

# 2010: Top 10 Cities for Single Women

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What makes a city a best place to live for single women?

This year, **SingleMindedWomen.com** analyzed major U.S. cities, with an emphasis on the criteria readers tell us are most important to them: **employment opportunities**; cost of living; access to **travel**; entertainment options; social opportunities; **ratio of women to men**; singles population; and **healthy lifestyle**, along with a few other **lifestyle** factors.

## Method to Our Madness

As the country emerges from the worst recession since the Great Depression, employment weighs heavily on the minds of single women and other working-age Americans. With career focus as a given, we disqualified any city with an unemployment rate above the national average, which at the time of our analysis was 10 percent. This immediately left some fabulous cities out of the running. See you later, Chicago; adios, San Diego; hasta la vista, Los Angeles; sorry, San Francisco. Favorite Florida cities, along with Atlanta, also didn't make the cut.

To earn a spot in the Top 10, an international airport was a requirement. Single-minded women want to be able to get there, wherever there may be, with ease.

Once we pared down our list, we examined industries and employers, and compared cost of living. We then looked at percentage of singles to the general population, as well as ratio of women to men. In addition, we explored venues for social activities, arts, sports, and other entertainment. We also looked at cities from the standpoint of healthy living, with good health taking into account body, mind, and spirit. Finally, we considered other aspects of lifestyle, such as aesthetics, personal style, and community support.

## Drum Roll, Please



**1. Boston.** For single women, Boston has it all. The city’s unemployment rate is more than two points below the national average, and Boston offers a wide range of career opportunities.

A renowned education hub, Beantown is home to some of the nation’s top colleges and universities. Whether you’re seeking a degree or looking to further your knowledge in a field, this is the place to do it.

But school ain’t just for learning. Boston’s colleges and universities are among the city’s many employers. Boston is also home to high-tech research, a growing biotech industry, health care facilities, and many large financial firms. In addition, it’s a publishing hub.

When it comes to cost of living, Boston is considerably less expensive than a number of other cosmopolitan locales, including New York and Washington, D.C., and surprising it’s even slightly less expensive than Seattle.

For cost of living, we referenced [Sperling’s BestPlaces](#) data, which factors in housing, food/groceries, transportation, utilities, health, and miscellaneous expenses using a variety of resources. (For additional details, see “Sources of Information” on Page 12.)

The reasonable cost of living in Boston, coupled with big city salaries, allows single women to splurge on entertainment, and in this city there’s plenty to do. If you’re a sports fan, you’ll find top teams in Boston, no matter your sport of choice. Boston is home to the Red Sox, the Celtics, and the Bruins. And of course, on the outskirts of town, you can watch the New England Patriots play.

Culture abounds in Boston: Symphony, opera, and theatre all flourish here. If you favor rock, pop, hip-hop, jazz, country or other musical entertainment, you’ll also find what

you seek. A variety of large, mid-size, and small venues host top musicians and emerging talent.

The city boasts several top art, science, and history museums, and is home to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. And speaking of history, Boston is steeped in it. From the nation's oldest baseball stadium, Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox, to historic Faneuil Hall, now part of a gigantic marketplace, and more, time spent in Boston gives you insight into the country's heritage.

Within the city itself there are countless opportunities for entertainment and social interaction. But what Boston has to offer the social single woman isn't confined to the city limits. Fabulous beaches are only a short distance away, as are opportunities for skiing and snowboarding. Meanwhile, Logan International Airport is easily accessible, and it offers on average more than 1,100 flights per day.

From the standpoint of housing, the city offers a variety of choices that include historic brownstones and modern high-rises. With regard to personal style and fashion, in Boston you'll find nearly everything you could possibly desire. If Newbury Street, an eight-block stretch of shops and boutiques, doesn't strike your fancy, there are malls, department stores, and outlets.

Boston is culturally diverse and, like most large U.S. cities, allows for individual expression and lifestyle. There are houses of worship for various religious denominations and resources for spiritual exploration. Well-being and Beantown go together in other ways as well; the city has top hospitals and health care facilities.

