

World's

# BEST CITIES

A RANKING OF GLOBAL PLACE EQUITY

2023

Where to live, work,  
invest and visit in a  
new global reality

How we chose the World's Best Cities for 2023 — 06

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Global city performance by category — 57



BESTCITIES.ORG



# We Are Place Makers

Resonance is a leading global advisor on placemaking, branding and marketing for the world's best cities, districts, developments and destinations.

# WELCOME TO THE 2023 WORLD'S BEST CITIES

**Resonance Consultancy is building the most comprehensive city rankings on the planet. Here's why this matters now more than ever as the world adapts to a new post-pandemic reality.**



**As leading advisors in tourism, real estate and economic development for 15 years, our team at Resonance has conducted extensive research on the rise of cities, the key trends propelling their growth and the factors that shape our perception of urban centers as desirable places to live, visit and invest.**

Of course the pandemic upended our cities as a whole and, for many of us, changed what we consider to be desirable in a place to live, work or play. Much has been written about the declining populations in some of the world's largest and most iconic cities. New York, San Francisco, Athens, Chicago and Rome have lost hundreds of thousands of residents since 2020. Is this the end of cities?

Far from it.

There's no question that the pandemic has altered every facet of our lives. According to LinkedIn, 1 out of every 6 jobs posted on the site today are "remote." Earlier forecasts by TheLadders.com—that 1 out of every 4 professional jobs will be remote by the end of 2022—have actually been exceeded in many countries. And with that newfound freedom, many people are choosing to move to smaller, or more affordable, or more interesting cities, taking their economic output and consumption with them. That's not necessarily a bad thing on the whole as economic growth and the benefits that come with it were becoming increasingly captured and concentrated in a handful of so-called "superstar" cities prior to the pandemic.

Whether it's domestic migration into entrepreneurial and more affordable secondary cities like Fukuoka in Japan, or international investment into now globally coveted centers like Lisbon or Auckland, the 2020 narrative about the death of cities has proven to be greatly exaggerated (if not forgotten entirely).

In fact, many global cities have utilized the pandemic pause to position themselves as ever more welcoming destinations—for tourism, for new, much-needed talent, and for risk-averse global capital looking for new opportunities in places that have done the work to build resilience for a changed world.

Places like Paris, where, as our report outlines, "returning visitors find a city that has codified pedestrianism and alfresco living." Or Madrid's Nuevo Norte Project, currently Europe's largest urban redevelopment initiative, that is transforming the "industrial wasteland of railway lands and brownfields north of the city into social housing, a transit hub and new office spaces." Don't even get us started on Dubai's torrent of city-building over the past 24 months.

Despite the pandemic's subsiding, urban populations are dealing with fresh crises, both economic and humanitarian. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has also scarred this year's rankings. In our view, no city can be a "Best City" that is part of a country that is taking unprovoked action against another and we have removed Moscow and St. Petersburg from this year's report, two cities that finished in the Top 20 last year. More importantly, we declared Kyiv our honorary World's Best City for 2023, and asked local journalist Anna Babinets to write a love letter to her hometown, sharing with us the hope, courage and resilience radiating from the Ukrainian capital, even in its darkest hour. You can read it on page 9.

As we emerge from the depths of the pandemic, there's never been a bigger opportunity for cities to act on their ambitions and to do right by their citizens—current and future. The data we collect to produce these rankings will continue to track and monitor this pivotal transformation every step of the way, identifying the Best Cities to live, work and visit now, and in the years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Fair".

Chris Fair, President & CEO  
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# THE URBAN OPPORTUNITY

The world's best cities have seized the pause of the past two-plus years to build resilience and cover for an uncertain future. These are the destinations of tomorrow. And the World's Best Cities Report outlines their work to get there today.



In my little corner of New York City, I'm happy to report that things feel... normalish. The temperatures are brisk; the leaves have fallen. Broadway is back with a robust schedule; restaurants are full (even too noisy, a pre-pandemic complaint I'd all but forgotten!). Some locals have even reconsidered their pandemic move upstate—just look at how rent and sale prices have spiked in NYC. Meanwhile, families across the boroughs are well into the school year. And not a “pandemic school year”—just a school year. You can practically feel the sigh of relief as new friendships are struck and guards are let down.

Will things ever be “normal” again in the world’s urban centers? No, not likely—though with luck and careful planning, they’ll bounce back better than before. In the fall 2022 Urban Issue of AFAR magazine, contributor Azzurra Cox writes, “As dramatic as the pandemic pause has been, it proved something that urbanists have always known: that cities are highly responsive and adaptable.” In the absence of crowds, urban planners could evaluate the true durability and accessibility of their infrastructure and perhaps even pivot away from car culture to a greener, two-wheeled future.

In the absence of daily commutes, the conversation around the 15-minute city has been reinvigorated. Big-box businesses may have suffered, but neighborhoods doubled down on small businesses—on their actual neighbors—which resulted in a true sense of community at a time when isolation was the norm.

The cities on this year’s list, as ranked by Resonance Consultancy and presented exclusively by AFAR, have used the “pandemic pause” to roll out 464 miles of bikeways (San Francisco), spend billions on hotels and waterfront development (Washington, D.C.), expand or open major museums and finally finish that LaGuardia airport renovation (NYC). One destination even changed its name—remember, it’s now Istanbul, Türkiye. And common across so many of these top-tier cities is a commitment to diversity, accessibility and sustainability: no longer “forward thinking,” now just the norm of the biggest thinkers.

Travel well,

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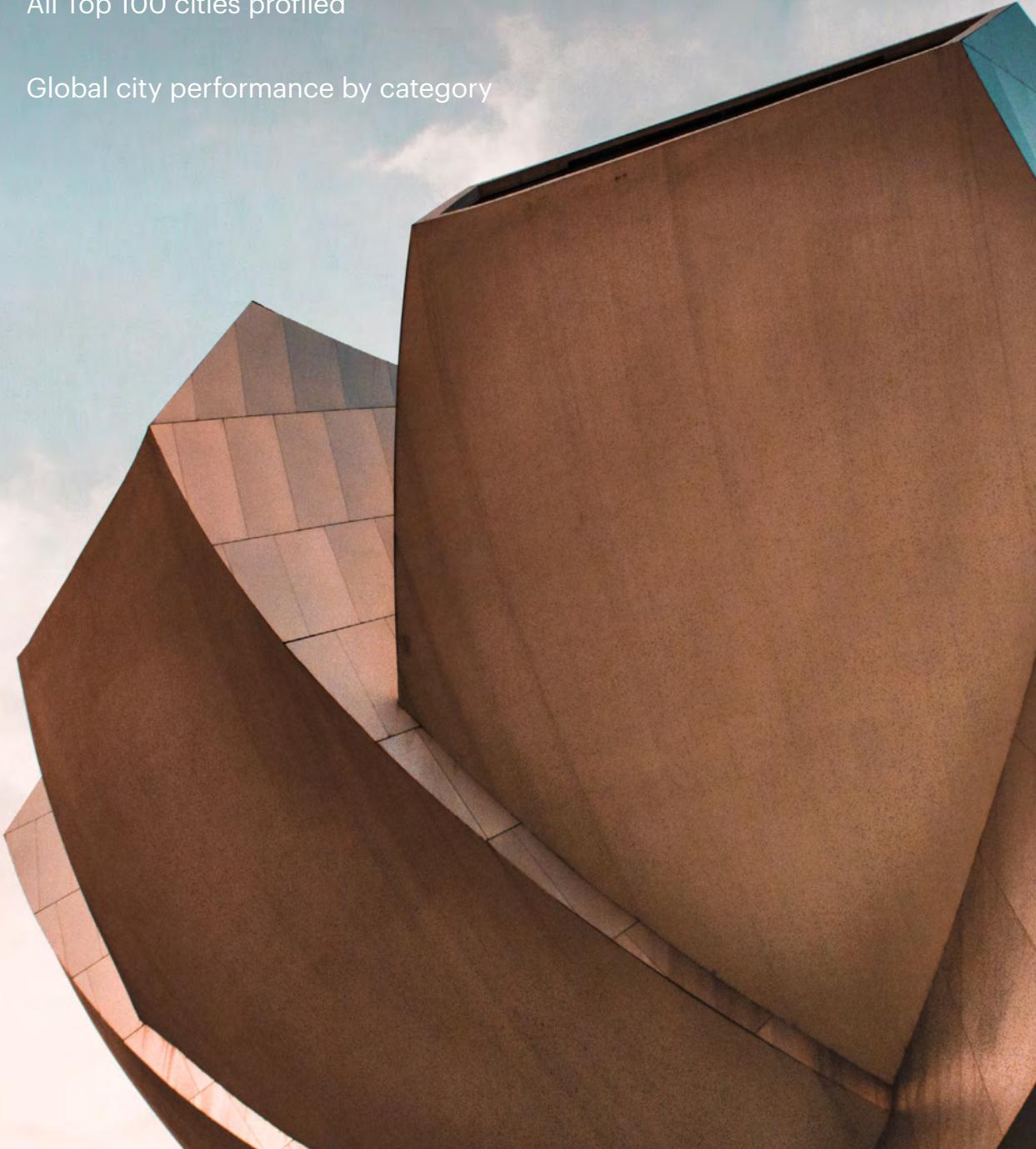
Laura Dannen Redman  
Digital Content Director, AFAR

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# HOW WE CHOSE THE 2023 WORLD'S BEST CITIES: THE METHODOLOGY

Resonance Consultancy ranks global cities (principal cities of metropolitan areas with populations of more than one million) by using a combination of statistical performance and qualitative evaluations by locals and visitors in 24 areas grouped into six core categories. Principal cities are defined as the largest city in each metropolitan statistical area. This year, we disqualified Moscow and St. Petersburg from our list of cities due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

## THE SIX CORE CATEGORIES



PLACE



PROGRAMMING



PROSPERITY



PRODUCT



PEOPLE



PROMOTION



PLACE

Our most layered category quantifies a city's physical sense of place. To score a city within our Place category, we evaluate the perceived quality of its natural and built environments. From how often the sun shines to the safety of the streets, several readily measurable, oft-cited factors influence our perceptions.

**Weather** Average number of sunny days (Weatherbase)

**Safety** Violent crime rate (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UN-Habitat, Eurostat, FBI and national data sources)

**Sights & Landmarks** Number of quality points of interest, neighborhoods and landmarks recommended by locals and visitors (TripAdvisor.com)

**Outdoors** Number of quality parks and outdoor activities recommended by locals and visitors (TripAdvisor.com)



PRODUCT

This is a ranking of the "hardware" of a city—often the most difficult metric for cities to get right. Our product category studies a city's key institutions, attractions and infrastructure. A city's infrastructure and institutions shape its identity via the quantity, quality and reputation of these "products." Expensive and difficult to develop and maintain, exceptional, recognizable products are often found only in large, cosmopolitan cities.

**Airport Connectivity** Number of direct destinations served by the city's airports (Google Flights, FlightConnections.com and FlightsFrom.com)

**Attractions** Number of quality attractions recommended by locals and visitors (TripAdvisor.com)

**Museums** Number of quality museums and arts institutions recommended by locals and visitors (TripAdvisor.com)

**University Ranking** Score of the top local university (U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings)

**Convention Center** Size of the largest convention center (10Times.com and official convention center website)



## Pg PROGRAMMING

This category measures the experiential pillars of a great visit: food, shows, shopping and nightlife. If our Product category is the “hardware” of cities and destinations, the mosaic of cultural programming and lifestyle experiences they offer is the “software” that makes them run—including the subcategories of Shopping, Culture, Restaurants and Nightlife. While such programming initiatives are individually insignificant, their sum fosters a community’s connection to place.

**Culture** Number of quality performing arts and cultural experiences recommended by locals and visitors (TripAdvisor.com)

**Nightlife** Number of quality nightlife experiences recommended by locals and visitors (TripAdvisor.com)

**Restaurants** Number of quality restaurants and culinary experiences recommended by locals and visitors (TripAdvisor.com)

**Shopping** Number of quality shopping experiences recommended by locals and visitors (TripAdvisor.com)



## Po PEOPLE

The more diverse a city’s population, the more it produces global ideas... on a local scale. Human capital is often a city’s most valuable resource and, for many cities, is increasingly in short supply. To evaluate the relative strength of human capital from one city to the next, we look at both the educational attainment level of the city’s population and the percentage of people participating in the labor force.

**Labor Force Participation** The percentage of citizens participating in a city’s labor force (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], World Bank, U.S. Census Bureau, and national data sources)

**Educational Attainment** Percentage of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, OECD, U.S. Census Bureau and national data sources)



## Ps PROSPERITY

A well-paid, economically secure citizenry facilitates stewardship and innovation. In general, beliefs about the wealth and prosperity of a city are shaped by statistics such as the income of citizens, the standard of living and the presence or absence of large, recognizable corporations—despite the fact that start-ups and innovation increasingly drive a city’s development and economic growth.

**Global 500** Number of Global Fortune 500 corporate headquarters (Fortune.com/global500)

**GDP per Capita** A City’s gross domestic product per Capita (McKinsey Urban World)

**Employment Rate** The most recent employment rate available as of July 2022 (OECD, World Bank, UN-Habitat, U.S. Census Bureau and national data sources)

**Income Equality** The city’s Gini index, a simple measure of the distribution of income across income percentiles in a population (OECD, International Monetary Fund, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and national data sources)



## Pm PROMOTION

A city’s ability to tell its story (and help others do the same) depends on how it incentivizes and rewards the sharing of experiences by locals and visitors. The number and frequency of media coverage, online articles, references and place-based recommendations influence our perception of cities, whether the news is good or bad. Today, residents, businesses and visitors promote a city to the world more than city marketers or chambers of commerce. Resonance ranks a city’s Promotion performance based on the number of stories, references and recommendations shared online about that city.

**Facebook Check-ins** Number of Facebook check-ins (Facebook.com)

**Google Search** Number of Google search results (Google.com)

**TripAdvisor Reviews** Number of TripAdvisor reviews (TripAdvisor.com)

**Instagram Hashtags** Number of Instagram hashtags (Instagram.com)

**Google Trends** Popularity on Google Trends in the past 12 months (Trends.Google.com)

World's

# TOP 100 CITY PROFILES

Cities are the engines of the global economy and the badges of human ingenuity.

Yes, they've been hobbled over the past three years, exposing the long-ignored foundational and institutional problems that manifested on their streets and in their hospitals. But they're also leading—like they always have—the recovery and future-defining next stages of our innovation, livability and sustainability.

Given the new rules of post-pandemic migration, the rise of remote work and the never-ending search for housing affordability, more cities are catching the imagination of global talent more frequently, with urban wealth and vibrancy created in more places than ever before. The planet's urban citizens have begun to gather again, once more colliding and creating the culture, wealth and energy that defines the zeitgeist and path forward for their countries, regions and the planet. The 100 cities that we profile over the next 50 pages will be, in each of their distinct ways, at the heart of that renewal in 2023.





AERIAL VIEW OF THE KYIV SKYLINE OVER THE DNIPRO RIVER AND TRUKHANIV ISLAND

# KYIV UKRAINE

BY ANNA BABINETS

2023 Honorary World's Best City

**The historic Ukrainian capital is the urban beacon of courage and resilience leading a defiant nation against a murderous aggressor. It is, like the rest of Ukraine, a place of inexhaustible courage in the face of daily tragedy.**

Kyiv is a city of many faces. The Dnipro, one of Europe's largest rivers, divides Ukraine's capital into two different worlds: the right bank—with its historical center, administrative buildings, cafés and restaurants—and the residential left bank.

With its cheaper real estate, thanks in part to an undiminished stock of towering Soviet-era apartment buildings, the left bank is home to many of

Kyiv's families. But new, even larger residential towers have sprung up over the last decade. Big shopping malls provide plenty of opportunities for entertainment, and no geopolitical crisis, contentious election or looming threat of Russian invasion have stood in the way of new investments: construction cranes are everywhere.

Kyiv's cheap and efficient subway makes it easy for left bank denizens to make their way across the river to the heart of their capital. On a hot day they might first get off at Hidropark, a metro station on an island, to relax at one of its beaches. The mighty Dnipro lapping at their feet connects over two dozen Ukrainian cities to the Black Sea, provides drinking water and hydroelectricity to many of their fellow citizens and forms an indelible part of the country's heritage, glorified by national poet Taras Shevchenko as the symbol of Ukraine's fate.



KYIV FOUNDERS MONUMENT, SURROUNDED BY PARKLAND ON THE DNIPRO RIVER

A UKRAINIAN SOLDIER STANDS IN FRONT OF A BUILDING IN RUINS



The nearby Trukhaniv Island offers more recreation, with bars, restaurants, beaches and concert venues — frequented by some of the country's most cutting-edge performers—and showcases memorable views of the charming Podil neighborhood.

Once downtown, a visitor might cross the new "glass bridge" (targeted by Russian bombardment on Oct. 10 but still standing) toward the parliament building and Maryinsky Park, popular for a stroll with dogs or children. On the other side, historic Podil is home to more parks, small squares and hidden murals and courtyards.

In Kyiv, cafés with minimalist, modern interiors share the streets with centuries-old churches and monasteries.

One of these is the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, a beautiful complex of church buildings on a hill. Founded as a cave monastery in the 11th century, the complex is older than the city of Moscow.

Those after something more modern might try 100 Rokiv, an innovative restaurant that serves traditional Ukrainian borscht alongside more daring inventions, like a dish of "edible bees" with acacia honey, black pepper and berry sauce.

After dinner comes dancing, with electronic music particularly big here in recent years. Closer, an underground venue near the city's Muslim cemetery, gets rave reviews. But Kyiv's best bars and clubs have no signboards: they're

hidden away in secret courtyards that only the locals know about. Not to worry, though, Kyivans are friendly—and happy to take their foreign friends to their favorite places.

Because the foreigners are back. For the capital of a country under relentless attack, Kyiv now looks surprisingly normal. That is, until recently, when over a few days in October, a wave of self-destructing Iranian-made drones launched by Russia started terrorizing the city's skies and killing citizens. Remarkably, cinemas, restaurants and theaters remain open; stylish young people drink their filter coffee with their dogs and laptops; during rush hour, traffic jams once again clog the city's arteries. The city's impressively deep subway—built at the height of the Cold War so it could serve as a bomb shelter—is once again doing what it does best: whisking people around for just eight hryvnia, or 20 cents, per ride.

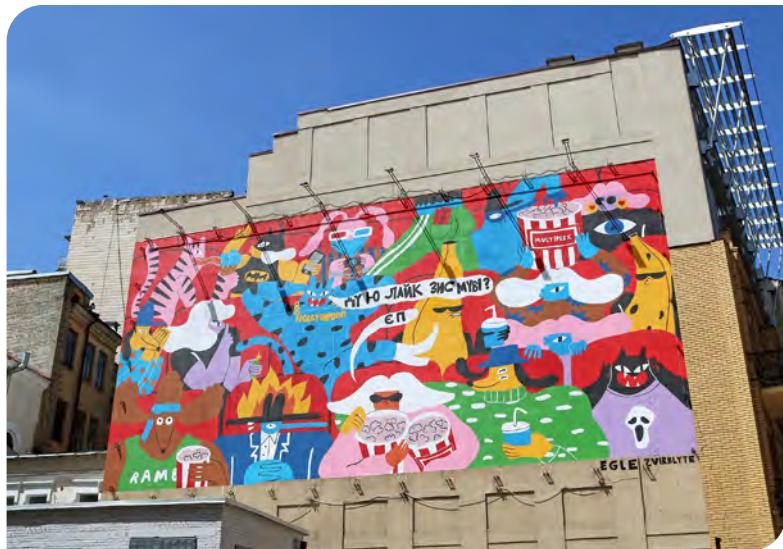
How different things looked in February, when Russia launched its illegal war against Ukraine. Pundits around the world predicted the city's imminent fall. Rockets rained on peaceful apartment blocks. Half of the city's residents left. A column of Russian military vehicles stretched for kilometers on its murderous advance into the city.

Although the Russians intended to capture Ukraine's capital in three days, they never came close. Facing determined



EXPANSIVE RIVER VIEWS FROM A STRIKING CROSSING FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS WITH GLASS FLOOR PANELS

A MURAL BY EGLE ZVIRBLYTE ON MIKHAILOVSKAYA STREET



resistance and crippled by their own incompetence, they soon abandoned their ambitious plans. A few months later, most Kyivans returned home.

This isn't the first time Kyiv has sprung back to life. The city's history is full of wars and revolutions—after each of which it inevitably blooms again in a 1,500-year cycle of devastation and rebirth.

During the Second World War the city center suffered terrible damage at the hands of both the Soviet and German armies, and was then rebuilt by German prisoners. During the reconstruction, thousands of swiftly growing chestnut trees were planted around the city in a scheme to green it as fast as possible. Since then, chestnut leaves have become one of Kyiv's most recognizable symbols: they're on metro tokens and in the logos of independent coffee shops.

