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Palm Beach County

A FLORIDA COUNTY GUIDE · SOUTH FLORIDA & THE KEYS

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REGION

South Florida & the Keys

COMMUNITIES TO START WITH

West Palm Beach, Boca Raton, Delray Beach, Wellington

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A large and diverse county blending coastal cities, luxury communities, equestrian areas, suburban centers and western agricultural landscapes.

Palm Beach County holds 1,575,726 people across 1,964 square miles. The median home is \$447,300 and the median rent is \$1,916 — both well above Nassau at \$382,800 and \$1,526 and Brevard at \$339,600 and \$1,556.

But the county figure is the least useful number on this page, and here is why.

Lifestyle: Business · Coastal cities · Equestrian

Boca Raton to Belle Glade

	BELLE GLADE	W PALM BEACH	BOCA RATON	COUNTY
Median home value	\$163,100	\$414,200	\$722,700	\$447,300
Median gross rent	\$898	\$1,772	\$2,508	\$1,916
Median household income	\$48,001	\$73,446	\$106,273	\$83,581
Bachelor's degree	15.9%	39.2%	61.8%	40.5%
In poverty	27.3%	14.1%	10.0%	11.7%
Homeownership	42.6%	50.5%	65.7%	70.1%
People per household	3.00	2.25	2.26	2.49
Aged 65 and over	17.8%	21.5%	24.6%	26.1%
Average commute	25.6 min	23.4 min	21.2 min	26.5 min

A house in Boca Raton costs 4.4 times a house in Belle Glade. \$559,600 apart. Same county, same commission, same sheriff, about forty miles.

That is not a rich neighborhood and a poor one. That is two different economies filed under one name.

Communities to compare

West Palm Beach

West Palm Beach is the county seat and the largest city here, growing 8.4 percent since 2020 against the county's 5.6, with just under half its housing rented and the smallest households of the places measured on this page. Poverty runs above the county rate. It is the part of Palm Beach County where renting before buying is ordinary rather than difficult.

Delray Beach

Delray Beach sits on the coastal strip between Boca Raton and West Palm Beach. NOBODY HAS PULLED FIGURES FOR IT, so nothing numeric is said here. Price it against its neighbors rather than the county, the same as everywhere else on this coast.

Boca Raton

Boca Raton carries the highest home values, rents, incomes and degree rates of the places measured here — a median home at more than four times Belle Glade's — and the shortest journey to work. Grew 4.2 percent since 2020, the slowest on this page. Price it against the county median rather than reading the county median as a guide to it.

Wellington

Wellington sits west of the coastal strip, inland from Lake Worth. NOBODY HAS PULLED FIGURES FOR IT, so nothing numeric is said here. Price it against its immediate neighbors rather than against a county median that spans \$163,100 to \$722,700.

Checks before Palm Beach County becomes the answer

- ☐ **Choose the coastal or western corridor.** Tie the shortlist to the real job, healthcare and school route before comparing communities spread across the county.
- ☐ **Test I-95, Turnpike and east-west travel.** Drive the complete route, including the surface-road segment; distance from an interchange can determine daily convenience.
- ☐ **Audit association obligations.** Review dues, reserves, assessments, membership requirements and rules for condos, gated communities and country-club property.
- ☐ **Separate flood from evacuation planning.** Review the exact flood information, hurricane evacuation zone, elevation, roof and insurance options before comparing coastal and inland homes.
- ☐ **Map healthcare by specialty.** The county has major hospital and specialty networks, but travel patterns differ north, central, south and west. Confirm the required providers.
- ☐ **Verify school assignment and municipality.** Confirm current school assignment, city limits, utilities, taxes and services for the precise parcel rather than the mailing name.

Questions to answer for Palm Beach County

Everybody drives about the same distance

Look at the bottom row again, because it is the one that explains the rest.

Boca Raton 21.2 minutes. West Palm Beach 23.4. Belle Glade 25.6. The county 26.5.

