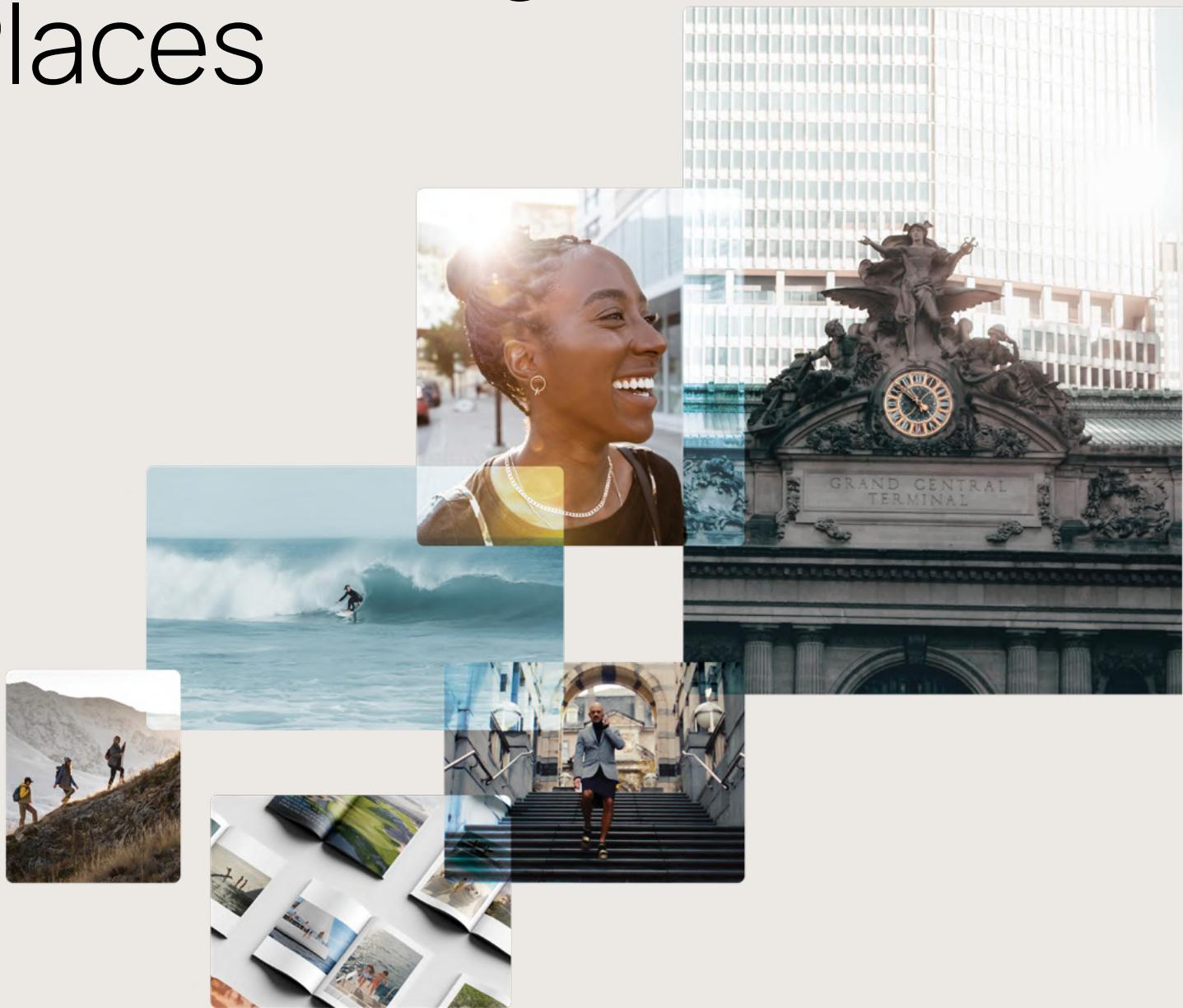


World's Best Cities

The 100 Global Cities
Shaping Tomorrow
The definitive place
power rankings

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

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Welcome to the World's Best Cities in 2025

As leading advisers in place strategy, place branding and place marketing, 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 areas as desirable places to live, visit, or launch and grow a business.



Chris Fair

President & CEO

Resonance Consultancy

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With this year's report, we are honored to celebrate a decade of our Best Cities program, during which it has ascended to become one of the most trusted, cited and recognized global benchmarks of perception and performance for urban economies. It has been covered by thousands of media outlets around the world and cited by urban leaders that include Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo and London Mayor Sadiq Khan. It has served as a playbook for companies and government agencies to help design, develop and promote places large and small around the globe.

It has also evolved as the pandemic changed what we consider to be desirable in a place to live, work or play. We now see a growing alignment in the way citizens, corporations and travelers choose cities as a place to live, visit or invest, and we have added new metrics like bikeability as a result.

This year's World's Best Cities Report is also the first to feature our new partnership with Ipsos to incorporate perception-based data into our rankings—the results of which also demonstrate that the world still very much aspires to live, visit and work in the planet's largest cities. In the rankings that follow, you will see that the results of a survey measuring public perception have been combined with a wide range of factors that have demonstrated moderate to strong correlations with attracting the prime age population demographic (age 25–44), visitor expenditure and/or business formation. This proprietary approach to benchmarking places is called the Place Power™ Score and we use it as the foundational step to help cities and communities of all sizes, all over the world.

Our survey of more than 22,000 people in 30 countries around the world provides new insights on which cities are considered to be the most desirable places to visit, live or work. The incorporation of these perception metrics has had a dramatic effect on the ranking of some cities. While the cities at the top of the list remain largely unchanged due to their strong results both for perception and key performance indicators, the strong global perception of a city like Sydney has helped push it into the Top 10 of our ranking for the first time. On the other hand, negative sentiment towards Hong Kong outside of China has caused that city's ranking to drop significantly this year. With this new data, we can now compare the relative performance and perception of a city to understand whether a city's reputation is warranted or not.

You can learn more about how we evaluate each city in our Methodology section on page 6.

The kudos and validation offered up a few years back by Bloomberg still reflect the core of our 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."

Our goal in producing these reports is to create the most comprehensive and holistic approach available for measuring and benchmarking both the perception and performance of cities. If you'd like to learn more about the rankings and how we use these insights to empower cities to realize their full potential, I'd love to chat. I hope you enjoy our 10th anniversary edition of the World's Best Cities in 2025.

An Evolving Ranking to Reflect a Changing Society

Welcome to the 10th edition of the World's Best Cities Report—the most trusted, cited and recognized global benchmark of perception and performance for urban economies.



Jason McGrath

EVP, Head of U.S. Corporate Reputation, Ipsos
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These past 10 years have seen unprecedented societal change, with an increasing focus on social and environmental responsibility and changing global demographics. It's a decade that has witnessed both the COVID-19 pandemic—which has forever changed when, where and how we work—and the beginning of the Great Wealth Transfer in the U.S., with an estimated \$84 trillion in assets shifting to younger generations.

