

# Top 10 Best College Towns

## What makes a great college town?

*A great college, naturally.*

*Gainesville ✓*

*Plenty of youthful energy? You bet.*

*Gainesville ✓*

*An abundance of kitschy cafes and indie bookstores and a vibrant music and art scene?*

*You can count on it.*

*Gainesville ✓*

*And if there's a home team to write home about, HOORAY!*

*Gainesville ✓*

The best college towns, like the ones on our list, offer something for everyone: cultural diversity, a mix of urban sophistication and small-town charm, great outdoor spaces and places for intellectual curiosity to thrive.



"Top 10 Best College Towns," Parents & Colleges (December 2010)  
[www.parentsandcolleges.com/top-ten-lists/list07-bct/](http://www.parentsandcolleges.com/top-ten-lists/list07-bct/). Accessed 20 March 2012.

1. Austin, TX *Population: 709,893*
2. Boulder, CO *Population: 91,481*
3. Madison, WI *Population: 223,389*
4. Berkeley, CA *Population: 101,555*
5. Athens, GA *Population: 111,580*
6. Princeton, NJ *Population: 13,381*
7. Eugene, OR *Population: 146,356*
8. Chapel Hill, NC *Population: 49,919*

## 9. Gainesville, FL

*Population: 108,655*

The University of Florida and its beloved Gators dominate the landscape of this sports-loving city. But that's not the only reason why Gainesville is a great college town. Vibrant downtown Gainesville provides a central location for just about everything, from local restaurants to movies and theater to art and music. There's live theater and first-run foreign, limited-release and avant-garde films at The Hipp (Hippodrome State Theatre), art festivals and shows all year long, free concerts and performing arts every Friday night from May through October in Bo Diddley Community Plaza, 13 museums and galleries, cafes and clubs—all reachable by Gainesville's public bus transportation system. Gainesville is also just a short drive from breathtaking beaches on the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. But nature lover's will find plenty of beautiful spaces right here, including Morningside Nature Center, the city's premier nature park with seven miles of trails winding through native vegetation, and the magnificent Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, with 62 acres of lakeside forests and gardens for picnicking and strolling.

\* U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 estimate

10. Lawrence, KS *Population: 88,605*

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