

Study reveals best states for lovers

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No offense to Virginia, but a nationwide study of positive relationships found that Mississippi, Utah and Wisconsin are actually the top states for lovers, said lead author William Chopik of Michigan State University. Credit: Michigan State University

Is Virginia really for lovers? Other states may have something to say about that.

In the first nationwide study of positive relationships, a Michigan State University researcher found that Mississippi, Utah and Wisconsin were actually the top states for lovers. Virginia finished mid-pack. On a regional basis, the Pacific Coast was tops for quality relationships.

The worst state and region for lovers? North Dakota and the Great Plains (South Dakota, Kansas and Colorado also placed in the bottom 10).

William Chopik, an assistant psychology professor who studies relationships and their effects, said he was surprised at how well many states fit stereotypes. New York, for example, was the ninth worst state for lovers, while California and Utah were both in the top 10.

"When I think of New York, I think of the anxious Woody Allen type, and New York had one of the highest scores for attachment anxiety," said Chopik, who was named one of Forbes' ["30 Under 30 for Science in 2016."](#) "California, on the other hand, seems like a romantic place with beautiful sunsets, oceans and warm weather. And Utah residents are known to be very nice, warm and generous, which many people attribute to the large Mormon population."

Obviously, not every state fit an assumed pattern, Chopik said, "but it was interesting to see the ones that did."

Chopik and Matt Motyl of the University of Illinois at Chicago studied survey data of 127,070 adults from all states. The study measured both attachment anxiety, in which people are "clingy" and constantly worried their partner will leave them, and attachment avoidance, in which people dislike intimacy and are more distant and cold toward their partners.

Neither characteristic is healthy for a relationship, Chopik said, and the top states for lovers scored low on both measures. Also in these states, marriage rates were highest and fewer people reported living in isolation.

The best states for lovers were Mississippi, Utah and Wisconsin (which essentially tied for No. 1), followed by Vermont, Alaska, North Carolina, Delaware, Minnesota and Oregon. Tying for 10th place were California, Maine and Washington.

The worst [states](#) for lovers tended to score high on both attachment anxiety and avoidance. North Dakota fared the worst, followed by Kentucky, Kansas, South Dakota, Rhode Island, Ohio, South Carolina, Colorado, New York and Indiana.

The study, published in the *Journal of Research in Personality*, notes that secluded mountainous areas tend to cater to loners and people who dislike social interactions, which could help explain some of the findings.

A region's temperature and weather may also affect how [people](#) interact with one another, the study notes.

Ultimately, the authors conclude, "we do not recommend changing all of the affectionate mottos used to describe places or finally moving out of North Dakota. To a certain degree, positive relationships are found everywhere and transcend time and place. After all, home is where the heart is."

Provided by Michigan State University

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