The pandemic, in particular, has had an extreme impact on cities as global citizens were presented with an opportunity for greater geographic freedom than ever before. The desirability of smaller cities surged while larger cities were left struggling to re-attract talent, invest in infrastructure and services, and manage high commercial vacancy rates.

Yet, despite all of these changes, this year's World's Best Cities Report shows that the future remains bright for cities across the globe. This is the first report to incorporate perception data as a factor in the rankings thanks to the partnership between Resonance, creators of the Best Cities rankings, and Ipsos. Together with Resonance we explored the preferences of more than 22,000 respondents across 30 countries to understand the towns and cities where they would most like to live, most like to visit and believe they would find the best job opportunities. This was accomplished with three open-ended questions where respondents could identify the towns and cities that they prefer:

1. Thinking about places across the globe, including small towns and large cities, what are the Top 3 towns or cities you would most like to live in someday?
2. Thinking about places across the globe, including small towns and large cities, what are the Top 3 towns or cities you would most like to visit in the next 12 to 24 months?
3. Thinking about places across the globe, including small towns and large cities, what three towns or cities do you believe currently offer the best job opportunities?

The resulting data reflects significant diversity in the responses, with more than 750 towns and cities mentioned by 10 respondents or more, and thousands more mentioned by fewer than 10 respondents. Despite the news stories touting the decline of large cities since the start of the pandemic, economic and demographic data actually shows that many cities around the globe are rebounding.

This is also evident in the results of these research questions, where large cities are most frequently cited as the places where people want to live, want to visit and believe the best job opportunities are available.

This data provides a trove of insights to explore, including demographic analysis to understand the destinations that various generations prefer, whether respondents in certain geographic regions prefer domestic destinations or global destinations, and a variety of other factors such as preferences based on educational attainment or household income.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the results in greater detail and to understand how your destination performs with regard to perception and performance. Please don't hesitate to reach out to connect and discuss how Ipsos can help you better understand your target stakeholder audiences and their expectations of your place.

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Our Methodology

How we ranked the world's best cities for 2025

In order to rank the performance and perception of the World's Best Cities for 2025, Resonance analyzed the principal cities of metropolitan statistical areas with populations of more than 1,000,000 (according to the population sources we use, which span Demographia, Eurostat, the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey). We determined the Top 100 cities by using a combination of core statistics and user-generated data from online sources such as Google, Tripadvisor and Instagram to measure quality of place when it comes to experiential factors.

This blend of data led to the creation of Resonance's proprietary Place Power™ Score, the foundation of all of our Best Cities rankings.

So how does Resonance choose the metrics to effectively measure an urban region's performance relative to its competitors?

While many factors shape our perception of urban regions as desirable places to live, work or visit, Resonance's proprietary Place Power™ Score rankings are focused on the shared factors that demonstrate moderate to strong correlations with the performance of urban regions when it comes to attracting prime age population (age 25-44), visitor expenditure and/or business formation.

Based on our ongoing analysis, these factors are an eclectic mix that ranges from the number of Fortune 500 companies and ease of airport connectivity to the number of nightlife and outdoor recreation experiences and the volume of check-ins on Facebook and mentions on Instagram. These factors can change and evolve over time, and so we've continually updated our methodology to reflect these shifts. Case in point: we've added factors like "Price-to-Income Ratio" (to track affordability) and Healthcare System Index (to measure a city's concern for the well-being of residents) to this year's index. And we've 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 and 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.

As part of our new partnership with Ipsos (see page 4) we combined the performance data of the subcategories that comprise our overall Livability, Lovability and Prosperity indices with perception data reflecting the opinions and preferences of more than 22,000 respondents

across 30 countries to understand the towns and cities where they would most like to live someday, where they would most like to visit, and where they believe they would find the best job opportunities.

This was accomplished with three open-ended questions where respondents could identify the towns and cities that they prefer. We asked them, when thinking about places across the globe, including small towns and large cities:

1. What are the Top 3 towns or cities you would most like to live in someday?
2. What are the Top 3 towns or cities you would most like to visit in the next 12 to 24 months?
3. What 3 towns or cities do you believe currently offer the best job opportunities?

This open-ended question methodology enabled us to capture the destinations that are top-of-mind to survey participants rather than restricting them to a predetermined list of cities.

The responses to these questions were aggregated and coded to benchmark the perception equivalent of our performance results, creating a true balance across our three overall indices of Lovability, Livability and Prosperity.

Note: All Russian cities continue to be omitted from our annual ranking. Resonance made this decision in 2022 after the country's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

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 much of an urban area is dedicated to green space, how bike-friendly its streets are and how many quality parks, sights, neighborhoods and landmarks are recommended online by locals and visitors. We also look at key socioeconomic factors such as the affordability of monthly rents and the cost of living—factors that not only retain talent, but also attract it (and, by extension, attract skill-seeking companies as well). Livability also looks at the natural attributes of a region such as the amount of tree cover and the quality of the air residents and visitors breathe.

LIVABILITY METRICS

Biking

The measure of whether a location is good for biking based on the density of mapped bike pathways, per 100,000 residents in a city. (Bikemap)

Sights & Landmarks

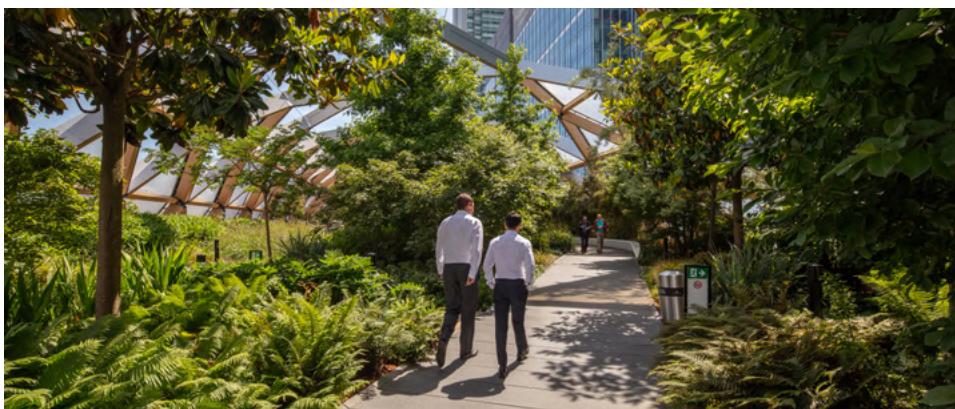
The number of sights and landmarks rated above four stars, as listed on Tripadvisor (Tripadvisor.com)

Price-to-Income Ratio

The affordability of housing by way of a ratio of median apartment prices to the median family's disposable income, showing how many years of income would be needed to buy an apartment. The ratio is lower when apartments are more affordable. This ratio is calculated using a net disposable family income, estimated at 1.5 times the average net salary (based on an assumption that 50% of the workforce are women), a standard apartment size of 969 square feet, and the average price per square foot in both cities and suburban areas. (Numbeo)

Rent

The typical cost of renting a one-bedroom apartment in a city center. (Numbeo)



Crossrail Place Roof Garden, London

Air Quality

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a measure of air pollutant concentrations in ambient air and their associated health risks. As the AQI increases, this denotes a higher level of air pollution and, as such, a higher percentage of the population is likely to experience adverse health effects in the area.

