

How to live the good life in a ski town

By Megan Michelson, *Outside*

Ski bumming is hardly a glamorous lifestyle. It means things like eating ramen for dinner, sleeping in your car, and taking an assortment of odd jobs. But the payoff can be worth it when you get an all-you-can-eat buffet of powder days. So how do you make life work in a ski town? We called some authentic ski bums to ask them how they've pulled it off.

There's a severe housing shortage in mountain towns right now, which means it can be tough to find affordable housing near ski hills. If you're working for a ski resort or another larger company, start by asking your employer (see the next tip on finding a job) if they offer workforce housing. Word of mouth rentals are likely your best bet: ask the coffee shop baristas and the ski tuners at your favorite shop, because they know everyone. For short-term solutions, look for caretaking gigs or ski leases, which are winter-only rentals.

"If you don't want to live in a van or a snow cave, and renting a room is too expensive, look into a ski lease," says Bevan Waite, 24, who lives in his van in Tahoe City, and works part-time for an architect and as an editor at SnowBrains.com. "People buy into a seasonal lease for a large house and split costs. Ski leases are often more popular with weekenders from the city but if you can weasel your way in as a full-time resident, you become the house caretaker and pay dirt cheap rent for living full-time in a fancy vacation house all winter long."

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