech “Silicon Valley”

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## Present population

- Rapid growth
- High birth rate
- 90 percent of in-migrants foreign
- More American-born people leaving than entering
- 95 percent urban

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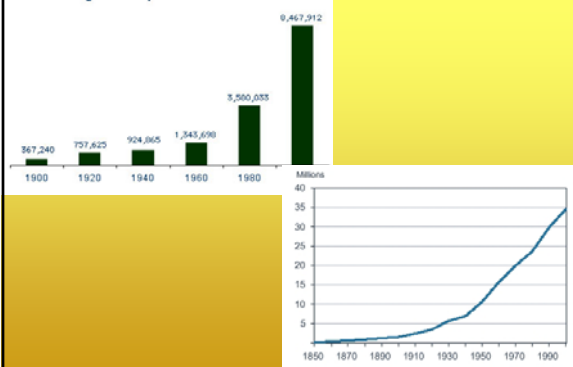
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Foreign Born Population 1900 to 2000



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## Diversity

- 46% white non-Hispanic
  - Only behind Hawaii, New Mexico
- 32% Hispanic (11 million)
  - Percentage only behind New Mexico
- 11% Asian (4 million)
  - Percentage only behind Hawaii
- 25% of the population does not speak English at home

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## Population numbers

State/Metro Area	2000	1990	Change
California State	33,871	29,760	+14%
Los Angeles – Riverside	16,373	14,531	+13%
San Diego	2,813	2,498	+13%
San Francisco – San Jose	7,039	6,253	+13%
Sacramento	1,796	1,481	+21%
Fresno	922	755	+20%
US & Canada	312,600	276,700	+13%

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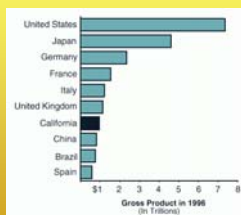
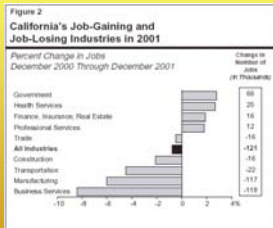
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## California economy



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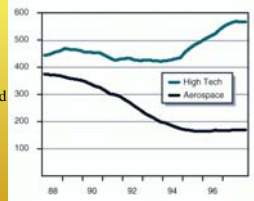
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## Defense and hi-tech industry

- Aerospace defense industry declined as cold war ended
- Hi-Tech employment skyrocketed in 1990s
- 1,000,000 Californians; 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of San Jose workers
- \$98B in wages
- Growth stopped



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## Manufacturing

- 2 million Californians employed
- Significant garment industry growth, esp. LA
  - High-end: proximity to center of entertainment industry
  - Low-end: cheap labor

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## Agriculture

- Crops not grown much elsewhere
  - Lemons, Oranges, other citrus
  - Avocados, Pistachios, Olives, Nuts
- Grapes
  - Wine industry
- Winter crops
  - Tomatoes in Central Valley

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## Tourism

- Hollywood and entertainment industry
- Disneyland
- San Francisco
- National Parks
- Skiing in the Sierras

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## Cities

- Difficult to describe
- Vast urban sprawl
- “Grew up” after advent of automobile

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## Los Angeles

- 3.5 million people
- County over 10M
- Very spread out
- Downtown area developing, not as central to city's function
- Major tourist hub



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## “The Valley”

- Endless sprawl on a grid system
  - Only broken by mountains
- Some parts of Los Angeles dozens of miles from City Hall
- Secessionist desires in San Fernando Valley, Hollywood

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## San Diego

- 2.8 million people
- Largest city on US side of US-Mexico border
- Large hi-tech, telecommunication employment, navy



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## Bay Area

- San Francisco
  - Largest western city till after WWI
  - Best natural harbor
  - No population growth
  - Many government employees
  - Very densely populated



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## Bay Area

- Oakland / East Bay
  - More blue-collar
  - Main shipping area of region
- San Jose
  - “Silicon Valley”
  - Rapid transformation from agricultural to hi-tech economy

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## Central Valley cities

- Sacramento
  - Aerospace, hi-tech, government
- Fresno, Bakersfield, Redding, Stockton...
  - Diversifying from original agricultural base
- Smaller populations than coastal cities, but growing (and sprawling) faster than coast

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## Outlook

- Boom near end
- Crises
  - Water shortages
  - Electricity shortages
  - Budget shortfall (\$36.5 billion!)
    - Lack of hi-tech growth
    - Decline in tourism
  - Cities with highest cost of living

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