Boston has slightly more women than men, approximately 52 percent to 48 percent, but approximately 33 percent of the population is single. Add to the mix the fact that Boston singles tended to be educated and career-minded, and you have a winning formula, one that earned Boston SingleMindedWomen.com's 2010 Top City status.



**2. Washington, D.C.** The nation's capital is a capital place for single women. Although it is an expensive place to live (in fact, it's the most expensive city on our list, edging out New York by a percentage point), Washington, D.C. has a lot going for it.

At the top of the list is employment opportunity. The city has the lowest unemployment rate of the cities on our list, 6.2 percent, largely because

Uncle Sam is hiring.

What's more, the outlook for employment should be strong for the foreseeable future. And it's not only because new jobs are being created—which they are; the federal government currently loses over 50,000 employees per year to retirement. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) estimates that 60 percent of the current federal workforce of 3 million will be eligible to retire in the next 10 years. It all translates to career opportunities.

The federal government employs professionals in virtually every field, and positions generally come with terrific benefits packages.

If a government job doesn't interest you, perhaps a position in one of the areas many colleges or universities will. Washington, D.C. is also a high tech hub.

Culturally speaking, the nation's capital has much to keep a single woman occupied. The Smithsonian, the world's largest museum complex, includes art and history museums and the National Zoo. The National Gallery of Art, other museums, memorials, and national landmarks will keep you busy as well. In this city, comfortable shoes are a must.

Pro sports fans will find teams to root for in the nation's capital. If you're looking for sports or recreation, you'll find it in D.C. as well. The 300-acre East Potomac Park has

hiking and biking trails, a golf course, and more. You can also kayak on the Potomac River.

Beach lovers will find many sand and surf destinations within a short distance of the city. A weekend at the beach, whether in Maryland, Delaware or Virginia, can definitely be on your summer itinerary if you live in Washington, D.C.

If you have longer trips in mind, travel is no problem. From Dulles International Airport you can reach your dream international destinations, and Reagan National Airport can keep you connected to domestic locations.

When it comes to housing, options abound. Washington has neighborhoods to suit almost every single woman: historic Georgetown, the popular and conveniently located Dupont Circle, and the trendy Adams Morgan, to name a few.

The singles scene is alive and thriving in the nation's capital city. There are slightly more women than men in Washington, D.C., but approximately 33 percent of the population is single. Add to this a backdrop of history and glamour that includes heads of state and visiting dignitaries and single women have lots of opportunities for national and international dating adventures.



**3. New York, New York.** So nice they named it twice, and it might have gotten top billing on the Top Cities for Single Women list were it not for the high cost of living and the rate of unemployment, which was 9.1 percent at the time of our analysis. The financial services sector took a huge hit during the recession, and as a result New York was dealt a blow. And it wasn't only Wall Street jobs that were impacted; the trickle down effect of the economy hurt the entire city.

Be that as it may, the employment outlook is improving, in financial services and other industries. It's also worth noting that New York offers far more than bulls and bears in the way of employment. Advertising, fashion, theatre, business services, technology, and of course tourism are all big in the Big Apple. The legal profession is a top employer here as well. Although it too was hurt by the recession, like finance, it shows signs of bouncing back.

Professional positions in New York tend to pay well. However, it isn't cheap to live in this metropolis. Fortunately, home and rental prices have dropped because of the economy, and in fact there are deals to be had.

There are also a wide variety of neighborhoods and housing choices, from Greenwich Village with its brownstones to lofts in SoHo to doorman buildings in Midtown, and more.

As the fashion capital of the U.S., New York is a singleista shopper's paradise. Whether you favor the high-end fashion of Fifth Avenue or downtown's boutiques, you'll find something to suit your style in Manhattan.

When it comes to entertainment, this truly is the city that never sleeps. New York is a bustling center of commerce and tourism by day, but at night it glows, literally. The bright lights of Broadway, the soft glow of the Empire State Building, and the

shimmering Chrysler Building are just a few landmarks that continue to dazzle, regardless of how long you live in New York.

