

One of my favorite past times is making my dogs happy. I spend **a lot** of free time hanging out with my pets. Long walks, trips to the pet store, doggy daycare, I do it all for my pups. I'm comfortable confiding this to you, because I know **I'm not alone**.

"57% of millennial households own a pet versus 51% of all U.S households." -*Forbes*

Amongst the "Millennials Kill Industries" propaganda, there's a lot of journalism dedicated to an entire generation picking their pets over people, over **children** specifically. But there's no mystery why, even the most expensive puppy is still cheaper than a child.

"Pets are becoming a replacement for children," -*Jean Twenge, a Psychology Professor, San Diego State University*, "They're less expensive."

Simple bar graph: Average of \$2,674 per year to raise a dog
Average of \$13,885 per year to raise a child

Pets provide companionship, with considerably less commitment and expense than getting married and having children. When our furry best friends do so much for us, it's hard not to do a lot for them in return. In prioritizing the happiness of the dogs in our lives, we (pet owners) now **rank the cities we live in based on pet-friendliness**.

Now, I probably won't move to a city **just because** it's the most pet-friendly. No judgment if you do, though. I just keep an eye on the things important to me and my crew, in my city and the cities I'm planning on visiting. When I daydream about picking up and moving my dogs are always with me.

Things that Your Dog Cares About

- **Number of Dog Parks:** Both the amount and the number per capita impact this statistic.
- **Walkability:** How easy and pleasant is it to walk around your neighborhood?

Pet-friendliness isn't just about dogs, although they make up a *clear majority* of pet-ownership. When ranking cities, the data takes into consideration all kinds of pets, with a focus on dogs and cats.

"About 74 percent of pet owners polled said they had dogs, and 47 percent said they had cats." -*Today* [source](#)

Your indoor cat probably won't be able to tell much of a difference between Corvallis, WA (**most cat-friendly**, according to Trupanion Pet Insurance) and Fresno, CA (**least pet-friendly**, according to WalletHub). But you'll notice the difference when seeking cat-friendly services and housing.

Things your Cat Cares About

- **Cat-centric services:** cat-only vet services and grooming.
- **Cat-friendly housing:** rental properties that accept cats, and homes with features for cats.
- **Environmental hazards:** the presence of local toxic plants that might harm outdoor cats.

Dogs and cats are the most talked about pets, and they dominate in pet-centric businesses, but they're not even the most popular pet to have in America. Stumped? I was too, but when you remember the starter-pet found at carnivals every summer, it gets pretty clear.

The number one pet in America: **Freshwater fish!** There's 171 million of the in the US, according to *World Atlas*. A goldfish was, *briefly*, my first pet as a kid. Sorry Penny, RIP. Then come **dogs** and **cats** in second and third. Ranked #4 and #5 respectively are **birds**, and **everything else**. [Source](#)

Freshwater fish are probably ranked #1 because they're don't require specific services. If you're a dedicated fish owner, good news is every city is pet-friendly to you. Bird-owners fall into the same boat, as many rental properties don't specifically forbid them since they're considered a "caged pet".

Bird ownership fluctuates year-to-year, sometimes as much as by **6 million** households. Just **32% of bird owners** consider them to be a part of the family, versus **81% of dog owners**. [source](#)

Small pets are in the same "caged pet" category with birds. They include hamsters, rats, mice, ferrets, rabbits, basically *every* pet you graduated to, after you kept your goldfish alive. Mine was an affable guinea pig named Cinnamon. The "everything else" category from World Atlas also includes equines. Horses fall somewhere between reptiles and saltwater fish in terms of popularity. No surprise, they have different considerations for pet-friendliness then, oh, a cat.

[source](#)

Best Cities to Own a Horse

- **Lexington, KY:** Horse capital of the world: endless pastures and a historic passion for horses.
- **Ocala, FL:** Temperate weather all year round and over 1,200 horse farms.

- **Middleburg, VA:** A tight knit community dedicated to preserving equestrian sport.

