[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Pp-semi-vandalism](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi-vandalism) [Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates) [Template:Infobox U.S. state](/wiki/Template:Infobox_U.S._state) [Template:Infobox U.S. state symbols](/wiki/Template:Infobox_U.S._state_symbols)

**Florida** [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) ([Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_language) for "land of flowers") is a [state](/wiki/U.S._state) located in the [southeastern region](/wiki/Southeastern_United_States) of the [United States](/wiki/United_States). The state is bordered to the west by the [Gulf of Mexico](/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico), to the north by [Alabama](/wiki/Alabama) and [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(U.S._state)), to the east by the [Atlantic Ocean](/wiki/Atlantic_Ocean), and to the south by the [Straits of Florida](/wiki/Straits_of_Florida) and the [sovereign state](/wiki/Sovereign_state) of [Cuba](/wiki/Cuba). Florida is the [22nd most extensive](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_area), the [3rd most populous](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_population),<ref name=2014pop>[Template:Cite press release](/wiki/Template:Cite_press_release)</ref> and the [8th most densely populated](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_by_population_density) of the [United States](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states). [Jacksonville](/wiki/Jacksonville,_Florida) is the most populous city in Florida, and the largest city by area in the [contiguous United States](/wiki/Contiguous_United_States). The [Miami metropolitan area](/wiki/Miami_metropolitan_area) is the eighth-largest [metropolitan area](/wiki/List_of_Metropolitan_Statistical_Areas) in the United States. [Tallahassee](/wiki/Tallahassee,_Florida) is the state capital.

A peninsula between the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic Ocean, and the [Straits of Florida](/wiki/Straits_of_Florida), it has the [longest coastline](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_by_coastline) in the [contiguous United States](/wiki/Contiguous_United_States), approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and is the only state that borders both the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. Much of the state is at or near sea level and is characterized by [sedimentary](/wiki/Sediment) soil. The climate varies from [subtropical](/wiki/Subtropical) in the north to tropical in the south.[[1]](#cite_note-1) The [American alligator](/wiki/American_alligator), [American crocodile](/wiki/American_crocodile), [Florida panther](/wiki/Florida_panther), and [manatee](/wiki/Manatee) can be found in the [Everglades National Park](/wiki/Everglades_National_Park).

Since the first European contact was made in 1513 by Spanish explorer [Juan Ponce de León](/wiki/Juan_Ponce_de_León) – who named it *La Florida* ([Template:IPA-es](/wiki/Template:IPA-es) "land of flowers") upon landing there in the Easter season, [*Pascua Florida*](/wiki/Pascua_Florida)[[2]](#cite_note-2) – Florida was a challenge for the European [colonial powers](/wiki/Colonialism) before it gained statehood in the United States in 1845. It was a principal location of the [Seminole Wars](/wiki/Seminole_Wars) against the [Native Americans](/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States), and racial segregation after the [American Civil War](/wiki/American_Civil_War).

Today, Florida is distinctive for its large [Cuban](/wiki/Cuban_American) expatriate community and high population growth, as well as for its increasing environmental issues. The state's economy relies mainly on tourism, agriculture, and [transportation](/wiki/Transportation_in_Florida), which developed in the late 19th century. Florida is also renown for [amusement parks](/wiki/Amusement_park), orange crops, the [Kennedy Space Center](/wiki/Kennedy_Space_Center), and as a popular destination for retirees.

[Florida culture](/wiki/Culture_of_Florida) is a reflection of influences and multiple inheritance; Native American, [European American](/wiki/European_American), [Hispanic and Latino](/wiki/Hispanic_and_Latino_Americans), and African American heritages can be found in the architecture and cuisine. Florida has attracted many writers such as [Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings](/wiki/Marjorie_Kinnan_Rawlings), [Ernest Hemingway](/wiki/Ernest_Hemingway) and [Tennessee Williams](/wiki/Tennessee_Williams), and continues to attract celebrities and athletes. It is internationally known for golf, tennis, [auto racing](/wiki/Auto_racing) and [water sports](/wiki/List_of_water_sports).

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## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

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By the 16th century, the earliest time for which there is a historical record, major [Native American](/wiki/Native_American) groups included the [Apalachee](/wiki/Apalachee) (of the [Florida Panhandle](/wiki/Florida_Panhandle)), the [Timucua](/wiki/Timucua) (of northern and central Florida), the [Ais](/wiki/Ais_people) (of the central Atlantic coast), the [Tocobaga](/wiki/Tocobaga) (of the [Tampa Bay](/wiki/Tampa_Bay) area), the [Calusa](/wiki/Calusa) (of southwest Florida) and the [Tequesta](/wiki/Tequesta) (of the southeastern coast).

### European arrival[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|300px|](/wiki/File:Flagler_College_2005-Sept_fl_104.JPEG)[St. Augustine](/wiki/St._Augustine,_Florida) is the oldest city in Florida, established in 1565. Florida was the first part of the [continental United States](/wiki/Continental_United_States) to be visited by Europeans. The earliest known European explorers came with the Spanish [conquistador](/wiki/Conquistador) [Juan Ponce de León](/wiki/Juan_Ponce_de_León). Ponce de León spotted the peninsula on April 2, 1513, and he named the region *La Florida* ("land of flowers").[[3]](#cite_note-3) The story that he was searching for the [Fountain of Youth](/wiki/Fountain_of_Youth) is a [myth](/wiki/Myth).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

"By May 1539, Conquistador [Hernando de Soto](/wiki/Hernando_de_Soto) skirted the coast of Florida, searching for a deep harbor to land. He described seeing a thick wall of red mangroves spread mile after mile, some reaching as high as [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), with intertwined and elevated roots making landing difficult. Very soon, 'many smokes' appeared 'along the whole coast', billowing against the sky, when the Native ancestors of the Seminole spotted the newcomers and spread the alarm by signal fires".[[4]](#cite_note-4) The Spanish introduced Christianity, cattle, horses, sheep, the Spanish language, and more to Florida.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[Template:Full citation needed](/wiki/Template:Full_citation_needed) Both the Spanish and French established settlements in Florida, with varying degrees of success. In 1559, Don [Tristán de Luna y Arellano](/wiki/Tristán_de_Luna_y_Arellano) established a settlement at present-day [Pensacola](/wiki/Pensacola,_Florida), making it the first attempted settlement in Florida, but it was abandoned by 1561.

In 1565, the Spanish settlement of [St. Augustine](/wiki/St._Augustine,_Florida) (San Agustín) was established, creating what would become the oldest European settlement in the continental U.S. and establishing the first generation of Floridanos.[[6]](#cite_note-6) Spain maintained tenuous control over the region by [converting the local tribes](/wiki/Spanish_missions_in_Florida) to Christianity. The area of Spanish Florida diminished with the establishment of English colonies to the north and French colonies to the west. The English attacked St. Augustine, burning the city and its cathedral to the ground several times until Spain built the Castillo de San Marcos (in 1672) and Fort Matanzas (in 1742) to defend it.

[thumb|upright=1.5|Aerial view of the](/wiki/File:Aerial_view_of_Castillo_De_San_Marcos_-_02_cropped_01.jpg) [Castillo de San Marcos](/wiki/Castillo_de_San_Marcos) (Florida).

Florida attracted numerous Africans and African Americans from adjacent British colonies in North America who sought freedom from slavery. The Spanish Crown gave them freedom, and those [freedmen](/wiki/Freedmen) settled north of St. Augustine in [Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose](/wiki/Fort_Mose_Historic_State_Park), the first free black settlement of its kind in what became the United States.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

[thumb|300px|The five flags of Florida from the right,](/wiki/File:Five_flags_of_Florida.jpg) [Spain](/wiki/Cross_of_Burgundy_flag) (1565–1763), the [Kingdom of Great Britain](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Great_Britain), Spain (1784–1821), the [Confederacy](/wiki/Confederate_States_of_America), and the United States. France (flag not shown) also ruled part of Florida.

In [1763](/wiki/Timeline_of_Florida_History), Spain traded Florida to the [Kingdom of Great Britain](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Great_Britain) for control of [Havana](/wiki/Havana), Cuba, which [had been captured](/wiki/Battle_of_Havana_(1762)) by the British during the [Seven Years' War](/wiki/Seven_Years'_War). It was part of a large expansion of British territory following [their victory in the Seven Years' War](/wiki/Great_Britain_in_the_Seven_Years_War). Almost the entire Spanish population left, taking along most of the remaining indigenous population to Cuba.<ref name=[http://fcit.usf.edu/Florida/docs/f/florbrit.htm>](http://fcit.usf.edu/Florida/docs/f/florbrit.htm%3e)[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The British soon constructed the King's Road connecting St. Augustine to [Georgia](/wiki/Province_of_Georgia). The road crossed the [St. Johns River](/wiki/St._Johns_River) at a narrow point, which the [Seminole](/wiki/Seminole) called *Wacca Pilatka* and the British named "Cow Ford", both names ostensibly reflecting the fact that [cattle](/wiki/Cattle) were brought across the river there.[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9) The British divided Florida into [East Florida](/wiki/British_East_Florida) and [West Florida](/wiki/British_West_Florida).[[10]](#cite_note-10) The British government gave land grants to officers and soldiers who had fought in the [French and Indian War](/wiki/French_and_Indian_War) in order to encourage settlement. In order to induce settlers to move to Florida, reports of its natural wealth were published in [England](/wiki/England). A large number of British settlers who were "energetic and of good character" moved to Florida, mostly coming from [South Carolina](/wiki/South_Carolina), [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(U.S._state)) and [England](/wiki/England). There was also a group of settlers who came from the colony of [Bermuda](/wiki/Bermuda). This would be the first permanent English-speaking population in what is now [Duval County](/wiki/Duval_County,_Florida), [Baker County](/wiki/Baker_County,_Florida), [St. Johns County](/wiki/St._Johns_County,_Florida) and [Nassau County](/wiki/Nassau_County,_Florida). The British built good public roads and introduced the cultivation of sugar cane, indigo and fruits as well the export of lumber.[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12) As a result of these initiatives northeastern Florida prospered economically in a way it never did under Spanish rule. Furthermore, the British governors were directed to call general assemblies as soon as possible in order to make laws for the Floridas and in the meantime they were, with the advice of councils, to establish courts. This would be the first introduction of much of the English-derived legal system which Florida still has today including [trial by jury](/wiki/Jury_trial), [habeas corpus](/wiki/Habeas_corpus) and county-based government.[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12) Neither East Florida nor West Florida would send any representatives to Philadelphia to draft the Declaration of Independence. Florida would remain a Loyalist stronghold for the duration of the American Revolution.[[13]](#cite_note-13) Spain regained both East and West Florida after Britain's defeat in the American Revolution and the subsequent [Treaty of Versailles](/wiki/Treaty_of_Versailles_(1783)) in 1783, and continued the division of East and West Florida until 1821.

### Joining the United States; Indian Removal[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

Spanish presence was minor during Spain's second governance period. The region became a haven for escaped slaves and a base for Indian attacks against the U.S., and the U.S. demanded Spain reform.

Americans of [English descent](/wiki/English-American) and Americans of [Scots-Irish descent](/wiki/Scotch-Irish_Americans) began moving into northern Florida from the backwoods of [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(U.S._state)) and [South Carolina](/wiki/South_Carolina). Though technically not allowed by the Spanish authorities, the Spanish were never able to effectively police the border region and the backwoods settlers from the United States would continue to migrate into Florida unchecked. These migrants, mixing with the already present British settlers who had remained in Florida since the British period, would be the progenitors of the population known as [Florida Crackers](/wiki/Florida_Cracker).[[14]](#cite_note-14) These American settlers established a permanent foothold in the area and ignored Spanish officials. The British settlers who had remained also resented Spanish rule, leading to a rebellion in 1810 and the establishment for ninety days of the so-called Free and Independent Republic of [West Florida](/wiki/West_Florida) on September 23. After meetings beginning in June, rebels overcame the Spanish garrison at [Baton Rouge](/wiki/Baton_Rouge,_Louisiana) (now in [Louisiana](/wiki/Louisiana)), and unfurled the flag of the new republic: a single white star on a blue field. This flag would later become known as the "[Bonnie Blue Flag](/wiki/Bonnie_Blue_Flag)".

In 1810, parts of West Florida were annexed by proclamation of President [James Madison](/wiki/James_Madison), who claimed the region as part of the [Louisiana Purchase](/wiki/Louisiana_Purchase). These parts were incorporated into the newly formed [Territory of Orleans](/wiki/Territory_of_Orleans). The U.S. annexed the Mobile District of West Florida to the [Mississippi Territory](/wiki/Mississippi_Territory) in 1812. Spain continued to dispute the area, though the United States gradually increased the area it occupied.

