

To print article, click **Print** on your browser's **File** menu.

[Go back](#)

Posted 4/28/2006



Forbes
.com

Cool Tools

[Get market news by e-mail](#)

[See if refinancing works](#)

[Personal finance bookshelf](#)

[Letters from MSN Money readers](#)

Find It!

[Article Index](#)

[Fast Answers](#)

[Tools Index](#)

[Site map](#)

msn.
Money

Forbes

The 12 best places to go to prison

Where a shamed CEO does his time makes all the difference. Does he want to learn to be a chef or to get back in shape? It's a quality-of-life issue, really.

By Forbes

Two disgraced Enron executives, former Chief Jeffrey Skilling and founder Kenneth Lay, have pleaded not guilty to the charges against them, and they each face a lengthy prison term if convicted.

Where they will serve their time -- assuming they serve time at all-- can be almost as important as how much time they'll do, says Alan Ellis, a former president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. Ellis now specializes in the defense of white-collar offenders.

Although criminals don't get to choose their prisons, they can make requests. And assuming their desired location matches their security classification, as defined by the Bureau of Prisons -- minimum, low, medium or high -- and has space available, requests are often honored.

Often, but not always. Take the case of Samuel Waksal, the

former **ImClone**

Systems ([IMCL](#), [news](#), [msgs](#)) CEO, who requested to serve

his seven-year sentence at Eglin Federal Prison Camp in Florida. (Eglin was once considered so cushy that the term "Club Fed" was actually coined to describe it. It was recently closed.) Instead, Waksal was shipped off to the Schuylkill Federal Correctional Institute in Minersville, Pa., which did not make our list.

Start investing with \$100.
Explore our
new ETF center.

[More on Forbes.com](#)



- [Slideshow: Best places to go to prison](#)
- [Slideshow: 10 alternatives to prison](#)
- [Slideshow: Best places to go in Vegas](#)
- [Slideshow: Tax haven getaways 2006](#)
- [Slideshow: Most dangerous destinations](#)

And the fates of crooked corporate titans like former **Tyco** ([TYC](#), [news](#), [msgs](#)) Chief Executive Dennis Kozlowski and **Adelphia** ([ADELQ](#), [news](#), [msgs](#)) founder John Rigas can hardly be encouraging, either. Kozlowski will serve up to 25 years of hard time in a New York state prison, while Rigas, who is free pending an appeal, was sentenced to 15 years in the can.

You could escape – but why?

The days of "Club Fed"-- think golf courses and lobster bakes -- are long gone. But minimum security facilities, known as federal prison camps, are the best suited for disgraced CEOs and other white-collar criminals. In theory, inmates in these camps show no risk of violence or escape. Both shoe-mogul Steven Madden and Martha Stewart are FPC alums.

Why are prison camps the way to go, if you must go at all? Among other perks, federal prison camps have a relatively low staff-to-inmate ratio, dormitory-style accommodations and little to no fencing. In fact, inmates could walk away from these camps. Few do, however, because recaptured inmates face severe consequences.

While some of the minimum security facilities still stand on their own, it is increasingly common to have camps lie adjacent to larger and more secure institutions, particularly low-security federal correctional institutions.

"It used to be that those freestanding facilities were considered to be more relaxed," says David Novak, a former **Microsoft** ([MSFT](#), [news](#), [msgs](#)) consultant who served time in a federal prison camp for mail fraud. "The differences now really come down to convenience for family, weather and things of that nature."

Ellis says the quality of life among staff members also can make one prison more pleasant than another. "Happier staff makes for happier inmates," he says.

To determine which prisons are the best places to serve time, we turned to the man who wrote the guidebook, literally. Ellis has written several editions of the Federal Prison Guidebook, which profiles each of the nation's 178 federal prisons.

[Slideshow: The 12 best places to do time](#)

[If you've got to do time ...](#)

Prison	Perk
FCI Ashland, Ky.	Wellness program
FCI Bastrop, Texas	Easy airport access
FCI Dublin, Calif.	Bookmobile service
FPC Duluth, Minn.	Musical instruments available
FCI Englewood, Colo.	Pool, ping-pong, foosball
FCI Lompoc, Calif.	Gym, tennis courts
FPC Montgomery, Ala.	Career retraining
FCI Otisville, N.Y.	Active Jewish religious program
FPC Pensacola, Fla.	Day jobs at the Navy base
FCI Sheridan, Ore.	Learn to be a fitness trainer
FCI Texarkana, Texas	Track, bocce pit, basketball court
FPC Yankton, S.D.	Music lessons, intramural sports

-- Lacey Rose, Forbes

Editors' choice

- o [Start on your first \\$1 million at age 16](#)
- o [Anatomy of a credit score](#)
- o [Used-car prices: Whom to believe?](#)
- o [The trade deficit's deep bite](#)
- o [Should you bail out spendthrift parents?](#)

Readers' choice

- Ratings Top 5 Articles
- 9.35 [Zombie debt collectors dig up your old mistakes](#)
 - 9.34 [10 ways to avoid outrageous hospital overcharges](#)
 - 9.33 [Keep thieves out of your bank account](#)
 - 9.30 [10 ways to stop identity theft cold](#)
 - 9.29 ['Phishing' scams: How to avoid getting hooked](#)

[View all top rated articles](#)