

## LOCAL

# Melbourne ranked 15th best place to live in US

**Rob Landers**

Florida Today

Published 5:22 a.m. ET May 16, 2023 | Updated 1:30 p.m. ET May 16, 2023

Weather, quality of life, home values, relative cost of living, general desirability.

These are a few of the qualities that make up the ideal “best place to live” according to *U.S. News & World Report*.

On Tuesday, the magazine announced the 150 “Best Places to Live” across the country and Melbourne is ranked 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Paul Alfrey wasn’t surprised to hear that his city, his lifelong home, moved up five spots in the 2023-24 rankings from its spot at 20 last year.

“It’s our way of life here,” Alfrey said. “I grew up here and, while we have our challenges, it keeps getting better and better.”

**Fly MLB:** What brought Avelo Airlines to Melbourne? More than \$500,000 in proposed incentives helped

**Melbourne Margaritaville** construction delayed; target opening pushed back to late 2025

**More Melbourne news:** Engineering veteran Jenni Lamb appointed as Melbourne's next permanent city manager

According to a *U.S. News* press release, this year, the magazine “expanded its data points to better encapsulate a place’s strengths and weaknesses.”

Alfrey was quick to list Melbourne’s strengths: Weather, beaches, booming downtown districts in Melbourne and Eau Gallie.

But he said it really boiled down to one thing: The people.

“It’s that sense of community that makes it special,” Alfrey said.

Brevard School Board member Katye Campbell, whose District 5 seat covers parts of south Melbourne, agreed with Alfrey on the special kind of community.

"I love that Melbourne has a smaller town feel without being far away from everything you could want to do," Campbell said. "We have the arts, the beach, great food, and great community support."

Kristine Zonka, the former Brevard County commissioner for District 5 which includes parts of Melbourne and now Florida Department of Health director for Brevard, said there are multiple aspects of the city that make it a “best place.”

“Melbourne has a great variety of things to do,” said Zonka. “Day with the family at our beautiful beaches, take a stroll through downtown Melbourne shopping at many of our local businesses, or visiting our Eau Gallie Arts District. There’s something for everyone...just pick your flavor!”

“Things to do” is just one of the criteria in this year’s rankings. Called the establishment-to-population ratio, this part of the methodology assesses the number of restaurants, bars and activities per 1,000 residents.

And finally current District 3 county commissioner John Tobia listed some of the city's amenities and growth as to why Melbourne ranked so high on the "Best Places to Live" and added the city had "zero reported fatal alligator attacks in almost 80 months."

**Moving?** Daily Bread proposes to build Melbourne homeless shelter-service complex on Sarno Road

## Top 10 ranked cities

1	Green Bay	WI
2	Huntsville	AL
3	Raleigh & Durham	NC
4	Boulder	CO
5	Sarasota	FL
6	Naples	FL
7	Portland	ME

8	Charlotte	NC
9	Colorado Springs	CO
10	Fayetteville	AR

## Florida cities and where they ranked

5	Sarasota
6	Naples
15	Melbourne
16	Jacksonville
24	Tampa
28	Pensacola
49	Daytona Beach
52	Orlando
60	Tallahassee
63	Port St. Lucie
67	Ocala
91	Fort Myers
105	Lakeland
138	Miami

## About the rankings

The 2023-24 Best Places to Live rankings were determined based on a methodology that takes into account the area's job market, value, quality of life and desirability. These measures were weighted in part based on a public survey of thousands of individuals throughout the U.S. to find out what qualities they consider important in a place to live. The methodology also includes data from the National Weather Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Census Bureau, the FBI, Sharecare, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. News rankings of the Best High Schools and Best Hospitals.

## About the methodology

U.S. News & World Report's Best Places to Live rankings are designed to help readers make the most informed decision when choosing where to settle down. The rankings include the 150 most populated metro areas in the country. To craft the methodology, *U.S. News* asked thousands of people to tell it what factors are important to when choosing a place to live. Based on this survey, the magazine's staff categorized the data into four indexes: Quality of Life Index (36%); Value Index (23%); Job Market Index (19%); and Desirability Index (22%). Data is sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau, the FBI, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Sharecare, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Weather Service and *U.S. News'* internal resources.

*Rob Landers is a veteran multimedia journalist for the USA Today Network of Florida.*

*Contact Landers at 321-242-3627 or rlanders@gannett.com.*

*Instagram: @ByRobLanders Youtube: @florida\_today*

***Support local journalism. Subscribe today.***