[Seminole](/wiki/Seminole) Indians based in [East Florida](/wiki/East_Florida) began raiding Georgia settlements, and offering havens for runaway slaves. The [United States Army](/wiki/United_States_Army) led increasingly frequent incursions into Spanish territory, including the 1817–1818 campaign against the Seminole Indians by [Andrew Jackson](/wiki/Andrew_Jackson) that became known as the [First Seminole War](/wiki/First_Seminole_War). The United States now effectively controlled East Florida. Control was necessary according to Secretary of State [John Quincy Adams](/wiki/John_Quincy_Adams) because Florida had become "a derelict open to the occupancy of every enemy, civilized or savage, of the United States, and serving no other earthly purpose than as a post of annoyance to them.".[[15]](#cite_note-15) Florida had become a burden to Spain, which could not afford to send settlers or garrisons. Madrid therefore decided to cede the territory to the United States through the [Adams-Onís Treaty](/wiki/Adams-Onís_Treaty), which took effect in 1821.[[16]](#cite_note-16) President [James Monroe](/wiki/James_Monroe) was authorized on March 3, 1821 to take possession of [East Florida](/wiki/East_Florida) and [West Florida](/wiki/West_Florida) for the United States and provide for initial governance.[[17]](#cite_note-17) [Andrew Jackson](/wiki/Andrew_Jackson) served as military governor of the newly acquired territory, but only for a brief period. On March 30, 1822, the United States merged [East Florida](/wiki/East_Florida) and part of [West Florida](/wiki/West_Florida) into the Florida Territory.[[18]](#cite_note-18) [thumb|300px|A contemporaneous depiction of the](/wiki/File:William_Cooley_Attack+Cleaned.png) [New River Massacre](/wiki/William_Cooley#New_River_Massacre) in 1836. By the early 1800s, [Indian removal](/wiki/Indian_removal) was a significant issue throughout the southeastern U.S. and also in Florida. In 1830, the U.S. Congress passed the [Indian Removal Act](/wiki/Indian_Removal_Act) and as settlement increased, pressure grew on the United States government to remove the Indians from Florida. Seminoles harbored runaway blacks, known as the [Black Seminoles](/wiki/Black_Seminoles), and clashes between whites and Indians grew with the influx of new settlers. In 1832, the [Treaty of Payne's Landing](/wiki/Treaty_of_Payne's_Landing) promised to the Seminoles lands west of the Mississippi River if they agreed to leave Florida. Many Seminole left at this time.

Some Seminoles remained, and the U.S. Army arrived in Florida, leading to the [Second Seminole War](/wiki/Second_Seminole_War) (1835–42). Following the war, approximately 3,000 Seminole and 800 Black Seminole were removed to [Indian Territory](/wiki/Indian_Territory). A few hundred Seminole remained in Florida in the [Everglades](/wiki/Everglades).

[thumb|200px|A](/wiki/File:Remington_A_cracker_cowboy.jpg) [Cracker](/wiki/Florida_cracker) cowboy, 19th century. On March 3, 1845, Florida became the 27th state to join the United States of America.[[19]](#cite_note-19) The state was admitted as a [slave state](/wiki/Slave_state), although initially its population grew slowly.

As European-American settlers continued to encroach on Seminole lands, and the United States intervened to move the remaining Seminoles to the West. The [Third Seminole War](/wiki/Seminole_Wars#Third_Seminole_War) (1855–58) resulted in the [forced removal](/wiki/Trail_of_Tears) of most of the remaining Seminoles, although hundreds of Seminole Indians remained in the Everglades.[[20]](#cite_note-20)

### Slavery, Civil War, and disenfranchisement[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) [thumb|300px|The](/wiki/File:Battle_of_Olustee.jpg) [Battle of Olustee](/wiki/Battle_of_Olustee) during the [American Civil War](/wiki/American_Civil_War), 1864. White settlers began to establish [cotton](/wiki/Cotton) [plantations](/wiki/Plantations_in_the_American_South) in Florida, which required numerous laborers, which they supplied by buying slaves in the domestic market. By 1860 Florida had only 140,424 people, of whom 44% were enslaved. There were fewer than 1,000 free [African Americans](/wiki/Free_black) before the Civil War.[[21]](#cite_note-21) In January 1861, Florida declared its secession from the [Union](/wiki/Union_(American_Civil_War)) and became a founding member of the [Confederate States](/wiki/Confederate_States_of_America). The Confederates received little help from Florida; the 15,000 men it offered were generally sent elsewhere. The largest engagements in the state were the [Battle of Olustee](/wiki/Battle_of_Olustee), on February 20, 1864, and the [Battle of Natural Bridge](/wiki/Battle_of_Natural_Bridge), on March 6, 1865. Both were Confederate victories.[[22]](#cite_note-22) The war ended in 1865.

Following the Civil War, Florida's [congressional](/wiki/United_States_Congress) representation was restored on June 25, 1868. After the [Reconstruction](/wiki/Reconstruction_Era) period ended in 1876, white Democrats regained power in the state legislature. In 1885 they created a new constitution, followed by statutes through 1889 that [disfranchised](/wiki/Disfranchisement_after_Reconstruction_era) most blacks and many poor whites.

Until the mid-20th century, Florida was the least populous Southern state. In 1900 its population was only 528,542, of whom nearly 44% were African American, the same proportion as before the Civil War.[[23]](#cite_note-23) The [boll weevil](/wiki/Boll_weevil) devastated cotton crops.

Forty thousand blacks, roughly one-fifth of their 1900 population, left the state in the [Great Migration](/wiki/Great_Migration_(African_American)). They left due to lynchings and racial violence, and for better opportunities.[[24]](#cite_note-24) Disfranchisement for most African Americans in the state persisted until the [Civil Rights Movement](/wiki/Civil_Rights_Movement) of the 1960s gained federal legislation in 1965 to enforce protection of their constitutional suffrage.

### 20th-century growth[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

Historically, Florida's economy was based upon agricultural products such as cattle farming, [sugarcane](/wiki/Sugarcane), [citrus](/wiki/Citrus), tomatoes, and [strawberries](/wiki/Strawberry).

Economic prosperity in the 1920s stimulated tourism to Florida and related development of hotels and resort communities. Combined with its sudden elevation in profile was the [Florida land boom of the 1920s](/wiki/Florida_land_boom_of_the_1920s), which brought a brief period of intense land development. Devastating hurricanes in [1926](/wiki/1926_Miami_hurricane) and [1928](/wiki/1928_Okeechobee_hurricane), followed by the [Great Depression](/wiki/Great_Depression), brought that period to a halt. Florida's economy did not fully recover until the military buildup for [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II).

The climate, tempered by the growing availability of [air conditioning](/wiki/Air_conditioning), and low cost of living made the state a haven. Migration from the [Rust Belt](/wiki/Rust_Belt) and the Northeast sharply increased Florida's population after the war. In recent decades, more migrants have come for the jobs in a developing economy.

With a population of more than 18 million according to the 2010 census, Florida is the most populous state in the Southeastern United States, and the fourth most populous in the United States.

<gallery mode=packed> File:Hemingwayhouse.jpg|[Key West Historic District](/wiki/Key_West_Historic_District) File:Lauraforsyth.JPG|[Downtown Jacksonville](/wiki/Downtown_Jacksonville) houses many of the city's iconic and historic structures File:YborCityAug20087thAvBerniniBricks.jpg|Historic [Ybor City](/wiki/Ybor_City) in Tampa File:OldU.S.PostOfficeandCourthouse.jpg|The [Downtown Miami Historic District](/wiki/Downtown_Miami_Historic_District) has some of the oldest buildings in Miami </gallery>

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[upright=2|thumb|A topographic map of Florida.](/wiki/File:Florida_topographic_map-en.svg) [thumb|300px|Florida map of Köppen climate classification.](/wiki/File:Florida_map_of_Köppen_climate_classification.svg) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Much of the state of Florida is situated on a [peninsula](/wiki/Peninsula) between the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic Ocean and the [Straits of Florida](/wiki/Straits_of_Florida). Spanning two [time zones](/wiki/Time_zone), it extends to the northwest into a [panhandle](/wiki/Panhandle), extending along the northern Gulf of Mexico. It is bordered on the north by the states of [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(U.S._state)) and [Alabama](/wiki/Alabama), and on the west, at the end of the panhandle, by Alabama. It is the only state that borders both the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico.

Florida is west of [The Bahamas](/wiki/The_Bahamas) and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) north of [Cuba](/wiki/Cuba). Florida is one of the largest states east of the [Mississippi River](/wiki/Mississippi_River), and only [Alaska](/wiki/Alaska) and [Michigan](/wiki/Michigan) are larger in water area. The water boundary is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) offshore in the Atlantic Ocean[[25]](#cite_note-25) and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) offshore in the Gulf of Mexico.[[25]](#cite_note-25) [thumb|300px|Florida and its relation to](/wiki/File:Cuba-Florida_map.jpg) [Cuba](/wiki/Cuba) and [The Bahamas](/wiki/The_Bahamas). At [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) [above mean sea level](/wiki/Above_mean_sea_level), [Britton Hill](/wiki/Britton_Hill) is the highest point in Florida and the lowest highpoint of any U.S. state.[[26]](#cite_note-26) Much of the state south of [Orlando](/wiki/Orlando,_Florida) lies at a lower elevation than northern Florida, and is fairly level. Much of the state is at or near sea level.

However some places such as [Clearwater](/wiki/Clearwater,_Florida) have promontories that rise [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) above the water. Much of Central and North Florida, typically [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) or more away from the coastline, have rolling hills with elevations ranging from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). The highest point in peninsular Florida (east and south of the [Suwanee River](/wiki/Suwanee_River)), [Sugarloaf Mountain](/wiki/Sugarloaf_Mountain_(Florida)), is a [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) peak in [Lake County](/wiki/Lake_County,_Florida).[[27]](#cite_note-27) On average, Florida is the flattest state in the United States.[[28]](#cite_note-28)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

The climate of Florida is tempered somewhat by the fact that no part of the state is distant from the ocean. North of [Lake Okeechobee](/wiki/Lake_Okeechobee), the prevalent climate is [humid subtropical](/wiki/Humid_subtropical_climate) ([Köppen](/wiki/Köppen_climate_classification): *Cfa*), while areas south of the lake (including the [Florida Keys](/wiki/Florida_Keys)) have a true [tropical climate](/wiki/Tropical_climate) (Köppen: *Aw*).[[29]](#cite_note-29) Mean high temperatures for late July are primarily in the low 90s Fahrenheit (32–34 °C). Mean low temperatures for early to mid January range from the low 40s Fahrenheit (4–7 °C) in northern Florida to above [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) from Miami on southward. With an average daily temperature of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), it is the warmest state in the U.S.[[30]](#cite_note-30) In the summer, high temperatures in the state seldom exceed 100 °F (38 °C). Several record cold maxima have been in the 30s °F (−1 to 4 °C) and record lows have been in the 10s (−12 to −7 °C). These temperatures normally extend at most a few days at a time in the northern and central parts of Florida. Southern Florida, however, rarely encounters freezing temperatures.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

The hottest temperature ever recorded in Florida was [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), which was set on June 29, 1931 in [Monticello](/wiki/Monticello,_Florida). The coldest temperature was [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), on February 13, 1899, just [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) away, in Tallahassee.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Due to its tropical climate, Florida [rarely receives snow](/wiki/Snow_in_Florida). However, on rare occasions, a combination of cold moisture and freezing temperatures can result in snowfall in the farthest northern regions. Frost is more common than snow, occurring sometimes in the panhandle.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

The [USDA](/wiki/USDA) Plant [hardiness zones](/wiki/Hardiness_zone) for the state range from zone 8a (no colder than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) in the inland western [panhandle](/wiki/Florida_panhandle) to zone 11b (no colder than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) in the lower [Florida Keys](/wiki/Florida_Keys).[[31]](#cite_note-31)

{| class="wikitable" style="text-align:center" | colspan="13" style="text-align:center;font-size:120%;background:#E8EAFA;"|Average high and low temperatures for various Florida cities |- style="background:#e5afaa; color:#000" | **°F** | **Jan** | **Feb** | **Mar** | **Apr** | **May** | **Jun** | **Jul** | **Aug** | **Sep** | **Oct** | **Nov** | **Dec** |- style="background:#f8f3ca; color:#000" |[Jacksonville](/wiki/Jacksonville,_Florida)[[32]](#cite_note-32)| 65/42 | 68/45 | 74/50 | 79/55 | 86/63 | 90/70 | 92/73 | 91/73 | 87/69 | 80/61 | 74/51 | 67/44 |- style="background:#c5dfe1; color:#000" | [Miami](/wiki/Miami,_Florida)[[33]](#cite_note-33)| 76/60 | 78/62 | 80/65 | 83/68 | 87/73 | 89/76 | 91/77 | 91/77 | 89/76 | 86/73 | 82/68 | 78/63 |- style="background:#f8f3ca; color:#000" | [Orlando](/wiki/Orlando,_Florida)[[34]](#cite_note-34)| 71/49 | 74/52 | 78/56 | 83/60 | 88/66 | 91/72 | 92/74 | 92/74 | 90/73 | 85/66 | 78/59 | 73/52 |- style="background:#c5dfe1; color:#000" | [Pensacola](/wiki/Pensacola,_Florida)[[35]](#cite_note-35)| 61/43 | 64/46 | 70/51 | 76/58 | 84/66 | 89/72 | 90/74 | 90/74 | 87/70 | 80/60 | 70/50 | 63/45 |- style="background:#f8f3ca; color:#000" | [Tallahassee](/wiki/Tallahassee,_Florida)[[36]](#cite_note-36)| 64/39 | 68/42 | 74/47 | 80/52 | 87/62 | 91/70 | 92/72 | 92/72 | 89/68 | 82/57 | 73/48 | 66/41 |- style="background:#c5dfe1; color:#000" | [Tampa](/wiki/Tampa)[[37]](#cite_note-37)| 70/51 | 73/54 | 77/58 | 81/62 | 88/69 | 90/74 | 90/75 | 91/76 | 89/74 | 85/67 | 78/60 | 72/54 |}

