

UNITED STATES OF PLATES

If you want to know what America is all about, just look to our souvenir dishes.

BY MONICA MICHAEL WILLIS

State plates became popular souvenirs back in the 1950s, '60s and '70s, when summer vacation meant hitting the road and exploring the country. Today you can find these retro keepsakes on eBay or Etsy and at local vintage shops for a steal: Some are just \$5! They're a great way to show your state pride, but they also make a thoughtful host or housewarming gift. Take a look, learn a little history and count the states you've visited!



COLORADO

Take a 17-stop tour of the Centennial State at a glance! The colorful retro pictures are super charming. \$21, [fromtheseller.etsy.com](https://www.fromtheseller.etsy.com)



CONNECTICUT

The state's maritime history is clear on this plate featuring Mystic and the US Coast Guard Academy, established in 1876. \$24, [ebay.com/str/orangeowltreasures](https://www.ebay.com/str/orangeowltreasures)



DELAWARE

The Homer Laughlin China Company created souvenir plates on wide-rimmed Cavalier china, including this 1953 beauty. \$35, [poshmark.com/closet/kellyreally18](https://www.poshmark.com/closet/kellyreally18)



ALABAMA

A 1960s plate from the capital of Montgomery pays homage to the state's hunting, fishing and agricultural heritage. \$10, [ebay.com/str/floribundacottageantiques](https://www.ebay.com/str/floribundacottageantiques)



ALASKA

Our 50th state is home to sled teams, totem poles and North America's 10 highest peaks. \$22, [rubberduckyretro.etsy.com](https://www.rubberduckyretro.etsy.com)



FLORIDA

This keepsake includes popular Sunshine State destinations like Miami Beach along with palms, oranges and hibiscus. \$18, [ebay.com/str/retrocamp](https://www.ebay.com/str/retrocamp)



GEORGIA

The Little White House seen here, built as a retreat by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in Warm Springs, can still be toured today. \$25, [tranformtreasures.etsy.com](https://www.tranformtreasures.etsy.com)



HAWAII

All eight of the major islands that make up the Hawaiian archipelago are included on this breezy 1960s plate. \$58, [ebay.com/usr/tifham-45](https://www.ebay.com/usr/tifham-45)



ARIZONA

Beyond the state flag, this plate also features the official state flower (saguaro blossom) and bird (cactus wren). \$25, [antiquesandrelics.etsy.com](https://www.antiquesandrelics.etsy.com)



ARKANSAS

Two of the Natural State's prettiest attractions, Hamilton Lake and Hot Springs National Park, decorate this memento. \$26, [sagesweetgrasssoaps.etsy.com](https://www.sagesweetgrasssoaps.etsy.com)



CALIFORNIA

This fun plate from the 1970s celebrates Hollywood and two long-gone tourist attractions, Marineland and Busch Gardens. \$18, [ebay.com/str/retrocamp](https://www.ebay.com/str/retrocamp)



IDAHO

Beloved tourist spots like Sun Valley and the Salmon River are spotlighted on a keepsake that resembles Delft pottery. \$25, [ebay.com/str/pevy](https://www.ebay.com/str/pevy)



ILLINOIS

This kitschy plate shows off Illinois's claims to fame, oil rigs included; the state had an oil boom in the mid-20th century. \$30, [ivesdrivevintage.etsy.com](https://www.ivesdrivevintage.etsy.com)



INDIANA

University of Notre Dame and the town of Santa Claus are two of the Hoosier standouts on this pretty pink find. \$29, [tranformtreasures.etsy.com](https://www.tranformtreasures.etsy.com)



» IOWA «

Some plates, like this one, come with convenient predrilled holes on the back so you can easily display them.
\$13, [luvredford.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/luvredford)



» KANSAS «

The fancy gilded border here showcases the Sunflower State's agricultural roots and those amber fields of grain.
\$18, [littleredhenvintage.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/littleredhenvintage)



» KENTUCKY «

A Thoroughbred is the star of this souvenir: Churchill Downs has been home to the Kentucky Derby since 1875.
\$19, [whitneyhouseantiques.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/whitneyhouseantiques)



» MISSISSIPPI «

Gulfport sunseekers and Southern belles grace this intricately illustrated 1970s Magnolia State plate.
\$14, [goldclovervintage.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/goldclovervintage)



» MISSOURI «

The Missouri capitol stands tall on this plate, made with a rare all-red design. It's surrounded by hawthorn blossoms.
\$20, [seahousecollectibles.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/seahousecollectibles)



» MONTANA «

Old Faithful and Flathead Lake are among the natural wonders that grace the plate for the Treasure State.
\$12, [thechickadeedesigns.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/thechickadeedesigns)



» LOUISIANA «

There are good times to be had in the Pelican State, as seen in these scenes of Mardi Gras, Dixieland jazz and the Sugar Bowl.
\$9, [ebay.com/str/dyco8364](https://www.ebay.com/str/dyco8364)



» MAINE «

This midcentury piece pays tribute to three of the state's 65 lighthouses and a covered bridge that dates to 1859.
\$24, [duckwells.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/duckwells)



» MARYLAND «

The Old Line State's plate references "The Star Spangled Banner." Francis Scott Key wrote it near Baltimore during the War of 1812.
\$20, [seahousecollectibles.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/seahousecollectibles)



