

Weird Stuff About Florida

- The phrase "cool as a cucumber" originates in Florida. On a hot day, the pulp of a cucumber can be up to 10° F. cooler than the surrounding air.
- Jacksonville was once known as "The World's Winter Film Capital". In the early 1900's, it had more film companies than Los Angeles and was the film-making center of the United States. Unfortunately, the people of Jacksonville thought of the film business as unseemly, and convinced it to move to California.
- The stone crab is a Florida delicacy. It is in season from the middle of October until the middle of May. Fishermen, by law, may only detach one of the crab's two claws. The crab is then returned to the water, where it is able to regenerate the lost claw.
- Florida is second only to Kentucky amongst southeastern states in the raising of beef cattle. Within Florida, cattle ranches are centered around the Kissimmee river, and the town of Kissimmee has been traditionally referred to as the "cow capital of Florida".
- The crocodile is classified as an endangered species and there are only 400 to 500 remaining in Florida. The easiest way to distinguish a crocodile from an alligator is to check for teeth, which are visible on crocodiles even when their mouths are closed. Beware: crocodiles are much more aggressive than alligators, and are usually hungry.
- During World War II German U-boats patrolled the waters just off of Florida's Atlantic Coast, and on several occasions attacked American freighters and tankers. On April 10, 1942, the tanker Gulfamerica was torpedoed just four miles offshore of Daytona Beach. Stunned beachgoers watched the fiery red explosion, and then witnessed the U-boat surface and use a deck gun to sink the ship.

- Between 1910 and 1986, St. Petersburg's daily newspaper, the Evening Standard, was given away free on days when the sun did not shine. In 76 years, this only occurred 295 times, an average of less than 4 times per year.
- An elegant dish that you can find in many of the most exclusive of Florida restaurants is called the "Hearts of Palm". This is a beautiful name for what is, in reality, Florida swamp cabbage.
- Spanish Moss, contrary to its appearance and name, is not a moss. In fact, it is a member of the pineapple family. Seeds are carried from tree to tree by tiny parachute devices, making this vegetation omnipresent in northern areas of the state.
- Each morning, janitors at the Metro-Dade courthouse in Miami sweep the surrounding area for remnants of voodoo rituals. The rituals are performed by family members of criminal defendants, in an effort to influence the outcome of trials. Dead goats, chickens and lizards are commonly found.
- The world's first scheduled commercial airline flight occurred in Florida on January 1, 1914. The flight occurred between Tampa and St. Petersburg, and traversed Tampa Bay.