

resonance

2024

World's Best Cities Report

The 100 Global Cities
Shaping Tomorrow:
The definitive
power rankings

[WORLDBESTCITIES.COM](https://www.worldsbestcities.com)

Empowering Places

Resonance creates transformative strategies, brands and campaigns that empower destinations, cities and communities to realize their full potential.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT • ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT • URBAN DEVELOPMENT

resonanceco.com

resonance

Welcome to the World's Best Cities in 2024



Chris Fair

President & CEO
Resonance Consultancy
cfair@resonanceco.com

Resonance Consultancy is building the most comprehensive global and regional city rankings on the planet. Here's why this matters now more than ever as the world accelerates into a new post-pandemic reality.

As leading advisors in destination, economic and urban development for almost two decades, 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.

We are excited to apply our trusted ranking methodology to global cities with metropolitan populations of 1 million+, for the ninth consecutive year. Over that time, we've been cited by hundreds of trusted global experts and media outlets, with Bloomberg calling our city rankings "the most comprehensive study of its kind; it identifies cities that are most desirable for locals, visitors, and businesspeople alike, rather than simply looking at livability or tourism appeal."

A review of global city performance has never been more important.

As our cities leave the pandemic behind, they walk forward with lessons forged in lockdowns and outdoor safe spaces fresh on their minds. Our urban centers and their citizens, current and future, are completely rethinking what they consider desirable in a place to live, work or play. But in that tumult, we at Resonance are seeing growing alignment and patterns in the way citizens, corporations and travelers choose cities to visit, live or invest in today.

From shockingly high (and persistent) downtown office vacancies, to record urban heat in dozens of metropolises this past summer, cities will never be the same again.

And neither will our Best Cities rankings. This year, we've regrouped our previous six categories (Place, Promotion, Product, etc.) into three larger pillars that we utilize in our work with clients—Livability, Lovability, and Prosperity—to define each city's relative Place Power® Score.

Our rankings are still built from 24 subcategories that we analyze to measure the performance of each city: globally, like in this report, but also in U.S. and European sub-rankings that can be found at WorldsBestCities.com. The criteria we select to rank these cities are limited to those that have historically shown positive correlations with attracting employment, investment and/or visitors. Yes, those include "livability" stalwarts like walkability and outdoor green spaces, but also increasingly coveted talent magnets and prosperity drivers like nightlife, restaurants and posts on Instagram.

These factors shape a city's "lovability," and our research indicates that they tend to drive investment and local prosperity more than, say, local school quality or a city's safety, which are more influential in choosing what neighborhood to live in within a city.

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 all year and across multiple regions will continue to track and monitor this pivotal transformation every step of the way, identifying the Best Cities to live in, work in and visit, now and in the years to come.

If you would like to learn how your city, region or community can leverage our deep insights and analysis to attract more visitors, talent and investment and improve the livability, lovability and prosperity of your city please let us know. We'd love to talk about how to empower your place together.

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

- 05 Our Methodology:
How we ranked the world's
best cities in 2024
- 08 The world's Top 100
cities, in detail
- 55 Ranking cities' Place Power[®]
Score, by category

Contents

Our Methodology

How we ranked the world's best cities in 2024

Every year, Resonance analyzes 270+ global cities (principal cities of metropolitan areas with populations of more than one million) to determine the Top 100 by using a combination of core statistics and qualitative evaluations and recommendations by locals and visitors in digital channels such as Tripadvisor, Google, Facebook and Instagram.

While many factors shape our perception of cities as desirable places to live, work or visit, the Best Cities rankings focus on factors that demonstrate moderate to strong correlations with attracting talent, visitors and/or businesses to urban areas based on our extensive analysis of a wide range of data sources. While factors such as time to commute to work, crime or housing affordability do indeed shape our perception of cities when it comes to choosing a location to live within a city, our analysis shows that these factors have little to no relationship with the performance of an urban area overall when it comes to attracting talent, tourism or investment – at least not in the short term.

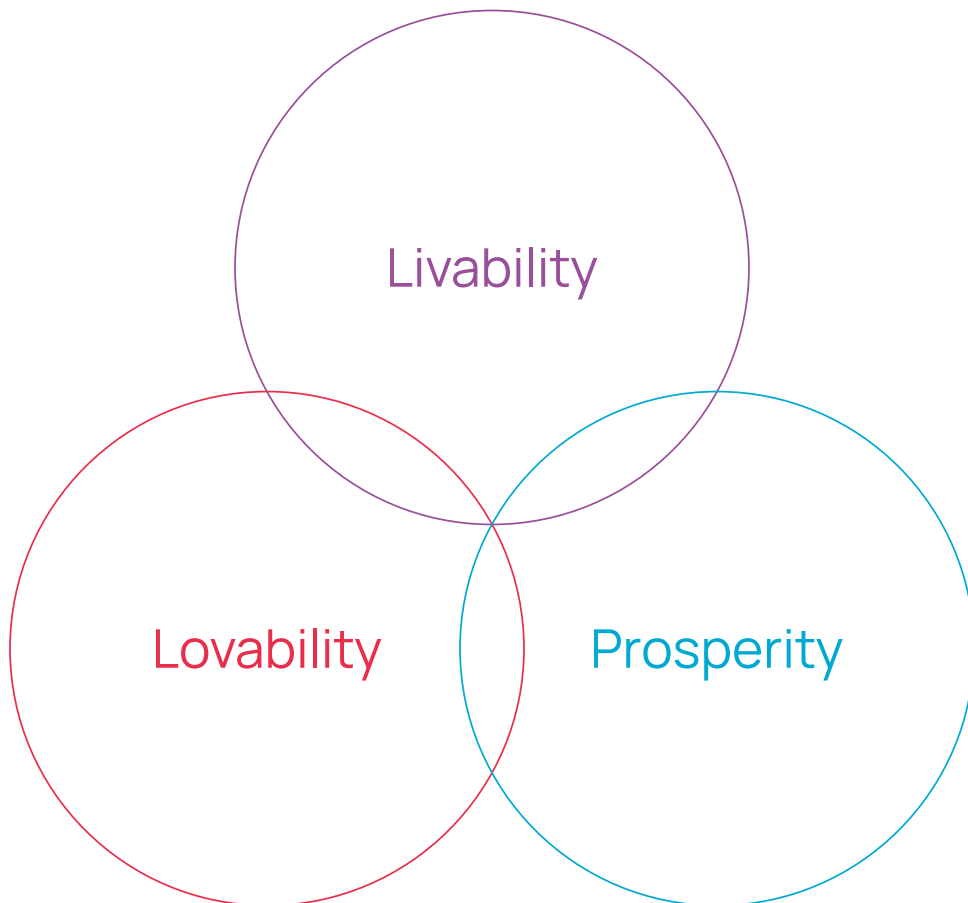
So what are the current factors influencing the performance of cities in attracting visitors, talent and/or companies? Based on our extensive analysis, it's an eclectic mix that ranges from the number of Fortune 500 companies and airport connectivity, to the number of nightlife and outdoor recreation experiences, to the volume of check-ins on Facebook and mentions on Instagram. These factors can change and evolve over time, and we have continually updated our methodology to reflect these shifts. Case in point: we have added factors like Walk Score and Biking to this year's index and removed inputs like Weather and Safety to more accurately represent the latest verified drivers of talent, investment and tourism to a city.

This year, we've regrouped our previous six categories (Place, Promotion, Product, Programming, People, Prosperity) into three larger pillars that we utilize in our work with clients—Livability, Lovability and Prosperity—to define each city's relative Place Power® Score.

Place Power[®] Score

Our methodology is a combination of core statistics from 400 global cities and user-generated ratings and reviews.

Resonance interprets this data through the lens of three key factors—Livability, Lovability and Prosperity—to define each city's Place Power[®] Score.



● Livability

Our most layered overarching category quantifies a city's physical sense of place. To score a city within our Livability category, we evaluate the perceived quality of its natural and built environments. This includes how walkable and bike-friendly it is to how many quality parks, sights, neighborhoods and landmarks are recommended online by locals and visitors. We also look at key infrastructure and institutions such as the ranking of the city's best university and the relative connectivity of its airport to other cities—factors that not only attract talent, but companies as well.

Walk Score A city's walkability score on Walk Score (Walkscore.com)

Biking A city's number of mapped bike routes per 1000,000 residents (Bikemap)

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

Parks & Recreation Number of quality parks and outdoor activities recommended by locals and visitors (Tripadvisor.com)

Airport Connectivity Number of direct destinations served by the city's airports (FlightsFrom.com)

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

Higher Education Score of the top local university (QS Rankings)

● Lovability

Lovability speaks to the relative vibrancy and quality of place of a city relative to its competitive set. Our research has shown for some time that the more vibrant the city is in terms of its culture, sports, dining and nightlife, the more visitors, young professionals and large corporations it attracts. A city's lovability also inspires residents, businesses and visitors to promote a city to the world more than city marketers or chambers of commerce can ever hope to achieve. Resonance ranks a city's performance in each of these areas based on the number of stories, references and recommendations shared online about that city in key user-generated digital channels.

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)

Attractions Number of quality family-friendly activities recommended by locals and visitors (Tripadvisor.com)

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)

● Prosperity

Human capital is becoming a city's most valuable resource when it comes to generating wealth and prosperity, and, for many cities, it is increasingly in short supply. To evaluate the relative strength of human capital from one city to the next, Resonance measures both the educational attainment level of the city's population and the percentage of people participating in the labor force. We not only include obvious indicators of prosperity such as GDP per capita, but also the poverty rate to evaluate how well that wealth is distributed among a city's population. Wealth and prosperity are also shaped by core statistics like business infrastructure (such as convention centers) 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. (We measure those, too.)

Educational Attainment Percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher (OECD/UNESCO Institute of Statistics / U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2021)

Labor Force Participation Percentage of the economy's active workforce (World Bank/OECD/Statistics Canada/U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2021)

GDP per Capita Value of goods and services produced per resident in the economy (McKinsey Global Institute)

Poverty Rate Percentage of the population living below the national poverty line (World Bank/Eurostat/UNICEF/OECD)

Fortune Global 500 Companies Number of Fortune Global 500 corporate headquarters (Fortune.com/Global500)

Number of Start-ups Number of registered start-ups in a city (StartupBlink)

Convention Center Size Size of the largest convention center in a city (10times.com)

The world's Top 100 cities, in detail

The world's urban centers are the engines of their regional and national economies and, importantly, the global economy. For centuries, they've been badges of human ingenuity. Yes, they've been hobbled this decade, 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 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. This means new centers of economic potential—not just in reinvigorated secondary and tertiary cities (think Gothenburg and Bilbao)—but also suburbs that offer better affordability and space while still allowing vital physical connections to large principal cities that are foundational to regional prosperity. And with government initiatives that prioritize reshoring and energy and food security multiplying with every passing quarter, it is cities—from Austin to Zürich—that are forging the resilient, future-focused economies we need.

After way too long in isolation, citizens of the world's cities are gathering again, once more colliding and creating the culture, wealth and energy that define the zeitgeist and path forward for their country, continent and the planet. The 100 cities that we profile over the next 50 pages are, in each of their distinct ways, at the heart of this renewal for the balance of this decade and beyond.

01

London

United Kingdom



Battersea Power Station resonates once again after a decade-long renovation.

As the “capital of capitals” deftly negotiates the uncharted, perilous terrain of a post-Brexit and pandemic world, it does so atop our ranking for the ninth straight year.

PLACE POWER® SCORE

- 1 Livability
- 1 Lovability
- 3 Prosperity

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Culture
- #1 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 12,434,823

London still reigns over all global cities. Despite crippling COVID lockdowns and economic devastation. Despite Brexit. Despite a war in Europe. The city is more indomitable and part of the global discourse than ever. From the Queen's death, to last autumn's chaotic drama at 10 Downing Street that finally calmed down with Rishi Sunak becoming prime minister, only to take heavy local election losses this spring, London is rarely quiet these days.

No wonder that, through all this tumult, the eyes of the world were fixed here more than on 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. London tops both our overall Livability and Lovability indices, leading all global cities in the Instagram Hashtags, Facebook Check-ins and Tripadvisor Reviews subcategories that in part comprise the latter.

Indeed the city is almost back to pre-pandemic capacity, if the Tube is any indication. The London Underground Night Tube reopened more than a year ago, with the city's other lines mostly up and running as they were before COVID. There are even new metro stops as part of the transformational Elizabeth line buildout, with trains now running directly from Reading and Heathrow to Abbey Wood and from Shenfield to Paddington. The brand-new Bond Street Elizabeth line station, at the heart of London's West End, also opened late last year. Returning transit aficionados won't believe the direct journeys now possible across the city.

Just as well, given the need to accommodate all the tourists: London ranked third on the planet (and first in Europe) for cities with the biggest international traveler spend in 2022, with \$16.07 billion, almost tied for second with Doha. (Dubai was the runaway winner.) Pedestrians are also excited by the 2025 opening of the Camden Highline, the nearly mile-long greenway just north of Central



Tower Bridge

London that will transform an unused train track into an elevated path similar to the famous urban landmark in New York.

And speaking of attracting people, the hand-wringing about the flight of talent and capital due to the pall of Brexit (and the follow-up specter of an airborne pandemic), while warranted, now seems excessive.

London's resilience has been buoyed by a sinking currency that has attracted 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 planet's most coveted city. (London also topped Resonance Consultancy's Europe's Best Cities earlier this year.)

According to the Financial Times and estate agency Savills, 2022 sales of luxury homes in the city were torrid, with 605 properties selling for £5 million (\$6.3 million) or more in 2022, the most since at least 2006. The party did slow in 2023, with inflation, persistent high interest rates and flat equity market performance

all cited as causes (to say nothing of the potential of the Labour Party forming the next government). "The number of properties sold in prime central London in the first quarter of 2023 was 29% lower than the same period last year, according to LonRes, which tracks the city's high-end market," reported the FT. "At the same time, buyer demand has fallen in nearly every part of prime London since last summer, says the data company PropCast."

The highest-profile new residents span the globally super-rich, from Middle Eastern buying activity hitting a four-year high in the second half of 2022 to the arrival of tech royalty, although aggressive tech-sector cost-cutting has brought the deep tech investment seen earlier this decade to a halt.

Instagram CEO Adam Mosseri, who arrived seeking the most educated citizenry on the planet—available at a relative discount to Silicon Valley or New York—returned to the U.S. earlier this year. While the city remains Meta's largest global engineering base outside of the U.S., its two offices in London's King's Cross neighborhood, opened in early 2022 after a

three-year build (and designed by Bennetts Associates with interiors by TP Bennett based on a concept design by Gehry Partners), are pretty sparse these days. While Google is still planning to open its 11-story, 969,000-square-foot London HQ in 2024 between King's Cross station and the King's Boulevard, the 4,000 anticipated employees won't be brought on for a while.

The office slowdown across the city has spotlighted the office vacancy crisis at Canary Wharf, London's 128-acre banking district, with its 17% (and rising) vacancy rate, which is the highest in the city. As a result, owners Canary Wharf Group are planning to invest their way out by building a "Canary Wharf 3.0" in the area, focused on residential, entertainment and a 750,000-square-foot life-sciences center, which it says will be the largest commercial lab in Europe.

Despite these recent economic clouds, London is still hot globally. 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.

The highest-profile new residents span the globally super-rich, from Middle Eastern buying activity hitting a four-year high in the second half of 2022 to the arrival of tech royalty, although aggressive tech-sector cost-cutting has brought the deep tech investment seen earlier this decade to a halt.

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. Recent tax incentives have included the lowest corporate tax rate among G7 countries and a cornucopia of research and development tax credits. "Grow London, delivered by London & Partners, continues to support high growth companies from around the world to choose London for their international expansion, connect into our communities and meet their peers," says Janet Coyle, managing director of business growth at London & Partners. "From Andreessen Horowitz picking London for its first office outside the U.S. to the Atlanta-based carbon credit fintech platform Cloverly expanding to London to support Mayor Sadiq Khan's ambitious climate goals to become a zero-carbon, zero-pollution city by 2030 and a zero-waste city by 2050, London is one of the best places to scale a business."

All those newcomers will need to fuel up, and this is 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 a Top 5 restaurant scene globally is buzzing again with big-name openings like Dubai-based izakaya-style restaurant Kinoya in Harrods. Hundreds of other rooms are soon to join this increasingly daring culinary destination serving—and welcoming—the world once more.

Fortunately for them, dozens of newly opened and equally daring hotels await, none more exciting than the urban reimagining of the Art'otel, with its 164 art-inspired rooms on the top levels of the recently reopened Battersea Power Station, a mid-1900s husk that today is stuffed with shops, restaurants, cinemas and a theater. Or the OWO Raffles in the Old War Office Building in Whitehall—it's the first time the neo-Baroque building, used by the Ministry of Defence until the 1960s, will open to the public.



St. Paul's Cathedral

02

Paris

France



Swimming in the Seine.

Paris attacked the pandemic not only with its doctors and health-care workers but also with its urban planners. Just in time to welcome the world for the 2024 Summer Olympics. But first, who's up for a dip in the Seine?

PLACE POWER® SCORE

- 2 Livability
- 3 Lovability
- 14 Prosperity

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Sights & Landmarks
- #1 Walk Score (tie)

POPULATION

Metro 13,115,000

A lot of city leaders talk about learning from the pandemic, but La Ville-Lumière is actually walking the walk, going all-in on those hard lessons and their applications 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 18 miles per hour introduced in 2021 to the promise of 435 miles of bike paths across most arrondissements by 2026—it's the citizenry's embrace of this boldness that is changing the city's fabric for good.

While the city is future-proofing itself with visionary sustainability and investment attraction (much more on that in a bit), it's battling monumental social and economic challenges, perhaps unlike any other capital city. Paris has been wracked by unemployment and economic calamity since 2020 and ranks #158 in our Poverty Rate subcategory, which

tracks residents living under the national poverty line. Despite its #2 overall global ranking for 2024, the city ranks #14 in our top-line Prosperity index and the systemic inequality is a powder keg in and around the city. This summer, the city (and country) exploded after the fatal, point-blank shooting of French teenager Nahel Merzouk by Florian Menesplier, a police officer, in the Paris suburb of Nanterre. Given the 17-year-old's Algerian and Moroccan descent, racism was alleged in the killing.

