

The Southeast Region



Although the Southeast is best known for its beautiful beaches, there's much more to the region than just sun and fun. Mountains. Valleys. Beaches. Swamps. The Southeast region has them all!

Land and Water

The Southeast is a region of both lowlands and highlands. The upper part and the lower part of Southeast region have very different landforms. The states in the upper part of the region have rolling hills, rich river valleys and high flat areas called plateaus. The states in the lower part of the region have beaches, swamps, and wetlands.

The Appalachian Mountains cover most of the upper part of the Southeast region. Some of the

peaks in the Appalachian Mountains are more than 6,000 feet high. They are the Southeast region's highest landforms. There are many rivers and oak and pine forests in the Appalachian Mountains.

The lower part of the Southeast region is known for its beautiful sandy beaches. Along the coast, the land is mostly flat. The coast of



There are twelve states in the Southeast region. Georgia is the largest state in the Southeast, but Florida has the most people.



The Appalachian Mountains are one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world.



Many waterways flow through the flat land of the Everglades. The Everglades is the only place in the world where both alligators and crocodiles live.

the Southeast region includes both the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. The low Coastal Plain stretches along the southeastern coast from Virginia to Louisiana. When the ocean rises each day at high tide, seawater flows into this lowland creating many swamps.

The largest and best-known swamps in America are all in the Southeast, located in Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Louisiana. The Everglades, a huge low, wetland, covers much of southern Florida. The Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia is the largest swamp in North America.

The Southeast has many rivers. Most of its rivers begin in the Appalachian Mountains. The rivers flow across the Coastal Plain to the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico. The Mississippi River carries fertile soil to the huge delta at the Gulf of Mexico. A delta is a triangle-shaped area at the end of a river. Delta soil is fertile and good for farming.

The place where the Appalachian Mountains meet the Coastal Plain is called the fall line. The land drops sharply at this point. As rivers flow over this drop, they form waterfalls. The falling water is used to run machines and to create electricity.



Many waterfalls form where the high land of the Appalachian Mountains meets the low land of the Coastal Plain.

Climate

Because the Southeast is closer to the equator, it is usually warm and sunny there. The summers are long, hot, and humid. Humid means damp or moist. Winters are short and mild. The ocean keeps temperatures in coastal areas warm. It is cooler in the hills and mountains. In the highlands, there are often storms and tornados. Tropical storms and hurricanes often cause flooding and other damage in the coastal areas of the Southeast region.

Products and Natural Resources

The Southeast is rich in natural resources. Natural resources include land, oceans, forests, minerals, and fuels. Land was the first natural resource that attracted people to the Southeast. Growing crops and raising animals was the Southeast's largest industry for many years. An industry is all the businesses that produce one kind of good or provide one kind of service. Today, many industries are important to the region, including the coal-mining industry, the steel-making industry, the lumber industry, and the oil industry.



Almost half of the peanuts grown in the US are grown in Georgia.

Agriculture, the business of growing crops and raising animals, is an important business in the Southeast. The Southeast is good for growing crops because of its flat land, rich soil, and long growing season. Southern farmers can grow crops for most of the year. Everyone loves Georgia's peaches and Florida's citrus fruits! Other farmers produce rice, cotton, tobacco, sugar cane, and peanuts. Because it produces so many food products, the Southeast has also become a center for food processing.



Cotton is one of many crops that are produced in the Southeast.

