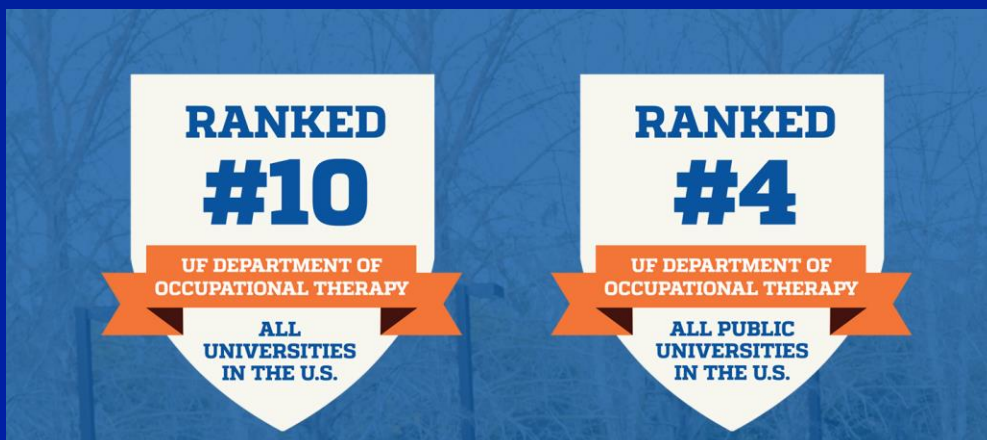


A Gator's Guide to Gainesville



Welcome to Greatness!



DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Whether you are new to Gainesville, or a returning Gator we welcome you to this phase of your Gator journey!

We are excited for you to begin your doctoral studies in the Great Department of Occupational Therapy. Over the next 9 semesters, you will learn the skills necessary to join our profession. We hope you also make great memories, build lifelong friendships, establish connections with our faculty – and have a little fun too!

Gainesville and the University of Florida have a wealth of opportunities for you to explore during your studies. While these next 9 semesters will be demanding, we hope you'll find some time to explore the University and this wonderful town.

This is your welcome guide. We hope you'll use it to get to know the University and Gainesville a bit better.

Welcome to the Great Department of Occupational Therapy – and GO GATORS!

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**If we were meant to stay in one place, we'd have roots
instead of feet.**

Rachel Wolchin

MOVING TO GAINESVILLE

Choosing an Apartment

If you attended UF for your undergraduate studies, you likely already have a good sense of where you may want to live. If you are making Gainesville your home for the first time, use this checklist to help you identify options for your living arrangements.

- ❑ **How long is the standard lease at the complex? Do they offer shorter lease arrangements?**

This might be helpful if you won't be in Gainesville for a full year which may happen during fieldwork or Capstone.

- ❑ **What bus routes are available at the complex?**

If you don't plan to drive to campus, you'll want to make sure that the RTS bus routes run to the Health Science Center.

- ❑ **Are you able to choose your roommate or will one be assigned?**

If you don't already know who you plan to live with, you'll want to be sure you understand how roommates are selected.

- ❑ **Is there a "turn week" where you are required to move out even if you are renewing your lease?**

Many student housing complexes near campus require everyone to move out for one week in August to "turn" the apartments for new leases. New leases may start a week later, requiring you to find somewhere else to live for that time period.

- ❑ **What amenities does the complex offer? Which amenities are important to you?**

Some students find a study space, access to a printer, or options for recreation important.

- ❑ **Do you want to live close to campus or are you willing to live a little further away?**

The NW side of Gainesville, Newberry, Alachua and High Springs are all within a 20-minute drive to campus. Generally, there are less student housing complexes in these areas. You may find pricing, lease options, or other amenities that aren't found closer to the University campus.

- ❑ **Is the area/complex safe?**

Gainesville is generally a safe community but you'll want to consider a few factors to make sure your living arrangements are a good fit for you. Consider lighting throughout the complex. Check with the Gainesville Police Department and online sex offender registries to learn if there are concerns in the area.

Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down.

Oprah Winfrey

PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION

When it comes to getting around Gainesville, specifically the UF campus, you have two primary options: the RTS bus system or parking your own vehicle on campus. There are also special programs to support student safety.

RTS Bus Routes

The Regional Transportation System (RTS) is free for all UF students with their Gator1 ID.

During the Fall and Spring semester, busses run more frequently with expanded routes. In the summer, you will want to verify the route schedule as there may be changes. Bus schedules also change on weekends and holidays. You can get more information directly from the RTS website at go-rt.com or through the RTS app (GNVRIDERTS).

Bus services in the immediate vicinity of campus run until around 10pm. There are a number of bus routes that run directly by the Health Science Center: 8, 13, 16, 25, 33, 35, 37, 38, 43, 122,

There are also a number of other routes with stops at the Reitz Union which is a short walk from the Health Science Center: 9, 12, 20, 46, 125, 126, 150.

Due to campus construction and RTS schedule changes, these routes may have detours. Verify the routes using the RTS app or website [here](#).

On-Campus Parking

All campus parking (cars and scooters) require permits available from UF Transportation and Parking Services (TAPS). As of 2023, annual permits for students cost \$160.00. Students can also purchase permits by semester.

All UF Parking Permits are virtual. When you purchase your permit, you will provide information about your vehicle and license plate. **When you park, you must park with your license plate facing out to the aisle.** If you do not have a visible license plate, you will be ticketed.

It is important to park in the correct areas. Be sure to check signs at the lot/garage to verify you have the correct permit. UF OTD students are eligible for Green decals. Motorcycle/scooter parking requires a specific permit and you must park in designated motorcycle/scooter parking. More information is available [here](#).

ON-CAMPUS SAFETY

SNAP

The Student Nighttime Auxiliary Patrol (SNAP) provides free, nightly campus safety and transportation services for UF students. SNAP operates 15-passenger vans with pick-up/drop-off options on campus, in Midtown, and in the Downtown area. This free services runs when UF classes are in session starting in the evening until 3am.

Scheduling a ride with SNAP is similar to ride share services. Download the UF SNAP app. In the app, you enter the address where you'd like to be dropped off or picked up. The app will give you walking directions to the nearest SNAP stop. All SNAP vans are clearly labeled with UF markings.

For more information, click [here](#).

UF SAFE RIDES BY LYFT

UF Safe Rides by Lyft offers UF students discounted Lyft standard rides Wednesday-Sunday from 9pm-3am while classes are in session.

Students receive a 50% discount up to a maximum of \$15/ride.

Rides are available within a specific geographic area. All areas of campus, the downtown area, portions of 34th Street, and Archer Road towards Butler Plaza are covered.

To use the service, create a Lyft account (if you don't already have one). Check your email at the beginning of the Fall semester for an invitation email from Lyft. That email contains a link that you will click to add the discount to your account. If you did not receive the email, or need more information about the service, you can find that information [here](#).

Health is the greatest of human blessings.

Hippocrates

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

UF offers a variety of services to support student health and wellness. Many of these services are offered free of charge to currently enrolled students.

Student Health Care Center

The Student Health Care Center (SHCC) provides a variety of services for UF students including primary care appointments, urgent care, immunizations, lab services, radiology and EKG, sexual health, and pharmacy.

The clinic also provides an array of specialty care services including allergy injections, LGBTQ+ care, nutrition, physical therapy, psychiatry, sports medicine, women's health, and travel services.

Appointments are available in person at the brand-new SHCC located on Stadium Road by the O'Connell Center (the basketball arena). Telehealth visits are also available.

While all students pay a health fee as part of their campus charges, it is important to know that services at SHCC are not necessarily free of charge. Some basic visits are offered at no cost. The SHCC will bill your insurance company but students should be prepared to pay their copay and/or for the full cost of services.

To schedule an appointment, or for more information, click [here](#).