The air quality index ranges from 0 to 500. Good air quality ranges from 0 to 50, while measurements over 300 are considered hazardous. (IQAir)

Healthcare System Index

The perceived quality of healthcare systems by evaluating factors like healthcare professionals, equipment and costs. Data is sourced from website visitor surveys that scored the quality of a healthcare system from -2 (strongly negative) to +2 (strongly positive). Each city's score is presented on a 0 to 100 scale. (Numbeo)

Tree Cover

This indicator measures the share of an urban area's land that is covered with vegetation that is at least 16 feet in height and with canopy cover that is greater than 50%. (OECD)

Parks & Recreation

This indicator measures the number of nature, parks, and outdoor activities rated above 4 stars, as listed on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Perception

Ranking in a survey of 22,000+ international survey respondents from 30 countries about the Top 3 cities and towns that they would most like to live in someday. (Ipsos)

Lovability

Lovability speaks to the relative vibrancy and quality of place of a city relative to its competitive set.

For almost a decade, Resonance research has shown that the more vibrant a city or region is in terms of its culture, dining and nightlife, the more visitors, young professionals and large corporations it attracts. A region's lovability also inspires residents, businesses and visitors to promote a region to the world more effectively and cost-efficiently than destination marketers can ever hope to. 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 like Tripadvisor, Instagram and Facebook, and sought out on Google.

LOVABILITY METRICS

Nightlife

The number of local nightlife experiences rated above 4 stars, as listed on Tripadvisor, including bars, pubs and clubs. (Tripadvisor.com)

Restaurants

The total number of restaurants within a city, as listed on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Shopping

The number of local shopping experiences rated above 4 stars, as listed on Tripadvisor, including shopping malls, farmers markets, department stores, airport shops and factory outlets in an area rated above 4 stars. (Tripadvisor.com)

Culture

The number of concerts, shows and events rated above 4 stars, as listed on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Attractions

The number of zoos, aquariums, amusement parks and gaming attractions rated above 4 stars, as listed on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Facebook Check-ins

The total number of check-ins posted by residents and tourists in a region. (Facebook.com)

Tripadvisor Reviews

The total number of reviews a destination has on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Instagram Hashtags

The total number of posts with hashtags that include the name of a region. (Instagram.com)

Google Trends

Popularity on Google Trends in the past 12 months, relative to the other cities analyzed, choosing the larger total of the city (for example, "Miami") or the city and region ("Miami, Florida"). (Trends.Google.com)

Museums

The number of museums rated above 4 stars, as listed on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Perception

Ranking in a survey of 22,000+ international survey respondents from 30 countries about the Top 3 cities and towns that they would most like to visit in the next 12 to 24 months. (Ipsos)



Ipanema Beach, Rio de Janeiro

Prosperity

Human capital is becoming a region'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 region to the next, Resonance not only measures both the educational attainment level of the city's population and the percentage of people participating in the labor force, but also the support a city provides for start-ups and how the innovation ecosystem is distributed across each city.

Wealth and prosperity are also evaluated by core statistics like business infrastructure, such as the region's airport connectivity to other destinations, and the number of regional universities and technical colleges (and their rankings) that fill the local talent pipeline.

PROSPERITY METRICS

Educational Attainment

The proportion of the population in a city that has at least a bachelor's degree. (Various: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, national statistics offices)

Labor Force Participation

A city's active workforce, defined as the percentage of all people of working age who are employed or are actively seeking work. (Various: OECD, World Bank, national statistics offices)

Fortune 500

The number of companies in a city that are ranked on the Fortune 500 list. (Fortune.com/Global500)

University

The score of the highest-ranking university in a city as measured by U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings. (U.S. News)

Airport Connectivity

The number of direct flight destinations from all commercial airports in the region. (Flightsfrom.com)

Convention Center

Size of the largest convention center in a city. (10times.com and convention center websites)

GDP per Capita

The GDP per capita in a region in U.S. dollars. (McKinsey & Company)

Business Ecosystem

The quantity, quality and overall state of a city's business environment that contributes to the success of start-ups in a city. (StartupBlink)

Unemployment Rate

The rate of unemployment in a region. (Various: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year, World Bank, national statistics offices)

Poverty Rate

The percentage of the population living below the poverty line in a city. (Various: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year, Eurostat, World Bank, national statistics offices)

Perception

Ranking in a survey of 22,000+ international survey respondents from 30 countries about the Top 3 cities and towns that they think have the best job opportunities. (Ipsos)

The world's Top 100 cities, in detail

Our global 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 of all sizes 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 Bilbao and Detroit) but also suburbs that offer better affordability and space while still allowing vital physical connections to the 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, the world's cities—from Austin to Zurich—are forging the resilient, future-focused economies the world needs. After far 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 region and country, as well as the planet.

The 100 cities that we profile over the next 50 pages will be, in each of their distinct ways, at the heart of this renewal for the balance of this decade and beyond.

1

London

United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 1 Lovability
- 2 Prosperity
- 3 Livability

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Nightlife
- 1 Airport Connectivity

POPULATION

Metro 12,435,000



Square Mile

London, the storied metropolis, once again reigns supreme in the 2025 World's Best Cities ranking, securing the top spot for the 10th year in a row. Navigating the complexities of a post-Brexit era, geopolitical uncertainties and economic challenges, London's resilient spirit and unmatched global appeal have solidified its place at the pinnacle of our annual ranking. It is the only city in this year's ranking to capture the top spot in an impressive seven of our 28 subcategories, from Nightlife and Museums to Instagram Hashtags.

As one of the most desirable destinations for students, foreign investors, tourists and business leaders, London boasts a magnetic draw for people from all walks of life, ranking on top of our overall Lovability index this year. Not surprisingly, the city ranked third globally for international traveler spending in 2023, taking in more than US\$16.5 billion and surpassing every other European city. The soft pound played a role in making bucket-list trips more affordable, while pent-up demand following pandemic restrictions propelled the city's recovery as a premier travel destination. In fact, Heathrow Airport reported its highest-ever September traffic in 2023, with more than seven million passengers arriving, exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

The city's focus on improving infrastructure is evident with the unveiling of Gatwick Airport's US\$305-million upgrade, including the construction of a second concourse and enhanced customer service amenities. The city's transportation network is also undergoing transformative developments, as evidenced by the new metro stops on the Elizabeth line, one of the most ambitious projects to boost connectivity across the capital. Trains now run directly from Reading and Heathrow to Abbey Wood, and from Shenfield to Paddington, with the newly opened Bond Street station adding to the West End's allure. The Elizabeth line's new routes have made moving across the city faster and more efficient than ever.

In 2024, London's commitment to placemaking was underscored by the highly anticipated building of the Camden Highline. The mile-long greenway, inspired by New York's iconic High Line, will breathe new life into an unused train track when it opens in 2027, offering a unique elevated space for walking, biking and gathering. Such urban renewal projects reflect London's dedication to enhancing quality of life for both residents and visitors.