After a week of protests across the country, which caused an estimated billion dollars in damage, city life has gotten back to normal as investigations into systemic racism in the regional police force and the murder trial proceed.

Even with the unrest, this summer looks to be one of the most lucrative ever by tourism



Strolling the Fondation Louis Vuitton.

spend. Of course, being able to enjoy a city ranked best in the world in our Sights & Landmarks subcategory, as well as #3 in Museums (the city has well over 100), has a tendency to distract one from the perils of the modern world.

Almost three years without Paris is certainly driving the voraciousness, but so is the euro being near par with the U.S. dollar of late. The city remains the most visited on the planet, with 44 million visitors last year, yet still 13% below 2019 levels.

Paris was also recently crowned the world's most powerful urban tourist destination for 2022 by the World Travel & Tourism Council, with the city's hospitality industry worth \$35.6 billion last year. And it's projected to grow to \$49 billion by 2032.

Good thing Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport used the past three years of lower volume to invest €250 million into a renovation of Terminal 1. Reopened this year, it now has a colossal junction building and a central lobby full of the latest tech to improve the traveler experience.

Rail access and infrastructure are also unprecedented. A seven-hour direct Berlin-to-Paris TGV line launches next year, with more ambitious directs like the Venice-to-Paris Midnight Trains coming in 2025.

No matter how they arrive, what Paris visitors new and returning will find is a city that has codified pedestrianism and alfresco living.

To ensure that 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 as outdoor seating. The same went for closing off lesser-driven streets entirely for public walking and seating for local businesses in need of additional outdoor space.

And nowhere is the transformation more dramatic than along the 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 hosts 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.

Speaking of Notre-Dame, its reopening in 2024 after its devastating fire aligns with what will be a vital year for Paris, and for France, when the city also hosts the 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 Atlantic salmon first returned to the Seine 14 years ago, the river 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 on floating outdoor stages, nursing this sacred river back to health would be incredibly poetic, even in a town that invented poetic gestures.

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 Atlantic salmon first returned to the Seine 14 years ago, the river is today home to more than 30 species of fish, like trout, perch and eel.

Those Paris heatwaves certainly became more tolerable this past summer, when public swimming was allowed on select days for the first time in a century. The plan is for regular swimming spots by 2025 at the Bras Marie, Bras Grenelle and Simone de Beauvoir footbridge in Bercy.

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 flood of new and renovated hotels in the city is also doubling down on coveted, elevated perches from which to meditate on the iconic views. The new Kimpton St Honoré and Hôtel Rochecouart are both topped by outdoor terraces, while the just-opened and Philippe Starck-designed Too Hôtel that soars above the city higher than any other is crowned with a giant, 3,750-square-foot glass cube with a bar and restaurant that serves up a view worthy of this enchanting *city*.

Local economic development teams are also back at full speed, especially with the obvious inequality that sends citizens out into the streets every few months. Initiatives range from subsidized rents for shops in underserved 'hoods (the city has purchased 650 abandoned spaces for this very purpose) to national talent attraction with direct local benefit.

In 2021, President Macron committed €30 billion to the France 2030 plan: an effort to create "high-tech champions of the future" that is expected to yield 100 French tech unicorns by the end of the decade. There are 26 today, with 20 of these in Paris and quickly establishing the city as a start-up hotbed, with the State of European Tech noting that France has seen the strongest growth in tech-focused job searches of any European country. And where do you think all that talent will pick as their new home base?



The timeless Eiffel Tower.

03

New York City

United States



Dancing in the streets during the annual South Side United Block Party in Brooklyn.

The greatest city in America is urban recovery writ large, with a dizzying roster of new shows, hotels and parks—and record real estate prices. But the Big Apple is always worth the price of admission, especially in these glory days.

PLACE POWER® SCORE

- 2 Lovability
- 6 Livability
- 12 Prosperity

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Google Trends
- #2 Culture

POPULATION

Metro 19,768,458

NYC between 2020 and 2022 was a ghastly reminder of the vulnerability of even the colossal and seemingly all-powerful; we saw here what awaited other cities across the U.S. and globally, first in its hospitals, then in its all-hands-on-deck recovery efforts.

Today, NYC is also the urban recovery writ large. Sniping haters who declared that the big, vibrant, cheek-by-jowl city experiment was finally over as the urban exodus intensified in 2020 and vacancy in the city's coveted real estate hit double digits were quickly silenced by the rebound. The mid-pandemic 50% drop in real estate sales shot up to the highest-ever median rents in Manhattan two years later (currently registering at a new all-time high of the mid-\$5,000s per month).

Tourism, the accelerant for so many of the city's amenities, was a priority for a sustainable recovery, and city leaders are doing everything

in their power to bring back not only those apprehensive New Yorkers whose hunger for regular bites of the Big Apple is finally being sated, but also the nearly 70 million people who visited in 2019 and spent \$46 billion across its expansive quilt of Sights & Landmarks (ranked #13 globally).

The city has no other choice: office occupancy remains about 50% of pre-pandemic levels, according to local numbers. For example, Bloomberg examined data from eight major Manhattan office buildings and discovered that "foot traffic is down about 52% on Fridays and 45% on Mondays compared with pre-COVID." The domino effect is perilous: an estimated 40% drop in office market value as office towers sit partially empty could cost \$5 billion in lost tax revenue (an astonishing 5% of the city's annual budget). Subway ridership is equally concerning, resulting in service cuts.



Little Island is drawing big crowds to Hudson River Park.

Fortunately, tourism numbers have had a breathtaking return, from 33 million visitors in 2021 (less than half of 2019's total) to 56 million last year—and onward to a projected 61 million in 2023. First order of business: getting those not already here to town. The suspension of travel for more than a year expedited the long-planned 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). The new Terminal C also came online last year. Newark Liberty International's updated Terminal A has opened with 33 new gates and construction has started on a new, congestion-easing 2.5-mile elevated guideway train system. JFK just unveiled 130,000 square feet of new and renovated space, and the New Terminal One opens later this decade. Back on the ground, Moynihan Train Hall is a new 17-track expansion of Penn Station that, if you squint, could 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. Almost 10,000 new or renovated hotel rooms opened in 2022 alone, including the headline-grabbing Aman New York, an "urban sanctuary" on Fifth Avenue. Also open is the year-old Ritz-Carlton New York, NoMad—named for its 'hood—which features Jose Andres' Nubeluz lounge on the 50th floor and plenty of massive windows from which to watch the street action. Better yet, soak in the 360-degree city panorama on the rooftop patio. The buildout stretches across the city, with a newly opened Thompson in Midtown, and new Renaissance Hotels properties in Harlem and Flushing. Moxy Hotels is also opening multiple locations in the Lower East Side and Williamsburg.

At street level, the city's firehose turns cultural, with massive museums (ranking #6 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 that includes an interactive exhibit, archival collections, a 68-

seat jazz club and a store. It should be open by the time you read this. The Bronx Children's Museum also just reopened 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—a building formerly used by the Met. Speaking of the Met, New York's 153-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, which opened in Times Square with a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of major theater productions. Also: Broadway shows are back!

Two more very NYC reasons to experience the city now: 2023 marked the 50th anniversary of the birth of hip hop music, founded in the Bronx on August 11, 1973, when Clive Campbell—better known as DJ Kool Herc—spun records at his sister's birthday party. Dozens

For those who prefer their immersion 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.

of local celebrations, exhibits and workshops will extend into 2024. It's also the 100-year anniversary of the underrated Museum of the City of New York, which celebrates and documents 750,000 objects, including photographs, prints, costumes, paintings and more, to allow NYC-philes to obsess over this place like nowhere else.

For those who prefer their immersion 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 spectacular new perches, like SUMMIT One Vanderbilt and its all-glass exterior elevators, called Ascent. Go up, look down and breathe out. This city is back.



The High Line Park, Manhattan

04 Tokyo Japan



Tokyo street life.

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.

PLACE POWER® SCORE

- 3 Livability
- 4 Lovability
- 11 Prosperity

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Restaurants
- #1 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 37,732,000

Despite earthquakes, tsunamis and typhoons, Tokyo has long held on to its top spot as one of the most livable metropolises on the planet (quantified by its Top 3 global ranking this year). 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 three-plus years of lockdowns and intermittent school closures.

The disastrous 2021 Summer Olympics may be mercifully in the rear view, although the tens of billions spent on infrastructure to welcome the world that stayed away will saddle the region for years. If there's a silver lining, it's that the city's 2,000 hotels, inns and guest houses that opened during the pandemic (to say nothing of the dozens of shopping complexes and other tourist developments) are as ready for returning visitors as any destination on earth.

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, with the expansion of the international terminal at Haneda, the city's main airport (ranked #38 globally), and a planned 18-minute rail link from arrivals to downtown by 2031. Tokyo holds on to its #1 spot for Shopping, helped by retail icons like Ginza's luxury department stores, newly enhanced with the art-bedecked 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. Just opened is the retail-centric office development of Toranomon Hills and the larger Azabudai Hills, which will accommodate more than 20,000 workers in what is envisioned as a vertical city within a city.

05 Singapore Singapore



The city's Changi Airport.

The Lion City whets travelers' appetites with remarkable dining and shopping.

PLACE POWER® SCORE

- 2 Prosperity
- 14 Lovability
- 17 Livability

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #9 Biking
- #11 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 5,983,000

Emerging from its origins as a free-spirited trading port, Singapore has undergone a remarkable transformation to emerge as one of Asia's most modern, well-organized and captivating urban centers.

Tourists in Singapore can immerse themselves in two favored local pastimes: shopping, which ranks #11 globally, and, of course, eating. The retail choices are staggering, from haute couture to electronics, from the countless shops adorning Orchard Road to the 24-hour, six-story Mustafa Centre. The culinary landscape lives up to its #14 Restaurants ranking, buoyed by the popularity of the beloved spicy white pepper crab and the sweet, refreshing Singapore Sling.

Capturing a photograph from the colossal rooftop infinity pool of Marina Bay Sands (poised to expand further with an additional 1,000-room hotel tower and a live entertainment arena) has become a symbolic ritual. On the opposite shoreline, Merlion Park,

with its metallic, surfboard-like head, offers an even more iconic perspective.

In the coming years, Singapore will focus on boosting prosperity (currently sitting pretty at #2), creating more green areas and building vibrant developments for work, education and play. The existing Changi Aviation Park will be expanded with the development of Changi East Industrial Zone, and a mega port in Tuas is set to be the world's largest fully automated terminal when completed. Closer to the city, a new waterfront district is being explored just south of the airport, called the Great Southern Waterfront, which is slated to build 9,000 housing units along Singapore's southern coast. Locals are also buzzing about the forthcoming NS Square, a future outdoor multipurpose venue in the Downtown Core area of Marina Bay that will replace the popular Marina Bay floating platform.

06

Dubai

United Arab Emirates



Sunset in Dubai.

Lavish, luxurious and lively in equal measure, Dubai continues its epic ascent on the world stage.

PLACE POWER® SCORE

- 4 Prosperity
- 5 Lovability
- 35 Livability

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #2 Outdoors
- #5 Instagram Hashtags

POPULATION

Metro 6,404,000

To a large part of the world's population, Dubai is "The Vegas of Arabia," a place that takes pride in turning every notion previously held about the Middle East on its head. Famed for outlandish developments like Palm Jumeirah, home to Atlantis, the Palm and the made-famous-by-Tom-Cruise Burj Khalifa—the tallest building in the world—the city has, over the years, made breaking world records a national pastime: tallest, longest, fastest, largest. Think of it, and the city's probably done it.

No wonder it ranks **#8** in our Attractions subcategory, crammed with never-ending malls, aquariums, indoor ski parks, dancing fountains, fantasy theme parks and Disneyfied water playgrounds that pay homage to Hollywood, Bollywood, Marvel and Lego—as well as innumerable family-friendly resorts.

Catering to all these visitors is no small feat, which is why Dubai will soon have more hotel rooms than larger cities like London or New York, according to Zoom Property Insights.

Leading the charge is Burj Al Arab, one of the city's most iconic landmarks, renowned for its (self-presented) "seven-star status." And now, with the number of rooms in the city soaring beyond 150,000 and many more new hotels and resorts in the pipeline, Dubai's hotel and hospitality sector is poised for greatness. This will, in turn, create more and more jobs, and boost the city's already high overall Prosperity ranking of **#4**.

The focus now is on the city's 2040 Urban Masterplan—as set out by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, vice president and ruler of Dubai—which calls for developing a "20-minute city"—allowing residents access to 80% of their daily needs and destinations within 20 minutes by foot or bike, making the global city feel more like a home town.

07

San Francisco

United States



Soaking in the Golden Gate Bridge.

The golden city has been deeply wounded economically—by the pandemic, the lack of affordable housing and violence unimaginable a few years ago.

PLACE POWER® SCORE

- 5 Prosperity
- 20 Livability
- 28 Lovability

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Number of Start-ups
- #3 University

POPULATION

Metro 4,623,264

Despite San Francisco's meticulously documented challenges, job opportunities and infrastructure buildout pave the way as the world continues to rush in like it always has. Its #5 ranking in our overall Prosperity index is driven by high salaries that draw global workers who rank the sixth most educated on the planet. No wonder San Francisco ranks #33 for Global 500 Companies. In fact, the Bay Area remains the number one place for start-up innovation, powered by venture capital kept interested in the city's famed "ecosystem"—for talent, for research and for universities.

In Henley & Partners and New World Wealth's "World's Wealthiest Cities Report 2023," San Francisco ranked third, tied with London and after New York and Tokyo, with 285,000 residing here in 2022.

Still, the city is in a crisis not seen in decades. Population decline was the worst among large U.S. counties between July 2020 and July 2022 (although it's slowed recently). Equally terrifying,

the city's office vacancy fluctuates at around 30%. Even the proudest locals wring their hands as companies leave for Austin and Florida. And then tweet about how you should, too.

Undeterred, local leaders are 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. The 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 opened last year in the Presidio alone (including Presidio Tunnel Tops, a 14-acre park built over the Presidio Parkway highway tunnels)—was a clinic in city-building opportunity that will pay dividends for decades.

08 Barcelona Spain



The Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya is always worth a stop.

The defiant Catalan capital is as coveted as ever. The difference post-pandemic? It has taken a breath and is welcoming the world on its own terms.

PLACE POWER® SCORE

- 7 Lovability
- 10 Livability
- 48 Prosperity

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #3 Nightlife
- #5 Tripadvisor Reviews

POPULATION

Metro 5,111,749

Barcelona threads the needle as one of the world's rare cities that ranks Top 10 in both our overall Livability (#10) and Lovability (#7) indices. It has near-perfect weather year-round, more than three miles of golden sandy beaches within city limits, iconic parks, striking architecture and diverse, era-spanning neighborhoods that are destinations at all hours, many fueled by the city's Top 3 nightlife ranking.

Can you blame the 12 million annual tourists who flocked here pre-pandemic, more than doubling the city's population? Barcelona responded with some of the strictest vacation rental rules anywhere, aimed at controlling the effects of runaway tourism—like 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, the first woman to hold the role, on a Barcelona-for-citizens platform. Ultimately the pandemic took care of “the tourist problem,” with devastating results. But even as the tide

of tourists once again washes over the city, what they find is a more citizen-focused place, increasingly self-propelled and non-vehicular, with more than 150 miles of new bike lanes and daring initiatives like Eixos Verds (Green Axis), a network of quieter roads that share space equally between cars, bikes and pedestrians, and are dotted with benches and community squares. The inspiration germinated from a local pilot project that, unsurprisingly, improved citizen mental health.

The city is also no longer content with digital nomads, and is aggressively securing massive foreign investment, ranging from Lufthansa Group, the largest airline group in Europe, which is opening its first southern European digital hub here any day now, to U.S. real estate developer Panattoni, which will invest \$300 million to build the largest data center in the region.

09 Amsterdam Netherlands



Amsterdam scores Top 5 for its biking in our ranking.

The smallest city in our Top 10 is taking back its streets, led by visionary Mayor Femke Halsema (literally visionary: she's also a filmmaker), the first non-interim female mayor in Amsterdam's history.

PLACE POWER® SCORE

- 5 Livability
- 22 Lovability
- 24 Prosperity

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #4 Labor Force Participation
- #5 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 2,891,907

Mayor Halsema's administration is showing a practical stewardship of a place (and citizens) once abandoned to the tourist euro that's co-authoring a future of accountability by everyone who calls the magnetic Dutch capital home. Take last year's 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 5 ranking in our overall Livability index. The sometimes out-of-control nightlife (ranked #10 globally) that the city was known and often marketed for—despite the attendant human trafficking—was another opportunity to right long-time local complaints, with local leaders going so far as to move the red-light district out of the famed

De Wallen neighborhood to a suburban Erotic Center while banning non-residents from cannabis cafés and ditching tours that glorify the city's baser side. Things escalated this spring, when smoking pot in public was banned outright and the city launched a “stay away” campaign targeting party tourism. Restaurants and bars will be asked to close by 2 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and the city will not allow new visitors into the old city district after 1 a.m.

Stepping in for vice are tours and programs focusing on the city's enviable livability and Dutch history. And getting tourists (who numbered 22 million in 2019) away from the city center and out to the #8-ranked shopping and #11-ranked museums that pepper the city.

Oh, and this past summer, city council also banned cruise ships from the city center as part of its clean-air efforts.

10

Seoul

South Korea



The Imprint at Seoul's Paradise City complex.

Riding the Hallyu wave, Seoul has firmly established itself as a global pop culture powerhouse.

PLACE POWER® SCORE

- 8 Prosperity
- 26 Livability
- 31 Lovability

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #8 Museums
- #3 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 23,016,000

In the land of kimchi, K-pop, K-dramas and K-beauty, Seoul is at the forefront of modern culture with many distinctions—home to BTS, the biggest-selling band in the world; the place that spawned Parasite, the genre-bending best-picture Oscar-winner; the city anchored by Gwangjang Market, featured on Netflix, frequented by Gordon Ramsay and a favorite of U.S. politicians.

