

Homeward Bound

These top-notch RV communities and resorts provide snowbirds and long-term residents comfort, convenience and livability

Snowbirding is just one of the many wonderful perks of RVing. The ability to ditch the cold in search of the sun from the comfort of your own motorhome makes perfect sense, but finding the ideal location to set up shop for months at a time can be a daunting task. The 2017 Good Sam RV Travel & Savings Guide is jam-packed with more than 12,500 listings, but sometimes we need a nudge in the right direction to experience the best of the best. Sometimes, simply offering full hookups and pull-through sites isn't

enough; if we're going to relax and stay awhile, we need a true community, and a location that offers a variety of activities and amenities, in addition to convenient access to area attractions.

That's why we've compiled the list on the following pages of some of the top resorts/communities along the region known as the Sun Belt, which stretches from California to Florida and features moderate winter temperatures, desert landscapes and, yes, even some great places to hit the beach.

Alabama

Located in Orange Beach, Alabama, nestled in with the powdery white sands of the Gulf of Mexico, **Heritage Motorcoach Resort & Marina** offers snowbirds a unique combination: a full-service luxury motorhome resort and a marina offering boat slip rentals. But you don't need to own a boat to appreciate this quaint, peaceful community with 79 sites situated on cobblestone streets lined with gas lamps. At each site, "You'll either have a view of the

water from your coach or be just a few steps away," said Rob Willard, Heritage Homeowner's Association board member. And, the on-site accommodations make for a truly memorable experience. "There are so many things that make Heritage stand out, such as our private marina and amazing setting, but two things that I really appreciate are being on the second-story clubhouse porch around the firepit for the sunrise and the sunset over the water, and second is the amazing infinity pool

looking out over the water," said Willard. Once a visitor books an RV site (access to the coach houses or casitas not included), they are free to enjoy the resort, which includes a grand room with dual big-screen TVs and fireplaces, a fitness center and laundry facility, a dog-friendly private beach and a pavilion on the marina

Heritage Motorcoach
Resort & Marina



for relaxing waterside. But Willard said the stunning surroundings aren't all that make Heritage so special. "While I can't say enough about how beautiful it is here at Heritage, if you talked to any of our owners they would tell you that the people are the main reason they decided to buy here," said Willard. "The people in the Heritage community combined with the beautiful setting on the water, literally make this place magical." And, if you find you can't get enough Heritage, you can purchase a site for a vacation home, rental or even your year-round residence, complete with RV pad, full hookups and 100 mbps wired Internet.

Heritage Motorcoach Resort & Marina
800-730-7032,
www.heritageorangebeach.com



Arizona

With 14 RV resorts designed for active 55-and-older RVers, **Cal-Am Resorts** knows what makes its residents happy. "Our amenities are first-rate, well-maintained and constantly evolving to meet the ever-changing desires of the 55-and-older generation," said Felix Posos, director of marketing for Cal-Am Properties. "Some [of our facilities] include tournament-rated bocce ball, pickleball and shuffleboard courts. Many have grand ballrooms to host themed parties, dances and gatherings. Pristine softball fields are included in a number of our resorts and our pools, spas, fitness rooms and administrative facilities are of the caliber found at any high-end resort," said Posos. But apart from athletic endeavors,



Pala Casino Spa & Resort

Cal-Am makes sure its Arizona and California residents keep busy. "The core of our resorts are the activities teams," said Posos. "Their tireless work to plan and manage multiple events every day provides a host of opportunities for guests to build new friendships, try a new activity, relax and dance to live music at happy hour and build life-long memories." Plus, said Posos, the dining and entertainment are first-rate. "Cal-Am's food service team adds yummy flavors to our bistros and special events with Sunday brunches that whet the appetite while meeting a variety of dietary needs," he said. "And our Concert Series brings in the best acts suited for our audience. In 2018, we will be hosting Gladys Knight, LeAnn Rimes, The Lovin' Spoonful and more. The lifestyle at Cal-Am resorts really is like being on a cruise ship without the waves."

