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Santa Rosa County

A FLORIDA COUNTY GUIDE · PANHANDLE & EMERALD COAST

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REGION	COMMUNITIES TO START WITH	PRINTED
Panhandle & Emerald Coast	Milton, Pace, Navarre, Gulf Breeze	October 6, 2026

Fast-growing suburban communities, rivers, forests and Navarre’s Gulf shoreline offer both military access and outdoor living.

Lifestyle: Growth · Military commute · Nature

Santa Rosa County by the numbers

Population Census estimate	198,472	At the last full count 2020 Census	188,000
Median age	40.1	Aged 65 and over	16.7%
Under 18	21.8%	Median household income	\$91,922
Median home value what owners estimate	\$329,800	Homeownership	80.6%
People per household	2.67	Average commute	30.5 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

Milton
Start with Milton to understand the established center, nearby services and everyday rhythm within Santa Rosa County.

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

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

Gulf Breeze
Compare Gulf Breeze with the county’s other major places for commute direction, home choices and the pace you want in Santa Rosa County.

Places that reveal the county

Blackwater River State Park

Six hundred acres on one of the purest sand-bottom rivers in the country, with wide white sandbars to stop on.

Gulf Islands National Seashore

White quartz barrier islands, old coastal forts and 135,000 protected acres running from Florida into Mississippi.

Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center

A volunteer-run sea turtle center in Navarre Beach Marine Park, built around a 15,000-gallon tank and one green turtle who cannot go home.

Blackwater Heritage State Trail

An 8.1-mile paved rail trail running north out of Milton, with a military spur carrying on to Whiting Field.

Gulf Breeze Zoo

Fifty acres at Woodlawn Beach holding over 900 animals, with a train through a thirty-acre preserve where the animals roam loose.

Adventures Unlimited Outdoor Center

An outfitter and resort at Tomahawk Landing near Milton, running paddling trips on Coldwater Creek and the Blackwater River since the 1970s.

Beaches in Santa Rosa County

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

Navarre Beach

Gulf Islands National Seashore Beach

Navarre Beach

A quiet stretch of Santa Rosa Island between two national seashore boundaries, with the longest fishing pier in Florida on it.

Navarre Beach Marine Science Station

A working marine science classroom on Navarre Beach, started in 2009 because the students themselves asked for it.

Arcadia Mill Archaeological Site

The excavated remains of Florida's earliest water-powered industrial complex, at Milton, with a boardwalk over the foundations.

West Florida Railroad Museum

A railroad museum in Milton's 1909 Louisville and Nashville depot, with cabooses and rolling stock standing on the track outside.

Naval Live Oaks Area

The first federal tree farm in the country, set aside by John Quincy Adams in 1828 to grow oak for warships.

Blackwater Heritage State Trail Visitor Center

The trailhead building at the Milton end of the Blackwater Heritage State Trail, with parking, water and the ranger station.

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