Metro Jacksonville is the 11th most populous city in the United States at 1,313,228. Population has grown by 25.45% since 1990. Median age is 34. February average temperatures are 67 high and 44 low.

Bloomberg Businessweek ranked Jacksonville as 26th on its America’s 2011 Best Places Rank, ahead of Denver (27), Nashville (28), Minneapolis (30), Atlanta (32), Houston (35), Dallas (42), Tampa (47), and Phoenix (49). Orlando and Miami did not make their top 50 list.

Says Bloomberg, “Why it’s ranked: With miles of Florida beaches nearby and thousands of acres of parks and preserves, residents of Jacksonville are spoiled with outdoor activities. The Atlantic Ocean provides both great air quality and a hurricane now and then. The city has good schools, low poverty rates, and plenty of great options for nightlife.”

Towering skyscrapers line the St. Johns River, and Jacksonville, the largest city in square miles in the continental United States, is home to three U.S. Navy bases, numerous major corporations, a Professional Golf Association tournament, the Jacksonville Jaguars National Football League team and three minor league sports teams. There are 10 colleges, universities, and professional schools within 30 miles.

Jacksonville has a diversified economy that includes service, transportation, medical and insurance industries.

Jacksonville offers five-star restaurants, resorts and other leisure activities. Its geographical location puts it close to many cultural, historic and entertainment centers in both Florida and Georgia. Elegant Savannah and exotic Amelia Island lie to the north, while historic St. Augustine, the oldest city in the United States and home of the new World Golf Village, lies to the south.

Map of the 25 major US cities with non-stop service from Jacksonville International Airport.

Cost of Living

Jacksonville’s housing market is ranked as one of the most affordable in the country. Median home sales price is $127,982 (2011). Compared to national averages, overall -7%, housing -21%, groceries +3%, utilities -9%, and transportation +5% (2010). Compared to other major cities, cost of living is 16% higher in Miami, 7% higher in Phoenix, and 1% lower in Dallas (2010). There is no Florida state income tax, and local sales tax is 7%.

There are many affordable places to rent or buy within a short drive of Mayo Clinic.

General sites
Wikipedia
City of Jacksonville
Jobs in Jacksonville

Museums
Cummer Museum of Arts and Gardens
MOCA – Museum of Contemporary Art
Lightner Museum
Day and Weekend Trips

Fernandina/Amelia Island – Just north of Jacksonville
Take the Ferry from Mayport over to Fernandina
Fort Clinch State Park - Civil war fort and beach
Cumberland Island National Seashore

St. Augustine – Just south of Jacksonville
St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum
Spanish Quarter Museum
Castillo de San Marcos – old fort
Ripley’s Believe it or Not

The Golden Isles: Jekyll Island / Sea Island / St. Simons / Little St. Simons – an hour or so from Jacksonville with bicycling, hiking, fishing, beaches, shopping

Savannah – about 2 ½ hours from Jacksonville
Fort Pulaski National Monument - Civil war fort

Daytona Beach – about 1 hour from Jacksonville - White sand beaches you can drive on, Ocean Walk Shoppes

Space Coast – about 3 ½ hours from Jacksonville
Kennedy Space Center
Canaveral National Seashore

Charleston – about 4 ½ hours from Jacksonville

Orlando – about 2 hours from Jacksonville
Walt Disney World
Universal Studios
Sea World

Panama City and Destin – about 5-6 hours away

Tampa – about 3 ½ hours from Jacksonville

Wild Adventures Amusement Park – Valdosta, GA, about 2 ½ hours from Jacksonville

Florida Keys – about 6-7 hours from Jacksonville

Miami – about 6 hours from Jacksonville

Numerous Florida State Parks

Atlanta – about 6 hours from Jacksonville

Sports

Jacksonville Suns – Jacksonville minor league baseball
Jacksonville Jaguars – NFL professional football
Jacksonville Sharks – Arena football (2011 champs)

Nascar Events (Daytona Beach)
The Players Championship
Gate River Run - Local 15K, and Running events
Area Golf Courses
World Golf Village – World Golf Hall of Fame

Shopping

St. John’s Town Center - New upscale open air mall
Regency Square Mall
Avenues Mall
San Marco
The Shoppes of Avondale
Riverside/Five Points
Riverside Arts Mart – Local farmers market, crafts, music

Concerts

Wilson Center for the Arts
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra
Jacksonville’s Time-Union Center
Day and Weekend Trips

Fernandina/Amelia Island – Just north of Jacksonville
- Take the Ferry from Mayport over to Fernandina

Fort Clinch State Park - Civil war fort and beach

Cumberland Island National Seashore

St. Augustine – Just south of Jacksonville
- St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum
- Spanish Quarter Museum
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- Kennedy Space Center
- Canaveral National Seashore

Charleston – about 4 ½ hours from Jacksonville

Orlando – about 2 hours from Jacksonville
- Walt Disney World
- Universal Studios
- Sea World

Panama City and Destin – about 5-6 hours away

Tampa – about 3 ½ hours from Jacksonville
- Busch Gardens
- Wild Adventures Amusement Park – Valdosta, GA, about 2 ½ hours from Jacksonville

Florida Keys – about 6-7 hours from Jacksonville
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Riverside Arts Market – Local farmers market, crafts, music

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Wilson Center for the Arts

Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra

Jacksonville's Time-Union Center

The Florida Theatre - Downtown Jacksonville

Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

St. Augustine Amphitheatre

Local Music Scene

Seawalk Pavilion at Jacksonville Beach

Jacksonville Landing Concerts

The Comedy Zone

Suwannee River Jam – Late April

Local Festivals

Jacksonville Events

Jacksonville Beach Events

Springing the Blues

Jacksonville Beach Jazz Festival

Ecofest – Mid-April

Fernandina Shrimp Festival – First Weekend in May

Taste of St Augustine

Jacksonville Crawfish Festival – Late April

Crawfish Festival in Woodbine, GA – Late April

Corn Festival – Mid May

Strawberry Festival – Late February/Early March

Area Schools and Universities

Duval County Public Schools

St. Johns County Public Schools

Jacksonville Schools

Jacksonville Private Schools

University of North Florida

Florida State College at Jacksonville

Jacksonville University (Private)

Local Restaurants

Open Table for Jacksonville

Transportation

Jacksonville International Airport – Airlines include Airtran, American, Continental, Delta, JetBlue, Southwest, United, and USAirways.

Kid (and Family) Friendly Activities

YMCA of Florida's First Coast

Museum of Science and History – Great for kids

Elizabeth's Tea Room – Great for little girls

Hands On Children's Museum

Jacksonville Public Libraries – Most have story hours

Marineland

Silver Springs (Nature's Theme Park)

Alligator Farm Zoological Park – St. Augustine

Jacksonville Zoo

Kennedy Space Center

Numerous State Parks

Adventure Landing – Mini golf, laser tag, go carts, arcade, water slides, lazy river

Thanks to Katherine Townsend for creating most of this list!