Visitors to most Cal-Am properties are offered daily, weekly and monthly RV reservations, and you can visit their website to see which property best suits your situation. But if you truly enjoy what Cal-Am offers RVers, you can purchase a site at Montesa at Gold Canyon, Arizona, to make the property your own. Montesa is now offering larger homes with optional roof decks, plus optional storage pads adjacent to the home for motorhomes, making it a perfect spot for a snowbird adventure.

Cal-Am Resorts, Montesa at Gold Canyon
877-355-0580, www.cal-am.com

California

Finding a fun way to pass the time is an important part of the motorhome lifestyle. So, it only makes sense to consider a destination such as **Pala Casino Spa & Resort**, located in northern San Diego County, California. With a world-class casino just steps from an upscale RV resort offering 100 full-hookup sites, you can experience the best of both worlds. "The RV resort's location offers privacy and proximity," said Jack Taylor, manager of public relations at Pala. "Guests like the privacy and contact with nature in the Palomar Mountains and the proximity of 10 golf courses, the Temecula Wine Country and, if they so choose, the big city just 50 minutes away," he said. But that's not to say there isn't plenty of allure to stay on the premises. "Of course, the RV resort's own amenities — the heated swimming pool and two spas, the entertainment in the registration building, the privacy of the clubhouse for individual parties and the proximity of a full-service Las Vegas-style casino with 11 restaurants, A-list shows, a national award-winning spa and a fully stocked mini-mart just a shuttle ride away — make Pala RV Resort unique," said Taylor. But Pala also goes out of its way to make visitors feel welcome, something Taylor feels truly sets the resort apart from the rest. "The Pala RV Resort team's attention to detail and follow-up starts the instant a reservation is made [and continues]

all the way to a late check-out," he said. "All guest requests are organized and monitored, from the booking of facilities and dinner/entertainment events at Pala Casino Spa & Resort, to the specific schedule for the free shuttle service to and from the casino. Additional amenities offered at the RV resort include access to five barbecue grills, two table-tennis games, two horseshoe pits and a fenced doggy park." Plus, says Taylor, "Even with all the entertainment opportunities close at hand, the resort team's creativity provides one-of-a-kind special events that last entire weekends, like Derby Day, Halloween, the Fourth of July, Santa's Shindig at Christmas, wine pairings, tailgate chili cookoffs and even a luau. All events involve prizes."

Pala Casino Spa & Resort | 877-946-7252, www.palacasino.com



Florida

Cypress Trail RV Resort

in southwest Florida allows snowbirds to enjoy the rewarding motorhome lifestyle with all the resort amenities they'd expect at an outstanding five-star resort, but without the high price. "We offer the best value for a comparable Florida RV community with so many activities, lot choices/sizes and accessibility," said marketing director Amir Harpaz. This master-planned, gated RV community is conveniently located in Fort Myers off Interstate 75. Each RV site includes city-supplied water and sewer, hard-wired



Internet and basic cable. Additionally, this exciting 472-lot outdoor destination provides residents with a variety of special on-site features and outdoor amenities, including sidewalks throughout the gated resort with lakefront or back-in lots available. Residents enjoy the 12,000-square-foot clubhouse, heated pool, spa, tennis, tournament-quality bocce, pickleball and shuffleboard courts. Two large lakes are on-site, and Cypress Trail says it is south Florida's only RV resort with certified nature trails in its own nature preserve. Cypress Trail is pet-friendly and offers special amenities for your four-legged friends. "Many residents really enjoy that we have a unique dog park and dipping pool so your dog can cool off from the Florida sun," said Harpaz. There's also a secure storage area with electricity for your RV, boat or other large item. Cypress Trail RV Resort offers a variety of lots for sale or use in its site rental program. Potential owners can choose from oversized lakefront, lakeview or private boundary lots, either pull-through or back-in, depending on the size of their motorhome.