» NEBRASKA «

An ox-drawn wagon and Chimney Rock, a navigational landmark for pioneer Cornhuskers, decorate this minimalist plate.
\$15, [ebay.com/str/theplateplacecollectibles](https://www.ebay.com/str/theplateplacecollectibles)



» NEVADA «

Las Vegas is a sight to behold, but this simple piece is all about natural beauties like Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Nevada.
\$20, [transformtreasures.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/transformtreasures)



» NEW HAMPSHIRE «

The gray tones go with the nickname the Granite State, so called for New Hampshire's many granite quarries.
\$18, [ebay.com/str/crestlinsales](https://www.ebay.com/str/crestlinsales)



» MASSACHUSETTS «

History buffs will appreciate images of colonial landmarks like Boston's Bunker Hill and Concord's Minuteman statue.
\$12, [ebay.com/str/22ryt](https://www.ebay.com/str/22ryt)



» MICHIGAN «

A windmill in the city of Holland (founded by Dutch immigrants) and the Detroit skyline stand out next to the pie-crust edge.
\$24, [transformtreasures.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/transformtreasures)



» MINNESOTA «

The lattice border makes this rustic plate, featuring mythical lumberjack Paul Bunyan and his faithful ox Babe, even more special.
\$10, [ebay.com/str/prairiefarmhouse](https://www.ebay.com/str/prairiefarmhouse)



» NEW JERSEY «

Atlantic City (the birthplace of the Miss America Pageant) and Princeton University have a place of pride on this 1970s collectible.
\$30, [transformtreasures.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/transformtreasures)



» NEW MEXICO «

Native American heritage as well as natural landmarks like Carlsbad Caverns in the Chihuahuan Desert distinguish this plate.
\$30, [nextstagevintage.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/nextstagevintage)



» NEW YORK «

When this midcentury souvenir first appeared in tourist shops, the 102-story Empire State Building was the world's tallest skyscraper.
\$19, [littleredhenvintage.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/littleredhenvintage)



NORTH CAROLINA

Cotton and tobacco numbered among the Tarheel State's most profitable crops at the time this plate was made in 1954. \$33, transformtreasures.etsy.com



NORTH DAKOTA

Frontier imagery and an unusual black-and-white zodiac border elevate this graphic 1950s souvenir. \$19, rubberduckyretro.etsy.com



OHIO

Native sons Thomas Edison and Orville and Wilbur Wright share billing on this pastel-bordered plate. \$22, littleredhenvintage.etsy.com



TENNESSEE

Tourists can still take in the Smoky Mountains from the 407-foot-tall Space Needle shown here. It opened in Gatlinburg in 1970. \$25, ebay.com/str/mainlymens



TEXAS

Pennsylvania-based Sabin Industries decorated many midcentury souvenir plates, including this Lone Star stunner. \$18, oldandokie.etsy.com



UTAH

A scalloped rim gives landmarks like Angel Arch and Salt Lake Temple (the world's largest Mormon church) a heavenly feel. \$25, tomsbasement.etsy.com



OKLAHOMA

Major exports—oil, wheat and cattle—as well as beloved pastimes like rodeo and football made the cut on this Sooner souvenir. \$15, ebay.com/str/lostbutnowamfound



OREGON

This Northwestern piece features the Pendleton Round-Up, a September rodeo that's now in its 113th year. \$23, transformtreasures.etsy.com



PENNSYLVANIA

Shout-outs to Ben Franklin, William Penn and the Liberty Bell remind everyone of this state's important place in American history. \$20, laststrawarts.etsy.com



VERMONT

The intricate pine-cone border and hand-painted accent colors make this 1950s-era souvenir especially attractive. \$30, nextstagevintage.com



VIRGINIA

Can you spot the tiny Northern cardinal (the state bird) hiding in the flowering dogwood (the state flower)? \$12, quiltednest.etsy.com



WASHINGTON

This bright Pacific Northwest plate shows off one of America's lushest states and 16 of its beloved attractions. \$18, klbvintagewares.etsy.com



RHODE ISLAND

Cliff Walk, the breezy path that traces the coast behind some of Newport's Gilded Age mansions, is the focus of this rare single-subject plate. \$5, ebay.com/str/sandyinairfax



SOUTH CAROLINA

A wide filigree border encircles Southern tourist faves such as Fort Sumter and Brookgreen Gardens. \$10, ebay.com/usr/brchea_0



SOUTH DAKOTA

Mount Rushmore clearly isn't the only big deal; roadside attraction Wall Drug installed giant dinosaurs that honor the fossil-rich state. \$30, transformtreasures.etsy.com



WEST VIRGINIA

When you're the only state that lies completely in the Appalachian Mountain region, you play up your rustic appeal. \$25, seahousecollectibles.etsy.com



WISCONSIN

Because it's only six inches in diameter and has a fancy gold rim, this souvenir would be a lovely catchall for coins or jewelry. \$27, appleblossomflowers.etsy.com



WYOMING

This plate's irregular edges look like the kind on a cowhide rug—fitting for a state with so many farms and ranches. \$19, rubberduckyretro.etsy.com