Gatorwell

The Gatorwell program provides free preventative health services to UF students on a variety of topics. Students can take advantage of individual and group wellness coaching, HIV testing, mindfulness workshops, alcohol safety awareness. They also provided education on topics such as interpersonal violence prevention, sleep, stress, and time management.

Services are provided by health promotion specialists and trained student interns.

For more information or to make an appointment, visit their website [here](#).

Counseling and Wellness Center

Services provided by the Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC) are offered completely free of charge to all enrolled UF students.

If you are in crisis, support is available 24/7 by calling 352-392-1575.

Short-term counseling, group counseling, couples counseling, and alcohol and drug services are available. The first step is to schedule a consultation by calling 352-392-1575, or through the online scheduling portal found [here](#). The consultation is a 20-30 minute appointment where a counselor will learn more about your needs and connect you to services that will best support you.

Students can access self-assessment tools (Silvercloud and ULifeline) which can help you learn more about yourself.

Psychiatry services are available, for a fee, through the Student Health Care Center.

For information about off-campus mental health providers, visit the CWC Thriving Campus database [here](#).

For more information about the CWC, visit their website [here](#).

U Matter, We Care

There are more campus resources than we can fit on this page! When you're having a hard time, it can be challenging to sift through all those resources to find the right support. That's where U Matter, We Care can help.

Their website, found [here](#), provides links to most campus wellness resources.

Students who need support connecting to resources can self-refer, or share a concern about a friend. The staff at U Matter, We Care will reach out—confidentially—with a goal of supporting the student in connecting with resources for their own well-being. The referral form is found [here](#).

If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second.

Edward Bellamy

ON-CAMPUS RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

UF Rec Sports provides access to state-of-the-art indoor fitness centers, indoor and outdoor pools, a recreational lake, and coordinates the intramural sports and clubs on campus.

On-Campus Exercise

SOUTHWEST REC

This facility is located on the west side of campus, and is the larger of the two gyms on campus. It features a large strength and conditioning room, 6 indoor basketball courts, 5 racquetball courts, functional fitness areas, indoor track, and state-of-the-art cardio equipment. Massage therapy, personal training, and the Fitness Assessment Center are also available (fees may apply). For more information, visit their website [here](#).

STUDENT RECREATION AND FITNESS CENTER (SRFC)

This facility is located in the heart of campus on Fletcher Drive near the Student Health Care Center. It features a multi-purpose gymnasium, strength and conditioning room, a cycle studio, racquetball and squash courts, and state-of-the-art cardio equipment. Hours vary by semester and day of the week. For more information, visit their website [here](#).

POOLS

Students have access to three on-campus pools for recreational and fitness swimming. The Florida pool is an 8-lane outdoor facility. Water is heated in the winter months. The O'Connell Center Pool is located on the lower level of the Stephen C. O'Connell center between Gates 2 and 3. It is an indoor, 8-lane, Olympic size pool. Lanes can be reserved at either of these pools.

The Graham Pool is an outdoor pool intended for leisure, is not heated, and is open seasonally March-October.

For more information about on-campus pools, visit the UF Rec Sports website [here](#).

Lake Wauberg

Lake Wauberg is located south of campus—about a 10-15 minute drive. It is open Wednesday-Sunday while classes are in session, and may close due to inclement weather. It consists of the North and South shores—each with a separate entrance and different activities.

The North Shore offers equipment check-outs for boating such as kayaks, canoes, stand up paddle boards, pedal boats, Hobie Cats, and Jon Boats. Field equipment is also available for check-out. All equipment is available free-of-charge for students. Students may be required to pass a swim or sailing certification before checking out equipment.

In addition to water and field sports, Lake Wauberg also offers a challenge course and climbing wall, swimming area with beach, and pavilions with grills. There are also trails for mountain biking and volleyball courts.

For more information about Lake Wauberg, visit the website [here](#).

Intramural Sports and Clubs

Sports Clubs are student-run organizations open to all UF students, faculty, staff, and their spouses. There are over 40 clubs to choose from including archery, bass fishing, martial arts, ice hockey, pickleball and Quidditch! For more information, visit the Sports Club website found [here](#).