In 2014, the city's center was again the site of brutal violence. People from all over Ukraine streamed to their capital to stand against the corrupt regime of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych. A tent city in Independence Square remained through months of bitter cold and police brutality. In the end, more than 100 people were killed by the authorities right in the city's heart. The protesters—chanting "Ukraine is Europe" all the while—celebrated their victory. Yanukovych fled to Russia and Ukraine embarked on a democratic political transformation with an ambitious program to root out corruption.

In the years since, the city's infrastructure has shown notable improvement. Buses were replaced, parks and squares renovated and the once-chaotic parking situation has improved, leaving more space for biking and walking. Just before the war began, the European Investment Bank signed a €100-million loan agreement with Kyiv's mayor to renew the city's trolleybus and metro fleets.

Sometimes the development leads to conflict. Even before the Euromaidan revolution, locals in one of the city's most picturesque areas fought to preserve it from destruction. Landscape Alley, a place featuring breathtaking views and many works of modern art and sculpture in the open air, was threatened by development plans to fill this historic area with expensive high-rise buildings. Activists united and asked artists to fill the street with their work instead, making it a destination. After a long confrontation, the activists won: the sculptures and murals will remain. Such conflicts between local residents and developers are a common story in the Ukrainian capital: in order to save their neighborhood from unwanted development, its residents must tap their creativity and resourcefulness.

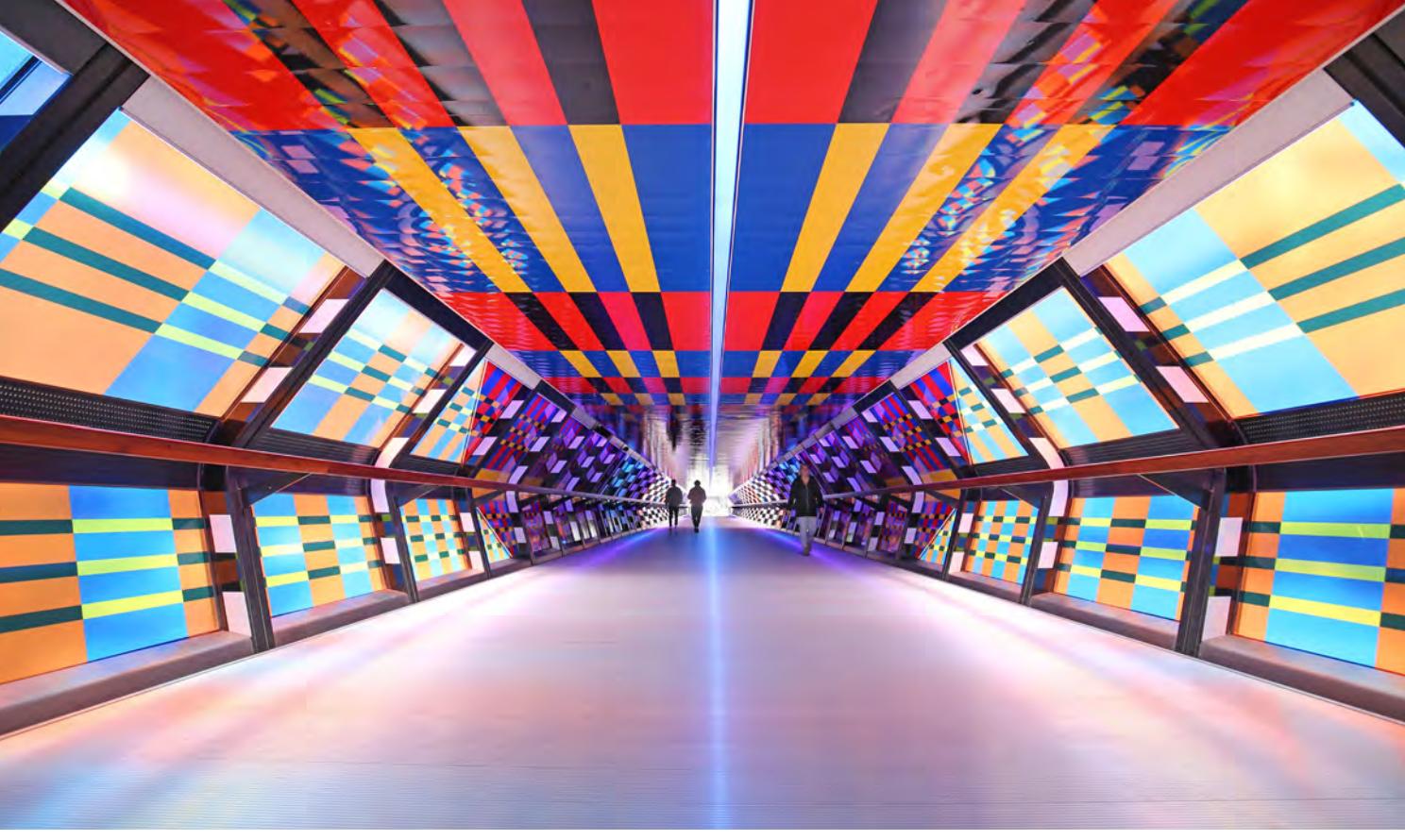
That spirit is something the Russians didn't know about, or didn't want to believe in. And that's why they never had a chance.

Anna Babinets is the editor-in-chief of *Slidstvo.Info*, an investigative outlet based in Kyiv, and a regional editor of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project. She specializes in covering high-scale corruption, money laundering and other crimes. Anna is part of the Panama Papers team, the author of several investigations into offshore companies belonging to former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, and among the authors of the award-winning documentary "Killing Pavel," about the murder of a well-known journalist in Kyiv.

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Anna and her team have focused on covering war crimes, reporting from the field and identifying Russian service members in Ukraine.



ANNA BABINETS



CANARY WHARF

#### POPULATION

METRO 11,120,000

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 NIGHTLIFE
- 1 MUSEUMS



RHS CHELSEA

# 1 LONDON UNITED KINGDOM

**As the “capital of capitals” negotiates the uncharted, perilous terrain of a post-Brexit and pandemic world, London continues to reign as the planet’s best cities for the seventh year running. Right. Can we talk about *this* year, then?**

London is back! But, given the past few months, have citizens even noticed?

This has been the busiest start to summer London has seen in more than a decade—with the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, Royal Ascot, RHS Chelsea Flower Show, Wimbledon, Boris’s resignation and, in the worst kind of end to summer, the Queen’s death and weeks of mourning.

Of course the eyes of the world were fixed on London throughout all the tumult more than any other city—save for maybe Kyiv—reminding everyone that London is spectacular and it’s been a really long while since they visited. Not that the city’s promotion engine was waning. The city still tops our Promotions category, coming out in front for Instagram hashtags, Facebook (or is it Meta) check-ins and TripAdvisor reviews.

Fortunately the city is almost back to pre-pandemic capacity, if the tube is any indication. The London Underground Night Tube reopened over the summer while certain lines are slowly restoring all service, with the Piccadilly line the last to have come online in August.

Despite much-warranted hand-wringing about the flight of talent and capital due to the pall of Brexit (and the follow-up specter of an airborne pandemic), London is hanging in just fine, relying on a dipping currency to attract investment



and, of course, previously priced-out tourists. And new residents. New wealthy residents who can now afford to check off a big item on the multi-millionaire bucket list: property in the best city on the planet.

An astonishing 61 luxury London properties—each worth \$11.5 million or more—were sold in the first six months of 2022, which was the highest number in a decade.

The highest-profile new residents include Instagram CEO Adam Mosseri, who may have come for the most #1 rankings of any city in our Top 100—from Culture to Nightlife, but stayed for another of London's assets: the best-educated citizenry on the planet. And available at a relative discount to Silicon Valley and New York. As much is confirmed by salary site Glassdoor, which estimates an average Meta software engineer in London can expect to earn just over \$102,000 versus \$169,000 in San Francisco. The tech giant is in the process of building its largest global engineering base in two offices in London's King's Cross neighborhood. The first, at 11-21 Canal Reach, opened in early 2022 after a three-year build designed by Bennetts Associates with interiors by TP Bennett based on a concept design by Gehry Partners. A

second building opened a few months later to bring the new office space to 425,000 square feet. Plus, of course, a 42,000-square-foot rooftop park for what will likely be almost 10,000 employees in a few years.

Another reason for Meta's entrenchment? Mortal enemy TikTok has prioritized London for years and just started a 15-year lease on an entire office block at Farringdon Crossrail station.

These seismic moves have dislodged the pandemic blockage for the global investment torrent into London. According to fDi Markets, the *Financial Times'* foreign investment tracker, London has pulled in the most foreign direct investments into tech from international companies since 2018, ahead of New York, Singapore and Dubai.

Of course none of this happens without the sustained facilitation of London & Partners, London's official publicity arm, and the economic development organization that works to offer financial perks for all that relocation.



VIEW OF HARRODS AT NIGHT ON BROMPTON ROAD, KNIGHTSBRIDGE

THE TIDE, GREENWICH PENINSULA, LONDON DOCKLANDS



LONDON CROSSRAIL

Recent tax incentives have included the lowest corporation tax rate among G7 countries and a cornucopia of research and development tax credits.

A recent report from real estate firm Cushman & Wakefield illustrated the run on London: of the 398 central London leasing transactions over 5,000 square feet in 2021, 59 were new businesses setting up for the first time or those relocating from outside London—the highest number ever recorded since tracking began in 2013.

Another, more disturbing metric of tech and foreign investment into the city?

An electricity shortage, specifically pressure on the grid in West London, made worse by energy-sucking data centers being built along the M4 corridor in the past few years. According to the *Financial Times*, “major new applicants

to the distribution network ... including housing developments, commercial premises and industrial activities will have to wait several years to receive new electricity connections.”

If all those newcomers can’t cook at home, they came to the right place, especially these days, when the culinary industry is being reborn after dozens of the city’s most iconic restaurants shuttered over the pandemic. The city with the fourth-best restaurants on the planet is buzzing again with big-name openings like Dubai-based izakaya-style restaurant Kinoya in Harrods. There are hundreds of other rooms soon joining this increasingly daring culinary destination serving—and welcoming the world once more.



VIEWS OF THE EIFFEL TOWER NEVER GET OLD

#### POPULATION

METRO 11,027,000

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 SIGHTS & LANDMARKS
- 2 SHOPPING



CYCLISTS RIDING ALONG BIKE LANES

## 2 PARIS FRANCE

**Paris attacked the pandemic not only with its doctors and health-care workers, but also with its urban planners.**

For all the talk of learning from the pandemic, one city appears to be going all-in on the hard lessons it gave and their application to molecular urban change.

While the face of Paris's pandemic evolution is Mayor Anne Hidalgo and her aggressive empowerment of self-propelled mobility—from a city-wide speed limit of 30 km/h introduced last year to the obsessive addition of bike paths, with the promise of 745 miles by 2026 across most arrondissements—it's the citizenry's embrace of this boldness that is changing the city's fabric for good.

While the city has been wracked by unemployment and economic calamity since 2020 (Paris, while much improved

from 2021, ranks #183 globally in our Employment subcategory this year), the walkable city ambition has aligned with the need for natural therapy and outdoor social distancing. Of course, being able to enjoy a city ranked best in the world in our Sights & Landmarks subcategory, as well as in the top three for Museums (the city has well over 100), has a tendency to distract one from the modern world's perils.

Almost as soon as the pandemic started, Parisians poured out of their close quarters onto the iconic Rue de Rivoli, the famed artery that intersects the heart of the capital, when it became off-limits to cars. Cars were also banned from the banks of the Seine and pretty much every other one of the world's favorite spots where, surreally, flâneurs found themselves able to take a deep breath of air without a hint of exhaust while actually hearing birdsong in what many say felt like a walk back in time.

VIEW OF A LIVELY PARISIAN CAFÉ & BAR AT NIGHT



Especially the fact that there was nary a selfie stick or sudden-stopping tourist to run into.

All of that has changed, of course, with France's removal of health measures earlier this year and tourism rushing back into the de-motorized streets, injecting much-needed revenues and, in some cases, exceeding pre-pandemic levels, according to government estimates. Almost three years without Paris certainly drove the voraciousness, but so did the euro being on par with the U.S. dollar for most of 2022.

According to French government estimates, tourists actually spent 10 percent more in France this summer than they did in 2019, which itself was one of the highest tourism-spending years on record. Not surprisingly, the single biggest beneficiary was the City of Light.

What returning visitors find is a city that has codified pedestrianism and alfresco living.

To ensure cars didn't take back control of Paris streets as pandemic urban pilot projects waned—as was the case in

many other cities—Mayor Hidalgo legislated that the 60,000 parking spots loaned to restaurants for outdoor seating simply remained. The same went for closing off lesser-driven streets entirely for public walking and seating for local businesses in need of additional outdoor space.

Nowhere is the transformation more dramatic than along the River Seine in the heart of Paris's tourist district, near Notre Dame Cathedral and city hall itself. With the reduced car traffic, this is now Paris's town square (in a city with dozens of historic spots worthy of the honor). The riverside promenade hosted thousands night after night, even after Paris's Right Bank summer event wrapped up. The Paris Plages urban beach initiative welcomes picnicking and other low-cost access to a city long criticized as pricey and exclusive.

And speaking of Notre Dame, its reopening in 2024 aligns with what will be a vital year for the city, when it also hosts the 2024 Olympic Summer Games, with many events integrated right into the revered urban fabric. And nothing would go further to demonstrate the city's efficacy in achieving a cleaner, healthier Paris than being able to host swimming events for athletes and the general public post-Games. After wild



CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS TRAVELING ALONG THE RIVER SEINE AT SUNSET



THE STREETS OF PARIS SEEN FROM A THREE-PANEL APARTMENT WINDOW

Atlantic salmon first returned to the Seine 13 years ago, it is today home to more than 30 species of fish, like trout, perch and eel. Considering Paris's plan to hold the 2024 opening ceremonies not in a stadium but by floating down its sacred river, nursing it back to health would be incredibly poetic, even in a town that invented poetic gestures. Those Paris heatwaves would certainly become more tolerable.

The Champs-Élysées is next on the city leadership's list, set to be transformed for the Games into a massive garden, with vehicle access cut in half and millions of euros invested in pedestrian-focused amenities.

The torrent of new and renoo hotels in the city is also doubling down on outdoor spaces. The year-old Kimpton St Honoré is topped by a bucolic 3,200-square-foot terrace called Sequoia that serves up panoramic views of the iconic skyline. The Hôtel Rochechouart, which opened in late 2020 in the 9th arrondissement, also has a little-publicized 1,000-square-foot perch from which to admire Sacré-Cœur and the Eiffel Tower in air scented by the wild lavender and berry bushes planted all around. *A bientôt mes amis.*



LITTLE ISLAND PARK, WEST SIDE MANHATTAN

#### POPULATION

METRO 19,294,236

#### HIGHLIGHTS

2 PROMOTION

2 CULTURE



BROOKLYN BRIDGE AT SUNSET

## 3 NEW YORK UNITED STATES

**After a hellish two years, few places on the planet were as ready to relaunch as NYC.**

The greatest city in America—lauded and crowned in our rankings for the past seven years and in countless others for many more—was a ghastly reminder during the pandemic of the vulnerability of even the colossal and seemingly all-powerful; we saw here what awaited the rest of the country. And the world. As early cases spiked, Gotham became the nation’s nightmarish coronavirus core.

It was this city-scale tragedy that first landed in the crosshairs of the sniping haters declaring that the big, vibrant, cheek-by-jowl city experiment was finally over. But for resilient New Yorkers, those attacks of course merely steeled their resolve for better days amid the death, protest and malaise.

Those better days are here. And the city is doing everything in its power to bring back not only apprehensive New Yorkers whose hunger for regular bites of the Big Apple has for two years been sated instead by takeout or delivery and a scrolling thumb tic, but also the nearly 70 million people who visited in 2019 and invested \$46 billion across its expansive quilt of Sights & Landmarks (ranked #13 globally).

“Fortunately, we’re anticipating being back to 85 percent of 2019 levels within the year,” said Chris Heywood, former executive vice president, global communications at NYC & Company, the destination marketing organization of the five boroughs. “We have benchmarked 2024 to be back to previous record-setting numbers.”

First order of business: getting those not already here to town. Fortunately, the suspension of travel for more than a year expedited the long-planned

EXPANSIVE VIEW OF CENTRAL PARK



transformations of New York's international gateways. LaGuardia Airport, Newark Liberty International Airport and John F. Kennedy International Airport all have new terminals, with the new Terminal B at LaGuardia alone boasting 35 gates (to say nothing of the FAO Schwarz on site). And, yes, a new Terminal C should be open by the time you read this. Newark Liberty International's updated Terminal A has opened with 33 new gates and construction will start later this year on a new, congestion-easing 2.5-mile elevated guideway train system. The infrastructure year ends with JFK's Terminal 8 unveiling 130,000 square feet of new and renovated space. The New Terminal One at JFK opens later this decade.

Back on the ground, Moynihan Train Hall is a new 17-track expansion of Penn Station that, if you squint, can pass for a northern European transit hub from the future.

With so many expected arrivals, NYC is certainly making sure everyone has a place to stay. More than 9,000 new hotel rooms have either opened or will be coming online this year, including the already opened (and headline-grabbing) Aman New York, an "urban sanctuary" on Fifth Avenue. Also open is the Ritz-Carlton, NoMad, a temple dedicated to the nearby and recently opened Madison Square Park, as well as The Thompson Central Park, a renovated property in Midtown. The build-out stretches across the city, with new Renaissance Hotels properties

in Harlem and Flushing opening in late 2022. Moxy Hotels is also opening multiple locations in the Lower East Side and Williamsburg.

At street level the city's firehouse turns cultural, with massive museums (#5 globally) going all in on expansions and new openings.

The Louis Armstrong House Museum in Corona, Queens, is undergoing a physical and programmatic expansion for a new cultural center, expected to debut later this year, that includes an interactive exhibit, archival collections, a 68-seat jazz club and store. And the Bronx Children's Museum is also opening this year after moving to a new home in Mill Pond Park. Dia Chelsea is a new

contemporary installation space, and the Frick Madison (the temporary home of the Frick Collection) has opened in the Breuer on Madison Avenue in a building formerly used by the Met. Speaking of the Met, just last year New York's 152-year-old cultural institution (housing 1.5 million objects and hosting seven million visitors in a non-pandemic year) announced a \$500-million reno of its modern and contemporary wing. Not as storied but equally New York is the new Museum of Broadway, the first permanent museum dedicated to the famed heartland of the stage, just opened in Times Square with a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of major theater productions.

And the big shows are back, too (with the odd COVID-related cancellation this past spring): Hugh Jackman returns for *The Music Man*; Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick star in a revival of Neil Simon's *Plaza Suite*... even Daniel Craig in *Macbeth*.

For those who prefer their urban exploration outdoors, classics like the High Line and Central Park are joined by the city's newest green space, Little Island—2.4 acres floating on the Hudson near the Meatpacking District on the site of an old pier. Like most things here, you have to see it to believe it.

When it's your turn to return to America's best city, do yourself a favor and make time to see the phoenix rise from above: there are the classics, like the Empire State Building and the Top of the Rock, but there are also new spectacular perches, like SUMMIT One Vanderbilt and its all-glass exterior elevators, called Ascent. Go up, look down and breathe out.



SUMMIT ONE VANDERBILT

**POPULATION**

METRO 39,105,000

**HIGHLIGHTS**

1 RESTAURANTS

1 SHOPPING

**4 TOKYO JAPAN**

THE SHOPPING HUB OF AKIHABARA AT NIGHT



**The futuristic metropolis is tapping its ancient feudal roots by investing in street-level livability and resident well-being—in the wake of the Olympics.**

Despite earthquakes, tsunamis and typhoons, Tokyo has long held on to its top spot as one of the safest metropolises on the planet. After dipping amid last year's scramble to host the 2021 Summer Olympic Games, the city remains incredibly safe, ranking #4 in our Safety subcategory.

Young kids playing and walking to school unattended—a pre-pandemic mind-bender for visitors to the world's largest city—is a common sight once more after almost three years of lockdowns and intermittent school closures.

Those delayed Olympics went on, of course, despite a tourism ban and local crowds not allowed to watch the live events. Tens of billions spent on infrastructure to welcome the world sat mostly empty and the 2,000 hotels, inns and

guest houses opened around the city will be underwater financially for years, to say nothing of the shopping complexes and other tourist infrastructure.

Despite the pandemic and subsequent derailment of Japan's plans—or perhaps because of them—the Japanese government remains steadfast, keeping its target of 60 million visitors and \$136 billion in tourism revenue by 2030. It's not as delusional as it sounds: the country enjoyed record tourism for seven straight years and can now accommodate even more visitors to Tokyo, with the expansion of the international terminal at Haneda, the city's main airport (ranked #65 globally).

The global reverence for the city has returned with international travel.

It earned the #1 spot in Shopping for its world-class experiences, like Ginza's luxury department stores, newly enhanced with the art-decked and sharply designed Ginza Six shopping center.

