

FLORIDA BY NUMBERS

BY KEVIN FRITZ

The Sunshine State offers a destination rich in history and flush with modern-day activities like no other place in the US. From its humble beginnings as an escape from northern winters to its bevy of world-class attractions and activities today, Florida has always been the ideal getaway to explore, unwind, relax and enjoy. Boasting an average annual temperature of 70.7 F, here in Florida, the numbers say it all.

ON THE BEACH

4 – The number of beaches in Florida ranked by Stephen Parker Leatherman, better known as Dr. Beach, in the top 10 in the US for 2015: #2 – Barefoot Beach Preserve County Park in North Naples; #3 – St. George Island State Park, near Apalachicola; #6 – Cape Florida State Park, Key Biscayne; and #9 – Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park, Naples.)

663 – Miles of beaches in the Sunshine State.

1,197 – Miles of Florida coastline.

4,500 – The number of offshore islands covering 10 acres or more. That's second in the nation next to Alaska.

A BIT OF HISTORY

1513 – The year Ponce De León landed near present-day St. Augustine and named the state La Florida meaning “place of flowers.”

1565 – Founding of St. Augustine, America's oldest city.

1845 – Florida became a state.

'GATORS

1 – The number of college football teams nicknamed the 'gators. (Florida 'gators at the University of Florida, Gainesville.)

67 – Counties in Florida in which you can find alligators. That's equal to the number of counties in Florida.

1.3 million – Total estimated number of 'gators that can be found in those 67 counties.

BIKING AROUND

4 – The number of cities with public bike-sharing programs, located in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando and Tampa.

Family fun on the Spring-to-Spring Trail in West Volusia.



Strollers on Jupiter Beach.



46 – Length in miles of Florida's longest paved bike trail, which stretches from Owensboro to Citrus Springs and spans three counties on the Nature Coast bordering the Gulf of Mexico (namely, Hernando, Citrus and Pasco counties).

275 – The number of miles the Coast to Coast Connector bike path will run when complete, connecting the Gulf coast at St. Petersburg, through Central Florida, to the Atlantic Coast at Canaveral National Seashore.

AT THE THEME PARKS

1936 – Cypress Gardens opens.

1947 – Weeki Wachee debuts its famed mermaids.

1971 – Walt Disney World opens.

1990 – Universal Studios opens.

2011 – LEGOLAND Florida (formerly Cypress Gardens) opens.

READY FOR FOOTBALL?

9 – The number of College Football Bowl games you can attend in Florida during the holidays (December and January).

42 – The total number of College Football Bowl games in all of the US.

LODGINGS

144,000 – The number of hotel rooms in Orlando, ranked second in the US.

370,000 – The total number of hotel rooms in all of Florida. **FL**