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16 Best Places To Retire in the US That Feel Like Europe

GOBankingRates
VANCE CARIAGA
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HELEN SQUARE

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Many Americans dream of retiring in Europe, though not everyone can pull it off. For those who can't, one solution is to find a place that has a European vibe without actually being in Europe.

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Plenty of U.S. cities have a European flavor — including major urban centers like Boston, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. While those cities might not be ideal for retirees because of their high costs of living, you can find more affordable options.

Here are 16 of the best places to retire in the U.S. that feel like Europe based on insights by Travel + Leisure and The Parking Spot.

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Charleston, South Carolina

Charleston combines “all the charm of a European vacation with the hospitality of the South,” according to The Parking Spot. The coastal port city is very walkable and features cobblestone streets, historic old homes, numerous cultural venues and some of the best food in the world.

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Helen, Georgia

Helen is located along the Chattahoochee River in the Blue Ridge Mountains and is known as “Little Bavaria” because of its distinct German vibe. Retirees will find plenty of shopping choices as well as numerous outdoor activities.

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Hermann, Missouri

Herman is located in an area known as the “Missouri Rhineland” because of its geographical resemblance to the German region. The town itself hosts events such as the Wurst Fest and Oktoberfest. Five city blocks are still dedicated to traditional German architecture, including the Deutschheim State Historic Site.

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Holland, Michigan

Because of its name, Holland aims to conjure up images of the Netherlands through its Dutch Village and the DeZwaan Windmill, which The Parking Spot calls the “only authentic, working, Dutch windmill” in the United States. Holland is also known for its annual Tulip Time Festival.

Willkommen
in
Leavenworth

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Leavenworth, Washington

Leavenworth was redesigned in the 1960s to look German and is a “dead ringer” for a Bavarian mountain village, according to Travel + Leisure. In addition to Oktoberfest celebrations and the Nutcracker Museum, Leavenworth’s location in the Cascades gives it a “truly alpine” feel.

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Montpelier, Vermont

Travel + Leisure likens the nation’s smallest state capital to a “French countryside village” thanks to its farmers markets, quaint shops, green hills and “smattering” of traditional European architecture. Montpelier’s name itself is a nod to the strong friendship early European settlers had with France.

Sean Pavone / Shutterstock.com

New Orleans, Louisiana

The Big Easy's French Quarter, also known as the Vieux Carré, might be the most European place in the country because of its design, French and Spanish architecture and deeply embedded French culture. That culture includes French street names, French-inspired cuisine and Francocentric holiday celebrations such as Mardi Gras and Bastille Day.

Daniel Hanscom / Getty Images

Newport, Rhode Island

Newport's swank mansions, sailing culture and Cliff Walk "could make any visitor feel like they've made their way to the French Riviera," Travel + Leisure noted. Retirees might find prices high in certain areas, but because Newport is not a big city you can live in adjacent areas and still have easy access to all the amenities.

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L'ETOILE DU NORD
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1893
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New Ulm, Minnesota

New Ulm's population is more than 50% German American, according to Travel + Leisure, and the city boasts a brewery (founded by a German immigrant) that ranks as one of the country's oldest. New Ulm is also home to a glockenspiel, which adds to the German vibe.

ElaineMcDonald / Getty Images

Pella, Iowa

As The Parking Spot noted, Pelll's tagline is "A Touch of Holland." The town's culture and architecture have numerous Western Europe influences, including brightly colored buildings, a windmill and a centrally located canal.

Sean Pavone / Getty Images/iStockphoto

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

One of the most important cities in Colonial America also boasts a European feel thanks to features such as Elfreth's Alley, the oldest continuously inhabited street in the U.S. You'll see elements of Greek revival architecture at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, while City Hall is influenced by French Second Empire architecture.

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Portland, Oregon

The main European influences in Portland are a world-renowned craft beer culture and an emphasis on eco-friendly urban transport in the form of around 400 miles of bike lanes as of 2019. You will also find world-renowned cuisine and a bohemian vibe.

Bill Perry / Shutterstock.com

Santa Barbara, California

This Instagram-ready coastal community has been called the “American Riviera” because of the resemblance its beaches have to the French coastline. Spanish influences are even bigger here thanks to Old Mission Santa Barbara, where you’ll find numerous white stucco and red-tiled rooftops.

Deals!
Vinhus

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Solvang, California

Solvang is a little slice of Denmark in sunny California, thanks to the Danish architecture, restaurants and shops that permeate the city. It is also home to Solvang Vintage Motorcycle Museum, which rotates a “broad collection” of foreign bikes monthly.

Read This: 9 Things the Rich Always Buy During the Holidays

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St. Augustine, Florida

St. Augustine's main claim to fame is being the oldest city in the U.S., having been founded by Spanish explorers in 1565 — 42 years before the English colonized Jamestown and 55 years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. Today you'll still see plenty of Spanish architecture and influences, including the Castillo de San Marcos and the colonial Spanish quarter.

