Tallahassee/Leon County, Florida

Brief History of the State of Florida and the City of Tallahassee

Thousands of years of Native American culture preceded the European discovery of the Florida peninsula. An estimated 100,000 Native Americans were living here at the time of its discovery by Juan Ponce de Leon in early 1513. As Ponce de Leon's arrival coincided with the Spring Pascua Florida festivities in Spain, he named the new land "Florida," which meant "filled with flowers." La Florida was also explored by another Spanish adventurer – Hernando de Soto. It is believed that de Soto and his army of over 600 men spent the winter of 1539-40 in an abandoned Apalachee Indian village located in what is now the city of Tallahassee.

Prior to 1821; Florida had consisted of two Spanish colonies that were ceded to Great Britain in the settlement of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). In 1821, President James Monroe appointed Andrew Jackson as territorial governor. One of the new governor's first acts was to organize the territory into two counties, Escambia and St. Johns, with the Suwannee River serving as the dividing line. (In 1822, two more counties were added – Duval in the east and Jackson in the west). The legislative council met at Pensacola, the capital of West Florida, in 1822, and at St. Augustine, the capital of East Florida, in 1823. As these two settlements of the territory were separated by 400 miles of wilderness, it was desirable to select a central site as a capital. Two commissioners appointed by Governor William Pope Duval selected the then uninhabited area known as Tallahassee as the site for the permanent capital and the governor proclaimed it the capital on March 4, 1824. The territorial council met there for the first time in November of that year. Tallahassee had been the site of indigenous settlements prior to and during the Colonial Era. Its name is an Apalachee Tribe phrase generally believed to mean "old town" or "old fields." Florida was admitted to the union as the 27th state on March 3, 1845.

Population Statistics

According to the latest US Census estimates, Florida ranks 3rd in population in the United States of America, Leon county ranks 23rd in population in the state of Florida and Tallahassee is the 9th largest city in the state.

	Tallahassee	**Leon County**	**Florida**	**United States**
Population 2023 (estimated US Census)	202,221	296,913	22,610,726	334,914,895
Population 2020 (actual US Census)	196,169	292,198	21,538,187	331,449,281
Male	47.4%	47.4%	49.2%	49.5%
Female	52.6%	52.6%	50.8%	50.5%
White	50.5%	56.1%	57.7%	61.1%
African American	35.0%	30.4%	15.1%	12.4%
Asian	4.5%	3.6%	3.0%	6.0%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	1.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Two or More Races	7.5%	7.4%	16.5%	10.2%
Other	2.2%	2.1%	7.3%	8.4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	8.5%	7.8%	26.8%	18.7%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	49.2%	47.1%	31.5%	33.7%

Source: United States Census Bureau

Tallahassee/Leon County Weather Facts

The average annual mean temperature at Tallahassee is 68.5°F; the average annual high temperature is 79.7°F, and the average annual low temperature is 57.2°F (based on 1991-2020 for the Tallahassee International Airport). July is typically the hottest month, with an average high temperature of 92.1°F and an average low temperature of 73.0°F. January is the coldest month, with an average high and low temperature of 63.9°F and 40.5°F, respectively. The official record-high temperature is 105°F, which was observed on June 15, 2011. The official record-low temperature is -2°F, which was observed on February 13, 1899, which gives Tallahassee the distinction of being the only location in Florida ever to have recorded a sub-zero temperature. Since that morning in 1899, the lowest temperature recorded in the modern historical record since 1940 was 6°F on January 21, 1985.

The average annual total rainfall is 58.81 inches. June ranks typically as the wettest month, with an average monthly rainfall total of 7.76 inches, and November ranks as the driest month with an average monthly rainfall total of 3.10 inches. Summer is the wettest season, and autumn is the driest. The record 24-hour total rainfall is 10.13 inches, which occurred on June 11-12, 2001. The average annual snowfall is less than a trace. Although snow flurries are seen every few years, on average, measurable snow (0.1 inches or greater, by definition) is seldom observed in Tallahassee, having occurred only ten times since 1938 and last occurred on January 3, 2018, when 0.1 inch was recorded. The largest snowfall ever observed was 2.8 inches on February 12-13, 1958.

In 2023, the temperature ranged from a minimum of 26°F (in January) to a maximum of 102°F (in August). The mean annual temperature was 71.1°F, which ranked as the second warmest year on record in Tallahassee. August 2023 tied for the hottest month ever recorded in Tallahassee, with a monthly average temperature of 85.5°F (tied with June 1998). 2023 experienced three consecutive 100°F+ degree days from August 12-14. There was a total of 12 freezes in 2023, which marked the ninth year in a row with below average annual freezes (since 2014). The total annual rainfall was 60.02 inches, which ranked as the 39th wettest year on record since 1940.

For the latest National Weather Service forecast or marine forecast, call the Weatherline Forecast Service at 850-942-8851. For additional climate information for Tallahassee or other locations in Florida, visit climatecenter.fsu.edu.

Source: Florida Climate Center/Center for Ocean-Atmospheric Prediction Studies https://coaps.fsu.edu/