In an astonishingly short span, South Korea's capital has 180ed from war-ravaged city to high-tech hub. Its e-governance system and Fourth Industrial Revolution are thriving, creating a digitally interconnected city on 5G and 6G networks. The city's ascent is boosted by our eighth-lowest Poverty Rate ranking, sixth-most Global 500 firms located in town, and a growing start-up ecosystem waiting its turn to disrupt the incumbents. All that innovation is sated by the 176 Michelin-rated venues that have earned Seoul a #3 ranking in our Restaurants subcategory. Start at Mukja Golmok, literally "Let's Eat Alley"; move

on to the vegetable-centric temple cuisine at Dooreyoo, Michelin-starred chef Tony Yoo's oasis; then head to Gwangjang Market, where you can eat everything from a soup of rice cakes and kimchi-tofu dumplings to squirmy live octopus (really).

Seoul's popularity as a travel destination is ascendant post-pandemic, too. In 2022, it ranked as the fourth-most searched destination on Airbnb globally, and in 2023, the government is investing millions in international conferences by expediting three MICE clusters within the city. As the Korean wave continues to crest and break in distant lands, this charismatic city is creating a new paradigm for culture and commerce, which in turn has thousands flocking to its shores.



11 Rome Italy

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #2 Tripadvisor Reviews
- #4 Sights & Landmarks

POPULATION

Metro 4,304,000

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. And that's just the stuff you can see. In recent months, construction projects have unearthed everything from a rare fourth-century golden glass depiction of Roma—the goddess personifying the city—to a life-sized marble statue of a Roman emperor dressed as Hercules. "The millennial history of our city never ceases to amaze and enchant the world," tweeted Roberto Gualtieri, mayor of Rome, after a recent find. Mix in underrated parks and greenways (Rome ranks #28 in our Outdoors subcategory) and its thousands of portals back in time (Sights & Landmarks rank #4 globally) and it's easy to see how Rome remains an urban treasure, drawing record post-pandemic tourists despite historic heat waves that exceeded 107 degrees Fahrenheit in July. Declarations of love for the city have multiplied with social media channels, of course, and Rome trails only London in our global Tripadvisor Reviews subcategory. The city is reopening fast, with new restaurants like Pulejo, Don Pasquale and Romanè, and properties like the country's first Six Senses resort.



12 Prague Czechia

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #3 Attractions
- #4 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 2,260,000

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

Pandemic lockdowns derailed tourism in Prague, and over the past year the city made long-lasting decisions to ensure that its #4-ranked Museums (ahead of places like Rome and Berlin) and #3-ranked Attractions (trailing only London and Tokyo) remain accessible to the citizens who supported local 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 as a vibrant urban market and series of pop-up bars. Prague's compact, fairy-tale walkability enchants in centuries-old cobbled streets and the (publicly accessible) hilltop Prague Castle, which has emerged from lockdown alongside Salm Palace—home to National Gallery exhibition spaces—fully renovated. The Baroque Clam-Gallas Palace in Old Town is also newly reopened and eager to be admired. The city's four universities, relative affordability and #4 Nightlife ranking have inspired young talent and billions in foreign investment to pour in—from real estate developers to long-established firms like Microsoft, Cisco and Oracle doubling down on a good thing.



13 Madrid Spain

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #5 Nightlife
- #8 Culture

POPULATION

Metro 7,005,000

Spain's kinetic capital is applying its pandemic lessons to a people-powered, planet-saving rebirth.

Madrid's sustainability-driven investment in its bounteous (but long-dormant) infrastructure and public assets is a wonder to watch unfold in real time. It starts, not surprisingly, with reuse and the conviction that everything old can be new again. Take the new Santander Park, an instant citizen and visitor destination that used to be a golf course. A 47-mile urban forest network with nearly half a million new trees 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 annually and mitigate the city's worsening urban heat. The investment in the city's outdoor realm will improve Madrid's #65 ranking in our Outdoors subcategory, especially combined with how safe the city has become, along with its tied top spot for Walk Score globally. Madrid's electric bus network trails only Berlin in Europe and new charging stations and bike lanes are everywhere. But the biggest news is this year's full approval of Madrid Nuevo Norte, the largest current urban regeneration project in Europe, in the city's underused northern rail district: more than 550 acres dedicated to the Madrid of the future.



14 Berlin Germany

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #5 Museums
- #6 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 4,980,000

No German city embodies the country's sentiments of tolerance and cultural ambition quite like its capital.

Berlin is a city where remnants of a fragile history mingle with a present in which being whatever you want simply comes with residency. Today, waves of Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion are joining North Africans, Afghans and dozens of other groups seeking a new life. It's a big reason why the city ranks #23 in our Start-ups subcategory, and #29 in Labor Force Participation. Its #50 ranking for Educational Attainment among residents will only climb with ambitious new citizens. The city is as culturally devoted as it is welcoming. This is the home of Museum Island, after all, and the city's Top 5 ranking globally in our Museums subcategory will also ascend with recent and upcoming openings. 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 more will open, dedicated to everything from samurai to video games. Another exciting 2023 development is the ongoing cultural and creative evolution of Berlin's Tempelhof Airport, Europe's largest historic monument, with the curve of the building stretching 3/4 of a mile. In 2026, the anticipated Museum of the 20th Century will launch as one of Europe's finest.



15 Los Angeles United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

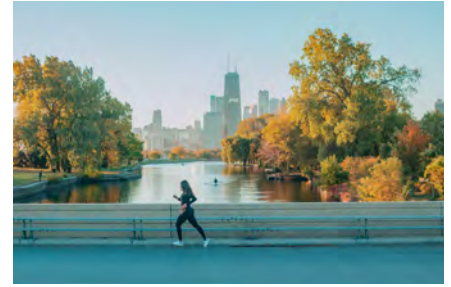
- #4 Google Search
- #6 University

POPULATION

Metro 12,997,000

The planet's city of stories is telling a few of its own this year. Over drinks, over dinner and on the train ride home.

Centennial milestones were all the rage in 2023 Los Angeles, and the chance to experience the celebrations will stretch into 2024 and improve the city's impressive #11 Attractions ranking globally. The biggie: the Hollywood Sign. In a recent study commissioned by Los Angeles Tourism, nearly 80% of respondents affirmed it as L.A.'s most iconic landmark. Also celebrating a century are Warner Bros. Studios and the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, as hallowed an American ground as you'll find and home to both the first Super Bowl in 1967 and multiple Olympic Games (including the upcoming 2028 Summer Games, when L.A. will become the first place in the U.S. to host the event three times). The world is curious (indicated by the #4 ranking for global Google searches, which powers a #13 finish in our overall Lovability index). The next two years are equally frenzied for the city's arts and culture scene. Both the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Natural History Museum's NHM Commons open in 2024, followed by the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, founded by philanthropist and filmmaker George Lucas and his wife Mellody Hobson, co-CEO and president of Ariel Investments.



16 Chicago United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Walk Score
- #7 Airport Connectivity

POPULATION

Metro 9,510,000

America's great Midwest metropolis pulses with infrastructure and affordability that eludes many other iconic global cities.

Three years of pandemic decimation and spiking inflation only meant the Windy City was spring-loaded for a breakout 2023, powered by a fully operational O'Hare International, ranked #7 globally. Meetings and conventions are also back, pouring into McCormick Place and its stunning Lake Michigan perch, ranked #38 in our Convention Center subcategory. The city's quiet productivity is humming again, leaner and more efficient than ever, with the 19th-most Global 500 headquarters on the planet. Even amid the post-pandemic headlines of emptying city cores, Chicago was named the top U.S. metro area for corporate investment for an astonishing 10th consecutive year by Site Selection, a magazine that tracks urban real estate and corporate development. The reason? "The metro area continues to attract companies and the talent those companies covet." The local food scene (#31) is also ascendant, powered by daring new openings and recently immortalized by FX series The Bear. In 2024, all eyes will be on South Chicago's Jackson Park. Its \$500-million Obama Presidential Center opens the following year as a museum and public gathering space looking to welcome 700,000 annual visitors and generate a long-term economic impact of \$3 billion.



17 Washington, D.C. United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Google Search
- #5 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 6,359,000

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 once again topped not only all U.S. cities for searches on Google in the past year, but globally as well. Given its omnipresence, there are few cities so poised to build on their exposure. "There is currently \$9.6 billion in development underway and the city has added new hotels, museums, rooftops, Michelin-rated dining and more for travelers to explore," says Elliott Ferguson, president and CEO of Destination DC. Those 2023 openings include the launch of the 274-room Royal Sonesta Capitol Hill, joining new properties like the AC Hotel Washington DC Capitol Hill Navy Yard and the Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf. And speaking of The Wharf, phase two of the massive Southwest Waterfront development just opened, creating yet another destination neighborhood in a city packed with them. New and reopening museums include the 32,000-square-foot Rubell Museum DC in a historically Black public school, and the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the world's only major art museum solely dedicated to championing female artists.



18 Beijing China

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #10 Google Search
- #13 University

POPULATION

Metro 18,522,000

One of China's "Four Ancient Capitals," Beijing walks a fine line between progress and politics.

Enigmatic hutongs whisper tales of emperors and concubines; next to them, towering skyscrapers reflect Beijing's rapid global ascent. The city's 3,000-year-old history comes alive across seven UNESCO World Heritage sites, punctuated by the modern Bird's Nest Olympic stadium and the Guardian Art Center—the world's first custom-built auction house. No longer does "Peking" observe world affairs from the sidelines; today's Beijing is keen to solidify China's position as the world's second-largest economy. President Xi Jinping speaks of Beijing's commitment to peace and democracy—a stark contrast to allegations of using the Beijing 2022 Olympics to "sportwash" perceptions of human rights. This may be the reason the city scores high on our Livability and Prosperity indices (#11 and #16, respectively) but has a long way to go on Lovability (#78)—something the government is aware of, and is seemingly taking steps to address. With the Global Security and Global Development initiatives externalizing internal policies—as seen at Beijing Daxing Airport's new innovation center, which facilitates entry of foreign enterprises into the Chinese market—Beijing aims to create an environment that supports sovereignty, security and development, meaning the "Forbidden City" would be forbidden no more.



19 Istanbul Türkiye

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #3 Airport Connectivity
- #3 Instagram Hashtags

POPULATION

Metro 15,636,000

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

The ancient collision between Europe and Asia radiates in Türkiye's kinetic capital. It's why the city is among the most beguiling for its sense of place, inside and out. Its Top 10 Sights & Landmarks ranking, as well as its #18 spot in our Outdoors subcategory, will both improve after extensive renovations for the Turkish Republic's centennial in October 2023. The devastating February 2023 earthquakes that killed tens of thousands in the country's southeast and in Syria (and that flooded the capital with survivors) have sounded the alarms about Istanbul's own preparation for an inevitable destructive quake. The tragedy has cast a pall around new openings like Galataport, Istanbul's reinvigorated historic harbor. Extending a mile along the Bosphorus Strait near the city's long-coveted Karaköy district, the \$1.7-billion project boasts the world's first-ever underground cruise terminal. More recently, the luxury Peninsula Istanbul opened in February, capping a blazing year for hotel openings that includes the seafront luxury resort JW Marriott Marmara Sea and a dozen others. The city's #10-ranked museums 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.



20 Dublin Ireland

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #6 GDP per Capita
- #13 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 544,000

The storied capital is made for flâneurs and entrepreneurs.

Safe, gregarious and increasingly wealthy, the Celtic Tiger has never been fiercer, ranking #6 globally in our GDP per Capita subcategory and Top 25 for Global 500 firms that call the city home. The magnetism is obvious in places like the Docklands area, known as Silicon Docks, home to big tech and digital players including Google, Meta, Amazon, eBay, Apple and Airbnb. They come for some of the world's lowest corporate taxes and stay for homegrown economic development initiatives like Ireland's Local Enterprise Office, which supports international companies with mentoring, training and financial grants. Several internationally renowned universities (Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and Dublin City University) help the city attract start-ups looking for a smaller, more affordable capital center. U.S. software firm Workday opened its new European headquarters last year, as did Kara Connect, an employee well-being platform from Iceland. 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 #16) does, along with an abundance of concerts, shows and events (Culture ranks #21). Of course, being among the safest capitals on the planet helps, too.



21 Vienna Austria

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #3 Biking
- #11 Google Search

POPULATION

Metro 1,890,000

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

Is there another city today that resonates as the global benchmark for urban livability, sustainability and equity more than the Austrian capital? Yes, it ranks Top 3 in our Walk Score and Biking subcategories, but it also excels in housing: in an era of prohibitive global urban rents, 60% of the city's population resides in subsidized apartments and 25% of homes are owned by the city. And it's tackling the climate emergency: last year, city leaders announced carbon neutrality by 2040, besting the Paris Agreement by a decade. Food security commitments yield over 5,000 acres of fields, vineyards and gardens within city limits. That gives Vienna's current #56 spot in our Restaurants subcategory room to ascend with authentic localism, especially thriving vegetarian spots like Tian, winner of a Michelin Green Star for sustainable gastronomy in 2022. Also helping this green journey are the new, fully automated X-Wagen trains connecting the city's U-Bahn stations, with buildout happening throughout the decade. The best part? The trains are built almost exclusively at the Siemens factory in town. Equally exciting is the massive new Aspern Seestadt urban development that insists residents walk, bike and use public transit on local streets (that are—finally!—named after women).



22 Milan Italy

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Walk Score
- #4 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 4,962,000

A no-nonsense devotion to the finer things makes Italy's northern power a culture and fashion vanguard increasingly sought by a wealthy global class.

The birthplace of Armani, Versace and dozens of other megawatt icons is no longer content with its crown as Europe's fashion and design center. Or even as Italy's financial heart. Milan is driven, as always, by its entrepreneurial hunger and is increasingly fueled by wealthy newcomers lured to the famed good life by government tax breaks (like capping income tax on money made abroad at €100,000 annually). The result is an influx of Brexit (and Russian) capital seeking a home, and the flurry of luxury real estate, hotels and social clubs that such capital inspires. The Ferragamo-owned Lungarno Collection unveiled the Portrait Milano in one of Europe's oldest seminaries, complete with a massive piazza. U.S. networking broker Core Club is opening in a nearby palazzo, its first outside of San Francisco and New York City. This strategic proximity to other European capitals and alpine resorts pulling in the global elite also won the city the 2026 Olympic Winter Games and a rush of development. Residents and visitors keep fit via the city's shared #1 spot globally for Walk Score ranking, and #4 spot in our Biking subcategory.



23 Toronto Canada

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #10 University
- #11 Global 500 Companies

POPULATION

Metro 6,771,000

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

All the buzz you're hearing about North America's second-largest financial center doesn't even come close to doing justice to what's going on in Toronto right now. The city is the welcoming front door to a country on the hunt for new skilled immigrants. Already, half of Toronto's population was born outside of Canada, and the city will blow past 7 million by the time you read this, on its way to trailing only Mexico City and New York in North American populations by the 2070s. Today, its 238 cranes more than quadruple second-place Seattle's count of 51. All that construction is optimizing and streamlining an emergent global destination city, from the reopening of its century-old Massey Hall to the massive new Renzo Piano-designed Ontario Court of Justice that combined six older buildings under one roof. Much-needed downtown green space has been added with Love Park, featuring a heart-shaped pond and built on the site of a former Gardiner Expressway off-ramp with access to the city's lakefront. Coming up, the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts is getting a \$400-million facelift and will be Canada's first carbon-neutral theater upon reopening in 2028.



24 Boston United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 University
- #8 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 4,900,000

America's oldest big city has never been more a part of the national future.

A hub of higher education and home to the 14th-most educated workforce on the planet, Beantown produces a steady stream of new talent to help attract start-ups and established companies alike. Future talent gravitates to Harvard, of course—the top-ranked university in the world—as well as to Boston's density of other world-class universities and colleges. The region bursts with lecture halls, labs and classrooms for the more than 75 institutions of higher learning, energized by the estimated 200,000 postsecondary students creating stories, ideas, solutions and technologies with global influence. No wonder the city ranks #8 globally for GDP per Capita. The buildout of America's newest (oldest) urban destination, buoyed by billions in federal stimulus funds, is also afoot. Hotel inventory is projected to grow by 5,000 new rooms by 2030, fueled by the 1,055-room Omni Boston Hotel at the Seaport on the South Boston Waterfront near the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, and the first Raffles property in North America. The city's cultural clout is also ascendant courtesy of the Fenway Sports Group and Live Nation's new MGM Music Hall at Fenway, a 5,000-seat concert hall that extends the iconic ballpark.



25 Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #39 Facebook Check-ins
- #48 Instagram Hashtags

POPULATION

Metro 1,374,000

Less glitzy than Dubai but equally ambitious in its influence, this is the new cultural capital of the UAE.

Sandstone walls tell tales of Arabian nights, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque sings a symphony of white marble and Islamic motifs, the enigmatic Louvre Abu Dhabi rises proudly on Saadiyat Island—all against the backdrop of opulent hotels, megamalls and ATMs that quite literally dispense bars of gold. From a pearl diving port that housed mangroves and gazelles to an oil-and-gas superpower to a global arts and culture destination, Abu Dhabi has, time and again, reinvented itself in ways big—and bigger. The emirate tops our overall Prosperity index, but its Livability ranking is on the other end of the spectrum (#236)—which means there's a lot of work to do. As part of its growth roadmap for 2023, the emirate aims to invest upwards of \$12 billion into culture and tourism, helping diversify the economy away from oil and drawing in more visitors. This puts Saadiyat Island in the limelight—as host to performances and exhibitions at Manarat Al Saadiyat and Berklee Abu Dhabi, and future home of the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi, the new local Guggenheim, Zayed National Museum and teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi.



26 Budapest Hungary

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #9 Attractions
- #15 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 3,003,000

The Old World beguiles in the Hungarian capital.

