



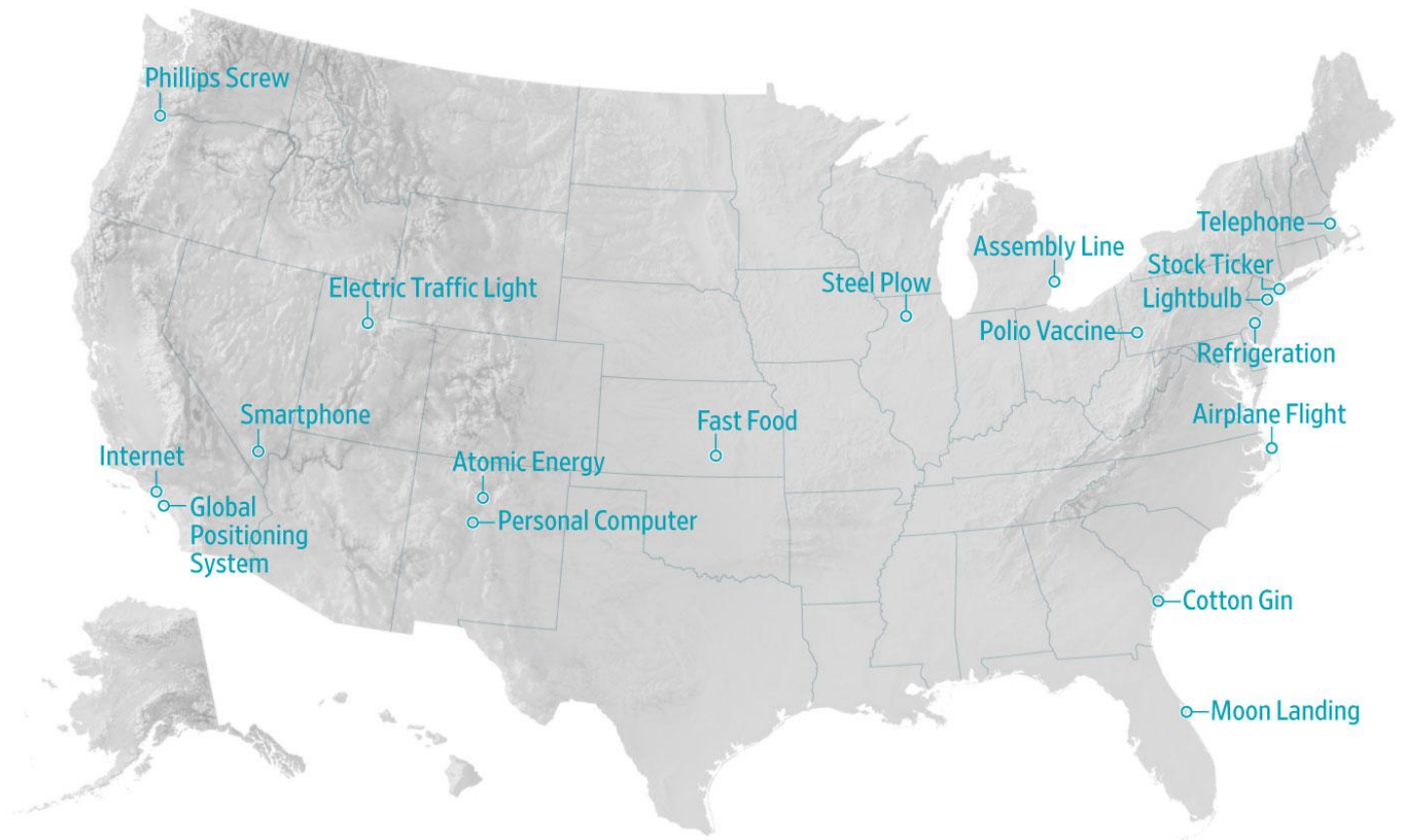
1. U.S.

Mapping 18 American Inventions That Created the Modern World

Trace locations historically associated with breakthroughs that have helped define the nation's 250-year legacy

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From the bustling labs of the Northeast to the remote deserts of the Southwest, American ingenuity can be found everywhere. This map traces locations historically associated with the breakthroughs that have defined the nation's 250-year legacy.



Phillips Screw

Telephone

Assembly Line

Stock Ticker

Steel Plow

Electric Traffic Light

Lightbulb

Polio Vaccine

Refrigeration

Airplane Flight

Smartphone

Fast Food

Internet

Atomic Energy

Global

Positioning System

Personal Computer

Cotton Gin

Moon Landing

Carl Churchill/WSJ

You can bring America's inventions to life below. Use your computer mouse to rotate each image, or even zoom in for a closer look. Or take advantage of your smartphone's augmented reality, by tapping the "Tabletop" buttons to see each image in an indoor setting or tapping the "Outdoor" buttons in a wide-open area to explore them at a larger scale. And at the bottom of this page, there are links to see locations connected to each breakthrough.

Airplane Flight

Bicycle wheel hub

Propeller

Rudder

Kitty Hawk, N.C.: On the desolate dunes of the Outer Banks, the Wright brothers conquered the sky in 1903, proving that controlled, powered flight was no longer a human fantasy.

Moon Landing

Descent stage
(landing assembly)

Ascent Stage
(crew quarters)

Kennedy Space Center, Fla.: This coastal launch site served as the terrestrial gateway for humanity's greatest leap, projecting American technological prestige into the cosmos.