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Tarpon Springs, Florida

Here is another Florida city with a European vibe, only in Tarpon Springs that vibe is Greek rather than Spanish. The city has a large Greek American population, which means you'll find plenty of Greek food and culture along with a Greek village and sponge docks.

This article originally appeared on GOBankingRates.com: 16 Best Places To Retire in the US That Feel Like Europe

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FAA Issues Nationwide Ground Stop For All Alaska Airlines Flights

HUFFPOST

RYAN GRENOBLE

April 17, 2024 at 12:24 PM

Alaska
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The Federal Aviation Administration issued a ground stop for all Alaska Airlines flights Wednesday morning, halting departures nationwide for both the Seattle-area company and Horizon Air, a subsidiary of Alaska Air Group.

Alaska Airlines told HuffPost that a software upgrade was to blame. Though the issue was resolved by 8:30 a.m. Pacific time, the airline said that it expects flight delays to persist throughout the day.

“This morning we experienced an issue while performing an upgrade to the system that calculates our weight and balance,” an Alaska Airlines spokesperson said in an emailed statement.

“Out of an abundance of caution, we requested a ground stop for all Alaska and Horizon flights, which was instituted at approximately 7:30am PT. The issue was mitigated and the ground stop for Alaska and Horizon flights expired at 8:30am PT.”

The airline encouraged travelers to check the status of their flights either online or in its app before they head to the airport.

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Massive Derby Shores project now at $160 million with new, well-known Wichita partner

The Wichita Eagle

CARRIE RENGERS

April 15, 2024 at 3:00 PM

After a few years of false starts and delays, the group bringing the massive Derby Shores project to Derby has a new partner and an expanded $160 million plan.

Wichita businessman Dave Murfin and Kansas City developer Rick Worner brought in Rodney Steven II as what Worner called their component developer — the one who will build and operate a four-and a-half-acre crystal blue lagoon with various water features and activities.

It was Steven — who is best known for his almost 70 Genesis Health Clubs nationally and the Genesis Sports Complex, aquatic complex and Blast Off Bay water park in Goddard — who bumped up the lagoon size from the original planned two acres.

“I didn’t think it would be enough of a draw,” Steven said.

“I just wanted to do it right. I didn’t want to do something little.”

Sand surrounds the zero-entry Derby Shores lagoon, which goes to depths of 8 feet. “And you feel like you’re on a beach,” said partner Rodney Steven II. “We’ll bring in tons and tons of white sand.” He compares it to the Caribbean "except the water is even clearer."

The tourism draw is the point behind the larger $100 million STAR bonds district that Derby created, first for Worner's Field Station: Dinosaurs park in 2018. Then in 2022, Derby approved just over $30 million in STAR bonds for Derby Shores.

STAR bonds are sales tax and revenue bonds issued through a state program meant to be used for tourist attractions that draw new money to Kansas.

When STAR bonds projects work as intended, the new sales tax revenue generated by a development allows cities to make annual payments to the state and retire debt over the life of the bonds. Basically, it's a way for cities to get new attractions without asking taxpayers to pay for them up front.

However, some Derby taxpayers have been skeptical and critical of both the dinosaur park and Derby Shores.

"Everybody predicted the dinosaur park would never open," Worner said. "There's always skepticism whenever you're talking about bringing tourists."

Others have criticized the park for not bringing in as many tourists as Worner had predicted, but he said it's building in popularity and what it offers each year.

Worner said the pandemic hurt everything, including the planned start of Derby Shores a few years ago with his and Murfin's first partners — the original team behind Great Wolf Lodge.

That group now is involved in a huge project near Branson, Mo., and Worner said that deal is taking all of its time and capital.

That in turn slowed his project and necessitated a new partner.

"We've had to hit the reset button."

Worner said Steven is a natural, particularly with what he's accomplished in Goddard.

"If you saw how he's done the baseball fields in Goddard, they're the home run of all home runs," Worner said.

"He's demonstrated to me that he can draw people from out of state consistently."

'Absolutely beautiful'

There will be many components to Derby Shores, but the centerpiece is the lagoon, which is in partnership with a national company called Crystal Lagoons that creates them all over the world.

“I’ve gone to a few of these places,” Steven said. “They’re absolutely beautiful.”

Sand surrounds the zero-entry lagoon, which goes to depths of 8 feet.

“And you feel like you’re on a beach,” Steven said. “We’ll bring in tons and tons of white sand.”

He compares it to the Caribbean “except the water is even clearer.”

There will be a boathouse, beach volleyball and all kinds of water activities, including slides, paddle boards, kayaks, power boards and glass-bottom boats.

There also will be docks and a wedding peninsula.