Students can also join intramural teams. Sport offerings vary by season. Some options include soccer, flag football, kickball, and sand volleyball. Students can create their own team or join an existing team as a "Free Agent". To learn more about Intramural Sports, visit the website [here](#).

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.

Albert Einstein

NATURE

Gainesville is centrally located in Florida which provides access to prairies, swamp land, and a short drive to beaches. The city has numerous parks that offer a variety of activities. State parks are also just a short drive away.

CITY PARKS

DEPOT PARK

This park is located close to campus in the downtown area. It features a large playground and splash pad, open grassy spaces, and dining options. The lighted and paved trails are used frequently, making this a safe option for walking, running, and biking. Some areas of the park close at sunset. Lighted areas remain open until 11:30pm. Depot Park is also home to various events and concerts throughout the year. For more information, visit their website [here](#).



Westside Park



This park is located a few miles north of campus. It features a large playground, pavilions, picnic tables, and open spaces. One of the city pools is also on site, as well as tennis courts and baseball fields. For more information, visit their website [here](#).

San Felasco Park

This park is located about 5 miles northwest of campus. Hiking trails, boardwalks, and biking trails will lead you through the pine flatwoods and Cypress Swamps. Since this park is more remote, it is suggested you enjoy with a friend! For more information, visit their website [here](#).



Northside Park



This park is located about 5 miles north of campus. It offers pavilions, grills, tennis courts with pickleball play, and a disc golf course. For more information, visit their website [here](#).

BEACHES

Floridians have two main choices when considering a beach trip: Gulf or Atlantic. Gainesville is situated in the middle of state which makes for an easy and equal drive to either option. Atlantic beaches will generally offer more wave action, while Gulf beaches typically have softer, whiter sand. Some beaches allow driving on



the beach, offer easier parking, allow pets and have more amenities (like restrooms)!

Some favorite Atlantic beaches are: Crescent Beach, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Flagler Beach, and Amelia Island State Park. Some favorite Gulf Coast Beaches are: Crystal River/Fort Island Gulf Beach, Cedar Key, Clearwater Beach, St. Pete Beach.

SPRINGS

Gainesville and the surrounding areas are home to unique geological features called freshwater springs. These areas are created when groundwater is forced up in areas where the aquifer is close to the surface, leaving pristine pools of water – usually 72 degrees year-round.



Most local Springs allow tubing down the riverway and provide areas to swim. The Springs are often located within State parks, providing a low entrance fee – usually about \$6/vehicle. You can bring your own float or rent tubes from the on-site vendors.

Some favorite Springs located near UF – about 15-30 minutes drive – are the Itchetuknee Springs, Gilchrist Blue Springs State Park, and Ginnie Springs.

For more information about local Springs, check out the Visit Gainesville website [here](#).

NATURE

Gainesville is centrally located in Florida which provides access to prairies, swamp land, and a short drive to beaches. The city has numerous parks that offer a variety of activities. State parks are also just a short drive away.

WANT TO SEE SOME GATORS?

Lake Alice

Lake Alice is located on Museum Rd in the middle of campus. This is not a lake for swimming as it is home to many Florida gators! Standing on the shores of the lake, you may spot the gators resting in the sun. During the evening (especially in mating season), you may hear their deep bellow. If you visit at dusk, you can also see the bats fly out of the bat houses directly across the street!



Paynes Prairie



Paynes Prairie Reserve State Park has 8 different trail access points – some paved or with boardwalks. This Reserve is home to many species of birds, alligators, and other wildlife. Visitors hope to spot the free-roaming horses and bison on their visits. For more information, visit their website [here](#).

La Chua Trail



This trail is located on the north side of Paynes Prairie. It features an elevator boardwalk and lengthy walk to an observation tower. While all of Paynes Prairie is home to wildlife, the La Chua Trail is specifically known for the close proximity you will have to gators. It's important to remember that gators are generally docile but it is not advised to get close or interfere with them! For more information, visit their website [here](#).