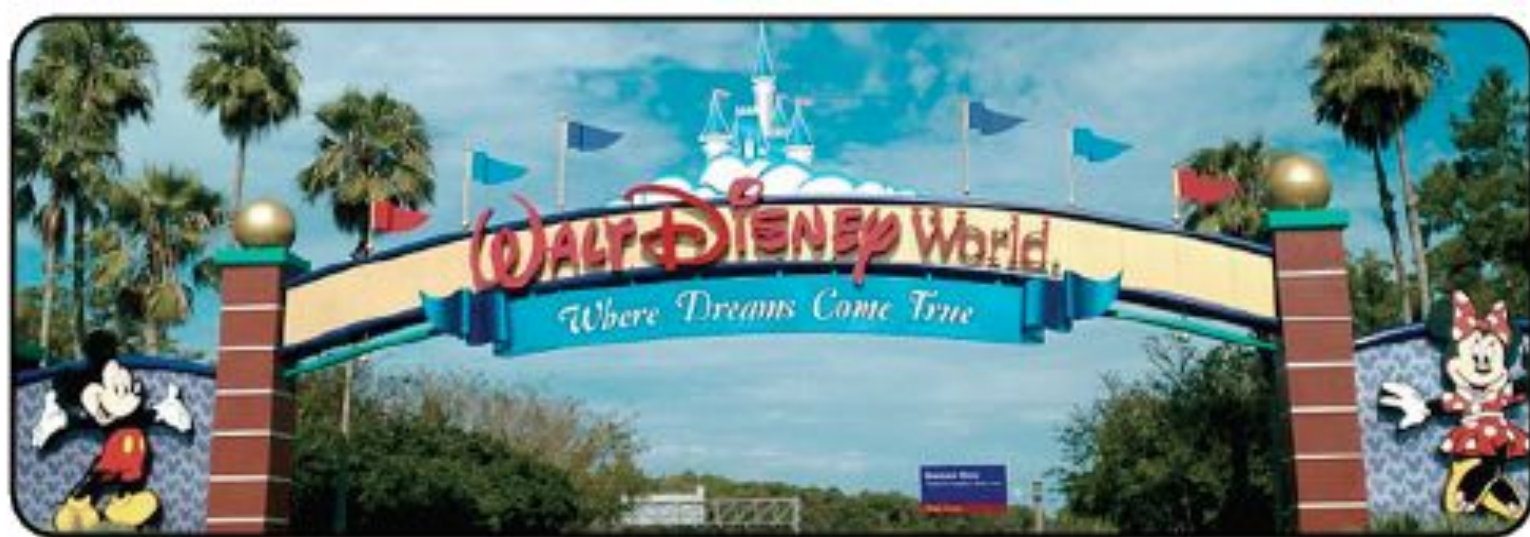
Because it grows so much cotton, the Southeast is the center of our country's textile industry. Many Southerners work in cotton mills and textile factories. They make yarn, cloth, and carpets.

Trees are also raised as a crop. In North Carolina, trees are used to make furniture. More than half of the furniture sold in the United States is made in High Point, North Carolina. In Georgia, Arkansas, and Alabama, people use trees to produce lumber and paper.



Oil rigs can be seen from shore along the Gulf of Mexico.

A lot of our country's energy is produced in the Southeast. The Gulf Coast produces oil and natural gas, a very important resource. Many people work on oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. At the foot of the Appalachian Mountains, moving water is used to make electricity. People in the Appalachian Mountains mine coal which is used to create energy, too. Limestone and iron come from other mines in this region. At the only public diamond mine in the world, Crater of Diamonds, you can search for diamonds.



Landmarks

The sunny climate of the Southeast region makes it a popular vacation spot for tourists each year. People from all over the world travel to the Southeast. Some come to golf and swim at the beach. Others celebrate Mardi Gras in Louisiana, or listen to country music at the Grand Ole Opry. Tourists can also enjoy the rides at several theme parks, including Disney World, Sea World, Busch Gardens, and Universal Studios. Graceland, the home and gravesite of Elvis Presley, located in Tennessee gets many visitors each year, too.



People also love to visit Kennedy Space Center in Florida. KSC has been used for every NASA human space flight since 1968. Visitors can see artifacts and exhibits on the history and the future of spaceflight. The Outer Banks in North Carolina, and Kitty Hawk, where the Wright Brothers first flew, are also popular tourist attractions.



