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Manatee County

A FLORIDA COUNTY GUIDE · GULF COAST

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REGION

Gulf Coast

COMMUNITIES TO START WITH

**Bradenton, Palmetto,
Lakewood Ranch,
Anna Maria**

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A growing county where new master-planned communities, an active riverfront city and beloved Gulf islands share one market.

Manatee County joins Bradenton and Palmetto on the Manatee River, the master-planned growth of Lakewood Ranch and the barrier-island communities around Anna Maria. Those locations offer very different housing, transportation, insurance and daily-service patterns.

Healthcare, tourism, construction, education, manufacturing, logistics, agriculture and professional services support local work, while many households connect south toward Sarasota. I-75, U.S. 41, U.S. 301 and a limited set of bridges organize the county's routine travel.

Scout the mainland and the coast separately. Drive the Manatee River or island bridge you would use, compare established neighborhoods with new development, and verify association, flood, evacuation, utilities and healthcare conditions for a sample address.

Lifestyle: Master-planned · Island access · Growth

Manatee County by the numbers

Population Census estimate	429,792	At the last full count 2020 Census	399,710
Median age	49.6	Aged 65 and over	28.5%
Under 18	17.5%	Median household income	\$78,457
Median home value what owners estimate	\$391,400	Homeownership	74.3%
People per household	2.40	Average commute	27.3 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

Bradenton

Bradenton is the county's primary city with a riverfront downtown, established neighborhoods, healthcare and access to coastal and east-county destinations.

Compare west, central and east Bradenton by bridge, flood and I-75 access.

Lakewood Ranch

Lakewood Ranch is a large master-planned community spanning east Manatee and neighboring Sarasota County. Confirm the actual county, district, school assignment, association obligations and route to employment before comparing amenities.

Palmetto

Palmetto sits north of the Manatee River with a smaller city center, port and industrial access and growth toward I-75. Test bridge travel into Bradenton or Sarasota and verify flood and drainage conditions.

Anna Maria

Anna Maria represents island living with beaches, a small-city pattern and strong visitor demand. Bridge dependence, evacuation, wind and flood exposure, rental rules and property maintenance must be priced alongside the setting.

Checks before Manatee County becomes the answer

- ☐ **Choose river, east county or island.** Match the home to the real work, healthcare and weekly service corridor before comparing very different parts of Manatee.
- ☐ **Drive the bridge.** Test Manatee River, Sarasota-bound or barrier-island bridge travel during ordinary and busy visitor periods.
- ☐ **Review planned growth.** Check future land use, transportation projects and construction around fast-growing east-county communities.
- ☐ **Price districts and associations.** Include CDD or district assessments, association dues, amenity obligations and buildout plans in the housing comparison.
- ☐ **Verify flood and evacuation.** Review the exact flood zone, evacuation level, roof, elevation, drainage, bridge access and insurance for coastal and river locations.
- ☐ **Map healthcare north and south.** Confirm routine and specialty care from the address, including travel toward Sarasota when the required provider is outside the county.

Questions to answer for Manatee County

River cities, planned growth and islands

Bradenton, Palmetto, Lakewood Ranch and Anna Maria offer different housing, service and storm profiles. The county should be compared as several local markets.

Local work connects to Sarasota

Healthcare, tourism, manufacturing, construction and services support Manatee, while cross-county employment makes the southbound route important for many households.

Healthcare access follows the urban corridor

Bradenton and the regional Sarasota-Manatee corridor provide strong care options. Island and rural-east addresses should be checked for ordinary and emergency travel.

I-75 and bridges create the framework

The interstate serves regional growth, while U.S. 41, U.S. 301, river crossings and island bridges shape local convenience. Surface-road time belongs in the test.

Coastal beauty carries readiness work

Storm surge, river flooding, heavy rain, wind and evacuation affect islands and mainland locations differently. Verify the route, building and policy.

Places that reveal the county

De Soto National Memorial

Just under twenty-seven acres where the Manatee River runs into Tampa Bay, marking the landing of Hernando de Soto in May 1539.

Anna Maria Island

A barrier island about seven miles long off Bradenton, holding three separate small cities and no high-rise buildings.

Emerson Point Preserve

Three hundred and sixty-five acres at the western tip of Sned Island, west of Palmetto, where the Manatee River meets Tampa Bay.

Village of the Arts

Thirty-six acres of small 1920s houses south of downtown Bradenton, turned into a working artists' neighborhood.

Manatee Village Historical Park

Fourteen historic buildings gathered on one site at 1404 Manatee Avenue East in Bradenton, free to walk through.

Bradenton Riverwalk

A mile and a half of public waterfront along the Manatee River through downtown Bradenton, opened on October 18, 2012.

Anna Maria City Pier

The city pier at the northern end of Anna Maria Island, a landmark here for more than a century and currently being rebuilt.

LECOM Park

A ballpark built in 1923 at 1611 Ninth Street West in Bradenton, the oldest stadium still used for spring training.

Robinson Preserve

Six hundred and eighty-two acres of restored coastal wetland on the peninsula where the Manatee River, Sarasota Bay and Tampa Bay meet.

The Bishop Museum of Science and Nature

The natural history museum of the gulf coast, at 201 Tenth Street West in Bradenton.

Gamble Plantation Historic State Park

The only surviving antebellum plantation house in south Florida, on 37th Avenue East at US 301 in Ellenton.

Coquina Beach

The long beach at the southern end of Anna Maria Island, between Gulf Drive and the Gulf of Mexico.

Rye Preserve

Five hundred and thirty acres of sand pine scrub, hardwood and river bluff on the Upper Manatee River, northeast of Bradenton near Fort Hamer.

Florida Maritime Museum

The maritime museum of the fishing village of Cortez, in the 1912 schoolhouse at 4415 119th Street West.

Palma Sola Botanical Park

Ten acres of subtropical garden at 9800 17th Avenue Northwest in Bradenton, free to enter.

Beaches in Manatee County

Always verify current parking, fees, water quality, lifeguard coverage and posted rules before leaving.

Bean Point Beach
Anna Maria City Beach
Holmes Beach
Cortez Beach
Longboat Key Beach

Bayfront Park Beach
Manatee Public Beach
Bradenton Beach
Coquina Beach
Greer Island Beach

Where to check

Manatee County Government · Official county services, planning, departments and resident information.	mymanatee.org
Manatee Transportation Planning · County roadway planning, development review and mobility analysis.	mymanatee.org
Manatee Emergency Management · Current alerts, evacuation, shelter and storm-preparation guidance.	mymanatee.org
Manatee Comprehensive Planning · Long-range land use, transportation, housing, utility and environmental policy.	mymanatee.org