Budapest is a buzzy European capital post-pandemic, beloved by digital nomads seeking freedom from more conservative metropolises (and coaxed here with the new White Card remote worker visa). The city, split by the expansive bend of the Danube River, delivers. On the west bank is medieval Buda, hilly and historic; on the east is Pest, modern and bohemian, with its recently revamped City Park surrounded by the bounty of its 29th-ranked Sights & Landmarks. The city celebrated the 150th anniversary of its unification this year with the reopening of the Széchenyi Chain Bridge. The year-long party and investment will improve the already impressive #9 Attractions and #21 Museums rankings, which include the must-see Museum of Fine Arts along with a dozen others, from the Szamos Chocolate Museum to new music and ethnography museums. At night, Budapest's Communist-era urbanity blooms as "ruin bars"—a distinctly Eastern European approach to nightlife (ranked #15 globally). Luxury has also flowered, with the new Matild Palace—the city's first Luxury Collection hotel—opening inside a UNESCO landmark last year, joining newcomer Párisi Udvar Hotel and the Anantara New York Palace reopening in an ornate 1894 stunner.



27 São Paulo Brazil

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #5 Culture
- #6 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 23,086,000

Known for its open-air museums and open-hearted communities, Sampa is on a roller-coaster ride toward urbanization.

Lina Bo Bardi's epoch-defining São Paulo Museum of Art and architect Rino Levi's pyramidal FIESP Cultural Center are just two eye-catching icons of São Paulo—but Brazil's largest city, home to more than 23 million "Paulistanos," draws its cultural identity from global influences as diverse as Japan, Italy, Lebanon and France. This amalgamation creates a day-to-day that is among the most vibrant and multifaceted on earth. Over the years, São Paulo has extended its borders beyond its historical core and into middle-class neighborhoods, growth that's been labeled as gentrification and is drawing attention to fault lines within Brazilian society, rooted in race, class, gender and sexuality. This is a city of the people, as evidenced by its #9 ranking in our overall Lovability index. While Livability is lower, at #27, Prosperity is a distant #161 globally. However, despite facing challenges, the Brazilian economy maintains its resilience. Notably, the first quarter witnessed robust real GDP growth, largely attributed to impressive crop yields. Inflation is on a rapid descent, which is poised to prompt interest rate reductions by Brazil's central bank—meaning brighter days ahead for Sampa.



28 Riyadh Saudi Arabia

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Poverty Rate
- #3 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 7,237,000

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's capital is beginning to pave the way for tourism... and into the global urban conversation.

Seeing the continued success of tourism in neighboring Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Oman, and keen on moving the economy away from 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 third-highest GDP per Capita ranking globally. Not surprisingly, Riyadh also has the lowest poverty rate on the planet. Still, events like Noor Riyadh, a new outdoor lights and art festival (along with Saudi's recent purchase of cultural and sports icons and franchises), offer hope of some freedom of expression. The #76-ranked airport will rise with the 2025 launch of Riyadh Air and plans for \$150 billion in transportation infrastructure by 2030, as well as (potentially) a new airport in the city. This summer, King Khalid International Airport became the MENA region's first to obtain the Welcome Chinese Certification from the Xi regime. 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.



29 Stockholm Sweden

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #2 Labor Force Participation
- #9 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 2,308,000

Ambitious tech and transit investment activate an enterprising and educated citizenry.

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 fresh-water outdoor swimming areas within a bounty of public green space, the cobblestones of Gamla Stan and its 1700s architecture and daring modern design. Throw in a multicultural population (powered by the ninth-most educated citizens of any city) and an epic summer season with near-constant daylight and you've got a coveted hometown. Stockholm built the world's largest open-fiber network in the 1990s, followed a decade or so later by the launch of global hits like Skype, Spotify and Minecraft—earning the city the moniker of “The Unicorn Factory.” More billion-dollar start-ups have launched here than in any place outside of Silicon Valley. A wander through the recently gentrified Södermalm neighborhood, the birthplace of many tech giants, reveals why the city ranks second globally in our Labor Force Participation subcategory this year, with educated, calm citizens creatively solving the world's problems and chasing the payoffs that come with doing so. It ranks Top 20 in our overall Prosperity index as a result.



30 Munich Germany

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #7 Biking
- #8 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 3,017,000

Bavaria's party capital is also a business behemoth—even more so post-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 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 eighth-best convention center on the planet—and its airport is ranked #18 (soon to improve after a \$550-million renovation wraps up by early 2024), ensuring regional and global access to all that Bavarian ingenuity. The Technical University of Munich, which brands itself “the Entrepreneurial University,” impressively ranks in the Top 25 globally. With all that citizen-focused infrastructure and entrepreneurship, Munich ranks #22 in our overall Livability index, and #40 for Prosperity, including #19 for Global 500 headquarters (made up primarily of automakers, media and manufacturing, but being quickly joined by biotech and IT giants). Next year, Apple plans to invest an additional billion dollars into its local operations in the city.



31 Melbourne Australia

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #15 University
- #15 Google Search

POPULATION

Metro 4,721,000

Street art and scenic trails are just the tip of the ice coffee for Australia's second-largest city.

The weather may not always seem promising and there may not be an iconic bridge in sight, but what Melbourne lacks in weather and landmarks it more than makes up for with its food—and coffee—culture, art scene (look out for graffitied laneways like Hosier Lane) and quirky offerings like the Brighton Bathing Boxes and the tiny, adorable St. Kilda penguins. Melbourne is also quintessentially “wine country”—it's home to 21 remarkable wine regions, including the prestigious Yarra Valley, the charming Mornington Peninsula and the rugged Grampians. The city is home to the Australian Open, which draws in hundreds of thousands of tennis enthusiasts to Melbourne Park and its arenas—in 2023, attendance reached a record-breaking 839,192 fans over a two-week stretch. Melbourne is held in high regard by visitors and proud locals (ranking #37 in our overall Lovability index) and is livable, too (#34)—and it is also taking steps to ascend the ranks on the prosperity of its citizens (although #53 globally is already quite commendable). That's where Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 comes in—a response to the challenges of population growth, it drives economic prosperity and livability while protecting Melbourne's environment and heritage.



32 Lisbon Portugal

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #11 Sights & Landmarks
- #15 Tripadvisor Reviews

POPULATION

Metro 3,013,000

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

You're not imagining it: all of your friends are moving to Lisbon. But it's only partially for the 2,799 annual hours of sunshine—the most of any European capital. There's also the famed public transit, walkability and the 125+ miles of bike paths that opened last year (with more on the way) that will improve its #13 global ranking for Biking. To immerse yourself in Lisbon's #16 ranking in our overall Livability index, scale any of the seven hills that provide perches to watch Atlantic sunsets, especially Castelo de São Jorge, up winding ancient alleys in one of Europe's oldest neighborhoods—like, 1,500 years old. Such spots rank Lisbon #19 in our Outdoors subcategory. Newcomers continue to pour in, buoying the ascendant house prices with new remote work visas (the latest requires a monthly salary of \$2,750) while ending overly generous foreign residencies. Temporary bans on Airbnb licenses are attempting to keep the city accessible for residents whose minimum wage is well under \$1,000 per month. Still, new allures like the city's most recent Michelin-starred, Japanese-influenced Kabuki and Kanazawa keep the newcomers flowing in. Go there instead of the new Lisbon Earthquake Experience.



33 Zürich Switzerland

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #8 Labor Force Participation
- #11 Global 500 Companies

POPULATION

Metro 1,937,000

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

Switzerland's financial center (even after the failure of Credit Suisse) 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 21st globally in our overall Prosperity index, powered by industrious citizenry that ranks #8 for Labor Force Participation and #11 for Global 500 headquarters, with major European players like Migros and UBS AG based here. The city's population is also the largest it's been since the halcyon days of the early 1960s. Zürich is statistically lauded like few others these days, ranking third globally—and first in Europe—in Insead Business School's latest Global City Talent Competitiveness Index. ETH Zürich (or Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) ranks #17 in our University subcategory and acts as a vital and reliable pipeline for the city's and nation's envied economic development advantage. All that talent is getting on corporate site selector radars, as evidenced by Microsoft's opening of a new technology center at the Zürich Airport to "deliver immersive industry experiences and deep technical engagement focused on business outcomes to customers," according to the company.



34 Seattle United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #4 University
- #10 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 4,012,000

America's growing tech hub is playing the long game, focusing on inclusive prosperity and urban vibrancy to win the war for talent.

You won't find Seattle among the panicky headlines chronicling the decline of U.S. west coast metropolises. Sure, the Emerald City is battling a burst housing bubble, a homelessness crisis and 20% commercial vacancy rates. But it's also growing by 1% annually, fueled by talent seeking (literally) greener pastures and pulled by the influential titans of industry in town, from Amazon to Starbucks to Zillow. Heat waves in the American South will only accelerate immigration. Q1 2023 employment grew by 4%, powered by a Top 10 global GDP per Capita ranking and a talent pipeline stocked by the omnipresent UDub—the University of Washington—one of the world's top public research universities (ranking #4 in our University subcategory). And that talent benefits from all manner of livability here, from start-up incubation to festivals to urban waterfront restoration. With its #26 ranking for Educational Attainment, is it any wonder Seattle is Top 25 globally for both Global 500 firms that call it home and for the number or start-ups? Its 51 construction cranes top the U.S., indicative of the big plans here and the expansion of everything from hometown icons like Amazon and Microsoft to global brands like Korean luxury hospitality group Lotte Hotels.



35 Sydney Australia

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#16 University
#17 Outdoors

POPULATION

Metro 4,712,000

Sydneysiders have a lot to be proud of—and even more to share with the world.

Sydney unveils a dazzling narrative punctuated by the luminous Opera House, the iconic Harbour Bridge—colloquially known as the “coat hanger”—and sun-drenched beaches, from Bondi to Balmoral and beyond. Here, long, laidback summers melt into mild, mellow winters—the perfect backdrop to explore Sydney’s remarkable blend of vintage and modern, from the colonial-era sandstone buildings of The Rocks to new icons like the Sydney Tower. Today’s Sydney finds itself at a pivotal juncture that looks to infuse renewed vitality into the central business district. The City of Sydney has earmarked millions to breathe life into creative precincts and public events. Simultaneously, the New South Wales government introduced its “24-Hour Economy Strategy,” igniting the resurgence of inner-city vibrancy—nightlife, dining and culture. The city is beloved by Sydneysiders actual and wannabe—evident from its Lovability rank of #29—and it’s focusing on giving more people even more reasons to fall in love with it. The cityscape has blossomed with hundreds of permanent al fresco licenses, events like the acclaimed Laneway Festival are luring people back to the city’s core and grand-scale urban renewal ventures, such as the birth of Tech Central, all promise a radiant future for Sydney’s bustling heart.



36 Doha Qatar

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

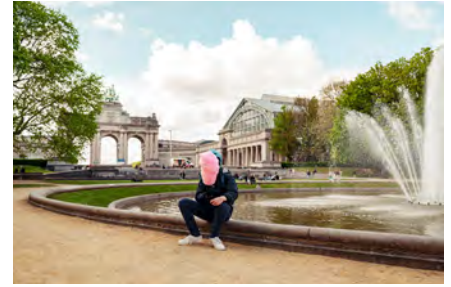
#33 Airport Connectivity
#54 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,886,000

The next Dubai? No, this city is one-of-a-kind in every way.

Qatar’s epic makeover from obscurity to global hot spot is a story for the ages—what began as a fishing and pearl-diving settlement has transformed into a gleaming (and sometimes improbable) vision of the future. High-rises, hotels and malls have replaced desert terrain. Markets like Souq Waqif are now rewriting history, and museums of every genre (including the 18-year labor of love that is the National Museum of Qatar) call out to culture vultures. All of these reflect the bold “Qatar National Vision 2030,” which aims to transform the country into a knowledge-based economy. But this sheen is dulled by reminders of a harrowing human rights record, and investigations into labor conditions and restrictions on civil liberties. As a result, while Doha’s Prosperity ranking is in the Top 10 globally (#9), its Livability and Lovability rankings are nowhere close. Now, in a post-FIFA era, Doha is gearing up to host a six-month expo that will welcome almost three million visitors. No other city in the Middle East is hurtling toward its audacious goals at such breakneck speed... and Doha is only just getting started.



37 Brussels Belgium

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#1 Walk Score (tie)
#14 Airport Connectivity

POPULATION

Metro 3,331,000

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

Understated Brussels boasts breathtaking architecture (especially for Art Nouveau aficionados). Take the Grand Place—surely among the most beautiful squares in the world. 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. (But also in the mix are state-commissioned buildings so ugly that entire social feeds hate on them.) Despite being the EU’s administrative center, one of the city’s most famous landmarks is Manneken Pis, a statue of a naked boy peeing into a fountain—a symbol of locals’ contempt for authority. The wit emanates from vibrant, educated, multiethnic citizenry (Brussels ranks #27 for Educational Attainment). Get local in the Congolese Matonge quarter’s flea markets and street art. Or at the new Working From_ co-working space at the Hoxton Hotel. The city is a gathering spot for conferences and summits of all kinds, which explains its Top 10 spot for Facebook Check-ins, and its Midi station is also the hub for a country with some of the world’s densest rail networks that is poised to expand inter-city and overnight connections in 2024.



38 San Jose United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Number of Start-ups (tie)
- #2 University

POPULATION

Metro 2,025,000

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

As the global heart of innovation and the urban center of Silicon Valley, San Jose trails only San Francisco in our overall Prosperity index in North America, and ranks #6 globally. Leading economically vital subcategories like Number of Start-ups (tied for #1) and Educational Attainment (#4) will have that effect. It's all astonishing, and possible because of San Jose's moat: 2,500 high-tech companies in and around city limits. It's why San Jose doesn't intend to lose its people—or jobs—for any sustained period of time. There's just too much global support to keep a good thing going. The institutional prosperity in the city is perhaps most obvious in the bounty of universities that are performance drivers all their own (including Stanford, trailing only Boston's Harvard in our University category), creating symbiotic integrations with local tech companies and offering access to funding and innovation like few others. Given the optimal conditions of a lauded, coveted school and the on-ramp it provides to jobs in the city, San Jose will continue to stock its talent pipeline for decades. The prospect of high-speed rail links to San Francisco and throughout California will mean improved access to talent.



39 Bangkok Thailand

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #5 Shopping
- #16 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 18,007,000

From stag-party hot spot to Russian haven, Thailand's capital has flipped the script on its global perception.

Everything most of us know about Bangkok has to do with exotic food, illicit massage parlors, beautiful beaches or thrift shopping. Parodied in films like *The Hangover 2* and unjustly reduced to stereotypes, this "City of Angels" is a unique metropolis where spirituality and hedonism coexist. Today, every corner of this city is abuzz with activity—thanks to a surge in visitors from Russia, en route to Phuket. Thousands have come to the city (Thailand has notably not barred inbound flights from Russia), hoping to avoid conscription to fight in Ukraine or just fleeing Russia's self-inflicted misery. All this, against Thailand's own volatile political scenario, like the recent barring of Pita Limjaroenrat from running for prime minister, which led to crippling street demonstrations. That hasn't stopped the city from rising up the ranks, with a global #12 position in our overall Lovability index thanks to its #5 ranking for Shopping and #13 spot for Attractions. The city is also catering to a growing tourist base—a multi-floor cannabis complex will soon open in Chinatown, and 40-plus hotels will open across the capital by 2027. One thing's for sure—the sensory overload that Bangkok has been known for will never cease.



40 Warsaw Poland

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #12 Educational Attainment
- #20 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 3,190,000

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

It's been a decade of steady growth for Poland, today a European economic powerhouse. But Russia's and Nazi Germany's Second World War invasions remain indelible, which is why Warsaw has welcomed more than 250,000 Ukrainian refugees fleeing Russia's latest invasion, swelling its population by almost 20%. Ukrainians who remain post-war will join a population ranked #12 globally for Educational Attainment and #20 for GDP per Capita. With that kind of talent, the city is busy with its long-planned ambitious projects—from the rebuild of the 17th-century Saski Palace destroyed by the Nazis to new museums and Michelin-starred restaurants to the recently opened 1,017-foot Foster + Partners-designed Varso Tower, the EU's tallest building. Warsaw also leads the largest infrastructure project in the Baltics in a century. The Rail Baltica high-speed railway should open in 2026, connecting Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to Poland and the rest of Europe: a 540-mile link from Tallinn to Warsaw with a top speed of 145 miles per hour. Tourism is booming, too, with the city's Attractions ranking #23 and a 4.4% rise in tourism contributing to its GDP in 2022 versus 2019, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council.



41 Copenhagen Denmark

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#22 University

#25 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 1,929,000

One of Europe's most buzzed-about capitals gets real.

Copenhagen's compact, park-filled urban grid, connected by serpentine bike lanes that end at clean, city-sanctioned (finally!) urban swimming spots, earned the world's locked-down attention during the pandemic. Its Top 25-ranked Labor Force Participation on top of all that urban bounty is also impressive. Global attention returned this year, by way of a UNESCO Capital of Architecture designation. Events are going on until 2026, at formal venues like the Danish Architecture Center, but also at places like the waterfront Opera Park, an urban green space designed for climate resilience. Copenhagen's commitment to sustainability is nothing new, of course. It has long invested in its cycling infrastructure, attempting to make 50% of all work and school commutes on bicycles by 2025, as well as helping Denmark reach overall carbon neutrality by 2050. Transit buildup is everywhere, connecting more affordable districts on the city's outskirts, most notably the much-needed Sydhavn connector next year. An international transit link to Malmö, Sweden, is also planned. But nothing will be as daring as the building of Lynetteholm, a 675-acre artificial island off the city's coast, housing 35,000 people while protecting the harbor from rising water. Or so we hope.



42 Taipei Taiwan

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#9 Restaurants

#12 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 9,079,000

From an urban jungle to an *actual* real-life jungle, Taipei's dual landscape reveals a trove of tasty treasures.

Nestled on the distant western fringe of the Pacific Ocean, Taiwan perceives itself as an independent nation, yet its status as such is not acknowledged by Beijing. The birthplace of beloved boba, Mongolian BBQ and Din Tai Fung's Michelin-starred soup dumplings, Taipei reveals a dynamic culinary scene across markets like Shida, traditional rechaos like Baxian Grill and gourmet restaurants like RAW and Mume—all of which help Taipei's restaurants rank #9 globally. It's also where Acer and Asus have their HQs, making it synonymous with affordable electronic goods (validating the city's #12 Shopping rank). Any visit to the city is incomplete without a wander through the Taipei Technology District. Scoring well for both Lovability and Livability in equal measure (#52), Taipei has the distinction of being the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage, and continues to be an inclusive haven for people from more conservative cities. It's also committed to bringing about urban transformations in every aspect of its citizens' lives through the New Taipei City's Climate Action Plan, which focuses on greener buildings, smarter transportations, cleaner energy and more efficient natural resource allocation in its globally coveted semiconductor industries.