Sweetwater Preserve

This park consists of 125 acres of wetlands and ponds. There are 3.5 miles of crushed gravel trails and boardwalks – making this an easy and accessible hike. For more information, visit their website [here](#).



OTHER FAVORITES

Devil's Millhopper

This state park houses a 120-foot-deep sink hole with stair access to the bottom. Picnicking spots and restrooms are available. Pets are allowed. A small entrance fee is collected via the honor-system.

For more information, visit their website [here](#).



Kanapaha Botanical Garden



This large botanical garden is located about 10 minutes down Archer Road, west of the University. There are 24 major botanical collections accessible on a paved 1.5 mile walkway. Entrance is \$10.

For more information, visit their website [here](#).

UF Natural History Museum

For some "indoor nature" visit this museum located on the UF campus on Museum Drive. Permanent exhibits include information on Florida's indigenous people, and unique Florida ecosystems. Visiting exhibits rotate regularly offering up close encounters with spiders, frogs, and other subjects! Don't miss the Butterfly Rainforest – an indoor garden home to more than 50 butterfly and moth species.

Admission to all exhibits is free with your UF student ID.

For more information, visit their website [here](#).



Every artist was first an amateur.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

FINE ARTS

The University of Florida and the Gainesville community offer opportunities to view local and touring theatrical performances, visit art exhibits and local art festivals, watch local and touring dance performances, and more.

On Campus

UF Performing Arts

Home to touring acts of all genres, the Phillips Center offers discounted student tickets to performances ranging from \$12-20 dollars.

Check out the Upstage events which feature more intimate performance held on the stage and include hors d'oeuvres or dessert.

Events are also held at smaller venues including the Squitieri Studio Theater

To purchase tickets, visit this [website](#).

School of Theater and Dance

Students in the College of the Arts share their talents through performances help on campus as the Constans theater. Student tickets are available for purchase at a discounted rate.

To purchase tickets, visit this [website](#).

Harn Museum of Art

Located on campus on Museum Road, this museum features 10 gallery spaces and hosts traveling exhibitions throughout the year. Museum Nights, held the 2nd Thursday of the month, provides evening admission and special activities or performances. Admission is free for all students. For more information, visit their website [here](#).

In the Community

The Hippodrome

Located downtown in the historic Federal Building, this regional theater produces an annual season of plays and musicals. It is also features first-run international, independent and avant-garde films in its cinema. Students are able to purchase tickets at a discount with their ID.

For more information, visit their [website](#).

Gainesville Community Playhouse

This community theater offers an annual season consisting of familiar Broadway and Off-Broadway musicals and plays. Gainesville residents (including students) can audition for any of their productions. Student tickets are available at a discount.

For more information, visit their [website](#).

Acrosstown Reparatory Theater

This local theater describes itself as "thinking people's theatre" with an emphasis on reinterpretation of classic productions, and opportunities for local playwrights to share their talents. Auditions are posted on their website. Student tickets are typically available.

For more information, visit their [website](#).

Festivals

When the weather cools, outdoor festivals are a popular local activity.

Hoggetowne Medieval Faire - January

Thornebrooke Art Festival - March

Santa Fe Spring Arts Festival - April

Micanopy Fall Festival - October

Downtown Festival and Show - November

**Neath the orange and blue victorious, our love shall
never fail. There's no other name so glorious, all hail,
Florida, hail!**

University of Florida Alma Mater

SPORTING EVENTS

The University of Florida is home to elite teams in a variety of sports. Students are able to purchase discounted tickets for most sporting events. Many regular season sports also offer free tickets for students.

Football

Student season tickets are available for purchase but often sell out quickly.

Single game tickets usually go on sale in mid-July. Ticket prices vary by game so you'll need to access the student ticket site to view prices.

Student tickets will provide access to the student section. You can also purchase regular tickets at the regular sale price if you prefer to sit elsewhere in the stadium.

