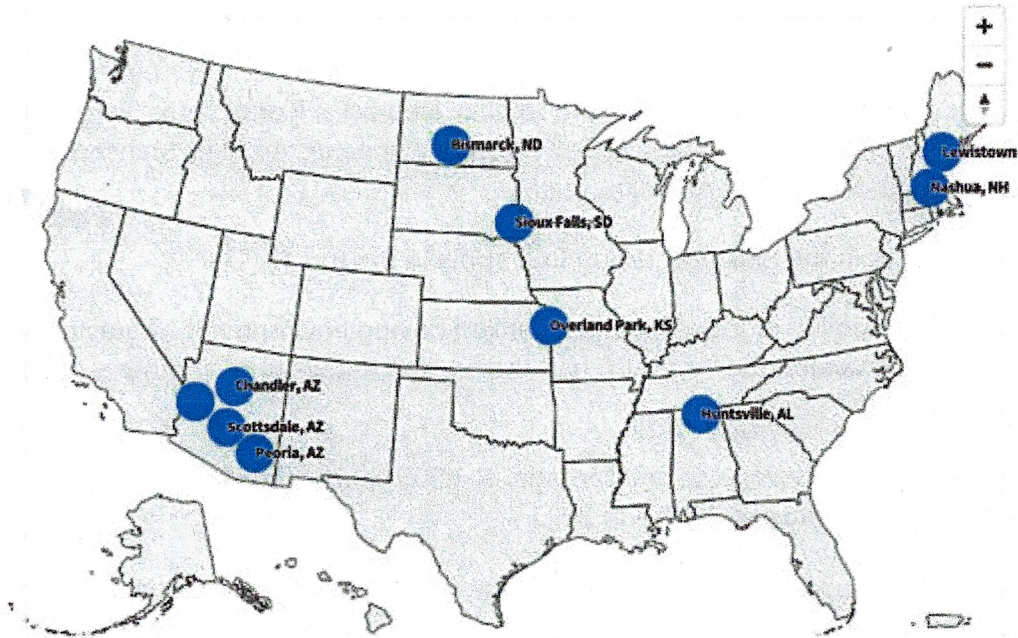


Map shows best cities for renters

Story by Suzanne Blake • 2w • 7-24-25

Best Cities to Rent In



Around 46 million households rent their homes in the United States, but the affordability and quality of the renting experience can vary dramatically based on where you live.

In WalletHub's new report, cities were ranked based on several measures of rental attractiveness and quality of life, including the difference between rent and mortgage payments, cost of living and job availability.

While cities like Overland Park, Kansas, ranked high on the list, Memphis, Tennessee, came in as the worst place to rent in the U.S.]

Why It Matters

Inflation has caused rent prices to skyrocket in recent years, and 2024 saw a 5.1 percent increase in rates year-over-year.

However, rental rates depend on your exact region and city, and the factors of that location will ultimately determine whether renting or owning is a better option.

What To Know

The top 10 cities to rent in were Overland Park, Kansas; Scottsdale, Arizona; Chandler, Arizona; Gilbert, Arizona; Bismarck, North Dakota; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Huntsville, Alabama; Peoria, Arizona; Lewistown, Maine; and Nashua, New Hampshire.

Overland Park had significantly high-ranking public schools and also had the highest average home square footage in the country at 2,809 square feet. It also had the eighth-best rental affordability, with only 18 percent of households paying more than 50 percent of their income for housing.

Next in the rankings, rounding off the top 20, were Lincoln, Nebraska; Plano, Texas; Fargo, North Dakota; Mesa, Arizona; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Casper, Wyoming; Phoenix, Arizona; Manchester, New Hampshire; Portland, Maine; and Amarillo, Texas.

Arizona was a clear winner in the rankings, taking four spots in the top 10.

Scottsdale had a high availability of jobs and a well-ranked driving environment, characterized by good traffic and infrastructure quality. It also had the fourth-best weather and the sixth-best recreation options.

Chandler had a relatively high average square footage, at 1,909 square feet. More than 16 percent of homes were built between 2010 and 2023.

"Cities like Bismarck and Sioux Falls come as little surprise, as they have wider rental availability at better prices," Alex Beene, a financial literacy instructor for the University of Tennessee at Martin, told *Newsweek*.

"Locations like Phoenix and its surrounding suburbs all ranking so high are vastly different in terms of having a higher cost of living, but the Arizona-based county benefits from having higher paying jobs meaning rent is a lower percentage of income," he said.

At the bottom of the list, cities like Memphis, Tennessee, stood out due to a mix of rental affordability factors and quality of life.

Detroit, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; Tacoma, Washington; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Newark, New Jersey, also scored at the bottom, despite their relatively large sizes.

"Detroit, Cleveland, and others ranking at the lowest end are the result of lower paying jobs combined with more scarce housing opportunities in different areas of these cities at higher prices," Beene said.

What People Are Saying

WalletHub analyst Chip Lupo said in the report: "In the best cities for renters, rent can cost you as little as around 15 percent of your income. You'll also have access to robust laws that protect renters, such as limiting deposits to only a month or two of rent. Our study also considers quality-of-life factors such as a city's traffic congestion, job market or recreation options to make sure you can get a good living experience, not just inexpensive housing."

Nationwide title and escrow expert Alan Chang told *Newsweek*: "It is not surprising to see that CA, FL, and TX had the majority of the rankings out of the list as they represent a very large portion of the housing market. What was surprising to me was that cities like Boise ranked in the bottom third for affordability. This shows that the housing market still hasn't normalized from the last 5 years of dramatic overvaluation."

Note

Alex Beene, a financial literacy instructor for the University of Tennessee at Martin, told *Newsweek*: "The fascinating part of these rankings is the socioeconomic differences of the locations on the top and bottom of the list and the factors that put them there...Ultimately, these rankings are more than just the cost of renting; it's how it stacks up against income and availability in these markets."

Kevin Thompson, the CEO of 9i Capital Group and the host of the *9innings* podcast, told *Newsweek*: "Climate, outdoor lifestyle, and overall quality of life are major differentiators. These can outweigh affordability in many cases which explains why people still choose to live in California despite the high cost of living. The access to nature, mild weather, and overall lifestyle benefits continue to make those cities attractive."

What Happens Next

While prices remain high in 2025, experts say renters should not necessarily expect a comedown.

"While some are expecting a market crash, I don't see one in the near future. This just appears to be the new normal," Chang said.