{| class="wikitable" style="text-align:center" |- style="background:#e5afaa; color:#000" | **°C** | **Jan** | **Feb** | **Mar** | **Apr** | **May** | **Jun** | **Jul** | **Aug** | **Sep** | **Oct** | **Nov** | **Dec** |- style="background:#f8f3ca; color:#000" |[Jacksonville](/wiki/Jacksonville,_Florida) | 18/6 | 20/7 | 23/10 | 26/13 | 30/17 | 32/21 | 33/23 | 33/23 | 31/21 | 27/16 | 23/11 | 19/7 |- style="background:#c5dfe1; color:#000" | [Miami](/wiki/Miami,_Florida) | 24/16 | 26/17 | 27/18 | 28/20 | 31/23 | 32/24 | 33/25 | 33/25 | 32/24 | 30/23 | 28/20 | 26/17 |- style="background:#f8f3ca; color:#000" | [Orlando](/wiki/Orlando,_Florida) | 22/9 | 23/11 | 26/13 | 28/16 | 31/19 | 33/22 | 33/23 | 33/23 | 32/23 | 29/19 | 26/15 | 23/11 |- style="background:#c5dfe1; color:#000" | [Pensacola](/wiki/Pensacola,_Florida) | 16/6 | 18/8 | 21/11 | 24/14 | 29/19 | 32/22 | 32/23 | 32/23 | 31/21 | 27/16 | 21/10 | 17/7 |- style="background:#f8f3ca; color:#000" | [Tallahassee](/wiki/Tallahassee,_Florida) | 18/4 | 20/6 | 23/8 | 27/11 | 31/17 | 33/21 | 33/22 | 33/22 | 32/20 | 28/14 | 23/9 | 19/5 |- style="background:#c5dfe1; color:#000" | [Tampa](/wiki/Tampa) | 21/11 | 23/12 | 25/14 | 27/17 | 31/21 | 32/23 | 32/24 | 33/24 | 32/23 | 29/19 | 26/16 | 22/12 |}

Florida's nickname is the "Sunshine State", but severe weather is a common occurrence in the state. Central Florida is known as the [lightning](/wiki/Lightning) capital of the United States, as it experiences more lightning strikes than anywhere else in the U.S.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Florida has one of the highest average precipitation levels of any state,[[39]](#cite_note-39) in large part because afternoon [thunderstorms](/wiki/Thunderstorm) are common in much of the state from late spring until early autumn. A narrow eastern part of the state including Orlando and Jacksonville receives between 2,400 and 2,800 hours of [sunshine](/wiki/Sunshine) annually. The rest of the state, including Miami, receives between 2,800 and 3,200 hours annually.[[40]](#cite_note-40) Florida leads the United States in tornadoes per area (when including [waterspouts](/wiki/Waterspouts))[[41]](#cite_note-41) but they do not typically reach the intensity of those in the [Midwest](/wiki/Midwest) and [Great Plains](/wiki/Great_Plains). [Hail](/wiki/Hail) often accompanies the most severe thunderstorms.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

[Hurricanes](/wiki/Tropical_cyclone) pose a severe threat each year during the June 1 to November 30 hurricane season, particularly from August to October. Florida is the most hurricane-prone state, with subtropical or tropical water on a lengthy coastline. Of the [category 4](/wiki/Saffir-Simpson_Hurricane_Scale#Category_4) or higher storms that have struck the United States, 83% have either hit Florida or Texas.[[42]](#cite_note-42) From 1851 to 2006, Florida was struck by 114 hurricanes, 37 of them major—[category 3](/wiki/Saffir-Simpson_Hurricane_Scale#Category_3) and above.[[42]](#cite_note-42) It is rare for a hurricane season to pass without any impact in the state by at least a tropical storm.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Florida was the site of what was then the costliest weather disaster in U.S. history, [Hurricane Andrew](/wiki/Hurricane_Andrew), which caused more than $25 billion in damage when it struck in August 1992; it held that distinction until 2005, when Hurricane Katrina surpassed it. [Hurricane Wilma](/wiki/Hurricane_Wilma) — the second most expensive hurricane in Florida history — landed just south of [Marco Island](/wiki/Marco_Island,_Florida) in October 2004.[[43]](#cite_note-43)[[44]](#cite_note-44) <gallery mode=packed> File:Andrew 23 aug 1992 1231Z.jpg|[Hurricane Andrew](/wiki/Hurricane_Andrew) bearing down on Florida on August 23, 1992. File:Royal Poinciana.jpg|The [Royal Poinciana](/wiki/Royal_Poinciana) grows in [South Florida](/wiki/South_Florida) and blooms in the winter, an indication of South Florida's [tropical climate](/wiki/Tropical_climate) File:Miamisummershower.png|Summer afternoon showers from the [Everglades](/wiki/Everglades) traveling eastward over [Downtown Miami](/wiki/Downtown_Miami) File:AutumnColors.JPG|[Fall foliage](/wiki/Fall_foliage) occurs annually in [North Florida](/wiki/North_Florida). File:Jacksonville Snow 2.jpg|Snow is uncommon in Florida, but has occurred in every major Florida city at least once. File:South Beach 20080315.jpg|Winter in Miami. Miami's tropical climate makes it a top tourist destination in the winter. </gallery>

### Fauna[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) [thumb|250px|An](/wiki/File:Anhingatrailalligator.png) [alligator](/wiki/American_alligator) in the [Florida Everglades](/wiki/Florida_Everglades). Florida is host to many types of wildlife including:

* Marine mammals: [bottlenose dolphin](/wiki/Bottlenose_dolphin), [short-finned pilot whale](/wiki/Short-finned_pilot_whale), [North Atlantic right whale](/wiki/North_Atlantic_right_whale), [West Indian manatee](/wiki/West_Indian_manatee)
* Mammals: [Florida panther](/wiki/Florida_panther), [northern river otter](/wiki/Northern_river_otter), [mink](/wiki/Mink), [eastern cottontail rabbit](/wiki/Eastern_cottontail_rabbit), [marsh rabbit](/wiki/Marsh_rabbit), [raccoon](/wiki/Raccoon), [striped skunk](/wiki/Striped_skunk), [squirrel](/wiki/Squirrel), [white-tailed deer](/wiki/White-tailed_deer), [Key deer](/wiki/Key_deer), [bobcats](/wiki/Bobcat), [gray fox](/wiki/Gray_fox), [coyote](/wiki/Coyote), [wild boar](/wiki/Wild_boar), [Florida black bear](/wiki/Florida_black_bear), [nine-banded armadillos](/wiki/Nine-banded_armadillo), [Virginia opossum](/wiki/Virginia_opossum)
* Reptiles: [eastern diamondback](/wiki/Crotalus_adamanteus) and [pygmy rattlesnakes](/wiki/Sistrurus_miliarius_barbouri), [gopher tortoise](/wiki/Gopherus_polyphemus), [green](/wiki/Green_turtle) and [leatherback sea turtles](/wiki/Leatherback_sea_turtle), and [eastern indigo snake](/wiki/Drymarchon). In 2012, there were about one million [American alligators](/wiki/American_alligator) and 1,500 [crocodiles](/wiki/American_crocodile).[[45]](#cite_note-45)\* Birds: [peregrine falcon](/wiki/Peregrine_falcon),[[46]](#cite_note-46) [bald eagle](/wiki/Bald_eagle), [northern caracara](/wiki/Northern_caracara), [snail kite](/wiki/Snail_kite), [osprey](/wiki/Osprey), [white](/wiki/American_white_pelican) and [brown pelicans](/wiki/Brown_pelican), [sea gulls](/wiki/Larus), [whooping](/wiki/Whooping_crane) and [sandhill cranes](/wiki/Sandhill_crane), [roseate spoonbill](/wiki/Roseate_spoonbill), [Florida scrub jay](/wiki/Florida_scrub_jay) (state [endemic](/wiki/Endemism)), and others. One subspecies of wild turkey, [*Meleagris gallopavo*](/wiki/Meleagris_gallopavo), namely subspecies *osceola*, is found only in Florida.[[47]](#cite_note-47) The state is a wintering location for many species of eastern North American birds.
  + As a result of [climate change](/wiki/Climate_change), there have been small numbers of several new species normally native to cooler areas to the north: [snowy owls](/wiki/Snowy_owl), [snow buntings](/wiki/Snow_bunting), [harlequin ducks](/wiki/Harlequin_duck), and [razorbills](/wiki/Razorbill). These have been seen in the northern part of the state.[[48]](#cite_note-48)\*Invertebrates: [carpenter ants](/wiki/Carpenter_ants), [termites](/wiki/Termites), [American cockroach](/wiki/American_cockroach), [Africanized bees](/wiki/Africanized_bee), the [Miami blue](/wiki/Miami_blue) butterfly, and the [grizzled mantis](/wiki/Gonatista_grisea).

The only known calving area for the [northern right whale](/wiki/North_Atlantic_right_whale) is off the coasts of Florida and Georgia.[[49]](#cite_note-49) The [native bear](/wiki/Florida_black_bear) population has risen from a historic low of 300 in the 1970s, to 3,000 in 2011.[[50]](#cite_note-50) Since their accidental importation from South America into North America in the 1930s, the [red imported fire ant](/wiki/Red_imported_fire_ant) population has increased its territorial range to include most of the Southern United States, including Florida. They are more aggressive than most native ant species and have a painful sting.[[51]](#cite_note-51) A number of non-native snakes and lizards have been released in the wild. In 2010 the state created a hunting season for [Burmese](/wiki/Burmese_python) and [Indian pythons](/wiki/Indian_python), [African rock pythons](/wiki/African_rock_python), [green anacondas](/wiki/Green_anaconda), and [Nile monitor lizards](/wiki/Nile_monitor_lizard).[[52]](#cite_note-52) [Green iguanas](/wiki/Green_iguana) have also established a firm population in the southern part of the state.

There are about 500,000 [feral pigs](/wiki/Razorback) in Florida.[[53]](#cite_note-53) <gallery mode=packed> File:Key deer male.jpg|[Key deer](/wiki/Key_deer) in the lower [Florida Keys](/wiki/Florida_Keys) File:Florida Scrub Jay.jpg|The [Florida scrub jay](/wiki/Florida_scrub_jay) is found only in Florida. File:Manatee with calf.PD - colour corrected.jpg|[West Indian manatee](/wiki/West_Indian_manatee) File:Everglades National Park Florida Panther.jpg|[Florida panther](/wiki/Florida_panther), native of [South Florida](/wiki/South_Florida) File:Babyleatherbackseaturtle.jpg|[Leatherback sea turtle](/wiki/Leatherback_sea_turtle) File:Grus americana Sasata.jpg|[Whooping crane](/wiki/Whooping_crane) </gallery>

### Flora[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

There are about 3,000 different types of [wildflowers](/wiki/Wildflower) in Florida. This is the third most diverse state in the union, behind California and Texas, both larger states.[[54]](#cite_note-54) On the east coast of the state, [mangroves](/wiki/Mangroves) have normally dominated the coast from [Cocoa Beach](/wiki/Cocoa_Beach,_Florida) southward; [salt marshes](/wiki/Salt_marsh) from [St. Augustine](/wiki/St._Augustine,_Florida) northward. From St. Augustine south to Cocoa Beach, the coast fluctuates between the two, depending on the annual weather conditions.[[48]](#cite_note-48) <gallery mode=packed> File:Everglades National Park cypress.jpg|[Everglades National Park](/wiki/Everglades_National_Park) in [Southern Florida](/wiki/Southern_Florida) File:BahiaHonda.jpg|[Bahia Honda](/wiki/Bahia_Honda_Key) in the [Florida Keys](/wiki/Florida_Keys) File:Juniper Springs Ocala National Forest.jpg|[Ocala National Forest](/wiki/Ocala_National_Forest) in Central and Northern Florida. File:Little talbot islands state park 2.JPG|[Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve](/wiki/Timucuan_Ecological_and_Historic_Preserve) in [Northeast Florida](/wiki/Northeast_Florida) </gallery>

### Environmental issues[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[thumb|250px|The beaches of](/wiki/File:Crandon_Park_Modified.jpg) [Key Biscayne](/wiki/Key_Biscayne,_Florida) in Miami. [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Florida is a low per capita energy user.[[55]](#cite_note-55) It is estimated that approximately 4% of energy in the state is generated through renewable resources.[[56]](#cite_note-56) Florida's energy production is 6% of the nation's total energy output, while total production of pollutants is lower, with figures of 5.6% for [nitrogen oxide](/wiki/Nitrogen_oxide), 5.1% for [carbon dioxide](/wiki/Carbon_dioxide), and 3.5% for [sulfur dioxide](/wiki/Sulfur_dioxide).[[56]](#cite_note-56) All potable water resources have been controlled by the state government through five regional water authorities since 1972.[[57]](#cite_note-57) [Red tide](/wiki/Red_tide) has been an issue on the southwest coast of Florida, as well as other areas. While there has been a great deal of conjecture over the cause of the toxic algae bloom, there is no evidence that it is being caused by pollution or that there has been an increase in the duration or frequency of red tides.[[58]](#cite_note-58) The [Florida panther](/wiki/Florida_panther) is close to [extinction](/wiki/Extinction). A record 23 were killed in 2009 predominately by automobile collisions, leaving about 100 individuals in the wild. The [Center for Biological Diversity](/wiki/Center_for_Biological_Diversity) and others have therefore called for a special [protected area](/wiki/Protected_area) for the panther to be established.[[59]](#cite_note-59) [Manatees](/wiki/Manatees) are also dying at a rate higher than their reproduction.

Much of Florida has an elevation of less than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), including many populated areas. Therefore, it is susceptible to [rising sea levels](/wiki/Current_sea_level_rise) associated with [global warming](/wiki/Global_warming).<ref name=RS62013>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> The Atlantic beaches that are vital to the state's economy are being washed out to sea due to rising sea levels caused by climate change. The Miami beach area, close to the continental shelf, is running out of accessible offshore sand reserves.[[60]](#cite_note-60)

### Geology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The Florida peninsula is a porous [plateau](/wiki/Plateau) of [karst](/wiki/Karst) [limestone](/wiki/Limestone) sitting atop [bedrock](/wiki/Bedrock) known as the [Florida Platform](/wiki/Florida_Platform). The largest deposits of [potash](/wiki/Potash) in the United States are found in Florida.[[61]](#cite_note-61) Extended systems of underwater caves, [sinkholes](/wiki/Sinkholes) and [springs](/wiki/Spring_(hydrosphere)) are found throughout the state and supply most of the water used by residents. The limestone is topped with [sandy](/wiki/Sand) soils deposited as ancient beaches over millions of years as global sea levels rose and fell. During the [last glacial period](/wiki/Last_glacial_period), lower sea levels and a drier climate revealed a much wider peninsula, largely [savanna](/wiki/Temperate_grasslands,_savannas,_and_shrublands).[[62]](#cite_note-62) The [Everglades](/wiki/Everglades), an enormously wide, slow-flowing river encompasses the southern tip of the peninsula. Sinkhole damage claims on property in the state exceeded a total of $2 billion from 2006 through 2010.[[63]](#cite_note-63) Florida is tied for last place as having the fewest earthquakes of any U.S. state.[[64]](#cite_note-64)[[65]](#cite_note-65) Earthquakes are rare because Florida is not located near any [tectonic plate](/wiki/Plate_tectonics) boundaries.

