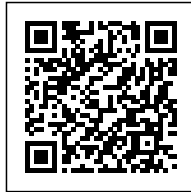


FLORIDA

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Florida is one of the constituent states in the Southeastern part of the United States. Florida is nicknamed *The Sunshine State* due to its geographical location and abundance of sunny days. The nickname was officially adopted by the Florida legislature in 1970.

Florida is well-known for its hot weather, bright days, and moderate winters. This has made it a popular destination for retirees from all around the country who want beautiful weather all year. The fun fact is that Florida is welcoming approximately 1,000 people every day. It is the most populous of the southeastern states and, after Texas, the second most populated Southern state.

Florida is bordered on the west by the Gulf of Mexico, on the northwest by Alabama, on the north by Georgia, on the east by the Bahamas and the Atlantic Ocean, and on the south by the Straits of Florida and Cuba; it is the only state that borders both the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. The nearest foreign territory is the Bahamas' island of Bimini, located about 50 miles (80 km) east of the state's southern edge.

Tallahassee, the state capital, is located in the northwest panhandle, and the most populous city in the state is Jacksonville.

Florida is the twenty second largest state in terms of area, with 65,757 sq mi (170,311 km), and the third most populous, with a population of over 21 million people.

Florida has been inhabited by several Native American tribes for at least 14,000 years. Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon, who led the first European trip to Florida in 1513, named the state after Spain's Easter feast known as *Pascua Florida*, or *Feast of Flowers*. Florida was the first location in the continental United States to be permanently colonized by Europeans, with St. Augustine, founded in 1565, being the oldest continuously inhabited city. Florida was continuously contested by Spain and the United Kingdom before being ceded to the United States in 1819; it was recognized as the 27th state on March 3, 1845. On January 10, 1861, the state seceded from the Union, becoming one of the seven original Confederate States. On June 25, 1868, Florida was returned to the Union after the Civil War ended.

Inhabitants of northern states began migrating to Florida in the late 19th century to escape harsh winters. Tourism became Florida's leading industry in the 20th century and continues to be so today, attracting millions of visitors each year. Florida is also known for its oranges and grapefruit. Some 80 percent of America's citrus is grown there and the state accounts for 40% of the world's orange juice supply.

The state bird of Florida is the Northern mockingbird, the state flower is the Orange blossom, the state song is "Swanee River", and the state motto is "In God We Trust".

English is the official language of Florida.

- Learn about **Florida flag color codes** and their meanings -

