

# COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT | BEND, OREGON

## City's year-round attractions brightened by lots of sunny days

By Teresa Kenney  
Special to New Homes

Once a logging town, the city of Bend, Ore., continues to buzz — but with outdoor recreationists instead of saws. Located nearly in the geographic center of the state, where the Cascades meet the high-desert plateau, Bend has almost 300 days of sunshine each year, more than any other city in Oregon. It's a good thing, too, because Bend's visitors and 80,000-plus residents prefer days spent outdoors, whether it's hitting the slopes of nearby Mount Bachelor, whitewater rafting on the Deschutes River or enjoying an outdoor concert.

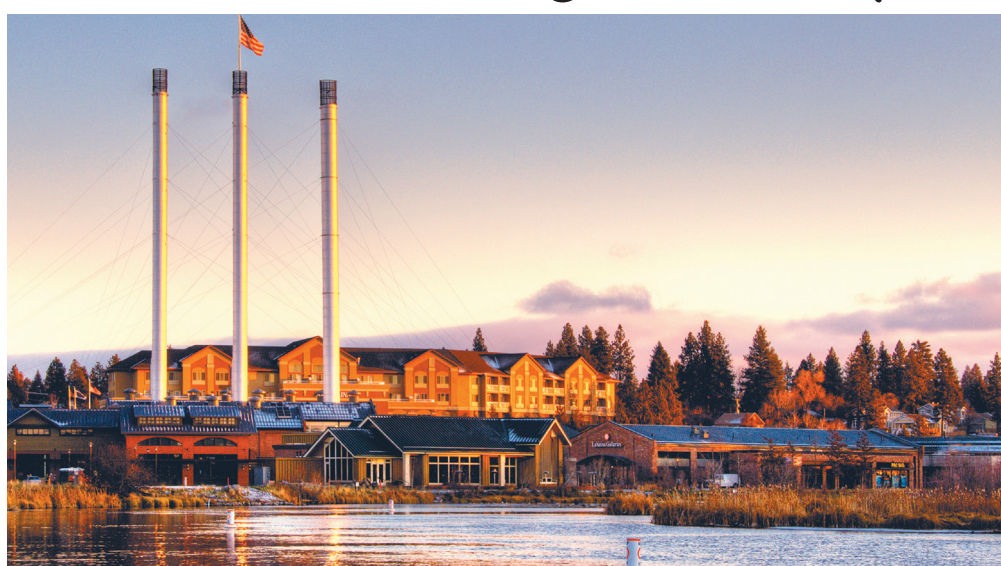
Bend's long list of must-see and must-do attractions has earned the laid-back town a spot on a host of "best of" lists in recent years, including Money Magazine's "Best Places to Retire," CNN.com's "100 Best Places to Live and Launch a Business," Mountain Bike Action's "Best Mountain Biking Town in America," Outside magazine's "Best Towns," Men's Journal's "Best Adventure Towns" and Golf Digest's "50 Great Destinations."

According to the Central Oregon Association of Realtors, Bend housing prices have followed national trends, dropping almost 30 percent in the past year, which makes the active resort and retirement lifestyle even more affordable now.

### Happy trails

Past crystal-clear lakes and ponderosa pines, along rivers and through caves, Bend has some of the region's most scenic hiking and biking trails, ranging from the easy (Farewell Bend River loop) to the difficult (Tumalo Mountain climb).

For those who prefer their adventures a bit more civilized, the city also has a 51-mile urban trail system that links neighborhoods, parks and schools. Grab a map at the Bend visitor's center or download a map from [visitbend.com](http://visitbend.com). For bicyclists who'd rather tour the area



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The 270-acre Old Mill District offers shopping and dining beside the Deschutes River.

on two wheels, the city has a number of rental shops for mountain bikes.

### Water sports

For those looking for an adrenaline-pumping whitewater-raft ride or a lazy afternoon spent floating wherever the water goes, Bend's setting near rushing rivers and tranquil lakes makes it a natural destination for water lovers.

Fly Fisherman magazine also rated the city one of the top 10 fly-fishing towns in the country. Those wanting a bit of practice before pulling on waders can head to the Orvis Casting Course in the Old Mill District, the only 18-hole golf-style casting course of its kind in North America. Free and open to the public, the course runs through the district along the banks of the Deschutes River. Anglers can practice casting at stations named for fishing challenges.

"The casting course was designed for fun (and) education, and to provide an opportunity to practice essential casting skills before going fishing or during the off-season," says Hutch Hutchinson, tournament caster, course designer and regional business manager for The Orvis Company.

### Snow much fun

A dormant volcano just 25 min-

utes from Bend, Mount Bachelor is the nation's sixth-largest ski area in the nation. The mountain averages 370 inches of annual snowfall and offers 3,683 acres of lift-accessible terrain. Winter snow fun includes snowboarding, cross-country skiing, dogsledding, snowshoeing and tubing. During the summer months, a chairlift ride 7,775 feet up offers a chance to explore the ancient lava flows exposed by the melting snow.

### Tee'd off

Golfers have plenty of choices: There are more than 25 courses in central Oregon, nine with a Bend address. This weekend, the Crosswater Golf Course at Sunriver Resort — just outside of Bend — is hosting the Jeld-Wen Tradition, one of five major championships on professional golf's over-50 circuit.

### Shopping and dining

Three smokestacks of the Brooks-Scanlon lumber mill stand as landmark reminders of Bend's logging past. Today, instead of lumber, they overlook the city's newest economic powerhouse — tourism — at the 270-acre Old Mill District. In addition to cafes and upscale shops, the outdoor lifestyle center includes a hotel and multiscreen movie theater.

### Getting there

Bend, Ore., is about 340 miles southeast of Seattle, at the intersection of highways 20 and 97. Take I-5 south to Albany, Ore., to connect to Highway 20 east.

### Check it out

Wanderlust Tours offers Brews and Views canoe tours 1:30-5:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Sundays through October. Paddlers can explore Cascade Lake with a naturalist guide and then take a break on the shore to drink craft beers by Cascade Lakes Brewing Company (children get root beer). Visit [wanderlusttours.com](http://wanderlusttours.com).

### Information

[visitbend.com](http://visitbend.com)

Boutiques, hometown diners and fine dining can also be found on the cobblestone streets of Bend's downtown district. After breaking a sweat browsing the racks, head to one of the city's brew pubs, like Deschutes Brewery, for a bite and a pint.

### Patronizing the arts

Bend has a strong connection to the arts. Each month, the Bend Gallery Association hosts a First Friday Art Walk, and the city is home to the annual Art in the High Desert festival. Held this year from Aug. 28-30, the festival features 110 artists from around the country and Canada. They represent a wide spectrum of art, including ceramics, sculpture, painting, jewelry and photography.

Music by headliners such as Bonnie Raitt, Lyle Lovett and Sugarland can be enjoyed at the Les Schwab Amphitheater, located on 5 acres across the river from the Old Mill District. The outdoor concert venue also hosts community events, including free summer Sunday concerts. Live-theater lovers can get their fix at productions by Bend's 2nd Street Theater, Tower Theatre and Cascades Theatrical Company.