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Sumter County

A FLORIDA COUNTY GUIDE · CENTRAL FLORIDA

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REGION

Central Florida

COMMUNITIES TO START WITH

**The Villages,
Bushnell, Wildwood**

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Nationally known retirement development coexists with rural communities and a strategic position near the Turnpike and Interstate 75.

Sumter County's best-known community is The Villages, whose large age-restricted development, golf-cart network and amenity districts occupy much of the county's north. Wildwood is the fast-growing highway and service center at I-75 and Florida's Turnpike, while Bushnell is the county seat and connects to a more rural central and south Sumter pattern.

Healthcare, retirement services, construction, retail, logistics, government and agriculture support the local economy. I-75, the Turnpike, U.S. 301 and SR 44 provide regional access, but golf-cart routes, privately maintained roads and reservation-based county transit can shape day-to-day mobility.

A scouting visit should compare The Villages with Wildwood or Bushnell on the actual routine. Verify age restrictions, district and association obligations, bond or assessment balances, golf-cart access, healthcare network, road ownership, flood and drainage conditions and storm plans for the exact address.

Lifestyle: Retirement · Golf · Highway access

Sumter County by the numbers

Population Census estimate	143,408	At the last full count 2020 Census	129,752
Median age	68.5	Aged 65 and over	57.7%
Under 18	7.1%	Median household income	\$76,508
Median home value what owners estimate	\$385,400	Homeownership	87.6%
People per household	1.93	Average commute	28.9 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

The Villages

The Villages is the county's defining retirement destination and extends into neighboring Lake and Marion counties. Confirm the property's county and community district, age-qualification rules, bond or maintenance assessments, amenity fees, golf-cart connectivity, hospital network and future development before comparing homes.

Wildwood

Wildwood sits at the I-75 and Turnpike junction and is changing quickly as The Villages and related commercial development expand. Review current and planned roads, construction, utilities, district boundaries and traffic around a prospective address.

Bushnell

Bushnell is the county seat with a small-town and rural character near I-75. It can suit households seeking more space and fewer master-planned obligations, but healthcare, shopping, internet, well or septic service and longer trips should be tested from the property.

Checks before Sumter County becomes the answer

- ☐ **Verify The Villages address completely.** Confirm county, municipality, community development district, age rules, bond balance, amenity charges and golf-cart access for the property.
 - ☐ **Choose retirement network or rural independence.** Compare organized amenities and services in The Villages with the space, utilities and longer trips common around Bushnell and rural Sumter.
 - ☐ **Map healthcare and emergency travel.** Confirm the hospital, specialists, insurance network and ambulance route from the address, including travel outside the county when needed.
 - ☐ **Test highway and local-road movement.** Drive I-75, the Turnpike, U.S. 301 or SR 44 plus the local segment; check whether golf-cart access can actually serve routine destinations.
 - ☐ **Check flood, drainage and road ownership.** Review flood information, stormwater conditions and whether roads or drainage are county, district, association or private responsibilities.
 - ☐ **Plan for limited fixed-route transit.** If a household member cannot drive, study Sumter County Transit's reservation and shuttle options and test access to medical and daily services.
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Questions to answer for Sumter County

The Villages is central—but not all of Sumter

The Villages offers a nationally distinctive retirement system, while Wildwood and Bushnell add highway growth, county services and rural alternatives. Compare the operating model, not only the house.

Retirement services drive a major economy

Healthcare, construction, retail, recreation and professional services cluster around The Villages, while logistics, government and agriculture broaden local work.

Healthcare needs network-level review

Local hospitals and clinics serve many routine needs, but specialty choices may point toward Ocala, Leesburg or farther regional centers. Verify coverage and travel.

Cars and golf carts serve different maps

I-75 and the Turnpike support regional trips, while The Villages' golf-cart network can improve local mobility only where routes connect. County transit is not a substitute for every trip.

Inland does not mean risk-free

Wind, heavy rain, flooding, drainage and power loss still matter. Review official flood information, road responsibility and the household's shelter and backup plan.

Places that reveal the county

Dade Battlefield Historic State Park

Eighty acres near Bushnell hold the ground where the Second Seminole War began on December 28, 1835.

The Villages Town Squares

Three open-air squares anchor The Villages, and all three are open to anyone who cares to walk in.

Florida National Cemetery

The national cemetery sits on 512.9 acres inside Withlacoochee State Forest, about fifty miles north of Tampa near Bushnell.

Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve

The Green Swamp covers about 110,000 acres where Lake, Pasco, Polk and Sumter counties meet, east of Dade City.

Lake Okahumpka Park

Sumter County's park on the shore of Lake Okahumpka sits just off State Road 44 east of Wildwood.

Withlacoochee State Forest

At 157,479 acres, Withlacoochee State Forest spreads across four counties, with a share of it in Sumter.

Lake Panasoffkee Wildlife Management Area

Nearly nine thousand acres run along the eastern shore of Lake Panasoffkee in north central Sumter County.

Sharon Rose Wiechens Preserve

A preserve of 625 acres off Moyer Loop, and the first nature preserve in The Villages opened to the public.

Where to check

Sumter County Government · Official county services, departments, projects and resident information.

sumtercountyfl.gov

Sumter County Transit · Reservation, shuttle, accessibility and transportation-disadvantaged information.

sumtercountyfl.gov

Sumter Emergency Management · Official alerts, hazards, shelters and household preparedness.

sumtercountyfl.gov

Sumter Flood Information · County flood hazards, mapping and preparedness resources.

sumtercountyfl.gov