

It's a slam-dunk — Boston is fun place to call home

Boston named No. 3 U.S. city for fun

BY G. SCOTT THOMAS
PORTFOLIO.COM AND BIZJOURNALS.COM



Boston's recent sports teams' success — a couple of World Series rings, three Super Bowl championships, another NBA crown and a grinding hockey franchise — has elevated the Hub to the No. 3 "Fun City" in the nation, according to a new analysis by portfolio.com/bizjournals.com. However, Boston's present-day success can't overcome history.

New York City was dubbed "Fun City" more than 40 years ago as an ironic reference to the woes the city faced then.

Transit strikes, rising crime rates, soaring taxes were the news of the day. But the mayor, John Lindsay, a dashing ex-congressman in his mid-40s, took the bad news in stride. He said that no matter what happened, New York was still an enjoyable place to live. It was a fun city, he insisted.

A nickname was born. Columnists quickly put Lindsay's offhand remark in capital letters, ironically dubbing the metropolis Fun City.

That's not what people remember today. New York is still called Fun City, but the term stopped being a knock more than 30 years ago. It has evolved into a tribute to the city's rebirth, energy and spirit.

Several factors make New York the clear leader.

- It's the No. 1 market in three of the study's seven categories: shopping, food and drink, and culture. And it's a runner-up in three others, ranking second for high-impact sports and third for popular entertainment and low-impact sports.
- It overwhelms all other markets in sheer volume. The New York City area, for instance, has 431 museums and historical sites. That's more than the combined total of 349 in Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas, the next three metropolitan areas in population.
- It boasts impressive concentrations in several fields. New York City has 399.7 stores, 82.8 restaurants, 12.5 fitness centers and 2.3 museums per 100,000 residents.

Second place on the list of America's fun places belongs to Chicago, which ranks among the 10 leaders in six of the study's seven categories. Its best performances are third place for food and drink, and fourth place for popular entertainment.

Boston came in first for high-impact and low-impact sports, hit the No. 3 spot for cultural offerings and took No. 4 in the shopping category. Rounding out the top 10 are Miami, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland (Maine), Philadelphia and Minneapolis.

It comes as no surprise that most of these markets have landed at the upper end of the rankings. These large metros are renowned for their broad variety of entertainment and recreational options.

But skeptics might question the inclusion of the Portland, Maine, area (population: 512,000), the only metro in the top 10 with a population below 3 million. Portland doesn't have the flashy image of its bigger counterparts, yet it's still a fun place:

- It's a haven for shoppers. No U.S. market has a stronger concentration of stores than Portland's 521.7 per 100,000 residents. The typical U.S. metro has just 356.8 stores per 100,000.
- It's ideal for boaters and fishermen, offering quick access to the Atlantic Ocean. Portland leads the nation with 7.4 marinas per 100,000 residents.
- It's versatile. Portland is among the five concentration leaders in seven other fields: fitness centers, restaurants, golf courses, amusement parks, museums, movie theaters and performing arts companies.

Missing from the top 10 are several renowned tourist destinations, including New Orleans (13th), Las Vegas (26th), Washington (27th), Atlanta (34th), Orlando (42nd), Tampa (45th) and Phoenix (57th).



Boston Celtics Center Kevin Garnett is just one force that drove Boston to the top of a ranking of fun U.S. cities compiled by Portfolio.com/bizjournals.com.

FUN'S NOT JUST IN THE SUN

Northern cities topped a ranking of most fun U.S. cities.

- 1 NEW YORK CITY
- 2 CHICAGO
- 3 BOSTON
- 4 MIAMI
- 5 LOS ANGELES
- 6 SAN FRANCISCO
- 7 SEATTLE
- 8 PORTLAND, MAINE
- 9 PHILADELPHIA
- 10 MINNEAPOLIS
- 11 PROVIDENCE
- 12 PITTSBURGH
- 13 NEW ORLEANS
- 14 DETROIT
- 15 BRIDGEPORT, CONN.
- 16 DALLAS
- 17 SYRACUSE, N.Y.
- 18 ROCHESTER, N.Y.
- 19 MADISON, WIS.
- 20 DENVER

SOURCE: PORTFOLIO.COM/BIZJOURNALS