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|left|Florida's population density](/wiki/File:Florida_population_map.png)

### Population[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:US Census population](/wiki/Template:US_Census_population) The [United States Census Bureau](/wiki/United_States_Census_Bureau) estimates that the population of Florida was 20,271,272 on July 1, 2015, a 7.82% increase since the [2010 United States Census](/wiki/2010_United_States_Census).<ref name=PopEstUS>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The population of Florida in the 2010 census was 18,801,310.[[66]](#cite_note-66) Florida was the seventh fastest-growing state in the U.S. in the 12-month period ending July 1, 2012.[[67]](#cite_note-67) In 2010, the [center of population](/wiki/Center_of_population) of Florida was located between [Fort Meade](/wiki/Fort_Meade,_Florida) and [Frostproof](/wiki/Frostproof,_Florida). The center of population has moved less than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to the east and approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to the north between 1980 and 2010 and has been located in [Polk County](/wiki/Polk_County,_Florida) since the [1960 census](/wiki/1960_United_States_Census).[[68]](#cite_note-68)The population exceeded 19.7 million by December 2014, surpassing the population of the state of [New York](/wiki/New_York) for the first time.[[69]](#cite_note-69) Florida contains the highest percentage of people over 65 (17%).[[70]](#cite_note-70) There were 186,102 military retirees living in the state in 2008.[[71]](#cite_note-71)About two-thirds of the population was born in another state, the second highest in the U.S.[[72]](#cite_note-72) In 2010, [illegal immigrants](/wiki/Illegal_immigration) constituted an estimated 5.7% of the population. This was the sixth highest percentage of any state in the U.S.[[73]](#cite_note-73)[[74]](#cite_note-74) There were an estimated 675,000 illegal immigrants in the state in 2010.[[75]](#cite_note-75) A 2013 Gallup poll indicated that 47% of the residents agreed that Florida was the best state to live in. Results in other states ranged from a low of 18% to a high of 77%.[[76]](#cite_note-76)

### Municipalities and metropolitan areas[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

The legal name in Florida for a city, town or village is "municipality". In Florida there is no legal difference between towns, villages and cities.[[77]](#cite_note-77)<ref name=FLpop>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Many of these were of English or [Scotch-Irish](/wiki/Scots-Irish_American) descent; however, their families have lived in the state for so long, that they choose to identify as having "American" ancestry or do not know their ancestry.[[84]](#cite_note-84)[[85]](#cite_note-85)[[86]](#cite_note-86)[[87]](#cite_note-87)[[88]](#cite_note-88)[[89]](#cite_note-89) In the 1980 [United States census](/wiki/United_States_census) the largest ancestry group reported in Florida was English with 2,232,514 Floridians claiming that they were of English or mostly [English American](/wiki/English_American) ancestry.[[90]](#cite_note-90) Some of their ancestry went back to the original [thirteen colonies](/wiki/Thirteen_colonies).

As of 2010, those of (non-Hispanic white) European ancestry accounted for 57.9% of Florida's population. Out of the 57.9%, the largest groups were 12.0% [German](/wiki/German_people) (2,212,391), 10.7% [Irish](/wiki/Irish_people) (1,979,058), 8.8% [English](/wiki/English_people) (1,629,832), 6.6% [Italian](/wiki/Italian_people) (1,215,242), 2.8% [Polish](/wiki/Polish_people) (511,229), and 2.7% [French](/wiki/French_people) (504,641).<ref name=FLdemo/><ref name=FLpop/> [White Americans](/wiki/White_American) of all European backgrounds are present in all areas of the state. In 1970, non-Hispanic whites were nearly 80% of Florida's population.[[91]](#cite_note-91) Those of [English](/wiki/English_American) and [Irish](/wiki/Irish_American) ancestry are present in large numbers in all the urban/suburban areas across the state. Some native white Floridians, especially those who have descended from long-time Florida families, may refer to themselves as "[Florida crackers](/wiki/Florida_cracker)"; others see the term as a derogatory one. Like whites in most of the other Southern states, they descend mainly from English and [Scots-Irish](/wiki/Scots-Irish_American) settlers, as well as some other [British American](/wiki/British_American) settlers.[[92]](#cite_note-92) [thumb|250px|](/wiki/File:Cuban_American_men_playing_dominoes_in_Little_Havana_Miami,_Florida.jpg)[Cuban](/wiki/Cuban_American) men playing dominoes in [Miami's](/wiki/Miami) [Little Havana](/wiki/Little_Havana). In 2010, Cubans made up 34.4% of Miami's population and 6.5% of Florida's.[[93]](#cite_note-93)<ref name=HisLatFlo/> As of 2010, those of Hispanic or Latino ancestry ancestry accounted for 22.5% (4,223,806) of Florida's population. Out of the 22.5%, the largest groups were 6.5% (1,213,438) [Cuban](/wiki/Cuban_people), 4.5% (847,550) [Puerto Rican](/wiki/Puerto_Rican_people), 3.3% (629,718) [Mexican](/wiki/Mexican_people), and 1.6% (300,414) [Colombian](/wiki/Colombian_people).<ref name=HisLatFlo>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Florida's [Hispanic](/wiki/Hispanics_in_the_United_States) population includes large communities of [Cuban Americans](/wiki/Cuban_Americans) in Miami and Tampa, [Puerto Ricans](/wiki/Puerto_Ricans_in_the_United_States) in Orlando and Tampa, and Mexican/Central American migrant workers. The Hispanic community continues to grow more affluent and mobile. As of 2011, 57.0% of Florida's children under the age of 1 belonged to minority groups.[[94]](#cite_note-94) Florida has a large and diverse Hispanic population, with Cubans and Puerto Ricans being the largest groups in the state. Nearly 80% of Cuban Americans live in Florida, especially South Florida where there is a long-standing and affluent Cuban community.[[95]](#cite_note-95) Florida has the second largest Puerto Rican population after New York, as well as the fastest-growing in the nation.[[96]](#cite_note-96) Puerto Ricans are more widespread throughout the state, though the heaviest concentrations are in the Orlando area of Central Florida.[[97]](#cite_note-97) As of 2010, those of African ancestry accounted for 16.0% of Florida's population, which includes [African Americans](/wiki/African_American). Out of the 16.0%, 4.0% (741,879) were [West Indian](/wiki/West_Indian) or [Afro-Caribbean American](/wiki/Afro-Caribbean_American).<ref name=FLdemo/><ref name=FLpop/><ref name=HisLatFlo/> During the early 1900s, [black people](/wiki/Black_people) made up nearly half of the state's population.[[98]](#cite_note-98) In response to segregation, disfranchisement and agricultural depression, many African Americans migrated from Florida to northern cities in the [Great Migration](/wiki/Great_Migration_(African_American)), in waves from 1910 to 1940, and again starting in the later 1940s. They moved for jobs, better education for their children and the chance to vote and participate in society. By 1960 the proportion of African Americans in the state had declined to 18%.[[99]](#cite_note-99) Conversely large numbers of northern [whites](/wiki/White_people) moved to the state.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Today, large concentrations of black residents can be found in northern and central Florida. Aside from blacks descended from African slaves brought to the US south, there are also large numbers of blacks of [West Indian](/wiki/West_Indian_American), [recent African](/wiki/African_immigration_to_the_United_States), and [Afro-Latino](/wiki/Black_Hispanic_and_Latino_Americans) immigrant origins, especially in the Miami/South Florida area. In 2010, Florida had the highest percentage of West Indians in the United States, with 2.0% (378,926) from [Haitian](/wiki/Haitian_people) ancestry, and 1.3% (236,950) [Jamaican](/wiki/Jamaican_people).<ref name=WesIndAnc>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> All other (non-Hispanic) Caribbean nations were well below 0.1% of Florida residents.<ref name=WesIndAnc/>[[100]](#cite_note-100) As of 2010, those of Asian ancestry accounted for 2.4% of Florida's population.<ref name=FLdemo/><ref name=FLpop/>

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[thumb|200px|left|20% of Floridians speak Spanish, the second most widely-spoken language.](/wiki/File:Pardon_our_dust.jpg) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

In 1988 English was affirmed as the state's [official language](/wiki/Official_language) in the [Florida Constitution](/wiki/Florida_Constitution). Spanish is also widely spoken, especially as immigration has continued from Latin America. Twenty percent of the population speak Spanish as their first language. Twenty-seven percent of Florida's population reports speaking a [mother language](/wiki/Mother_language) other than English, and more than 200 first languages other than English are spoken at home in the state.[[101]](#cite_note-101)<ref name=MacDonald>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

The most common languages spoken in Florida as a first language in 2010 are:[[101]](#cite_note-101)\* 73% — English

* 20% — Spanish
* 2% — French Creole
* Other languages comprise less than 1% spoken by the state's population

The most common accent throughout Florida is [general American English](/wiki/General_American_English), but there are a variety of English-language accents and dialects in Florida. Southern accents are common in northern Florida. Because of many migrants from the Northeast who have settled on the east coast of Florida, many have a northeastern accent. Similarly reflecting generations of migrants from the Midwest, the population of the west coast of Florida has a midwestern accent.

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[thumb|250px|](/wiki/File:Miami_Cathedral_of_Saint_Mary.jpg)[Miami Cathedral of Saint Mary](/wiki/Miami_Cathedral_of_Saint_Mary). [Roman Catholicism](/wiki/Roman_Catholicism) is the largest single religious denomination in the state. The *2014 Pew Religious Landscape Survey* showed the religious makeup of the state was as follows:[[102]](#cite_note-102)

* Christian 70%
  + 24% Evangelical Protestant
  + 14% Mainline Protestant
  + 8% Black Protestant
  + 21% Catholic
  + 3% Other Christian
* Jewish 3%
* Other non-Christian faiths 3%
* Unaffiliated 24%

In 2010, the three largest denominational groups in Florida were the [Roman Catholic Church](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church), the [Southern Baptist Convention](/wiki/Southern_Baptist_Convention), and the [United Methodist Church](/wiki/United_Methodist_Church).[[103]](#cite_note-103) Florida is mostly [Protestant](/wiki/Protestantism), but Roman Catholicism is the single largest denomination in the state, due in significant part to the state's large Hispanic population. There is also a sizable [Jewish](/wiki/American_Jews) community, located mainly in [South Florida](/wiki/South_Florida); this is the largest Jewish population in the [South](/wiki/American_South) and the third-largest in the U.S. behind those of New York and California.[[104]](#cite_note-104)

## Governance[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|left|190px|](/wiki/File:Old_Florida_Capitol.jpg)[Florida Capitol](/wiki/Florida_State_Capitol) buildings

The basic structure, duties, function, and operations of the government of the state of Florida are defined and established by the [Florida Constitution](/wiki/Florida_Constitution), which establishes the basic law of the state and guarantees various rights and freedoms of the people. The state government consists of three separate branches: judicial, executive, and legislative. The legislature enacts bills, which, if signed by the [governor](/wiki/Governor_of_Florida), become [law](/wiki/Florida_Statutes).

The [Florida Legislature](/wiki/Florida_Legislature) comprises the [Florida Senate](/wiki/Florida_Senate), which has 40 members, and the [Florida House of Representatives](/wiki/Florida_House_of_Representatives), which has 120 members. The current Governor of Florida is [Rick Scott](/wiki/Rick_Scott). The [Florida Supreme Court](/wiki/Florida_Supreme_Court) consists of a Chief Justice and six Justices.

Florida has 67 [counties](/wiki/County_(US)). Some reference materials may show only 66 because [Duval County](/wiki/Duval_County,_Florida) is consolidated with the [City of Jacksonville](/wiki/City_of_Jacksonville). There are 379 cities in Florida (out of 411) that report regularly to the Florida Department of Revenue, but there are other incorporated municipalities that do not. The state government's primary source of revenue is sales tax. Florida does not impose a personal [income tax](/wiki/Income_tax). The primary revenue source for cities and counties is property tax.

There were 800 [federal corruption](/wiki/Federal_Corrupt_Practices_Act) convictions from 1988 to 2007, more than any other state.[[105]](#cite_note-105)

### Elections history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Further2](/wiki/Template:Further2)

{| class=wikitable style="float:right; margin-left:1em" ! colspan = 6 | Florida registered voters as of March 2016[[106]](#cite_note-106)|- ! colspan = 2 | Party ! Number of Voters ! Percentage |- [Template:American politics/party colors/Democratic/row](/wiki/Template:American_politics/party_colors/Democratic/row) | [Democratic](/wiki/Florida_Democratic_Party) | style="text-align:center;"| 4,623,226 | style="text-align:center;"| 37.98% |- [Template:American politics/party colors/Republican/row](/wiki/Template:American_politics/party_colors/Republican/row) | [Republican](/wiki/Republican_Party_of_Florida) | style="text-align:center;"| 4,362,652 | style="text-align:center;"| 35.84% |- [Template:American politics/party colors/Independent/row](/wiki/Template:American_politics/party_colors/Independent/row) | [No Party Affiliation](/wiki/Independent_politician#United_States) | style="text-align:center;"| 2,855,179 | style="text-align:center;"| 23.45% |- | rowspan=1 colspan=2 align="left" | Minor Parties | style="text-align:center;"| 332,822 | style="text-align:center;"| 2.73% |- ! colspan = 2 | Total ! style="text-align:center;"| 12,173,879 ! style="text-align:center;"| 100% |}

From 1952 to 1964, most voters were registered Democrats, but the state voted for the Republican presidential candidate in every election except for [1964](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1964). The following year, Congress passed and President [Lyndon B. Johnson](/wiki/Lyndon_B._Johnson) signed the [Voting Rights Act of 1965](/wiki/Voting_Rights_Act_of_1965), providing for oversight of state practices and enforcement of constitutional voting rights for African Americans and other minorities in order to prevent the discrimination and disenfranchisement that had excluded most of them for decades from the political process.