Cypress Trail RV Resort | 239-333-3246, www.cypresstrailrv.com

With both rental and deeded lot ownership options, **Florida Grande Motor Coach Resort** in central Florida is a great place for the snowbird season and beyond. Featuring a total of 215 lots and located between farms and grazing cattle (you read that right), Florida Grande offers a truly unique experience. "I believe we are the only resort in Florida to boast cattle as our closest neighbor," said Matthew Smith, developer at Florida Grande. "They mow our front 40 acres." Apart from the unusual neighbors, that location features some other benefits. "Our community boasts a level of peace and quiet that is unparalleled," said Smith. "The resort is bordered on all sides by farmland and is far removed from any traffic, congestion or crime. Yet, if you're in the mood for a night of big-city entertainment, you can be in downtown Orlando or Tampa in less than an hour." But the rural location doesn't mean the resort is lacking in amenities. "The Florida Grande's design was focused exclusively on motorhomes and the RVing way of life," said Smith. "Everything from the extra-wide roads, oversized concrete pads, enormous lot sizes and staging area were designed specifically to accommodate motorhomes. We even

Florida Grande Motor Coach Resort



built an enormous clubhouse just to keep things consistent." There are a number of site rentals available, some also including use of the Grande Suite, an optional add-on that can be selected by the owner during the purchase process. "Visiting our resort you will see how the owners in our community have made their lots unique with quality landscaping, outdoor kitchens, pergolas and, of course, our Grande Suites," said Smith. "The 384 square feet of the [optional] Grande Suite gives our owners the opportunity to create their own space. Almost all have full baths and laundry, with their main uses varying from a grand dining room to relaxing living room or workshop." Smith says the resort plans to complete Phase 2 of its construction over the next few years, which will include another clubhouse, a swimming pool and improvements to the Grande Suite design.

Florida Grande Motor Coach Resort
352-569-1169, www.floridagrande.com



Lake Weir Preserve, an RV community in central Florida, is your chance to own a home in a peaceful, majestic RV-centric setting where nature is more than an amenity. Lake Weir is nestled among scenic natural beauty but within easy reach of Florida's big-name attractions. Lake Weir's location — an hour from Orlando or the Gulf Coast — enables residents to enjoy the best of the Sunshine State. "We are, quite frankly, located in the epicenter of Florida," said Neil Schuster, co-managing partner of Lake Weir Preserve. "Within an hour's drive of all the attractions of Orlando and the beautiful

beaches of both Florida coasts."

But perhaps even more important than the ideal location is the sense of fellowship found within Lake Weir. That feeling of community is why many have purchased a fully customizable floorplan featuring a number of home elevations. Full hookups in an attached RV garage for your motorhome makes necessities such as storage, maintenance and cleaning — as well as loading and unloading — as easy as walking through the door. "Our oversized lots of a third of an acre and larger are perfect for our custom homes featuring RV garages," Schuster said.



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Apart from finding new friends and neighbors just a few doors down, residents at Lake Weir are afforded the opportunity to expand their flock of friends thanks to the amazing shopping, dining and entertainment attractions just minutes from Lake Weir Preserve. "Our residents love the proximity to The Villages, which is just 8 miles away," Schuster added. "But after a round of golf or night on the town, there's no better place to come home to than Lake Weir Preserve."

**Lake Weir Preserve | 866-204-5506,
www.lakeweirpreserve.com**

Georgia

Crossing Creeks RV Resort & Spa offers upscale amenities nestled on 100 acres in the scenic North Georgia Mountains surrounded by the picturesque Coosa and Anderson creeks. "Crossing Creeks RV Resort & Spa is a great location to relax in the fresh mountain air," said marketing director Amir Harpaz. "It's also an outstanding place to view the varied fall colors for which the Blue Ridge Mountains region is known." The historic town of Blairsville is nearby and the resort is just a few hours away via a four-lane paved highway from major metropolitan areas in Georgia, Tennessee and the Carolinas.

Each site is equipped with full hookups and a large concrete pad suitable for motorhomes up to 45 feet long. The premium creek-side lots are designed with an enlarged patio to take advantage of the sparkling sounds of

running water while entertaining on the spacious outdoor living area.