With an eye on sustainability and growth, Mayor Sadiq Khan was re-elected for a landmark third term in early May 2024, campaigning on promises of a "fairer, safer, greener" London. He pledged to build 40,000 new council homes by the end of the decade and lead the city toward net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. The mayor's commitment to green initiatives, along with his focus on reducing air pollution and tackling climate change, has strengthened London's reputation as a forward-thinking global capital. His vision of a "moment of maximum opportunity" highlights the potential synergy between a Labour mayor and a Labour government working together to deliver a prosperous future for Londoners.

London's foreign direct investment story is equally compelling. The city ranks #2 in Prosperity, maintaining its position as a top choice for international businesses and investors. In a notable endorsement of London's global leadership in AI



Old War Office

and technology, Salesforce—the world's leading producer of AI CRM software—chose London for its first AI Center, located in the city's Blue Fin building. Salesforce's commitment to investing US\$4 billion in AI innovation and growth over the next five years underscores the city's thriving tech ecosystem, supported by a highly educated workforce (ranking #5 globally for Educational Attainment) and a robust business environment (#3 in our Business Ecosystem subcategory).

Complementing these developments is a surge of U.S. investment in London real estate. Between January and March 2024, American investors poured US\$3.66 billion into UK commercial property, marking a 50% increase over the same period in the previous year. Almost US\$2 billion of that has been allocated to hotels and offices in London, which remains one of the world's most dynamic and liquid commercial property markets. According to data from BNP Paribas, this represents one of the highest quarterly investments from U.S. funds in the past decade. Among the high-profile transactions, MCR, an American hotelier, purchased the BT Tower for US\$335.5 million, with plans to transform it into a luxury hotel. New York hedge fund Elliott acquired restaurants, bars and apartments from the Langham Estate for US\$366 million, while Miami-based Starwood Capital made a notable entry with its US\$976-million purchase of 10 Radisson Blu hotels from the Edwardian Group. The reason? London is

back in the office. While office vacancy rates in the U.S. have climbed to about 14%, London's office vacancy rate remains comparatively low, at just over 9%. The city's real estate resilience is further buoyed by ambitious developments like the Canary Wharf 3.0 project, aimed at reinventing the area with mixed-use developments and a 753,000-square-foot life sciences center, set to be the largest commercial lab in Europe.

No wonder the City of London Corporation recently opened offices in New York and Washington, D.C., to build stronger financial ties to the U.S. and secure billions in leases. London & Partners, the city's promotional and economic development arm, works alongside by offering financial incentives, including the lowest corporate tax rate among G7 countries and a wide array of research and development tax credits. The strategy, as noted above, is off to a good start.

London's ability to attract investment is matched by its commitment to fostering innovation and economic growth. Salesforce Ventures, as part of its UK focus, has already invested over \$200 million in UK companies, including ElevenLabs (an AI text-to-speech pioneer) and AutogenAI, a world leader in AI bid and proposal writing. These investments underscore London's growing influence in technology and AI, as the city moves up the ranks to become a global leader in climate-

tech investment as well. "London continues to set the bar for what a truly great city should be," says Laura Citron OBE, CEO of London & Partners, the UK capital's growth agency. "Our iconic attractions, world-class financial sector, and fast-growing tech industry are proof of our city's strength. But it's the diversity of our people and ideas that drives the innovation, opportunities, and progress that shape our future. No city embodies this quite like London."

London's thriving hospitality sector is yet another driver of its global allure. Recent hotel openings showcase the city's ability to blend historic charm with contemporary luxury. The Art'otel, located in the newly redeveloped Battersea Power Station, features art-inspired rooms overlooking the Thames and places guests in the midst of a buzzing commercial and cultural hub. OWO Raffles in Whitehall, housed in the iconic Old War Office building, marks the first time this neo-Baroque landmark has been open to the public. Other luxury hotels like Mandarin Oriental Mayfair, Six Senses and PPHE Hotel Group's subterranean hotel near Victoria station bring new experiences to visitors and cement London's place as a world leader in hospitality.

Meanwhile, the Peninsula London, inspired by the classic cars of Sir Michael Kadoorie, displays an exceptional level of elegance with a rotating selection of vintage vehicles in its restaurant lobby,

“London continues to set the bar for what a truly great city should be. Our iconic attractions, world-class financial sector, and fast-growing tech industry are proof of our city’s strength. But it’s the diversity of our people and ideas that drives the innovation, opportunities, and progress that shape our future. No city embodies this quite like London.”

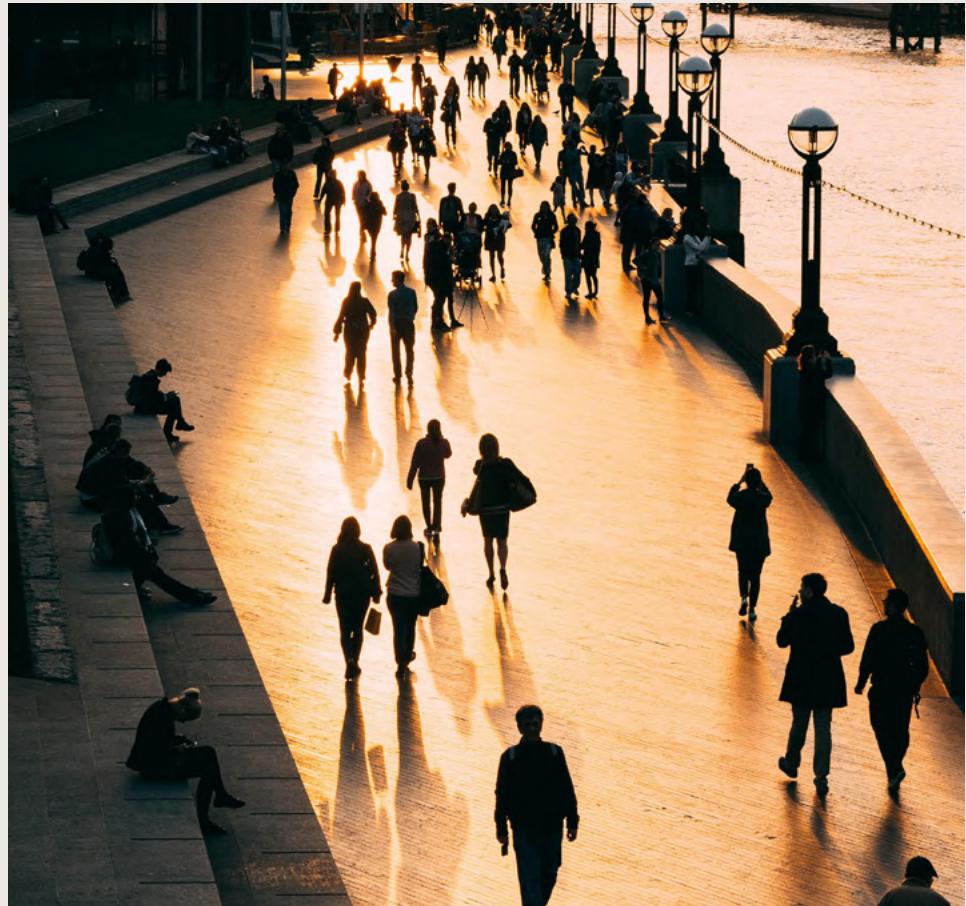
Laura Citron OBE

CEO of London & Partners

a nod to the city's historical ties to automotive craftsmanship and luxury. This unique approach to hotel design reflects London's ever-evolving cultural and hospitality landscape, offering visitors memorable experiences that honor tradition while embracing modernity.

