

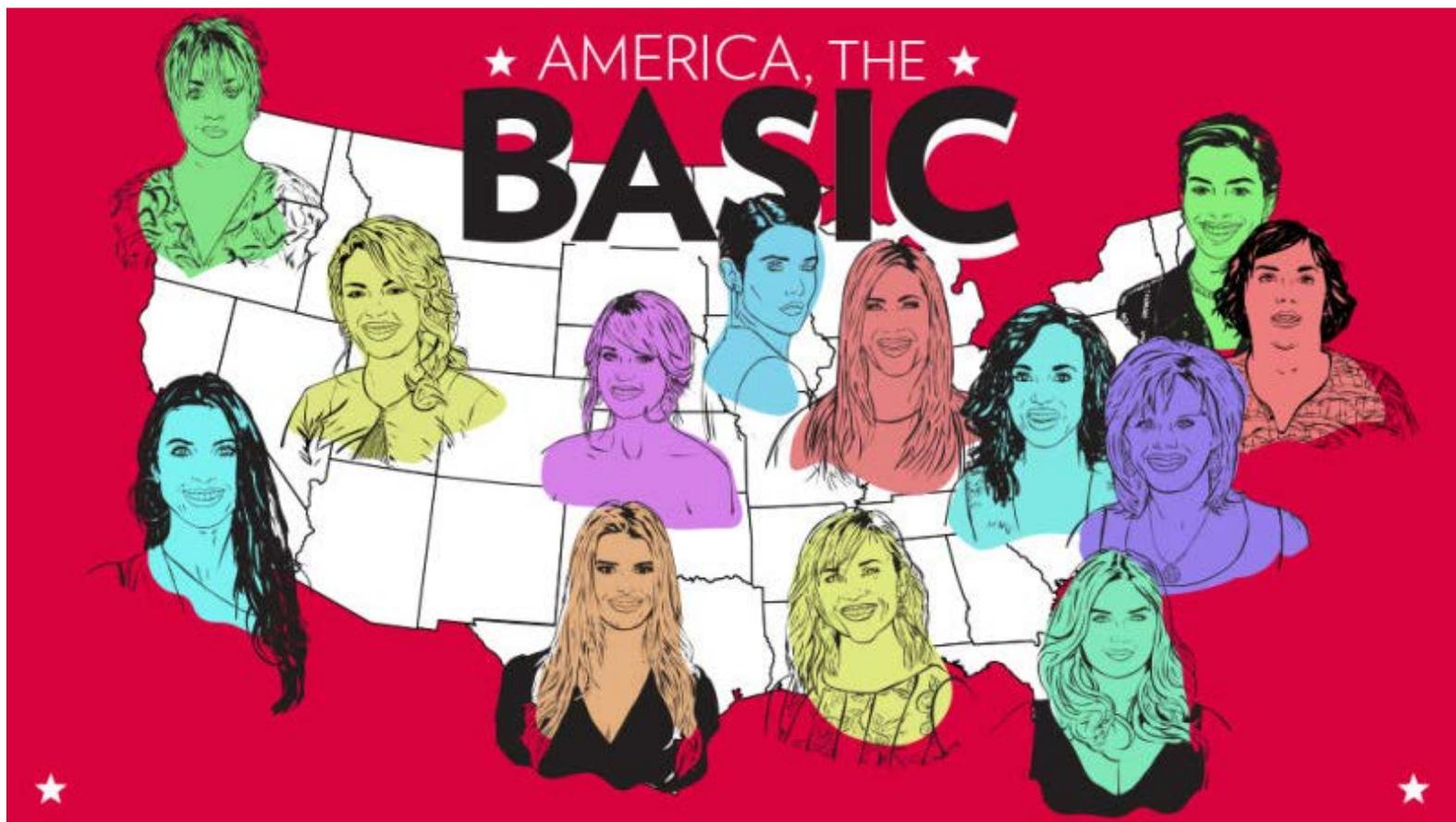
The United States of Basic Bitches: A Map and Field Guide