The newly renovated Miyashita Park boasts 90 boutique shops and restaurants, plus a new hotel with a view of the famed Shibuya district, complete with volleyball courts and a skatepark sprawling over 2.5 acres. Last year the city unveiled the planet's first Netflix store. Earlier this year, two pop-up stores dedicated to the Netflix show *Stranger Things* added to the fun.

New openings will ensure retail domination for the foreseeable future, like Kameido Clock near Kameido Station, home to 139 commercial tenants, including Tsutaya Books and Uniqlo, as well as green spaces for families. Mikan Shimokita in the Shimokitazawa neighborhood is a just-opened shopping and restaurant complex where shopping is upstaged by cuisine spanning Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Italian and fusion.

Appropriately, Tokyo boasts the second-highest number of restaurants of any city—topping our Restaurant category—and is moving far beyond its internationally beloved food traditions. The metropolis is home to approximately 100,000 restaurants, so visitors and residents alike could never hope to experience a fraction of them. But should you wish to, there are plenty of places to stay.



VIEW OF TOKYO BAY, RAINBOW BRIDGE

## POPULATION

METRO 6,595,000

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 SAFETY
- 2 FACEBOOK CHECK-INS

An alluring blend of over-the-top experiences, Arab heritage and luxury shopping, Dubai is so over the pandemic.

Dubai is a city of superlatives: you can ride the elevator to the top of the world's tallest building for a bird's-eye view, and bet on the ponies at the world's richest horse race. And, as of a few months ago, dive into the world's deepest swimming pool (for diving), as certified by Guinness World Records (which, if it hasn't already, should really just relocate permanently to this place solely dedicated to rewriting it). All this happens in one of the planet's safest cities.

Dubai's firehouse of only-here experiences is not by accident: the city reinvented itself yet again throughout the 2010s,

# 5 DUBAI UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

growing from a sterile playground for a handful of ultra-rich Emiratis to an international tourism and business destination. That has helped attract global talent that today ranks #27 for Educational Attainment worldwide while enjoying top-10 Income Equality.

Dubai's next challenge will be not blowing its pandemic reopening by doing too much too fast. The city is hoping to bring back the tourists (16.7 million in 2019) who have become critical to its economy, and has spent its downtime building and recalibrating at a velocity unprecedented even for this Energizer Bunny of a metropolis.

The most visited mall on the planet is already here, and helps Dubai climb to #28 in our Shopping subcategory. It would be a mistake to focus on the "mall" part of the name, however; like the city itself, the Dubai Mall is more of an attempt to capture every human experience and repackage it for consumption. It has the world's tallest tower, the Burj Khalifa, and one of the largest aquarium tanks anywhere. The city's reinvention goes on through Cityland Mall, the world's first "nature-inspired" shopping mall, which should be fully open by the time you read this.

Likewise, the Burj Khalifa's time in the sun may be nearing an end: Santiago Calatrava's Tower at Dubai Creek will eclipse the skyscraper as the tallest building in the world when completed in the next few years.

Speaking of the future, the city's sensory overload of a Museum of the Future just opened to instant landmark status. It's difficult to argue with National Geographic's declaration that this massive, singular steel-and-glass-clad torus is one of the most beautiful museums in the world.

There are, of course, a dozen other massive openings that would top most cities' 2022 announcements, from the new Mohammed Bin Rashid Library on Dubai Creek to the unprecedeted engineering of geography at The Palm, Ain Dubai and the Dubai Islands and the new, towering perches from which to see it all. Our pick? The AURA Skypool, which is (of course) the world's first and highest 360-degree infinity pool.

A new standard of luxury arrived in October 2022 with the 795-room Atlantis Royal, with restaurants from celebrity chefs Ariana Bundy and José Andrés.



SUNSET ON THE TOLERANCE BRIDGE OVER THE DUBAI WATER CANAL

**POPULATION**

METRO 4,735,000

**HIGHLIGHTS**

3 NIGHTLIFE

5 TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS

The defiant Catalan capital was the poster child of global overtourism—and its solutions. That is, before the pandemic.

Barcelona is an almost ideal European city, one with near-perfect weather year-round, three miles of beaches within city limits, iconic parks, striking architecture and colorful neighborhoods that march to their own beat—artistic, sophisticated, bohemian. No wonder it ranks #6 in our Place category, which measures both the natural and built environments of a city. And no wonder the city was dealing with 12 million tourists annually, almost double its entire regional population.

Barcelona responded with some of the strictest vacation rental restrictions anywhere, aimed at controlling the effects of runaway tourism—like

# 6 BARCELONA SPAIN

VIEW OF BARCELONA'S SUPERBLOCKS



real estate investors who snatch up apartments only to rent them on Airbnb, depleting an already limited supply. The city also elected mayor Ada Colau on a Barcelona-for-citizens platform.

Ultimately the pandemic took care of “the tourist problem,” with devastating results. Infection flare-ups meant that tourist founts like France banned all citizen travel to the Barcelona region for most of last year and local sources estimate that almost 40 percent of the shuttered bars and restaurants may never reopen. For a city with the #3 ranking for global Nightlife, this has been catastrophic.

Fortunately, tourism is returning—slowly after 2021 saw three times the visitors from 2020, but if early numbers from 2022 are an indication, accelerating fast. What they’ll find is more non-vehicular access to the city. Mayor Colau has delivered on her promise to reach 125 miles of bike lanes, with another 20 to be completed by 2023. The city has also moved forward with aggressive car traffic restrictions as part of the mayor’s superblock initiative, replacing parking and roads with playgrounds and public seating. See the future for yourself at Passeig de Sant Joan, recently named one of the world’s best streets by Time Out. Sant Joan is one of Spain’s first green corridors, designed for self-propelled mobility and exploration with its bicycle lanes, expansive sidewalks, greenery and sprawling outdoor seating. Extra bonus: it’s also home to the city’s beloved food market, Mercat de l’Abaceria (at least until it moves into more permanent digs later this decade).

The city’s top 10 Outdoors ranking should improve after its renewal. And getting to the city’s #10-ranked Sights & Landmarks by bike or foot will also help visitors discover more of its streets. And those are reopening, too. The city’s iconic La Rambla boulevard is also in the midst of ambitious renos to make it more walkable with fewer cars, while elevating the area’s architecture and art heritage, culminating with the reopening of the area’s stunning 17th-century Teatre Principal in 2024.



VIEW OF LA SAGRADA FAMILIA

**POPULATION**

METRO 3,207,000

**7 ROME ITALY****HIGHLIGHTS**

- 2** TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS
- 3** SIGHTS & LANDMARKS

**The Eternal City has always been coveted. These days, the bounty is an immersive step back in time.**

Few cities serve up the ability to walk Western history like Roma. Heck, Palatine Hill alone invites you into two millennia's worth if you've got an hour. Mix in a safe (#23), accessible modern city and its thousands of portals back in time (Sights & Landmarks are in the global top five) and it's easy to see how Rome cracked the Best Cities Top 10 again this year (after just missing out in 2021).

Declarations of love for the city have multiplied with social media channels, of course, and while Facebook check-ins (#23) and Instagram hashtags (#33) have

slipped due to lower tourism numbers, Rome still ranks #10 for Google Trends and TripAdvisor reviews. How can it not when so many sing its praises? Take the immortal Anthony Bourdain: "If I'm in Rome for only 48 hours, I would consider it a sin against God to not eat cacio e pepe, the most uniquely Roman of pastas, in some crummy little joint where Romans eat."

So let's dig into some of the highlights of the dozens of rising phoenixes of the city's culinary scene after so many restaurants shuttered over the past two years.

Pulejo, named after native son Chef Davide Pulejo, was one of the city's most anticipated openings this spring. Pulejo's international experience, from Noma in Copenhagen to Milan's L'Alchimia, will make this Prati room a fast destination.

A coin-throw from Trevi Fountain is Don Pasquale, housed in the former residence of Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti, making this restaurant and cocktail bar a destination not just for Italian cuisine lovers, but for interior design buffs as well. Chef Domenico Boschi riffs on classics of the Roman culinary empire (think artichoke and cod).

And believe the buzz about Romanè, opened recently by celebrity chef and restaurateur Stefano Callegari and devoutly dedicated to the approachability of Italian cuisine.

Appropriately, Roma has also just opened the Garum museum (named after the fish sauce that ancient Romans got their umami hit from). Its documentation of Italian cuisine—recipes, ancient utensils and methods and much more—is housed in a 16th-century palazzo that's worth a visit on its own.

A dozen other museums and cultural landmarks have also just reopened or have been unveiled for the first time, even in a city where you can't walk a block without running into a millennia-old something. Rome's #7 Museums ranking will rise as a result. Don't miss the reopened Mausoleum of Augustus as well as the Casa Romana, a 4th-century residence underneath the Museo di Scultura Antica Giovanni Barracco. Newcomers include the Museo Ninfeo, which chronicles the ruins of a... let's call it "vacation property" ... for Roman emperors.



BRIDGE OF SAINT ANGELO AT SUNSET

**POPULATION**

METRO 6,006,000

**HIGHLIGHTS**

6

NIGHTLIFE

7

TRIPADVISOR  
REVIEWS

**Spain's kinetic capital—sideswiped by the pandemic—is back like never before, thanks to a people-powered rebirth.**

Madrid suffered greatly early on in the pandemic, when it was one of the planet's hardest-hit capitals. But the city has bounced back on its feet deftly, continuing a much-needed investment in its bounteous (but long-dormant) infrastructure and public assets that is fueling the Spanish capital's city-building legacy like few eras before.

In Madrid, it starts with focusing on existing assets and the conviction that everything old can be new again. Many of the 20 recently opened and coming-soon high-end hotels are committed to reuse—from the Madrid Edition by Marriott International, housed in the old Monte de Piedad de Madrid building, to the stunning Metrópolis building's new life as a boutique hotel, spa, private club and multiple restaurants. Speaking of restaurants, more than 50 have opened in 2022, with almost that many slated for 2023.

Madrid's city leaders are also doubling down on modern reinvention focused on its citizenry. The Buen Retiro ("pleasant retreat") park in the city center joined Madrid's tree-lined Paseo del Prado boulevard on UNESCO's World Heritage list two years ago. It occupies 1.3 square miles in the center of the city, and Paseo del Prado, which includes a promenade for pedestrians, runs parallel to it, connecting the heart of the nation's art world, flanked by the Prado Museum, with the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum and the Reina Sofía art center.

# 8 MADRID SPAIN

THE METROPOLIS BUILDING, DESIGNED BY JULES AND RAYMOND FÉVRIER



Appropriately, both have been extensively expanded during the pandemic and this UNESCO honor will only add much-needed magnetism to Madrid's #15-ranked Sights & Landmarks.

It's an essential piece of infrastructure for a city that needs plentiful outdoor space, now more than ever. Madrid's #13 ranking in our Place category is well-earned and will only improve in the future, given long overdue big-budget projects, like making the central Gran Vía boulevard far more pedestrian friendly.

Perhaps the biggest news is Madrid's beautiful measures to combat climate change and pollution, by way of a 47-mile urban forest network with nearly half-a-million new trees that will connect the city's existing forest masses and reuse derelict sites between roads and buildings. Upon completion, this "green wall" is projected to help absorb 175,000 tons of carbon dioxide per year, and mitigate heat generated by urban human activity. The investment in the city's outdoor realm will improve Madrid's middling #60 ranking in our Outdoors subcategory, especially combined with how safe the city has become (ranking #23 globally).

The city is also investing in social housing and equitable development with the Madrid Nuevo Norte Project, currently Europe's largest urban redevelopment initiative, which will transform the industrial wasteland of railway lands and brownfields north of the city into social housing, a transit hub and new office spaces, with a focus on meeting UN Sustainable Development Goals. That bodes well for its current middle-of-the-pack score (#56) for Income Equality.



PARTERRE GARDEN IN BUEN RETIRO PARK

**POPULATION**

METRO 5,901,000

**HIGHLIGHTS**

4 SAFETY

4 GOOGLE TRENDS

**Asia's financial powerhouse turns its ambitions to elevated infrastructure and homegrown innovation.**

Singapore's 50-year rise from politically unstable, resource-poor and unskilled ex-colony to talent- and capital-hungry shipping hub (the world's busiest) and, subsequently, Asia's wealth management capital, is place-brand engineering at its most ambitious. Small wonder, then, that the city has never finished out of the Top 10 in our seven years of this ranking.

Singapore's reinvestment in research, talent and corporate headquarters recruitment ensures it will be home to a sustainably wealthy citizenry for decades to come. It's why the city-state continues its ascent among the planet's most prosperous cities, with a growing cluster of Global 500 companies (placing it #24 globally). The government has already committed \$16 billion to establish Singapore as a global research and

# 9 SINGAPORE SINGAPORE

STREETS OF SINGAPORE



development hub. Its 2020 Research, Innovation and Enterprise Plan aimed to duplicate Nordic and Israeli innovation and R&D, much of which will strengthen local universities. This focus on research, medicine and tech is designed to open another front for Singapore—one that complements its financial dominance. It builds on the human capital of the citizenry, already in the top five in our GDP per Capita subcategory.

Today, manifestations of this wealth and confident swagger are everywhere. From construction cranes to the gilded facades of Orchard Road—Singapore's version of Fifth Avenue for high-end fashion, now more coveted with the imminent

opening of the 350-room sustainability-obsessed luxury Pan Pacific Orchard as well as the new (and massive) Hilton Singapore Orchard—the city knows its affluent global audience: moneyed wanderers who seek efficiency, security and exoticism.

Singapore delivers it all post-pandemic, ranking #4 for Safety and within the top 25 for Outdoors, set to ascend with the 10th-anniversary additions to the city's Gardens by the Bay, starting with the Active Garden, a new 2.5-acre purpose-built green space for people of all generations to connect with one another through physical, social and learning activities. That demonstrable care for its aging population, to say nothing of 80 percent of citizens living in public housing, further differentiates this fascinating city from any other urban center on earth.

The Singapore Green Plan 2030 is aiming for 800-plus miles of bike lanes and the recently reopened nine-mile Rail Corridor makes for a quick self-propelled break from the city and journey back in time.

Of course the city's Safdie Architects-designed \$1.7-billion Jewel Changi Airport, opened in 2019 a few months before lockdowns, is also worthy of a few hours of exploration. It's already helped the city get into our top 50 Airport Connectivity ranking.



GARDENS BY THE BAY

**POPULATION**

METRO 1,157,000

**HIGHLIGHTS**

3

INCOME EQUALITY

5

LABOR FORCE  
PARTICIPATION

**Surprised to see a midsized European capital with a fading party rep ranked so high? You obviously haven't visited in a while.**

The smallest city in our Top 50 is a tiny but mighty dynamo to keep an eye on, led by visionary mayor Femke Halsema (literally: she's also a filmmaker), the first non-interim female mayor in the city's history.

**10 AMSTERDAM NETHERLANDS**

Her administration's practical stewardship of a place (and citizens) often abandoned to the tourist euro is co-authoring a future of accountability by everyone who calls the magnetic Dutch capital home. Take the recent approach to a refugee accommodation crisis that led to hundreds of unhoused migrants, many fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, sleeping outside the city's overflowing resource centers: accommodate more than 1,000 on a moored cruise ship for six months, buying vital time to find other arrangements. Not surprisingly, this care for others and willingness for locals to do the work is represented by the city's top three ranking for Income Equality, and top five for Labor Force Participation.

The sometimes out-of-control nightlife (ranked #10 globally) and human trafficking that the city was known for

(and, often, marketed as) was another opportunity to educate frustrated but powerless citizens, who were given copies of a free book exploring the city's role in the organization and management of the global slave trade from a local perspective and what they could do to help the fight. And the city is fighting, going so far as to move the red-light district out of the famed De Wallen neighborhood to the outskirts of the city while banning non-residents from cannabis cafés and ditching tours that glorify the city's baser side. Stepping in are tours focusing on the city's enviable livability and Dutch history. And getting tourists (who numbered 22 million in 2019) away from the city center, to places like Amsterdam-Noord, accessible via a free five-minute ferry from Central Station, the city's main transport hub.

Noord has become a sort of second downtown, with factories that once produced cargo ships today housing daring kitchens, some of Europe's coolest galleries and hungry tech start-ups eager to draw talent with a buzzy address. The proximity to a smoldering nightlife that doesn't infringe on sleeping families helps, too. Not like the district has nowhere to sleep: the new Sir Adam Hotel, occupying the first eight floors of the landmark A'dam Tower, has access to the city's highest observation deck to really wake up groggy guests.

The city is also embracing corporate Brexit refugees, who are setting up shop after leaving London, drawn by new overnight rail connections, for which Amsterdam is a growing hub, and air connectivity (#7).

All this is creating a looming housing crisis, which is why Mayor Halsema and other city leaders are aiming to get out ahead of it with the Haven-Stad (Port City) residential neighborhood that will eventually see up to 70,000 homes imagined as "a metropolitan mixed-use area."

Unsurprisingly, incumbent pillars of industry already using the area don't share the vision.



DANCING HOUSES OVER RIVER AMSTEL AT SUNSET



## 11 PRAGUE

CZECHIA

**POPULATION** METRO 1,164,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

3 ATTRACTIONS

4 NIGHTLIFE

**Bold reclamations focused on resident needs have created a more accessible city while tourists weren't looking.**

Demand for new rules of engagement came at a time when, during the first three months of 2021, Prague recorded an almost 94 percent decrease in tourism compared to 2019. As it returns, the city is making deliberate and long-lasting decisions to ensure its #4-ranked Museums (ahead of places like New York) and #3-ranked Attractions (trailing only London and Tokyo) remain accessible to the citizens who kept them going when tourism didn't. Places like the Čapadlo embankment on the Vltava River have become open-air stages and galleries reminiscent of Paris. Náplavka, with its former ice-storage spaces ensconced in the river's retaining walls, was reborn during the pandemic as a vibrant urban market and series of pop-up bars. Prague's compact, walkable fairy-tale spirit is still found in century-old cobbled streets and (publicly accessible) hilltop Prague Castle, which has also emerged from lockdown with Salm Palace, which houses National Gallery exhibition spaces, fully renovated. Other classics, like the Baroque Clam-Gallas Palace in Old Town, are also newly reopened and eager to be admired.

## 12 LOS ANGELES

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 13,249,614

### HIGHLIGHTS

2 GOOGLE SEARCH

5 UNIVERSITY

**The city fell from great heights. But Angelenos are helping L.A. take flight once more.**

The City of Angels is cooking again. "L.A. is the best food town in America because it's also among the most diverse," says L.A. Tourism and Convention Board president and CEO Adam Burke. "We have Angelenos from 140 countries living here, speaking 220 languages." All around L.A.'s 100+ municipalities, people are back, enjoying the #11-ranked restaurants on the planet. The city's ascendant infrastructure is hot, too. The new SoFi Stadium, the largest in the National Football League, officially opened last fall to host the NFL's Rams and Chargers home games. In February 2022, the hometown Rams ended the inaugural season by winning it all in Hollywood fashion. An equally big story is about how all nine of LAX's terminals are in the midst of a combined \$14.3-billion modernization that includes the Automated People Mover train, scheduled to open next year. Adding to L.A.'s #21 Museums ranking is the opening of the visually stunning Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, with its ongoing three-floor *Stories of Cinema* exhibit exploring the histories of moviemakers and their works. No wonder it ranks #2 globally for Google searches.

## 13 CHICAGO

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 9,508,605

### HIGHLIGHTS

5 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

7 GOOGLE SEARCH

**America's great Midwest metropolis has an abundance of programming and culture, with the deep infrastructure and affordability that eludes many other cities.**

The hardships of 2020 and 2021 only meant that the Windy City was spring-loaded for a breakout 2022, powered by a fully operational O'Hare International, the #5 airport in the world as measured by the number of direct destinations served. Meetings and conventions of all sizes are back and the city's quiet productivity is humming again with the 19th-most Global 500 headquarters on the planet and renewed investment in America's long-reigning Midwest economic powerhouse. On the streets of Chicago's #24-ranked Sights & Landmarks, the pandemic looks to be in the rearview mirror. The planet's 11th-best Nightlife has had plenty of patrons looking to keep the party going this year. Lucky for them, there are many new spots to grab dinner in a city that ranks #28 globally in our Restaurants subcategory. Chef José Andrés debuted Bazaar Meat and Bar Mar in December 2021 inside Bank of America's new Chicago headquarters, and this spring the city's youngest Michelin-starred chef, Donald Young, debuted Venteux, a French brasserie in the new Pendry Chicago hotel that is just one of more than a dozen bold hotel openings in 2022.