As the city continues to expand its cultural offerings, improve infrastructure, and attract talent and investment, London remains a beacon of global leadership. By 2030, the city's financial district is expected to add 11 new towers, reshaping the Square Mile into a more structured skyline reminiscent of Manhattan's grid. The City of London Corporation's ambitious plans have already seen approval for over 5.3 million square feet of new office space, with an equal amount under consideration—equivalent to 70 soccer fields, doubling once all projects receive final approval.

The synergy between London's historical legacy and its modern ambitions positions it as not just a city of the present, but a metropolis of the future. With ongoing investments in connectivity, sustainability and innovation, and a blend of culture, economic power and hospitality, London sets the global standard for what a world-class city should be—resilient, innovative and eternally captivating. And with a raging club scene, of course.



Southbank

2

New York

United States

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 1 Prosperity
- 2 Livability
- 3 Lovability

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Business Ecosystem
- 2 Culture

POPULATION

Metro 19,909,000



Times Square

New York City, the perpetual heartbeat of America, may trail London, but it passes Paris in our rankings this year and comes out on top among U.S. cities.

The Big Apple epitomizes urban recovery, marked by a whirlwind of new shows, hotels, cultural spaces and transformative developments—backed by record real estate prices and an influx of both visitors and new residents. With a rebound as impressive as its skyline, NYC's resurgence is nothing short of remarkable, embodying the city's indomitable spirit.

The city's ability to bounce back from the depths of the pandemic is nothing short of extraordinary. Just a few years ago, skeptics were quick to proclaim the end of NYC's dynamic urban experiment as offices emptied and tourism plummeted. But in a powerful resurgence, Manhattan rents have now skyrocketed to all-time highs, with the median rent currently in the mid-US\$5,000s per month, reflecting the demand for prime living spaces. This upturn in real estate not only signifies the city's recovery but highlights its enduring allure as the place to be for both domestic and international residents.

Tourism, a cornerstone of NYC's global reputation and economy, has come roaring back, reinforcing the city's position as a must-visit destination. In 2023, an estimated 62.2 million visitors explored the city (11.6 million international and 50.6 million domestic), according to New York City Tourism + Conventions. This marks a phenomenal recovery from the mere 33 million who visited in 2021, with

projections reaching 64.5 million visitors in 2024. These numbers are not just a testament to the city's successful rebound but underscore its thriving cultural and entertainment scene (ranking #2 globally), with world-class Broadway shows, restaurants, sporting events and museums (for which it ranks #6).

Nancy Mammana, chief marketing officer and interim CEO of New York City Tourism + Conventions, affirms, "We're so pleased that New York City has been recognized on Resonance's 2025 World's Best Cities ranking. Our destination continues to shine with only-in-NYC experiences across the five boroughs, including Broadway, world-class dining, major sporting events, dynamic arts and culture offerings, rich and diverse history, and more." By the end of 2024, visitor numbers are expected to recover to 97% of their pre-pandemic record highs, contributing US\$74 billion in economic impact.

With tourism on the rise, the focus has shifted to ensuring that NYC's transportation infrastructure can handle the influx of travelers. Significant renovations have been completed at all three major airports: LaGuardia, Newark Liberty International and John F. Kennedy International. At LaGuardia Airport, the new Terminal B—with 35 gates and a sleek FAO Schwarz—has transformed the passenger experience. The addition of



The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Terminal C in 2023 solidified the airport's standing, garnering international accolades. Newark Liberty International's revamped Terminal A boasts 33 new gates, and a congestion-easing elevated train system is currently under construction to streamline travel. The most ambitious project, however, is the ongoing US\$19-billion transformation of JFK Airport, where the upcoming US\$9.5-billion New Terminal One is slated to be the airport's largest. Expected to open in 2026, the terminal will offer over 300,000 square feet of dining, retail and lounges that reflect NYC's boroughs and celebrate the city's culture. The city's #6 ranking for Airport Connectivity will only improve.

Meanwhile, Moynihan Train Hall, a stunning 17-track expansion of Penn Station, brings a modern touch to the city's rail transit network, evoking the design and efficiency that would make a European commuter proud.

Housing global travelers is another matter altogether, particularly in light of the new and controversial Local Law 18 (introduced by Mayor Eric Adams who is currently under investigation for corruption), which imposes stricter regulations on short-term rentals. This has led to an 80% decrease in short-term listings, impacting platforms like Airbnb and causing hotel rates to rise. New hotels have cropped up across the city, adding thousands of rooms and options for travelers seeking diverse

accommodations (and willing to pay for them). Standouts include The Ritz-Carlton New York, NoMad, with its panoramic city views from José Andrés' Nubeluz lounge on the 50th floor, and the opulent Fifth Avenue Hotel, which offers an immersive, detail-rich experience complete with bejeweled bar carts and fine dining at Café Carmellini. The city's luxury hotel scene continues to grow with the opening of properties like Thompson in Midtown, Renaissance hotels in Harlem and Flushing, and several Moxy hotels across the Lower East Side and Williamsburg.

Newest still is the Warren Street Hotel, setting a new standard in boutique hospitality. This latest offering from Firmdale Hotels, known for the Whitby and Crosby Street Hotel, features whimsical yet luxurious interiors by Kit Kemp Design Studio. Rooms are individually styled with floor-to-ceiling windows, eclectic art and even curated vinyl collections. The Surrey, a Corinthia Hotel, also makes a comeback, with its Central Park-inspired suites reimagined by Martin Brudnizki, reflecting both the hotel's historic elegance and modern flair.

NYC's cultural institutions have also played a pivotal role in the city's renaissance, with expansions, renovations and new openings. The Louis Armstrong House Museum in Queens, a cultural center featuring an interactive exhibit, jazz club and archival collections, pays homage to one of

the city's iconic musicians. The Bronx Children's Museum has also reopened in a new location, offering a refreshed space for learning and play. The reimagined Dia Chelsea provides a contemporary arts space in Manhattan, and the Frick Collection will soon reopen after a multiyear renovation of its historic 1 East 70th Street home.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, one of the world's most visited museums, has announced a US\$500-million renovation of its modern and contemporary wing, ensuring that its 1.5-million objects continue to be displayed in state-of-the-art conditions. Adding to the city's appeal, the Museum of Broadway opened its doors in Times Square, offering behind-the-scenes insight into one of the world's most famous theater districts. The Museum of the City of New York, celebrating its 100th year, provides an intimate look at the city's history, while the newly opened Perelman Performing Arts Center (PAC NYC) stands as an architectural marvel and testament to the resilience of Lower Manhattan. That particular neighborhood is undergoing a dramatic transformation. Once known primarily as a financial district, it is increasingly becoming a 24/7 destination as office buildings are converted into residential spaces. A flurry of new cultural openings has spurred growth in the area, including the Mercer Labs Museum and "Life & Trust," a theatrical production from the creators of the acclaimed "Sleep No More." Lower Manhattan

“We’re so pleased that New York City has been recognized on Resonance’s 2025 World’s Best Cities ranking. Our destination continues to shine with only-in-NYC experiences across the five boroughs, including Broadway, world-class dining, major sporting events, dynamic arts and culture offerings, rich and diverse history, and more.”

