


# Best Places for a Long Life

by Matthew Amster-Burton

Thursday, September 11, 2008 provided by 

Residents of these 25 counties enjoy some of the highest life expectancies in the U.S.

## 1. Montgomery County, MD



Courtesy: Federal Realty Investment Trust

### Bethesda Row

Bethesda) help make affluent, educated Montgomery County No. 1 for longevity.

Bethesda's downtown is compact, walkable, and connected to central Washington, D.C. by Metro.

Outside of town, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Park's scenic canal-side trail helps keep residents in shape.

Last year, Montgomery's county seat of Rockville unveiled a new pedestrian-friendly town center, bringing together housing, jobs, shopping, and recreation.

## 2. Story County, IA

**Towns include:** Ames

**Life expectancy at birth:** 81.02 years

The story begins in the city of Ames, on the campus of Iowa State University. The school's Memorial Union Workspace program offers classes and studio space to the public, including programs in pottery, music, and - yes - basket-weaving.

Also on campus, the nationally respected Reiman Gardens is open seven days a week and offers a butterfly garden, as well as indoor and outdoor botanical exhibitions.

Iowa is the nation's first caucus state during presidential primaries, when residents get plenty of opportunities to tell the candidates first-hand how they feel.

## 3. Carver County, MN



Courtesy: Chaska Chamber of Commerce

### Chaska

**Towns include:** Aspen Hill, Calverton, Fairland, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Montgomery Village, North Bethesda, North Potomac, Olney, Potomac, Rockville, Silver Spring, Wheaton-Glenmont, White Oak

**Life expectancy at birth:** 81.31 years  
Two top-ranked hospitals (Suburban and Naval, both in

More from [CNNMoney.com](http://CNNMoney.com):

- [Money Magazine's Ultimate Guide to Retirement](#)
- [Best Places to Retire](#)
- [Best Places for Affordable Homes](#)

**Towns include:** Chanhassen, Chaska

**Life expectancy at birth:** 80.98 years

Carver County is home to over 50 of Minnesota's 10,000 lakes, and 70,000 Minnesotans who fish, sail, and otherwise enjoy them.

This suburban Minneapolis county has made physical fitness a major goal. At [gocarvergo.org](http://gocarvergo.org), you can figure out where to head for swimming, running, and biking, and even plan out a hike using an extensive interactive map.

For big-city pursuits, Carver is only a half-hour from the center of nearby Minneapolis.

#### **4. Collier County, FL**

**Towns include:** Golden Gate, Naples

**Life expectancy at birth:** 80.97 years

Collier County, which includes the city of Naples on the Gulf coast, is the picture of Florida leisure.

By land area, Collier is the largest county in the state, and 80 percent of it is devoted to parks and nature preserves. Any kind of water-related recreation or exercise you can think of is readily available. Naples has long been a destination for artists: Take a class at the Von Liebig Center or just work your way through the county's 100-plus art galleries.

You can also take in a show-or star in one-with the Naples Players, which is recognized as one of the nation's top community theaters.

#### **5. Benton County, OR**



Courtesy: Corvallis-Benton Chamber Coalition

**Benton County**

**Towns include:** Corvallis

**Life expectancy at birth:** 80.93 years

Corvallis, in Benton County, Ore., offers two annual film festivals, Shakespeare in the park, proximity to one of the world's great wine regions, and free summer classes for seniors (65 and up) at a major university. But it's no metropolis: Oregon State University gives the town of under 50,000 much of its population.

Opportunities for outdoor recreation are plentiful, too. Hiking and biking trails start just outside of town, and Corvallis is nestled halfway between the equally breathtaking Oregon Coast and Cascade mountains.

#### **6. Fairfax County and City, VA**

**Towns include:** Annandale, Bailey's Crossroads, Centreville, Chantilly, Dranesville, Fairfax, Franconia, Groveton, Herndon, Hunter Mill, Jefferson, Lorton, McLean, Mount Vernon, Newington, Oakton, Reston, Springfield, Sully, West Springfield

**Life expectancy at birth:** 80.9 years

With a median income over \$100,000, Fairfax is one of the richest counties in the U.S. It's home to excellent hospitals (such as Inova), and the north terminus of Amtrak's Auto Train, which lets you take your car or van on the train to Florida.

But Fairfax's most striking amenity has to be Wolf Trap, the nation's only national park for the performing arts. Residents can enjoy year-round pop music, opera, dance, and theater performances, at multiple venues set in a park, without ever leaving the county.

#### **7. Marin County, CA**

**Life expectancy at birth:** 80.82 years

We can't promise you'll live to 100 if you run Marin County's annual 7-mile Dipsea cross-county race. But it worked for Jack Kirk.

The race is open to competitors of all ages, and we mean all: Kirk ran every race from 1930 to 2002, finally retiring at age 96; he died a centenarian.



**Marin County**

Marin County, at the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge across from San Francisco, is known for its liberal politics and its natural beauty: it features both Muir Woods and the Point Reyes seashore. And get yourself indoors, too: Marin is home to the

Mill Valley Film Festival and, in San Anselmo, a top destination for antique shopping.

## **8. Olmsted County, MN**

**Towns include:** Rochester

**Life expectancy at birth:** 80.68 years

Sure, a lot of things go into making Olmsted County a place where residents live long, but if you had to sum it up in two words, they'd be: Mayo Clinic. The world-renowned medical center is headquartered in Rochester.

Of course, you don't want to spend too much time there. So join the neighbors for a jog to help keep the doctor away: Minnesota, despite its frigid winters, has the highest percentage of residents who get regular exercise, according to the Centers for Disease Control. And you can get plenty of it in Rochester, which offers 60 miles of hiking trails and over 100 parks where you can work out.

## **9. Johnson County, IA**



Courtesy: Iowa City/Coralville CVB

University of Iowa's Hancher Auditorium

**Towns include:** Iowa City

**Life expectancy at birth:** 80.47 years

The Iowa Writers' Workshop brings writers from all over the world to Iowa City, making it perhaps the most literary of America's small cities. (It's also one of the most educated.)

The program serves the wider community through the Iowa Summer Writing Festival, which offers dozens of classes taught by professors and professional writers. What better way to get that mental exercise you've always sworn you'd do

once you found the time?

## **10. Honolulu County, HI**

**Towns include:** Honolulu, Kailua, Kaneohe, Mililani Town, Pearl City, Waimalu, Waipahu

**Life expectancy at birth:** 80.45 years

What can we say about Honolulu County (which covers the entire island of Oahu) that isn't obvious? After all, if you love the beach and can afford the housing, you may be thinking of moving there right now.

How about great local food? Aside from great high-end restaurants like Roy's and Alan Wong's, Hawaii is known for healthy food (the traditional diet is loaded with omega-3s). Noodles and plate lunches are tasty and ubiquitous. Then again so is Spam musubi, a pressed cake of rice with a slice of you-know-what on top.