And of course there's no shortage of entertainment. Besides Broadway, there's Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, concerts at Madison Square Garden, countless clubs and other music venues, and restaurants galore.

Few, if any, cities rival New York in terms of art museums. Meanwhile, the Museum of Natural History and the Hayden Planetarium allow for journeys far beyond the city.

Sports fans will find top teams to root for in New York. Sports enthusiasts will also find plenty of opportunities for play as well. Central Park's 843 acres include 58 miles of pedestrian paths where, yes, you can train for the New York City Marathon.

Weekend getaways to the mountains of Upstate New York for camping and hiking in summer or skiing and snowboarding in winter are easy. The world famous Hamptons, with their incredible beaches, are also only a short distance away.

Long distance travel is convenient from JFK International Airport or La Guardia Airport. Rail and bus offer travel options as well.

There are slightly more women than men in New York, but as in Washington, D.C., approximately 33 percent of the population is single. What's more, in New York there are no shortages of opportunities to mingle. If you're interested in a fast-paced, exciting city, where you can also shop till you drop, you might want to make a brand new start of it in old New York.



**4. Seattle.** If the Pacific Northwest beckons, Seattle may be calling.

Although the recession impacted the city's employment opportunities (unemployment was 9 percent at the time of our analysis), Seattle offers career potential for the long-term. Top industries include technology, which is poised for continued growth this decade, and biotech and medical equipment, two other high-growth fields. Aerospace is also big in this city known for the Space Needle restaurant and observation deck.

The view of Seattle from above and below offers much to behold, from the metropolitan skyline to Puget Sound, Lake Washington, and the Great Smoky Mountains. As a city, Seattle is both urban and untamed.

This duality is reflected in the city's culture. Seattle's history as a timber and gold rush town and as a seaport has always drawn those with a sense of adventure. In the 1980s, the city's unconventional spirit gave birth to grunge, the rock music movement that arguably defined rebellion for a generation.

Today, Seattle's music scene still thrives, as do the performing arts. In fact, there's no shortage of things to do in this city. Seattle's list of entertainment options includes pro sports teams, art museums, and more.

Outdoor recreation is at the top of the list of things to do in this city, where a healthy lifestyle matters. Hiking and climbing are favorite sports in Seattle—and in fact, even on rainy days you can get your fix. The city is home to the Pinnacle, one of the tallest, freestanding indoor climbing walls in the world, which can be found at outdoor gear, equipment and clothing maker REI's Yale Avenue location.

Dubbed the Emerald City in the 1980s, Seattle is so named because of the lush evergreen forests in the surrounding area. Today, however, green also applies to the mindset of residents, who take environmental responsibilities seriously. In Seattle, there are many

opportunities to participate in group and community activities related to various green and environmental issues.

Seattle is 20 percent less expensive than New York, which allows a single woman to take in the scene, and sock away money for travel. From this city, it's easy to tour the country—or the world. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac Airport) is approximately 30 minutes from Seattle's downtown.

In comparison to the top three cities on our list, housing in Seattle is relatively inexpensive, (although other factors, including health care, drive up the overall cost of living), and there are numerous options. Seattle has condos, lofts, and traditional apartments, but there are also many single family homes. In this waterfront city, houseboats and floating homes are also an option. Ahoy, Seattle.

The ratio of women to men is almost equal in Seattle, and approximately 30 percent of the population is single. These factors, combined with career opportunities, a reasonable cost of living, and a lifestyle conducive to health, well-being, and individuality, make Seattle a best city for single women.



**5. Philadelphia.** The City of Brotherly Love has much to offer single sisters. Its unemployment rate is below the national average, and the city is not dependent on one or two industries for career opportunities.

Philadelphia's top industries include finance, insurance, medical instruments and supplies manufacturing, medical research, and pharmaceuticals. The city also has a thriving tourist business; Philadelphia is among the most-visited cities in the United States.

