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Okaloosa County

A FLORIDA COUNTY GUIDE · PANHANDLE & EMERALD COAST

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REGION

Panhandle & Emerald Coast

COMMUNITIES TO START WITH

**Fort Walton Beach,
Destin, Niceville,
Crestview**

PRINTED

October 6, 2026

Military installations, tourism, fishing and white-sand beaches support one of Northwest Florida's strongest coastal economies.

Lifestyle: Defense · Beaches · Boating

Okaloosa County by the numbers

Population Census estimate	216,599	At the last full count 2020 Census	211,668
Median age	37.4	Aged 65 and over	16.6%
Under 18	22.6%	Median household income	\$81,998
Median home value what owners estimate	\$351,200	Homeownership	68.4%
People per household	2.48	Average commute	26.3 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

Fort Walton Beach

Start with Fort Walton Beach to understand the established center, nearby services and everyday rhythm within Okaloosa County.

Niceville

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

Destin

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

Crestview

Compare Crestview with the county's other major places for commute direction, home choices and the pace you want in Okaloosa County.

Places that reveal the county

Henderson Beach State Park

A stretch of white dune and Gulf beach left undeveloped in the middle of Destin, with camping right behind the sand.

Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park

One of Florida's oldest marine parks, on Okaloosa Island since 1955, with dolphins, sea lions and a sea turtle rescue center.

Destin History & Fishing Museum

The story of Destin's fishing village, with the Primrose, the oldest seine fishing boat still in existence.

Turkey Creek Nature Trail

A free, mile-long boardwalk along a creek in Niceville, with platforms for swimming.

The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island

Restaurants, shops and beach volleyball on the Gulf at Okaloosa Island, with the fishing pier at one end.

Big Kahuna's Water & Adventure Park

Destin's water park, open in the warm months, with slides, a wave pool and a lazy river.

HarborWalk Village

The restaurants, shops and charter docks at the foot of the Destin bridge, with weekly fireworks over the harbor.

Okaloosa Island

Three miles of white-sand Gulf beach between Fort Walton Beach and Destin, with free parking and the pier at its center.

Beaches in Okaloosa County

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

Henderson Beach State Park

Crystal Beach

Norriego Point Beach

Wayside Park Beach

Princess Beach

Air Force Armament Museum

A free museum of Air Force weapons and the aircraft that carried them, outside the gate of Eglin Air Force Base.

Okaloosa Island Pier

A fishing pier reaching 1,270 feet into the Gulf, beside the Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island.

Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park

A 357-acre park of sand pine scrub and old cedar on a brackish arm of Choctawhatchee Bay, once part of an Eglin bombing range.

Emerald Coast Science Center

A hands-on science museum in Fort Walton Beach with live animals and a hurricane simulator.

Destin Harbor Boardwalk

A public walkway along Destin Harbor where the charter fleet ties up and the day's catch is weighed.

Crab Island

A shallow sandbar in the bay just north of the Destin bridge, reached by boat, where people anchor to wade and swim.

Wild Willy's Adventure Zone

A family fun park on Okaloosa Island with dinosaur-themed miniature golf, go-karts, laser tag and a ropes course.

James Lee Park Beach

June White Decker Park Beach

Okaloosa Island Beach

John Beasley Park Beach

Newman C. Brackin Wayside Beach

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