

# Cultural Daily

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## How Geography Shapes the Games We Choose

Our Friends · Friday, July 25th, 2025

Digital technologies have all but eliminated the inconveniences of navigating new environments and locales. Google Maps is built into every Android smartphone, and the simple app can help even the most spatially unaware person find their way easily in a new town. Many have proclaimed that **geography's necessity** has been all but eliminated. The belief is not unfair. The gadgets and electronics at our disposal help us defeat the constraints of the physical world. Geography still plays an important role in most of our lives regardless.

Geographic location can shape our beliefs and views on life though many won't want to admit such outdated notions. The truth of the matter is that physical location has affected a country's cultural development in all matters; from their views on work culture to actual entertainment. Ice skating and **ice hockey are a big hit in Canada** because of the harsh winter conditions. Swimming and water polo has a huge following in Italy and Spain, influenced by Mediterranean climate. Even soccer's global popularity was in part influenced by England's geographic supremacy during the Victorian era. The effect of geography can even be seen in eSports. Certain countries have dominion in specific game genres.

But does geography shape the games that we choose to play? Physical location may not be the only factor, or even the strongest factor, in our deciding what the best game for us is. But it certainly plays a role, whether we would like to admit it or not. Below, we are going to explore how geography impacts the decisions we make regarding entertainment. We will also discuss whether it is the only factor that drives our choices.

## How Geography Impacts Decisions

We often underestimate geography's impact on a nation's cultural development. A country by the sea might have developed a powerful trading network, and experienced intriguing cultural imports from all over the world. Their culture would naturally evolve in a different direction from a mountainous nation with fewer opportunities to trade with distant countries. What we mean is that geography can sometimes impact decision-making in the simplest way; by giving us more options to choose from.

Geography can even impact the simplest of decisions at times. An excellent example of that would be the success of gambling games in different regions of the world. The United States has some of human history's most noteworthy gambling hubs. Las Vegas and Atlantic City get millions of visitors a day. It shouldn't shock us to learn that a lot of the gambling culture in the country is influenced by these two cities. That influence doesn't just stop at land-based casinos either. Online

gambling is also profoundly influenced by games that are popular in Las Vegas and Atlantic City.

Poker is a prime example. Texas Holdem may have begun in a Texas tavern. But the game's global popularity came from its success in Las Vegas. The game is a hit at online casinos today when [online poker legal states](#) options are far more widespread. Had one of poker's most popular incarnations today not made it out of its state of origin many believe it would not have had the cultural dominion that it does today.

## Is Geography Always the Primary Factor?

Understanding the importance of geography is an important aspect of understanding cultural and societal development. Once upon a time geographic location may even have been the most important factor in determining our entertainment. However, technological progress has definitely changed the way that location affects us. It may once have been necessary to actually visit California in order to get a taste of Neapolitan pizza from LA. With the internet at our disposal any of us could search up a classic Neapolitan recipe and try to recreate the style at our very own home. The very fact that Neapolitan pizza is available in Los Angeles, which is over 10000 kilometers from its place of origin shows that humans have overcome geography's constraints.

Geography is far from the only factor behind humanity's cultural and societal development. We need look no further than the poker example that we already gave. Texas Holdem is the most popular variant of the game in its home state. However, it also has a global following and is ranked as the most popular version of poker worldwide. It is played all over the USA for one. But also it is a staple of casinos in countries that have nothing to do with America. Obviously, geography is not the only factor in determining entertainment's flow.

Some might say it isn't even the primary factor. The popularity of Texas Holdem speaks to that as well. Texas is the biggest state in the Union. It is also important to America's economic and historic identity as well. But it wasn't until the poker variant reached Las Vegas that it attained cultural dominance around the globe. Las Vegas' status as a gambling city and a tourist attraction contribute to the tourists that visit. Geography plays a role, but it is much more the cultural perception of those that visit Sin City that drove the popularity of Texas Holdem all over the globe.

*Photos: Pavel Danilyuk via Pexels.*

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