Settled in 1656, St. Augustine is the oldest permanent European settlement in North America. A fort was built to defend Florida against pirates hunting the Spanish treasure fleet. The Castillo de San Marcos is the oldest masonry fort in North America. It is made of a mix of mortar and coquina, fossilized crushed shell stone.



In Atlanta, Georgia, people can visit the World of Coca-Cola, a museum all about Coca-Cola. In one of the exhibits, you can taste over 60 different kinds of Coca-Cola from around the world. The museum gets over 1 million visitors a year.



The Georgia Aquarium is the world's largest aquarium. It holds 8.5 million gallons of water, and more than 500 different kinds of marine animals, including four whale sharks, four beluga whales, eleven bottlenose dolphins, and four manta rays. The Aquarium is the only facility in the US to house whale sharks, the largest living fish species.

Culture

Food

The South is known for its wonderful types of foods. If you travel to the South you can expect to find lots and lots of fried chicken. Many people in the Southeast enjoy eating grits for breakfast, or with fried catfish for dinner. Sweet tea, boiled peanuts, barbecue, hushpuppies, corn on the cob, and collard greens are other foods eaten in the South. In North Carolina and South Carolina, "Hoppin' John" (a mixture of rice and black-eyed peas flavored with salt pork) is a favorite food.



Louisiana is famous for its Cajun and Creole dishes. Gumbo, a stew made with okra, seafood, and sausage seasoned with sassafras and bay leaves, is a popular dish. Jambalaya is another traditional dish made with chicken, sausage, and seafood served over rice. Friends and family often get together for a crawfish boil. Crawfish are boiled in a large pot with corn on the cob, potatoes, sausage, and spices, and then dumped on a newspaper-covered table to be eaten with hot sauce, lemon juice, and melted butter.

Coca-Cola started in the South. In 1865, Dr. John S. Pemberton, a pharmacist in Atlanta, Georgia, created what would become the most recognized and popular soft drink on earth. Coca-Cola was first bottled in 1894 in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Before that, Coca-Cola was only sold from soda fountains.

Fun

Southerners use their ocean and rivers for recreation. Swimming, fishing, and boating are popular water sports. People here also use the ocean and rivers for

transportation. Many port cities have grown up along the coast where rivers reach the sea. One of the busiest port cities is Miami. Miami is located near the southern tip of Florida. The port of Miami is also home to many cruise ships. Each year, more than three million people leave Miami on cruise ships for vacations at sea. No wonder Miami is also known as the "Cruise Capital of the World."



Many cruise ships and container ships dock at the Port of Miami.

Music

The Southeast region has given this country many kinds of music. Bluegrass is the traditional music of people who live in the Appalachian Mountains. Bluegrass is played on banjos, guitars, and fiddles.

Louisiana is known for the creation of jazz music. African American musicians living near New Orleans created this style of music. The best-known jazz musician is probably the great trumpet player Louis Armstrong.



The Mississippi Delta region is the birthplace of another type of music called the blues. Sometimes slaves would sing about their sorrows. These sad songs came to be known as the blues. The Southeast region is also the birthplace of country music, a blend of bluegrass and blues music.

NASCAR racing began in the South. Spectators can see cars racing at over 200 miles per hour at racetracks in Talladega, AL and Daytona Beach, FL. Many Southerners also enjoy watching football. People can play golf almost year round because of the mild climate. Other popular sports are fishing, soccer, and baseball.



In New Orleans, people enjoy celebrating Carnival during the 12 days leading up to Mardi Gras. Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday, is the Tuesday 47 days before Easter. Visitors enjoy catching beads, cups, and doubloons thrown from floats during the 70 parades. The parades are filled with floats, dance groups, clowns, and marching bands. Other Mardi Gras celebrations are held in Mobile, Alabama and Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Another popular tradition during Carnival is the king cake. King cake is made of braided pastry, laced with cinnamon. It is always iced in the Mardi Gras colors of purple, green, and gold. Hidden in each king cake is a tiny plastic baby. The person who finds the baby must buy the next king cake.