Nancy Mammana,
CMO and Interim CEO,
New York City Tourism + Conventions

retail is also ascendant, with Printemps, the legendary Parisian luxury department store, set to open its first North American location in One Wall Street by 2025.

Hudson Yards West continues to grow as a new frontier in urban development, with master planning led by SOM and a vision to turn disused rail yards into vibrant city spaces. A 5.6-acre park will unite the area with the surrounding neighborhoods, while a proposed trio of skyscrapers—including a super-tall tower of 1,172 feet—will reshape the city’s skyline. The completed Two Manhattan West tower marks the final chapter in the Hudson Yards development, while the newly restored Lever House and a glulam bridge connecting the High Line to Penn Station showcase NYC’s commitment to both preservation and innovation.

New York’s economy and job market, thriving in the wake of these cultural and infrastructural investments, rank first in our Prosperity index and second in Livability worldwide. The city boasts a robust Business Ecosystem (#2 globally), supported by its concentration of Global Fortune 500 companies (#4) eager to tap the pipeline of the city’s ambitious young talent, courtesy of its #6 ranking for universities.



Moynihan Train Hall

3

Paris

France

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 1 Livability
- 2 Lovability
- 3 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Sights & Landmarks
- 2 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 13,115,000



Notre Dame Cathedral

No other city attracted more global attention this past summer than the intoxicating French capital. And while the 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games showcased athletic achievement (to say nothing of French heavy metal), Paris continues to blow our minds with its future-focused initiatives in urban reinvention—showcased most prominently by the reopening (finally!) of Notre Dame cathedral.

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. And with half a decade and billions in investment on full display at the city's widely successful Summer Olympics, Paris has codified pedestrianism, biking and alfresco living like nowhere else on the planet.

While the face of Paris's pandemic evolution is Mayor Anne Hidalgo and her obsession with the empowerment of self-propelled mobility—from a city-wide motorized vehicle speed limit of 19 miles per hour introduced in 2021 to the promise of more than 435 miles of bike paths by 2026—it's the citizenry's embrace of this master plan that is changing the city's fabric for good.

An incredible 70% of Parisians don't own cars, and they enjoy better air quality and personal health as a result. The all-in commitment to biking, called Plan Vélo, will place the city among the most bike-friendly on the planet, improving on its current #28 spot in our Biking subcategory. Act Two of the plan will teach children to ride bikes in schools, create bike repair infrastructure in neighborhoods and promote local cycling tourism to the world.

Late last year, city officials tracking local rush hour traffic on several of the city's main thoroughfares tabulated more bicycles than cars on the road.

Pedestrians are getting equal love, with local numbers citing that 65% of all journeys are made on foot, an increase of 12% from 2010 to 2020. Since 2020, city leaders have taken credit for creating an extra 30 hectares of pedestrian areas via widened sidewalks and car-free zones (prioritizing school zones in doing so). Measures like bollards, longer crossing lights and traffic police to protect pedestrians will also encourage walking in the city. The plan is for another 100 pedestrianized hectares to be implemented by 2030.

The biggest investment in the city's mobility and getting residents out of their cars is the expansion of the Paris Métro, already the envy of the world with its 500-mile, 16-line network seamlessly incorporated into a commuter rail system. In its most significant upgrade in decades, the Grand Paris Express will be a new 125-mile network boasting four additional lines, extensions to existing lines (11 and 14) and a mind-blowing 68 new metro stations. Started in 2016, it is, according to the French government, Europe's largest civilian infrastructure project. The new lines prioritize access to the city's suburban towns, which were left out of the Parisian ascent for far too long. While the city was future-proofing itself with visionary sustainability and investment attraction, it has and is battling monumental social and economic challenges, perhaps unlike any other capital city on the continent.



The Seine

Paris has been wracked by unemployment and economic calamity since 2020 and ranks #114 in our Poverty Rate subcategory, which tracks residents living under the national poverty line. The systemic inequality is a powder keg in those areas where tourists rarely go. In the summer of 2023, 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 background, racism was alleged in the killing.

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

Even with the unrest, last year's international tourist spend continued its march to pre-pandemic levels. Of course, being able to enjoy a city ranked best on the planet for Sights & Landmarks, and in the Top 3 for Shopping, Culture, Concerts and Museums (the city has well over 100), has a tendency to distract one from the perils of the modern world.

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 US\$36.8 billion last year. And it's projected to grow to more than US\$49 billion by 2032.

More than 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 among the most visited on the planet, with 47.5 million visitors in 2023 (21.6 million domestic tourists and 25.9 million international), yet these numbers are still below 2019 levels.

With this past summer's Olympics and the unveiling of the Notre Dame renovation, 2024 could be the year that Paris hits pre-pandemic tourism revenues, especially after the world feasts on how the sporting events have been woven into the legendary urban fabric.

And nowhere will the focus be more intense than on the city's revered Seine River and its benchmark for Paris's efficacy in achieving a cleaner, healthier home. Five Olympic events took place in the river where swimming has been banned since 1923 due to pollution and sewage, and Mayor Hidalgo fulfilled her promise to go for a swim before the opening ceremonies (which featured a flotilla of boats on the Seine). Escaping those Paris heat waves will certainly be easier in the coming years.

Historic placemaking aside, Paris's revered hospitality scene is also flourishing in the afterglow of the global spotlight, with 122 Michelin-starred restaurants across a population of 2.1 million—a density that speaks to the city's culinary excellence (the second-most on the planet). Over the past three years, 25 new five-star hotels have opened in Paris, bringing the total to 101. Noteworthy openings include Hotel Madame Rêve, Kimpton St. Honoré Paris, Château des Fleurs, Maison Proust, LVMH's Cheval Blanc Paris and the Chopard boutique hotel at 1 Place Vendôme. Swedish designer Martin Brudnizki made his mark on the city's luxury hotel scene with the dual fall 2023 openings of Le Grand Mazarin and La Fantaisie, bringing a colorful and textured aesthetic that revitalizes the traditional Parisian hotel experience.

The luxury rental market is also evolving, with players like Highstay introducing luxury serviced apartments equipped with kitchens and living spaces. Founded in 2020, Highstay offers 32 high-end apartments across prime locations like the Champs-Elysées and Saint-Honoré, with another 34 currently under construction. These apartments, which guests can access via digital codes and manage through a dedicated concierge portal, represent the shift towards more personalized and flexible hospitality offerings.