Home to an impressive array of colleges and universities and museums, Philly offers plenty to stimulate your interest. The city also has many historic sites, including Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed, and the Liberty Bell. And if that weren't enough, Philadelphia lays claim to championship-winning sports teams.

There is always something happening in Philly, no matter the time of year. During the year-end holidays, the city comes alive with the spirit of the season. The city's many traditions include the Festival of Trees at the Pearl S. Buck House, which features more than a dozen beautifully decorated trees. The Philadelphia International Flower Show, the world's largest indoor exhibition, held annually in March, will put you in the mood for spring. In fall, there are harvest festivals. And of course in summer there is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. No city celebrates Independence Day like Philadelphia.

Single women seeking housing in the city of sisterly love will find a wide range of choices, from modern skyscrapers to row houses to Victorian homes. And the cost of living in Philly is 44 percent less than New York.

This allows for travel opportunities, and there are plenty of places to go within a short distance of the city. The Jersey Shore is only a couple of hours away, as are the Pocono

Mountains. The city is also within close proximity to two other top places on our list: Washington, D.C. and New York.

Like a few other cities on our list, Philly has slightly more women than men, but approximately 33 percent of the population is single. The large number of singles, low cost of living, and high number of cultural, entertainment, and other social opportunities, not to mention array of industries, make Philadelphia a favorite city.



**6. Phoenix.** If you want to go west, single woman, consider Phoenix. With an unemployment rate below the national average and several main industries from which to choose, Phoenix just might be the place where your career soars.

High tech and manufacturing, two sectors showing signs of improvement, are big area employers, as are the aerospace and service industries. The city is also home to a number of Fortune 1000 companies and several colleges and universities.

The cost of living in Phoenix is 45 percent less than New York, and one benefit of the recession is that housing has recently become much more affordable. Whether you're seeking an apartment, condo or single family home, you'll find it in Phoenix. And if Southwest is your style, you've found your paradise.

Phoenix is steeped in Native American history, and local style reflects the influence. Architecture, décor, clothing, jewelry, and more are distinctly Southwest in color and design.

Not surprising, history and art museums tout area culture. However, Phoenix also enjoys a thriving contemporary arts scene.

Phoenix is also home to professional baseball, basketball, football, and hockey teams, so single women sports fan will feel right at home.

There are many opportunities for pursuing healthy living in Phoenix. The city and surrounding areas include mountain and desert preserves where you can enjoy everything the beautiful outdoors has to offer. Be forewarned: Summers are hot in Phoenix. The tradeoff is that during the winter months temperatures are mild.

Be that as it may, winter sports enthusiasts should not dismiss Phoenix. There are plenty of opportunities for skiing and snowboarding within a few hours of the city.

There's much to hold your attention in Phoenix, and much to explore year round a short distance away, including one of the most spectacular sites on earth, the Grand Canyon. Travel is also easy from Sky Harbor International Airport, which offers approximately 1,500 flights per day and is only three miles from downtown Phoenix.

The ratio of women to men is nearly equal in Phoenix, and approximately 30 percent of the population is single. The downtown art and music scene offers a lot of entertainment possibilities, and places to meet people.

Because life in Phoenix favors both your personal and professional life, this city rises above several others on our list.



**7. Denver.** The Mile High City is high on the list of Top Cities for Single Women for a number of reasons. Its top industries include aerospace, aviation, satellite, mining, energy, and bioscience. A number of these fields, particularly energy and bioscience, offer a range of job opportunities.

The rate of unemployment in Denver is below that of most major cities; in fact, with the exception of Washington, D.C., Denver has the lowest unemployment rate of any city on our list.

The cost of living is also fairly reasonable in Denver; it's 36 percent less expensive to live in Denver than in New York.

The city offers every type of housing option, from apartments, condos, and lofts to single family homes. Rental rates are reasonable, particularly in relation to other metro areas. Single women looking to purchase a home can also find value for the dollar in Denver. And chances are your home will have a view of the Rocky Mountains.