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America can consider itself #blessed that it has a word like “bro”— three letters that convey to most people a specific image about a specific regionally varietal type of young premarital, often preppy man characterized group socializing and over-imbibing. But the English language giveth, and the English language leaveth you waiting at soccer practice long after the other kids have been picked up by their moms. So while it’s not perfect, the best word we have to describe the female equivalent of the “bro” is the “basic.”

crowded L train, and the thought hit me like a wall of hot garbage smell during a heat wave: with their uniform socially enforced, boring sartorial style, preference for a specific set of slang words, propensity toward proud liver abuse, and tendency to roll at least four deep on weekend nights, the only difference between a “bro” and a “basic bitch” is gender. **Bros are just male Basic Bitches.** They’ve been basic all along! And just as there are bros in every corner of America, there are corresponding regional varieties of female basics. (Because they’re a lot less likely to throw an empty Jim Beam bottle at your flower pots, I’m hesitant to use the phrase “bitch” to refer to them. They’re usually too nice for that, at least after graduation.)



The United States of Bros: A Map and Field Guide

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Basic-ness should be acknowledged and owned because there’s nothing wrong with being “basic” except, maybe, that “basic” people are not very interesting on an individual level. It implies that a person is still stuck in their collegiate socialization pattern, dressing pretty much exactly like their friends, and they hesitate to deviate from what’s comfortable yet despite the fact that they can probably afford it. But that’s okay. In fact, the very existence of the phrase “basic” as an insult is a symptom of our generation’s pathological obsession with their own special snowflakedom. Being called “basic” implies, literally, “similar to others in a predictable manner.” There are six and a half billion humans on earth. We all have our own DNA, but beyond the very tiniest organelles in our cells, we are all, to one extent or another, basic as fuck. None of us is Rihanna. Rihanna is barely Rihanna sometimes.

Herewith, America the Basic.

Chicago Trixie Basic

Habitat: Traditionally Lincoln Park/Lakeview, but her territory has expanded to include Bucktown, Wicker Park, “West Town” (a *made up neighborhood*), “Near North,” and the “South Loop.” Rarely south of Roosevelt or north of Irving Park, almost never west of Western. If there is a street festival in a white area, she will be there in wedge heels and big sunnies.

Her jewelry is: David Yurman.

Most mystifying behavior: Buying three-day passes to Lollapalooza every summer even though she of all people should know from experience that it is *horrible* and that is the one summer weekend that you *leave* Chicago and do other things like maybe go up to Door County.

Loves: The Cubbies, bags (the game, not purses, although purses are also excellent), that hot dog place on Clark where they yell at you.

Celebrity aspiration: Jennifer Aniston.

SEC Sorority Girl Basic

Wears: Pearls to job interviews. But not just pearl necklaces or pearl earrings — she wears the whole set. Everything, everything, *everything* is monogrammed. Things are monogrammed that you'd have no idea could be monogrammed. If she hasn't already, she will one day throw a party where every guest leaves with something monogrammed.

Dream vacation: Road trip to the beach.

Votes: Republican.

Most mystifying behavior: Has stopped going to tanning beds years ago, but still lays out in the sun all summer with the lowest SPF suntan lotion on the market.

Biggest pet peeve: Anyone who thinks she's not a "real" football fan because she's wearing Lilly Pulitzer dress and heels to a home game in September. Bless their hearts.

Celebrity aspiration: Reese Witherspoon.

Manhattan Basic

Job: Public relations.

Her purse is: Let's be honest with ourselves — if her bag is real, she didn't buy it herself. Her yoga mat is definitely real, though (she's going after work).

Her rent is: Astronomical, especially considering she lives with 18 people in a hallway that has been divided into a series of coffin-sized bedrooms. Real estate broker said it was "cozy" and it's *such a good deal* for the West Village. Luckily, one of her roommates has a dad who makes enough money to cosign the lease.

Most mystifying behavior: For someone who insists that Manhattan is the best place in the world, she's been going to Brooklyn an awful lot. Has a very expensive membership to Equinox and only uses the elliptical for 20 minutes.

Most impressive skill: Doing everything while walking. Eating, texting, crying, studying, reading, ordering takeout, navigating a messy breakup, negotiating a new contract at work. A Manhattan Basic is like a shark: If she's not walking somewhere in Sigerson Morrison flats she might die.

