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Orange County

A FLORIDA COUNTY GUIDE · CENTRAL FLORIDA

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REGION

Central Florida

COMMUNITIES TO START WITH

**Orlando, Winter Park,
Apopka, Lake Nona**

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The metropolitan core offers the region's broadest mix of jobs, culture, healthcare, universities, established neighborhoods and new master-planned development.

Orange County is the center of the Orlando metropolitan area, but its communities do not function as one market. Downtown Orlando and the older inner-ring neighborhoods feel different from Winter Park, the northwest growth around Apopka, the tourism corridor southwest of the city and the planned medical and residential districts around Lake Nona.

Tourism is highly visible, yet the employment base also includes healthcare, education, simulation, aviation, professional services, construction and public-sector work. Because those job centers are spread across the county, the best housing choice often begins with an I-4, SR 408, SR 417 or SR 528 commute rather than with a city name.

A serious scouting trip should include an ordinary weekday. Drive the exact work route, price tolls, compare established and new-construction areas, confirm the assigned school and test how easily the address reaches groceries, medical care and the airport without assuming every Orlando location is equally convenient.

Lifestyle: City access · Careers · Culture

Orange County by the numbers

Population Census estimate	1,471,937	At the last full count 2020 Census	1,429,908
Median age	36.6	Aged 65 and over	13.0%
Under 18	21.4%	Median household income	\$79,719
Median home value what owners estimate	\$390,100	Homeownership	56.8%
People per household	2.72	Average commute	28.0 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

Orlando

Orlando combines a true downtown, historic neighborhoods, arts and sports venues, major hospitals and a wide suburban footprint. Separate the City of Orlando from an Orlando mailing address, then compare downtown, College Park, Conway, Dr. Phillips and east-side communities by commute and municipal services.

Apopka

Apopka gives northwest Orange County a distinct mix of newer subdivisions, older neighborhoods, nurseries and access toward Lake County. Test SR 429 and surface-road travel to the actual job center, especially if work is downtown, near the attractions or southeast of Orlando.

Winter Park

Winter Park offers an established city center, lakes, cultural institutions and access to the northern employment corridor. Housing can command a premium, so compare the walkable core with surrounding neighborhoods and verify whether an address is inside the city or only uses the Winter Park name.

Lake Nona

Lake Nona is a planned southeast Orlando growth area centered on medical, research, education and newer residential development. Review association costs, construction timing, airport noise or access, and the real drive to destinations outside the SR 417 corridor.

Checks before Orange County becomes the answer

- ☐ **Start with the employment corridor.** Identify whether daily travel points downtown, north Orlando, the tourism district, the airport, Lake Nona or another county; then compare homes within that route.
- ☐ **Calculate tolls with the mortgage.** SR 408, SR 417, SR 429 and SR 528 can make a commute workable, but recurring tolls and interchange access belong in the monthly budget.
- ☐ **Verify the municipality and address.** An Orlando or Winter Park mailing address may sit outside the named city. Confirm the jurisdiction, utilities, taxes and services for the exact parcel.
- ☐ **Check school assignment directly.** Growth and attendance boundaries can change. Use the current Orange County Public Schools assignment tools for the property, not a neighborhood sales description.
- ☐ **Compare established with newly built.** Balance newer construction and planned amenities against association obligations, construction activity and longer drives from growth corridors.
- ☐ **Plan for heat, rain and inland flooding.** Orange County is inland, but intense rain, drainage, wind and power loss still matter. Review the parcel, neighborhood drainage and household emergency plan.

Questions to answer for Orange County

Housing ranges from historic to newly planned

Bungalows near central Orlando, Winter Park homes, suburban subdivisions and large southeast and northwest growth areas serve different budgets and routines. Compare age, association rules, taxes and commute cost together.

The economy extends beyond the attractions

Hospitality and conventions remain major, while healthcare, universities, simulation, aviation and professional services create separate employment clusters. A household with two work locations should test both routes.

Major care and education networks are broad

AdventHealth, Orlando Health, UCF, Valencia College and the Lake Nona medical institutions create several strong service areas. Specialty care may be excellent yet still inconvenient from the opposite side of the county.