Too often in the Paris narrative, the city's economic might gets forgotten. This is the place with the third-most Global Fortune 500 headquarters on the planet, and booming start-ups (ranking #10 in our Business Ecosystem subcategory).

Outside the city, Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (ranked #2 globally in our Airport Connectivity subcategory) used the past three years of lower volume to invest US\$280 million into a renovation of Terminal 1. Reopened in 2022, 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. Direct high-speed TGV routes linking other capitals have launched over the past year, with more ambitious directs like the Venice-to-Paris Midnight Trains coming in 2025.

Too often in the Paris narrative, the city's economic might gets forgotten. This is the place with the third-most Global Fortune 500 headquarters on the planet, and booming start-ups (ranking #10 in our Business Ecosystem subcategory). 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 29 today, and the 20 of these in Paris are 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 most of that arriving talent will pick as their new home base? Especially when the cost of a car isn't necessary.



Tuileries Garden

4

Tokyo

Japan

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 4 Livability
- 4 Lovability
- 6 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Restaurants
- 1 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 37,785,000



Omoide Yokocho Alleyway

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 #4 global ranking this year).

These days, Japan's capital has set its eyes on redefining the urban experience, with strategic investments in public spaces, culture and tourism. The reason? Because it can, as the economic engine of the country—responsible for 20% of Japan's GDP—and with the second-most Global Fortune 500 Companies in our ranking (and #6 in our overall Prosperity index).

Tokyo's commitment to a sustainable, human-centered cityscape is evident in its reimagining of transportation and green spaces. A transformative project inspired by New York City's High Line aims to repurpose a mile-long stretch of the Tokyo Expressway into a pedestrian walkway, complete with greenery, retail and recreational spaces. This initiative is part of a global shift from car-centric infrastructure to more pedestrian-friendly environments. The project will partially open by 2030, offering a new perspective on the city by allowing residents and visitors to traverse Tokyo on foot, above its kinetic streets among the skyscrapers and trains. The broader strategy to move sections of major expressways underground, including parts of the KK Line, marks a significant shift toward enhancing walkability and reclaiming urban space for public use.

But this is also a city of craftsmanship and the art of hospitality. Having added thousands of hotel rooms over the past few years, its hotel and

tourism sector is geared for resurgence, aligning with Japan's national target of attracting 60 million tourists and generating US\$136 billion in tourism revenue by 2030. The city's significant infrastructure investments, such as the expansion of Haneda Airport and a rapid 18-minute rail link to downtown by 2031, exemplify its commitment to global accessibility. These projects reflect Tokyo's aim to balance visitor convenience with sustainable growth. The low yen against the U.S. dollar has only helped.

The city has also solidified its status as a global shopping destination, for which it tops the planet. Ginza remains the epicenter of luxury, with the Ginza Six center blending high-end fashion, culinary excellence and contemporary art. Miyashita Park in Shibuya enhances Tokyo's urban retail experience, offering not only boutique shopping and dining but also active spaces like volleyball courts and a skatepark—all framed by a new hotel with panoramic views. Emerging developments such as Toranomon Hills and Azabudai Hills are reshaping the cityscape, creating “vertical cities” that blend business, retail, leisure and living. And increasingly, public art, as Tokyo's new teamLab Borderless at the Azabudai Hills complex demonstrates. Like the rest of the city, you have to experience it to believe it.

5

Singapore

Singapore

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 5 Prosperity
- 8 Livability
- 10 Lovability

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 GDP per Capita
- 8 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 5,926,000



Marina Bay Sands

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. With dining and shopping to match.

Two favored pastimes dominate the lives of Singapore's residents and visitors alike: shopping and eating. Ranking #12 globally for Shopping, Singapore's retail landscape is a testament to the city's consumer-driven dynamism. From the glitz malls of Orchard Road, teeming with haute couture and international brands, to the iconic 24-hour Mustafa Centre, selling everything from electronics to spices, retail is both a daily habit and an art form.

Singapore's dining scene, ranked #19 in our Restaurants subcategory, is equally dynamic. The city's culinary diversity ranges from humble hawker centers—renowned for Michelin-starred street food—to upscale dining establishments serving dishes like spicy white pepper crab.

Capturing a photo from the rooftop infinity pool of Marina Bay Sands is a quintessential Singapore experience. And Marina Bay Sands is set to grow

further, with plans to add an additional 1,000-room hotel tower and a live entertainment arena, amplifying its status as a premier global destination. On the opposite shore, Merlion Park offers its own iconic view, with the metallic surfboard-like head of the Merlion gazing out over the waters.

Singapore's commitment to waterfront development is evidenced by ambitious projects like the Great Southern Waterfront, set to transform the southern coastline. The project plans to add around 9,000 housing units and develop vibrant community spaces, bolstering Singapore's already impressive livability. Meanwhile, the forthcoming NS Square will replace the Marina Bay floating platform in 2027, bringing a multi-purpose outdoor venue to downtown.

Singapore ranks highly in economic terms, placing in the Top 5 in our overall Prosperity index, driven by its #5 spot in the GDP per Capita subcategory. The city is a key technology hub in Southeast Asia, with notable investment from global giants. Google's expansion of its cloud infrastructure and data centers in Singapore marks a US\$5-billion investment, providing services for everything from Google Search to Maps. The facility, which employs more than 500 people, underscores Singapore's growing role in Asia's digital economy. Microsoft and Apple's parallel expansion into

Southeast Asia signifies the city-state's strategic positioning as a nexus of global tech infrastructure and innovation. The expansion of Changi Aviation Park and the development of Changi East Industrial Zone promise to bolster the aviation and trade sectors. The upcoming mega port in Tuas, poised to be the world's largest fully automated terminal, exemplifies the nation's focus on logistical efficiency and forward-thinking urban planning.

And Singapore is also exploring new modes of sustainable living, with plans for more green areas, smart urban districts and developments that promote work, education and leisure with initiatives like the pedestrian Park Connector Network enabling access to business clusters and green spaces from anywhere on the island.

6

Rome

Italy

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 5 Livability
- 5 Lovability
- 72 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Tripadvisor Reviews
- 4 Sights & Landmarks

POPULATION

Metro 4,304,000



Pantheon

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 the past 18 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. Such finds remind us that Rome's rich narrative continues to unfold, as Mayor Roberto Gualtieri aptly states, "The millennial history of our city never ceases to amaze and enchant the world."

The city's appeal extends beyond its historic relics, and the Eternal City ranks in the Top 5 globally in both our overall Lovability (#5) and Livability (#5) indices, offering residents and visitors experiences that go beyond tourism—inviting them into the daily rhythms of a city that has in many ways defined Western civilization.

These treasures are shared widely, such as the Largo di Torre Argentina site—the scene of Julius Caesar's assassination—opened to the public last June with the support of Italian jeweler Bulgari. The city's commitment to uncovering and preserving its past is complemented by its push to embrace modern culture. Rome's thousands of historical sites power its #4 Sights & Landmarks subcategory ranking, drawing visitors eager to experience the grandeur of the Colosseum, the Pantheon,

and St. Peter's Basilica. Its impressive museums rank #6. This connection to its monumental history has only increased Rome's popularity, placing it just behind London in the global Tripadvisor Reviews subcategory.

