

COLONIAL HERITAGE OF FLORIDA

As a focal point for early European colonization, the state of Florida has had a rich history, full of both cultural progress and imperial conflict. The first colonists in Florida were the Spanish, who founded the Gulf city of Pensacola in 1559. Only one year after its founding, however, Pensacola was completely wiped out by a series of tumultuous storms, forcing its surviving residents to flee back to Spain. Escaping upheaval in their home country, Huguenots from France set up the second settlement in Florida, Port Charlotte, in 1564. The following year, the Spanish regained interest in the new land of Florida, laying the framework for the city of Saint Augustine, which continues to be inhabited to this day. Shortly thereafter, the Spanish from St. Augustine obliterated the neighboring French settlement of Fort Charlotte, which ensured Spanish hegemony over Florida and sparked a long-lasting imperial rivalry between the French and the Spanish empires.

Spain embarked on a christianizing mission in Florida for nearly two centuries before Britain gained control at the 1763 conclusion of the Seven Year's War. Britain administered a loyal West and East Florida until the end of the American Revolutionary War in 1783, during which Britain ceded the territory back to Spain. During the 40 years that ensued, American settlers continuously encroached on Spanish Florida, and the overburdened Spanish Empire succumbed to this pressure in 1822, when it officially granted the United States sovereignty over the territory. So it remains today, but the vestiges of colonial history remain imprinted across the whole of Florida.

- Battle ✱ Name of Site/Event
- Mission ✚ Year Established/Occurred
- Fort ⬛
- Settlement 🚩

- French 🇫🇷
- British 🇬🇧
- Spanish 🇪🇸
- American 🇺🇸

0 45 90 180 Miles

ATLANTIC OCEAN

GULF OF MEXICO

Territorial Claims