From the 1930s through much of the 1960s, Florida was essentially a one-party state dominated by white conservative Democrats, who together with other Democrats of the Solid South, exercised considerable control in Congress. They gained federal money from national programs; like other southern states, Florida residents have received more federal monies than they pay in taxes: the state is a net beneficiary. Since the 1970s, the conservative white majority of voters in the state has largely shifted from the Democratic to the Republican Party. It has continued to support Republican presidential candidates through the 20th century, except in [1976](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1976) and [1996](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1996), when the Democratic nominee was from the [South](/wiki/Southern_United_States). They have had "the luxury of voting for presidential candidates who pledge to cut taxes and halt the expansion of government while knowing that their congressional delegations will continue to protect federal spending."[[107]](#cite_note-107) In the [2008](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2008) and [2012](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2012) presidential elections, [Barack Obama](/wiki/Barack_Obama) carried the state as a northern Democrat, attracting high voter turnout especially among the young, Independents, and minority voters, of whom [Hispanics](/wiki/Hispanics) comprise an increasingly large proportion. 2008 marked the first time since 1932, when [Franklin D. Roosevelt](/wiki/Franklin_D._Roosevelt) carried the state, that Florida was carried by a Northern Democrat for president.

The first post-[Reconstruction era](/wiki/Reconstruction_era) Republican elected to Congress from Florida was [William C. Cramer](/wiki/William_C._Cramer) in 1954 from Pinellas County on the Gulf Coast,[[108]](#cite_note-108) where demographic changes were underway. In this period, African Americans were still [disenfranchised](/wiki/Disfranchisement_after_Reconstruction_era) by the state's constitution and discriminatory practices; in the 19th century they had made up most of the Republican Party. Cramer built a different Republican Party in Florida, attracting local white conservatives and transplants from northern and midwestern states. In 1966 [Claude R. Kirk, Jr.](/wiki/Claude_R._Kirk,_Jr.) was elected as the first post-Reconstruction Republican governor, in an upset election.[[109]](#cite_note-109) In 1968 [Edward J. Gurney](/wiki/Edward_J._Gurney), also a white conservative, was elected as the state's first post-reconstruction Republican US Senator.[[110]](#cite_note-110) In 1970 Democrats took the governorship and the open US Senate seat, and maintained dominance for years.

Since the mid-20th century, Florida has been considered a [bellwether](/wiki/Bellwether), voting for 13 successful presidential candidates since 1952. It voted for the loser only three times.[[111]](#cite_note-111)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Presidential elections results** | | |
| **Year** | [**Republican**](/wiki/Republican_Party_(United_States)) | [**Democratic**](/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)) |
| [2012](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2012) | 49.13% *4,163,447* | **50.01%** *4,237,756* |
| [2008](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2008) | 48.22% *4,045,624* | **51.03%** *4,282,074* |
| [2004](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2004) | **52.10%** *3,964,522* | 47.09% *3,583,544* |
| [2000](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2000) | **48.85%** *2,912,790* | 48.84% *2,912,253* |
| [1996](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1996) | 42.32% *2,244,536* | **48.02%** *2,546,870* |
| [1992](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1992) | **40.89%** *2,173,310* | 39.00% 2,072,698 |
| [1988](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1988) | **60.87%** *2,618,885* | 38.51% *1,656,701* |
| [1984](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1984) | **65.32%** *2,730,350* | 34.66% *1,448,816* |
| [1980](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1980) | **55.52%** *2,046,951* | 38.50% *1,419,475* |
| [1976](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1976) | 46.64% *1,469,531* | **51.93%** *1,636,000* |
| [1972](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1972) | **71.91%** *1,857,759* | 27.80% *718,117* |
| [1968](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1968) | **40.53%** *886,804* | 30.93% *676,794* |
| [1964](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1964) | 48.85% *905,941* | **51.15%** *948,540* |
| [1960](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1960) | **51.51%** *795,476* | 48.49% *748,700* |

In 1998, Democratic voters dominated areas of the state with a high percentage of racial minorities and transplanted white liberals from the northeastern United States, known colloquially as "snowbirds".[[112]](#cite_note-112) [South Florida](/wiki/South_Florida) and the [Miami metropolitan area](/wiki/Miami_metropolitan_area) are dominated by both racial minorities and white liberals. Because of this, the area has consistently voted as one of the most Democratic areas of the state. The Daytona Beach area is similar demographically and the city of Orlando has a large Hispanic population, which has often favored Democrats. Republicans, made up mostly of white conservatives, have dominated throughout much of the rest of Florida, particularly in the more rural and suburban areas. This is characteristic of its voter base throughout the [Deep South](/wiki/Deep_South).[[112]](#cite_note-112) The fast-growing [I-4 corridor](/wiki/I-4_corridor) area, which runs through [Central Florida](/wiki/Central_Florida) and connects the cities of [Daytona Beach](/wiki/Daytona_Beach,_Florida), [Orlando](/wiki/Orlando,_Florida), and [Tampa](/wiki/Tampa)/[St. Petersburg](/wiki/St._Petersburg,_Florida), has had a fairly even breakdown of Republican and Democratic voters. The area is often seen as a merging point of the conservative northern portion of the state and the liberal southern portion, making it the biggest swing area in the state. Since the late 20th century, the voting results in this area, containing 40% of Florida voters, has often determined who will win the state of Florida in presidential elections.[[113]](#cite_note-113) The Democratic Party has maintained an edge in voter registration, both statewide and in 40 of the 67 counties, including [Miami-Dade](/wiki/Miami-Dade_County,_Florida), [Broward](/wiki/Broward_County,_Florida), and [Palm Beach](/wiki/Palm_Beach_County,_Florida) counties, the state's three most populous.[[114]](#cite_note-114)

#### Elections of 2000 to present[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

In 2000, [George W. Bush](/wiki/George_W._Bush) won the [U.S. Presidential election](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2000) by a margin of 271–266 in the [Electoral College](/wiki/Electoral_College_(United_States)).[[115]](#cite_note-115) Of the 271 electoral votes for Bush, 25 were cast by electors from Florida.[[116]](#cite_note-116) The Florida results were contested and a recount was ordered by the court, with the results settled in a court decision.

Reapportionment following the [2010 United States Census](/wiki/2010_United_States_Census) gave the state two more seats in the House of Representatives.<ref name=CENSUS>Leary, Alex: ["Florida gains two U.S. House seats in Census"](http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/national/article1141209.ece), *St. Petersburg Times,* December 21, 2010</ref> The legislature's redistricting, announced in 2012, was quickly challenged in court, on the grounds that it had unfairly benefited Republican interests. In 2015, the Florida Supreme Court ruled on appeal that the congressional districts had to be redrawn because of the legislature's violation of the Fair District Amendments to the state constitution passed in 2010; it accepted a new map in early December 2015.

The political make-up of congressional and legislative districts has enabled Republicans to control the governorship and most statewide elective offices, and 17 of the state's 27 seats in the 2012 [House of Representatives](/wiki/United_States_House_of_Representatives_elections_in_Florida,_2012).[[117]](#cite_note-117) Florida has been listed as a [swing state](/wiki/Swing_state) in Presidential elections since 1950, voting for the losing candidate once in that period of time.[[118]](#cite_note-118) In the closely contested [2000 election](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2000,_in_Florida), the state played a pivotal role.[[115]](#cite_note-115)[[116]](#cite_note-116)[[119]](#cite_note-119)[[120]](#cite_note-120)[[121]](#cite_note-121)[[122]](#cite_note-122) Out of more than 5.8 million votes for the two main contenders Bush and [Al Gore](/wiki/Al_Gore), around 500 votes separated the two candidates for the all-decisive Florida electoral votes that landed Bush the election win. Florida's [felony disenfranchisement](/wiki/Felony_disenfranchisement) law is more severe than most European nations or other American states. A 2002 study in the [*American Sociological Review*](/wiki/American_Sociological_Review) concluded that "if the state's 827,000 disenfranchised felons had voted at the same rate as other Floridians, Democratic candidate Al Gore would have won Florida—and the presidency—by more than 80,000 votes."[[123]](#cite_note-123) In 2008, delegates of both the [Republican Florida primary election](/wiki/Republican_Party_(United_States)_presidential_primaries,_2008#GOP_February_5_rule) and [Democratic Florida primary election](/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)_presidential_primaries,_2008#Nullified_primaries) were stripped of half of their votes when the conventions met in August due to violation of both parties' national rules.

In the 2010 elections, Republicans solidified their dominance statewide, by winning the governor's mansion, and maintaining firm majorities in both houses of the state legislature. They won four previously Democratic-held seats to create a 19–6 Republican-majority delegation representing Florida in the federal House of Representatives.

In 2010, more than 63% of state voters approved the initiated Amendments 5 and 6 to the state constitution, to ensure more fairness in districting. These have become known as the Fair District Amendments. As a result of the [2010 United States Census](/wiki/2010_United_States_Census), Florida gained two House of Representative seats in 2012.[[124]](#cite_note-124) The legislature issued revised congressional districts in 2012, which were immediately challenged in court by supporters of the above amendments.

The court ruled in 2014, after lengthy testimony, that at least two districts had to be redrawn because of gerrymandering. After this was appealed, in July 2015 the Florida Supreme Court ruled that lawmakers had followed an illegal and unconstitutional process overly influenced by party operatives, and ruled that at least eight districts had to be redrawn. On December 2, 2015, a 5-2 majority of the Court accepted a new map of congressional districts, some of which was drawn by challengers. Their ruling affirmed the map previously approved by [Leon County](/wiki/Leon_County) Judge Terry Lewis, who had overseen the original trial. It particularly makes changes in South Florida. There are likely to be additional challenges to the map and districts.[[125]](#cite_note-125) According to [The Sentencing Project](/wiki/The_Sentencing_Project), the effect of Florida's felony disenfranchisement law is such that in 2014, "[m]ore than one in ten Floridians – and nearly one in four African-American Floridians – are [were] shut out of the polls because of felony convictions," although they had completed sentences and parole/probation requirements.[[126]](#cite_note-126)

### Statutes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:FlaSupremeCrtBldgFeb08.JPG) [Florida Supreme Court](/wiki/Florida_Supreme_Court)

The state repealed mandatory auto inspection in 1981.[[127]](#cite_note-127) In 1972, the state made [personal injury protection](/wiki/Personal_injury_protection) auto insurance mandatory for drivers, becoming the second in the nation to enact a [no-fault insurance](/wiki/No-fault_insurance) law. The ease of receiving payments under this law is seen as precipitating a major increase in insurance fraud.[[128]](#cite_note-128) Auto insurance fraud was the highest in the nation in 2011, estimated at close to $1 billion.[[129]](#cite_note-129) Fraud is particularly centered in the Miami-Dade metropolitan and Tampa areas.[[130]](#cite_note-130)[[131]](#cite_note-131)[[132]](#cite_note-132)

### Law enforcement[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) Florida was ranked the fifth most dangerous state in 2009. Ranking was based on the record of serious felonies committed in 2008.[[133]](#cite_note-133)The state was the sixth highest [scammed](/wiki/Scam) state in 2010. It ranked first in mortgage fraud in 2009.[[134]](#cite_note-134) In 2009, 44% of highway fatalities involved alcohol.[[135]](#cite_note-135) Florida is one of seven states that prohibit the [open carry of handguns](/wiki/Open_carry_in_the_United_States). This law was passed in 1987.[[136]](#cite_note-136) According to the Federal Trade Commission, Florida has the highest per capita rate of both reported fraud and other types of complaints and reported including identity theft complaints.[[137]](#cite_note-137)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[thumb|250px|right|Launch of](/wiki/File:Space_Shuttle_Columbia_launching.jpg) [Template:OV](/wiki/Template:OV) from the [Kennedy Space Center](/wiki/Kennedy_Space_Center) [thumb|Map of Florida showing average income by county.](/wiki/File:Geo_Map_of_Income_by_Location_in_Florida.png) [thumb|right|250px|The](/wiki/File:Brickell1.JPG) [Brickell Financial District](/wiki/Brickell_Financial_District) in Miami contains the largest concentration of international banks in the United States.[[138]](#cite_note-138)[[139]](#cite_note-139)

In the twentieth century, tourism, industry, construction, international banking, biomedical and life sciences, healthcare research, simulation training, aerospace and defense, and commercial space travel have contributed to the state's economic development.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Florida in 2010 was $748 billion.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Its GDP is the [fourth largest](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_by_GDP) economy in the United States.[[141]](#cite_note-141) In 2010, it became the fourth largest exporter of trade goods.[[142]](#cite_note-142) The major contributors to the state's gross output in 2007 were general services, financial services, trade, transportation and public utilities, manufacturing and construction respectively. In 2010–11, the state budget was $70.5 billion, having reached a high of $73.8 billion in 2006–07.[[143]](#cite_note-143) Chief Executive Magazine name Florida the third "Best State for Business" in 2011.[[144]](#cite_note-144) The economy is driven almost entirely by its nineteen metropolitan areas. In 2004, they had a combined total of 95.7% of the state's domestic product.[[145]](#cite_note-145)

### Personal income[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) In 2011, Florida's [per capita personal income](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_by_GDP_per_capita_(nominal)) was $39,563, ranking 27th in the nation.[[146]](#cite_note-146) In February 2011, the state's unemployment rate was 11.5%.[[147]](#cite_note-147) Florida is one of seven states that do not impose a personal [income tax](/wiki/Income_tax).