43 Austin United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#6 Google Search

#23 University

POPULATION

Metro 2,352,000

The American dream has a new hometown.

The rebellious Texas city—forged by can-do persistence cut with a university town's progressive livability—is now a well-oiled talent-attraction machine. Talk to any entrepreneur leaving Silicon Valley, NYC or Seattle and chances are they've considered Austin. They come for the 24th-most educated citizenry on the planet that's already here, and, given that Austin ranks #6 globally in our Google Search subcategory, they are soon on their way. Since the pandemic, Austin has secured headquarters for giants like Oracle, Tesla, BAE Systems and dozens more, joining incumbents like Samsung USA, which itself is mulling a \$40-billion local investment into 11 manufacturing plants here. Dozens of ambitious tech firms (especially EV and superconductor manufacturers) are moving in monthly. New high-rises like the Waterline (the tallest building in Texas when it opens in 2026), along with Wilson Tower (the largest planned U.S. residential high-rise outside of NYC) will be just two of the biggest trophies on the city's expanding skyline. The #23-ranked University of Texas at Austin is also a talent magnet, focusing on research and a growing skills pipeline to the symbiotic private sector. The local music scene is pretty good, too.



44 Oslo Norway

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #6 Labor Force Participation
- #8 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,279,000

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

No longer overshadowed by Stockholm and Copenhagen, Oslo is proving itself a worthy destination all its own. Its #52 Museums ranking will improve with the recent opening of Munch, a waterfront museum dedicated to the Expressionist painter of *The Scream*. It, along with new districts like Sørenga, comprise the recently unveiled eastern waterfront that makes the entire harbor walkable via a six-mile trail network. Newer still is the downtown National Museum, which replaced several cultural buildings, including the National Gallery. It houses classical and contemporary art and architecture studies and it just became the largest art exhibition space in Scandinavia. Above the city, Rose Castle unveiled a permanent installation of paintings and sculptures that tell the story of Oslo's resilience during the Second World War. No wonder its citizens rank #6 globally for Labor Force Participation, supported by 50-plus start-up hubs helping make Oslo one of Europe's fastest-growing cities. The dozen floating saunas downtown do their part, too. Much-needed housing is aggressively being built in places like Fjord City on industrial port lands. As more prospective residents discover the drivers of Oslo's #33 spot in our overall Livability index, its lore will only grow.



45 Osaka Japan

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #2 Restaurants
- #24 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 15,126,000

From street-eats to side-splitting laughter, Osaka serves up a menu of entertaining delights.

Japan's third-largest city and an economic engine, Osaka has a long history of feeding its millions of inhabitants well, earning the city its motto: *kuidaore*, or "eat till you drop." Affectionately known as *tenka no daidokoro*—the country's kitchen—Osaka is Japan's street food capital, home of takoyaki and okonomiyaki (as well as the birthplace of the infamous sushi conveyor belt). But the city also tickles many a funny bone with an abundance of comedy clubs specializing in *manzai*, a sillier take on the "straight man and wacky guy" comedy routine. A direct result of that beloved foodie culture and those must-see experiences is a decent showing in our Lovability and Prosperity indices, at #40 and #45 respectively—numbers that are poised to rise in the coming years.

And, recently, the government cemented Osaka's place as a hub of entertainment by approving a controversial plan for the country's first casino. To be built on the city's artificial island of Yumeshima, it will be part of a \$12.8-billion resort due to be completed in 2029. And with October's Tourism EXPO Japan Osaka Kansai set to welcome 150,000 visitors, the city aims to captivate the imagination of travelers through a kaleidoscope of sensory and savory experiences.



46 Hong Kong China: Hong Kong SAR

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #12 Restaurants
- #13 Outdoors

POPULATION

Metro 7,450,000

If there ever was a place that embodies the phrase "East meets West," Hong Kong is it.

On any given day in Hong Kong, you could head to a fishing village less than an hour from downtown, lie on a beach, go shopping at a kinetic mall or timeless back-alley market, wind down at a memorable restaurant and then head out to spend the evening among the endless cafés and bars. What's not to like?

Well, plenty, if you ask the locals. Hong Kong is a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China that was, until recently, free to manage its own affairs. But over the past couple of decades, Beijing has chipped away at Hong Kong's freedoms—sparking mass protests in the process. It's what makes the city rank only #49 for its once-enviable Livability, but the pride and passion of the locals for their home makes it all the more lovable (at #19), despite the fraught politics. Still, Hong Kong moves onwards and upwards: Swire Properties, New World Development, Kerry Properties and Hongkong Land all increased their investments, delivering as many as 119 new private housing projects as early as 2024, with a total of 40,000 units. Hong Kong International Airport has also embarked on a series of projects aimed at turning it into an Airport City, including the Sky Bridge, which affords Instagram-ready views out over the airport to the countryside—setting the scene for a memorable stay.



47 Tel Aviv Israel

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#34 Museums
#41 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 2,799,000

Magical, mellow and manic in equal measure, Tel Aviv lives up to its fame as a non-stop city.

Tel Aviv is a choose-your-own-adventure metropolis, attracting history lovers, beach bums and everyone in between. Every district unveils a distinct facet of its character: from the millennia-old allure of Old Jaffa transporting you back in time to the artistic ambience of Neve Tzedek and its meticulously restored 19th-century avenues adorned with exclusive jewelry and high-fashion boutiques (earning the city a #41 rank for Shopping). Meanwhile, the refined cafés at Kikar Hamedina exude sophistication. And let's not forget the wine bars, craft breweries, rooftop lounges, underground clubs and upscale restaurants that line Rothschild Boulevard, Florentin and the port area—all of which contribute to a vibrant nightlife scene (ranked #51 globally). However, Tel Aviv is more than just Israel's "City That Never Sleeps." It's a place in a constant state of change, as evidenced by the city's updated master plan—which proposes dense construction along rail and metro corridors in the form of clusters of towers ranging from 20 to 80 stories. This ambitious development aligns with a forecasted population surge of up to half a million residents by 2025.



48 Athens Greece

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#19 Shopping
#22 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 3,154,000

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

The ancient capital has had a brutal decade: punishing financial crises, wildfires and the pandemic. Which makes this latest rebound particularly impressive, especially when you note that the city's heritage was rarely compromised despite the austerity. The sustained investment is now blooming as jobs trickle back (fueled by global workers and micro start-ups coaxed by relative affordability and all manner of digital nomad visas) and tourist levels return to 2019 levels. They stroll the refreshed Grand Promenade, a 2.5-mile tree-lined and car-free walkway at the foot of the Acropolis that connects the city's major archaeological sites (earning a #27 ranking for Sights & Landmarks). The Athens Olympic Museum in the northern Athenian suburb of Marousi is the nation's newest, highlighting the history of the Olympic Games. Athens' #31 ranking for Museums will improve soon enough. Another new (well, technically renovated) cultural destination is the National Gallery, reopened in 2021 after an eight-year renovation that doubled its size and let in ample natural light to spotlight the European art. Oh, and there are also almost 300 new restaurants and 35 new hotels in town, with the anticipated One&Only Aesthesis opening any month now on a private oceanfront estate.



49 Frankfurt Germany

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#4 Airport Connectivity
#10 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 2,679,000

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. Its airport is one of the world's aviation hubs (#4 globally in our Airport Connectivity subcategory). The city's #10-ranked convention center draws more than 4.5 million visitors annually (pandemic years excepted). In 15 minutes, conventioners arriving at FRA can be 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. A 10-minute Uber serves up historic, pub-sprinkled neighborhoods like Sachsenhausen. The convention center has invested heavily in its "hygiene concept," a typically German system for safely organizing an event in the age of new pathogens. The city has also benefited from London's Brexit uncertainty. J.P. Morgan is moving hundreds of employees from London to Frankfurt (and Paris), along with approximately €200 billion in assets. Financial clout as Germany's business nerve center aside, the city is also becoming a vital global internet exchange point, and a strategic investment for firms requiring secure data communications infrastructure.



50 Vancouver Canada

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#19 University
#31 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 2,460,000

A panorama of ancient forests, totem poles, pan-Asian diaspora and hockey-loving hipsters makes Vancouver a coveted destination.

With its addictive views, mild climate and multiculturalism (it boasts the largest pan-Asian population outside of Asia), Vancouver is widely recognized as one of the most livable cities in the world (our ranking places it at #43 globally). An elemental collision of urban velocity and timeless, serene nature means that epic skiing, mountain biking and hiking is just a half-hour's transit or bike ride north, while the city itself is studded with sandy shorelines, verdant gardens and Canada's urban green-space jewel: Stanley Park. In the next three years, Vancouver will host the Invictus Games, the Grey Cup, the Laver Cup international tennis tournament, the 90th anniversary of the first international Alcoholics Anonymous convention and part of the FIFA World Cup. This all means a lot more travelers coming into the city. But Vancouver isn't equipped for them. In the midst of rising real estate prices, the city is facing another challenge: fewer hotel rooms—a direct result of the government converting hundreds of rooms into social housing during the pandemic. That means the existing hotel rooms and vacation rentals are often too prohibitively priced to allow a new generation to fall in love with this special place.



51 San Diego United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#11 University
#16 Outdoors

POPULATION

Metro 3,286,069

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

You could say that San Diego is where California began. It was here that Spanish colonists established the region's very first mission in 1769. Today, it's one of the fastest-growing cities in the U.S., pulling in residents seeking 263 full and partly sunny days annually, the natural endowment of the #16-ranked Outdoors on the planet and the 23 beaches—70 miles of them—within city limits that make the city synonymous with the lore of SoCal surf culture. Speaking of storytelling, the sun-kissed backdrops coax locals to share the aesthetic bounty online, powering the city to a #35 spot for Tripadvisor Reviews and #38 for Instagram Hashtags. Increasingly, the buzz is on local attractions, with the 3.2-acre, \$87-million Denny Sanford Wildlife Explorers Basecamp finally open and immersing visitors in the sights and sounds of ecosystems around the world, from balmy rainforests to dusty dunes. The city's #60 Museums ranking will improve when the San Diego Museum of Art in iconic Balboa Park unveils its 2026 west wing, courtesy of Foster + Partners, a firm that has built iconic structures at museums around the world.



52 Orlando United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#6 Attractions
#9 Tripadvisor Reviews

POPULATION

Metro 2,691,925

The Mouse's house may be on shaky ground, but an embrace of hometown dynamism shores up local strength.

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 and a #6 spot for Attractions lift Orlando's overall ranking. The city is gaining post-pandemic ground with the newly opened, \$4.2-billion South Terminal Complex at Orlando International Airport, featuring the state's first high-speed rail, called the Brightline, which connects Orlando with West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Miami. Downtown culture is also ascendant with this fall's opening of live music venue Judson's, the fourth indoor performance space at downtown Orlando's Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, joining Steinmetz Hall (opened last year), the Walt Disney Theater and the Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater. The local economic story would've been even better if not for the Florida governor's ongoing culture war with Disney. It cost Orlando a billion-dollar office complex and its estimated 2,000 high-paying jobs earlier this year.



53 Helsinki Finland

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #14 Labor Force Participation
- #36 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 1,551,959

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

Few nations managed the pandemic better than the country named the world's happiest for the sixth year in a row. And if a country is the happiest in the world, its capital city likely is, too. The rapid and effective response of the Finnish government—supporting local businesses, holding virtual info sessions and generally having everyone's back so long as they had each others'—showed citizens what is possible when a society obsesses over considered, accessible urban experiences. As such, Helsinki's massive, purpose-built outdoor seating areas and other similar communal infrastructure projects have largely remained and city leaders continue to generously fund citizen placemaking. It's the kind of sensible urban cohesion you'd expect from a city that boasts some of the lowest rates of poverty in Europe, as well as the 14th-highest rate of Labor Force Participation on the planet. The city's natural bounty continues to expand with new trails, parks and an urban ferry system. Curious visitors are filling new hotels in repurposed spaces like GLO Hotel's restored 1920s bank location near the port, and the Best Western Premier Hotel Katajanokka's space in a converted former prison.



54 Miami United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #7 Instagram Hashtags
- #23 Outdoors

POPULATION

Metro 6,091,747

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

Miami's natural attributes have always captured the world's imagination and crystalized its hedonistic brand. The city ranks #23 globally in our Outdoors subcategory, and, subsequently, #7 for Instagram Hashtags showing off all those natural attributes. But it's Miami's openness to immigrants (and, more recently, the LGBTQIA+ community and Silicon Valley migrants) that has people buzzing. The city has the highest percentage of foreign-born residents in America (which is saying something) and, increasingly, a new distributed workforce continues to arrive to work (and play) from home here. Even with recent tech and crypto meltdowns, Miami ranks an impressive #36 on the planet for start-ups in town, and is hanging in with \$400 million raised by local businesses in Q2 2023, according to Pitchbook. All that talent and down payment money is looking to buy in and housing costs are defying gravity (and interest rates). Residential buildout is everywhere and two luxury projects in particular will change the skyline. The 1,049-foot Waldorf Astoria Hotel and Residences is predicted to be the tallest residential tower south of New York when completed in 2027. The Residences, a 70-story luxury condominium tower, is scheduled to begin construction this year.



55 Buenos Aires Argentina

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #8 Culture
- #12 Museums

POPULATION

Metro 16,710,000

The vivacious "Paris of South America" dances on the brink of economic collapse.

If you crave a taste of European flair in South America, you can't go wrong with Buenos Aires. Its boho attitude—which birthed the tango's intoxicating seduction—can still be felt in La Boca and San Telmo, as well as the Art Deco buildings that line the cobblestone streets. Living up to the city's shared #1 Walk Score ranking, every place is just a stroll away, from the street art along Palermo and Colegiales to the 233-foot Obelisco de Buenos Aires and the internationally acclaimed Teatro Colón. The external wealth and influence here overshadows life in the rest of the country, which is suffering severe economic and social problems that are, in turn, impacting Baires. Even as inflation in Argentina is at 100%—the fourth highest in the world—Buenos Aires' culinary scene is flourishing, with residents rushing to eat their feelings and spend their devaluing pesos. (No wonder the restaurant ranking has risen to #45.) Global visitors are pouring in, too, to feast on the #8-ranked Culture and #12-ranked Museums on the planet. INPROTUR, Argentina's tourism office, reported that more tourists visited from the U.S. and Canada between January and May 2023 than during the same period in any year since 2010.



56 Hamburg Germany

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #21 Labor Force Participation
- #24 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 3,421,692

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 stunning lake and a latticework of canals. Emblematic of this is the \$933-million Elbphilharmonie, a spectacular concert hall that combines 19th-century marine trade warehouses with the crystalline architecture and acoustics of the future. Hamburg's commitment to the arts powers it to #31 in our Culture subcategory. Its nightlife (made famous by the nascent Beatles in the early 1960s) hasn't lost a beat, ranking in the Top 25 globally. Hamburg comes by its opulence and sophistication honestly, with a workforce that ranks #21 for Labor Force Participation. And this being Germany, lower-income residents are not being left behind, evident in the city's signature redevelopment project, HafenCity, set to open in 2026. In Europe's biggest inner-city urban development initiative—which, over more than a decade, is transforming 618 acres of tumble-down docks along the port area into a buzzing shopping and residential area—a third of housing must be subsidized while another third is rental. Ambitious city-building continues in the burbs, too, with an innovative car-free neighborhood being built a 15-minute train ride from the center.



57 Brisbane Australia

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Biking
- #20 University

POPULATION

Metro 2,628,083

Rugged and refined, historical and modern—Brisbane delivers on its first impressions with aplomb.

Australia's third-largest city and the capital of Queensland boasts lush landscapes, a subtropical climate and abundant beaches—all complemented by gleaming skyscrapers and Queensland's first casino in a central business district. Locals couldn't resist: "Brisvegas" is now a nickname. Don't let the glitz fool you, though. Although the Gold Coast, situated 40 miles to the south, is renowned for its surfing, vibrant nightlife and thrilling roller coasters, Brisbane has enough brains to balance its beauty. The Queensland Cultural Centre is a focal point for the arts, with the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art curating buzzy shows. What's more, investment is pouring in, ranging from the colossal \$3.6-billion riverfront casino initiative at Queen's Wharf to the creation of a 1,500-seat glass theater within the dynamic South Bank. With the city anticipated to house an additional 1.5 million residents by 2045, growth is being accelerated by a designation as the host for the 2032 Olympics—the lead-up to which should generate tens of thousands of jobs throughout the construction sector. Consequently, the city's #109 Prosperity rank holds the potential for a dramatic upswing to bring it closer in line with its already healthy #24 Livability ranking.



58 Kuwait Kuwait

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #6 Instagram Hashtags
- #7 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 4,289,000

The Gulf's most contentious city faces political strife and environmental challenges all at once.

Nestled in the historic and often disputed region between Saudi Arabia and Iraq, Kuwait possesses a distinct allure. Once a thriving trade and fishing hub dubbed the "Marseilles of the Gulf," modern Kuwait City is defined by the discovery of oil in the 1930s. Despite sharing the affluence of Gulf compatriots and oil reserves (earning an impressive #10 ranking in our overall Prosperity index) and showcasing an architectural panorama that's both daring and inventive, it diverges in its stance on excess. This divergence might find its roots in the tumultuous years marked by the Iraqi invasion, or more recently by political instability: Kuwait introduced its seventh government in 36 months earlier this year. Local temperatures are forecast to rise by 10 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100, as compared to the 2000s. Kuwait ranks third in the world for carbon footprint—at 25 tons per CO₂ per person annually—trailing only Bahrain and Qatar. However, while counterparts like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have committed to net-zero targets within a few decades, Kuwait's pledge for COP26 is a feeble single-digit reduction by 2035. Given this, is it really surprising that the city languishes at a dismal #253 in our Livability index?



59 Las Vegas United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#4 Culture
#4 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 2,292,476

The revenge city will see you now.

