

10 Best U.S. Ski Towns to Live in All Year Round, According to Real Estate Experts

Outdoor recreation, close-knit communities, and photogenic streets are hallmarks of some of the best ski towns across the U.S.

By [Lydia Mansel](#) | Published on January 11, 2026

2 COMMENTS



Skis sticking up from the snow.
Credit: jzehnder/Adobe Stock

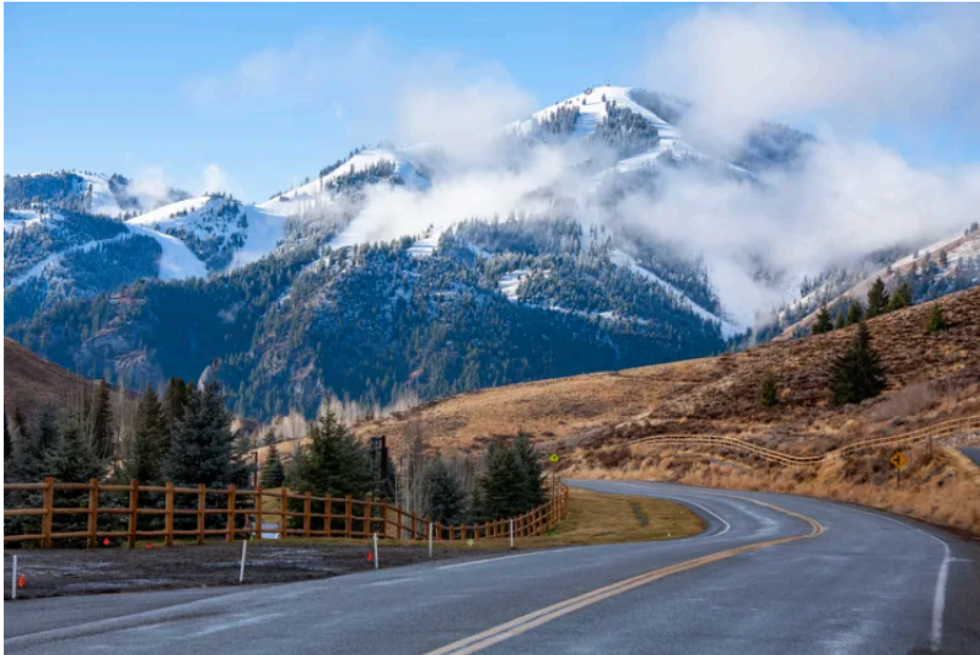
Life in an American ski town is defined by a few things: access to a ski area, of course, a generally laid-back atmosphere, and a community that shares an appreciation for the outdoors.

“Whether you’re drawn to the refined energy of Vail, the connected ease of Park City, or the rich culture of the Roaring Fork Valley, one thing is certain: living in a world-class ski town means embracing a lifestyle that doesn’t end when the lifts stop running,” Emily Duke, managing broker at [LUX Real Estate Company](#), tells *Travel + Leisure*. “These are communities where adventure, artistry, wellness, and connection are right outside your door every season, every day.”

Because this type of lifestyle is so appealing—and remote work has made it more attainable for many—ski towns tend to be more expensive than your typical mountain town. “With any truly great ski town, real estate rarely comes cheap,” says Duke. “But for those who want mountain living without sacrificing culture, connection, or quality of life, a handful of destinations rise above the rest.”

Here are the best U.S. ski towns to live in full-time, according to real estate experts.

Sun Valley, Idaho



A road curving through Sun Valley, Idaho.
Credit: christiannafzger/Getty Images

"[Sun Valley](#) offers a balanced mountain lifestyle rooted in nearly 90 years of resort history, with a relaxed pace that appeals to both full-time residents and second-home owners," says Bill Fandel, founding broker of [Compass Telluride](#). "A sunny climate, well-developed trail systems, and a strong arts and cultural presence support year-round living, while a range of resort and residential options accommodates varied lifestyles without sacrificing a sense of community."

In the winter, residents can take to the slopes of [Sun Valley Resort](#); come summertime, skis are replaced with hiking boots, mountain bikes, and golf clubs. While the real estate market isn't necessarily affordable, the average home value ([\\$1,123,665](#), according to Zillow) is significantly lower than in a few other towns on this list.



An ice skating rink in Telluride's Mountain Village.
Credit: Ryan/Adobe Stock

"People often think of [Telluride](#) only for its world-class skiing and some of the finest-groomed runs in North America, but the town's rich history, extraordinary beauty, and authentic, close-knit community create an exceptional year-round lifestyle," says Fandel, who describes the ski town as a "high-alpine environment" with "nearly 300 days of annual sunshine." Like most ski towns, Telluride isn't cheap; in fact, it was named the [most expensive ski town](#) in the U.S. in 2024.

The cost of living in this part of Colorado is about [75 percent above](#) the national average, and the average home value is north of [\\$2 million](#). But if budget isn't a concern, you'll access a life filled with, in Fandel's words, "quaint yet remarkable restaurants that rival those in the alps, renowned terrain delivering legendary outdoor activities in every season, stunning homes, and a down-to-earth, family-friendly atmosphere."