Florida's constitution establishes a state [minimum wage](/wiki/Minimum_wage) that (unique among minimum wage laws) is adjusted for inflation annually. As of January 1, 2015, Florida's minimum wage was $5.03 for *tipped positions*, and $8.05 for *non-tipped* positions, which was higher than the federal rate of $7.25.[[148]](#cite_note-148) Florida has 4 cities in the top 25 cities in the U.S. with the most credit card debt.[[149]](#cite_note-149) The state also had the second-highest credit card delinquency rate, with 1.45% of cardholders in the state more than 90 days delinquent on one or more credit cards.[[150]](#cite_note-150) There were 2.4 million Floridians living in poverty in 2008. 18.4% of children 18 and younger were living in poverty.[[151]](#cite_note-151) Miami is the sixth poorest big city in the United States.[[152]](#cite_note-152) In 2010, over 2.5 million Floridians were on food stamps, up from 1.2 million in 2007. To qualify, Floridians must make less than 133% of the federal poverty level, which would be under $29,000 for a family of four.[[153]](#cite_note-153)

### Real estate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

In the early 20th century, land speculators discovered Florida, and businessmen such as [Henry Plant](/wiki/Henry_Plant) and [Henry Flagler](/wiki/Henry_Flagler) developed railroad systems, which led people to move in, drawn by the weather and local economies. From then on, tourism boomed, fueling a cycle of development that overwhelmed a great deal of farmland.

Because of the collective effect on the insurance industry of the hurricane claims of 2004, homeowners insurance has risen 40% to 60% and deductibles have risen.[[43]](#cite_note-43) At the end of the third quarter in 2008, Florida had the highest mortgage delinquency rate in the U.S., with 7.8% of mortgages delinquent at least 60 days.[[150]](#cite_note-150) A 2009 list of national housing markets that were hard hit in the real estate crash included a disproportionate number in Florida.[[154]](#cite_note-154) The early 21st-century building boom left Florida with 300,000 vacant homes in 2009, according to state figures.[[155]](#cite_note-155) In 2009, the US Census Bureau estimated that Floridians spent an average 49.1% of personal income on housing-related costs, the third highest percentage in the U.S.[[156]](#cite_note-156) In the third quarter of 2009, there were 278,189 delinquent loans, 80,327 foreclosures.[[157]](#cite_note-157) Sales of existing homes for February 2010 was 11,890, up 21% from the same month in 2009. Only two metropolitan areas showed a decrease in homes sold: [Panama City](/wiki/Panama_City –_Lynn_Haven –_Panama_City_Beach,_Florida_Metropolitan_Statistical_Area) and [Brevard County](/wiki/Palm_Bay –_Melbourne –_Titusville,_Florida_Metropolitan_Statistical_Area). The average sales price for an existing house was $131,000, 7% decrease from the prior year.[[158]](#cite_note-158)[Template:Dubious](/wiki/Template:Dubious)

### Tourism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[thumb|right|280px|The](/wiki/File:Port_of_Miami_20071208.jpg) [Port of Miami](/wiki/Port_of_Miami) is the world's largest cruise ship port. [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Magic_Kingdom_castle.jpg) [Walt Disney World Resort](/wiki/Walt_Disney_World_Resort) in Orlando. Tourism makes up one of the largest sectors of the state economy, with nearly 1.2 million persons employed in the tourism industry in 2015 (a record for the state).[[159]](#cite_note-159) In 2015, Florida broke the 100-million visitor mark for the first time in state history by hosting a record 105 million visitors, the fifth consecutive year that a record was set.[[159]](#cite_note-159)[[160]](#cite_note-160) Many beach towns are popular tourist destinations, particularly during winter and [spring break](/wiki/Spring_break). Twenty-three million tourists visited Florida beaches in 2000, spending $22 billion.[[161]](#cite_note-161) The public has a right to beach access under the [public trust doctrine](/wiki/Public_trust_doctrine), but some areas have access effectively blocked by private owners for a long distance.[[162]](#cite_note-162) [Amusement parks](/wiki/Amusement_park), especially in the [Greater Orlando](/wiki/Greater_Orlando) area, make up a significant portion of tourism. The [Walt Disney World Resort](/wiki/Walt_Disney_World_Resort) is the most visited vacation resort in the world with over 50 million annual visitors, consisting of four [theme parks](/wiki/Theme_park), 27 themed [resort hotels](/wiki/Resort), 9 non–Disney hotels, two [water parks](/wiki/Water_park), four [golf courses](/wiki/Golf_course) and other recreational venues.[[163]](#cite_note-163) Other major theme parks in the area include [Universal Orlando Resort](/wiki/Universal_Orlando_Resort), [SeaWorld Orlando](/wiki/SeaWorld_Orlando) and [Busch Gardens Tampa](/wiki/Busch_Gardens_Tampa).

### Agriculture and fishing[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[thumb|180px|Oranges in Florida.](/wiki/File:IFAS_citrus02.jpg) Agriculture is the second largest industry in the state. [Citrus](/wiki/Citrus) fruit, especially [oranges](/wiki/Orange_(fruit)), are a major part of the economy, and Florida produces the majority of citrus fruit grown in the United States. In 2006, 67% of all citrus, 74% of oranges, 58% of [tangerines](/wiki/Tangerine), and 54% of [grapefruit](/wiki/Grapefruit) were grown in Florida. About 95% of commercial orange production in the state is destined for processing (mostly as [orange juice](/wiki/Orange_juice), the official [state beverage](/wiki/State_beverage)).[[164]](#cite_note-164) [Citrus canker](/wiki/Citrus_canker) continues to be an issue of concern. From 1997 to 2013, the growing of citrus trees has declined 25%, from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). [Citrus greening](/wiki/Citrus_greening) disease is incurable. A study states that it has caused the loss of $4.5 billion between 2006 and 2012. As of 2014, it was the major agricultural concern.[[165]](#cite_note-165) Other products include [sugarcane](/wiki/Sugarcane), [strawberries](/wiki/Strawberry), [tomatoes](/wiki/Tomato) and [celery](/wiki/Celery).[[166]](#cite_note-166) The state is the largest producer of [sweet corn](/wiki/Sweet_corn) and [green beans](/wiki/Green_beans) for the U.S.[[167]](#cite_note-167) The Everglades Agricultural Area is a major center for agriculture. The environmental impact of agriculture, especially [water pollution](/wiki/Water_pollution), is a major issue in Florida today.

In 2009, fishing was a $6 billion industry, employing 60,000 jobs for sports and commercial purposes.[[168]](#cite_note-168)

### Industry[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[thumb|right|250px|The](/wiki/File:Miami_Civic_Center_20100619.jpg) [Miami Civic Center](/wiki/Civic_Center_(Miami)) has the second-largest concentration of medical and research facilities in the United States.[[169]](#cite_note-169) Florida is the leading state for sales of power boats. There were $1.96 billion worth of boats sold in 2013.<ref name=fl150210>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

[Phosphate mining](/wiki/Phosphate#Occurrence), concentrated in the [Bone Valley](/wiki/Bone_Valley), is the state's third-largest industry. The state produces about 75% of the phosphate required by farmers in the United States and 25% of the world supply, with about 95% used for agriculture (90% for [fertilizer](/wiki/Fertilizer) and 5% for livestock feed supplements) and 5% used for other products.[[170]](#cite_note-170) After the watershed events of [Hurricane Andrew](/wiki/Hurricane_Andrew) in 1992, the state of Florida began investing in economic development through the Office of Trade, Tourism, and Economic Development. Governor [Jeb Bush](/wiki/Jeb_Bush) realized that watershed events such as Andrew negatively impacted Florida's backbone industry of tourism severely. The office was directed to target Medical/Bio-Sciences among others. Three years later, The [Scripps Research Institute](/wiki/Scripps_Research_Institute) (TSRI) announced it had chosen Florida for its newest expansion. In 2003, TSRI announced plans to establish a major science center in Palm Beach, a [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) facility on [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), which TSRI planned to occupy in 2006.[[171]](#cite_note-171)

### Government[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

Since the development of the federal NASA [Merritt Island launch sites](/wiki/List_of_Merritt_Island_launch_sites) on Cape Canaveral (most notably Kennedy Space Center) in 1962, Florida has developed a sizable [aerospace industry](/wiki/Aerospace).

Another major economic engine in Florida is the [United States military](/wiki/United_States_military). There are 24 military bases in the state, housing three [Unified Combatant Commands](/wiki/Unified_Combatant_Command); [United States Central Command](/wiki/United_States_Central_Command) in Tampa, [United States Southern Command](/wiki/United_States_Southern_Command) in [Doral](/wiki/Doral,_Florida), and [United States Special Operations Command](/wiki/United_States_Special_Operations_Command) in Tampa. Some 109,390 U.S. military personnel stationed in Florida,[[172]](#cite_note-172) contributing, directly and indirectly, $52 billion a year to the state's economy.[[173]](#cite_note-173) In 2009, there were 89,706 federal workers employed within the state.[[174]](#cite_note-174) Tens of thousands more employees work for contractors who have federal contracts, including those with the military.

In 2012, government of all levels was a top employer in all counties in the state, because this classification includes public school teachers and other school staff. School boards employ nearly 1 of every 30 workers in the state. The federal military was the top employer in three counties.[[175]](#cite_note-175)

## Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

There were 2.7 million [Medicaid](/wiki/Medicaid) patients in Florida in 2009. The governor has proposed adding $2.6 billion to care for the expected 300,000 additional patients in 2011.[[176]](#cite_note-176) The cost of caring for 2.3 million clients in 2010 was $18.8 billion.[[177]](#cite_note-177) This is nearly 30% of Florida's budget.[[178]](#cite_note-178) Medicaid paid for 60% of all births in Florida in 2009.[[44]](#cite_note-44) The state has a [program](/wiki/Florida_Medicaid_waiver) for those not covered by Medicaid.

In 2013, Florida refused to participate in providing coverage for the uninsured under the [Affordable Care Act](/wiki/Affordable_Care_Act), popularly called Obamacare. The Florida legislature also refused to accept additional Federal funding for Medicaid, although this would have helped its constituents at no cost to the state. As a result, Florida is second only to Texas in the percentage of its citizens without health insurance.[[179]](#cite_note-179) and last holding a state height record from 1974 to 1981.<ref name=emp>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The city is endowed with one of the largest collections of [Prairie School](/wiki/Prairie_School) buildings outside of the Midwest.<ref name=pst>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Jacksonville is also noteworthy for its collection of [Mid-Century modern](/wiki/Mid-Century_modern) architecture.<ref name=Jhs>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Some sections of the state feature architectural styles including [Spanish revival](/wiki/Spanish_Colonial_Revival_Style_architecture), [Florida vernacular](/wiki/Florida_cracker_architecture), and [Mediterranean Revival](/wiki/Mediterranean_Revival_Style).[[181]](#cite_note-181)[[182]](#cite_note-182) A notable collection of these styles can be found in [St. Augustine](/wiki/St._Augustine), the oldest continuously occupied European-established settlement within the borders of the [United States](/wiki/United_States).<ref name=nhl>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

## Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

### Primary and secondary education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

Florida's public primary and secondary schools are administered by the [Florida Department of Education](/wiki/Florida_Department_of_Education). School districts are organized within county boundaries. Each school district has an elected [Board of Education](/wiki/Board_of_Education) which sets policy, budget, goals, and approves expenditures. Management is the responsibility of a [Superintendent of schools](/wiki/Superintendent_(education)).

The [Florida Department of Education](/wiki/Florida_Department_of_Education) is required by law to train educators in teaching [English for Speakers of Other Languages](/wiki/English_language_learning_and_teaching) (ESOL).<ref name=consentdecree>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

### Universities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

The [State University System of Florida](/wiki/State_University_System_of_Florida) was founded in 1905, and is governed by the [Florida Board of Governors](/wiki/Florida_Board_of_Governors). During the 2010 academic year, 312,216 students attended one of these twelve universities. The [Florida College System](/wiki/Florida_College_System) comprises 28 public community and state colleges. In 2011-12, enrollment consisted of more than 875,000 students.[[183]](#cite_note-183) Florida's first private university, [Stetson University](/wiki/Stetson_University), was founded in 1883. The [Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida](/wiki/Independent_Colleges_and_Universities_of_Florida) is an association of 28 private, educational institutions in the state.[[184]](#cite_note-184) This Association reported that their member institutions served over 121,000 students in the fall of 2006.[[185]](#cite_note-185) <gallery mode=packed> File:FSUWestcottBuilding-2.jpg|[Florida State University](/wiki/Florida_State_University)  
[Tallahassee](/wiki/Tallahassee,_Florida) File:Gville UF Century Tower01.jpg|[University of Florida](/wiki/University_of_Florida)  
[Gainesville](/wiki/Gainesville,_Florida) File:AcademiccoreFGCU.jpg|[Florida Gulf Coast University](/wiki/Florida_Gulf_Coast_University)  
[Fort Myers](/wiki/Fort_Myers,_Florida) File:Flagler College - Lobby inside Ponce de Leon Hotel.JPG|[Flagler College](/wiki/Flagler_College)  
[Saint Augustine](/wiki/Saint_Augustine,_Florida) File:University of Miami Otto G. Richter Library.jpg|[University of Miami](/wiki/University_of_Miami)  
[Coral Gables](/wiki/Coral_Gables,_Florida) </gallery>

## Transportation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Yeehaw_Junction_Turnpike_east01.jpg)[Florida's Turnpike](/wiki/Florida's_Turnpike)

### Highways[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) Florida's highway system contains [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of interstate highway, and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of non-interstate highway, such as state highways and U.S. Highways. Florida's [interstates](/wiki/Interstate_Highway_System), [state highways](/wiki/Florida_State_Highway_System), and [U.S. Highways](/wiki/U.S._Highways) are maintained by the [Florida Department of Transportation](/wiki/Florida_Department_of_Transportation).