## 14 SAN FRANCISCO

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 4,701,332

### HIGHLIGHTS

2 UNIVERSITY

9 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

**Job opportunities and infrastructure build-out pave the way as the world continues to rush in, despite the haters.**

San Francisco doesn't just welcome differences, it celebrates them, ranking it #34 in our People category, including #9 for Educational Attainment among its citizenry. Its #16 Prosperity ranking includes #9 finishes in our Employment and GDP per Capita subcategories. The promise of high salaries draws global workers who fuel the city's ambition and ideas and drive its #31 ranking for Global 500 companies. Still, the city has been deeply wounded economically—by the pandemic, the lack of affordable housing and what many see as regulatory overreach. Companies are leaving for Austin and Florida as a result. But life goes on. The city is rolling out the most daring bike and pedestrian infrastructure in America and the protected bike network now boasts 464 miles of bikeways, including 50 miles of new car-free/car-light streets in the past year alone. Aggressive pursuit of outdoor public spaces—from downtown's new Salesforce Park, 70 feet above street level atop the roof of the Salesforce Transit Center, to the half-dozen parks, tunnels and spaces opening this year in the Presidio alone—was a clinic in opportunism. The city's #31 Outdoors ranking will only improve.

## 15 BERLIN

GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 4,026,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

5 NIGHTLIFE

6 MUSEUMS

**No other German city embodies the country's sentiments of tolerance and acceptance quite like its capital.**

Berlin is a city where remnants of a fragile history mingle with a present in which being whatever you want just comes with residency. These days, the city is welcoming waves of Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion, just like it did for decades—with mixed success—for newcomers seeking a new life from all over the world. The result: raw, unabashed urbanity and self-expression that atrophied under pandemic restrictions for the past 30 months. But as public health measures ease (and the sun comes out), the entire city is back gathering outdoors, in the parks, the beer gardens and, increasingly, in street parties and parades. Berlin also ranks #6 for Museums, a ranking that is set to ascend with the cascade of new openings and renovations this year. Two major museums have moved into the new Humboldt Forum in the heart of the city: the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art. A dozen other museums are set to open, with collections ranging from the world of the samurai to video games. In 2026, the anticipated Museum of the 20th Century will be one of Europe's finest.

## 16 HONG KONG

CHINA: HONG KONG SAR

**POPULATION** METRO 7,398,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

1 GOOGLE TRENDS

4 SAFETY

**Not quite China but no longer a Western colony, Hong Kong is fighting for its uncertain future.**

The colonial spirits that still haunt the place, the forest of skyscrapers seen on a hike to Pok Fu Lam Reservoir, the sounds, smells and tastes from the dai pai dong (open-air food stalls) of Temple Street Night Market and the city's electric pulse all captivate visitors and locals alike. The sublime embrace of the city was shattered in April 2019 when Hong Kong citizens opposing a law to extradite criminal cases to China first took to the streets. The demands quickly spread to broader human rights reforms targeting China's encroachment on the region—and, now, new security laws imposed by Beijing briefly cast a pall on Hong Kong's Safety ranking. (It's back to #4 globally, a high point of its #7 ranking in our overall Place category.) Still, Beijing today insists students are taught President Xi speeches and continues to persecute dissent. The political upheaval, combined with crushing pandemic public health measures, means the sharpest annual drop in population in 2022, down 1.6 percent according to a September 2022 Census and Statistics Department report—the steepest decline since the government began tracking figures in 1961. No wonder it's been trending so highly on Google.



## 17 WASHINGTON UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 6,196,585

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 GOOGLE SEARCH
- 7 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

America's intriguing capital city has the world's attention—and is working to keep it.

The ubiquity of D.C. in dramas on screens small and large, combined with the shocking events of recent years, means we're all thinking about Washington. Want proof? It topped all cities for the number of references on Google in the past year. Given its omnipresence, there are few cities so poised to build on its exposure. "Investment continues in the city with \$10.3 billion in development, 29 hotels in the pipeline, eight of which are opening this year, and the near completion of phase two of the Wharf," says Elliott Ferguson, president and CEO of Destination DC. Those 2022 openings include the AC Hotel Washington DC Capitol Hill Navy Yard, and the Pendry DC – The Wharf. And speaking of The Wharf, phase two of the massive Southwest Waterfront development is scheduled to open any month now. Food and dining are also helping D.C. pursue equity with Market 7, a sprawling food hall touting Black-owned businesses. The jewel in the city's culinary crown is the \$250-million RiverPoint, two blocks from Audi Field. With all of this culinary investment, the city's middling global #105 Restaurants ranking will surely improve.

## 18 BEIJING CHINA

**POPULATION** METRO 19,437,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES
- 10 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

Come for the prosperity, stay for the mind-boggling urban infrastructure build-out.

If the 21st century belongs to China (Narrator: It does), Beijing will be the place to watch its rise. The capital city ranks #2 for Prosperity (losing the top spot to Doha this year), and performed well in two separate features within that category: the highest number of Global 500 headquarters and a #26 Employment Rate ranking worldwide, which has tumbled in the past year. The site of the grand Ming Dynasty Forbidden City has endured more lockdowns than most cities in our ranking, with the Chinese government keeping any return to "normalcy" elusive. At least the world got to see a bit of Beijing's splendor during the curtailed 2022 Winter Olympic Games, with the brand-new airport getting its due globally. The spectacular, \$12-billion Zaha Hadid-designed Daxing International Airport opened its doors in late 2019, just in time to slam them shut as the pandemic hit. Airport officials promise high-speed rail, inter-city services and downtown-to-airport express trains all stopping right beneath the terminal, making for quick connections to Beijing's roiling downtown. The city is already in the top 10 in our Airport Connectivity subcategory.

## 19 DUBLIN IRELAND

**POPULATION** METRO 1,371,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 SAFETY
- 23 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

The storied capital is made for flâneurs and entrepreneurs.

Safe, gregarious and increasingly wealthy, the Celtic Tiger has never been fiercer, ranking #16 in GDP per Capita while simultaneously #27 for Income Equality. The magnetism is obvious in places like its Docklands area, known as Silicon Docks, home to big tech and digital players including Google, Facebook, Amazon, eBay, Apple and Airbnb. They come for some of the world's lowest corporate taxes and stay for the home-grown economic development initiatives like Ireland's Local Enterprise Office, which supports international companies with mentoring, training and financial grants. And it's not just household names setting up shop in the Irish capital. The site of several internationally ranked universities (Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, and Dublin City University), the city continues to attract smaller start-ups that choose it over traditional head office cities like London and New York. It helps to be able to offer eager young employees something to do outside of work, which Dublin's famous—though increasingly costly—pub-centric nightlife (ranked #15 globally) handily takes care of, along with an abundance of concerts, shows and events (Culture ranks #19). Of course, being among the safest cities on the planet helps, too.



## 20 ISTANBUL TÜRKİYE

**POPULATION** METRO 15,311,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 INSTAGRAM
- 4 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

The planet's only major city straddling two continents is going all in on capitalizing on its strategic location.

The ancient gateway between Europe and Asia, the conservatism and liberalism that Istanbul's history built on radiates in every atom of Türkiye's kinetic capital. It's why the city always ranks high in our Sights & Landmarks subcategory (#11 this year, just behind Barcelona). Minarets and church spires dot the bright skyline, while down at street level vendors plying their wares share the street with harried bankers and diplomats. But on both sides of the Bosphorus Strait, everyone is talking about Galataport, Istanbul's reinvigorated historic city harbor. Extending almost a mile along the Bosphorus near the city's long-coveted Karaköy district, the \$1.7-billion project boasts the planet's first-ever underground cruise terminal—essentially a mini tourist city where those coming and going can shop and eat. But it's not all logistical: the luxury Peninsula Istanbul opens nearby early next year, capping a torrid year for hotel openings that includes the seafront luxury resort JW Marriott Marmara Sea and a dozen others. The city's #10 Museum ranking will also get a boost from the Galataport investment, with the Istanbul Modern, the city's first contemporary art museum (designed by Renzo Piano), returning to its Karaköy roots.

## 21 LAS VEGAS UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,182,004

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 ATTRACTIONS
- 4 CULTURE

COVID-19 floored Sin City, but its resilience and response will define it for decades.

Tourism—the #1 economic driver for Southern Nevada—means that COVID-19 decimated Las Vegas like few other cities. A Vegas visit in 2022, therefore, is a pilgrimage into American urban resilience. After all, this is Vegas, baby, home of the #7 Weather ranking in the world and the planet's top three Attractions. More than 2.6 million visitors checked into town this past February alone, according to local numbers, which is a 70 percent increase year over year and just down 18 percent from 2019. Welcoming them are new properties like the \$4.3-billion Resorts World Las Vegas. Opened in mid 2021, it is ginormous, comprising three hotels, the 27,000-square-foot Awana Spa and a 5,000-capacity theater. The fact that places like the Wynn were extensively renoed at a cost of \$200 million during the pandemic is almost lost in the gilded fog of Vegas construction. In addition to the fervor of build-out during the past two years, there is still more than \$15 billion in new investment in the pipeline, including the 2023 completion of the much-anticipated Fontainebleau and the \$2-billion MSG Sphere under construction behind the Venetian.

## 22 MILAN ITALY

**POPULATION** METRO 4,994,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 SIGHTS & LANDMARKS
- 10 TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS

A no-nonsense devotion to the finer things makes Italy's northern power a culture and fashion vanguard.

Milan's quest to be the eminent Italian metro grabbed the world's attention in all the wrong ways with one of the first serious outbreaks of COVID-19 outside of Asia. Italy's financial hub was hard hit, but its recovery is swift. Let's start with efficient livability: of any Italian city, Milan scores highest in the Product category, which includes the number of quality museums (it ranks #15 worldwide). Its bucolic and historically revered sense of place, glittering with the Duomo and dozens of other life-affirming urban treasures, powers its Sights & Landmarks ranking to #6 globally, with a #11 finish for our overall Place category. Its meticulous urbanity is appreciated globally, with a top 10 finish in TripAdvisor reviews. But this is Milan, home of the banks, stock exchange, fashion and design that drive Italia's GDP... and there's work to do ahead of the 2026 Olympic Games. Namely, extending the metro to its best spots (and airports and transit hubs) and staying on track with the city's new districts, like the Isola-Porta Nuova, a lab of daring, sustainably minded architecture known as both "New Milan" and "Little Manhattan."



## 23 BUDAPEST

HUNGARY

**POPULATION** METRO 2,429,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

8 ATTRACTIONS

16 NIGHTLIFE

The Old World beguiles in the Hungarian capital.

Budapest has emerged as a European capital post-pandemic, coveted by digital nomads looking for urban vibrancy on a budget and without the rigid establishment of the old, *old Europe*. The city, which is split by the expansive bend of the Danube River, delivers in spades. On the west bank is medieval Buda, hilly and full of history, and on the east is Pest, modern and bohemian, with its recently revamped City Park. The two were first linked in 1849 by the iconic Széchenyi Chain Bridge and together they now offer an alluring whole that ranks #8 globally for Attractions and in the top 25 for Museums, which include the must-see Museum of Fine Arts along with a dozen other niche ones, from the Szamos Chocolate Museum, to an epic Pinball Museum. At night, Budapest's Communist-era factories and parkades come alive as "ruin bars," a distinctly Eastern European approach that keeps the city's nightlife (ranked #16) reinventing itself. Budapest is also suddenly a luxury property hot spot, with the new Matild Palace—the city's first Luxury Collection hotel—opening inside a UNESCO landmark last year, joining newcomer Párisi Udvár Hotel.

## 24 TORONTO

CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 6,985,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

7 GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES

9 UNIVERSITY

Economic growth, fueled by immigration and global investment, has Canada's largest city poised for big things.

With almost half of its population foreign-born, Toronto's top 25 finish this year is powered by diversity and education, with its eponymous university, U of T, ranking #9 globally and its residents finishing #20 for the planet's most educated. All that talent, about to increase drastically due to Canada's embrace of skilled immigrants, will supercharge an economy that already boasts the seventh-highest number of Global 500 head offices (up two spots from last year). Incredibly, Canada's largest city only seems to be getting started: last year it was crowned the fastest-growing metropolitan area in all of North America by a Centre for Urban Research and Land Development study. Getting less attention is the projection by the University of Toronto that, in less than 50 years, it will trail only New York and Mexico City in North American population. Fortunately, it's not all work. The century-old Massey Hall just reopened for performances after a C\$184-million three-year reno (sure to improve Toronto's #17 Culture ranking), and new hotels like the W are opening, as are elevated High Line-esque parks and Paris-ish swimming spots.

## 25 SYDNEY

AUSTRALIA

**POPULATION** METRO 4,645,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

8 GOOGLE SEARCH

14 OUTDOORS

Friendly, warm, young and rich, Sydney is a beauty with a growing line of suitors.

If Sydney weren't so (relatively) isolated, it would likely challenge Paris and London for global visitor supremacy. It's the laid-back, sunny manifestation of the good life. Consider residents as a benchmark: according to local numbers, Sydney has been gaining more than 80,000 annually (before its multiple COVID lockdowns, of course, the most dramatic being 2021's 107-day one that incited dozens of protests). The city's staggering growth is indicative of the pull of the golden beaches, the big-city harbor and the mellow, generous, welcoming citizens who call this spectacular location home. Sydney's big outdoor spaces—ranked #14 globally—likely helped residents tolerate the pandemic's early days, and those drastic lockdowns, with some green spaces seeing double the usual number of visitors. The next big visitor to town? SXSW, the annual entertainment and tech summit from Austin, is launching a Sydney version in October 2023. Despite spiking housing costs driven by massive demand, the city continues to invest in road projects that include 12 miles of road tunnels to connect the city to its growing burbs and public rail transport that is projected to have 32 stations by 2024.



## 26 SEOUL

SOUTH KOREA

**POPULATION** METRO 22,394,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

2 RESTAURANTS

7 MUSEUMS

Multifaceted Seoul ranks as impressively high for culture and entertainment as it does for institutions, attractions and infrastructure.

For a city that's larger than Beijing and New York and has two Londons worth of people, Seoul is perhaps the most stealthy metropolis on earth. The innovation, culture and (most tantalizingly) the cuisine in the South Korean capital is truly astounding. The city has long been one of Asia's economic engines and boasts the sixth-most Global 500 companies (ranking #21 in our overall Prosperity category). The city government that largely mitigated pandemic outbreaks by swift collaboration with the local high-tech sector to detect, contain and treat cases in the early months of COVID today is forging into Web3 with a \$187-million investment in a virtual communication network with the working title of "Metaverse Seoul." And yes, virtual tourism is part of the plan. But to experience the second-best restaurants on the planet (behind Tokyo), you'll have to visit IRL. Start at Mukja Golmok, literally "Let's Eat Alley"; then the vegetable-centric temple cuisine at Dooreyoo, Michelin-starred chef Tony Yoo's oasis; and Gwangjang Market, a century-old food hall where you can eat everything from a soup of rice cakes and kimchi-tofu dumplings to squirmy live octopus (really).

## 27 DOHA

QATAR

**POPULATION** METRO 1,520,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

1 GDP PER CAPITA

1 EMPLOYMENT RATE

Qatar has its sights set on becoming the next tourism hot spot in the Middle East, with Doha as its crown jewel.

In less than a century, Qatar went from a poor UK colony with a dwindling fishing industry to an independent nation that today is the richest state per capita in the world—with booming infrastructure development to match. Doha is tops globally for GDP per Capita, Employment Rate and our overall Prosperity category. With shrewd investment of oil wealth, the Qatar Investment Authority is estimated to be worth almost \$450 billion. A flurry of investment means new highways, a metro system, universities, the I.M. Pei-designed Museum of Islamic Art and the breathtaking new National Museum of Qatar, which, when it opened, inspired the *New York Times* to say, "Skip the Vatican Museum. Go to the National Museum of Qatar instead." November's 2022 FIFA World Cup will not only showcase new stadiums like the Lusail Iconic Stadium (the 86,000-seat World Cup Final host venue created by famed British architects Foster + Partners in Doha's \$45-billion new Lusail district), but also an astounding 100+ new hotels in and around the city, from the Fairmont and Raffles Doha housed right in the U-shaped Katara Tower to two (two!) Waldorf Astoria properties.

## 28 ABU DHABI

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,022,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

2 GDP PER CAPITA

3 WEATHER

The UAE's second city passes on the ostentatious and pursues the culturally significant.

While Dubai has the world's biggest, tallest and most expensive *everything*, Abu Dhabi is quietly focusing on heritage and a rich cultural tapestry. It invests in bringing artists and creators as guests for residencies and multi-show dates. The city has a knack for attracting permanent international talent, as well as developing its homegrown innovation, ranking #27 in our Educational Attainment subcategory, eager to tap into the second-highest GDP per Capita on the planet, its third-best Weather, and, unlike other oil-rich metropolises, top 10 Income Equality. UAE's second city is positioning itself as a leading global arts and culture hub, with the world's largest mosque and museums designed by just about every starchitect you can think of. While the Nouvel-designed Louvre Abu Dhabi is already open, the city is hard at work on Saadiyat Island on the construction of Norman Foster's Zayed National Museum (set to open in 2025), Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Tadao Ando's Maritime Museum and a Performing Arts Center by the late Zaha Hadid. The city's #240 ranking for Museums will rocket up our rankings any year now.



## 29 OSAKA

JAPAN

**POPULATION** METRO 15,490,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

4 SAFETY

8 SIGHTS & LANDMARKS

**Osaka does today what it's done well for centuries: entrepreneurialism, food distribution and living high off the spoils of both.**

One thing that's apparent strolling the controlled velocity of Osaka is the swagger of its citizens. This was the capital of what is today modern Japan a millennium before Tokyo, after all, when it served as "the nation's kitchen"—the distribution point for rice, the most important measure of wealth. Osaka has always known how to eat, ranking #12 globally for Restaurants, and is best known for its okonomiyaki—cabbage pancakes stuffed with an ever-changing lineup of fillings. It's also still an economic force, #12 on the planet for Global 500 companies. Amazingly, the city's economy dwarfs Hong Kong's. But it's the impressive #23 ranking in our Programming category—led by a #9 spot for its shopping scene—that made Osaka the fastest-rising Japanese tourist city prior to the pandemic. The return of visitors is eagerly anticipated, and many will be sure to check in at Japan's first W Hotel, which opened in early 2021 and was designed by Pritzker Prize-winning Osakan Tadao Ando. Also newly opened is Super Nintendo World as part of Universal Studios Japan, featuring more Mario immersion than any human being could ever need.

## 30 BANGKOK

THAILAND

**POPULATION** METRO 17,573,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

2 EMPLOYMENT RATE

5 SHOPPING

**Eat, shop and repeat in Thailand's intoxicating capital city and, increasingly, Southeast Asia's transportation hub.**

Bangkok is coming out of the pandemic more kinetic, bustling and relevant than ever. Start with the city as a global culinary powerhouse, ranking #16 worldwide in our Restaurants subcategory, despite the rumored destruction of the industry by lockdown. The industrious street food entrepreneurs in Bangkok's Yaowarat (Chinatown) triumphantly relit their grills and started serving up heaping portions of curry and noodles, albeit across Plexiglas barriers, while sticking to strict COVID-19 protocols that helped the city fare exceptionally well against the virus early on. These days, restaurant openings are back and include must-try curry house Charmgang, which opened just before the lockdown, and David Thompson's new Aksorn, serving meals inspired by vintage Thai recipes. The city also ranks in the top five globally for Shopping, and the proof is in its plentiful markets, like Chatuchak, its largest, and Central, an upscale department store that carries local and traditional Thai merchandise like tableware and decorative items made by artisans in Chiang Mai. But the biggest buzz in town is Bang Sue Grand Station, Southeast Asia's largest railway terminal, which started full service late last year.

## 31 VIENNA

AUSTRIA

**POPULATION** METRO 1,843,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

15 WEATHER

14 CULTURE

**Where modernism was born, the future is doing just fine.**

Fresh ideas are blowing through the city that gave birth to modernism—creating a place that's becoming the benchmark for urban livability, sustainability and equity. Just consider housing: in an era of prohibitive global urban rents, 60 percent of the city's population resides in subsidized apartments and 25 percent of citizens' homes are owned by the city. Vienna also ranks #15 globally for Income Equality, while finishing a respectable #55 for Labor Force Participation. Here, too, is the European standard for public transit, with almost half of residents holding an annual transit pass—and using it religiously. The new U5 subway line, combined with an ever-expanding bike lane network, makes car-free exploring a joy here. And there's so much to see, with safe streets, great weather, clean air and water, and a history of methodical city planning that has given the world everything from the English garden-inspired City Park (opened in 1862) to an actual national park just outside of town (National Park Donau-Auen). But it's not like the city lacks for urban pursuits, as indicated by its #14 ranking globally for Culture and #18 ranking for its 100+ museums.



## 32 SAN DIEGO

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 3,316,073

### HIGHLIGHTS

11 UNIVERSITY

14 WEATHER

Southern California's urban ideal offers free sunshine and the epic outdoors. Steps from home and office—across two borders.

One of California's oldest cities is today one of America's fastest growing. It ranks #26 in our deep Place category—with the #15 finish for Outdoors globally. And, of course, there's its climate. San Diego is as naturally endowed as any place has a right to be—its sublime 263 full and partly sunny days annually help rank it #14 for Weather, while the 23 beaches—70 miles of them—within city limits make it synonymous with the lore of SoCal surf culture. The built environment is also ascendant, starting with the #30-ranked Attractions subcategory. The 3.2-acre, \$87-million Denny Sanford Wildlife Explorers Basecamp is finally open, designed to immerse visitors in the sights and sounds of ecosystems around the world, from balmy rainforests to dusty dunes. The city's subdued cultural might is also on display, with the new Comic-Con Museum in Balboa Park's former Hall of Champions building and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, which unveiled its long-awaited renovation and expansion of its La Jolla flagship campus. Increasing cross-border economic collaboration with Mexico is also fueling its #21-ranked GDP per Capita.