Road choice determines convenience

I-4 is the visible spine, but toll beltways and east-west expressways frequently determine whether a community works. Drive the route during a normal weekday and record time, tolls and backup options.

Inland does not mean risk-free

Wind, heavy rain, drainage, heat and extended power loss require planning. Review flood information, large trees, roof age and access after storms at the exact address.

Places that reveal the county

Magic Kingdom Park

The first of the four Walt Disney World parks, open since 1971 and the most visited theme park on earth.

Disney's Hollywood Studios

A 135-acre Disney park opened in 1989, now built around Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge and Toy Story Land.

Universal Studios Florida

The first Universal Orlando park, open since 1990, built around film and television sets and rides drawn from them.

Universal Epic Universe

Universal's fourth Orlando park, opened in May 2025, five themed worlds arranged around a garden hub.

Aquatica Orlando

A 59-acre water park across from SeaWorld, opened in 2008, with two wave pools sharing one long white-sand beach.

Fun Spot America Orlando

A 14-acre family park on International Drive with four multi-level go-kart tracks and the only wooden coaster in Orlando.

Gatorland

A 110-acre alligator park south of Orlando, family owned since 1949 and older than every theme park in the county.

EPCOT

Disney's second Florida park, opened in 1982, split between technology pavilions and eleven country pavilions around a lagoon.

Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park

A 580-acre Disney park that is also an accredited zoo, holding about 2,000 animals from around 200 species.

Universal Islands of Adventure

Universal's second Orlando park, opened in 1999, eight themed islands around a lagoon with several of the heavier coasters in Florida.

SeaWorld Orlando

A 200-acre marine park open since 1973, with eight roller coasters alongside the animal exhibits and a large rescue operation.

Discovery Cove

An all-inclusive reserved-entry park beside SeaWorld where a capped number of guests swim with dolphins and snorkel a built reef.

ICON Park

A 20-acre open entertainment district on International Drive with a 400-foot observation wheel and no admission charge to walk in.

Andretti Indoor Karting & Games Orlando

A 150,000-square-foot indoor karting and games venue on Universal Boulevard, with three electric kart tracks that combine into one long circuit.

K1 Speed Orlando

An indoor electric karting track off International Drive that takes walk-ins, with karts reaching 45 miles an hour.

WonderWorks Orlando

The upside-down building on International Drive, holding six zones of hands-on science exhibits, a ropes course and laser tag.

Harry P. Leu Gardens

Nearly 50 acres of botanical garden three miles from downtown Orlando, given to the city in 1961 along with the family house.

Lake Eola Park

The park at the center of downtown Orlando, built around a 23-acre sinkhole with a lit fountain standing in it.

Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art

A Winter Park museum holding the most complete collection of Louis Comfort Tiffany's work anywhere, including the chapel he built for the 1893 Chicago exposition.

Tibet-Butler Preserve

A 440-acre county preserve on Lake Butler southwest of Orlando, with 3.6 miles of trail and a nature center, free to enter.

Where to check

Orange County Government · Official county services, planning, public safety and resident information.

[ocfl.net](https://www.ocfl.net)

Orange County Economic Development · County business, employment-sector and economic-development resources.

[ocfl.net](https://www.ocfl.net)

Orange County Emergency & Safety · Emergency management, alerts and public-safety information.

[ocfl.net](https://www.ocfl.net)

Orange County Departments & Contacts · Direct links for planning, housing, schools, transportation and property services.

[ocfl.net](https://www.ocfl.net)

Pirate's Dinner Adventure

An interactive dinner show in Orlando built around a full-size ship in an indoor lagoon, running since 1999.

Orlando Science Center

A 207,000-square-foot science center in Loch Haven Park with four exhibit floors, a giant screen theater and a public observatory.

Crayola Experience Orlando

A 70,000-square-foot hands-on color attraction inside The Florida Mall, with twenty-five activities aimed at children.

Orlando Museum of Art

Orlando's art museum, founded in 1924, holding more than 2,400 works with particular depth in the art of the ancient Americas.

Orange County Regional History Center

Central Florida's history museum, in the restored 1927 Orange County courthouse in downtown Orlando.
