

1stFlorida.com

Hardee County

A FLORIDA COUNTY GUIDE · CENTRAL FLORIDA

The full guide: 1stflorida.com/counties/hardee · 1stFlorida.com is privately owned and is not affiliated with Florida state or county government.

REGION

Central Florida

COMMUNITIES TO START WITH

**Wauchula, Bowling
Green, Zolfo Springs**

PRINTED

October 6, 2026

Agriculture, open land and close-knit towns define this inland county south of Polk and east of the Gulf Coast metros.

Lifestyle: Rural living · Agriculture · Space

Hardee County by the numbers

Population Census estimate	25,675	At the last full count 2020 Census	25,327
Median age	35.8	Aged 65 and over	16.1%
Under 18	24.4%	Median household income	\$60,489
Median home value what owners estimate	\$153,600	Homeownership	71.4%
People per household	2.91	Average commute	26.8 minutes

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, published January 2026, read September 19, 2026. Survey figures are estimates; median home value is what owners estimate their home is worth, not a sale price.

Communities to compare

Wauchula

Start with Wauchula to understand the established center, nearby services and everyday rhythm within Hardee County.

Zolfo Springs

Walk or drive through Zolfo Springs at different times of day to judge traffic, neighborhood character and access to outdoor space.

Bowling Green

Use Bowling Green to compare housing patterns, main-road access and the shopping or medical stops used during a normal week.

Places that reveal the county

Paynes Creek Historic State Park

The site of an 1849 killing that started a war scare, and of a fort the mosquitoes closed in nine months.

Cracker Trail Museum

Over 4,000 pieces of pioneer Florida in one county museum at Zolfo Springs, every one tagged with the name of the family who gave it.

Solomon's Castle

A 12,000-square-foot castle clad in newspaper printing plates, built by hand on swampland, with a Spanish galleon in the moat.

Hardee County Wildlife Refuge

A county-run refuge at Zolfo Springs for native and exotic animals that were surrendered or rescued and cannot go back to the wild.

Peace River

The river runs the length of Hardee County, and its gravel beds hold shark teeth and Ice Age bone.

Pioneer Park

A county park on the Peace River at Zolfo Springs holding an 1879 cabin, an 1897 blacksmith shop, a 1914 locomotive and a campground under old oaks.

Hardee Lakes Park

Twelve hundred acres of old phosphate pits turned into lakes, given to the county by the mining company that dug them.

Where to check

Florida disaster preparedness maps · Official evacuation-zone, route and storm-surge planning maps.

floridadisaster.org

Florida school accountability reports · Current state school and district accountability information.

fldoe.org

Florida community health data · County-level public health indicators and community reports.

flhealthcharts.gov

Florida housing resources · State resources for homebuyers, renters and local assistance programs.

floridahousing.org