## 33 SÃO PAULO

BRAZIL

**POPULATION** METRO 22,495,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

3 RESTAURANTS

4 FACEBOOK CHECK-INS

The world is already in Brazil's largest city. They all just happen to speak Portuguese.

Brazil's (and South America's) biggest metropolis greets you not with beaches but with high-rises, traffic, smog and more than the occasional downpour. But as Paulistanos will tell you in person or via Facebook check-ins (#4), they live in the best city on the planet. With the largest population of Italian descendants outside of Italy, the largest community of people of Japanese descent outside Japan and a large Middle Eastern community fueled mostly by Lebanese and Syrian immigrants, culinary delights are a given. The city lands an impressive #3 for its restaurants, ahead of London and New York. The resuming of life has given the city's #4-ranked Culture scene a shot in the toned arm, with signature concerts, shows and events drawing big, colorful and gyrating crowds once more. New hotels and experiences are everywhere: from the anticipated Rosewood São Paulo (its interiors and 180 guest rooms designed by French designer Philippe Starck and 57 local artists) to the Hotel Ca' d'Oro's new Skybar on the 27th floor, an ideal perch to take a breath and observe a city that never seems to.

## 34 MELBOURNE

AUSTRALIA

**POPULATION** METRO 4,629,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

12 UNIVERSITY

18 SIGHTS & LANDMARKS

Cool, confident and never too eager to give up its secrets, Melbourne rewards citizens and curious, patient visitors.

Like the rest of Australia, Melbourne had a 2021 from hell due to punishing lockdowns, civil unrest, local business bankruptcies and the exodus of once proud locals. But the city is too proud to wallow and has work to do. While Sydney is known for its laid-back vibe and breezy style, Melbourne goes for edgy aesthetics and urban panache, ranking #18 for Sights & Landmarks and #22 for Culture. For proof, explore a multitude of tiny alleys, where the city's spray-can artists turn dreary walls into colorful canvases. You might stumble upon a laneway, those locally loved narrow passageways open only to pedestrian traffic, with a charming little bar or an award-winning restaurant. In the art capital of Australia, you can while away the morning at Gertrude Contemporary, a gallery that showcases the work of emerging homegrown artists, or you can lose yourself in the happening Fitzroy neighborhood, where the city's street-art scene began in the aforementioned alleys. In addition to its alluring urbanity, Melbourne's people are the city's superpower, ranking #19 for Educational Attainment and helping steward the planet's #12-ranked university.



## 35 ZURICH

SWITZERLAND

**POPULATION** METRO 1,369,041

### HIGHLIGHTS

11 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

12 GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES

Often ranking among the world's most livable cities, Zurich is exactly the kind of place you'd want to call home: efficient, clean and safe.

Switzerland's financial center and largest metropolis is a magnet for foreigners who, along with multilingual Swiss nationals, enjoy one of the world's highest standards of living—the city ranks #15 for GDP per Capita and #12 for Global 500 headquarters, with major European players like Migros, Credit Suisse and UBS AG based here. Given the city's reemergence post-pandemic, it's no wonder unemployment has plummeted, ranking #27 globally. Zurich also lands at #8 in our People category, which includes the Educational Attainment (#17) and Labor Force Participation (#11) subcategories. For the uninitiated, Zurich may seem like a bourgeois and reserved kind of place, but under the buttoned-down oxford you'll find a thriving arts landscape, an adventurous restaurant scene (including Bridge, a market and food hall with local purveyors) and plenty of vintage finds that won't break the (Swiss) bank account. The city has the highest concentration of creative-industry companies in Switzerland, nurtured and inspired by the Global 500 biggies. The next gen of entrepreneurs has set up shop in once-industrial west-end 'hoods like districts 4 and 5, which are increasingly becoming cultural destinations, too.

## 36 BOSTON

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 4,832,346

### HIGHLIGHTS

1 UNIVERSITY

8 GDP PER CAPITA

America's oldest big city has never been more current.

A hub of higher education and home to the 11th-best-educated workforce on earth, Beantown produces a steady stream of new talent to help attract startups and established companies alike. Future talent gravitates to Harvard, of course—America's top school (and a big reason why the city is #1 in our University subcategory and scored #34 globally in our overall Product category). The city is bursting with lecture halls, labs and classrooms for the more than 75 institutions of higher learning in the area, and is energized by the estimated 200,000 post-secondary students (many who are excitedly back in the city after two-and-a-half years away) creating stories, ideas, solutions and technologies that will help drive the economy and incubate innovation districts nationally and globally for decades to come. They're definitely hitting it at the right time. Boston ranks #8 in our global GDP per capita subcategory and #14 overall for Prosperity. "Boston's reopening is well underway," says Martha Sheridan, president and CEO of the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Hotel development is robust, new openings and 5-star renovations are a sure sign that recovery is unfolding as we would hope."

## 37 LISBON

PORTUGAL

**POPULATION** METRO 2,719,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

12 SIGHTS & LANDMARKS

15 TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS

The once sleepy capital on the edge of western Europe is today one of the continent's hottest destinations.

The Portuguese capital is a tactile, multisensory experience best explored on foot, allowing a few of the 2,799 hours of sunshine a year—the most of any European capital—to warm your sense of discovery. As walkable as Lisbon is, it will soon be equally bikeable, with more than 125 miles of bike paths opened earlier this year and more on the way that will further improve its #19 global ranking for Place. Its seven hills play with the senses, reverberating sounds, light and scents, to say nothing of providing perches from which to watch the sun setting into the Atlantic. The best spot? Castelo de São Jorge, a view you have to earn by ascending through winding ancient alleys in one of Europe's oldest neighborhoods—like, 1,500 years old. New international residents continue to pour in, buoying the ascendant house prices while pursuing the coveted visa programs the national government keeps riffing on. They also come for daring initiatives like the city's first Michelin-starred restaurant at chef Pedro Pena Bastos' Cura at the Four Seasons Hotel Ritz. Go there instead of the new Lisbon Earthquake Experience.



## 38 WARSAW

POLAND

**POPULATION** METRO 1,965,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

2 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

24 ATTRACTIONS

Poland's capital is an economic and entrepreneurial hotbed with plenty of reasons to leave work early.

It's been decades since Warsaw shook off its dreary Cold War cloak, and while other members of the EU have suffered financial woes in recent years, Poland has flourished, slowly but surely becoming an economic European powerhouse, and not just among former Soviet states. But Russia's and Nazi Germany's invasions remain indelible, which is why its capital has unconditionally welcomed 250,000 Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Russian invasion. The city is simultaneously getting on with its ambitious projects (from the upcoming rebuild of the Saska Palace, an iconic 17th-century building destroyed by the Nazis in World War II, to new museums and a couple of Michelin-starred restaurants) and finally coming into its own as a tourist destination with its Attractions ranking in the top 25 globally. It's also an affordable one, where real estate and travel often cost half of what they do in other western European capitals. Warsaw also boasts the planet's second-best-educated citizens, second only to London. With that kind of brainpower already in town, Warsaw's time as a coveted European capital has arrived.

## 39 SEATTLE

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 3,871,323

### HIGHLIGHTS

4 UNIVERSITY

11 GDP PER CAPITA

America's growing tech hub is playing the long game, focusing on inclusive prosperity in the talent wars.

Seattle's self-reliance was on full display during the pandemic's darkest days. The city saw the first outbreaks in the U.S. But as the *New York Times* noted a year later, "The Seattle area has the lowest death rate of the 20 largest metropolitan regions in the country. If the rest of the United States had kept pace with Seattle, the nation could have avoided more than 300,000 coronavirus deaths." The resilience wasn't just in public health. Despite an over-reported (and, as it turns out, temporary) exodus from the center to the suburbs, Seattle has avoided the economic impact that continues to hobble other cities. In fact, it remains a draw for Californians looking for (literally) greener pastures and pulled by the titans of industry in town, from Amazon to Zillow. CBRE cites Seattle as the #6 market for commercial leases so far in 2022, most of it driven by tech firms. Another indicator of Seattle's continued ascent? Its #19 global ranking for Prosperity, home-grown in local post-secondary powerhouses led by the UDub—the University of Washington—which ranks #4 globally.

## 40 ORLANDO

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,508,970

### HIGHLIGHTS

5 ATTRACTIONS

9 TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS

Two years of subdued tourism means Orlando is ready to welcome the world again.

Being the largest city in a region that generates more than \$60 billion in tourism-related revenue every (non-pandemic) year gets you plenty of lift from a rising tide. That's a lot of visitors with a story to tell if you give them the means to tell it. Orlando knows how to get people talking. Its #9 ranking in our TripAdvisor Reviews subcategory drove its overall ranking, fueled by its top five global ranking for Attractions. Orlando plans buzzy product releases with military precision—and suffered deeply when confronted with an invisible enemy it couldn't defeat quickly. After its many high-budget tourism initiatives were delayed—from SeaWorld's new Sesame Street Land to LEGOLAND Resort's Lego Movie World—the city is making up for lost time with the massive South Terminal Complex at Orlando International Airport, with phase one of the \$3.8-billion, multi-year project nearing completion right about now. Orlando's #19 ranking for Airport Connectivity is about to improve globally. Beyond the theme parks, you'll find locals and visitors cheering for hometown pro soccer at the new Exploria Stadium—with plenty of placemaking around the emerging neighborhood.



## 41 MUNICH GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 2,008,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

7 CONVENTION CENTER

7 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Bavaria's party capital is also a business behemoth—an advantage highlighted during the pandemic.

Yes, there's Oktoberfest every autumn, but Germany's third-largest city works as hard as it plays, becoming one of Europe's hottest destinations for new residents seeking this elusive balance. The pandemic has only highlighted the productivity of understated Bavarian innovation, especially given all the "temporary" initiatives—from outdoor seating to a reimagined concrete factory—that have become permanent and made this merry city even more fun. But this is Germany after all and there's productivity to think about. Munich boasts the world's #7 convention center—and its airport is ranked #15 (soon to improve after a \$550-million reno is done in 2023), ensuring ease of access to all that business. The local Technical University of Munich, which brands itself "the Entrepreneurial University," also finished in the top 25 in our University subcategory. Small wonder, with all that infrastructure and entrepreneurship, that Munich ranks #17 in our overall Prosperity category, including #19 for Global 500 headquarters (made up primarily of automakers, media and manufacturing, but being quickly joined by biotech and IT giants).

## 42 HOUSTON UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 6,884,138

### HIGHLIGHTS

5 GOOGLE SEARCH

10 GDP PER CAPITA

Educated, diverse and hard-working, Houston is America's stealthy powerhouse on the rise.

Austin may get the attention, but the promise of the Lone Star State drawing Californians and New Yorkers is quietly being fulfilled in Houston. In the past year, immigration both domestic and international has swelled the metro population almost seven million—an increase of almost 300,000. And the people arriving are more educated and more international than before the pandemic. Houston today is one of America's most ethnically diverse big cities, with more than 145 languages spoken at home, according to the latest census—about even with New York. No wonder it ranks #26 for Culture globally and, perhaps more remarkably, #31 for Restaurants, with a flurry of post-pandemic launches happening now—from food halls like Railway Heights and POST Houston, to elevated Mexican at Chivos, Casa Nomad and Urbe (few cities anywhere do Mexican better than Houston). The fifth-largest city in the U.S. has certainly stirred global curiosity with its economic might, with a top 10 global GDP per Capita finish. And that curiosity about the city? Houston has been among the top five Googled cities over the past year.

## 43 AUSTIN UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,114,441

### HIGHLIGHTS

6 GOOGLE SEARCH

23 UNIVERSITY

The home of SXSW (it returned IRL this fall!) continues its quest to become America's new hometown.

The rebellious Texas city—forged by the can-do persistence cut with a university town's social activism—is now simply a place that's incredibly livable. Talk to any entrepreneur leaving Silicon Valley or Seattle and chances are they've considered Austin. The capital and talent inflow is staggering: Austin ranks #40 for Global 500 headquarters on the planet. Its employment rate sits at #38 globally, as tech giants like Oracle (as in, *the planet's second-largest software company*) move HQs to the city, joined by smaller job creators like BAE Systems. The #23-ranked University of Texas at Austin is also a talent magnet, focusing on research and a growing talent pipeline to the symbiotic private sector. That foundation of thinking differently has been pulling the creative class since long before it had a moniker, prompting local marketer Visit Austin to trademark the city as "the Live Music Capital of the World." South by Southwest, the annual summit of business, music and creativity, is still going strong, an elder beacon for new ventures and a firehose of investment that has seen two new Thompson Hotels and a United Nations of restaurants opening in 2022 alone.



## 44 BUENOS AIRES

ARGENTINA

**POPULATION** METRO 16,216,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

8 CULTURE

12 MUSEUMS

Buenos Aires is a mesmerizing cocktail that blends a dash of European flair with a heavy dose of Latin passion.

Elegant mansions line cobblestone streets, drivers maneuver broad boulevards according to rules only they comprehend, and the planet's #26 Nightlife (back sultrier than ever post pandemic restrictions) goes on until dawn. Porteños, as locals are known, have mastered the art of whiling away the hours at cafés, drinking espresso and arguing over politics or yesterday's fútbol match. But this chaotic, beautiful mess teetered on the edge under massive infection numbers and deaths. While the employment rate has recovered (but still at #130 globally), the city's Safety ranking has tumbled to #180. Still, this is the fourth year in a row in the Top 100 for "Baires," led by its #16 spot for Sights & Landmarks, boosted by spots like La Boca, a vibrant quarter where everything—walls, lampposts, fire hydrants and even tree trunks—is painted in vibrant shades of green, red, yellow, purple and blue. Buenos Aires is also an emerging force in our Programming category (#16), ranking #8 for Culture thanks to its now normally scheduled torrent of events and concerts—from tango in the park in Belgrano to the increasingly buzzy arteBA art fair.

## 45 NAPLES

ITALY

**POPULATION** METRO 3,303,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

4 SIGHTS & LANDMARKS

6 OUTDOORS

Italy's third-largest city is a 3,000-year-old treasure trove of urbanity, with the experiences to match.

Even by European secondary-city status, Naples is often overlooked and underestimated—both by international visitors and by Italy's power centers. The city's three millennia of existence make it one of the oldest urban hearts on the continent—with the accompanying layers of beauty, conflict and lore (*grazie*, Elena Ferrante). Naples ranks second only to Dubai (the anti-Naples if there ever was one) in our deep Place category, including #4 for Sights & Landmarks—its centuries-old Naples Cathedral rivals any other in the sensual feast that is Italy. Like in Rome and Istanbul, a mere stroll here reveals forgotten history on every block. The city's waterfront, nearby beaches and green spaces result in a #6 ranking for Outdoors. Naples has long been associated with crime and mafia, but tourism has doubled over the past decade, and crime dropped by almost 50 percent between 2018 and 2019 according to local sources—resulting in a vastly improved #23 Safety ranking globally (tied with Zurich). Of course, both positive indicators are at risk given that Napoli has one of Italy's highest unemployment rates and its historically high student dropout rate is dire as it picks up the pieces of the latest pandemic to level the city.

## 46 COPENHAGEN

DENMARK

**POPULATION** METRO 1,618,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

4 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

20 UNIVERSITY

One of Europe's most coveted capitals gets real.

It seems that the fourth-most-educated citizenry on the planet is prescient enough to recognize short-term pain for long-term gain. Due to its citizens' compliance with isolating during the early days of the pandemic and thereby avoiding overly punitive lockdowns, Copenhagen has been "back" longer than most global capitals over the past 18 months. Of course a city this compact, peppered with parks and connected by a serpentine network of bike lanes (with another \$65 million to be invested in 2022, the city's Year of the Bike) and clean urban swimming spots made outdoor, distanced pursuits easier than elsewhere. The commitment to sustainability is everywhere, from Copenhagen's drive to make 50 percent of all work and school commutes on bicycles by 2025 to Denmark's overall carbon neutrality aim by 2050. Transit build-out is everywhere, connecting more affordable districts on the city's outskirts, most notably the much-needed Sydhavn connector in 2024. But nothing will be as daring as the building of Lynetteholm, a 680-acre artificial island off the city's coast, housing 35,000 people while protecting its harbor from rising water. Or so we hope.



## 47 DALLAS UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 7,320,663

### HIGHLIGHTS

6 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

12 GOOGLE SEARCH

"Big Things Happen Here" can refer to any one of investment, population growth or cultural ascent in the Big D.

It's not only city sloganizing that's big in Dallas. It's economic reality. Home to more than 10,000 corporate headquarters—the largest concentration in the U.S.—and ranking #24 in the world for Global 500 companies, the city is easy to get to. Dallas Fort Worth International Airport is sixth-best globally in our Airport Connectivity rankings. A planned \$3-billion Terminal F project, on hold during the pandemic, is likely back on the table, given DFW's rebound of 62.5 million passengers in 2021—nearly 60 percent higher than 2020. The #42 ranking for Convention Center is going to ascend, too, now that city council has approved plans for a new \$2-billion, 2.5-million-square-foot facility to be built adjacent to the current one by 2028. But Dallas is big on fun and culture, too. This is the home of America's sixth-largest LGBTQ+ community. On 20 square blocks of mixed-use space, institutions like the Dallas Museum of Art, the Crow Museum of Asian Art and the renowned Nasher Sculpture Center—as well as theaters, symphony and opera venues, plus restaurants and bars—all point to future improvement for the city's #82 Programming ranking.

## 48 HELSINKI FINLAND

**POPULATION** METRO 1,200,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

11 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

15 INCOME EQUALITY

Irreverence and saunas are the thing in Northern Europe's emerging hot spot.

Few nations have managed the pandemic better than the country named the world's happiest for the fifth year in a row. And if a country is the happiest in the world, one can discern that so is its capital city. When the rest of the world was coming to grips with the pandemic, Helsinki's local government immediately took action—supporting local businesses, holding virtual info sessions and generally having everyone's back, so long as they had each others'. The city was among the first in the world to recognize the safety of al fresco dining, and public funds were used to purpose-build massive outdoor seating areas as communal infrastructure for local restaurants (while providing local jobs in doing so). Most spaces have remained and city leaders continue to provide millions of dollars annually to citizen placemaking projects. It's the kind of sensible urban cohesion you'd expect from a city that boasts the 11th-most-educated citizenry on the planet and its 23rd-safest streets, and where the workforce enjoys some of the top income equality in the world (#15).

## 49 FRANKFURT GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 1,941,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

2 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

9 CONVENTION CENTER

Frankfurt is quickly growing into a European business capital.

Frankfurt has perfected the art of air access. Germany is in the middle of Europe, Frankfurt is in the middle of Germany, and its airport—the largest in the country—is one of the world's aviation hubs (#2 in our Airport Connectivity subcategory, one that Frankfurt has been ascending for years). The city rises above most others with its #9-ranked convention center, which draws more than 4.5 million visitors annually (pandemic years excepted). In 15 minutes, conventioneers who fly into FRA can find themselves at the massive Messe Frankfurt, the world's largest trade fair and event organizer, featuring its own exhibition grounds. A short stroll in any direction takes visitors to shopping, restaurants, museums and other pleasures to mix with the business of the day. The convention center has invested heavily in its "hygiene concept," a typically German comprehensive system for safely organizing an event in the age of new pathogens. The city has also benefited from London's Brexit uncertainty. JPMorgan is moving hundreds of employees from London to other European cities, mainly Paris and Frankfurt, as well as approximately 200 billion euros in assets to Frankfurt from London.



## 50 ATLANTA

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 5,862,424

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 11 GOOGLE SEARCH
- 14 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

Ambitious and dripping with history, ATL is creating its future mid-flight.

Long a progressive beacon of diversity in Georgia, Atlanta and its rich legacy of American civil rights—the city is the birthplace of Martin Luther King Jr.—powered the long-conservative state to flip to the Democrats in the 2020 election. People noticed, with more than 200,000 relocating to the city over the past year, with more mulling their options, indicated by ATL's #11 Google Search ranking globally. Good thing the city—already home to Global 500 companies that rank it #31 on the planet—is planning for the influx, with bold projects downtown (like the 50-acre Gulch redevelopment called Centennial Yards, featuring 12 million square feet of residential, retail and office space and 1,500 hotel rooms). Just east, along Peachtree, Mitchell and Broad streets, as well as Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, dozens of historic buildings are being revived with a focus on public spaces and walkability. Even Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (from where 80 percent of the U.S. population resides within a two-hour flight) is renovating, despite already ranking #14 for Airport Connectivity. Its ATL Next project is pumping \$6 billion into modernization and connectivity.



## 51 STOCKHOLM

SWEDEN

**POPULATION** METRO 1,584,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
- 11 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

An ambitious tech scene and transit investment attempt to balance a spike in unemployment.

