What we should know about the **Sunshine State**

Florida was the SOUTHERN MOST state, before Hawaii became one of the United States. Now it is the SUNSHINE STATE. I have been to Florida several times for vacation. I saw the south, the east coast, Orlando, the gulf coast and the Everglades. Florida is exciting, hot and wet, beautiful, amazing and during Hurricane season sometimes dangerous.

Most of the information is what I learned during my vacations. The photos are from my photo gallery. Data, pictures or graphs from the Internet are marked with the source where I found it.

**A few facts and figures**

Florida has 18 Mio inhabitants and it is size is 170’000 km² big. This is a quarter of the inhabitants and half the size of Germany. The capital of Florida is Tallahassee. Because of it’s warm weather, Florida is very popular to spent the winter period. Many people move to Florida after retirement. That’s why some people call it the “olds people home”. In the United States, the units are different from Europe. The most important units are: Fahrenheit, ounce and mile. The temperature is expressed in Fahrenheit. The calculation to °C is not so easy, but it is sufficient to know, that 30°C are 86 Fahrenheit. 1 ounce is 28 grams and 1 Mile is 1.6 Kilometers.
1. Miami with Miami Beach and the Miami Seaquarium

Miami’s population is about 400,000 of which a huge part is Spanish-speaking.

Miami has a very high crime rate and there are many poor people.

The most popular attractions are Miami Beach, Miami Seaquarium, and the Skyline of Downtown Miami.

Miami Beach is on an island in front of Miami and well known for the endless beaches and the colorful houses in the Miami Seaquarium is one of America’s first marine-life parks with exhibitions and shows. There are more than 1,000 animals like manatees, orcas dolphins and sea lions.

2. Florida Keys and Key West

Florida Keys is a chain of more than 150 isles. “Key” means a small island. The keys are connected by the US 1 which is about 200 km long and consists of 42 bridges. The longest bridge is 7 miles long (7-Miles Bridge).

The last and biggest island of the Keys is Key West. In Key West is the southern most point of the USA, which is 90 miles away from Cuba.

A famous attraction is the Ernest Hemingway house, where the author used to live.

3. Fort Lauderdale

Fort Lauderdale is located 20 miles north of Miami. Its population is 165,000. The attractions are the beaches with turtle nesting, the flea market and the Sawgrass Mills Mall.

All turtles nests on the beach are marked with claims and bands to avoid destruction by people. In August and September the little turtles are born and start their dangerous way to the sea. Many
4. Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral

Cape Canaveral is known for the Kennedy Space Center and the Wildlife reservation area.

The climatic and geographic conditions at Cap Canaveral made it a perfect location to build the airspace station, which was the ramp for many famous rocket launches.

The exhibitions include an Apollo landing capsule, Saturn rockets and the Space Shuttle “Explorer”.

There is a huge not-public area around the Kennedy Space Center for safety reasons. This area is a perfect home for many animals like birds, reptiles and amphibians.

5. Orlando and the parks

Orlando has a population of 200,000. It is famous for the adventure parks, which 45 Mio people are visiting every year.

The most popular parks are:
- Disney World with Magic Kingdom and Epcot.
- Discovery Cove and SeaWorld.

Discovery Cove provides several attractions such as a lagoon to swim with dolphins and a lagoon where visitors can play with stingrays.

In SeaWorld’s water world, visitors can learn a lot about the maritime life. Many shows such as the orca “Shamu”, dolphins, sea lions is a must-have-seen. Another adventure is the roller coaster.
6. Gulf coast

The Gulf of Mexico is the start point of the gulf stream. The water temperature is between 22°C and 30°C. Famous cities at the gulf coast are Tampa, Fort Myers and Naples.

There can be watched more animals as somewhere else in Florida. The mild and calm conditions provide a perfect wildlife for dolphins, stingrays and manatees as well as turtles and raccoons.

Sanibel Island has a great beach to find shells

Stepping on a sting of stingrays can be very painful and must be treated in the hospital.

7. Everglades

The Everglades is the area from Lake Okeechobee in the north to the Keys in the south. It is a huge swamp floated with fresh water. The water depth is just a 30 cm deep. It takes several months for the water to get from the lake through the Everglades to the sea.

Around the National park, there are farms, where alligators are breaded and where airboat tours are offered. The tour with an airboat is a special adventure to explore the wildness of flamingos, alligators, turtles, pelicans, flamingos, mangroves and sawgrass.

Summary and any other interesting things

Florida is a great place for several reasons.
• People are more relaxed and friendly
• Exciting animals in the sea and on land
• Shops which are open around the clock (7/24)
• Warm sea water and endless beaches
• Marvelous food including steaks, donuts, pancakes and tropical fruits
• Always warm and sunny → it is the sunshine state !!!

Sources
• wikipedia.org
• info-florida.de
• triadvisor.com
• many booklets from several trips to Florida

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