While I've *dreamed* of becoming a horse owner in my lifetime, I don't know the first thing about what to look for in a horse-friendly apartment. I'm *kidding*. The rest of this article focuses on the most pet-friendly cities for cats and dogs.

"...millennials are infatuated with our dogs...we've taken our love and made it part of our generational identity."- *Vice* [source](#)

There isn't a specific order to the listing of the cities. All these cities are doing something right for their pets. These 10 cities are among the top ranked for all aspects of pet ownership. Some factors, briefly touched on earlier, are:

- Number of Dog Parks
- Cat Friendliness in Cities (Top 10)
- Accessibility and Cost of Vet Care (Top 20)
- Pet-Friendly & Pet-Focused Businesses (Top 20)
- City Walkability (scored out of 100)

The Pet-Friendly Cities

Portland, Oregon.

The Stats: Dog Parks:34 Walkability: 64 Cat Friendliness: #4 Dog Friendliness: #7

Other notable features? It has the most dog-friendly restaurants in the nation. Portland abounds with places like the Java Hound Coffee Bar. There, pups can snag a goat-milk Puppuccino and stop in for Yappy Hour for food & beverage deals. Portland is also home to Oregon's only cat-only pet hospital, where vet visits are designed stress-free for cats.

Seattle, Washington.

The Stats: Dog Parks:14 Walkability:73 Cat Friendliness:#7 Dog Friendliness:#5

Even though the Washington Park Arboretum isn't off-leash, it is 230 acres of dog-friendly gardens, walking trails and even guided tours. Perfect if your pet is a budding arborist. For more cut-loose fun Seattle has the House of Ruff, which is a combination indoor dog park and bar.

Denver, Colorado.

The Stats: Dog Parks:13 Walkability:60 Cat Friendliness:#5 Dog Friendliness:#6 Pet Wellness:#11

Denver also ranks high for having more dog training facilities than other cities in the country, there's 623. If you and Rex always talk about showing 'em how it's done at Crufts, maybe move

to Denver. The Mile-High City is also home to one of the country's first cat cafes. The Cat Company is open every day with around 15 adoptable felines waiting to get to know you over a cup of coffee.

Tampa, Florida.

The Stats: Dog Parks:15 Walkability:50 Cat Friendliness:#1 Pet Wellness:#17

Tampa has the most veterinarians per capita in the country, and the cost of vet care and insurance premiums for pets is lower than in other cities. It's easy to rent pet-friendly apartments, and the city abounds with dog-friendly businesses. If your dog is an adrenaline junky, the North American Diving Dog national championships take place in Florida every year.

San Francisco, California.

The Stats: Dog Parks:35 Walkability:86 Cat Friendliness:#3 Dog Friendliness:#8

San Fran has more pet businesses than any other city in the country. If nothing makes you happier than getting your cat a fresh cut and gourmet cat nip, then head to California. There's also a cat-only veterinary practice. It ranks high for dogs too, with lots of dog-friendly companies that let you bring your dog with you to work.

Chicago, Illinois.

The Stats: Dog Parks: 25 Walkability:78 Dog Friendliness:#23

If you've got a pooch with style that just won't quit, then the Windy City is the right spot. It's ranked #3 for the most dog salons in the country. And if your dog's been asking for beachy waves in their fur since adoption day, take her to Montrose Beach for the day. Find pet-friendly restaurant patios in every neighborhood and the Bloomingdale's on Michigan Ave allows posh dogs to shop with owners.

Phoenix, AZ.

The Stats: Dog Parks:12 Walkability:41 Cat Friendliness:#2 Dog Friendliness:#19 Pet Wellness:#16

If your dog holds you personally responsible for the weather, check out the Southwest for pet friendly cities. Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Las Vegas all regularly score highly for pet friendliness. The Arizona capitol boasts not just great off-leash spots, but also dog-friendly shopping centers for running errands. Take advantage of the great weather at the many dog-friendly patios restaurants offer throughout the city.