No other Scandinavian city serves up a sensory feast like Stockholm, blending rustic, traditional and New Nordic cuisine, geography (the city center was built on 14 islands), and salt and freshwater outdoor swimming areas amongst a bounty of public green space, the cobblestone of Gamla Stan and its 1700s architecture, and daring modern design. Throw in a multicultural population that speaks near flawless English (Stockholm ranks #3 globally in our important People category and #11 for Educational Attainment) and an epic summer season with near-constant daylight, and you've got yourself a coveted hometown. Stockholm built the world's largest open-fiber network in the mid-1990s, which was followed a decade or so later by the launch of global hits like Skype, Spotify and Minecraft—earning Stockholm the moniker "The Unicorn Factory." More billion-dollar start-ups launched here than in any city outside of Silicon Valley. A wander through the recently gentrified Södermalm neighborhood, the birthplace of many tech giants, reveals why the city ranks #2 in our Labor Force Participation subcategory, with educated, calm citizens creatively solving the world's problems and chasing the payoffs that come with doing so.



## 52 MIAMI

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 6,090,660

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS
- 15 EMPLOYMENT RATE

Miami's creativity is powered by its arms-wide-open acceptance of newcomers.

The city's natural attributes have always captured the world's imagination and crystallized its hedonistic brand. But it's Miami's openness to immigrants (and, more recently, the LGBTQ+ community, and, even more recently than that, Silicon Valley migrants) that has people buzzing. As the planet's seventh-most Instagrammed city, and #22 most googled, Miami ranks #20 in our vital overall Promotion category. Today, a new distributed workforce comes to work (and, more importantly, play) from home here. Take tech-lusting mayor Francis Suarez: as the pandemic was hitting, he helped erect a billboard near Twitter's San Francisco headquarters that read "Thinking of moving to Miami? DM me." Below was his handle. Three years later, Miami has the 15th-lowest unemployment rate on earth. But it's not like Florida's largest city is some erstwhile economic rookie—its historic role as a crossroads of the Americas has long provided a business advantage few cities can claim. It's home to one of the largest concentrations of international banks in the US, as well as one of North America's largest hubs—outside of Mexico City, New York and L.A.—of Spanish-language media.



## 53 ATHENS

GREECE

**POPULATION** METRO 3,417,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

24 SHOPPING

25 NIGHTLIFE

As the 2,500-year-old cradle of Western civilization, Athens understands resilience.

The ancient capital had a brutal decade: punishing financial crises, subsequent austerity, wildfires and the pandemic. But it has come back stronger, just like always. And its latest rebound is particularly impressive, based on the city's heritage that was rarely compromised despite cutbacks and sacrifice. As such, the sustained investment is now blooming as jobs trickle back and tourists return to almost 2019 levels. They stroll the refreshed Grand Promenade, a 2.5-mile-long, car-free tree-lined walkway at the foot of the Acropolis that connects the city's major archaeological sites. Greece's newest museum, the Athens Olympic Museum, opened to the public in May 2021 in the northern Athenian suburb of Marousi, takes visitors through the long and glorious history of the Olympic Games. Athens' #33 ranking for Museums (though already better than last year) will improve soon enough. Another new (well, technically renovated) cultural destination is the National Gallery, also reopened in 2021 after an eight-year reno that doubled its size and let in ample natural light spotlighting the European art. Oh, there are also almost 300 new restaurants and 35 new hotels in town.

## 54 RIO DE JANEIRO

BRAZIL

**POPULATION** METRO 12,486,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

9 FACEBOOK CHECK-INS

10 CULTURE

Cidade Maravilhosa oozes with sensory delights.

Tropical and sexy, with dazzling beaches, samba-fueled nightlife (with Carnival back, too) and lush mountains that rise to the heavens, Rio is stunning. It ranks #7 for Outdoors and #29 for Sights & Landmarks, and you could certainly spend your entire visit exploring al fresco. Lapa is the edgy red-light district teeming with live-music clubs, and on weekends the party spills into the street, just reinforcing the city's ranking as having the 32nd-best Nightlife on the planet to go along with its top 10 ranking for Culture. In Copacabana there's the Museum of Image and Sound by the New York-based architects behind the High Line park. Once you've done the beach, swap your Havaianas for hikers and visit Tijuca Forest, a national park with waterfalls, wildlife and Christ the Redeemer, which stands in all its glory atop the 2,329-foot Corcovado Mountain. For a less crowded but still spectacular view of the city, Sugarloaf Mountain offers a cable car at the mouth of Guanabara Bay. Safety (#257) is Rio's biggest liability and it ranks dead last in this category of all the Top 100 cities in 2022.

## 55 HAMBURG

GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 2,048,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

13 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

22 NIGHTLIFE

Germany's second city is as creative as it is ethical.

Hamburg is both Europe's second-largest shipping port and a serious contender for "Venice of the North," with a lake and a latticework of canals that elevate the city into visually stunning territory. Emblematic of this is the \$933-million Elbphilharmonie, a spectacular concert hall that combines 19th-century warehouses with the crystalline architecture and acoustics of the future. But don't let the opulence fool you: Hamburg boasts the 27th-best Income Equality worldwide. Lower-income residents are not being left behind, even in its signature redevelopment project, HafenCity. In Europe's biggest inner-city urban development initiative—which, over more than a decade, is transforming almost a square mile of tumble-down docks along the city's port into a buzzing shopping and residential area—a third of housing must be subsidized while another third is rental. Project completion is 2026 and includes new additions to Hamburg's bustling Nightlife (#22). This is the town that made the Beatles, after all. Ambitious city-building continues in the 'burbs, too, with a daring car-free neighborhood being built a 15-minute train ride from the city by Danish firms Karres en Brands and Adept



## 56 DENVER

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,892,066

### HIGHLIGHTS

13 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

23 GDP PER CAPITA

Light rail, legal pot and ascendant art attract educated talent looking for a new post-pandemic home.

With its secondary-city affordability and coveted lifestyle brand at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, Denver is an increasingly wealthy, healthy millennial magnet. Case in point is its top 25 global ranking for the most educated citizens, who ply their trades at large Global 500 companies ranging from Western Union to Molson Coors Beverage, and at the hundreds of start-ups in the emergent cannabis and burgeoning wellness industries. No wonder the Mile High City boasts a #23 ranking for GDP per Capita, and #43 in our overall Prosperity category. But Denver plays as hard as it works. Amid 300 days of annual sunshine, the obsession with the outdoors today is matched by a commitment to the arts. Denver Art Museum's Martin Building recently underwent an extensive, multi-year renovation that includes a new restaurant from award-winning Denver chef Jennifer Jasinski. The success of the city's Crush Walls international street art festival even inspired AFAR magazine to declare Denver "the Street Art Capital of the Country." The city's #61 ranking for Culture will only improve in the coming years.

## 57 MONTREAL

CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 3,746,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

12 INCOME EQUALITY

22 CULTURE

Canada's exotic French heart battled through a brutal pandemic. But brighter days are back, *mes amis*.

Outgoing, two-cheek-embracing, convivial-above-all Montreal took a hard, early hit as the pandemic struck. Deaths in residences for the elderly exposed the ugly underbelly of an underfunded system of care that's been the pride of a city that ranks #12 globally for Income Equality. North America's most European city acted accordingly over the past two years, turning major streets into creatively styled outdoor hangouts with art and music, and vastly increasing bike lanes. Today, Montreal's #22-ranked Culture is palpable with a smoldering indie music scene, digital placemaking and playful creativity on every street corner (or so it seems). And so much more is afoot. When it opens in 2025, the massive Espace St-Denis in the Latin Quarter will encapsulate the historic Théâtre St-Denis, new performance spaces and restaurants. But the city has a head for innovation, too, with its iconic McGill University finishing #27 globally and the Université de Montréal becoming a hot spot of the artificial intelligence kind. Montreal's growing tech expertise has attracted record foreign investment, including into the city's ascendant real estate.

## 58 BRUSSELS

BELGIUM

**POPULATION** METRO 2,041,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

9 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

24 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Belgium's capital and the de facto home of the European Union is a city with plenty of surprises up its stuffy sleeve.

Understated Brussels is a bounty of breathtaking architecture—surely the Grand Place is one of the most beautiful squares in the world—as well as the source of ugly state-commissioned buildings (there are entire social feeds dedicated to it). The city has invested in public spaces, like the Tour & Taxis Food Market under the glass roofs of the former Gare Maritime, and the Grand Hospice: a repurposed neoclassical complex with beautiful colonnades and an interior park. Despite the city being the EU's administrative center, one of its most famous landmarks is the Manneken Pis, a statue of a naked boy peeing into a fountain—a symbol not just of the city's contempt for authority but also of the locals' enduring deadpan humor. The city never takes itself too seriously thanks to its vibrant, educated, multi-ethnic citizenry (Brussels ranks #12 in our People category). Meet the locals at under-the-radar spots like the Congolese Matonge quarter—worth it for the flea markets and street art alone. For some classic fare, explore the city's many museums (ranked #27), starting with the grand Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium.



## 59 TEL AVIV

ISRAEL

**POPULATION** METRO 2,719,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

27 CONVENTION CENTER

33 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Israel's smart, cosmopolitan and ambitious cultural capital prioritizes the hedonistic good life in its pursuit of global talent.

With its perfect weather, laid-back lifestyle and burgeoning tech industry, it's no surprise that Tel Aviv has become a coveted home base for increasingly mobile talent seeking exoticism and high salaries. They come knowing of the instability in this ancient land, like in May 2021, when 160 rockets rained down on the city as beachgoers scrambled for safety, and the near monthly reports of security forces intercepting terrorist attacks. But Tel Aviv doesn't huddle for long, boasting a smart, cosmopolitan, curious populace that scores #33 globally for Educational Attainment. The city also appreciates its culture as much as its Campari, ranking #33 for Museums like the eponymous Museum of Art, whose new building of twisting geometric surfaces, designed by Preston Scott Cohen, is one of the city's landmarks. Opened in 2018 and sited across the Yarkon River from the art museum is the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, a grand monument to the natural world that also makes allowances for the country's Abrahamic faith. Numerous hotels opened in 2022 (with more coming in 2023), and 170,000 people celebrated this year's Tel Aviv Pride parade, including 10,000+ tourists.

## 60 OSLO

NORWAY

**POPULATION** METRO 1,278,827

### HIGHLIGHTS

9 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

15 INCOME EQUALITY

Smart, practical and increasingly keen to share its idiosyncrasies with the world, Oslo is an economic powerhouse with swagger (as much as Norwegians swagger).

No longer playing second fiddle to Stockholm and Copenhagen, Oslo is proving itself a worthy destination all its own. Its #50 Museum ranking will improve with the recent opening of Munch, a waterfront museum dedicated to Edvard Munch, Expressionist painter of *The Scream*. Newer still is the months-old National Museum downtown, which replaced several cultural buildings, including the National Gallery. It houses classical art, contemporary art and design, and architecture studies and just became the largest art exhibit space in Scandinavia. Above the city, Rose Castle last year unveiled a permanent installation of paintings and sculptures that tell the story of the invasion and resilience of Norway during World War II. Among Europe's fastest-growing cities, Oslo is hustling to provide much-needed housing, most notably by aggressively building out its Fjord City by reclaiming little-used industrial port real estate. High-rises and pedestrian squares have already opened, and residents are braving the new outdoor public swimming pools. As more prospective residents discover Oslo's #15-ranked Income Equality and economic prosperity, its population will only grow.

## 61 TAIPEI

TAIWAN

**POPULATION** METRO 9,078,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

8 RESTAURANTS

13 SHOPPING

A stealthy Asian capital ascends rapidly while China looms.

This is the second time that Taiwan's capital appears in our Top 100, and although its ranking is middle-of-the-pack, its resonance in the global consciousness as the Asian Kyiv is resounding, amplified by China's saber-rattling. This underappreciated city is a joy to explore: safe, affordable and packed with the #8-ranked Restaurants on the planet. Start with the xiao long bao, or soup dumpling, at local restaurant legend Din Tai Fung, home to, if local lore is to be believed, the best dumplings in the world. It's decades-old favorites like this that keep Taipei's culinary entrepreneurs sharp. The city is also a global shopping destination (ranking #13), buoyed as much by its myriad haute boutiques and the global chains in the luxe Ximending area as by the serpentine electronics bazaar of the Guang Hua Digital Plaza. The sense of livability for a city this large is threaded together by fantastic public transit—soon to be improved further with the new Circular Line—and casual affluence that ranks Taipei in the top 25 globally for Prosperity (and low unemployment, courtesy of the 17th-highest number of Global 500 companies in town). When you're the heart of the indispensable global semiconductor industry, investment (like covetous competitors) are never too far away.



## 62 VALENCIA

SPAIN

**POPULATION** METRO 1,493,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

16 WEATHER

23 SAFETY

Enigmatic customs and historically paramount places make this city an undiscovered gem.

Spain's third-largest city has always flown under the radar for non-Europeans. Emerging from a harrowing pandemic, the city was named WorldDesign 2022 Capital by the World Design Organization. Its reasoning? "With impressive urban infrastructures that coexist harmoniously with the natural and built environment, the city has become a leading example of effective and strategic use of design in public policy." We can't argue. Ranking #16 for Weather and #23 for Safety, Valencia is going all in on sustainability, building on 1,200+ acres of carbon-absorbing urban gardens like the Turia Viveros gardens, and its nearly 10 miles of European Blue Flag-status beaches. Its new Parque Central just unveiled 24 acres of green space and tree canopy on top of a reused rail yard. Amazingly, Valencia also just became the first city in the world to verify its carbon emissions from tourist activity. Look it up—it's a big deal. This is also the home of the City of Arts and Sciences, site of Europe's largest aquarium, and its new CaixaForum history museum will improve its #50 global ranking for Attractions.

## 63 MINNEAPOLIS

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 3,573,609

### HIGHLIGHTS

5 EMPLOYMENT RATE

21 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Bold city-building, relative affordability and post-pandemic prosperity beckon.

Minneapolis has become a household name as the site of the George Floyd murder at the hands of local police, an event that sparked a global movement against systemic racism and police violence. In addition to their vital role in the fight for justice, residents have long advocated for their city, the results of which can be seen in almost a decade of visionary city-building called the Minneapolis Big Build. The city is in the throes of an unprecedented renaissance, with more than \$1-billion worth of annual construction permits issued for each of the past four years. The investment has yielded (so far) the redesign of Nicollet Avenue, the opening of U.S. Bank Stadium and the Commons Park, a major reno of Target Center (home of the NBA Timberwolves) and improvements to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and Walker Art Center. There are a dozen more massive projects opening soon, including the new Water Works Park on the Mississippi riverfront. This, on top of a #17 ranking for Global 500 companies—the most per capita of any American metro area—ranks Minneapolis #12 globally for Prosperity, including its top five Employment Rate globally.

## 64 PHILADELPHIA

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 6,079,130

### HIGHLIGHTS

7 UNIVERSITY

32 CULTURE

The City of Brotherly Love gives locals and visitors plenty of Americana.

Given its deep roots in the creation of the Union almost 250 years ago, Philadelphia is a dense, cataloged embodiment of American values and traditions, easily accessible and eagerly shared. Philly has always let its experiences do the talking, whether it's walking through history along the cobblestones of Old City or breathing in the urban green of Fairmount Park. The city's stealthy urban tapestry houses the #52-ranked Sights & Landmarks, which make strolling aimlessly here a joy. This will only improve with the recently opened central portion of the multiuse Delaware River Trail that links the city's waterfront destinations and will improve on the otherwise middling #150 global rank in the Outdoors subcategory. Those in need of a more regimented history lesson will love some of the top museums in the U.S. (ranked #40 globally) in town, especially in light of recent investments like the 90,000 square feet of new public and exhibition space at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, as part of the Frank Gehry-led expansion. Small wonder then that the city finished #32 in our overall Culture category.



## 65 CALGARY

CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 1,349,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

18 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

18 INCOME EQUALITY

**Canada's energy capital is building for its future, and putting a struggling oil industry in the rear view.**

Although Toronto is Canada's business heart, it's Calgary—with one of the country's youngest populations and home to its oil industry-forged entrepreneurialism—that's always been the challenger. People here walk like New Yorkers and cut to the chase like Texans. No wonder it's home to the most Americans per capita in Canada. Ranking #22 globally in our GDP per Capita subcategory, by far the highest in Canada, the city is now slowly emerging from a spell of economic hardship not seen in decades (the fortunes of Calgary rise and fall with the price of crude). The pandemic added to the misery, which has manifested into one of the highest unemployment rates among Canadian cities over the past year (and ranked #154 globally). That is thankfully changing, as home construction ramps up in the hopes of luring new residents seeking affordable real estate (relative to the rest of a very expensive country). New projects, like the recently opened Central Library in the burgeoning cultural hub of East Village, reinforce the city's long-lauded quality of life that awaits arrivals. A half-dozen new hotels are keeping returning business travelers happy.

## 66 PORTLAND

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,445,761

### HIGHLIGHTS

13 GOOGLE SEARCH

14 GDP PER CAPITA

**America's Left Coast runs deep in this ambitious city on the edge of the wilderness.**

Portland's blissful isolation, ambivalence toward established norms and legacy of self-sustainability—to carve out one's place in the encroaching wilderness—makes it one of the most earnest cities in the U.S. Portlanders are among the most industrious urbanites on the planet (sorry, *Portlandia*) ranking #14 for GDP per Capita, and have long built it themselves if they couldn't find anything to their liking—from performance outdoor apparel like Columbia and Nike (based in nearby Beaverton) to daring hospitality brands like Ace and McMenamins. The honesty makes its way to the city's brand, most recently seen in Travel Portland's open letter inviting visitors back to the city, published in the *New York Times* and elsewhere, stating, "Some of what you've heard about Portland is true. Some is not." And the return is on. PDX ranks #13 globally in our Google Search subcategory. The city boasts 85+ breweries (among the most per capita in the nation) and its boundary-pushing cultural scene ranks #39. New public projects prioritizing bikes and pedestrians are everywhere, none more Portland than the new Ned Flanders Crossing pedestrian bridge, in honor of native son and *The Simpsons* creator Matt Groening.

## 67 NASHVILLE

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 1,871,903

### HIGHLIGHTS

14 CONVENTION CENTER

35 GOOGLE SEARCH

**Music City is playing America's song right now.**

The hospitality and revelry that's defined Nashville over the decades has lain dormant since the start of the pandemic, but Music City is back in a big way in 2022. The home base for artists like Jack White, Kings of Leon and the Black Keys reclaimed its live-music glory with June's return of CMA Fest and Bonnaroo (after both were canceled last year), as well as dozens of other shows that have the city buzzing. Last year's opening of the National Museum of African American Music, a vital center to educate the world, preserve a legacy and celebrate the central role African Americans played in creating the American soundtrack, is just one reason Nashville ranks #57 globally in our overall Programming category. Massive developments like the new home of the Nashville SC Major League Soccer team in Wedgewood-Houston—a 30,500-person soccer-only facility with double-tiered stands—will only fuel the city's #105 ranking for Attractions. The city-building ambition is driving the opening of a dozen hotels over the next two years, as well as the massive expansion of the city's #84-ranked airport to complement its #14-ranked convention center.



## 68 AUCKLAND NEW ZEALAND

**POPULATION** METRO 1,413,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

9 OUTDOORS

28 ATTRACTIONS

On the north island of New Zealand is a spectacular checklist of a city virtually untouched by the pandemic.

No city on the planet insulated itself better from the pandemic than Auckland. Want proof? A national shutdown in August 2021 after one—one!—Delta variant case was discovered. The city is booming again, with curious locals and a few returning tourists exploring the \$600-million Commercial Bay district in the city's harbor, with 100+ retail and dining spots. But natural bounty rules here and the city ranks #9 globally for Outdoors, with almost too many green spaces to count despite its diminutive size. Roam the paths leading to one of the 48 dormant volcanic cones, or cross the island on foot (just a five-hour hike). Not surprisingly, the city is becoming more cosmopolitan—a coveted hometown for risk-averse, isolationist billionaires and young talent craving proximity to outdoor adventure alike. Given the state of the world, Auckland's ascent in this category is likely, as are more sales like the \$2-million teardown with no bathroom that sold in mid 2021. Fortunately, the city's original inhabitants are not going anywhere, and Auckland remains home to the largest Polynesian population of any city on earth.

## 69 VANCOUVER CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 2,429,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

18 UNIVERSITY

20 INCOME EQUALITY

The most Asian city outside of Asia is as smart as it is gorgeous. Too bad about the price of entry.

