

Top 10 US Cities Where Owning a Car is Essential



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Living in a city with poor public transport, bad weather, or long commutes can make owning a vehicle highly beneficial. While transportation in the U.S. has improved, there are still cities such as Franklin and Raleigh where car ownership is necessary.

However, with the shift towards electric vehicles, pollution in car-dependent cities is decreasing, and owning a car provides flexibility for short-notice trips. In suburbs and small towns, cars are essential for quick transportation, especially in areas without pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. Learn about the worst U.S. cities to live in without a car in 2023 to avoid the stress of unreliable public transport.



1. Franklin, TN

The city of Franklin has retained its small-town feel, while still keeping its past intact. To get to work without a problem and on time, you need a car. It also comes with the freedom of shopping at many stores and eating at several great restaurants without having to wait for a ride.

2. Birmingham, LA

Birmingham is the biggest city in Alabama and a car is practically essential if you want to live there. While trains are available, they're mainly used for iron and steel manufacturing, so they won't be of much assistance to commuters. Walking or cycling might take longer as the city's population is crammed into a small area. But at least you won't have to worry about expenses - Alabama has low gas prices and taxes on car ownership.

3. Miramar, FL

If you dislike driving, it's best to avoid a city like Miami. However, if you prefer quick access and a spacious feel, Miramar is an ideal choice. With your own car, you'll find it easier to get around, particularly if you're traveling with your family. Additionally, the city hosts family-oriented events throughout the year, making it an enjoyable place to live.

4. Kansas City, MO

Reliable transportation is a necessity to reside in Kansas, where Ford's truck assembly plant is located. Despite higher insurance costs compared to other similar cities on this list, the affordability of gas prices more than makes up for it.

5. Salt Lake City, UT

It is natural for cars to play a major role in the culture of a city that hosts the International Auto Expo, such as Salt Lake City. It is one of America's largest cities built with automobiles in mind. In this city, non-car owners have difficulty moving around. In spite of this, the city's scenery demands residents to drive.

6. Des Moines, IA

Aside from Des Moines' open fields and wildlife, Valley Drive is Iowa's oldest drive-in theater, which is another reason to consider buying a car. By visiting the drive-in, you will get an authentic, enjoyable experience. Des Moines is located right in the middle

of wide, undeveloped fields, so you'll need a car to explore them. On a daily commute, however, you won't find much traffic or congestion.

7. Jackson, MS

Jackson has a well-designed network of highways and roads that allows for efficient travel without the need for slow and confusing streets. For those living in Jackson, having a car offers the freedom to travel locally or out of town with ease.

Consequently, it is considered the least walkable city in the United States. So, make the most of the city's efficient highway system by owning a car.

8. Raleigh, NC

Raleigh offers affordable car ownership for most people with lower insurance rates and fuel prices compared to other regions. Additionally, buying a car in Raleigh comes with reasonable taxes on sales, making it a pleasant surprise for car buyers. As a city with a lower population, commuting is expected for anyone living in Raleigh.

9. Cincinnati, OH

According to reports, car maintenance, and repair costs are comparatively low in Cincinnati. Additionally, the city offers reasonable car insurance rates that have a tendency to decrease more than the national average. If you are commuting from a rural or suburban area, and need to work in the city, reliable wheels are necessary for your daily commute, unless you live right in the middle of the city.

10. Oklahoma City, OK

You'll need a car for commutes, sports events, attendance, and daily activities in Oklahoma City. Unless you stay in a hotel near your destination, a car will be a great option. You'll get a smooth commute no matter where you live in this city.