



Red Cliffs Ranch, one of several proving grounds for two-wheeled enthusiasts outside mountain-bike mecca Moab, Utah

MECCAS *continued*

Taos, New Mexico

Population: 5,062
Median Income: \$26,416
Median Home Price: \$222,400
Average High/Low Temp: 81°/10°

With a ban on snowboards, 300-plus annual inches of snowfall on the slopes, and 200-plus annual days of sunshine, Taos is a ski purist's town. "Back in Crested Butte," says Don Brokmeyer, who moved here 14 years ago, "they lift-serviced all the steeps, so it was bumped out and crowded." At Taos Ski Valley, two lifts and a 45-minute hike earn you 3,275 feet of steep, deep, champagne

powder from 12,481-foot Kachina Peak. Dirtbag skiers scramble for every service job, but that's the cost of low blood pressure, fresh air, and occasional glimpses of Julia Roberts. —D.D.

Last Chance, Idaho

Population: 223
Median Income: \$27,900
Median Home Price: \$186,800
Average High/Low Temp: 82°/8°

"People call this the Ph.D. of fly-fishing," says Jim Fredericks, regional fisheries manager for the Upper Snake Region. Henry's Fork, where it crosses the unspoiled beauty of Harriman State Park, is a classroom of slow-moving

water, some of the continent's biggest rainbow trout, and, as everyone will tell you, surface-sip feeding patterns that demand a careful read of every fish. Outside of the town (which consists of four fly shops and a few restaurants), Norman Schwarzkopf and Michael Keaton are celebrities. To locals, they're just summer students. —D.D.

Bishop, California

Population: 3,621
Median Household Income: \$29,463
Median Home Price: \$389,600
Average High/Low Temp: 100°/28°

Western-wear emporiums still outnumber mountain shops in Bishop,

and the skinny young climbers piloting jacked-up trucks with scabbed hands and faraway stares seem to like it that way. Living cheap in a big house on a leafy street, grabbing early-morning pastries at Erick Schar's Bakkery, and keeping mostly to themselves, they're focused on what matters: year-round bolt-clipping on the rust-red cliffs of the Owens River Gorge, highball boulders at the famous Buttermilks, and inexhaustible big-wall routes in Yosemite only a few hours away. —D.D.

Moab, Utah

Population: 4,825
Median Household Income: \$33,582
Median Home Price: \$135,700
Average High/Low Temp: 97°/17°

The new generation of "big travel" bikes, with suspensions that yield as much as eight inches on impact, have helped make this remote desert town — with six thriving bike shops for fewer than 5,000 residents — the sport's uncontested mecca, and it shows. Nightlife involves pedaling off to the Moab Brewery and a house party, and town gossip and morning coffee usually come from the java bar at the Chile Pepper Bike Shop. Monty Henry, a repairman at Chile Pepper, owns the local's usual arsenal of bikes: one for jumping, one for cross-country exploration, a knock-around townie cruiser, and a heavy-duty freerider for rolling off the nearby cliffs. Two-wheeled culture is so pervasive here that the state of Utah even pays unemployment to seasonal bike-shop workers who get laid off during the winter. —D.D.

MOST ACTIVE TOWNS *Multisport hubs with something for everyone* By Christian DeBenedetti

PLACE	SCENE	POPULATION	AVG. HIGH/LOW TEMP	SKIING	TRAIL HIKING	BIKING	WINDSURFING	WHITEWATER	CLIMBING
HOOD RIVER, OR	Ski Mount Hood on a summer morning, windsurf or bike the trails all afternoon.	6,362	78°/28°	■	■	■	■	■	■
MAMMOTH LAKES, CA	Four major recreation areas (including Yosemite) give it an edge-of-the-world feel.	7,259	84°/17°	■	■	■	■	■	■
JACKSON, WY	Three hundred inches of snowfall make for epic winter skiing and great fly-fishing after the thaw.	8,966	79°/3°	■	■	■	■	■	■
MCCALL, ID	Two big lakes, two ski resorts, plus zoning restrictions that keep big box stores at bay.	2,304	82°/12°	■	■	■	■	■	■
HAINES, AK	Wilderness, mild weather, and no stoplights — the perfect small-town adrenaline headquarters.	1,698	67°/19°	■	■	■	■	■	■
MOUNTAIN VIEW, AR	The trails won "epic" IMBA status to go with the trout fishing, caving, and bluegrass.	2,975	89°/24°	■	■	■	■	■	■
CARBONDALE, CO	The perfect adventure base camp, 30 miles from Aspen.	5,706	87°/11°	■	■	■	■	■	■
BOZEMAN, MT	Go-for-it culture in sight of five mountain ranges, but without the attitude.	32,414	83°/11°	■	■	■	■	■	■