At the heart of the resort is Crossing Creeks Village. The log-sided buildings include a welcome center and sales office, clubhouse, activities center, bathhouse and laundry, and spa and fitness center. The pool and hot tub are set in the center, as are the gazebo and the double-sided waterfall. With a dry sauna and steam rooms, two massage rooms and a gym in the spa, visitors can relax or be as active as they'd like. Professional massage services are available for separate consideration.

Crossing Creeks is also ideal for those without a motorhome who love the outdoor lifestyle. You can purchase a real log cabin and place it on one of the resort's spacious lots (which you can own or lease from Crossing Creeks). "You can [even] place both an RV and a cabin on the same lot," said Harpaz, who added, "This allows lot owners the opportunity to host family members and other guests who may not own an RV but still want to enjoy the lifestyle found in the great outdoors."

Whether you seek a peaceful retreat and the solitude of the Georgia Mountains or enjoy outdoor activities such as golf, kayaking, white-water rafting or fishing, Crossing Creeks is "an extraordinary mountain retreat and destination that's both affordable and accessible," said Harpaz.

Crossing Creeks RV Resort & Spa | 706-835-1111, www.crossingcreeksrvresort.com

Louisiana

Cajun Palms RV Resort in Henderson, Louisiana, offers more than 300 deluxe RV spots for snowbirds. The RV sites feature full hookups, 30- and 50-amp power and more than 70 channels of digital cable. Pull-through and back-in sites include 20 feet of space between each concrete pad.

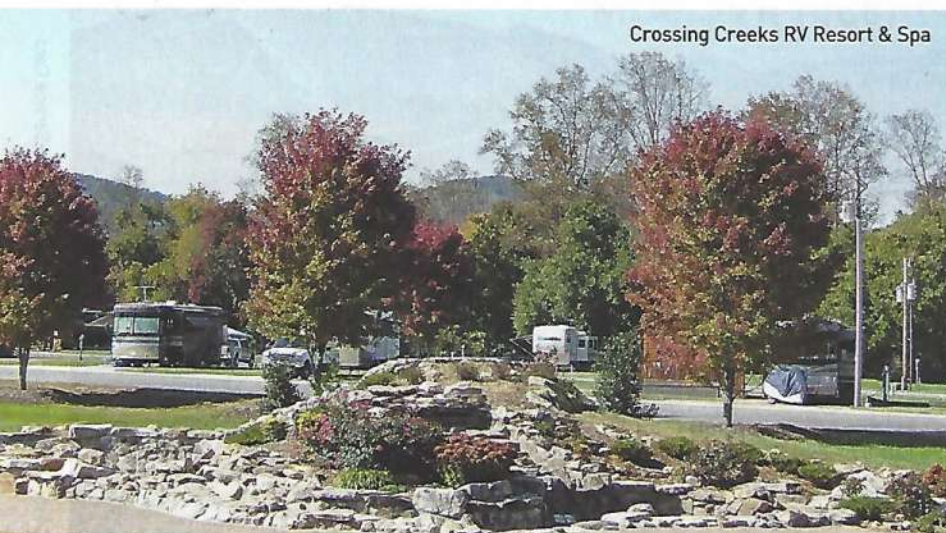
Cajun Palms features a massive clubhouse with an assembly/reception hall with a beverage service counter, band/DJ stage and private bathrooms, and has an occupancy rating of 750. On-site offerings include two concession stands serving prepared food, a poolside patio, a second-floor deck overlooking the resort-style pool and kiddie pool — plus there's a second-floor bar with video poker. Other amenities include a workout facility, video arcade, movie theater, business meeting room and coin-operated laundry facilities. If that's not enough, there are water slides, mini golf, a convenience store and golf-cart rentals. There are also 25 cabins available for rent on site.

**Cajun Palms RV Resort | 337-667-7772,
www.cajunpalms.com**

Mississippi

Having recently undergone an extensive three-year renovation, the new-and-improved **Sun Roamers** in Picayune, Mississippi, offers more than 150 RV sites with full hookups available, in addition to an Olympic-size swimming pool, laundry facilities, fishing, an exercise room and nature trails. Park models and cabins are also available. The on-site 6,000-square-foot clubhouse can accommodate up to 300 people and is equipped with a commercial kitchen, making it a great option for reunions or even small rallies. Plus, the resort is only 45 minutes from Mississippi beaches, historic New Orleans, Louisiana, and many local attractions, including casinos, fine restaurants, golfing and amusement parks.