Home prices across those three places vary by a factor of 4.4. Journeys to work vary by 4.4 MINUTES.

In most places, cheap housing means a long drive — you live far out because that is what you can afford, and you pay for it in hours. That is not happening here.

It is not happening because these are not suburbs of one city. Boca people work in Boca. Belle Glade people work in Belle Glade, in agriculture. West Palm Beach works in West Palm Beach.

PALM BEACH COUNTY IS NOT A CITY WITH SUBURBS AROUND IT. It is a row of separate local economies that happen to share a county government, and moving between them is not a commute decision. It is a decision about which

economy you are joining.

The western two thirds

1,964 square miles of land is a great deal of Florida. The published density is 759.7 people per square mile at the 2020 Census; run the 2025 estimate over the same land area and it is about 802.

Both of those numbers describe a county that does not exist.

The great majority of those 1.58 million people live on the eastern edge — the coastal strip from Boca up through Delray, Boynton, West Palm Beach and Jupiter. West of that the county runs out to Lake Okeechobee through sugar cane and vegetable fields, and the towns out there are small. Belle Glade, the largest of them on this page, holds 17,241 people.

So when somebody quotes you a density, an average price or a median anything for Palm Beach County, they are describing a strip of coast and a great deal of farmland as though they were one place.

Half the seat rents

West Palm Beach is the county seat and the largest city here, and half of it rents. Homeownership is 50.5 percent against a county at 70.1.

It also has the smallest households on the page — 2.25 people, level with Boca and well under Belle Glade's 3.00 — and it grew 8.4 percent since 2020 while the county grew 5.6 and Boca grew 4.2.

Fastest growing, most renting, smallest households, and a poverty rate above the county's at 14.1 percent against 11.7. That is a city filling up with people who have not bought yet, and it is a different proposition from either of the places either side of it.

If you are moving here and not certain where you will land, that combination is worth knowing: the seat is the part of this county where renting first is normal rather than difficult.

Pick the economy first

Most county guides tell you to pick a neighborhood. Here the order is different.

DECIDE WHICH ECONOMY YOU ARE JOINING before you look at a single house, because the price, the schools, the household size and the work are all downstream of that decision and they move together.

Then, within it: price the specific stretch, not the county. A median that spans \$163,100 and \$722,700 tells you nothing about the street you are standing on.

Ask what the commute is FROM WHERE YOU WILL WORK, not from the county average. Twenty-six minutes is a real number and it describes nobody in particular.

And if you are renting first, look hard at West Palm Beach. Half the city already does.

Business and healthcare anchor the coast

Finance, professional services, healthcare, tourism and education cluster heavily along the coastal corridor, while agriculture remains central in the west. Job location should lead the shortlist.

Higher education

Colleges and universities in this county are spread along the coastal strip rather than gathered in one campus town. If a household member is studying or teaching, check the specific institution's location against the stretch you are pricing before you commit to an area — the drive between two addresses in this county is not the same question as the drive in a county with one center.

Places that reveal the county

Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens

Japanese gardens on land given to the county by the last man left from a Japanese farming colony that failed here a century ago.

Lion Country Safari

Opened in 1967 and believed to be the first cageless zoo in the country - you drive through it in your own car.

Mounts Botanical Garden

Twenty acres and more than 7,000 kinds of tropical plant from six continents, in 25 separate gardens on Military Trail.

Gumbo Limbo Nature Center

Twenty acres of barrier island run jointly by the city, the park district and Florida Atlantic University, free to enter.

Wakodahatchee Wetlands

Fifty acres of working water infrastructure that became one of Florida's finest birding boardwalks, free to enter, with more than 178 species recorded.

Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum

A light that has stood since 1860, climbed by 105 steps, with a 48-inch minimum height to go up.

Cox Science Center and Aquarium

A science center in Dreher Park since 1961, with a quarter-mile outdoor science trail. A large expansion closes its planetarium and Hall of Discovery until late 2027.