Few cities have been as supercharged by the return of the visitor economy as Las Vegas, which lives and dies by its #1 industry. A visit in 2023, therefore, is a pilgrimage into American urban resilience. After all, this is Vegas, baby, home to the planet's fourth-best Culture and Attractions and the sixth-most Tripadvisor Reviews to document all that fun in the sun. (The city also ranks in the Top 25 globally in our Outdoors subcategory.) More than 23 million tourists arrived here in the first five months of 2023, a 19% increase year over year. Welcoming them are properties like the two-year-old, \$4.3-billion Resorts World Las Vegas, comprising three hotels, the 27,000-square-foot Awana Spa and a 5,000-seat theater. The gilded Vegas construction pipeline still has at least \$15 billion of new investment, even after the completion of the 25-acre Fontainebleau complex, and the \$2-billion, 18,000-seat, 516-foot-in-diameter MSG Sphere, the largest spherical structure in the world. (You've likely seen it on your Insta, especially after U2 christened it this fall.) The city also topped Redfin's web property searches for the first time ever last summer, indicating that smitten tourists want in on the fun full-time.



60 Montreal Canada

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#20 Culture
#29 University

POPULATION

Metro 3,707,000

You're about to hear a lot more about Canada's laidback second city (and North America's most European).

When Harley Finkelstein, president of tech dynamo Shopify, talks about choosing Montreal as his family's new home, he doesn't mince words. "I don't think there's any city in the world that is more entrepreneurial than Montreal," he told local outlet Cult MTL, adding that, "if you see a city with a disproportionate number of artists, musicians and chefs, that's probably a city with great culture." Planned local investment agrees. By late 2024, an innovation hub called Ax-C should open downtown, uniting entrepreneurs, incubators, university researchers, management experts and investors under one roof, like Toronto's MaRS and Paris's Station F. The hope is for it to reignite the downtown in a WFH reality. The city's Top 20 global culture is also doing its part, with the 2025 opening of the massive Espace St-Denis in the Latin Quarter that will encapsulate the historic Théâtre St-Denis and create new performance spaces for the city's smoldering arts scene and #48-ranked restaurants. There's also a genuine effort to make the city more bike and pedestrian friendly, with this summer's \$22-million funding of 53 bike infrastructure projects and the move to close many streets to cars from spring to fall.



61 Glasgow United Kingdom

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#8 Educational Attainment
#36 University

POPULATION

Metro 1,830,710

Music and a pursuit of affordable opportunity keep Glasgow real, even as its reputation soars.

Glasgow powers to its global ranking on the strength of its education, including the planet's eighth-most educated citizenry and its #36-ranked university. People not already here are certainly noticing. Tech start-ups hungry for cheap space and talent are drawn to the city's working-class authenticity over pricier European capitals. What they find is a long legacy of homegrown talent, stoked by the eponymous university founded in 1451, the fourth oldest in the English-speaking world. It counts economist Adam Smith and U.S. founding father James Wilson as alumni. Being a university town, Glasgow performs well in our Nightlife subcategory (#42) and the city roars to prominence at gritty venues like the Sub Club, where live shows dominate. Glasgow was designated the U.K.'s first UNESCO City of Music in 2008, and the need to get back out there makes nights here even more epic of late. Its impressive #72 spot in our Culture subcategory speaks to this year's packed events calendar—ranging from the annual Celtic Connections festival to August's UCI Cycling World Championships, hyped as the largest cycling event in history. Next year's dance card is fuller still.



62 Shanghai China

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #7 Global 500 Companies
- #7 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 24,073,000

China's current commercial nucleus is home to 68 billionaires, and has ambitions for more.

Within the dynamic metropolis of Shanghai, contrasts unfold. On one side of the Huangpu River lies the refined Puxi district, housing the city's Art Deco architectural marvels, the waterfront Bund promenade and traditional Chinese gardens. On the opposing side, the Pudong area showcases its mind-boggling, otherworldly skyscrapers. Shanghai today is a major global hub for everything from finance, business, research, technology and manufacturing to arts and culture. It's also home to the world's busiest container port. Challenges abound, from air pollution to impoverished slums, and a growing vulnerability to rising sea levels. Nevertheless, the city scores high for Livability (#21), while struggling in Prosperity (#139: yes, billionaire residents notwithstanding). Shanghai's vision for tomorrow therefore extends to transforming itself into an innovative hub for future industries, with aspirations to achieve an output value of 500 billion yuan (\$69.7 billion) by 2030. The "Shanghai 2035" plan, approved by state council, envisions a metropolis characterized by innovation, humanity, sustainability and global influence—effectively putting the city on a rising path by focusing on onboarding more citizens into the ever-sprouting skyscrapers they look up at daily (at least when the smog clears).



63 Rio de Janeiro Brazil

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #7 Outdoors
- #11 Facebook Check-ins

POPULATION

Metro 12,592,000

Cidade Maravilhosa is where the party never stops—for locals and for travelers.

Most notably recognized for its extravagant festivities leading up to Carnival, Rio boasts an unmistakable exotic flair: a lifestyle of beach leisure, vibrant nightlife, alluring samba rhythms and a more unhurried way of life. The ever-popular Copacabana and Ipanema beaches cater to sun worshippers, while the city houses numerous free museums and cultural centers for art aficionados (together ranking in the Top 10 in our Culture subcategory). Outside the city, the mountains and Tijuca National Forest beckon adventurous souls, ranking the city #7 for Outdoors. Despite its rougher edges, Rio has left behind its era of widespread crime—even the favelas, the city's brightly painted shantytown communities, now offer an engrossing setting for cultural immersion. The city will continue to be one of the most lovable places in the world—this year it ranks #21—and its local government is making every effort to make it more livable and prosperous, too. The urban renewal is just beginning: Rio envisions itself as a leader in mitigating and adapting to climate change by achieving climate neutrality by 2050. It's also on the road to establishing itself as a circular economy, integrating economic, social and urban-environmental policies for waste management.



64 Auckland New Zealand

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #9 Outdoors
- #29 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 1,446,000

From one coast to another, Auckland is distilled urbanism in a naturally endowed context.

With the reopening of New Zealand to travelers, there's no better time to discover Auckland. In many ways it is New Zealand's most modern city, with its skyscrapers, modern business centers and a downtown packed with reinvigorated clubs and art galleries. But it's also built on top of dormant volcanoes, with most of its charm showcased in pristine beaches and twin harbors facing the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea. It naturally ranks #9 for Outdoors. Commercial Bay stands out as a recent addition that has brought about a revolutionary shift in the retail and hospitality landscape of Auckland's Central Business District. Another highlight is the revitalized Viaduct Harbour, boasting a selection of new high-end hotels. Additionally, the Britomart precinct has undergone a meticulous industrial-to-modern metamorphosis spanning two decades. As a result, Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland's Māori name (meaning "the place desired by many"), is bulging at the seams, and is projected to host nearly half of New Zealand's current population by 2048. Despite the challenges of overcrowding and homelessness, Auckland is moving quickly, taking lessons from other global cities and ranking #45 in our overall Livability category as a result.



65 Atlanta United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #15 Airport Connectivity
- #24 Global 500 Companies

POPULATION

Metro 6,144,970

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.—is increasingly in the national conversation as a new hometown. And people are walking the talk, with almost a quarter of a million relocating to the city over the past two years. Even more are mulling their options, indicated by ATL's #27 Google Search and Top 25 ranking for Instagram Hashtags. Good thing the city—already home to the 24th-most Global 500 headquarters on the planet—is planning for the influx, with bold new 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 on 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 which 80% of the U.S. population resides within a two-hour flight) is renovating, despite already ranking #15 for Airport Connectivity. Its ATL Next project is pumping \$6 billion into modernization.



66 Houston United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #5 Google Search
- #9 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 7,206,841

H-Town is an increasingly coveted hometown for some of the best and brightest on earth. And beyond.

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 to above seven million and the city today is one of America's most ethnically diverse metropolises, with more than 145 languages spoken at home, according to the latest census—about even with New York. No wonder it ranks #27 for Culture and its prism of festivals, from international film to massive Juneteenth celebrations. Next year, the city welcomes America's first Ismaili Center, commissioned by His Highness the Aga Khan. In addition to all its Lovability bonafides (H-Town ranks #38), the fourth-largest city in the U.S. is aiming higher, way higher, with its ongoing evolution as Space City. Its Houston Spaceport is an FAA-licensed urban commercial spaceport offering unprecedented access to a thriving aerospace community. The head start the city has in building a cluster of aerospace companies manufacturing locally is staggering, especially considering that the spaceport can eventually serve as the country's takeoff point for passenger jets capable of flying at supersonic and hypersonic speeds.



67 Busan South Korea

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #8 Poverty Rate
- #34 Instagram Hashtags

POPULATION

Metro 3,814,000

South Korea's summer capital rolls up its sleeves in pursuit of the prestigious World Expo 2030.

The "Miami of South Korea" is a sought-after vacation spot for local and global travelers alike, boasting stunning beaches that are absent in the landlocked capital. Among its must-visit landmarks are the remarkable Shinsegae Centum City Busan, the world's largest department store, and the thrill-inducing Lotte World Adventure Busan, the largest amusement park in Korea. Playing a pivotal role in its economy, the Port of Busan serves as a crucial conduit, linking the nation to the Pacific Ocean and the wider Asia region. As South Korea's primary port (and the fourth-largest container port in the world), it manages approximately 40% of the country's overseas freight, 80% of its container shipments and 40% of its total fishery output. The city's eighth-lowest poverty rate on earth powers its overall #17 Prosperity ranking. Busan isn't stopping there: it's in the running to host World Expo 2030 and is actively cultivating its identity as a cryptocurrency hub. Simultaneously, the city is emerging as a thriving convention center and an emerging "bleisure" (business + leisure) destination. Adding to the intrigue, the upcoming Oceanix floating city prototype, scheduled for completion by 2025, is solidifying Busan's reputation as a noteworthy player in the region.



68 Philadelphia United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#9 University
#35 Culture

POPULATION

Metro 6,228,601

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 Americana, 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 understated urban tapestry houses the planet's #56-ranked Sights & Landmarks, perfect for exploring by foot—a ranking that will only improve with the extensive development of the multiuse Delaware River Trail that links the city's waterfront destinations. Those in need of more regimented history will love some of the top museums in the U.S. (ranked #41), especially with 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. Important exhibits opened this summer and fall, none bigger than Disney100 and SPACE at the Franklin Institute, and Black Founders: The Forten Family of Philadelphia at the Museum of the American Revolution. The city's coveted University of Pennsylvania is an Ivy League icon, ranked #9 globally and keeping the local talent pipeline stocked.



69 Naples Italy

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#4 Outdoors
#5 Sights & Landmarks

POPULATION

Metro 3,298,730

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

Even by European second-city status, Naples is overlooked and underestimated—both by international visitors and by Italy's power centers. The city's three millennia of existence make it one of Europe's oldest—with the accompanying layers of beauty, conflict and lore (*grazie*, Elena Ferrante). Naples ranks in the Top 5 globally in our Outdoors subcategory, buoyed by the city's historic waterfront, nearby beaches and green spaces ranging from swaths of urban parkland to secret public gardens. Napoli also ranks #5 for Sights & Landmarks—its centuries-old Naples Cathedral rivals any other in the sensual feast that is Italy. Like in Rome and Istanbul, strolling here reveals forgotten history on every block. Despite the city's long association with mafia, tourism has doubled over the past decade, and crime has dropped dramatically (being now more confined to the “victim knew the suspect” variety), according to local sources. New international investments (like the W Naples opening next year inside a historic bank building on the kinetic Piazza del Municipio) are finally reaching one of the continent's most beguiling cities. With Tripadvisor Reviews ranking #27 globally, a new high-speed rail link to Rome's Fiumicino airport is increasingly delivering curious first-timers to *la città*.



70 Denver United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#17 Airport Connectivity
#23 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 2,972,567

Light rail, legal pot and ascendant art shine bright.

With its second-city affordability and coveted lifestyle brand at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, Denver is an increasingly wealthy, healthy talent magnet. It ranks in the Top 25 globally for educated citizenry, who ply their trades at large Global 500 firms (ranked #62) ranging from Western Union to Molson Coors Beverage, and at the hundreds of start-ups in the emergent cannabis and burgeoning wellness industries. All that commerce propels the city to #23 for GDP per Capita. 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. The Denver Art Museum is slowly emerging from an extensive, multi-year renovation that includes a new restaurant from award-winning Denver chef Jennifer Jasinski, and the return of the museum's Arts of Africa, Modern and Contemporary Art and Arts of Oceania collections to the public for the first time since construction started in 2016. Investments like the Crush Walls international street art festival and the arrival of the artist collective Meow Wolf are rapidly improving the city's #62 Culture ranking globally.



71 Nashville United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #16 Convention Center
- #34 Culture

POPULATION

Metro 2,013,506

The hospitality and revelry that defined Nashville for decades has finally returned.

The home base for artists like Jack White, Kings of Leon and the Black Keys reclaimed its live-music glory with a full slate of before-times festivals like the CMA Fest and Bonnaroo, as well as new shows and attractions. The buzziest is the duet between the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the historic Ryman Auditorium that created the Rock Hall at the Ryman exhibit celebrating one of America's most revered stages, including stories about Elvis Presley, James Brown, Dolly Parton, the Foo Fighters and dozens more. The 2021 opening of the National Museum of African American Music—a vital center to educate the world, preserve a legacy and celebrate African Americans in creating the American soundtrack—is just one reason why Nashville ranks an impressive #34 in our Culture category. Massive developments like the new home of the Nashville SC Major League Soccer team in Wedgwood-Houston—a 30,500-seat soccer-only facility with double-tiered stands—join the city-building ambition behind the opening of more than a dozen hotels over the next two years and a massive expansion of the city's airport as business returns to the world's #16-ranked convention center.



72 Manchester United Kingdom

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #32 Nightlife
- #33 University

POPULATION

Metro 3,348,274

A renowned university and a strategic location for future-focused business come together to form a historic sense of place.

Manchester's reputation as the engine of English industry drives a global curiosity in the storied city (and its worker-bee icon is a must-buy souvenir). Castlefield, an "Urban Heritage Park," is one portal into history: the city's canal, favored by tourists today, once transported coal into the city's industrial hub. More urban reuse is planned. The University of Manchester is among the highest ranked in Europe (and #33 globally in our rankings), which more than justifies its UNESCO City of Literature designation. The university is home to a dazzling legacy of 25 Nobel laureates, with several still 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 supercharged with this year's £15-million transformation that adds a two-story extension, a new exhibition hall, the Belonging Gallery, the South Asia Gallery and the Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery to the Manchester Museum. Also new is Factory International, a flagship cultural center with exhibits by Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama. No wonder Manchester is in the Top 50 globally for Tripadvisor Reviews.



73 Dallas United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #8 Google Search
- #9 Airport Connectivity

POPULATION

Metro 7,759,615

"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 sloganeering 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 in the Top 20 (#19) on the planet for Global 500 Companies, the city is easy to get to. Dallas Fort Worth International Airport ranks #9, with a planned \$3-billion Terminal F project possibly back on the table, given DFW's rebound of 73.4 million passengers in 2022—an increase of 17% over a busy 2021. The #46 ranking in our Convention Center subcategory will ascend when a new \$2-billion, 2.5-million-square-foot facility is built next to the current one in 2028. The same year should see the trenching of the city's car-worshipping Interstate 345 that cut off Black neighborhoods when it was built in the early 1970s. But Dallas is big on fun and culture, too. This is the home of America's sixth-largest LGBTQIA+ community. On 20 square blocks of mixed-use space, institutions like the Dallas Museum of Art, the Crow Museum of Asian Art, theaters, and symphony and opera venues all power an improving #61 Culture ranking.



74 Liverpool United Kingdom

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #8 Sights & Landmarks
- #21 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 1,533,860

The city that helped win wars and give peace a chance is poised to tell its story again.

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 Trans-Atlantic slave trade, is laid bare at its International Slavery Museum. Its contribution to helping win both world wars with tens of thousands of Liverpudlians enlisting (plus its own strategic location) is outlined in the Western Approaches Museum, housed in a hidden bunker under the city. But it was in its post-war decline that Liverpool made history again when four local teenagers jammed together. Today, The Beatles Story is the world's largest permanent exhibit devoted to the band. Almost as revered is Liverpool FC, the U.K.'s most storied club, and Anfield stadium, their home since 1892. Given these layers of history, the city's #8 ranking for Sights & Landmarks isn't surprising. Expect the city to rise up our future rankings as the new Waterfront Transformation Project reimagines the historic area as part of a 10-year masterplan featuring a pyramidal pavilion for contemplation by architect Asif Khan and artist Theaster Gates.



75 Minneapolis United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #23 Educational Attainment
- #24 Global 500 Companies

POPULATION

Metro 3,690,512

Bold city-building and post-pandemic prosperity beckon.

Minneapolis is now synonymous with George Floyd's murder at the hands of local police, an event that sparked a global movement against systemic racism and police violence. Residents have long advocated for their city, the results of which can be seen in a decade of visionary city-building called the Minneapolis Big Build. The city is in the thick of an unprecedented renaissance, with more than \$1-billion worth of annual construction permits issued in 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's Timberwolves) and improvements to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and Walker Art Center. There are a dozen more projects that have opened or will soon, including the new Water Works Park on the Mississippi riverfront. This, on top of a somewhat surprising #24 ranking for Global 500 Companies—the most per capita of any U.S. metro area—and an ambitious citizenry that ranks #23 globally for Educational Attainment powering a global #26 GDP per Capita ranking, it's no surprise this Midwest magnet lands #32 globally in our overall Prosperity index.



76 Mexico City Mexico

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #13 Museums
- #19 Facebook Check-ins

POPULATION

Metro 21,804,000

An ever-changing megalopolis, Mexico's capital is a study in contrasts.