**Sun Roamers RV Resort | 601-798-5818,
www.sunroamers.com**



Crossing Creeks RV Resort & Spa

Nevada

If trying your hand at lady luck is in the cards this snowbird season, head to Don Laughlin's Riverside Resort & Casino in Laughlin, Nevada. The adjacent **Riverside Resort RV Park** offers a multilevel resort with some 740 RV sites, with full hookups, a dump station and laundry facilities. But the big draw here is no doubt the casino, which provides gamers with slots, bingo, keno, a sports book, poker and more. And, guests to the resort are afforded full access to the hotel/casino's amenities. "A complimentary shuttle will take you to our casino resort, which is right next door," said Diana Fuchs, director of marketing and entertainment. "The casino resort offers a 1,400-room hotel with 24-hour Nevada-style gaming, a 34-lane bowling center, a Six-Plex movie theater, two classic-car museums, a USS Riverside boat tour along the Colorado River up to Davis Dam, and weekly entertainment in our showroom, Don's Celebrity Theatre," she said. And visitors won't be lacking in dining options, as "We also have seven different restaurants to dine in, from our massive buffet to the famous Gourmet Room," said Fuchs. Plus, two swimming pools, two arcades and the nearby Colorado River ensure fun for the whole family.

But Riverside isn't content to rest on its laurels, as the resort has some

pretty significant upgrades on the horizon. "We are currently expanding our salon and day spa to give a truly resort spa experience," said Fuchs. "The Jean Jeffrey Salon & Day Spa will be opening in November, and we are also currently renovating our North Tower Bar planned to reopen in December. But in the meantime, we still have six other casino bars and four other lounge bars to choose from." And that's not all, as the resort has some additional adult renovations planned as well. "Our South Tower Pool will undergo a full expansion and renovation this winter, stretching out to the Colorado River and including fire pits, a round bar with amazing views, private cabanas and live music. Opening spring 2018, it will be a true resort-style adult-only pool experience," said Fuchs.

Riverside Resort & Casino RV Park
800-227-3849, www.riversideresort.com

New Mexico

Snowbirds looking to get their kicks in New Mexico should point their motorhome toward the new **Route 66 RV Resort**, less than 20 minutes west of downtown Albuquerque. Located just steps away from Route 66 Casino Hotel, visitors can enjoy 100 full-hookup sites with picnic tables and fire rings (some sites offering 100-amp hookups). There are also pickleball courts, horseshoe pits and a resort-


style pool with a cabana and slide, plus a community center and two dog parks. And, when you stay at Route 66, you are afforded access to the casino/hotel's amenities as well, including more than 1,300 slots, table games, a 500-seat bingo room, movie theater, nightclub and five dining venues. There's even a supervised hourly childcare facility and arcade for the kiddos.

Route 66 RV Resort | 505-352-8000,
www.rt66rvresort.com



Texas

Located just three miles from Austin's Lake Travis, **La Hacienda RV Resort & Cottages** makes for a convenient Texas Hill Country homebase. Fishing, skiing and sailing opportunities are just minutes away, and historic downtown Austin — famous for barbecue, antique shopping and its rich history and culture — is only a half-hour's drive. La Hacienda itself features nearly 350 full-hookup sites, in addition to a heated pool, recreation hall, nature trails and exercise room. A four-hole chip-and-putt golf course keeps duffers happy, and a 1-acre dog park will keep your four-legged friend's tail wagging. Fully furnished cottages are also available for rental. Other area attractions include world-class golf courses, shopping malls and outlets, museums and natural features galore.

La Hacienda RV Resort & Cottages | 888-378-7275, www.lahaciendarvpark.com 

Don Laughlin's Riverside Resort & Casino

