

Moving to Gainesville

The local picture. The practical details. A plan for your move.



I'm Donovan Arnold. I grew up here and have been a Gainesville Realtor® since 2010. This guide will help you explore the area and ask the right questions before choosing a home.

Start with what matters to you

- 02 Compare locations and everyday routes
- 03 Get outside and explore
- 04 Find local food, parks and museums
- 05 Budget, tours and property due diligence
- 06 Settle in with a first-week checklist

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Find your starting point

Compare the address, the route and the property itself.



Downtown and Duckpond

Explore downtown and the nearby Northeast Residential Historic District. For an older home, investigate condition, permit history and any historic design-review requirements before planning exterior changes.

[City historic-preservation resources](#)

UF, work and your daily routine

Locate the building you actually need to reach. Compare driving, parking and walking time. Test routes at your normal travel times, and check event schedules when planning a scouting visit.

[UF campus maps and visitor information](#)

Southwest Gainesville and surrounding towns

Include Haile, Jonesville, Newberry, Alachua or High Springs if their locations fit your destinations. Compare housing type, lot size, construction age, utilities and association rules for each property.

Build a short list

Write down your budget, three must-have home features, usual destinations and moving timeframe. Use those details to compare homes rather than relying on a neighborhood label.

Make time for the outdoors

Gardens, sinkholes, prairie views and paved trails.



Kanapaha Botanical Gardens

Explore plant collections and garden paths. As of this update, the gardens are closed Thursdays. Check admission, visitor rules and weather policies before going.

[Kanapaha visit information](#)

Devil's Millhopper

Explore the limestone sinkhole and surrounding landscape. Check the park's current alerts and access information before leaving, especially after severe weather.

[Devil's Millhopper park information](#)

Paynes Prairie and the Hawthorne trail

Choose a prairie trail or part of the 16-mile Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail, which starts at Boulware Springs. Review terrain, route length, pet rules and accessibility for your outing.

[Paynes Prairie visitor information](#)

[Gainesville-Hawthorne trail information](#)

Before you go

Bring water, sun protection and suitable footwear. Check weather and trail closures. Observe wildlife from a distance and keep pets away from the water's edge.

Get a feel for local life

A few places to add to your next scouting visit.



Satchel's Pizza and 4th Ave Food Park

Try Satchel's for pizza and its distinctive setting, or browse the current businesses at 4th Ave Food Park. Menus and operating hours vary, so check directly before making plans.

[Satchel's menu and visit details](#)

[4th Ave Food Park vendors and events](#)

Depot Park and the Cade Museum

Pair a walk around Depot Park with the nearby Cade Museum for Creativity & Invention. Check park notices and splash-area availability. Museum admission, hours and programming are separate.

[Depot Park activities and visitor information](#)

[Cade Museum tickets and visitor information](#)

Florida Museum: reopening announced

As of October 6, 2026, the exhibits building and Butterfly Rainforest are closed for expansion. The museum has announced reopening on November 23, 2026. Confirm the schedule before your visit.

[Florida Museum reopening updates](#)

For current events, check organizer calendars and UF's calendar rather than an old annual-event list.

[UF events calendar](#)

Plan your purchase

Four conversations to have before committing to a home.

01 Compare the complete cost

Ask your lender for financing and closing-cost estimates. Include taxes, insurance, association dues, utilities and maintenance. Request property-specific insurance quotes early; ask about roof condition, hurricane deductibles and wind-mitigation documentation.

[Florida insurance wind-mitigation resources](#)

02 Review representation before tours

Before in-person and live virtual tours, we will review and sign a written buyer agreement. Discuss services, duration, exclusivity, termination and compensation before signing. Real estate compensation is negotiable and is not set by law.

[NAR consumer guide to written buyer agreements](#)

03 Investigate the specific property

Review disclosures, permits, inspection findings and association documents. Ask your insurer and lender about flood risk, coverage and property requirements before your deadlines. For a well or septic system, discuss inspections and maintenance with qualified professionals.

[FEMA Flood Map Service Center](#)

04 Estimate your taxes after purchase

The seller's tax bill may not reflect your future bill. Ask the Property Appraiser about reassessment and eligibility for exemptions. Homestead does not transfer automatically; confirm January 1 eligibility requirements and the usual March 1 application deadline directly.

[Alachua County Property Appraiser: tax and exemption FAQs](#)

Bring your priorities, not a perfect plan

Tell me your budget, timing, preferred home features and destinations. We can use those details to build a search and discuss a tour plan.

Make the move easier

Address-specific checks and a practical first-week plan.

Confirm schools directly

Use the district's address lookup and contact Alachua County Public Schools to confirm assignment for the applicable school year. Verify enrollment requirements and program eligibility directly with the district.

[ACPS Find My School](#)

Arrange services for the exact address

Confirm electricity, water, internet and waste-service providers. If GRU serves the property, submit the service request early and confirm the connection date. Verify waste collection separately for your city or county location.

[GRU start, stop and move service](#)

Learn local wildlife precautions

Keep your distance from alligators and never feed them. Keep pets leashed and away from the water's edge. Use Florida Fish and Wildlife guidance for precautions around water.

[FWC living with alligators guidance](#)

Your first-week checklist

- Confirm utility connections and your collection day.
- Locate water shutoffs, the electrical panel and smoke alarms.
- Update mailing addresses and save service and association contacts.
- Test everyday routes and review your household storm plan.

Questions about your move?

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General local information, not legal, tax, insurance or lending advice. Confirm property-specific details with the relevant provider or professional. Information reviewed October 6, 2026; hours, access and policies can change. Equal Housing Opportunity.