Before you attend your first game, make sure you know these game day traditions!

Gator Walk – Cheer on the players as they walk into the stadium locker room before the game.

Orange and Blue Chant – During the game, the east side chants "ORANGE" and the west side returns "BLUE"

"We are the Boys" – After the third quarter, stand with your fellow gators and sing the song (don't worry the lyrics are on the jumbotron!). Get extra loud on "VICTORIOUS" and "GLORIOUS"

"Won't Back Down" – Sing this Tom Petty classic just after "We are the Boys"

Gator Chomp – Listen for the band to play the Jaws theme song (usually before every kick-off), and after big plays!

Other Gator Sports

While football may be the most popular, it is far from the only sport Gator's excel at.

Basketball – Played at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center. Season passes for both Men's and Women's basketball are free to students (for regular season games)

Baseball– Played at the brand new Condrion Family Ballpark. Season passes are available for free to students for regular season games.

Softball – Played at the Katie Seashole Pressly Stadium. Season passes are available for free to students for regular season games.

Gymnastics – Meets take place at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center. Season passes are available for free to students for regular season games.

Other sports– Most other sports do not require tickets. Find the schedule of the sport you are interested in by checking the All Sports Calendar [here](#).

How do I purchase tickets?

For all student ticket purchases, you should visit this [website](#) for more information, to create a student ticket account, and to purchase tickets.

COFFEE AND FOOD

Gainesville is home to some unique local restaurants that are worth a visit during your time here! From quirky décor and unique settings to creative flavors – Gainesville has it all. Of course, every student needs a favorite coffee shop – find yours from the list below!

Restaurants

The Top - \$\$

Best known for: kitschy décor, shareable appetizers, happy hour drink specials

Food Parks - \$

Best known for: outdoor dining and food trucks.

There are a few options in town: 4th Avenue Food Park and Midpoint Park and Eatery

UpperCrust - \$

Best known for: pastries, cakes, and bread

Mac's Drive-Thru - \$

Best known for: simple burgers and fries (think McDonald's but fresh!). Cash only.

Satchel's Pizza - \$

Best known for: quirky décor, fun seating options (try the VW bus!), pizza (available by the slice and whole)

Luke's Bagels - \$

Best known for: NY Style bagels (line up early – they sell out quick!)

Halo Potato Donuts - \$

Best known for: potato donuts with creative flavors

El Indio - \$

Best known for: drive-thru authentic Mexican

Afternoon - \$\$

Best known for: brunch!

Cry Baby's

Best known for: burgers, totchos, happy hour specials

Germain's - \$

Best known for: delicious fried chicken sandwiches

Boca Fiesta - \$

Best known for: tex-mex style food, outdoor patio

Sweetberries - \$

Best known for: sandwiches, frozen custard

Ember's Grill - \$\$\$

Best known for: local upscale steakhouse; make your graduation reservations early!

Coffee

Coffee Culture

Local coffee shop with pastries; less crowded with ample seating

Opus Coffee

Locally brewed coffee, multiple locations on and around campus

Pascal's

Serves coffee from local roasters, close to campus, ample seating

Wyatt's

Downtown coffee shop serving locally roasted beans; less seating for long study sessions

Karma Cream

Midtown coffee shop uses vegan and organic ingredients

Volta

Downtown coffee shop, garage parking directly above, moderate seating

Maude's

Downtown coffee shop with board games, books, and plenty of seating. Serves pastries and light food.

Patticake's

Located further from campus, serves delicious cupcakes

Curia on the Drag

In a quirky complex that also includes a thrift store and art gallery; little indoor seating, large outdoor covered patio

Cym

Located a little further from campus, easy park, lots of seating for studying

Foxtail

Serves coffee from environmentally-friendly farms; centrally located in Butler Plaza with access to other shopping, ample parking

Coffee, because adulting is hard.

Laughter is brightest in the place where food is good.



Unknown; Irish Proverb