Rapids Water Park

Thirty acres and 42 slides and attractions in Riviera Beach, grown from four slides on four acres in 1979.

Peanut Island Park

A 37-acre county park with no bridge and no parking lot - it is reached by boat only, and has a snorkeling lagoon.

Society of the Four Arts

A 1936 cultural society on ten acres by the Intracoastal, whose 1938 demonstration garden was built to teach new arrivals how to garden in the tropics.

Norton Museum of Art

Founded by a Chicago steel executive who retired to Palm Beach and decided South Florida should have a museum of its own. Open since February 1941.

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

A state park where the reef sits a short swim offshore, with a nature center and an island reachable only by paddling.

Henry Morrison Flagler Museum

Henry Flagler's 1902 Gilded Age estate, Whitehall, open as a National Historic Landmark with self-guided tours.

Loggerhead Marinelife Center

The only sea turtle hospital between Orlando and the Florida Keys, free to visit, started by a Juno Beach real estate agent who wondered why hatchlings crawled the wrong way.

Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

The northernmost remnant of the Everglades, more than 145,000 acres of it, pressed straight up against suburban Palm Beach County.

Palm Beach Zoo

A zoo that began as a red barn in a park the city bought for one hundred dollars, with a goat called Pepita and, later, a kangaroo banned from Palm Beach by ordinance.

Boca Raton Museum of Art

A museum that began as a display of borrowed paintings at a 1940s library festival, now at Mizner Park, with its art school still in the original 1962 building.

Kravis Center for the Performing Arts

A performing arts center that opened fully funded in 1992, named for a Tulsa geologist by his friends rather than by himself.

Manatee Lagoon

A free center on the Intracoastal where manatees gather in the warm water a power station puts out, chiefly from mid-November to the end of March.

Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens

The El Cid home and studio of sculptor Ann Weaver Norton, with nine monumental works standing among more than 250 rare palms and cycads.

Beaches in Palm Beach County

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

Coral Cove Park Beach
Carlin Park Beach
Loggerhead Park Beach
Riviera Municipal Beach
Palm Beach Municipal Beach
Lake Worth Beach
Ocean Inlet Park Beach
Delray Municipal Beach
Spanish River Park Beach
South Beach Park Boca Raton

Jupiter Beach Park
Juno Beach Park
John D. MacArthur Beach State Park
Ocean Reef Park Beach
Phipps Ocean Park Beach
R. G. Kreusler Park Beach
Gulfstream Park Beach
Atlantic Dunes Park Beach
Red Reef Park Beach
South Inlet Park Beach

Where to check

Palm Beach County Government · Official county services, departments, planning and resident information.	discover.pbc.gov
Palm Beach County Departments · Direct access to transportation, planning, emergency, health and property agencies.	discover.pbc.gov
Palm Beach County Economic Development Plan · County priorities for employment, housing, transportation and resilience.	discover.pbc.gov
Palm Beach County Emergency Plan · The current county framework for emergency preparation and response.	discover.pbc.gov

Where these figures came from

- US Census Bureau QuickFacts, Palm Beach County, Florida.** The County column — population, percent change, age, income, home value, homeownership, gross rent, household size, commute, education, poverty, land area and density
- US Census Bureau QuickFacts, West Palm Beach city, Florida.** The W Palm Beach column, and the growth, homeownership, household size and poverty figures in the seat section
- US Census Bureau QuickFacts, Boca Raton city, Florida.** The Boca Raton column, and the 4.2 percent growth figure
- US Census Bureau QuickFacts, Belle Glade city, Florida.** The Belle Glade column, and the 17,241 population figure
- US Census Bureau QuickFacts, Nassau County and Brevard County, Florida.** Nassau and Brevard figures used in the opening comparison. Nassau's home value and rent are installed in its guide; Brevard's home value is installed but its rent is not — the rent figure here comes from QuickFacts directly.