

Story Time - Snowbirds



Snowbirds Take Flight to Osoyoos

Situated in the northernmost part of the Great Basin Desert, Osoyoos has the ideal climate for anyone wanting to escape the cold winter blues. While summers occasionally reach a high of 40 degrees Celsius, winter temperatures rarely dip below zero for an extended period of time. Unlike winters in the rest of Canada, Osoyoos doesn't experience extreme temperature changes or piles of snow in the Valley. Like most deserts, the region is dry – with a total of just 12 inches of rainfall per year.

Every year snowbirds (people who spend the majority of their winter months in hot or mild climates) take great pleasure in the changing seasons as they pack up in late fall and take flight to Osoyoos. There is a noticeable increase in the number of snowbirds coming from all parts of Canada, the U.S. and abroad to enjoy the mild climate, warm welcome, natural beauty and seasonal activities this destination has to offer. They certainly know how to enjoy the good life, spending the winter in Canada's only true desert.

During the winter months, Osoyoos comes alive with these part-time residents who come to enjoy the serenity of Osoyoos Lake and the nearly year-round golf. Many of the area's wineries are open throughout the winter, and some offer special snowbird-focused events. For those who want to join a local club, there are plenty of activities to choose from including bowling, nature walks, hockey, movie nights and curling. Feeling social? The Osoyoos Senior's Centre hosts fitness sessions, bridge, cribbage, dancing, and more. Osoyoos' annual WinterFest, which takes place in February, was created specifically with snowbirds in mind.

Fully-outfitted accommodations are plentiful – and winter visitors can choose what they'd like: luxury condos, guesthouses in the vineyards, lakeside resorts, orchard homes, or a range of freshly renovated retro motels. Most local resorts, hotels and motels offer monthly rates throughout the shoulder and winter seasons, as well as special events and activities. Want to be closer to nature in this beautiful setting? The NK'MIP RV Park is nearly as busy in February as it is in July, with snowbirds flocking to the lakeside sites.

Come for the winter, invest in forever

After a while, a number of snowbirds decide to buy property and make their permanent home in Osoyoos or area. With the growth in high-end residential and resort real estate developments, Osoyoos has seen more than \$350 million in investment in new building permits in the past five years. Successful baby boomers are discovering that Osoyoos is the place to settle. They are coming from Alberta, the BC Lower Mainland, and even from just up the road in Kelowna. Current resort residential projects that snowbirds could soon call "home" include the lakeside developments of Watermark Beach Resort and Walnut Beach Resort; vineyard living at Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa; and the semi-urban La Mirada. Even Mt. Baldy Ski Area is in the process of developing a large number of on-hill residential units. In addition, there are several smaller residential condo developments ranging from 10-21 units, currently under construction throughout Osoyoos.