Celebrity aspiration: Anne Hathaway, who got married, moved to Brooklyn, and acted like that was her plan all along.

Dallas Basic

Job: Real estate. Maybe marketing.

Drives: A massive SUV her dad bought for her.

Wears: Kendra Scott jewelry, Tori Burch accessories, 7 For All Mankind or Citizens of Humanity jeans. A statement necklace if it's a special occasion.

Listens to: 106.1 KISS FM.

Spends her summers: Being a bridesmaid. She has been a bridesmaid like 15 times.

Celebrity aspiration: Jessica Simpson.

Brooklyn Basic

Pretends to love: Roberta's, Smorgasburg, TV On The Radio, her boyfriend's tattoos.

Pretends to hate: *Vice*, racism (kind of loves racism a little bit), non-Beyoncé pop radio, traditional weddings.

Wastes a lot of time: In line for free outdoor events, peering angrily down the G train platform, ordering cocktails that take forever to prepare, pretending to consider buying \$700 reclaimed wood coffee tables at Brooklyn Flea, **instagramming graffiti**, waiting for brunch at a place that is like two doors down from another place that serves food that is just as good and has no line, writing essay-length Yelp reviews that do not get to the fucking point until like four paragraphs in, wandering aimlessly around vintage stores.

Wants to be: A writer/comedian/street style star/internet celebrity/muse/It Girl.

Most mystifying habit: Tells people she lives in Williamsburg but actually lives in Bushwick. Tells people she lives in Fort Greene but actually lives in Bed Stuy. Tells people she lives in South Slope; actually lives in Sunset Park (the 36th Street DNR train really isn't that bad, though).

Celebrity aspiration: Lena Dunham.

Los Angeles Basic

Drives: A white Jetta of the same model year she graduated.

Where you find her: Celeb spotting on Robertson Boulevard.

Daytime drink order: Double mochaccino, skim milk, 2 Splendas from Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf.

Daytime wardrobe: Shapeless Free People tunics or Lululemon workout clothes worn as street clothes.

Nighttime drink order: Clear liquor mixed with something low-calorie, chased with a shitload of cocaine.

Tells people she is: An actress.

Is actually: An extra.

Most anticipated event: Outdoor music festivals. Coachella is like her prom. But she draws the line at Burning Man — that's for weirdos and artists.

Celebrity aspiration: Audrina Patridge.

HBCU Sorority Girl Basic

People think she's: Stuck up, probably because her hair is always laid and her outfit is always on point.

Sick of: Being told she'll never get a man because she's too ambitious.

Job: Already has her JD and is working as an attorney. In a year or so, she'll get bored and get her MBA from Harvard. If all goes to plan, by the time she's 40, she will have 57 advanced degrees and more money than God.

Most Gchatted phrase: YAAAAAAAAS.

Celebrity aspiration: Olivia Pope.

Seattle Basic

Job: Works for Amazon.

Habitat: Shopping at U Village or Bellevue Square, hanging out at the Garage or Pesos.

Anxieties: Not crazy about moving to Capitol Hill, but her posse is moving there and she's gotta be close to her girls.

Love life: Much more focused on obtaining high quality pot than she is on obtaining a husband. Would date a cool tech guy, though.

D.C. Basic

Job: An NGO or a nonprofit somewhere on The Hill. Makes a real big deal about it.

Where you'll find her: DuPont/Logan Circle, out with her boyfriend, Chad, who works in government.

Uniform: Ann Taylor Loft, Banana Republic, J. Crew. All of the cardigans in the world.
All of them.

Most mystifying habit: Keeping up with "foodie" culture and visiting the newest, trendiest restaurants everyone is gushing about...then ordering the chicken.

Most irritating habit: Livetweeting her NGO's panel discussions on her personal Twitter account, obediently uses media-prescribed hashtags.

Celebrity aspiration: Gretchen Carlson.

Florida Basic

Job: Right now, she's trying to figure out what to do with her sociology degree and living at home. To earn money, she's taking advantage of her good looks while they last, working at Liv or Mansion. Don't worry, dad. She wears a lot more than the girls who only wear pasties and makes just as much as a bottle girl. Maybe she'll audition to be a cheerleader for the Miami Heat in the fall. That looks fun.

