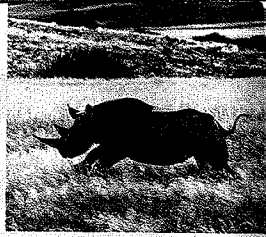




NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

On Foot in Rhino Land

A Safari Across the World's Oldest Desert



ADVENTURE

nationalgeographic.com/adventure

DREAM IT. PLAN IT. DO IT.

• WHERE TO **Live & Play** NOW!



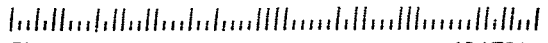
THE 50 NEXT GREAT TOWNS

- Missoula
- San Francisco
- Carbondale»
- Boston
- Hood River
- San Antonio
- Seattle
- and More

Plus: BROOKLYN to BRATTLEBORO
The Adventure Town Experiment
By Tom Clynes

ALL ACROSS AFRICA
NEW TRIPS IN: KENYA,
SOUTH AFRICA, SENEGAL,
ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA

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{ THE *fifty next* GREAT ADVENTURE TOWNS }

50 Where to Live + Play NOW!



A change of address can bring instant gratification. You could wake up tomorrow in Missoula and kayak off your own deck at dawn, sneak in singletrack at lunch in Chattanooga—or choose your own adventure in any one of the country’s best base camps. • But a move is a long-term investment. So this year we selected 50 innovative towns that aren’t just prime relocation spots right now, but smart choices for the future. Not only do they have the action. They’ve got a plan. • Now we’re giving you a plan too. Inside, you’ll find hometown picks that range from adventure 24/7 hubs loaded with outdoor options to urban players that offer a variety of jobs and cultural activities without sacrificing green space. You’ll also hear from recent transplants who made the move and have a better quality of life to show for it. So go on—get packing. *BY SARAH TUFF & GREG MELVILLE*

INSIDE: WEST 76 | ROCKIES 79 | CENTRAL 81 | EAST 88 | FOLDOUT MAP & SCOUTING REPORTS 83 | THE ADVENTURE TOWN EXPERIMENT 90

Best for: MUSIC LOVERS

Milwaukee WISCONSIN

Home to the world's biggest music festival—almost a million people come every year for Summerfest—Milwaukee keeps rocking through fall with a slew of free concerts along the shores of Lake Michigan. Also on tap: The new 35-mile Urban Water Trail leads paddlers through the city's three rivers, while singletrack, kiteboarding launchpads, dive sites, and surf breaks (seriously) are minutes from Miller Park. Population: 573,358 • Median home price: \$129,800

**Lone Star Revival****San Antonio** TEXAS

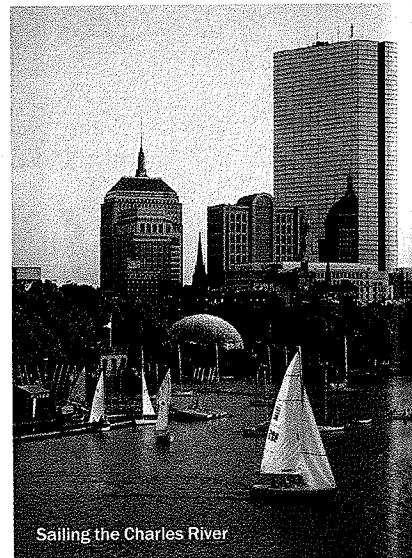
Austin's not the only Hill Country hub worth considering. Now that San Antonio is sprucing up its eponymous river—with waterfront hiking and biking trails, canoe races, and cafés—Fiesta City is regaining some of its Alamo-era swagger. • In May residents voted to use \$125 million to shore up the San Antonio River Improvements Project, which will extend the city's Venice-inspired River Walk from two to thirteen miles and add nearly 460 acres of parkland. Steven Schauer, of the San Antonio River Authority, sums it up well: "The people here want their river back for recreation." • They're also reclaiming their land. Last year locals lobbied to save an old dairy farm on the outskirts of town from development; it will now be converted into 311 acres of urban green space. Outside city limits, hikers can wander through 8,622 acres of mountain laurel and Spanish moss in Government Canyon State Natural Area, while road cyclists head northwest to the wildflower-flecked hills. And in the heat of the Lone Star State summers, a new crop of vineyards and a handful of brewpubs (Blue Star gets our vote) are just a pedal away. Population: 1,296,682 • Median home price: \$155,300

Biking San Antonio's new downtown paths

**east****THE NEW PATRIOT GAMES****Boston** MASSACHUSETTS

Just a few years ago, Bostonians were knee-deep in the \$15 billion construction chaos that was the Big Dig. But these days, the new Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway has made the inner-city waterfront more accessible (and appealing) than ever, with a 15-acre strip of parks designed for everything from yoga to concerts. "All people think of is Boston Common," says Andrew Prescott, a former accountant who turned his bike-commuting habit into a business by founding Urban AdvenTours. "But now we have all this great new public space, and more people are getting outside—even when there's two feet of snow." More than 15,000 acres of parks and 25 miles of beaches are now within 15 minutes of downtown.

