

Why California, Texas & Tennessee Families Are Moving to Central Arkansas

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More house, more trail, less stress

In Central Arkansas, the typical home sells for about a third of what it costs in California and for less than the going rate in Austin or Nashville. You keep your weekends, too: state parks, whitewater and lakes are 30 minutes from downtown Little Rock, not three hours in traffic.

If you're in Los Angeles, Dallas or Nashville and wondering whether there's a place where your paycheck stretches and your hiking boots still get used, this is it. Arkansas didn't earn the name "The Natural State" by accident.

I've helped families relocate here for 17 years, including hundreds of military households moving to Little Rock Air Force Base. Here's what the numbers and the lifestyle actually look like.

Home prices: what your equity buys here

The median home in Little Rock sold for about \$250,700 in early 2026, roughly \$665,000 less than the median in California. Coming from Nashville, Austin or Dallas, you're still looking at \$145,000 to \$210,000 in savings on the typical home.

Market	Median sale price	Little Rock costs you less by
California (statewide)	\$914,810	\$664,102
Nashville, TN	\$461,599	\$210,891
U.S. national	\$429,526	\$178,818
Austin, TX	\$415,605	\$164,897
Dallas, TX	\$397,415	\$146,707
Little Rock, AR	\$250,708	—

California figure: April 2026 single-family median ([C.A.R. via Norada](#)). All others: Redfin, Jan-Mar 2026 average median sale price ([Little Rock](#), [Nashville](#), [Austin](#), [Dallas](#)).

What does that mean in real life? A California seller who walks away with \$500,000 in equity can buy a home in Chenal Valley or the Heights outright, or put a large down payment on a luxury property and keep a cushion in the bank. In Little Rock, even the top 5% of sales had a median of about \$806,000 in January 2026, still below California's *typical* home ([Redfin via Stacker](#)).

Luxury in Chenal Valley (72223) and the Heights (72207)

In Little Rock's two premier luxury ZIP codes, typical luxury prices run from the mid-\$800,000s to about \$900,000. That's still below California's *median* home.

ZIP code	Area	Luxury price	What the number measures
72223	Chenal Valley / far west Little Rock	\$900,587 average asking price (range \$605K-\$3.04M)	Luxury homes currently listed for sale (JamesEdition)
72207	The Heights	\$856,000 average sale price	Recorded sales, 5-year trend; the 12-month median is \$408K (TopHap/ATTOM)

For perspective, the same budget that buys a typical California home can buy a custom home on a golf course in Chenal or a renovated estate near the Country Club of Little Rock in the Heights.

Cost savings beyond the purchase price

Arkansas and Mississippi are the two least expensive states in the country, with overall prices about 13% below the national average, and housing is the biggest reason ([Mappr, federal Regional Price Parities](#)). Your monthly payment, your property tax bill and your insurance all scale off a smaller number.

- **Property taxes:** Arkansas's effective rate on owner-occupied homes is about 0.56% ([Tax Foundation](#)). On a \$250,000 home that's roughly \$1,400 a year. Texas averages about 1.49% ([WalletHub data via USA Symbol](#)), close to \$5,900 a year on a typical Dallas home.

- **Income tax:** Arkansas cut its top rate to 3.7%, retroactive to January 1, 2026, the lowest since the tax was created ([Tax Foundation](#), [Arkansas EDC](#)). California's top rate is 13.3%.
- **Estate and inheritance:** Arkansas has neither ([Tax Foundation](#)).

Coming from	Where you save most	Straight talk
California	Home price, income tax, everyday costs	You'll trade dry heat for humid summers. Most clients say the savings make that easy.
Texas	Home price, property tax	Texas has no state income tax. For most homeowners, lower property taxes and a smaller mortgage more than close that gap.
Tennessee	Home price, especially vs. Nashville	Tennessee has no wage income tax and similar property taxes. The win here is buying more house for less.

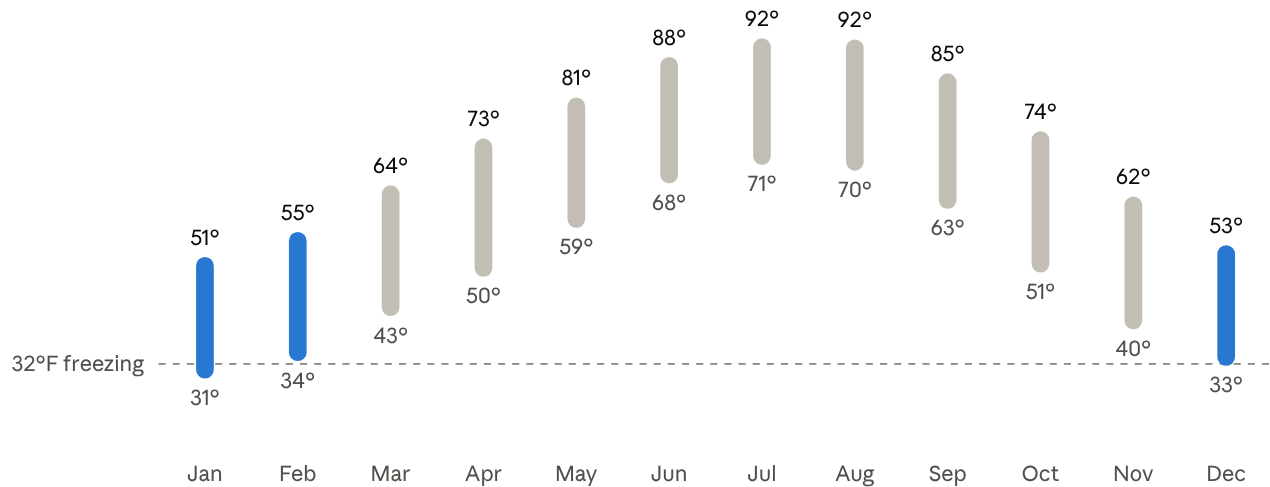
Arkansas's combined sales tax averages about 9.48% ([Tax Foundation](#)), so run your own numbers. I'm happy to walk through a side-by-side for your situation.