The *Ciudad de México*, CDMX, is having a major moment—one that's raising its profile on the world stage. Alongside classic street food, culinary virtuosos like Enrique Olvera of Pujol and Jorge Vallejo of Quintonil thrive. The cultural legacy of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera remains indelible, but has been enhanced by the Soumaya and the Museo Jumex, raising the city's global Museums ranking to #13. Not even tequila is immune to progress, having to compete with artisanal mezcal distilleries that spring up on an almost monthly basis. Mexico City is changing—fast—and resident *chilangos* are rushing to keep up with it. They're the ones literally paying the price for the accelerated gentrification of neighborhoods like La Condesa and La Roma Norte—which have sent real estate prices soaring, forcing many to relocate to the outskirts. It's still a highly lovable city though, ranking at #45. In contrast, Prosperity is a lowly #137, with forecasts that the economy will likely slow in step with an expected moderation of growth in the United States. The local hope is that any decline could be tempered by increased investment from U.S. reshoring initiatives and companies relocating to the Latin American country.



77 Minsk Belarus

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Labor Force Participation
- #2 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 2,147,000

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 in the summer of 2020, Russian-backed dictator Alexander Lukashenko “won” another election with apparent overwhelming support. Allegations of rigging (again) sent hundreds of thousands into protests all over the country—but mostly in Minsk. The suppression of dissent by secret masked police, combined with the jailing of opposition leader Maria Kalesnikava (in a Russian penal colony) 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 and most recently a safe harbor for Wagner mercenaries. With the second-most educated citizens globally, 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: it was almost entirely rebuilt after its destruction by the Nazis in WWII via post-war Soviet urban planning, and little has changed since. When Russian authoritarianism eventually crumbles in the region, citizens of Minsk, already tops for Labor Force Participation, are poised to reimagine their city as the next great European capital.



78 Lyon France

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #4 Convention Center
- #16 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 2,280,845

Future-focused and daring, France’s second city is an ancient river metro with big plans.

A Roman city founded more than two millennia ago, Lyon is to be savored nose to tail, past to future, literally and figuratively. If the city’s middling Attractions (#73) and Museums (#137) 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 business with its #4-ranked convention center in the heart of the Renzo Piano-designed Cité Internationale, and is poised to develop its future talent in-house, with the Université de Lyon among the finest in France.



79 Portland United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #12 GDP per Capita
- #30 Google Search

POPULATION

Metro 2,510,696

America’s Left Coast utopia is figuring it out.

Portland’s blissful isolation, ambivalence toward norms and self-sustainability have long made it one of the most earnest cities in the U.S. Portlanders are among the most engaged urbanites on the planet, and have always built it themselves if they couldn’t find anything to their liking—from performance outdoor apparel like Columbia and Nike to hospitality brands like Ace and McMenemy’s. Their #12 global ranking for GDP per Capita, therefore, is no surprise. But the urban utopia of recent decades was ravaged by the pandemic, with homelessness spiking by almost 70%, vehicle theft almost doubling and shootings tripling, all since 2019. The population shrank for the first time in decades in 2021. Portlanders are fighting for the city’s inclusive livability and identity, one that still boasts almost 100 breweries (among the most per capita in the U.S.) and boundary-pushing nightlife and shopping that ranks in the Top 50 globally. 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. A 35-story Ritz-Carlton, the city’s first five-star hotel, is scheduled to open by late 2023.



80 Rotterdam Netherlands

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #3 Labor Force Participation
- #36 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,890,814

Long the austere worker city lost in the shadow of Amsterdam and The Hague, Rotterdam demonstrates the secret power of second cities.

The urban post-war rebuild wasn't exactly equal in the Netherlands. Take Rotterdam: re-engineered to provide Europe with its largest port. Today, it still does. Fittingly, the city was also saddled with the continent's largest red-light district. These days, you can start there, in the once-dingy Katendrecht neighborhood, to witness Rotterdam's current ascent. It's now the city's culinary heart, with its Deliplein Square, an outdoor dining room ringed by restaurants, and the Fenix Food Factory, packed with stalls, a local brewery and workshops in a waterfront warehouse. Watch the city's high-100s Restaurants ranking pop in the coming years. Rotterdam is also Europe's design and architecture hot spot. Places like the Wilhelminakade district, the steamship embarkation point for U.S.-bound Dutch émigrés, is today home to towers designed by Álvaro Siza, Norman Foster and local starchitect Rem Koolhaas. There's even an all-timber floating office building moored nearby. What rising sea levels? Sustainable architecture elsewhere includes the air-filtering Smog Free Tower and the Windwheel (you'll have to see it to believe it, in 2025). With that kind of office space, no wonder the city's workers boast the world's third-highest ranking for Labor Force Participation.



81 Bogotá Colombia

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #23 Facebook Check-ins
- #39 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 10,085,000

Colombia's underrated capital is a bucket-list must for intrepid fashionistas and culturati.

Skyscrapers soar next to sprawling barrios, hipster shops and restaurants make their presence felt in the gritty neighborhoods and a once-overwhelming crime rate is dwindling. This is the new Bogotá: part cosmopolitan city, part couture hub and all charm. The sophisticated center, La Candelaria, welcomes tourists with its cobblestone alleyways (small wonder the city's Walk Score ties for tops among all global cities), colonial buildings, 300-year-old houses and a collection of Baroque and neoclassical churches and cathedrals. But, in recent years, Bogotá has staked its claim in the design world, too, consciously leading a slow fashion movement. It's a natural extension of Bogotanos' artistic identity and complements the country's existing commitment to preserving folkloric handicrafts. It's not just sustainable fashion that the city is aiming for, it's sustainable *everything*. Colombia's capital is aiming for net zero by 2050, and the Séptima Green Corridor initiative aims to better integrate the city's transport network, part of a broader effort to cut climate-changing emissions and pollution. Change is slow, and not without its challenges, but Bogotanos and smitten visitors love the city (it ranks #48 in our overall Lovability index) and are doing the work to raise its ascendant profile on the world stage.



82 Kraków Poland

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

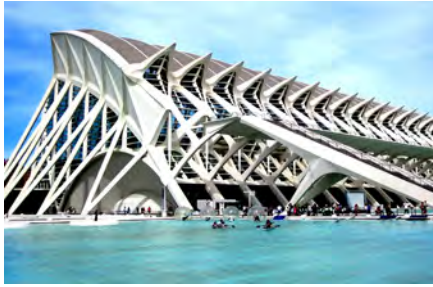
- #6 Biking
- #22 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 1,423,451

Poland's second city (and historic soul) is a walkable trip back in time with an eye on an exciting future.

Few cities in Eastern Europe boast more historical significance than Kraków. Largely spared from Second World War bombing, the city features ancient urban gems ranging from the Wawel Royal Castle perched on a hill in all its Gothic-meets-Renaissance glory to the Cloth Hall, which, built in the 1200s, could vie for Europe's oldest shopping center. It's why the city is increasingly a destination for Europeans looking for new urban holidays, with its #22-ranked Attractions and #32-ranked Museums, soon bolstered by this spring's opening of a new home for the Museum of Contemporary Art overlooking the Vistula River. Like in Warsaw, foreign investment is everywhere. Ryanair recently announced a €750-million expansion of its Kraków operations while Google continues to invest. Volvo Cars should open an entirely new tech hub to drive electrification by the end of 2023, noting the need to beat competitors to Kraków's untapped talent pool. The investment will create an estimated 500 to 600 local jobs. Office and residential investment is also pouring in, with global real estate developer Panattoni, Finland's YIT and Hungarian developer Echo Investment all building this decade. A new priority building bike infrastructure powers Kraków to #6 globally.



83 Valencia Spain

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

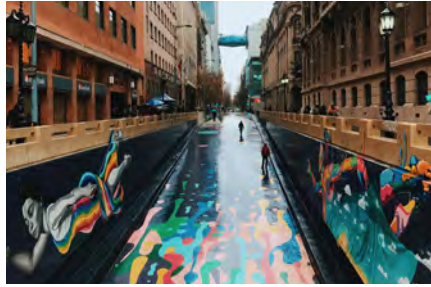
- #1 Walk Score
- #38 Tripadvisor Reviews

POPULATION

Metro 1,768,205

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 the 2022 World Design 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 #19 in our Sights & Landmarks subcategory, Valencia is going all in on sustainability, building on 1,200 acres of carbon-absorbing urban gardens like Jardines del Real/Viveros and the city's 10 miles of European Blue Flag-status beaches. Its new Parque Central unveiled 25 acres of green space and tree canopy on top of a reused rail yard last year. 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 and the site of Europe's largest aquarium, and its new CaixaForum history museum will improve the city's underrated museum reputation.



84 Santiago Chile

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #32 Facebook Check-ins
- #36 Outdoors

POPULATION

Metro 7,171,000

Warm and open in spite of deep challenges, Santiago continues to be cautiously optimistic for the upcoming year.

Located in the middle of a valley, surrounded by mountains and crossed by a river, Santiago—Chile's capital—is probably the only place in the world where you can ski down the Andes at sunrise, then surf in the Pacific by sunset. This eclectic mix of old and new is home to emerging artists, intrepid travelers and hotshot chefs, all looking for inspiration from this elemental landscape. But it's not all sunny. In the previous year, confronted by an unrelenting and historic 13-year drought, Chile took the unprecedented step of introducing a water rationing plan in Santiago, while crime rates, pollution and an evident neglect in public space investments persist. As economic projections for the nation appear somewhat diminished—though there is a glimmer of optimism for a resurgence in 2024—its poverty rate (#171) is abhorrent. Nonetheless, the reopening of China's markets is expected to offer a brief respite, lending a helping hand to the national economy despite mining strikes and the specter of inflation and higher interest rates. Despite these hurdles, there's a positive outlook for the country's hospitality sector, with a moderate influx of new establishments in the pipeline for its capital.



85 Birmingham United Kingdom

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #36 Convention Center
- #42 University

POPULATION

Metro 2,643,000

England's historic industrial heart beats anew with robust infrastructure that fosters a cultural economy.

Birmingham (or "Brum"), the largest city in the West Midlands and second-largest in England, has inspired both industry and imagination throughout the centuries. The area's rich coal and iron deposits fueled its ascent as a vital engine for the British Empire, resulting in some of the fastest urban growth on the planet in the 19th century. At the same time, its economic success provided a ringside opportunity to assess the true cost of all that progress long before such things were questioned. J.R.R. Tolkien grew up here, and the author often cited his childhood adventures in the West Midlands countryside as the inspiration for Middle Earth. No wonder the city ranks #48 in our Sights & Landmarks subcategory. Or that the Birmingham Library is the largest public library in Europe. Fellow Birmingham cultural analysts Black Sabbath shared their own local inspiration with the world a half-century later. Beyond the cultural clout of the region (Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon, is a 40-minute train ride south), the city today is as entrepreneurial as you'd find in the U.K., with business finally back at the #36-ranked convention center and a talent pipeline stocked by it eponymous #42-ranked uni.



86
New Orleans
 United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #18 Nightlife
- #22 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 1,261,726

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

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. They may pale in size but not in intensity compared to others in the world. It’s why the city ranks in the Top 50 globally in our overall Lovability index, which includes Nightlife (#18), Shopping (#23) and Tripadvisor Reviews (#25). But the city works as hard as it plays, ranking #22 in GDP per Capita (even more impressive when you consider the post-Katrina exodus over the past two decades). And things are busy in the Crescent City. The French Quarter may be touristy, but the investment continues with the One11, the area’s first new hotel in 50 years. A new Four Seasons Hotel and Residences opened in the former World Trade Center, followed by local icon and men’s clothing store Rubenstein’s turning their second floor into an eponymous 40-room boutique property. The city’s Top 25 Museums ranking will improve with the Warehouse District’s new Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, along with this summer’s massive new Audubon Aquarium of Americas and Insectarium opening right on the Mississippi adjacent to the French Quarter.



87
Bucharest
 Romania

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #36 GDP per Capita
- #46 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 2,478,618

You’re going to be hearing big things about “Little Paris.”

Bucharest is your suggestion to well-traveled acquaintances who’ve been “everywhere” in Europe. More than three decades after it left the Iron Curtain, Romania’s capital is finally getting the attention it’s sought since the ‘90s. Culturally endowed, historically vital and gastronomically mind-blowing, no wonder the city was just named tops in Europe for digital nomads based on a study by Panache Cruises, driven by its tech infrastructure and affordability. (Apparently, one can live like a count for \$1,500 per month, all in.) The #36 Attractions ranking is demonstrative that the Old World beckons here, despite Soviet-backed dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu’s zealous bulldozing of centuries-old architecture. Must-sees include the Arcul de Triumf, and of course the ornate beer halls that rival those of Vienna. Foreign investment is picking up, inspired by locally born software and robotics company UiPath, which went public with a \$1.3-billion software IPO on the NYSE in 2021, one of the largest in U.S. history. Local culinary talent is also returning, following chefs like Alex Petricean (formerly of Copenhagen’s Noma) and London talent Radu Ionescu. No wonder that work ethic among the citizenry ranks Bucharest at #36 for GDP per Capita and #46 for Labor Force Participation.



88
Leeds
 United Kingdom

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #14 Labor Force Participation
- #38 Walk Score

POPULATION

Metro 2,619,128

As far as U.K. cities go, it’s good to be Leeds.

The U.K.’s fourth-largest city finally gets to reap the fruits of its labor after it lost its European Capital of Culture bid on a post-Brexit technicality in 2017. City leaders applied some Yorkshire pragmatism, got their £10 million bid money matched and launched their own year of culture, called Leeds 2023. January kicked off with concerts, a literary festival and a senior storytelling initiative. The celebration builds on a legacy of cultural programming (ranked #98 globally and sure to improve), powered by a storied nightlife (an impressive #41) supported by six (six!) local universities and a proud ‘90s past of bringing acid house dance music to the world. The ongoing Back to Basics weekly club night, launched in 1991, claims to be Europe’s longest-running, while downtown’s Mojo bar has been making foggy memories since 1996. New spots helping shape the city include the Viaduct Showbar, an LGBTQIA+ hot spot. The deep culture also resonates outdoors, and Roundhay Park, with its 285 hectares of lakes, forests, playgrounds and cafés (and the occasional Rolling Stones, Madonna or U2 show), is one of Europe’s largest urban green spaces.



89 Muscat Oman

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #1 Poverty Rate (tie)
- #5 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 1,332,000

A city frozen in time gets on the fast track to the future.

Nestled snugly between the imposing Hajar Mountains and the graceful expanse of the Gulf of Oman, Muscat emerges as an unequivocal haven for aficionados of history. The Omani capital paints an exquisite tableau of architectural splendor, with iconic landmarks such as the Al Alam Palace and the mosaic-adorned Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque dotting its landscape. Zealously dedicated to the art of preservation, Muscat shows a commitment that extends even to its contemporary skyline, where modern structures showcase traditional domes, arabesque windows and other hallmarks of heritage. While Muscat's reputation as a weekend escape from Dubai might be firmly established, the city's aspirations reach far beyond as it embarks on a transformative journey to becoming a leisure destination. Tourism developments bloom in alignment with Oman Vision 2040, particularly with the opening of the illustrious Jumeirah Muscat Bay, the imminent arrival of the Four Seasons Resort and Private Residences, and the highly anticipated Hotel Indigo in Jebel Akhdar. Of course this latent luxury isn't surprising in a place with one of the lowest poverty rates on the planet and that ranks in the Top 5 for GDP per Capita.



90 Ottawa Canada

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #6 Educational Attainment
- #38 Poverty Rate

POPULATION

Metro 1,085,000

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 bigger-city siblings, Toronto and Montreal. But a national 150th birthday in 2017 brought attention to the citizens (ranking an astonishing #6 globally for Educational Attainment) of a city where one in four is an immigrant. All that brainpower has poured into almost 2,000 knowledge-based businesses—everything from cleantech and life sciences to aerospace. Tens of thousands of new jobs are the result—along with a #38 ranking in global Poverty Rate (the lower the number, the better). In a city with a relatively low cost of living (although house prices are ascending, as with most Canadian cities), that means money to spend on the #59-ranked Attractions, which increasingly (and finally) prioritize Indigenous reconciliation. Mādahòki 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 healing and wellness programs and social enterprise. The city's understated outdoor bounty is also a growing priority, with the newly renovated NCC River House in the Rockcliffe area doing its best Helsinki impression, and Westboro Beach being restored for swimming.



91 Cologne Germany

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #24 Convention Center
- #38 Walk Score

POPULATION

Metro 2,215,509

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 Sights & Landmarks (#55), Culture (#92) and Museums (#128) subcategories. That last one hurts, given the range of museums in town, from Middle Age riches at the Schnütgen, 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 2022. In addition to its overlooked cultural bounty, Cologne is also a regional business powerhouse and destination, powered by its Top 25-ranked convention center and fueled by citizens ranked #55 for Labor Force Participation. It's also home to Lufthansa, traditionally the second-largest airline in Europe, which should help draw new head offices post-pandemic.



92 Charlotte United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#24 Global 500 Companies
#30 Airport

POPULATION

Metro 2,701,046

Affluent, easy to love and bursting with southern charm.

America's Old South is up to new tricks in Charlotte, a global banking powerhouse (the second-most important in the U.S. after New York) and ranked **#24** in our Global 500 Companies subcategory. All that productivity comes with relative housing affordability, and combined with its **#56**-ranked GDP per Capita, it's no wonder the city ranks **#73** globally in our overall Prosperity index. Charlotte is building on the good thing it has going: the already walkable downtown recently extended its east-to-west hybrid streetcar system that runs an impressive four miles over 17 stops. The city is further investing in its economic innovation with massive projects like the medical school campus and an innovation district called The Pearl, funded by Atrium Health and Wake Forest Baptist—26 acres in Midtown that will help position Charlotte as a destination for research and innovation and create thousands of jobs this decade alone. But with 1,000 apartments, a hotel, restaurants and bars, the project will be a destination, too. As will a former Sears department store that reopened last year as the Visual and Performing Arts Center, a new home to dozens of galleries, studios, theaters and classrooms.



93 Calgary Canada

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

#21 Educational Attainment
#31 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 1,319,000

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. The city has long been home to the most Americans per capita in Canada and is increasingly the destination of choice for immigrants. Ranking **#31** globally in our GDP per Capita subcategory, by far the highest in Canada, the city is now slowly emerging from a near decade of economic hardship (its fortunes rise and fall with the price of crude). The pandemic added to the misery, which manifested into high unemployment and sky-high downtown office vacancies. In typical Calgarian pragmatism, rapid residential conversions of office towers are today inspiring places like Manhattan, and the resulting housing affordability is driving a massive population boom as Canada jacks up immigration with chronically low supply in its urban centers. 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 (and engages a curious citizenry ranked **#21** globally for Educational Attainment). A half-dozen new hotels are keeping returning business travelers happy.