Habitat: A car idling outside of Publix with the air conditioning cranked, the beach posing for pictures with her sorority sisters where all of them sit in a line with their backs to the camera and their feet toward the ocean, because sisterhood is for a lifetime.

Wardrobe: Owns 15 different bikinis and only 2 pairs of closed-toe shoes, and no winter jackets.

Most mystifying habit: Her hair usually looks pretty good despite nothing, absolutely nothing, about the state of Florida's weather being conducive to good hair. The only people capable of having good hair in the humidity of Florida are people who have spent years there.

Favorite book: "Magazines."

Pet Peeve: People who judge sorority girls, chipped nail polish.

Celebrity aspiration: Kate Upton.

San Francisco Basic

Job: High-powered enough to require effort and with a salary that can finance a one

bedroom apartment and a low-end designer shoe wardrobe. Boring enough that if she's a good conversationalist, she never talks about work.

Habitat: The Marina, using her purse to save seats at the bar for her friends, or en route to The Marina via Uber or, if she's feeling chatty, Lyft. If not the Marina, the trendiest bagel shops. None of this Noah's Bagels shit. Only the trendiest of bagels for the basics of San Francisco.

Drink of choice: Midori sours and craft ales.

Fave vacation spot: Napa, Calistoga, or spas.

Provo Princess

Job: Finding a suitably square-headed RM to marry, preferably one who majored in finance.

Drink of choice: Doesn't drink, but spends a lot of time at the gym. Endorphins are kind of like alcohol!

Uniform: Hair with a lot of body, very large smile, layered tops and skirts or shorts that just cover her temple garments.

Won't: Drink alcohol, curse, go out with a guy unless she thinks there's actual marriage potential.

Will: Scrapbook and Pinterest the shit — sorry, *poop* — out of everything. Start a mommyblog (she's already got a layout ready to go). Bake, bake, bake, bake, bake and leave cute encouraging notes for her roommate who is "having a hard time."

Celebrity aspiration: Katherine Heigl, before she went Exmo.

Basic of the Great Plains

Habitat: Target or a wine bar. If they existed, a Target wine bar. Eating sushi and ostensibly not thinking about how long that fish has been dead, since she's in Tulsa and that fish is from, like, Japan and this restaurant sure as hell isn't getting daily fresh shipments to a nearby airfield. Never mind. Keep eating.

Dream wedding: Cowboy boots with very, very expensive wedding dress. Photo session in front of funnel cloud forming over daddy's cornfield. Husband in a fancy dress cowboy hat. Inhabiting the married life of Faith Hill and Tim McGraw, eventually.

Most mystifying habit: Still refers to her former University of Nebraska sorority big and little sisters as "My Big" and "My Little." Claims to attend church services way more

often than she actually attends church services.

Celebrity aspiration: Carrie Underwood.

Boston Basic

Uniform: Sperrys, sexy-sporty Red Sox gear, possibly a pink Red Sox hat. But *do not* question the authenticity of her Red Sox fandom. Oh, *god help you* if you question the authenticity of her Red Sox fandom.

Habitat: Fenway, clubs on Landsdowne

Most mystifying habit: Lives with four girls, calls herself “one of the guys.” Is the source of the “white ladies love Pumpkin Spice Lattes” meme because no one loves Pumpkin Spice Lattes more than a Mid-Atlantic basic. Will see any movie starring one of the minor Wahlbergs.

Secret Shame: Would kill Giselle with her bare bare hands and blunt kitchen utensils if it meant she’d have a chance to marry Tom Brady. Actually, if you asked her, she’d probably freely admit that.

The Secret Canadian Basic

Habitat: Blends in best in the upper midwest, because only a trained ear can differentiate between a northern Minnesconsin accent and a southern Ontario accent. But, really, could be anywhere. Constant vigilance.

Giveaways: Uses the metric system, quizzes you about your favorite Canadian prime minister when you scoff about her lack of knowledge about how the legislative branch works, thus successfully shaming you over the knowledge double standard to which you hold Canadians. Hockey fandom. Drawn out O’s.

Celebrity aspiration: Colbie Smulders.

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