



We suggest: Las Vegas NV, Tucson AZ, Philadelphia PA, Los Angeles CA and Atlanta GA. Of course, choosing them is very much a matter of personal opinion. Sometimes, senior travelers may decide to forego the big cities and choose a quaint little mountain town where nothing much happens, and whatever does happen, doesn't cost a lot.

They love the comfy little B&B that charges \$35 a night, including breakfast. And the little family restaurant is famous for its five-course dinner for only \$5.99 a person. For recreation, there's boating on the lake for \$2 an hour, and free scenic biking and hiking trails all around.

Other travelers prefer big cities with their posh hotels, bright lights, upscale restaurants, top-rate entertainment and exciting places to see. Of course, if they choose big cities, they must be prepared to pay big prices. Right? Not necessarily. Here are some choices of five of some major American cities to visit. If you do it right, it can be done on a budget.

1. Las Vegas NV: This could be an inexpensive surprise to some people who haven't yet been to Sin City. They believe Vegas is there to take your money in the casinos, and they're right, if you go just to gamble. However, if you visit Vegas to enjoy all the many other pleasures the town offers, you'll be amazed at how easily you can do it on a budget.

Really great hotel rooms and suites at the best high-rise resorts that would cost you \$500 a night in New York City are less than \$100 in Vegas. The famous Vegas buffets and dinners with price tags of \$10 would cost \$70 or more in Chicago. Some hotels offer combination bargains at \$100 a night that include three free daily buffet meals. What self-respecting traveling chowhound could resist that bargain?

You can stroll the Vegas Strip and old Wild West downtown area and enjoy enough free entertainment to keep you happy for hours. Examples: The Fremont Street Experience is a massive overhead projection show that goes on every night. There's a nightly earth-shattering, erupting volcano at the Mirage, and a real, live lion habitat at MGM Grand.

2. Tucson AZ: Once a sleepy little desert town, today it's a modern city of a million people. It still offers the classic Arizona beauty that budget-minded tourists enjoy. Surrounding Tucson is the magnificent Saguaro National Park and mountains, where the tall cacti rule the landscape. You can stroll along with rattlers, roadrunners, coyotes, pumas and javalinas. Hotel and restaurant prices are modest, and the summer warmth lasts all year long.

3. Philadelphia PA: Visit the colonial city where the U.S. was born 240 years ago in 1776. Hotels and bed and breakfasts near Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell are reasonably priced. Many of the city's best restaurants, budget department stores and fine shopping are all within walking distance. Fairmount Park and the banks of the Schuylkill River are great for cycling, strolling or picnics at any time of the year.

4. Los Angeles CA: Skip grungy downtown and see the great sights of Hollywood, Beverly Hills and the beaches of Venice, Santa Monica and Malibu. Along with your touring and hiking, you'll experience amusement parks and budget oceanside restaurants with exotic foods to enjoy. While window shopping in Beverly Hills, you may bump into your favorite movie or TV stars looking for the same bargains.

When planning to visit the City of Angels, check with your travel agent or online for free audience tickets. There are many quiz, late night, sitcom live TV or tapings at studios and theaters throughout the town. Visit great museums and galleries, many with mid-week free entry. When you tire of hiking and biking, extensive Metro bus and subway service costs just \$5 for an all-day pass.

5. Atlanta GA: It's the biggest airline hub in the world, so if you're flying from here to there and must change planes in Atlanta, take the time to spend a day or two in this wonderful town. You'll find it's much more easy on travelers than when General Sherman visited during the Civil War.

You won't find any statues of that Yankee invader in Atlanta, but take a bus and see for free the enormous carving on Stone Mountain, called the Mount Rushmore of the South. The massive figures depict Confederate heroes of the Civil War.

A relaxing way to go through downtown Atlanta is by riding a tour boat or renting a canoe and floating right through on the Chattahoochee River. Additionally, for free, you can visit the Fernbank Science Center and the Governor's Mansion.

Other free tours include the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum, the Martin Luther King National Historic Site and the Margaret Mitchell House and Museum, where the author of "Gone With the Wind" once lived.

Of course, there are many more than just five great American cities well worth visiting on a budget. If you do some homework before you go, you'll be able to find the best and most economical hotels, restaurants and entertainment. In almost any city, you can do it on a budget. You'll also find many interesting activities you can do absolutely free.