The majestic Rockies are a source of beauty and activity. Whether you're into skiing, hiking, camping or just taking in the scenery, you'll be able to do it living in Denver. Nearby state and national parks are among the most magnificent in the country.

But Denver isn't only for rugged outdoor types. Single women will also find sophistication in this city. Arts and culture will stimulate your mind and nourish your creativity. Meanwhile, top spas and salons will help you address other aspects of wellbeing.

The city is home to several colleges and universities, as well as top sports teams. There's plenty to see and do in Denver, whether alone, with friends or as a couple.

And speaking of couples, single women will find plenty of solo mates in Denver where approximately 30 percent of the population is single and the ratio of women to men is almost even. A nearly perfect singles equation, job opportunities, and the great outdoors make us Rocky Mountain high on Denver, Colorado.



**8. Pittsburgh.** If you still have images of Pittsburgh as a steel town, it's time to take another look. This city has evolved into a bustling center of commerce, and it has become quite cosmopolitan in the process.

Pittsburgh's unemployment rate is far below the national average, with top industries that include finance, health care, and technology. Job seekers take note: Two out of those three, health care and technology, are high-growth industries. The city is also headquarters to a dozen Fortune 1000 corporations.

What's more, the cost of living in Pittsburgh is 49 percent less than New York—and that's not a typo. Homes are priced well below the national average in Pittsburgh, which means more house for your money *and* more money after your housing costs are covered. Indeed, whether you plan to rent or own, you can plan on your dollars going further in a city that offers Victorian and other single family homes, townhouses and condos, lofts, and more.

Pittsburgh boasts several top universities, including the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University. Education is integral to this city, and it offers professional growth and employment opportunities.

The arts also thrive here. Art museums include the Andy Warhol Museum and the Carnegie Museum for the Arts, among others. The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Opera, and the Pittsburgh Ballet all feature top talent.

In addition, Pittsburgh is home to major league baseball, football, and hockey teams.

From the standpoint of personal recreation, the city's parks and three rivers offer numerous possibilities that include hiking, biking, canoeing, kayaking, and more.

Pittsburgh has slightly more women than men, but approximately 29 percent of the population is single. One of the many positive aspects of Pittsburgh is its ethnic diversity, which contributes to the city's culture and its charm, and allows for an affinity, even if you are originally from elsewhere.

A single woman looking to further her career and enjoy a variety of entertainment options, while enjoying the best of old and new in a classic yet affordable American city, should consider picking Pittsburgh. It's why we did.



**9. Dallas.** There's a reason all your exes live in Texas, particularly if the city is Dallas.

Top industries in Dallas include defense, financial services, information technology, and life sciences. These and other fields serve the area well in terms of job opportunities; the city's unemployment rate is below the national average.

The cost of living in Dallas is also below many other cities on our list, and it's 44 percent below the cost of living in New York.

Housing options include luxury high rises, townhouses in gated communities, single family homes, and more. And yes, if a true ranch is your dream (as opposed to the house kind), on the outskirts of the city you can find one with a corral or two.

But don't mistakenly think Dallas is all cowboys and cowgirls. The city has a thriving arts community, six cultural centers, a performing arts center, an opera house, and more. Dallas is also home to many fine restaurants, antique shops, and specialty shops.

In addition, Dallas features upscale malls, designer boutiques, and vintage shops. If you like to shop, you'll love this aspect of Dallas.

Pro sports and this city go hand in hand, as does enthusiasm for the home team. Everything is big in Texas, including the singles population. More than 30 percent of the adult residents are single, and the ratio of women to men is nearly even.

There's plenty to do in Dallas, but when you're ready to travel, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport offers options that are limited only by your imagination. It's the world's third busiest airport, with nearly 1,750 flights per day.

Travel options, social options and job options make us opt for Dallas as a top city.



**10. Austin.** Rounding out the Top Ten is another Texas city with a lot to offer single women: Austin.

Like several other cities on our list, Austin has an unemployment rate far below the national average. This is largely because three of the city's top industries, high tech, pharmaceutical, and bio tech, are growth industries. And all three will hold even more promise as the economy recovers.