Lightbulb

Menlo Park, N.J.: Thomas Edison's "invention factory" transformed a rural hamlet into the birthplace of the modern age, by perfecting the first commercially viable incandescent light.

Cotton Gin

Brushes

Hand crank

Savannah, Ga.: Eli Whitney's mechanical engine exponentially increased production, cementing the South's economic power and tragically entrenching the institution of slavery.

Global Positioning System

Altitude: 20,200km

Los Angeles: Originally a military project managed at the Los Angeles Air Force Base in the 1970s, this satellite-based system changed how the world navigates.

Personal Computer

Accessories sold separately

Output LEDs

Albuquerque, N.M.: As the home of MITS, maker of the Altair 8800, Albuquerque sparked the computer revolution in the mid-1970s, drawing a young Bill Gates and Paul Allen to start [Microsoft](#).

Phillips Screw

Slot fits Phillips screwdriver

Portland, Ore.: By preventing the stripping of fasteners, Henry Phillips's design enabled the use of high-speed power tools essential for World War II-era assembly lines.

Fast Food

"Castle" chimney for griddle smoke

Wichita, Kan.: White Castle standardized the production of the 5-cent burger, establishing the business model for the modern global franchise and redefining the American diet.

Smartphone

Screen

Las Vegas: [IBM](#) unveiled a device that merged telephony and computing in 1992 at a Las Vegas trade show, previewing the coming mobile era.

Electric Traffic Light

Powered by trolley
car lines

Salt Lake City: Developed by Lester Wire, this innovation brought order to the chaos of the early automotive era, creating the blueprint for urban traffic management.

Internet

Los Angeles: The first message sent between UCLA and Stanford in 1969 birthed a digital nervous system that has become the fundamental infrastructure of the 21st century.

Telephone

Mouthpiece
Telegraph wire

Boston: From a Boston laboratory, Alexander Graham Bell's first successful transmission, in 1876, collapsed the barriers of distance, forever altering human interaction.

Stock Ticker

Ticker tape
Ink pads

New York City: By streaming the pulse of Wall Street, this invention democratized financial information and laid the groundwork for the modern, high-speed global economy.

Refrigeration

Philadelphia: Through the pioneering designs of inventor Oliver Evans, Philadelphia became a hub for the mechanical ice-making technology that stabilized the global food-supply chain.

Polio Vaccine

Pittsburgh: Developed at the University of Pittsburgh in the 1950s, this vaccine transformed a devastating childhood disability into a preventable disease, marking a triumph in medical history.

Assembly Line

Elevated tracks
Rope or continuous chain
pulls chassis forward

Detroit: Henry Ford’s integration of moving parts and stationary labor in 1913 revolutionized global manufacturing, turning the automobile from a luxury into a middle-class staple.

Steel Plow

Hitch

Cutting edge

Grand Detour, Ill.: John Deere’s “self-polishing” steel blade allowed settlers to slice through the sticky Midwest sod, unlocking the agricultural potential of the American heartland.

Atomic Energy

Neutron

Energy

Los Alamos, N.M.: Under the veil of the Manhattan Project, this remote mesa became the site of a profound scientific pivot that ended a world war and ushered in the nuclear age.

Visit the locations where history was made

Use the links below to find the approximate locations — and if you try out the monument-scale "Outdoor" AR in these spots, feel free to send us a screenshot!

Table with 3 columns and 18 rows. (column headers with buttons are sortable)

Invention	Town	Location
Lightbulb	Menlo Park, N.J.	Thomas Edison Center
Stock Ticker	New York, N.Y.	Western Union Telegraph Building
Airplane Flight	Kill Devil Hills, N.C.	Wright Brothers Memorial
Assembly Line	Detroit, Mich.	Highland Park Plant
GPS	Los Angeles, Calif.	Los Angeles Air Force Base
Moon Landing	Kennedy Space Center, Fla.	Kennedy Space Center
Personal Computer	Albuquerque, N.M.	Ed Roberts's garage
Electric Traffic Light	Salt Lake City, Utah	Intersection
Cotton Gin	Savannah, Ga.	Mulberry Grove Plantation
Phillips Screw	Portland, Ore.	Henry Phillips' home

Table with 3 columns and 18 rows. (column headers with buttons are sortable)

Invention	Town	Location
Fast Food	Wichita, Kan.	First White Castle
Steel Plow	Grand Detour, Ill.	John Deere Historic Site
Atomic Energy	Los Alamos, N.M.	Manhattan Project National Historical Park
Refrigeration	Philadelphia, Pa.	Oliver Evans's 'Mars Works'
Smartphone	Las Vegas, Nev.	COMDEX Trade Show
Telephone	Boston, Mass.	Historical Plaque
Internet	Los Angeles, Calif.	Boelter Hall, UCLA
Polio vaccine	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Historical Plaque

Sources: Smithsonian Institution (Wright flyer); National Museum of American History (Telephone); The Henry Ford, CG Trader (Assembly line); ‘Courtesy of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History’ (Stock ticker); National Museum of American History (Steel plow); Utah Department of Transportation (Electric traffic light); Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History (Lightbulb and Personal computer); Salk Institute for Biological Studies (Polio vaccine); Jacob Perkins’ Ice Machine 1834 diagram from Scientific American (Refrigeration); State Library of Ohio and Ohio History Connection (Fast food); Oregon Historical Society (Phillips Screw); NASA (Moon Landing); MIT (Atomic energy); National Science Foundation (Internet); National Archives (Cotton gin); Mobile Phone Museum (Smartphone); Federal Aviation Administration (GPS). Illustration includes Noun Project elements