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Editor's Pick: Top 10 Towns For Outdoor Enthusiasts

STORY BY ANN GIBSON // DECEMBER 13, 2018

When we visit a national or state park, we expect natural beauty and hours of outdoor fun. But an urban vacation is another story, often more concrete and steel than sunshine and gardens. But cities with green spaces are good for visitors and residents.

A recent [study](#) by the Trust for Public Land gives a shout out to 50 destinations where nature is just an hour's drive away and you're never more than a 10-minute stroll from a city park. Check out our list of destinations making the most of their natural assets and ways to maximize the outdoor fun on your next visit.



1. Albuquerque, New Mexico

Surrounded by over three million acres of national forests and wildlife refuges, Albuquerque is a hiking and biking paradise. Start in the historic downtown to circumnavigate the city on the 50-mile [Activity Loop](#) or step back in time to the days of early Spanish settlers at [Petroglyph National Monument](#).

2. West Valley, Utah

Take your pick of spectacular summits to climb near West Valley, like 11,329-foot Twin Peaks or 11,752-foot Mount Timpanogos. If flat terrain is more your style, hike along the shores of Great Salt Lake on [Antelope Island](#). Winter is peak season, with Park City, Solitude, and Alta Ski Resorts just a short drive to the east.



3.

St. Paul, Minnesota

With an astounding 261 city parks, you never have to venture far to enjoy the outdoors in St. Paul. Green space lines the shores of the Mississippi River through downtown from Mears Park to beautifully landscaped Como. Bike from park to park along over [180 miles](#) of urban bike lanes and greenways.



4. Jersey City, New Jersey

With over 390 miles of public shoreline within an hour's drive, Jersey City's outdoor spaces combine the best of coastal beauty, history, and city amenities. Visit the string of public beaches and state parks that run from Avon-By-the-Sea to North Beach, or soak in the rich immigrant history at [Liberty State Park and Ellis Island](#).

5. Torrance, California

Miles of Pacific coastline to the west and 700,000-acre [Angeles National Forest](#) to the east combine the best of both land and sea in Torrance. Go birding in [Madrona Marsh](#), cycle the 22-mile [Strand](#) bike path, and relax to the sound of crashing waves at [Miramar Park](#).



6.

Miami, Florida

On top of 1,300 acres of city parks, Miami is a perfect jumping off point for the Everglades and Biscayne National Parks. Bike the loop road through [Shark Valley](#), glide through the Everglades in an airboat, or camp on [Long Pine Key](#), all just a short drive from the clubs and restaurants of Brickell and Coconut Grove.

7. St. Louis, Missouri

At the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, St. Louis surprises with dramatic bluffs, river islands, and prairie marshes filled with Trumpeter Swans, Bald Eagles, and hundreds of migratory birds. Zipline in [Creve Coeur Park](#) or kayak the six-mile water trail. Take a stroll through Victorian-era [Lafayette Park](#) and watch the Perfectos play vintage baseball just like it was played back in the 1860s.



8.

Arlington, Virginia

Just outside the nation's capital, you'd never guess you'd be able to bike and walk 75 miles of [trails](#) and explore 1,100 miles of parks and open space. But nature is never far away in Arlington. Explore the 45-mile route from Purcellville to Shirlington in [Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park](#), tour the city's three [nature centers](#), or take your pup on a playdate at one of eight local dog parks.

9. Providence, Rhode Island

Over 100 city parks, a dozen right in downtown, are your all-access pass to the outdoors in Providence. Explore the city's history on three self-guided [walking tours](#), then visit [Roger Williams Park](#) for the zoo, carousel, train, and pony rides. Waterfront gems are Riverwalk and India Point Park.



10.

Reno, Nevada

With over 5 million acres of public land within an hour's drive, [Reno](#) is all about getting outdoors. There's swimming, kayaking, SUP, and sailing on the vivid blue waters of Lake Tahoe, rafting on the Truckee, American, and Carson Rivers, road biking the Lake Tahoe loop and Truckee River Bike Path, and mountain biking the Peavine Trail System.

Maintain the pace all winter too with world class downhill skiing and snowboarding at Squaw Valley and Heavenly, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, dog sledding, and more. Back in downtown Reno, play in class II-III rapids at the Truckee River Whitewater Park and hike the trails at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park.