94 Nagoya Japan

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

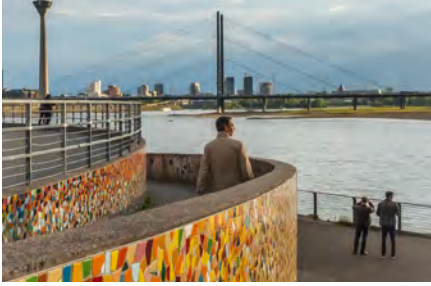
#4 Restaurants
#13 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 9,197,000

Japan's very own "Detroit City" isn't all about automobiles—it's a world of food, fantasy and fabulous shopping.

Completely rebuilt after the bombings of the Second World War, today's Nagoya boasts modern architectural marvels and opulent department stores, leaving no doubt that it ranks among Japan's wealthiest cities. With its rich historical significance as the birthplace of the first Shogun, Minamoto Yoritomo, and the origins of the Three Unifiers—Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu—Nagoya beckons with some of Japan's most underrated must-see attractions. The city ranks **#135** for global Attractions, which speaks to the city's obscure tourist bounty: three Toyota museums (the automotive giant launched here), the SCMaglev and Railway Park museum, which celebrated 150 years of rail travel in the country last year, and a science museum featuring one of the world's largest planetariums. Last year the world's inaugural Studio Ghibli theme park opened as a 200-acre, five-theme ode to several of the studio's most beloved movies. Then, of course, there's the food culture that's helped the city rank **#4** globally for Restaurants, characterized as comfort food that balances sweetness with spices—with miso playing a starring role in any and every dish, and unagi a popular protein. With its **#13**-ranked Labor Force Participation, Nagoya enjoys a high overall Prosperity ranking (**#46**).



95 Düsseldorf Germany

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #20 Biking
- #29 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 6,237,000

A vibrant economy and an inflow of new immigrants balance efficiency and revelry.

Düsseldorf has the special blend that makes an efficient, prosperous city perform for its residents and visitors. Take the Messe Düsseldorf, the city's convention center (ranked #29 globally). Several Global 500 firms are here (#33), attracting residents and placing Düsseldorf at an impressive #44 in Labor Force Participation by its citizenry. New talent is welcomed by an understated multiculturalism (including Germany's largest Japanese community, in the Immermannstrasse area), and the capital of the North Rhine-Westphalia state's plentiful job opportunities. The small but mighty cultural scene (ranked #138 but poised for big things) supports more than 100 galleries, and Joseph Beuys, the sculptor and performance artist, is a local icon almost 40 years after his death. The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen museum is home to important classical and contemporary European art collections, performances and screenings. The architecture at MedienHafen—a waterfront development juxtaposing old with new—boasts buildings and hotels by Frank Gehry, David Chipperfield, Jo Coenen, Steven Holl and Claude Vasconi alongside restored historic warehouses that maintain the industrial port character of the Rhine River shoreline.



96 Hanoi Vietnam

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #6 Outdoors
- #14 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 7,547,000

The political nucleus and the historic heart of fast-growing Vietnam is a growing Asian power to tap into.

Although not as expansive or bustling as Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi offers a plethora of activities and attractions, from urban landmarks (you haven't seen Hanoi unless it's through the glass-bottom terrace of the Lotte Center observation deck), chaotic markets for bargain hunters, awe-inspiring heritage structures like the Imperial Citadel—a UNESCO World Heritage site—and a vibrant nightlife that holds its own charm. However, many of Vietnam's endemic problems persist in the city—government bans on independent labor unions, human rights groups and political parties; police intimidation; restricted movement; arbitrary arrests; unfair trials; and imprisonment are some of the challenges. Small wonder, then, that the city is near the bottom of our list, with Livability at #61 and Prosperity at #184. Still, Vietnam's economy has proven its resilience amid challenges in the global economy—growth is projected at 4.7% in the second half of 2023. What's more, according to the Vietnam News Agency, the Hanoi hospitality market is expected to boom; there are plans for an additional 66 new projects with more than 11,000 hotel rooms. Out of these, 61% are five-star hotels—making the city ready to host the world (and coveted business travel).



97 Gothenburg Sweden

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #25 Biking
- #28 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 629,000

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

Sweden's second city is wrapping up a three-year celebration of its 400th birthday (2021–2023). When you're the second-smallest city by population in our Top 100 (trailing only Dublin), you're allowed. This under-the-radar European city has always done things its own way. There's birthday storytelling, like Gothenburg Stories, the main installation of the city museum, showcasing interviews with 100 locals. There's massive sustainable infrastructure, like the expansion of Jubileumsparken (Centenary Park). There's the Hisingsbron vertical-lift bridge, which rises to accommodate river traffic, allowing 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 rollercoasters in the new Luna Park at Liseberg amusement park. A half-dozen high-profile hotels have opened over the past 18 months, from the Jacy'z skyscraper resort to the 451-room Scandic Göteborg Central and Clarion Hotel the Pier, built by Chinese automotive company Geely (owners of Gothenburg-based Volvo) next to their innovation center, called Uni3. Its citizens boast the #28-ranked Labor Force Participation on the planet, as part of its #60 rank in our overall Prosperity index.



98 Sapporo Japan

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #21 Restaurants
- #27 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 2,028,000

A four-season spot with plenty on offer, Japan's fifth-largest city breaks into our Top 100 in style.

A first-timer on our list, Sapporo is one of Japan's newest and most orderly cities. With little in the way of traditional architecture, it lacks in that unique "Japanese-ness" of places like Tokyo and Kyoto, but makes up for it with opportunities for summer road trips and snowy winter adventures (don't miss the ice sculptures on Susukino and the castles and manga characters made of snow—with stops at the Sapporo Clock Tower and the open-air Historical Village of Hokkaido along the way). Of course, no visit to the city would be complete without stops at the Sapporo Beer Museum and the Asahi brewery, followed by a leisurely karaoke crawl around the bars of Susukino. Sapporo also has plenty of open-air hot-spring baths, or rotenburo—Tsukisamu Onsen, next to the Sapporo Dome stadium, is just one of many—and major department stores, like Daimaru, Mitsukoshi and the Tanukikoji Arcade lining the 1,700-foot underground pedestrian passage. The city's position as an IT and logistics hub is powered by a citizenry ranked #27 for their Labor Force Participation and #41 for Educational Attainment.



99 Bilbao Spain

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #15 Educational Attainment
- #19 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,048,966

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

Bilbao, in the heart of Basque Country in northern Spain, last year celebrated 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. Proudly one of Europe's smaller urban centers, Bilbao revels under the cover of its own relative obscurity and isolation, creating its own magnetism. Sure, the Guggenheim's destination architecture still draws hundreds of thousands annually, but as one of Europe's most welcoming cities (tied for #1 globally for its Walk Score and ranking #19 for its biking infrastructure), Bilbao is building an accessible hometown full of new green spaces and sustainability-minded housing—with other daring new waves of architecture, like Santiago Calatrava's Zubizuri Bridge and Bilbao Airport, and Zaha Hadid's redevelopment of the old port area. Design-forward Bilbao is also emerging as a stealthy, affordable business headquarters, ranking #43 for Global 500 companies in town, including multinational electric utility company Iberdrola and financial giant BBVA. The world is watching this urban dynamo, especially as it hosted the launch of the Tour de France cycling race this past summer in balmy splendor while the rest of Southern Europe sweltered.



100 Baltimore United States

PLACE POWER® HIGHLIGHTS

- #7 University
- #25 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 2,838,327

Baltimore's historic subtleties and educated citizenry make for a captivating hometown tapping its strategic assets.

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 only fallen slightly since. No wonder the city's beguiling urban pockets and dipping crime rates are attracting visitors and curious potential residents seeking unvarnished American urbanism and some of the country's best museums (ranked #71 globally). According to Q4 2022 numbers, the city's downtown is back to 95% of pre-pandemic activity. Good thing, too, because the signature placemaking investment is finally opening in phases in South Baltimore's industrial Warner Street district (since rebranded to The Walk @ Warner Street), with plans for a new entertainment district between M&T Bank Stadium and Horseshoe Casino Baltimore being implemented. The city also boasts the Top 25 most educated residents on the planet, partially the result of Johns Hopkins University, which ranks #7 globally in our University subcategory and is also Baltimore's largest employer.

Ranking cities' Place Power[®] Score, by category

| Rank | City | Country | ● Livability | ● Lovability | ● Prosperity | Population |
|------|---------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 1 | London | United Kingdom | 1 | 1 | 3 | 12,434,823 |
| 2 | Paris | France | 2 | 3 | 14 | 13,114,718 |
| 3 | New York | United States | 6 | 2 | 12 | 19,768,458 |
| 4 | Tokyo | Japan | 3 | 4 | 11 | 37,732,000 |
| 5 | Singapore | Singapore | 17 | 14 | 2 | 5,983,000 |
| 6 | Dubai | United Arab Emirates | 35 | 5 | 4 | 6,404,000 |
| 7 | San Francisco | United States | 20 | 28 | 5 | 4,623,264 |
| 8 | Barcelona | Spain | 10 | 7 | 48 | 5,111,749 |
| 9 | Amsterdam | Netherlands | 5 | 22 | 24 | 2,891,907 |
| 10 | Seoul | South Korea | 26 | 31 | 8 | 23,016,000 |
| 11 | Rome | Italy | 4 | 6 | 150 | 4,303,821 |
| 12 | Prague | Czechia | 12 | 17 | 39 | 2,259,981 |
| 13 | Madrid | Spain | 18 | 10 | 43 | 7,005,286 |
| 14 | Berlin | Germany | 14 | 15 | 38 | 4,979,867 |
| 15 | Los Angeles | United States | 19 | 13 | 30 | 12,997,353 |
| 16 | Chicago | United States | 15 | 16 | 44 | 9,510,390 |
| 17 | Washington | United States | 30 | 23 | 15 | 6,358,652 |
| 18 | Beijing | China | 11 | 78 | 16 | 18,522,000 |
| 19 | Istanbul | Türkiye | 8 | 8 | 181 | 15,636,000 |
| 20 | Dublin | Ireland | 28 | 46 | 22 | 544,107 |
| 21 | Vienna | Austria | 13 | 32 | 72 | 1,890,000 |
| 22 | Milan | Italy | 9 | 24 | 141 | 4,961,743 |
| 23 | Toronto | Canada | 47 | 25 | 25 | 6,771,000 |
| 24 | Boston | United States | 40 | 58 | 18 | 4,899,932 |
| 25 | Abu Dhabi | United Arab Emirates | 236 | 84 | 1 | 1,374,000 |
| 26 | Budapest | Hungary | 41 | 30 | 31 | 3,002,758 |
| 27 | São Paulo | Brazil | 27 | 9 | 161 | 23,086,000 |
| 28 | Riyadh | Saudi Arabia | 140 | 105 | 7 | 7,237,000 |
| 29 | Stockholm | Sweden | 39 | 100 | 20 | 2,308,143 |
| 30 | Munich | Germany | 22 | 61 | 40 | 3,016,834 |
| 31 | Melbourne | Australia | 34 | 37 | 53 | 4,721,000 |
| 32 | Lisbon | Portugal | 16 | 39 | 112 | 3,013,027 |
| 33 | Zürich | Switzerland | 42 | 112 | 21 | 1,936,563 |
| 34 | Seattle | United States | 53 | 53 | 26 | 4,011,553 |
| 35 | Sydney | Australia | 55 | 29 | 51 | 4,712,000 |

| Rank | City | Country | ● Livability | ● Lovability | ● Prosperity | Population |
|------|----------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 36 | Doha | Qatar | 146 | 149 | 9 | 1,886,000 |
| 37 | Brussels | Belgium | 23 | 43 | 81 | 3,331,496 |
| 38 | San Jose | United States | 163 | 214 | 6 | 2,025,000 |
| 39 | Bangkok | Thailand | 46 | 12 | 155 | 18,007,000 |
| 40 | Warsaw | Poland | 54 | 60 | 27 | 3,189,533 |
| 41 | Copenhagen | Denmark | 32 | 80 | 37 | 1,928,612 |
| 42 | Taipei | Taiwan | 52 | 52 | 42 | 9,079,000 |
| 43 | Austin | United States | 60 | 56 | 29 | 2,352,426 |
| 44 | Oslo | Norway | 33 | 134 | 28 | 1,278,827 |
| 45 | Osaka | Japan | 73 | 40 | 45 | 15,126,000 |
| 46 | Hong Kong | China: Hong Kong SAR | 49 | 19 | 138 | 7,450,000 |
| 47 | Tel Aviv | Israel | 86 | 95 | 23 | 2,799,000 |
| 48 | Athens | Greece | 29 | 47 | 107 | 3,154,000 |
| 49 | Frankfurt | Germany | 25 | 97 | 65 | 2,678,557 |
| 50 | Vancouver | Canada | 43 | 68 | 62 | 2,460,000 |
| 51 | San Diego | United States | 81 | 44 | 54 | 3,286,069 |
| 52 | Orlando | United States | 68 | 26 | 101 | 2,691,925 |
| 53 | Helsinki | Finland | 44 | 126 | 36 | 1,551,959 |
| 54 | Miami | United States | 51 | 33 | 113 | 6,091,747 |
| 55 | Buenos Aires | Argentina | 38 | 27 | 149 | 16,710,000 |
| 56 | Hamburg | Germany | 59 | 57 | 66 | 3,421,692 |
| 57 | Brisbane | Australia | 24 | 85 | 109 | 2,628,083 |
| 58 | Kuwait | Kuwait | 253 | 67 | 10 | 4,289,000 |
| 59 | Las Vegas | United States | 154 | 11 | 142 | 2,292,476 |
| 60 | Montreal | Canada | 70 | 50 | 75 | 3,707,000 |
| 61 | Glasgow | United Kingdom | 64 | 89 | 47 | 1,830,710 |
| 62 | Shanghai | China | 21 | 63 | 139 | 24,073,000 |
| 63 | Rio de Janeiro | Brazil | 31 | 21 | 207 | 12,592,000 |
| 64 | Auckland | New Zealand | 45 | 86 | 80 | 1,446,000 |
| 65 | Atlanta | United States | 91 | 51 | 61 | 6,144,970 |
| 66 | Houston | United States | 122 | 38 | 63 | 7,206,841 |
| 67 | Busan | South Korea | 149 | 140 | 17 | 3,814,000 |
| 68 | Philadelphia | United States | 63 | 73 | 74 | 6,228,601 |
| 69 | Naples | Italy | 7 | 34 | 244 | 3,298,730 |
| 70 | Denver | United States | 110 | 83 | 35 | 2,972,567 |

| Rank | City | Country | ● Livability | ● Lovability | ● Prosperity | Population |
|------|-------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 71 | Nashville | United States | 79 | 65 | 69 | 2,013,506 |
| 72 | Manchester | United Kingdom | 56 | 76 | 88 | 3,348,274 |
| 73 | Dallas | United States | 105 | 64 | 52 | 7,759,615 |
| 74 | Liverpool | United Kingdom | 50 | 88 | 97 | 1,533,860 |
| 75 | Minneapolis | United States | 95 | 147 | 32 | 3,690,512 |
| 76 | Mexico City | Mexico | 57 | 45 | 137 | 21,804,000 |
| 77 | Minsk | Belarus | 184 | 133 | 19 | 2,147,000 |
| 78 | Lyon | France | 84 | 94 | 70 | 2,280,845 |
| 79 | Portland | United States | 128 | 79 | 49 | 2,510,696 |
| 80 | Rotterdam | Netherlands | 89 | 178 | 41 | 1,890,814 |
| 81 | Bogotá | Colombia | 88 | 48 | 118 | 10,085,000 |
| 82 | Kraków | Poland | 36 | 66 | 152 | 1,423,451 |
| 83 | Valencia | Spain | 48 | 74 | 134 | 1,768,205 |
| 84 | Santiago | Chile | 71 | 55 | 127 | 7,171,000 |
| 85 | Birmingham | United Kingdom | 69 | 87 | 100 | 2,643,000 |
| 86 | New Orleans | United States | 83 | 49 | 128 | 1,261,726 |
| 87 | Bucharest | Romania | 97 | 93 | 67 | 2,478,618 |
| 88 | Leeds | United Kingdom | 87 | 111 | 71 | 2,619,128 |
| 89 | Muscat | Oman | 220 | 242 | 13 | 1,332,000 |
| 90 | Ottawa | Canada | 116 | 119 | 58 | 1,085,000 |
| 91 | Cologne | Germany | 76 | 108 | 108 | 2,215,509 |
| 92 | Charlotte | United States | 98 | 120 | 73 | 2,701,046 |
| 93 | Calgary | Canada | 182 | 101 | 33 | 1,319,000 |
| 94 | Nagoya | Japan | 144 | 116 | 46 | 9,197,000 |
| 95 | Düsseldorf | Germany | 62 | 166 | 106 | 6,237,000 |
| 96 | Hanoi | Vietnam | 61 | 41 | 184 | 7,547,000 |
| 97 | Gothenburg | Sweden | 104 | 229 | 60 | 629,000 |
| 98 | Sapporo | Japan | 117 | 148 | 68 | 2,028,000 |
| 99 | Bilbao | Spain | 123 | 191 | 56 | 1,048,966 |
| 100 | Baltimore | United States | 112 | 135 | 77 | 2,838,327 |

Want to empower your city or region to be more livable, lovable and prosperous for citizens, investors and talent? Contact Resonance and let's empower your place together at info@resonanceco.com.

Let's empower
your place together.

resonanceco.com
info@resonanceco.com
@resonanceco

New York

175 Varick St., 6th Floor
New York, NY 10014
P +1 646 467 4501

Vancouver

306-1040 Hamilton St.
Vancouver, BC V6B 2R9
P +1 604 681 0804

Montréal

3500 St Jacques St.
Montréal, QC H4C 1H2
P +1 438 888 0161

Singapore

46 Kim Yam Rd., #01-05/06/07
Singapore 239351
P +65 8116 7444

resonance