

REGION  
Northwest

TOWN

**BEND**STATE  
(Oregon)**(by the numbers)**

POPULATION



AVERAGE COMMUTE



MEDIAN AGE



MEDIAN INCOME



MEDIAN HOME PRICE



BIGGEST EMPLOYERS



TELLING STATISTIC



Gerry Lopez  
wakesurfing  
on Cultus Lake,  
near Bend

**EVERY PLACE HAS** its season—when living there makes you feel blessed. In Bend, one of the country's fastest-growing cities, the showcase season happens to be, well, all of them. Take a midsummer night. It's light until nearly 9:30 p.m., plenty of time to lob woolly buggers into crisp holes on the Deschutes River after work or hop on a bike to catch Beck at the amphitheater. You can ski through May (July with skins) and mountain-bike all year. Some 2.5 million acres of wilderness surround the city; 10,000-foot volcanoes dominate the skyline. Bend's heritage as a flannel-and-jeans lumber town is less in evidence these days. The Old Mill District now hosts an REI, and the locals include surf icon Gerry Lopez (who came for the snowboarding) and mountaineer Steve House. Bend even has its own

brand of diversity: The town's signature race—the Pole Pedal Paddle, held in May—requires skiing, biking, running, paddling, and more running for 30-some miles from the top of Mount Bachelor into town, where everyone then drinks beer. And there's a lot of good beer: five breweries for 67,000 people, plus swanky restaurants, art walks,



Portland

and film festivals. But the town still has its bowling leagues, muddy pickup trucks, and chatty barbers on Bond Street (who also serve you beer during your trim). Best of all, being on the dry side of the Cascades, where the evergreen forest bumps into high-desert sage, Benders have all the fun of the Pacific Northwest without the rain. They bike-commute year-round on 51 miles of urban trails, take weekend trips to surf storm swells banging into the coast, and pick up fresh salmon at the farmers' market. No wonder someone moves here every two hours.

**THE PERFECT  
(48 hours)**

From subscriber Mary Ramos, 38, who moved to Bend six years ago for the mountain biking and now works for a downtown advertising firm: Rent a bike at Sunnyside Sports ([sunnysidesports.com](http://sunnysidesports.com)) and ride it to the Victorian Cafe (541-382-6411) early the next morning to beat the crowds who come for the crab Benedict. From there, continue on to the rolling singletrack of Phil's Trail and spin all the way to Mount Bachelor if you like, 2,700 feet up. Kick back on the patio at the Bend Brewing Company ([bendbrewingco.com](http://bendbrewingco.com)) for California chicken on focaccia and a Metolius Golden Ale. Take a Turkish-style public bath at McMenamins Old St. Francis School, a Catholic school turned pub, movie theater, and hotel ([mcmcnamins.com](http://mcmcnamins.com)). For dinner, try the local

**SUPERSIZE ME  
(portland, or)**

pop. 533,427

With excellent mass transit, anti-sprawl development, and greenhouse-gas-curbing policies that have been in place for 14 years, Portland has long been hailed as one of the most progressive urban centers in the country. Pair that with year-round skiing on Mount Hood, 239 parks (including 5,000-acre Forest Park, the largest urban park in the U.S.), and more than 400 coffee shops and suddenly the rainy winters don't seem that bad. Traffic is getting worse, but Portlanders put a positive spin on that, too: The city was recently ranked first in the country for friendliest drivers.

Kumamoto oysters at Merenda ([merendarestaurant.com](http://merendarestaurant.com)). Rent gear from the Patient Angler ([patientangler.com](http://patientangler.com)) and spend the next day casting on the Deschutes. Come evening, head to the Bend Distillery sampling room ([benddistillery.com](http://benddistillery.com)) for cocktails. Even guys like the lemon-drop martinis. —TIM NEVILLE

**READERS' CHOICE  
(ashland, or)**

"Great weather, Shakespeare festival." John H. Bolton



Dillon Falls, on the  
Deschutes River



mcs