As the terminus of a cross-country railroad whose mountainous western section was constructed by laborers from across China, Vancouver was built with a foundation of pan-Asian sensibility that today is driving some of Canada's fastest population growth. The global infatuation is obvious: safe, smart (the University of British Columbia ranks #18 globally) and socially minded (Income Equality ranks #20), Vancouver's special blend is sprinkled across some of the planet's most exquisite urban topography. You can leave the downtown office via public transit and be bombing down a ski or mountain bike run an hour or so later. And because nowhere is perfect, that geography is courtesy of massive seismic activity that has spared paradise so far. But a cost-of-housing earthquake hasn't. Always on the lookout for foreign investment, various incarnations of provincial and federal governments made citizenship available to foreigners with sufficient capital, with little oversight on taxing outside funds. As such, Vancouver's housing prices are now mostly hitched to a global context, largely decoupled from local wages. Fortunately, Silicon Valley and Seattle tech firms, coaxed by Canada's openness to immigration from global tech talent, are paying up.

## 70 SANTIAGO CHILE

**POPULATION** METRO 7,026,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

17 WEATHER

25 OUTDOORS

The Andean capital is sowing its seeds of equity and democracy.

These are exciting times in the Chilean capital, even though a revolutionary draft of a new constitution to replace the one written 41 years earlier under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet went back to the drawing board earlier this year. Progressive new leadership has been tasked with creating a more egalitarian society long sought by citizens that is increasingly manifested in Santiago. The valley metropolis of seven million is home to an urban bounty, boasting high rankings for Museums (#48), Restaurants (#52) and Shopping (#53). The city is also attracting post-pandemic digital nomads who love Santiago's commitment to transit and easy access to mountain biking, hiking and even skiing and snowboarding. To say nothing of day-tripping to globally lauded wineries. The city plays as hard as it works with a top 25 Outdoors ranking and the 17th-best weather on the planet. Also compelling? Santiago's embrace of start-ups both local and international, led by its Start-Up Chile government-funded accelerator, which includes an equity-free grant, mentorship and network to support founders, and (of course) a sweet co-working space in Santiago.



## 71 MEXICO CITY

MEXICO

**POPULATION** METRO 21,505,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

13 MUSEUMS

14 FACEBOOK CHECK-INS

Latin America's megalopolis has multitudes that can take a lifetime to unravel.

The largest city in North America is also one of its oldest urban centers. Founded as Tenochtitlan by the Aztecs in 1325—260 years before the Spanish invasion—Mexico City's layers of struggle, beauty and triumph have been immortalized by its citizens like few other places on the continent. In recent years, CDMX has been trying to clean up its act, with revamped public spaces, new designer hotels and cultural investment. The culinary scene, one of the most intriguing and deeply complex on the planet, ranks #38 globally (up five spots over last year). Visitors need to prioritize. We recommend the Casa Luis Barragán, a UNESCO World Heritage site and social media eye candy (the city is #14 for Facebook Check-ins), and strolling the stylish neighborhoods of Roma and La Condesa, which drip with greenery and explode with color in their century-old mansions. The city lands at #48 for Sights & Landmarks and #13 for Museums. Problems persist, with rising police corruption and a related increase in crime, which doesn't fare well for the brand new Felipe Ángeles International Airport north of the city, which has struggled to attract airlines and travelers.

## 72 MUMBAI

INDIA

**POPULATION** METRO 22,186,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

1 CONVENTION CENTER

7 FACEBOOK CHECK-INS

Dozens of cities are described as contradictions. Mumbai is unequivocally worthy of the cliché.

Mumbai's juxtapositions are often as overwhelming as the choice of things to do here for newcomers. How can the icon of commercialism and Bollywood—as well as the 24th-place ranking for the most Global 500 companies—also house one of the world's biggest slums? Before you spin too quickly, it's best to eat something in a city ranked in the top 10 globally for its restaurants. Then it's off to see the sights. The Taj Mahal Palace, the extravagance of the Chhatrapati Shivaji train station and the Gateway of India arch are all global cultural touchstones that contribute to the city's #36 ranking for Sights & Landmarks. But this is also a place with live music speakeasies straight out of New Orleans, and craft breweries that rival those of Munich. Global ambition is everywhere. To see the city's future today, check out the Powai district, and the daring Chedi Mumbai hotel, with 312 guest rooms and a perch over Powai Lake and the city's skyline. The expanded Navi Mumbai International Airport will increase the city's #75 Airport Connectivity ranking, as well as accommodate rising city tourism. India's first bullet train will do the same regionally.

## 73 SHANGHAI

CHINA

**POPULATION** METRO 22,118,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

7 RESTAURANTS

9 GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES

One of the world's largest cities is still locked down, but poised to soar again.

This powerhouse of finance, international trade, culture, science and technology has arguably been floored by the pandemic more than any other city. The full, police-enforced lockdowns are unrivaled this late in the pandemic. That Shanghai still ranks #9 for Global 500 companies headquartered here, as well as #7 for its United Nations of restaurants, speaks to the resilience and entrepreneurialism of citizens. This eminently walkable city—shocking to consider given the fact that more than 22 million people live here—is remarkably safe (#32 globally). Shanghai's personality is split by the Huangpu River: Pudong (east bank) is the financial district, fringed with towers that include the landmark spike of the retro-futuristic Oriental Pearl. Puxi (west bank) is home to the Bund, lined with the neo-Renaissance edifices that were home to Western colonial businesses in the 1930s, and to the wonderfully layered French Concession. A national push by the Chinese government means this megalopolis will soon bloom with green spaces, like Suzhou Creek, a former open sewer that today is a 26-mile waterway flanked by hundreds of trees and many more families.



## 74 SAN JOSE

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 1,987,846

### HIGHLIGHTS

4 GDP PER CAPITA

4 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Talent, smarts and money are a potent mix that has insulated San Jose from economic devastation while allowing its citizens to be bold with recovery.

Today, California's oldest civilian Spanish settlement is a talent-rich economic juggernaut, even amid the lagging pandemic and the crescendo in tech circles that "everyone is leaving Silicon Valley." Despite crushing housing costs and a battered tech sector that has powered San Jose for decades, and a rise in interest rates that is spooking a lot of the venture capital that funds the bets necessary to fuel the region's innovation, the city still boasts the most educated population in the country, ranking #4 in our Educational Attainment subcategory. As a result, San Jose finished #28 in our overall People category. This is also the eight-most-educated city on the planet, with the highest Household Income ranking and an Employment Rate ranking of #6 globally. A possible concern (but not surprising given the city's economic relentlessness) is its #187 ranking for Income Equality. The region, home to Google, Facebook, Cisco Systems, eBay and PayPal, is #7 for Global 500 companies in town. The titans of tech help San Jose rank #4 for GDP per Capita on the planet.

## 75 LYON

FRANCE

**POPULATION** METRO 1,448,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

3 CONVENTION CENTER

27 INCOME EQUALITY

Future-focused and daring, Lyon is an ancient river city with big plans.

Lyon is a city to be savored nose to tail, past to future, literally and figuratively. If the city's middling Attractions (#72) and Museums (#117) rankings rise with the plentiful planned investment, that's just icing on the *gâteau*. Locals are buzzing about the new OL Vallée leisure center (although it's a lot more than that). Yes there's the massive gym and semi-Olympic pool, but also five indoor soccer pitches, a 32-lane bowling alley, escape rooms and the City Surf Park. More new investment is pouring into La Confluence, a 370-acre urban redevelopment that not only brings together Lyon's two fabled rivers—the Rhône and the Saône—but also gives new life to an industrial urban wasteland. Most notable in the new development's crown is the Musée des Confluences, an architectural enigma glittering at the very point where the rivers meet, with an outstretched park disappearing into the flows. Lyon also takes care of its people, scoring an impressive #27 globally for Income Equality, and is poised to harness the return of business travel with the #3-ranked convention center on the planet.

## 76 BILBAO

SPAIN

**POPULATION** METRO 1,042,338

### HIGHLIGHTS

4 SAFETY

7 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Smart, safe and economically vibrant, Bilbao is redesigning the European good life.

Bilbao, in the heart of Basque Country in northern Spain, is celebrating 25 years since the 1997 opening of the Guggenheim Bilbao, the Frank Gehry-designed titanium-clad museum that made the city, and its architect, global icons. The city is one of the smallest by population in our Top 100, and is, under cover of its own obscurity and isolation, creating its own magnetism. Sure, the Guggenheim's destination architecture still draws hundreds of thousands annually, but as one of the safest cities on the planet (ranked #4), Bilbao is building new green spaces and sustainability-minded housing—with daring new waves of architecture inspired by Gehry like Santiago Calatrava's Zubizuri bridge and Bilbao airport, and Zaha Hadid's redevelopment of the old port area. The design-minded city is also emerging as a stealthy, affordable business headquarters, ranking #40 for Global 500 companies located in town, including multinational electric utility company Iberdrola and financial giant BBVA. Citizens rank #7 globally for Educational Attainment. The world definitely has this small urban dynamo on its radar—for starters, it's hosting the launch of the Tour de France cycling race next year.



## 77 LIVERPOOL UNITED KINGDOM

**POPULATION** METRO 1,533,860

### HIGHLIGHTS

7 SIGHTS & LANDMARKS

21 NIGHTLIFE

The city that helped win wars and change history is poised to tell its story again.

Tucked into the northwest coast of England, Liverpool's place as an integral urban center in world history is difficult to comprehend without visiting it yourself. Fortunately, Liverpool documents it all masterfully—and honestly. The city's role as a strategic British Empire trade port, responsible for half of Britain's transatlantic slave trade, is laid bare at its International Slavery Museum. Its contribution to helping win both world wars by sending tens of thousands of Liverpudlians to fight (plus its own strategic location) is outlined in the Western Approaches Museum, housed in a hidden bunker under the city's streets. But it was in its post-war decline that Liverpool made history once more when four local teenagers decided to jam together. Today, The Beatles Story is the world's largest permanent exhibition purely devoted to telling the band's tale. Almost as revered is Liverpool FC, the UK's most storied club, and Anfield stadium, their home since 1892. Given these layers of history, the city's #7 ranking for Sights & Landmarks isn't surprising. Especially when you explore the kinetic streets of Baltic Triangle and RopeWalks.

## 78 NEW ORLEANS UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 1,267,777

### HIGHLIGHTS

18 NIGHTLIFE

20 SHOPPING

Few cities work as hard to get back up as the Big Easy.

In the face of poverty and injustice—and "natural" disasters compounded by both—NOLA has, over its three centuries, created a culture of presence, music and festivals that may pale in size to others in the world but never in intensity. It's why the city ranks #24 globally for Programming, our category spanning shopping, dining and after-hours vibrancy. Given the need to celebrate, seize the day and revel in all that fusion of humanity and culture and sweaty new people and ideas, the city ranks #18 in our Nightlife subcategory. The French Quarter may be touristy, but the investment continues, by way of the One11, the area's first new hotel in 50 years. More new investments include the new Four Seasons Hotel and Residences, housed in the former World Trade Center. Its new restaurant, Chemin à la Mer, from local culinary icon Donald Link, honors its founder's Louisiana heritage with French technique—an addition that's sure to improve NOLA's #163 Restaurants ranking. The Warehouse District's new Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience will do the same for the already impressive #25 Museum ranking.

## 79 BRISBANE AUSTRALIA

**POPULATION** METRO 2,213,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

19 UNIVERSITY

34 ATTRACTIONS

Rugged and cultured, the capital of Queensland does it in balance.

You go to Sydney for beaches and Melbourne for culture. So what does Brisbane, Australia's third city, offer that you can't find elsewhere? And why did it trail only Melbourne and Perth for population growth over the past decade (and barely at that)? The short answer is that, like Medellin and Boise, it's riding the wave of post-pandemic demand for secondary cities, powered by new talent that's confident working remotely and wants affordability, lifestyle and sophistication without big city price tags and drama. Cosmopolitan Brisbane, which scores in the top 20 globally for its university, is sunny with the outdoors within city limits. Named after the river that runs through it, Brisbane is best explored from the water and should rank higher than its #69 for Outdoors (and will once Victoria Park gets remade into a massive public green space). Culture vultures soak up art at the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, Australia's largest for modern and contemporary art. Much-needed infrastructure is already planned with Brisbane hosting the 2032 Summer Olympics. The 17,000-seat Brisbane Live Arena is scheduled to open in 2024.



## 80 MANCHESTER UNITED KINGDOM

**POPULATION** METRO 2,747,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

#7 GOOGLE TRENDS

#30 UNIVERSITY

A coveted university and strategic location for future-focused business add to a historic sense of place.

Manchester's reputation as the bucking engine of English industry drives a global curiosity in the storied city. Castlefield, an "Urban Heritage Park," is one portal into that storied past: the canal running through Manchester formerly transported coal into the city's industrial hub, but today transports tourists through its historic waters. More urban reuse is planned. The University of Manchester scores the city one of its highest rankings globally (#30) in the Product category, which also measures Airport Connectivity (#35) as well as Attractions (#78). The university is home to a dazzling legacy of 25 Nobel laureates, among whom several currently remain on staff. Manchester's conversion from producing goods to ideas is well underway, and the history of the workers who made that possible is on grand display at the People's History Museum. The city's middling Museums ranking is about to be supercharged with the early 2023 reopening of the Manchester Museum's \$18-million transformation that will add a two-storey extension that includes a new Exhibition Hall, Belonging Gallery, South Asia Gallery and Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery. No wonder Manchester is #7 for Google Trends (soccer aside).

## 81 FUKUOKA JAPAN

**POPULATION** METRO 2,280,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

#4 SAFETY

#14 RESTAURANTS

Japan's fastest-growing city is a peek into its urban future.

Located between Tokyo, Seoul and Shanghai, Japan's fourth largest city sits on the northern tip of Kyushu, the country's southernmost main island. Because of its historic strategic location, Fukuoka today is Japan's second-largest port city, behind Yokohama. The historic economic prosperity of the city (ranked #27 globally for Employment Rate) has always been symbiotic with the lifestyle afforded by being surrounded by a half-dozen beaches in town (including nearby Momochi), the iconic locally revered Ohori Park, where wide multiuse paths radiate around an artificial lake, and one of Japan's lowest costs of living. In fact, according to national estimates, Fukuoka is the country's fastest-growing city by population. This is particularly massive when you consider the country's aging employee pool and internal competition for talent. And with fantastic train connections out of the Hakata hub (including an airport that's 15 minutes or less by metro from most spots in the city), regional flights to larger business centers are convenient. Just make it back in time for dinner at Fukuoka's #14-ranked restaurants, powered by regional specialties tonkotsu ramen, yatai and motsunabe.

## 82 SEVILLE SPAIN

**POPULATION** METRO 1,091,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

#23 WEATHER

#32 SIGHTS & LANDMARKS

Seville's millennia along the Guadalquivir River, an ancient highway that transported goods and people from Cadiz to Cordoba, means city building is in the place's DNA.

Despite its only second appearance in our Top 100 list, as well as being one of the smallest Top 100 cities by population, Seville—or Sevilla in its mother tongue—is as complex and multilayered as the most ornate fan wielded by local flamenco dancers. The Andalusian capital revels in its warm, sunny climate (#23), and is proudly walkable, narrow and winding, perfect for exploring by foot or bike. Moorish and Baroque architecture radiates in panoramas out from its spectacular cathedral and the Giralda bell tower. Not content with masterpieces of the past, city builders are always looking to visually delight locals and visitors, which results in the #32 global ranking for Sights & Landmarks. Take the 10-year-old Metropol Parasol that rises over the medieval Plaza de la Encarnación. Six massive sculpted sunshades ascend 90 feet up and shade those below from the relentless Andalusian sun. Speaking of heat, the new proMETEO Seville Project made Seville the world's first city to name heatwaves in the same way we do hurricanes to raise public awareness of their impact on health and encourage people to protect themselves.



## 83 RIYADH

SAUDI ARABIA

**POPULATION** METRO 6,889,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

6 WEATHER

6 GDP PER CAPITA

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's capital is beginning to pave the way for tourism.

Seeing the continued success of tourism in neighboring Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Oman, and keen on moving the economy away from a dependency on fossil fuels, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia started issuing tourist visas in April 2018 for the first time in eight years. The gateway is Saudi's conservative capital, where anything qualifying as entertainment is discouraged and where a rigid focus is kept on business—mostly around extractive industries—resulting in the sixth-highest GDP per Capita of any global city in our rankings. Not surprisingly, the weather also ranks #6. Still, events like Noor Riyadh, an outdoor lights and art festival launched last year, offer hope of some freedom of expression. The #90-ranked airport—and, along with it, Riyadh stock—will rise with the March 2022 announcement of a new national airline carrier and a commitment to invest almost \$150 billion in transportation infrastructure by the end of the decade, as well as plans for a new airport in the city. Still, Saudi Arabia's ultraconservative leanings present a threat to the country's plans for international tourism, as does its reputation for murdering journalists and outspoken critics.

## 84 JERUSALEM

ISRAEL

**POPULATION** METRO 1,584,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

1 SAFETY

40 MUSEUMS

Holy and storied, Jerusalem is rediscovering itself as an entrepreneurial hot spot.

Despite—or rather because of—the global headlines about the struggle for this ancient city, Jerusalem is one of the safest big cities in the world. Let that sink in. Okay, let's move on. A vibrant scene has emerged from these timeless streets, with new residents seeking the Holy City less for religion and more for entrepreneurship and networks (there are more than 500 start-ups here). Of course, that access—from getting mortgages to well-paid work—is heavily favored to Jewish over Palestinian citizens. A city that allows anyone of Jewish ancestry to obtain Israeli citizenship will always have a secret power for talent attraction. Its #33-ranked Weather and overall #4 finish in our expansive Place category is naturally an alluring home base. But the past two years haven't been easy, even when you exclude the pandemic. The city sparked the horrific May 2021 escalation of new conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians as a result of the eviction of six Palestinian families from a neighborhood in East Jerusalem in favor of Jewish settlers. Violence between Palestinians and Israeli security forces has flared since.

## 85 NANJING

CHINA

**POPULATION** METRO 7,729,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

1 INCOME EQUALITY

32 SAFETY

China's often-overlooked ancient capital blends tradition with a prosperous present.

The sheer human history and urban potential of China comes into sharp focus when you consider Nanjing. Larger than Dallas, the birthplace of the Ming dynasty and one of the four great ancient capitals of China is often overlooked globally. Strategically situated in the Yangtze River Delta 190 miles northwest of Shanghai—an hour by bullet train—it has served as the capital city of 10 Chinese dynasties and regimes for two millennia. Not surprisingly, the city boasts some of China's most significant historical attractions, including the Ming Xiaoling tomb, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Its #140 Sights & Landmarks ranking could ascend rapidly with the return of global travel. Nanjing is also home to China's oldest public library, itself a massive draw, and its eponymous museum is one of China's first. There are also many new icons, like the stunning Sifang Art Museum, part of the 115-acre Sifang Parkland showcasing contemporary architecture. Listen for Nanjing in future conversations about emerging global design capitals. The city is also incredibly prosperous, boasting the best Income Equality on the planet—this is communist China, after all—as well as a safety ranking of #32.



## 86 MINSK BELARUS

**POPULATION** METRO 2,213,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
- 3 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

A communist-era city fights another tyrant today in its quest for freedom.

Minsk—and Belarus—are fighting for their lives. While the rest of the world was preoccupied with the pandemic last year, Russian-backed dictator Alexander Lukashenko “won” another election with apparent overwhelming support. Allegations of rigging (again) sent hundreds of thousands of protesters marching all over the country—but mostly in Minsk. The suppression of dissent by secret masked and unmarked police, combined with the jailing of opposition leader Maria Kalesnikava, all point to ongoing volatility in this fascinating city. Of course Russia’s meddling went next-level with its invasion of Ukraine and the automatic inclusion of the Belarusian regime as its puppet ally. Already, Lukashenko is slowly distancing himself from Putin, but it’s not like he’ll survive an honest election. With the third-most-educated citizens globally, it’s not surprising that the hunger for change is ravenous in a place where you shouldn’t drink the tap water or speak your mind freely. The city itself is frozen in time: almost entirely rebuilt after its destruction by the Nazis in WWII to post-war Soviet urban planning, and little changed since.

## 87 SALT LAKE CITY UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 1,201,043

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 EMPLOYMENT RATE
- 18 GDP PER CAPITA

The great outdoors—and high salaries—are calling, and Salt Lake is doing its best to keep you in town.

Combining spectacular natural and built environments, Salt Lake City is no longer just a gateway to the great outdoors—it’s also a welcoming destination with ascendant culture (#93 globally), new museums, and... local breweries, which over the past two years have multiplied once the local potency limits were relaxed. The transformation began with the arrival of the XIX Olympic Winter Games 20 years ago, as the city thawed its reputation as an über-conservative cowboy town with Mormon family values to become the lifestyle magnet of quaint cafés and stylish restaurants it is today. SLC continues to pour millions into development projects and the beautification of its downtown, and the city has matured into an urban experience as much as an outdoor one. Of course, the proximity of the Wasatch Range’s stunning canyons and 11,000-foot peaks is still the reason many adrenaline junkies travel and move here. And they work as hard as they play: Salt Lake ranks an astonishing #31 globally in our Prosperity category—led by its global top 10 Employment Rate ranking (#9) and #18 ranking for GDP per Capita.

## 88 PHOENIX UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 4,761,603

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 WEATHER
- 30 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

Rapid population growth, increasingly ambitious architecture and a reverence for the outdoors blends a heady mix in the desert.

