

Combine Vacation with Selecting a Retirement Community

Are you planning a vacation? Are you also considering a move to a retirement community? Why not combine your get-away with shopping for your new home? Experts say that one of the ways to ensure a happy transition to a retirement community is to "Try before you buy." Many senior communities offer vacations specials so that you can do just that.

Vacations in retirement communities offer a number of advantages.

- They are less expensive than staying in a hotel or motel and eating meals out.
- You will have the opportunity to meet residents in the community and get their opinions about what it is like to live there.
- You can get tips from residents about the real costs of living there. (Sales people for the community may not tell you about all the additional costs you will incur such as fees for meals, housekeeping, and transportation.)
- Staying in a retirement community means that you will have access to meals, housekeeping, and activities while you are on vacation.

Before you make your plans, be sure that you know what type of retirement community is best for you. Here is an overview of the types of options available:

Active Adult Communities

These campuses are designed for active adults. You may hear them referred to by other names such as Independent Living or Congregate Living. The focus is on recreation, educational programs, and other activities. Many have golf courses, tennis courts, and swimming pools. Active adult communities also offer a safe environment and a community of people with whom you can socialize. Some take people of any age, while others are restricted to people age 55 and older.

While this is a great option for many, active adult communities do not provide any type of health or home care. If you want to move to a place that offers an active lifestyle as well as supportive services, one of the following two options might be best for you.

Assisted Living Communities

Assisted Living programs provides you with the availability of some services it you need them. They offer housing, supportive care and some home care. They may be part of an active adult or other type of community. They do not offer health or skilled nursing care.

Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC)

CCRCs provide the full range of care---from active living to assisted living to skilled nursing care, all on one campus. .

Resources

Here are some resources to find retirement communities in the locations you are interested in:

- Call an Eldercare Locator information specialist at 1-800-677-1116, weekdays, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (ET). Or, go to <http://www.eldercare.gov/eldercare/Public/Home.asp> to find the office on aging in the area you are interested in.
- Go to: <http://www.seniorhousingnet.com/seniors/> and follow the instructions in the “Find Senior Housing & Care” section. After you enter the city and state of the area you are interested, in it will show the options in that locale. For example, entering Denver, Colorado and “assisted living” brought up detailed information about eleven communities, including pictures.

After identifying the retirement communities you are interested in, contact their sales departments and ask if they have a "try before you buy" program.

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