

Birmingham ranks seventh nationally for retiring foodies

Jay Grossman 9:40 a.m. ET Sept. 6, 2017



For retiring foodies, Birmingham is nothing short of paradise. According to the nation's largest referral service for senior housing options, Birmingham ranks as [one of the top cities](#) in the country for food and alcohol connoisseurs looking for independent living. "Birmingham has a great walkable reputation and the city is loaded with high-quality restaurants," said Ben Hanowell, data scientist with [A Place for Mom](#). "For retiring seniors who like to get around, you really can't beat it."

Hanowell ranks Birmingham at No. 7 on his list of cities with at least two independent retirement communities. Chicago, New York and several cities in California round out the list.

To come up with the rankings, Hanowell said he looked at the cost-of-living index in more than 3,000 cities, then considered restaurants and accessibility. A Place for Mom partners with more than 15,000 communities to provide referrals for independent living and assisted living.

"Our objective was to come up with a list of where can you can go for bite to eat and get the most value out of your senior living experience," Hanowell said. "What we found is that a very large proportion of seniors – even those in assisted living – want to be within walking distance of a dining establishment."

More: [Taco time! Los Tres Amigos now opens](#)

More: [Old Village restaurant crawl draws bigger crowd](#)

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Cris Braun, executive director of Next, [Birmingham's 50-plus community center](#), said the older adult population is the one demographic that spends more money locally than any other group, which includes eating out a few times a week.

"Birmingham has a wide variety of restaurants, from burgers and tacos to fine dining, making it popular among older adults who want to try new places and follow the latest food trends," she said.

Home cooking

Residents at [All Seasons of Birmingham](#) on Elm Street enjoy complimentary transportation into the downtown to walk, shop and eat. They also have the option of staying home and enjoying a phenomenal on-site dining program, complete with an executive chef who previously worked in Chicago.

"It's like a five-star dining experience," All Seasons executive director Joe Del Serrone said. "We have daily specials and a fresh catch ... restaurant-style seating and plenty of delicious dining options for breakfast, lunch and dinner."

There's even a cocktail hour. Del Serrone said the goal is to make residents feel like they're staying in a top-notch resort hotel.

“We invest a lot in our dining program,” he said. “We understand it’s important, especially for this area. Our demographic is worldwide travelers who expect the best.”

Hanowell said autonomy is a key factor for seniors.

Autonomy is perhaps the most important feature of satisfaction among older adults,” he said. “In fact, there’s research that shows people who live in neighborhoods with diverse amenities actually feel a greater sense of autonomy, even if they need some assistance getting around.”

Top 7 cities for retiring foodies:

1. Evanston, Ill.
2. New York, N.Y.
3. Bronx, N.Y.
4. San Leandro, Calif.
5. Tarzana, Calif.
6. Culver City, Calif.
7. Birmingham, Mich.