

## The Nine Nations of North America

The 1981 book *The Nine Nations of North America* by Washington Post reporter Joel Garreau was an attempt to explore the regional geography of the North American continent and assign portions of the continent to one of nine "nations," which are geographic regions that have consistent qualities and similar features.

The nine nations of North America, as proposed by Garreau include:

1. The Foundry
2. MexAmerica
3. The Breadbasket
4. Ecotopia
5. New England
6. The Empty Quarter
7. Dixie
8. Quebec
9. The Islands

What follows is a summary of each of the nine nations and their qualities. Links in the titles of each region lead to the complete online chapter regarding that region from the book

### **The Foundry**

Includes New York, Pennsylvania, and the Great Lakes Region. At the time of publication (1981), The Foundry region was in significant decline as a manufacturing center. The region includes the metropolitan areas of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Toronto, and Detroit. Garreau selected Detroit as the capital city of this region but considered Manhattan an anomaly within the region.

### **MexAmerica**

With a capital city of Los Angeles, Garreau proposed that the Southwestern United States (including California's Central Valley) and Northern Mexico would be a region onto itself. Stretching from Texas to the Pacific Coast, MexAmerica's common Mexican heritage and the Spanish language unite this region.

### **The Breadbasket**

Much of the Midwest, stretching from northern Texas to the southern parts of the Prairie Provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba), this region is essentially the Great Plains and is, according to Garreau, the heartland of North America. Garreau's proposed capital city is Kansas City.

### **Ecotopia**

Named after a book of the same name, Ecotopia with a capital city of San Francisco is the liberal Pacific Coast from southern Alaska to Santa Barbara, including the Washington, Oregon, and Northern California metropolitan areas of Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco.

New England

**The Foundry**

Consisting of what is traditionally known as New England (Connecticut to Maine), this region of the nine nations includes the Canadian Maritime provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, along with the Atlantic province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The capital of New England is Boston.

**The Empty Quarter**

The Empty Quarter includes everything from about 105 degrees west longitude to Ecotopia on the Pacific Coast. It also includes everything north of the Breadbasket so it includes all of Alberta and Northern Canada. The capital city of this sparsely populated nation is Denver.

**Dixie**

The Southeastern United States except for Southern Florida. Some refer to Dixie as being the former Confederate States of America but it doesn't travel directly along state lines. It includes southern Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana. The capital city of Dixie is Atlanta.

**Quebec**

Garreau's only nation that consists of a single province or state is Francophone Quebec. Their constant efforts at succession led him to create this unique nation out of the province. Obviously, the capital of the nation is Quebec City.

**The Islands**

Southern Florida and the islands of the Caribbean comprise the nation known as The Islands. With a capital city of Miami. At the time of the book's publication, this region's main industry was drug smuggling.