• And forget upper-crust yacht clubs. Beantown may be New England's economic capital, but it's not overpriced. Annual membership at Community Boating, Inc., where you'll find kayaking, windsurfing, and sailing, is just \$229. And last year the Environmental Protection Agency gave the Charles River a B++, good enough to do the once unthinkable: backstroke alongside the scullers. Population: 590,763 • Median home price: \$355,000



Sailing the Charles River

Charleston

SOUTH CAROLINA

Think of Charleston as the jock in the Southern belle set. With new offshore ecotours and surfing at nearby Folly Beach, the pretty city's outdoor action now matches its good looks. Locals kayak the Ashley River, horseback ride from the historic Inn at Middleton Place, or hike among cypresses. Population: 107,845 Median home price: \$252,000

Charlottesville VIRGINIA

"Leave all the afternoon for exercise and recreation." So said resident Thomas Jefferson, and no wonder—he had the Blue Ridge Mountains out back. Today, University of Virginia grads follow his advice in the lush hills of Shenandoah, while city planners protect urban forest and build new trails. Population: 40,315 Median home price: \$279,500

Plymouth

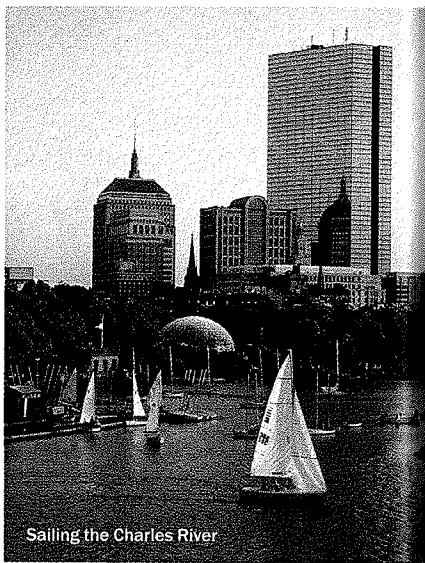
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Life in Plymouth is like a master class in recreation. Wedged between Mount Washington Valley and the Granite State's glittering lakes region, this college-meets-covered-bridge depot is home to the new White Mountain Exploration center, with instruction in ski touring, ice climbing, mountain biking, and rock climbing all run by Eastern Mountain Sports. When classes aren't in session, recess means kayaking the Pemigewasset River and exploring the 798,562-acre White Mountain National Forest. And if working at Plymouth State University or the local hospital doesn't entice you, high-tech and political posts are just 45 minutes south in Concord. Population: 6,336 Median home price: \$215,000

central east

NEW PATRIOT GAMES

MASSACHUSETTS



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Best for: THE LIFELONG COED

State College PENNSYLVANIA

*Ab, to be young and live in a rugged corner of the Alleghenies.
Eighteen- to-24-year-olds make up nearly two-thirds of this
Penn State playground's population—the rest just act that age.
Grads land gigs at the gear shops and outfitters among the tap
rooms and taverns here. On their days off, they ride singletrack
on Mount Nittany, fly-cast in one of 19 trout streams, or race
the Tussey Mountainback, a 50-mile ultramarathon in October.*

Population: 38,436 • Median home price: \$223,325

Blue Hill MAINE

This preppy coastal town's new
focus is on the outdoors: The Blue
Hill Heritage Trust has conserved
4,750 acres of wilderness, ensur-
ing that kayakers spend more time
on the placid bays, not stuck in
tourist-trap traffic. Pack your easel,
your garden hoe, or your 401(k);
this is a haven for photogs and
painters. Population: 2,289
Median home price: \$182,000

HOT BARGAIN

Lenoir NORTH CAROLINA

Leave it to Google to find this
hidden gem: Its new hub is here in
the forested Blue Ridge foothills.
Downtown revitalizations are under
way, and weekly farmers markets
with live bluegrass will make the
newbies feel at home. Even without
a dot-com salary, you can land a
four-bedroom on three acres with
mountain views for \$299,000—
for now. Population: 18,018
Median home price: \$115,000

Avalon NEW JERSEY

While boardwalks, amusement
parks, and McMansions engulf the
rest of the Jersey Shore, Avalon
has stayed relatively sprawl free.
Its newly protected beaches—
habitats for both surfers and terra-
pin turtles—have some of the last
high dunes in the area. The price
tag here is high, but new afford-
able housing is cropping up in
Middle Township, three miles away.
Population: 2,125
Median home price: \$1,237,500

THE GREEN ADDRESS

Salisbury MARYLAND

Biking a century, catching a minor-
league baseball game, picking
apart a plate of blue crabs—it's
all in an afternoon's work. Set on
Maryland's eastern shore, Salisbury
is home to DLITE, an alliance that
protects the peninsula for hiking,
cycling, and crabbing and provides
green-collar jobs. Population: 27,172
Median home price: \$192,400



Islamorada FLORIDA

Strung across six islands in the lower Florida Keys, the village of
Islamorada is set between a Gulf Stream-warmed Atlantic Ocean—
home to sailfish, wahoo, dolphin, tuna, sharks, and North America's
only living coral reef—and the Florida Bay, rife with bonefish, snook,
and snapper. "There's so much wildlife here, it really feels like
the sportfishing capital of the world," says captain Eric Bass (yep, his
real name). • But while Bass's boat is one of a hundred-plus angling
for tourists, competition gives way to camaraderie in the tight-knit
community. Back on dry land, neigh-



Kayak commute to
Chattanooga's Tennessee River



Southern Exclusive

Chattanooga TENNESSEE

Cathi Cannon, 33, multisport endurance athlete and graphic designer

Why I made the jump: "As an off-road racer, I found it hard to live in
a city as big as Atlanta—I was driving to the mountains all the time.
So I made the move to Chattanooga in 2006. In 15 minutes I can be
on a mountain with hundreds of miles of singletrack. A ton of like-
minded people are drawn here, thanks to the advocacy group Outdoor
Chattanooga, and the town is thriving, with a new emphasis on the out-
doors. I joined a women's cycling team, two adventure racing clubs, and
am on the board of the Wilderness Trail Running Association; we call
ourselves the Boonies, since we like to play in the middle of nowhere."

How I found a job: "I made some connections for freelance work before
I moved. Other people here work in health care, at the university,
as lawyers—or at a bike shop."

Favorite trail: "Raccoon Mountain has great singletrack."