The cost of living in Austin is extremely reasonable compared to other cities, and it's 47 percent below the cost of living in New York.

There are a variety of housing options in Austin, whether you choose to rent or own. In this city, as in Dallas, your dollars will go a long way. In fact, if you're relocating from a more expensive metropolis, you'll likely be amazed at what you can afford.

When it comes to entertainment, there's plenty to do in Austin, particularly if you enjoy live music. Austin lays claim to 200 live music venues. Blues and country are predominant, but classical music is also popular.

Austin is the only city on our list without a pro sports team, and the largest city in the U.S. without a pro team. Sports fans may find this disappointing, although it's worth noting that the University of Texas does have a championship-winning football team.

The University of Texas and other universities and colleges are sources of education, naturally, but they also offer social opportunities. This is particularly noteworthy in Austin, where the population skews a little bit younger than the other cities on our list.

The median age of residents in other SMW Top Cities for Single Women all fall in the 30s; in Austin, the median age is just over 29. It's not a dramatic difference, but the

median age of the population in Austin is, for example, younger by five years or more in comparison to Washington, D.C., New York, Seattle, and Pittsburgh.

Nevertheless, Austin claims the largest single population of cities on our list: Approximately 35 percent of the population is single. It also happens that there are slightly more men than women in this city.

Take a great singles scene, throw in lots of live music, add affordable housing and job opportunities, and you have the No. 10 city on our list, Austin.

## Choosing Your Best City

Now that you've toured the country with SMW, you're probably wondering: How do I choose *my* best city?

While we can help with the major categories, your personal preferences will also factor in. For example, if snow is a must-have, Phoenix most likely won't be a favorite. Meanwhile, if you crave wide open spaces, New York City may not be the best choice.

However, by weighing what you want in the context of what SingleMindedWomen.com's Top 10 Cities for Single Women offer, you should be able to find a location that satisfies most of your requirements—and will be a place you can call home.

## Sources of Info

SingleMindedWomen.com would like to acknowledge [Sperling's BestPlaces](#), which we referenced for cost of living, using New York as our benchmark city.

Sperling's factors housing (31 percent), food/groceries (16 percent), transportation (10 percent), utilities (8 percent), health (5 percent), and miscellaneous (30 percent) into its cost of living analysis and uses a variety of resources. These resources include published and unpublished data from the Consumer Price Index, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); health costs from Medicare and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; the Consumer Expenditure Survey (BLS); Current Population Survey (BLS), Department of Energy; the Federal Travel Directory; National Association of Realtors; Home Price Mortgage Index from Freddie Mac; median home sales prices from state realtor associations and county deed records; Coldwell Banker's Home Price Index; and Sperling's own research. Sperling's tells us most metrics have been updated in the past three to six months.

We utilized Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to look at industries with projected growth and compared this data to top industries in major cities. To analyze industries within cities, we relied on numerous sources, including Wikipedia, City-Data.com, and individual city websites.

BLS metropolitan summary analysis provided unemployment information. BLS data and Census Bureau data was also a source of population information, particularly with regard to the ratio of women to men. We relied on Google Maps mashups for singles population data.

Interestingly, it is difficult to find comprehensive data that provides accurate breakdowns of the number of single women to single men. We found most numbers are based on small segments of the populations or outright estimates. Therefore, we chose to share information about the mix of the overall population and the singles population separately. We would like to point out, however, that our own spot analysis finds the ratio of single

women to single men tends to be relatively consistent with the overall population; in other words, if the ratio of women to men is approximately 50-50, the ratio of singles is typically in proportion.

Other sources of information include Craigslist and real estate websites (for housing information); airport websites; various state and city websites for park, recreation, arts, and entertainment information and links; college and university websites; and again, Wikipedia. Google Maps was a tremendous asset in terms of analyzing distance and providing geographical information and reference points.

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