In 2011, there were about 9,000 [retail gas stations](/wiki/Filling_station) in the state. Floridians consume 21 million gallons of gasoline daily, ranking it third in national use.[[186]](#cite_note-186)[[187]](#cite_note-187)Motorists have the 45th lowest rate of car insurance in the U.S. 24% are uninsured.[[188]](#cite_note-188) Drivers between 15 and 19 years of age averaged 364 car crashes a year per ten thousand licensed Florida drivers in 2010. Drivers 70 and older averaged 95 per 10,000 during the same time frame. A spokesperson for the non-profit [Insurance Institute](/wiki/Insurance_Institute_for_Highway_Safety) said that "Older drivers are more of a threat to themselves."[[189]](#cite_note-189) Before the construction of routes under the [Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956](/wiki/Federal_Aid_Highway_Act_of_1956), Florida began construction of a long cross-state [toll road](/wiki/Toll_road), [Florida's Turnpike](/wiki/Florida's_Turnpike). The first section, from [Fort Pierce](/wiki/Fort_Pierce,_Florida) south to the [Golden Glades Interchange](/wiki/Golden_Glades_Interchange) was completed in 1957. After a second section north through Orlando to [Wildwood](/wiki/Wildwood,_Florida) (near present-day [The Villages](/wiki/The_Villages,_Florida)), and a [southward extension](/wiki/Homestead_Extension_of_Florida's_Turnpike) around Miami to [Homestead](/wiki/Homestead,_Florida), it was finished in 1974.

Florida's primary interstate routes include:

* [Template:Jct](/wiki/Template:Jct), which bisects the state, connecting [Tampa](/wiki/Tampa,_Florida), [Lakeland](/wiki/Lakeland,_Florida), [Orlando](/wiki/Orlando,_Florida), and [Daytona Beach](/wiki/Daytona_Beach,_Florida), connecting with [I-75](/wiki/Interstate_75_in_Florida) in Tampa and I-95 in Daytona Beach.
* [Template:Jct](/wiki/Template:Jct), which traverses the [panhandle](/wiki/Florida_Panhandle), connecting [Pensacola](/wiki/Pensacola,_Florida), [Tallahassee](/wiki/Tallahassee,_Florida), [Lake City](/wiki/Lake_City,_Florida), and [Jacksonville](/wiki/Jacksonville,_Florida), with interchanges with I-75 in Lake City and I-95 in Jacksonville.
* [Template:Jct](/wiki/Template:Jct), which enters the state near Lake City ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) west of [Jacksonville](/wiki/Jacksonville,_Florida)) and continues southward through [Gainesville](/wiki/Gainesville,_Florida), [Ocala](/wiki/Ocala,_Florida), Tampa's eastern suburbs, [Bradenton](/wiki/Bradenton,_Florida), [Sarasota](/wiki/Sarasota,_Florida), [Fort Myers](/wiki/Fort_Myers,_Florida) and [Naples](/wiki/Naples,_Florida), where it crosses the "[Alligator Alley](/wiki/Alligator_Alley)" as a [toll road](/wiki/Toll_road) to [Fort Lauderdale](/wiki/Fort_Lauderdale,_Florida) before turning southward and terminating in [Hialeah](/wiki/Hialeah,_Florida)/[Miami Lakes](/wiki/Miami_Lakes,_Florida) having interchanges with I-10 in Lake City and I-4 in Tampa.
* [Template:Jct](/wiki/Template:Jct), which enters the state near Jacksonville and continues along the Atlantic Coast through Daytona Beach, the [Melbourne/Titusville](/wiki/Space_Coast), [Palm Bay](/wiki/Palm_Bay,_Florida), [Vero Beach](/wiki/Vero_Beach,_Florida), [Fort Pierce](/wiki/Fort_Pierce,_Florida), [Port Saint Lucie](/wiki/Port_Saint_Lucie,_Florida), [Stuart](/wiki/Stuart,_Florida), [West Palm Beach](/wiki/West_Palm_Beach,_Florida), and [Fort Lauderdale](/wiki/Fort_Lauderdale,_Florida), before terminating in [Downtown Miami](/wiki/Downtown_Miami), with interchanges with I-10 in Jacksonville and I-4 in Daytona Beach.

### Airports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:1_-_Aéroport_de_Miami_-_Août_2008.jpg)[Miami International Airport](/wiki/Miami_International_Airport) is the world's 10th-busiest cargo airport, and second busiest airport for international passengers in the U.S.

Florida has 131 public airports.[[190]](#cite_note-190) Florida's seven large hub and medium hub airports, as classified by the FAA, are the following: {| class="wikitable sortable"

|- valign=baseline ! style="white-space:nowrap; text-align:left;" | City served ! style="white-space:nowrap; text-align:left;" | Code ! style="white-space:nowrap; text-align:left;" | Airport name ! style="white-space:nowrap; text-align:left;" | FAA  
Category ! style="white-space:nowrap; text-align:right;" | Enplanements |- valign=top | [Miami](/wiki/Miami) | align=center | MIA | [Miami International Airport](/wiki/Miami_International_Airport) | Large Hub | align=right | 17,017,654

|- valign=top | [Orlando](/wiki/Orlando,_Florida) | style="text-align:center;"| MCO | [Orlando International Airport](/wiki/Orlando_International_Airport) | Large Hub | align=right | 17,017,491

|- valign=top | [Fort Lauderdale](/wiki/Fort_Lauderdale,_Florida) | style="text-align:center;"| FLL | [Fort Lauderdale–Hollywood Int'l Airport](/wiki/Fort_Lauderdale–Hollywood_International_Airport) | Large Hub | align=right | 10,829,810

|- valign=top | [Tampa](/wiki/Tampa) | style="text-align:center;"| TPA | [Tampa International Airport](/wiki/Tampa_International_Airport) | Large Hub | align=right | 8,137,222

|- valign=top | [Fort Myers](/wiki/Fort_Myers,_Florida) | style="text-align:center;"| RSW | [Southwest Florida International Airport](/wiki/Southwest_Florida_International_Airport) | Medium Hub | align=right | 3,714,157

|- valign=top | [West Palm Beach](/wiki/West_Palm_Beach,_Florida) | style="text-align:center;"| PBI | [Palm Beach International Airport](/wiki/Palm_Beach_International_Airport) | Medium Hub | align=right | 2,958,416

|- valign=top | [Jacksonville](/wiki/Jacksonville,_Florida) | style="text-align:center;"| JAX | [Jacksonville International Airport](/wiki/Jacksonville_International_Airport) | Medium Hub | align=right | 2,755,719 |}

### Intercity rail[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

[thumb|200px|right|](/wiki/File:West_Palm_Beach_SAL_001.jpg)[Amtrak](/wiki/Amtrak) serves most major cities in Florida. This [West Palm Beach Station](/wiki/West_Palm_Beach_(Tri-Rail_station)) serves Amtrak and [Tri-Rail](/wiki/Tri-Rail) [commuter rail](/wiki/Commuter_rail) service. Florida is served by [Amtrak](/wiki/Amtrak), operating numerous lines throughout, connecting the state's largest cities to points north in the United States and Canada. The busiest Amtrak train stations in Florida in 2011 were: [Sanford](/wiki/Sanford_(Amtrak_station)) (259,944), [Orlando](/wiki/Orlando_(Amtrak_station)) (179,142), [Tampa Union Station](/wiki/Union_Station_(Tampa,_Florida)) (140,785), [Miami](/wiki/Miami_(Amtrak_station)) (94,556), and [Jacksonville](/wiki/Jacksonville_(Amtrak_station)) (74,733).[[191]](#cite_note-191) [Sanford](/wiki/Sanford,_Florida), in [Greater Orlando](/wiki/Greater_Orlando), is the southern terminus of the [Auto Train](/wiki/Auto_Train), which originates at [Lorton, Virginia](/wiki/Lorton,_Virginia), south of Washington, D.C.. Until 2005, Orlando was also the eastern terminus of the [Sunset Limited](/wiki/Sunset_Limited), which travels across the southern United States via [New Orleans](/wiki/New_Orleans), [Houston](/wiki/Houston), and [San Antonio](/wiki/San_Antonio) to its western terminus of Los Angeles. Florida is served by two additional Amtrak trains (the [Silver Star](/wiki/Silver_Star_(Amtrak_train)) and the [Silver Meteor](/wiki/Silver_Meteor)), which operate between New York City and Miami. [Miami Central Station](/wiki/Miami_Central_Station), the city's [rapid transit](/wiki/Rapid_transit), [commuter rail](/wiki/Commuter_rail), [intercity rail](/wiki/Intercity_rail), and [bus](/wiki/Bus) hub, is under construction.

The [Florida Department of Transportation](/wiki/Florida_Department_of_Transportation) was preparing to build a [high-speed rail](/wiki/High-speed_rail) between [Tampa](/wiki/Tampa), [Lakeland](/wiki/Lakeland,_Florida) and [Orlando](/wiki/Orlando,_Florida).[[192]](#cite_note-192) This was to be the first phase of the [Florida High Speed Rail](/wiki/Florida_High_Speed_Rail) system.[[193]](#cite_note-193) Soil work began in July 2010[[194]](#cite_note-194)[[195]](#cite_note-195) and construction of the line was slated to begin in 2011, with the initial Tampa-Orlando phase completed by 2014.[[196]](#cite_note-196) The second phase, would have extended the line to Miami. Governor Scott, however, refused federal funds and the project has been canceled.

[All Aboard Florida](/wiki/All_Aboard_Florida) is a proposed higher-speed rail service that would run between [Orlando](/wiki/Orlando,_Florida) and [Miami](/wiki/Miami_Beach,_Florida) at speeds up to 125 mph. Its Miami to [Cocoa](/wiki/Cocoa,_Florida) portion is scheduled to open in 2016, with the final segment to Orlando opening in 2017.

### Public transit[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

[thumb|200px|right|The](/wiki/File:Metrorail-Tri-Rail.png) [Miami Metrorail](/wiki/Miami_Metrorail) is the state's only [rapid transit](/wiki/Rapid_transit) system. About 15% of Miamians use public transit daily. [Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

* Miami: Miami's public transportation is served by [Miami-Dade Transit](/wiki/Miami-Dade_Transit) that runs [Metrorail](/wiki/Miami_Metrorail), a [heavy rail](/wiki/Heavy_rail) [rapid transit](/wiki/Rapid_transit) system, [Metromover](/wiki/Miami-Dade_Metromover), a [people mover](/wiki/People_mover) train system in [Downtown Miami](/wiki/Downtown_Miami), and [Metrobus](/wiki/Miami-Dade_Transit#Metrobus), Miami's bus system. Metrorail runs throughout [Miami-Dade County](/wiki/Miami-Dade_County) and has two lines and 23 stations connecting to Downtown Miami's Metromover and [Tri-Rail](/wiki/Tri-Rail). Metromover has three lines and 21 stations throughout [Downtown Miami](/wiki/Downtown_Miami). Outside of Miami-Dade County, public transit in the [Miami metropolitan area](/wiki/Miami_metropolitan_area) is served by [Broward County Transit](/wiki/Broward_County_Transit) and [Palm Tran](/wiki/Palm_Tran); intercounty [commuter rail](/wiki/Commuter_rail) service is provided by [Tri-Rail](/wiki/Tri-Rail), with 18 stations including the region's three international airports.
* Orlando: Orlando is served by the [SunRail](/wiki/SunRail) commuter train, which runs on a [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) when complete) line including four stops in downtown. [Lynx bus](/wiki/Lynx_(Orlando)) serves the greater Orlando area in [Orange](/wiki/Orange_County,_Florida), [Seminole](/wiki/Seminole_County,_Florida), and [Osceola](/wiki/Osceola_County,_Florida) counties.
* Tampa: Tampa and its surrounding area use the [Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority](/wiki/Hillsborough_Area_Regional_Transit_Authority) system ("HART"). In addition, downtown Tampa has continuous trolley services in the form of a [heritage trolley](/wiki/Heritage_trolley) powered by [Tampa Electric Company](/wiki/Tampa_Electric_Company). Pinellas County and St. Petersburg provide similar services through the [Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority](/wiki/Pinellas_Suncoast_Transit_Authority) or "PSTA". The beaches of [Pinellas County](/wiki/Pinellas_County,_Florida) also have a continuous trolley bus. Downtown St. Petersburg has a trolley system.
* Jacksonville: Jacksonville is served by the [Jacksonville Skyway](/wiki/Jacksonville_Skyway), an automated people mover [monorail](/wiki/Monorail) connecting the [Florida State College](/wiki/Florida_State_College_at_Jacksonville) downtown campus, the Northbank central business district, Convention Center, and Southbank locations. The system includes 8 stops connected by two lines. [JTA](/wiki/Jacksonville_Transportation_Authority) bus has 180 vehicles with 56 lines.

