## Bull \& Bear Markets

## S\&P 500 Composite Index to October 2008



BMO

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## THE RISKS AND REWARDS OF INVESTING

- This chart represents the bull and bear markets in the S\&P 500 Composite Total Return since 1956. All bars above the line are bull markets; all bars below are bear markets.
- For the purposes of this illustration, a bull (bear) market is defined as a positive (negative) move greater than $15 \%$ that lasts at least 3 months.
- The first bar represents a bear market which, at its lowest point, dropped to $-15 \%$ and lasted 17 months. This was followed by a bull market rising 104\% and lasting 48 months.
- Since 1956 there have been 10 bull markets and 11 bear markets. As can be seen from the chart, bull markets typically last longer and provide a more significant percentage change.
- Bear markets during this period have averaged $-26 \%$ and lasted only 14 months. Bull markets during this period have averaged $148 \%$ and lasted 48 months. This is the reward for accepting the risk of bear markets.


## INVESTOR BEHAVIOUR

- According to the chart, markets spend more time in positive territory (bull) than negative (bear).
- Bull markets are, on average, longer and more intense, providing a more significant percentage change.
- On average bear markets are more brief, and yet engender fear. It is during these periods that there are significant investment 'bargains' to be found.
- Investor discipline during bear markets is critical.

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