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BY THE NUMBERS

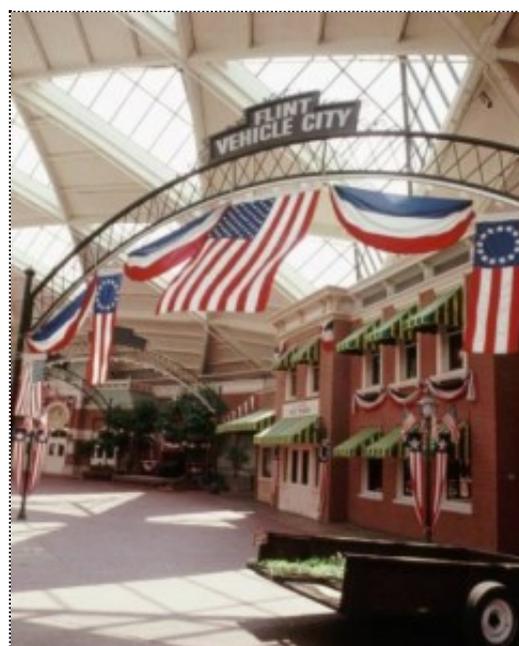
America's historic drop in violent crime: By the numbers

Crime is supposed to spike when times get tough, so why are most crime statistics at low levels not seen since before the days of color TV?

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The conventional wisdom is that crime rises during hard economic times. Well, either that's wrong or the economy isn't really that bad, according to [new preliminary national crime statistics](#) from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In fact, U.S. crime rates in 2011 hit their lowest levels since World War II, University of Maryland [criminologist Gary LaFree tells MSNBC](#). Experts cite a number of possible reasons for the prolonged drop in crime, including better policing techniques, an aging population, and, somewhat counterintuitively, the unifying effects of the recession. Here's a look at our *Leave It to Beaver*-level crime rates, by the numbers:

- 4**
Percent drop in violent crime (including murder, rape, and robbery) from 2010 to 2011
- 5**
Consecutive years violent crime has fallen
- 38**
Percent drop in violent crime from the peak in 1992
- 0.8**
Percent drop in property crime (including burglary, larceny, and auto theft) from 2010 to 2011
- 9**
Consecutive years property crime has fallen
- 30.6**
Percent drop in property crime since the peak in 1991



A shopping mall in downtown Flint, Mich.: Flint has the highest rate of violent crime of any U.S. city with more than 100,000 people, but violent crime across the country has dropped 4 percent since 2010 and 38 percent since the peak in 1992. *Photo: Bob Krist/CORBIS*

- 5**
Percent drop in arson from 2010 to 2011
- 4**
Percent drop in forcible rape
- 4**
Percent drop in robberies
- 3.3**
Percent drop in car theft
- 1.9**
Percent drop in murder
- 14,468**
Total [approximate](#) murders in the U.S. in 2011
- 280**
Decrease in murders from 2010 to 2011
- 1968**
Last year the total number of murders was lower, at 13,800
- 18.3**
Percent *increase* in murders in cities with populations under 10,000
- 14.4**
Percent decrease in murder in cities with populations of 50,000 to 99,999
- 51,209**
Violent crimes in New York City (pop. 8.2 million), including 515 murders — the highest total of any U.S. city
- 2,392**
Violent crimes in Flint, Mich. (pop. 102,357), including 52 murders — the highest rate of any city of 100,000+
- 95**
Violent crimes in Temecula, Calif. (pop. 101,274), including 0 murders — the lowest total of any city of 100,000+
- 120**
Violent crimes in Irvine, Calif. (pop. 214,872), including 2 murders — the lowest rate of any city of 100,000+
- 14,009**
Law enforcement agencies the FBI gathered its numbers from
- 37.2**
The median age in America, a historic high. "There is some truth to the fact that younger people commit more crimes," [LaFree tells MSNBC](#).

Sources: [Discovery News](#), [FBI \(2,3\)](#), [Huffington Post](#), [Los Angeles Times](#), [MSNBC](#), [Reuters](#), [24/7 Wall St.](#)