|  |
| --- |
| +Largest public transit systems in Florida (2012) |
| **Rank** | **City** | **Weekday passenger ridership** | **Population served** | **% of population on transit** | **Modes of transit** |
| 1 | [Miami](/wiki/Miami) | 367,000[[197]](#cite_note-197) | 2,554,776 | 14.4% | [Tri-Rail](/wiki/Tri-Rail), [Metrorail](/wiki/Miami_Metrorail), [Metromover](/wiki/Metromover) & Metrobus |
| 2 | [Fort Lauderdale](/wiki/Fort_Lauderdale) | 147,718[[198]](#cite_note-198) | 1,748,066 | 8.5% | [Tri-Rail](/wiki/Tri-Rail) (commuter rail) & [BCT bus](/wiki/Broward_County_Transit) |
| 3 | [Orlando](/wiki/Orlando) | 97,000[[199]](#cite_note-199) | 2,134,411 | 4.4% | [Lynx bus](/wiki/Lynx_(Orlando)) & [Sunrail](/wiki/SunRail) |
| 4 | [Gainesville](/wiki/Gainesville,_Florida) | 50,500[[199]](#cite_note-199) | 125,326 | 40.3% | [RTS bus](/wiki/Gainesville_Regional_Transit_System) |
| 5 | [Tampa](/wiki/Tampa) | 50,400[[199]](#cite_note-199) | 1,229,226 | 4.1% | [HART bus](/wiki/Hillsborough_Area_Regional_Transit) & [TECO Line Streetcar](/wiki/TECO_Line_Streetcar_System) |
| 6 | [West Palm Beach](/wiki/West_Palm_Beach,_Florida) | 45,100[[200]](#cite_note-200) | 1,320,134 | 3.4% | [Tri-Rail](/wiki/Tri-Rail) (commuter rail) & [Palm Tran](/wiki/Palm_Tran) (bus) |
| 7 | [St. Petersburg](/wiki/St._Petersburg,_Florida) | 42,500[[201]](#cite_note-201) | 916,542 | 4.6% | [PSTA bus](/wiki/Pinellas_Suncoast_Transit_Authority) |
| 8 | [Jacksonville](/wiki/Jacksonville,_Florida) | 41,500[[199]](#cite_note-199) | 821,784 | 5.0% | [JTA bus](/wiki/Jacksonville_Transportation_Authority) & [Skyway](/wiki/JTA_Skyway) (people mover) |
| 9 | [Tallahassee](/wiki/Tallahassee,_Florida) | 22,400[[199]](#cite_note-199) | 181,376 | 12.4% | [StarMetro bus](/wiki/StarMetro) |

## Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Daytona_International_Speedway_2011.jpg)[Daytona International Speedway](/wiki/Daytona_International_Speedway) is home to various auto racing events Florida has three [NFL](/wiki/National_Football_League) teams, two [MLB](/wiki/MLB) teams, two [NBA](/wiki/National_Basketball_Association) teams, two [NHL](/wiki/National_Hockey_League) teams, and one [MLS](/wiki/MLS) team. Florida gained its first permanent major-league professional sports team in 1966 when the [American Football League](/wiki/American_Football_League) added the [Miami Dolphins](/wiki/Miami_Dolphins). The state of Florida has given professional sports franchises some subsidies in the form of tax breaks since 1991.[[202]](#cite_note-202) About half of all [Major League Baseball](/wiki/Major_League_Baseball) teams conduct [spring training](/wiki/Spring_training) in the state, with teams informally organized into the "[Grapefruit League](/wiki/Grapefruit_League)". Throughout MLB history, other teams have held spring training in Florida.

[NASCAR](/wiki/NASCAR) (headquartered in [Daytona Beach](/wiki/Daytona_Beach,_Florida)) begins all three of its major auto racing series in Florida at [Daytona International Speedway](/wiki/Daytona_International_Speedway) in February, featuring the [Daytona 500](/wiki/Daytona_500), and ends all three Series in November at [Homestead-Miami Speedway](/wiki/Homestead-Miami_Speedway). Daytona also has the [Coke Zero 400](/wiki/Coke_Zero_400) NASCAR race weekend around [Independence Day](/wiki/Independence_Day_(United_States)) in July. The [24 Hours of Daytona](/wiki/24_Hours_of_Daytona) is one of the world's most prestigious endurance auto races. The [Grand Prix of St. Petersburg](/wiki/Grand_Prix_of_St._Petersburg) and [Grand Prix of Miami](/wiki/Grand_Prix_of_Miami_(Indycar)) have held [IndyCar](/wiki/IndyCar) races as well.

The [PGA of America](/wiki/Professional_Golfers_Association_of_America) is headquartered in [Palm Beach Gardens](/wiki/Palm_Beach_Gardens,_Florida), the [PGA Tour](/wiki/PGA_Tour) is headquartered in [Ponte Vedra Beach](/wiki/Ponte_Vedra_Beach,_Florida), and the [LPGA](/wiki/LPGA) is headquartered in Daytona Beach. [The Players Championship](/wiki/The_Players_Championship), [WGC-Cadillac Championship](/wiki/WGC-Cadillac_Championship), [Arnold Palmer Invitational](/wiki/Arnold_Palmer_Invitational), [Honda Classic](/wiki/Honda_Classic) and [Valspar Championship](/wiki/Valspar_Championship) are [PGA Tour](/wiki/PGA_Tour) rounds.

The [Miami Masters](/wiki/Miami_Masters) is an [ATP World Tour Masters 1000](/wiki/ATP_World_Tour_Masters_1000) and [WTA Premier](/wiki/WTA_Premier_tournaments) tennis event, whereas the [Delray Beach International Tennis Championships](/wiki/Delray_Beach_International_Tennis_Championships) is a [ATP World Tour 250](/wiki/ATP_World_Tour_250) event.

Minor league baseball, [football](/wiki/American_football), basketball, [ice hockey](/wiki/Ice_hockey), soccer and [indoor football](/wiki/Indoor_American_football) teams are based in Florida. Three of the [Arena Football League's](/wiki/Arena_Football_League_(2010)) teams are in Florida.

Florida's universities have a number of [collegiate sport](/wiki/National_Collegiate_Athletic_Association) programs, especially the [Florida State Seminoles](/wiki/Florida_State_Seminoles) and [Miami Hurricanes](/wiki/Miami_Hurricanes) of the [Atlantic Coast Conference](/wiki/Atlantic_Coast_Conference) and the [Florida Gators](/wiki/Florida_Gators) of the [Southeastern Conference](/wiki/Southeastern_Conference).

|  |
| --- |
| + Florida major league professional sports teams |
| **Team** | **League** | **Venue** | **Location** | **Championships** |
| [Miami Dolphins](/wiki/Miami_Dolphins) | [National Football League](/wiki/National_Football_League) | [Sun Life Stadium](/wiki/Sun_Life_Stadium) | Miami Gardens | 2 ([1972](/wiki/Super_Bowl_VII), [1973](/wiki/Super_Bowl_VIII)) |
| [Miami Heat](/wiki/Miami_Heat) | [National Basketball Association](/wiki/National_Basketball_Association) | [American Airlines Arena](/wiki/American_Airlines_Arena) | Miami | 3 ([2006](/wiki/NBA_Finals_2006), [2012](/wiki/NBA_Finals_2012), [2013](/wiki/NBA_Finals_2013)) |
| [Miami Marlins](/wiki/Miami_Marlins) | [Major League Baseball](/wiki/Major_League_Baseball) | [Marlins Park](/wiki/Marlins_Park) | Miami | 2 ([1997](/wiki/1997_World_Series), [2003](/wiki/2003_World_Series)) |
| [Florida Panthers](/wiki/Florida_Panthers) | [National Hockey League](/wiki/National_Hockey_League) | [BB&T Center](/wiki/BB&T_Center_(Sunrise,_Florida)) | [Sunrise](/wiki/Sunrise,_Florida) | 0 |
| [Tampa Bay Buccaneers](/wiki/Tampa_Bay_Buccaneers) | National Football League | [Raymond James Stadium](/wiki/Raymond_James_Stadium) | Tampa | 1 ([2003](/wiki/Super_Bowl_XXXVII)) |
| [Tampa Bay Rays](/wiki/Tampa_Bay_Rays) | Major League Baseball | [Tropicana Field](/wiki/Tropicana_Field) | St. Petersburg | 0 |
| [Tampa Bay Lightning](/wiki/Tampa_Bay_Lightning) | National Hockey League | [Amalie Arena](/wiki/Amalie_Arena) | Tampa | 1 ([2004](/wiki/2004_Stanley_Cup_Finals)) |
| [Orlando Magic](/wiki/Orlando_Magic) | National Basketball Association | [Amway Center](/wiki/Amway_Center) | Orlando | 0 |
| [Orlando City SC](/wiki/Orlando_City_SC) | [Major League Soccer](/wiki/Major_League_Soccer) | [Orlando City Stadium](/wiki/Orlando_City_Stadium) | Orlando | 0 |
| [Jacksonville Jaguars](/wiki/Jacksonville_Jaguars) | National Football League | [EverBank Field](/wiki/EverBank_Field) | Jacksonville | 0 |

## Sister states[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **style=background:navajowhite|Sister jurisdiction** | **style=background:navajowhite|Country** | **style=background:navajowhite|Year**[**[203]**](#cite_note-203) |
| [Languedoc-Roussillon](/wiki/Languedoc-Roussillon) | [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) France | 1989 |
| [Taiwan Province](/wiki/Taiwan_Province) | [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Taiwan, R.O.C.](/wiki/Taiwan) | 1992 |
| [Wakayama Prefecture](/wiki/Wakayama_Prefecture) | [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) Japan | 1995 |
| [Western Cape](/wiki/Western_Cape) | [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) South Africa | 1995 |
| [Nueva Esparta](/wiki/Nueva_Esparta) | [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [Venezuela](/wiki/Venezuela) | 1999 |
| [Kyonggi](/wiki/Gyeonggi-do) | [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) [South Korea](/wiki/South_Korea) | 2000 |

[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=43)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal) [Template:Div col](/wiki/Template:Div_col)

* [Outline of Florida](/wiki/Outline_of_Florida) – organized list of topics about Florida
* [Index of Florida-related articles](/wiki/Index_of_Florida-related_articles)
* [Ecology of Florida](/wiki/Ecology_of_Florida)
* [List of counties in Florida](/wiki/List_of_counties_in_Florida)
* [List of people from Florida](/wiki/List_of_people_from_Florida)
* [List of places in Florida](/wiki/List_of_places_in_Florida)
* [List of sister cities in Florida](/wiki/List_of_sister_cities_in_Florida)
* [Music of Florida](/wiki/Music_of_Florida)
* [List of National Register of Historic Places in Florida](/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Florida)
* [Timeline of Florida History](/wiki/Timeline_of_Florida_History)

[Template:Div col end](/wiki/Template:Div_col_end)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=44)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=45)]

* Viviana Díaz Balsera and Rachel A. May (eds.), *La Florida: Five Hundred Years of Hispanic Presence.* Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2014.
* Michael Gannon (ed.), *The History of Florida.* Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2013.

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=46)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [State website](http://www.myflorida.com/)
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Florida State Guide, from the Library of Congress](http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/states/florida/index.html)
* [Template:Osmrelation-inline](/wiki/Template:Osmrelation-inline)
* [Florida Memory Project](http://www.floridamemory.com/) Over 300,000 photographs and documents from the State Library & Archives of Florida
* [Online collection of the Spanish Land Grants.](http://www.floridamemory.com/Collections/SpanishLandGrants/)
* [USGS real-time, geographic, and other scientific resources of Florida](http://www.usgs.gov/state/state.asp?State=FL)
* [Florida Rivers and Watersheds – Florida DEP](http://www.protectingourwater.org/)
* [U.S. Census Bureau](http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12000.html)
* [Economic and farm demographics fact sheet from the USDA](http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/state-fact-sheets/state-data.aspx?StateFIPS=12&StateName=Florida#.U85ox_ldVu0)
* [Energy & Environmental Data For Florida](http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/state/state_energy_profiles.cfm?sid=FL)
* [*Heliconius charitonia*, zebra longwing](http://entomology.ifas.ufl.edu/creatures/bfly/zebra_longwing.htm) Florida state butterfly, on the [UF](/wiki/University_of_Florida) / [IFAS](/wiki/Institute_of_Food_and_Agricultural_Sciences) Featured Creatures Web site
* [TerraFly Property Value and Aerial Imagery Spatio-temporal animation Real Estate Trends in Florida](http://cake.fiu.edu/Trends/)
* [List of searchable databases produced by Florida state agencies](http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/Florida) hosted by the [American Library Association Government Documents Roundtable](http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/Main_Page)

[Template:Navboxes](/wiki/Template:Navboxes) [Template:United States political divisions](/wiki/Template:United_States_political_divisions) [Template:United States topics](/wiki/Template:United_States_topics) [Template:Spanish Empire](/wiki/Template:Spanish_Empire) [Template:Geographic location](/wiki/Template:Geographic_location) [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord) [Template:S-start](/wiki/Template:S-start) [Template:S-bef](/wiki/Template:S-bef) [Template:S-ttl](/wiki/Template:S-ttl) [Template:S-aft](/wiki/Template:S-aft) [Template:S-end](/wiki/Template:S-end)

[Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control)

[Category:Florida](/wiki/Category:Florida) [Category:Former Spanish colonies](/wiki/Category:Former_Spanish_colonies) [Category:Former British colonies](/wiki/Category:Former_British_colonies) [Category:Peninsulas of Florida](/wiki/Category:Peninsulas_of_Florida) [Category:Southern United States](/wiki/Category:Southern_United_States) [Category:States and territories established in 1845](/wiki/Category:States_and_territories_established_in_1845) [Category:States of the Confederate States of America](/wiki/Category:States_of_the_Confederate_States_of_America) [Category:States of the United States](/wiki/Category:States_of_the_United_States) [Category:States of the Gulf Coast of the United States](/wiki/Category:States_of_the_Gulf_Coast_of_the_United_States) [Category:States of the East Coast of the United States](/wiki/Category:States_of_the_East_Coast_of_the_United_States) [Category:U.S. states with multiple time zones](/wiki/Category:U.S._states_with_multiple_time_zones) [Category:1845 establishments in the United States](/wiki/Category:1845_establishments_in_the_United_States)