Florida History Timeline

1500s
- (1513) Spanish explorer, Juan Ponce de Leon landed near (present day) St. Augustine, named it La Florida, and claimed it for Spain
- (1539) Hernando de Soto explored central and northern Florida
- (1565) Spanish established St. Augustine, first permanent European settlement

1600s
- (1650) Fort Matanzas built

1700s
- (1740) British invaded Florida, native populations diminished
- (1763) Britain gained control in exchange for Havana, Cuba. French & Indian War ends
- (1768) British sugar, citrus, rice and indigo plantations established
- (1770) Creeks Indians, later called Seminoles, entered Florida
- (1781) American Revolution ends - United States declares independence
- (1783) Spanish troops repossessed Florida

1800s
- (1818) General Jackson fought Seminole Indians
- (1821) United States acquired Florida from Spain by treaty
- (1822) Tallahassee established as territorial capital
- (1830-1840) Population boomed, settlers arrived by steamboat
- (1834-1837) First railroads began operation
- (1845) Florida became 27th state
- (1851) Dr. John Gorrie patented ice making process
- (1861-1865) Civil War began; Florida seceded from Union, joined Confederacy
- (1868) Florida readmitted to Union
- (1878) Tourism began at Silver Spring, H. Jones invented glass-bottom boat
- (1881) Development of new industries: railroads, citrus, phosphate, timber, truck farming and tourism
- (1894-1899) Frosts killed many citrus trees

1900s
- (1905-1912) Construction of Henry Flagler’s Overseas Railroad to Key West
- (1917-1918) World War I, Florida was site for military training and shipbuilding
- (1925-1926) Florida Land Boom- People buying land and moving to Florida
- (1927) Sugar growing and milling began in Everglades
- (1941 - 1945) World War II, Florida again was a major site for military training and shipbuilding
- (1947) Everglades National Park dedicated by President Truman
- (1954) U.S. Supreme Court ruled segregation of public schools unconstitutional
- (1958) NASA began operations at Cape Canaveral later called Cape Kennedy; first satellite, Explorer 1, launched
- (1961) Cape Canaveral launched first manned vessel into space
- (1962) Cuban Missile Crisis
- (1964) Hurricane Cleo caused property damages of $115,320,000
- (1969) Apollo 11 launched, carried first men to moon
- (1971) Walt Disney World opened in Orlando
- (1972) Apollo 16 landed on moon; Tropical Storm Agnes caused heavy damage to Florida eastern seaboard
- (1977) Severe cold devastated citrus and vegetable crops
- (1992) Hurricane Andrew devastated Homestead and South Florida

2000s
- (2004) Four hurricanes struck Florida causing extensive damage
- (2007) Crash of the early 21st century Florida Land Boom, resulting in major state budget deficits and the cutting back of state and local preservation programs
- (2010) Gulf Oil Spill further impacted state economy
- (2011) Space shuttle Atlantis final launch. End of the Space Shuttle Program at Kennedy