A thriving desert metropolis that’s now top five nationally by population, Phoenix has seen the fastest growth of any major U.S. city in the past decade. According to the latest census data, it added 163,000 residents, bringing the core city’s population to 1.6 million, with its metro on the cusp of 5 million. And what’s not to love? A growing roster of fine museums, a vibrant artist community and 300 days of sunshine—with the #12-ranked Weather on the planet. Get a street-level view of the city’s increasingly considered urban planning with a stroll through Roosevelt Row Arts District, or RoRo, as locals call it. Art galleries, studios, restaurants and bars sit side by side in this walkable creative district in the downtown core—helping the city to its #81 ranking globally in our diverse Place category. The newest addition to the downtown arts district is Pemberton PHX—part art exhibit and part foodie magnet, where locally loved restos like Baba’s Falafel and Saint Pasta host pop-up dinners year-round.



## 89 JAKARTA

INDONESIA

**POPULATION** METRO 35,362,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

9 INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS

23 SAFETY

The planet's second-most-populous metropolis may be sinking, but it's not done yet.

Perched on the north coast of Java, Indonesia's central island, Jakarta and its concerto of daily urban chaos needs to be seen to be believed... if only because the city may not be around much longer. This city of more than 35 million, safe (#23) and documented by residents and visitors (Instagram hashtags are in the top 10 globally) is sinking. And fast: an astounding eight feet in the past 10 years in some places, which is more than double the global average for coastal megacities. The swampy land that supports an increasingly congested urban grid (where government officials need police escorts to get to meetings on time) was made even more unstable by the depletion of the water table. With the Java Sea rising and 13 rivers running through the city, even the government has given up. Earlier this year, officials announced that there will be a new Indonesian capital called Nusantara, meaning "archipelago" in Javanese, 800 miles away on the island of Borneo. Still, foreign investment isn't going anywhere, betting big on the post-pandemic demand for business and international travel. More than a dozen luxury hotels are scheduled to open over the next four years.

## 90 GOTHENBURG

SWEDEN

**POPULATION** METRO 1,021,831

### HIGHLIGHTS

20 INCOME EQUALITY

29 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

A 400-year-old industrial port town on Sweden's scenic west coast has smartened up for a sustainable future.

For the smallest city in our Top 100, Gothenburg, Sweden's second-largest city, is reopening like few other towns. Of course when the re-emergence coincides with your 400-year anniversary (2021–2023), you take your shot. There are dozens of celebrations planned, each highlighting this under-the-radar European city that has always done things its own way. There's storytelling, like Gothenburg Stories, the main installation of the city museum, showcasing interviews with 100 locals about city life. There's massive sustainable infrastructure, like the expansion of Jubileumsparken (Centenary Park). Also, the new Hisingsbron vertical-lift bridge, which can rise to accommodate river traffic, allows residents to bike and walk safely over the Göta River. There are ambitious new attractions, from the completely renovated Gothenburg Maritime Museum and Aquarium to roller-coasters in the new Luna Park at Liseberg amusement park. A half-dozen high-profile hotels have either opened or will by early 2023, from Jacy'z skyscraper resort to the 451-room Scandic Göteborg Central, and the Clarion Hotel The Pier, built by China automotive company Geely next to their Gothenburg innovation center called Uni3.

## 91 PERTH

AUSTRALIA

**POPULATION** METRO 2,005,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

38 UNIVERSITY

53 GDP PER CAPITA

A beautiful and wealthy city of more than two million awaits on a far-flung coast of Australia.

The past two years have been brutal for Australia's fourth-largest city. In early 2021, just days after residents were ordered into lockdown due to the pandemic, some had to flee their homes as wildfires encroached, eventually burning 20,000 acres and dozens of properties. Perth has always been an ancestral home for Australia's first peoples. At places like Six Seasons Gallery at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, you can see some 3,000 Indigenous works of art from across Australia, each offering insights into Aboriginal life and culture. The Noongar experience is woven throughout the 60,000-person Optus Stadium, in art installations, trails, interpretive storyboards and digital storytelling—an enriching foil for the cricket and football played there. Perth ranks #53 for GDP per Capita and the local talent pipeline gets filled early. The big global draw is the coveted University of Western Australia, which reached 38th best on the planet in this year's ranking. Perthites of every provenance are avid outdoors-people, and the city's #75 ranking for its expansive Outdoors will improve as more people discover the city's investment in making all of that natural bounty accessible, including the 50 miles of beachfront on Perth's coastline.



## 92 GLASGOW

UNITED KINGDOM

**POPULATION** METRO 1,264,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

6 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

33 NIGHTLIFE

**Music and a pursuit of equality keep Glasgow real, even as its reputation soars.**

Known as a working-class city with working-class values, Glasgow powers to its Top 100 finish on the strength of a People ranking that highlights its success in bringing everyone along for the ride as its reputation grows. And it's growing, as tech start-ups hungry for cheap space and talent willing to bet on changing the world are moving in from pricier European cities like Dublin and Amsterdam. What they find is brilliant homegrown talent that makes Glasgow the sixth-most-educated city on the planet. Of course Glasgow's brainpower isn't new. The eponymous university was founded in 1451 and is the fourth oldest in the English-speaking world. It counts economist Adam Smith and U.S. founding father James Wilson as alumni, and it ranks #40 globally. Being a university town, Glasgow performs well in our Nightlife subcategory (#33) and the city roars to prominence at gritty venues like the Sub Club, where live shows dominate. Glasgow was designated the UK's first UNESCO City of Music in 2008, and the need to get back out there makes nights here even more epic of late.

## 93 NAGOYA

JAPAN

**POPULATION** METRO 9,522,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

4 SAFETY

5 RESTAURANTS

**Japan's overlooked innovation hub is going all in on showcasing local and national bounty to those enlightened enough to enjoy it.**

Japan's fourth-most-populous city is a hub of industry and export (Toyota launched here and the company's Toyota Kaikan Museum is a must). Yet despite its location between Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka, as well as its #4 ranking for Safety globally, it sees a fraction of international visitors compared to larger nearby cities. What they're missing out on is a living bridge between ancient and modern Japan, with dozens of underrated specialized museums (#97) and attractions (#133) to nerd out on even for non Japan-philes. Ancient history is everywhere. Atsuta Shrine, built almost two millennia ago, and Osu Kannon temple are excellent locations to learn about Japanese history. Then zoom ahead a few centuries to the spectacular SCMaglev and Railway Park Museum, this year celebrating 150 years of rail travel in the country. Then experience the just-opened 200-acre Studio Ghibli theme park, which opens with five themed zones centered on several of Ghibli's most beloved movies. Once back in reality, fuel up on local cuisine at any of the hundreds of specialty restaurants that have propelled Nagoya to the top five for dining globally.

## 94 BALTIMORE

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,796,733

### HIGHLIGHTS

5 UNIVERSITY

27 GDP PER CAPITA

**Baltimore's historic subtleties and educated citizenry make for a beguiling hometown with some familiar struggles.**

Less than an hour's commute from Washington, D.C., Baltimore offers a slower pace of life and significantly cheaper housing than the hyper-charged capital. But the window to buy into one of Baltimore's diverse, historic communities is closing fast—home prices in the city reached a 10-year record high a year into the pandemic and have been climbing ever since (the last few months being the notable exception). No wonder the city's beguiling urban pockets and dipping crime rate are attracting urban tourists from all over the world seeking unvarnished American urbanism. The massive place-making investment here is only getting started in South Baltimore's industrial Warner Street District, with plans for a new entertainment district between M&T Bank Stadium and Horseshoe Casino Baltimore being implemented. The city also boasts one of the most educated citizenry on the planet (#37), partially the result of Johns Hopkins University, which ranks in the global top five and is also Baltimore's largest employer. With other long-entrenched institutions and employers making their home in the city, residents rank #27 globally for GDP per Capita.



## 95 STUTTGART

GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 1,357,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
- 27 INCOME EQUALITY

German efficiency and hospitality combine in a company town with a fun side.

Stuttgart is a hardworking economic engine that performs across multiple metrics with aplomb: its People ranking of #45 features some of the highest Labor Force Participation numbers anywhere (#8), and its Prosperity (#41) is shared among the growing talent base here, evidenced by the city's #27 ranking for Income Equality. The city's economic rev was sideswiped by the pandemic, when its well-used #76-ranked convention center fell silent. It's since reopened and doubled down on its sustainability, with more than half its area committed to green space, with the solar panels on the hall roofs and parking lot generating surplus electricity for local households. Also buzzing are the streets around the convention center, as business travel that has fueled Stuttgart's party mile for the past few decades—a hub of bars, cafés, clubs and intimate drinking dens—has roared back. Given the pent-up demand, this was one place in Germany where the post-pandemic return to business was swiftest. It's not surprising, given Stuttgart ranks #40 for Global 500 companies based here, and is an economic hub boasting the European headquarters of Daimler, Porsche, Bosch and IBM.



## 96 OTTAWA

CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 1,048,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
- 27 INCOME EQUALITY

The cosmopolitan capital of Canada has a reputation for brainpower that's attracting the world.

Canada's capital has long lived in the shadow of its exciting big-city siblings, Toronto and Montreal. But a national 150th birthday in 2017 brought attention to the citizens (ranking #38 in People) of a city where one in four is an immigrant. Ottawans are uncommonly intelligent: the city ranks #15 in Educational Attainment. All that brainpower has poured into some 1,800 knowledge-based businesses—everything from clean technology and life sciences to digital media, aerospace and software. Tens of thousands of new jobs are the result (even in this period of economic uncertainty)—along with a #79 ranking in global GDP per Capita. In a city with a relatively low cost of living (although house prices are ascending as insanely as anywhere else in Canada), that means there's money to spend on plentiful things to do (with a #56 ranking in Attractions), which increasingly, finally prioritize Indigenous reconciliation. The year-old Mādahōki Farm (meaning "share the land" in Algonquin Anishinaabe) is a new agritourism venture out of the Canadian Museum of History where Indigenous communities can reconnect with the land through both healing and wellness programs and social enterprise opportunities.



## 97 HANOI

Vietnam

**POPULATION** METRO 7,375,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 OUTDOOR
- 15 EMPLOYMENT RATE

The Vietnamese capital's frenetic serenity takes it to the next level post-pandemic.

Stepping into Hanoi is a firehose of the kinetic urbanity you missed during the pandemic. The dodging of honking scooters as you cross the Tay Ho District for your morning croissant at Local Bread. The kaleidoscope of literally anything you could ever want at Dong Xuan Market, which is a big reason for the city's #19 global ranking in our Shopping subcategory. The late-night camaraderie of taking the load off street-level at Bia Hoi Corner, filling your belly and getting buzzed into the wee hours for the price of a couple of fancy coffees in London. The next day, do the exact opposite and unplug completely by contemplating the hundreds of Hanoi's quiet corners and hundreds of temples, like the Temple of Literature, dedicated to Confucius and site of Vietnam's first university in 1070. That's right: a 950-year-old public campus sprinkled with ponds, topiary and impeccable gardens. Small wonder that Hanoi ranks #4 globally for Outdoors, especially when you count mind-bending Halong Bay, dotted with huge limestone islands and caves and home to dozens of floating fishing villages.



## 98 SENDAI

JAPAN

**POPULATION** METRO 1,206,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 SAFETY
- 27 EMPLOYMENT RATE

A small but sensory wonder opens the gates to Japan's northern bounty.

Japan's 11th-largest city is also the country's newest addition to our Top 100 list. Located 90 minutes northeast of Tokyo by bullet train, the city seems a world away. Small enough to get around by bike and incredibly safe (#4 globally) and affordable, Sendai is a cultural hotbed with dozens of festivals annually. The city is also a visual feast, where skyscrapers blend into mountainous, coastal topography and the canopy that gives this "City of Trees" its moniker. The remains of 17th-century Aoba Castle, built for samurai lord Date Masamune on Aoba Hill, rise above the city. But the natural bounty reveals itself 30 minutes or so out of town, where surfers have their pick of northern Japan swells and skiers and snowboarders feast on the powder of Spring Valley Izumi Kogen ski resort. Hot springs are everywhere. The city is also a stealthy culinary gem, ranking #39 globally, and if you go, the marinated beef tongue, pickled vegetables, oxtail soup and rice is a rite of passage, as is the Zunda-mochi (made by crushing cooked edamame beans and mixing them with mochi) for dessert. Grab it at Murakamiya bakery.

## 99 COLOGNE

GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 2,100,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 31 GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES
- 22 CONVENTION CENTER

Cologne is open for business and pleasure.

Despite aesthetic riches like the twin-spired Cologne Cathedral, which rises above the historic buildings of the city's Old Town, and the cultural bounty of places like the Museum Ludwig with its 20th-century art, the perception of the city lags behind its virtues. Cologne ranks cruelly low in our Culture (#93), Attractions (#99) and Museums (#134) subcategories. That last one hurts, given the range of museums in town, from Middle Age riches at the Schnütgen Museum, classics at the Wallraf-Richartz and the Picassos and more modern marvels at the Museum Ludwig. The city even has its own beer, Kölsch. Its global ascent is inevitable, especially with both Germans and international visitors rediscovering the city, like the more than one million who attended the restarted Pride parade in June 2022. It already ranks #67 in our Product category, an amalgam of University Ranking, Airport Connectivity, Convention Center, Attractions and Museums. The reason for its high score? Its convention center—ranked #22 for its size globally. Cologne is home to Lufthansa, the second-largest airline in Europe (COVID-19-fallout willing), helping to earn it a #31 spot for Global 500 corporate headquarters.

## 100 MARSEILLE

FRANCE

**POPULATION** METRO 1,400,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 27 INCOME EQUALITY
- 57 CONVENTION CENTER

The oldest city in France sparkles with an average of 300 days of sunshine annually and plenty of delights.

Leading up to its designation as Europe's Capital of Culture, Marseille spent billions cleaning up and modernizing to shed its seedy reputation. With a #79 ranking for Safety, there's still work to be done, and a swath of new buildings on the waterfront demonstrates the commitment across city leadership in France's second-largest city. Don't miss Vieux Port, designed by Norman Foster, who turned a site that's been here for 26 centuries into a mesmerizing pedestrian-only zone with a buzzing sense of place. The showstopper is at Quai des Belges, where a dramatic blade of reflective stainless steel creates a dreamy canopy and shelter from the sun, which shines almost year-round (Marseille ranks #79 for Weather). Nearby is the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations with its fishnet-inspired design, linked by a pedestrian bridge to the 17th-century Fort Saint Jean. Another new ode to the old is the just-opened Cosquer Méditerranée, housing a full-scale replica of the nearby Grotte Cosquer cave, decorated with prehistoric artwork before it was inundated with water. The city's residents are looked after as well: Marseille ranks #27 for Income Equality globally.

World's

# BEST CITIES PERFORMANCE BY CATEGORY



RANK	CITY	PROVINCE	PLACE	PRODUCT	PROGRAMMING	PEOPLE	PROSPERITY	PROMOTION
1	London	United Kingdom	16	1	1	1	9	1
2	Paris	France	8	2	4	9	7	3
3	New York	United States	40	4	3	76	6	2
4	Tokyo	Japan	5	3	2	59	4	35
5	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	1	54	39	16	35	4
6	Barcelona	Spain	6	5	7	53	154	12
7	Rome	Italy	3	10	5	150	107	6
8	Madrid	Spain	13	17	6	23	101	16
9	Singapore	Singapore	24	23	22	44	10	11
10	Amsterdam	Netherlands	55	8	15	10	18	27
11	Prague	Czech Republic	39	6	8	11	54	42
12	Los Angeles	United States	47	12	17	99	42	9
13	Chicago	United States	111	7	11	91	39	17
14	San Francisco	United States	42	32	20	34	16	32
15	Berlin	Germany	132	13	12	26	132	22
16	Hong Kong	China: Hong Kong SAR	7	26	28	182	32	10
17	Washington	United States	131	35	66	15	13	8
18	Beijing	China	12	11	40	197	2	134
19	Dublin	Ireland	9	43	27	46	24	60
20	Istanbul	Türkiye	38	9	13	181	180	5
21	Las Vegas	United States	41	29	14	147	135	13
22	Milan	Italy	11	24	25	149	120	23
23	Budapest	Hungary	32	25	26	18	117	62
24	Toronto	Canada	121	21	34	42	34	25
25	Sydney	Australia	33	45	36	55	56	24

RANK	CITY	PROVINCE	PLACE	PRODUCT	PROGRAMMING	PEOPLE	PROSPERITY	PROMOTION
26	Seoul	South Korea	57	19	18	102	21	63
27	Doha	Qatar	35	104	217	192	1	114
28	Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates	29	132	211	16	5	51
29	Osaka	Japan	10	82	23	78	44	70
30	Bangkok	Thailand	104	55	10	153	38	18
31	Vienna	Austria	36	28	33	48	100	56
32	San Diego	United States	26	42	44	68	46	36
33	São Paulo	Brazil	172	18	9	167	177	7
34	Melbourne	Australia	76	49	43	19	98	33
35	Zurich	Switzerland	73	50	106	8	11	122
36	Boston	United States	128	34	72	31	14	45
37	Lisbon	Portugal	19	52	32	49	206	48
38	Warsaw	Poland	120	40	73	4	79	78
39	Seattle	United States	174	44	42	39	19	49
40	Orlando	United States	153	15	45	87	85	29
41	Munich	Germany	156	22	69	57	17	55
42	Houston	United States	167	37	51	98	23	26
43	Austin	United States	102	71	53	36	47	54
44	Buenos Aires	Argentina	53	59	16	129	159	38
45	Naples	Italy	2	47	19	230	196	71
46	Copenhagen	Denmark	149	39	48	5	109	133
47	Dallas	United States	137	30	82	73	33	43
48	Helsinki	Finland	90	69	101	7	65	182
49	Frankfurt	Germany	168	16	71	70	26	90
50	Atlanta	United States	179	33	89	65	48	30

RANK	CITY	PROVINCE	PLACE	PRODUCT	PROGRAMMING	PEOPLE	PROSPERITY	PROMOTION
51	Stockholm	Sweden	233	36	118	3	64	88
52	Miami	United States	133	60	67	108	104	20
53	Athens	Greece	27	57	31	122	164	81
54	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	50	53	21	208	213	15
55	Hamburg	Germany	130	76	50	41	61	57
56	Denver	United States	151	62	79	35	43	75
57	Montreal	Canada	135	46	41	69	102	64
58	Brussels	Belgium	238	31	47	12	114	94
59	Tel Aviv	Israel	75	51	55	43	124	161
60	Oslo	Norway	180	70	130	6	49	164
61	Taipei	Taiwan	129	78	30	112	25	84
62	Valencia	Spain	15	79	97	100	170	76
63	Minneapolis	United States	177	72	105	30	12	175
64	Philadelphia	United States	161	41	54	80	59	79
65	Calgary	Canada	141	89	112	22	37	102
66	Portland	United States	178	81	46	61	28	89
67	Nashville	United States	184	58	57	66	55	72
68	Auckland	New Zealand	78	85	83	33	123	138
69	Vancouver	Canada	163	68	63	47	115	67
70	Santiago	Chile	43	100	58	97	179	44
71	Mexico City	Mexico	99	48	52	128	168	37
72	Mumbai	India	60	14	49	236	162	14
73	Shanghai	China	62	20	29	194	93	119
74	San Jose	United States	115	199	192	24	8	178
75	Lyon	France	147	38	98	62	119	95

RANK	CITY	PROVINCE	PLACE	PRODUCT	PROGRAMMING	PEOPLE	PROSPERITY	PROMOTION
76	Bilbao	Spain	34	150	167	21	134	219
77	Liverpool	United Kingdom	118	103	68	32	142	104
78	New Orleans	United States	148	101	24	146	66	73
79	Brisbane	Australia	74	65	93	116	112	97
80	Manchester	United Kingdom	255	63	74	37	137	34
81	Fukuoka	Japan	18	161	88	110	122	144
82	Seville	Spain	31	129	56	106	182	87
83	Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	49	126	241	145	29	53
84	Jerusalem	Israel	4	141	115	169	161	179
85	Nanjing	China	89	91	226	197	3	252
86	Minsk	Belarus	235	145	180	2	131	130
87	Salt Lake City	United States	110	110	174	51	31	206
88	Phoenix	United States	81	74	140	121	106	86
89	Jakarta	Indonesia	72	98	94	184	130	21
90	Gothenburg	Sweden	80	113	228	29	126	225
91	Perth	Australia	105	124	179	54	90	101
92	Glasgow	United Kingdom	253	84	64	13	121	109
93	Nagoya	Japan	107	144	81	64	63	145
94	Baltimore	United States	195	73	109	63	57	140
95	Stuttgart	Germany	123	137	172	45	41	139
96	Ottawa	Canada	160	128	116	38	88	126
97	Hanoi	Vietnam	28	115	38	176	174	47
98	Sendai	Japan	17	178	164	103	108	228
99	Cologne	Germany	205	67	110	92	75	96
100	Marseille	France	113	86	107	84	136	107



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