Austin, TX.

The Stats: Dog Parks:13 Walkability:40 Dog Friendliness:#12 Pet Wellness:#2

This city ranks #1 for photogenic pets, there are more pet photographers here than anywhere else in the country. It ties for #1 with a handful of other cities for the most pet-friendly restaurants. The weather can't be beat for precipitation-adverse pooches.

Atlanta, GA.

The Stats: Dog Parks:4 Walkability:49 Cat Friendliness:#9 Dog Friendliness:#3 Pet Wellness:#6

Maybe you don't have a pet yet but are ready; Maybe move to Atlanta. It ties with a few other cities for the most animal shelters per capita, so there are lots of furry kids waiting for adoption. Many of the local landmarks in Atlanta are pet friendly, and restaurants and breweries.

Los Angeles, CA.

The Stats: Dog Parks:13 Walkability:67 Dog Friendliness:#14 Pet Wellness:#13

LA isn't just a top city for pets that want to get their own Netflix series. The city is packed with fun and free things to do with your furry companion. If your hipster hound keeps asking for the Baha Men on vinyl, you can take them to dog-friendly Amoeba Music to shop. There are many dog beaches and off-leash parks. Every year West Hollywood hosts the Pawsapalooza with food trucks, pet boutique vendors, and special events.

Some Runner-Up Cities

Honorable mentions go to a few noteworthy cities, who don't rank in other areas.

Portland, Maine gets the award for most pro-cat city. They're one of the few states to have a state cat (the adorable giant Maine Coon) and almost half of the residents in the city own a cat. The other state animal is a moose. Maine doesn't mess around with their state animals.

Worth noting, **California** has the most veterinarians per capita, almost twice as many as the next ranking state.

Every year, cities develop more dog parks, they're one of the fastest growing public land amenities. The award for most dog parks per capita goes to **Boise, Idaho**. But the most total dog parks is a whopping 145 in **New York City**.

The honorable mentions list is growing and even small cities are adding more amenities for pets every day. Millennials may kill the *cereal industry*, *casual dining*, and *luxury goods*; but the pet care industry is thriving. And it's not just the United States that's obsessed with our pets, millennials the world over are transforming their cities into pet-friendly metropolises.

European Dog-Friendly Cities

I can't be the only one who has a secret dream of running off to Paris to train to be a pastry chef at Le Cordon Bleu. But seeing as I have yet to bake scones without burning them, planning a European vacation is more practical. If you're wracked with guilt leaving your furry life partner behind, consider visiting these European cities. They all have hundreds of **pet-friendly hotels**, **attractions** your dog can visit with you, and **pet-centric businesses**. [source](#)

- **Paris, France.** Parisian dogs go everywhere with their owners, including boutiques, restaurants, and even the metro. Stay at **Le Meurice**, a historic dog-friendly hotel.
- **Amsterdam, The Netherlands.** Let your pup run off leash in any of the city's public parks, or take them for a ride on a rental bike. Stay at **Neighbor's Magnolia Hotel**.
- **Barcelona, Spain.** Bring your dog to the many dog-friendly beaches along the coast. Don't worry about leaving your pup behind for dinner, most restaurants allow dogs.
- **Berlin, Germany.** The city's Walkability score is 97 but if your paws get tired, dogs are allowed on the metro. Stay at the **Gorki Apartments**, where your dog gets its own bed.
- **Bruges, Belgium.** Spend all day checking out dog friendly cafes and pubs along cobblestone streets. In particular, visit **The Doghouse**, close to city attractions.

Travelling with your pooch has never been easier. As millennials dominate the workforce and the pet-industry continues to grow, there are more and more places that will spoil your dog just as much as you do.

Simple graph or chart: 53% of travellers with pets travel with their companion. American's are more likely (56%) than residents of the UK (41%). [source](#)

What Being Pet-Friendly Does for Your City

All cities are becoming more pet friendly each year, partly because pet owners are willing to spend. There's a good chance that my (pretend) training at Le Cordon Bleu would earn you more as a dog-baker than a pastry chef.