Climate: four real seasons, short winters

Little Rock averages a high of about 72°F and a low of about 51°F over the year, with January highs still around 50°F.

Highs top 50°F even in January; 70s in April and October

Little Rock average monthly high and low, °F · winter months highlighted



National Weather Service, Little Rock Adams Field 1991–2020 normals · December derived from the winter seasonal normal

Spring and fall are the payoff: highs in the 60s and 70s from March through May and again from late September into November, which is prime hiking, paddling and patio season. Snow is rare, about 3.8 inches in a typical year, and the area gets roughly 50 inches of rain, which keeps the hills green ([NWS Little Rock](#)).

Straight talk: summers are hot and humid, with about 76 days a year at 90°F or above, and spring brings severe-weather season. If you're coming from Texas, it will feel familiar. If you're coming from coastal California, plan your outdoor time for mornings and evenings in July and August.

The great outdoors, without the price tag

You don't give up the trailhead when you move here. Arkansas has 52 state parks and seven national park sites ([Clinton School of Public Service](#)), and some of the best are a short drive from any Central Arkansas neighborhood.

Destination	Approx. drive from Little Rock	Why go
Pinnacle Mountain State Park	20–25 min	Summit hikes up a peak that rises more than 1,000 feet over the river valley; eastern end of the 250-mile Ouachita National Recreation Trail
Arkansas River Trail	In town	About 34 car-free paved miles for walking, running and biking, including the Big Dam Bridge
Hot Springs National Park	About 1 hour	Historic Bathhouse Row, mountain trails and the oldest site in the national park system
Lake Ouachita	About 1 hr 15 min	Arkansas's largest lake, roughly 40,000 acres of clear water ringed by national forest
Petit Jean State Park	About 1 hr 15 min	Arkansas's first state park: waterfalls, bluffs and overlooks
Buffalo National River	About 2.5–3 hours	America's first national river: 135+ miles of floating, bluffs and caves

The [Ouachita National Forest](#) alone covers nearly 1.8 million acres, the oldest and largest national forest in the South. Compare that to fighting for a parking spot at a California trailhead or a weekend lake trip out of Dallas, and the lifestyle math gets easy.

Where relocating buyers land

Central Arkansas isn't one market. Where you buy depends on your commute, your schools, your budget and how close you want to be to the trails.

Area	Best fit for	What to expect
The Heights	Walkable charm, local restaurants, older character homes	Little Rock's premium in-town neighborhoods; the 72207 ZIP had a \$408K median sale price over the past 12 months (TopHap/ATTOM)
Chenal Valley	Luxury and golf-course living, newer construction	Minutes from Pinnacle Mountain and Lake Maumelle
West Little Rock	Families who want space and shopping close by	Wide price range; the 72227 ZIP posted a \$265K median (TopHap/ATTOM)
Bryant / Benton (Saline County)	Value, newer subdivisions, an easy I-30 commute	Popular with first-time buyers and growing families
Maumelle	Lake and park access, planned community feel	Close to the Arkansas River Trail and Pinnacle Mountain
Jacksonville / Cabot / Sherwood	Military families at Little Rock Air Force Base	Short commute to the base; strong VA-buyer market

Moving with the military? I specialize in LRAFB relocations and can help you line up your VA loan, base commute and school zones before you arrive.

Ready to see what your move looks like?

If you're selling in California, Texas or Tennessee, let's put real numbers on it: what your equity buys here, what your monthly costs drop to, and which neighborhood fits how you live. I'll set up a virtual tour or a one-trip house-hunting weekend, and I'll even point you to the best trailhead near your new front door.

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About the numbers

Price figures come from public sources (Redfin, the California Association of Realtors and ATTOM property records), not MLS-verified local data, and are medians rather than averages. Climate figures are National Weather Service 1991–2020 normals for Little Rock

Adams Field. Tax figures come from the Tax Foundation and state sources as of 2026. For current, MLS-verified numbers on a specific neighborhood, contact me directly.