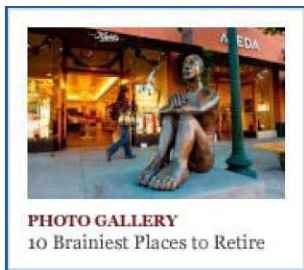


The 10 Brainiest Places to Retire

By *Liz Wolgemuth*

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Just because you hit your 60s, it doesn't mean your brain starts to power down. Just the opposite. Your noodle needs more stimulation than ever, and, finally, you have the time to supply the required intellectual input. And picking a place to retire can be key to that process. For retirees who have no desire to stop learning—and that's, like, pretty much everyone—there are plenty of American communities that boast thriving intellectual centers where cultural activities keep residents (and their brains) as busy and interested as they want to be.



What makes the difference? A city with a large local university might offer a colorful slate of arts or educational events nearly every evening. Some suburbs have found a way to create unique learning opportunities for residents, who still have an easy route into the neighboring metropolis.

U.S. News consulted our list of more than 1,000 [Best Places to Retire](#) and came up with 10 retirement destinations that attract highly educated folks. (And you can use [Best Places to Retire](#) to do more than seek out intellectual excitement: A [search tool](#) allows you to build your own list of retirement spots based on your personal preferences, including region, climate, healthcare, recreational and cultural activities, and other factors.)

One brainy spot that won't surprise: [Berkeley, Calif.](#), where residents might head for a screening of a film on urban organic farming in Cuba at the local Unitarian Universalist congregation, attend a University of California-Berkeley professor's speech on counterinsurgency in Iraq, or get a tour of the UC Botanical Garden. While traditional bingo is on tap at the South Berkeley Senior Center, residents can also learn a less common skill like self-acupressure or take a class on the millinery arts, says director Larry Taylor.

Across the map in [Chapel Hill, N.C.](#), residents might spend their evenings paddling out in kayaks to watch the stars with an astronomy educator from the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Boulder, Colo., may be best known for its environmental-protection efforts and green savvy, but this city offers its residents a wealth of cultural activities. Albert Boggess, former project scientist for the Hubble Space Telescope, and his wife, Nancy, also a former research scientist for NASA, retired to Boulder in 1994, drawn by both the climate and an academic community that included many of their colleagues. "It's a university town, which is important to us, and there are all sorts of activities which come with that automatically," Albert Boggess says. "There's lots of good music here, both classical music and popular music. And that appeals to us."

Upper St. Clair, Pa., is near Pittsburgh and has 29 area colleges, including Carnegie Mellon University, while the quintessential college town of **Ann Arbor, Mich.**, offers an array of intellectual and cultural programs through the University of Michigan's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

West Lafayette, Ind., is home to Purdue University, which hosts lectures and brings in ballets and plays—"a variety of different programs that you wouldn't necessarily normally get in this size community," says Joann Wade, president of the Lafayette-West Lafayette Convention and Visitors Bureau. The city's nearly 29,000 permanent residents can also get "bigger-city opportunities," Wade says, by driving an hour to Indianapolis or two hours to Chicago.

Hoboken, N.J., and **Brookline, Mass.**, also have the big-city experience close at hand. Hoboken is just across the Hudson River from Manhattan, while many Brookline residents commute the short distance to work in Boston's medical centers and universities.

Some suburbs have a main attraction all their own. **Reston, Va.**, was developed as a planned community or "new town" in the 1960s, and it's only a half-hour drive to Washington, D.C., and its panoply of world-class museums. Out west, **Lake Oswego, Ore.**, hugs the city of Portland but also offers culture and beauty of its own, making the most of its 405-acre lake.

The brainiest places to retire:

- **Ann Arbor, Mich.**
- **Berkeley, Calif.**
- **Boulder, Colo.**
- **Brookline, Mass.**
- **Chapel Hill, N.C.**
- **Hoboken, N.J.**
- **Lake Oswego, Ore.**
- **Reston, Va.**
- **Upper St. Clair, Pa.**
- **West Lafayette, Ind.**

Data source: OnBoard LLC