"Pet care industry is booming, with North American sales expected to hit \$281 billion by 2023."
-[Business Insider](#)

Making cities pet-friendly improves the quality of life for everyone, not just pet owners. When cities start focusing on improvements for pets, the first result is usually more open green spaces. Under-utilized spaces are reclaimed, activating abandoned parts of the city in disrepair.

"People with pets tend to get more exercise, report less loneliness and stress, and have stronger social ties. So, when communities work to be pet friendly—when city pets are part of city conversations—it's an investment in the health and wellbeing of everyone." *Mars Petcare Program* [source](#)

Your relationship with your pet will probably outlast many of the relationships you have with people. The average romantic relationship lasts only **2 years and 9 months** according to the [Daily Mail](#). The average lifespan of a pet these days? **Over a decade**. If you've ever thought twice about moving to San Francisco to give a relationship a shot with someone you right-swiped, then you at least owe your pet the same courtesy.

Ok, maybe that's not realistic. But, consider this...

Use our **Top Ten** list to plan your next vacation and take your dog with you. There are more pet-friendly airlines than ever before, and pet-friendly hotels. It's easy to plan a vacation and not leave your best friend behind. In the meantime, get to know your neighbors and fellow pet-lovers and work on increasing the pet-friendliness score in your hometown.

Become a Top Ten City

You live in a city you love, but you're not putting up big numbers in the Pet Friendliness ranks. I'm looking at you:

- **Newark, NJ:** Fewest Pet Businesses.
- **San Bernardino, CA:** Fewest Dog-Friendly Restaurants.
- **Lexington, KY:** Fewest Animal Shelters.
- **Philadelphia, PA:** Highest Veterinary Care Costs.

Don't despair about not providing a good enough home for your furry BFF. Instead, become a pet advocate in your city. *You're* the hero that your city's pet citizens need. A few easy tips for increasing your pet friendliness score:

- Citizens can [establish dog parks](#) in their neighborhoods, with just a little community organizing and follow-through.
- Let restaurants with patios know you want dog-friendliness. Follow through by showing up, with friends, to patronize their business.
- Shop local! It's easy to buy online, but local pet businesses also provide expertise, advice, and products you might not otherwise find.

There are contributing statistics to this list that we, as pet owners, can't control. Availability and cost of veterinary care, for example. Or, environmental hazards to outdoor cats. But there's a lot about creating a pet-friendly city that's just improving your city for everyone, pets and human residents alike.

Some of pet-friendliness is a result of **how active** friends of pets (that's us) are in their **community**. Supporting local pet-centric businesses like dog-bakeries, grooming facilities and daycares all keeps money in your community. Maybe there's an empty lot or abandoned area of your neighborhood that is just waiting for transformation into a dog park. And, getting involved comes with the added benefit of making human friends (and their pet counterparts).

Let me know in the comments your favorite pet-friendly activity, or something you can't wait to develop in your city.

This list was compiled with data from the following sources:

- The Trust for Public Land tracks the number of dog parks in cities every year, including new developments and parks per capita. [source](#)

- CATalyst Council is a non-profit that advocates for cat friendliness. Their ranking comes from compiling information about the number of cat owners, how many cats are microchipped, cat-friendly ordinances and bonus points to cities whose mayors have cats. [source](#)
- Trupanion ranked the top 25 cat friendly cities based on cat-specific services, environmental hazards to cats, and homes for sale with cat friendly features. [source](#)
- Pet Wellness score comes from Wallethub and takes into consideration the number of vets, animal trainers, care givers, and dog daycares. [source](#)
- WalkScore is a nonprofit that advocates for more walkability in cities. They award cities a ranking based off of how walkable their neighborhoods are. [source](#)
- Dog Friendliness score adds up the number of groomers, veterinarians, dog daycares, and dog trainers. [source](#)