New restaurants like Pulejo, Don Pasquale and Romanè have quickly become local favorites, alongside the rooftop restaurant Seen by Olivier at the new Anantara hotel, which offers sweeping views of the city's skyline. Acclaimed Sicilian chef Ciccio Sultano's Giano, located in the W Hotel near the Trevi Fountain, serves a Mediterranean-inspired menu, while all-day trattoria Da Etta, steps from the lively Trastevere neighborhood, excels in Roman classics with an impressive 2,000-bottle wine selection.

Global hospitality brands have taken note of Rome's resurgence, with several high-profile openings in the past year. The Six Senses Rome, the brand's first Italian property, is housed in a UNESCO-listed palazzo just minutes from the Trevi Fountain and Pantheon, while Bulgari Roma brings together luxury and gastronomy, featuring Chef Niko Romito's Michelin-starred expertise in a monastery from the 1500s transformed into an elegant retreat. Other recently or soon-to-be-opened properties include Thompson Rome, as well as new hotels from Four Seasons, Corinthia, Nobu and Rosewood adding to the city's gilded appeal.

7

Madrid

Spain

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 7 Lovability
- 9 Livability
- 18 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Tripadvisor Reviews
- 9 Sights & Landmarks

POPULATION

Metro 7,005,000



Carrusel Babi Pascual

Spain's kinetic capital has gone all in on a people-powered, planet-saving rebirth.

Madrid's sustainability-driven investment in its bounteous urban and natural 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 forest of indigenous trees has been shown to lower temperatures within its shade by an astonishing 4-5 degrees F compared to the rest of the city.

This investment in its outdoor realm will improve Madrid's #51 ranking in our Air Quality subcategory, as well as its #74 Parks & Recreation ranking, especially combined with how safe the city has become. Madrid's electric bus network trails only that of Berlin in Europe and new EV charging stations and bike lanes are everywhere.

But the biggest news is the recent full approval of Madrid Nuevo Norte, the largest urban regeneration project in Europe, in the city's underused northern rail district: more than 544 acres dedicated to the

Madrid of the future. Long seen as a dead, unusable patch on Madrid's otherwise revitalized cityscape, the ambitious project attempts to activate an area choked by the existing railway tracks leading to Chamartín station and restart it as a residential and business destination serviced by an integrated public transport hub.

The city is also going all-in on its already formidable Culture-scape (ranked #13), from newly opened local indie cinemas like Cines Embajadores to the mind-blowing unveiling of the Royal Collections Gallery, considered the country's most significant museum in decades (and sure to help improve Madrid's current #22 spot for Museums). Located next to the Royal Palace of Madrid, the space was dug out from rock under Campo del Moro gardens to Armería square, and will be the centre of all Patrimonio Nacional's cultural activities and royal collections. It will also help the Spanish head of state restore, conserve and share the country's historical, cultural and natural heritage.

With all this investment, it's a good thing the city's Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport (currently ranked #17 in our Airport Connectivity subcategory) has earmarked almost US\$1.8 billion to become the EU's largest, although work isn't scheduled to begin until 2031.

8

Barcelona

Spain

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 6 Livability
- 6 Lovability
- 38 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Nightlife
- 5 Tripadvisor Reviews

POPULATION

Metro 5,112,000



Benidorm seafront

The Catalan capital is as coveted as ever, but now it's welcoming the world on its own terms.

As if Barcelona, with its near-perfect weather, striking architecture and miles of golden sandy beaches within city limits wasn't revered enough already, 2024 has made it a must-visit, across Europe and the world. The big news, of course, is that after almost a century and a half, Gaudí's famous church, the Sagrada Família, is almost finished. The towers of the evangelists John and Matthew lit up the city last Christmas, leaving only the sixth and final 568-foot Jesus Christ tower to open in 2026.

Despite having the EU's highest density of cars (15,540 per square mile) and replacing the pro-walking and biking mayor Ada Colau (the city's first woman to hold the role) with the car-championing Jaume Collboni last May, the city continues to unveil ambitious pedestrian projects.

Barcelona just opened its US\$56-million Consell de Cent, 21 pedestrianized blocks that used to be a four-lane cross-town street, part of what is being called a "green axis" urban park in an area popular with both locals and visitors. Dotted with benches and community squares, the pathway gained its inspiration from a local pilot project that, unsurprisingly, improved citizens' mental health.

Given the city's #6 ranking in our overall Lovability index, the 12 million annual tourists who flocked here pre-pandemic, more than doubling

Barcelona's population, are headed back. The city's implementation of some of Europe's strictest vacation rental rules will be tested as it aims to resupply a chronic shortage of resident housing. Mayor Collboni's zero tolerance for short-term rental policy exceeds even New York City's strict Local Law 18. He also noted that there would be a total ban on short-term rentals as of 2029, with the plan to cease renewing existing short-term rental licenses immediately, and stop issuing new ones with the aim for a complete phaseout by the end of the decade. Barcelona currently has around 10,000 legal rentals in the city, according to local numbers.

Obviously, Barcelona is also no longer content with digital nomads, and is now aggressively securing massive foreign investment that will benefit the city over the long term, ranging from Lufthansa Group, the largest airline group in Europe (which opened its first southern European digital hub last year) to U.S. real estate developer Panattoni (which will invest \$300 million to build the largest data center in the region). The city's #34 Business Ecosystem ranking will only improve as global innovation investment, like Intel's recent Barcelona Supercomputing Center initiative as part of a US\$37-billion EU-wide semiconductor push, comes online.

9

Berlin

Germany

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 7 Prosperity
- 9 Lovability
- 35 Livability

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Museums
- 7 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 4,980,000



Berlin Cathedral

Berlin is a city where remnants of a fragile history mingle with a present in which being whatever you want simply comes with residency.

Thirty-five years after the fall of its eponymous wall and the Iron Curtain, Berlin's continued embrace of immigrants from all over the world in search of a new life continues to define the city. Its eclectic energy is a reflection of its 12 kiez (neighborhoods), each with its own distinct character and rhythms that embody the city's unfiltered urbanity and commitment to self-expression. Rankings of #16 for Culture and #7 for Nightlife underscore its reputation as a party capital and a hub for festivals and live music.

A bustling calendar of events made for a raucous 2024, with major summer experiences like the annual Christopher Street Day, the massive Gay Pride celebration, attracting hundreds of thousands of revelers, activists and policymakers in celebrating the LGBTQ+ legacy of Schöneberg, the world's first "gay village." Berlin's hospitality industry contributes to this welcoming spirit, with the Pink Pillow Berlin Collection—an initiative of 57 hotels dedicated to inclusivity and support for social causes.

The city also hosted EURO 2024, with the city's Olympiastadion becoming the largest venue in Germany's first major football tournament since the 2006 FIFA World Cup. For the record, Spain beat England 2-1 in front of more than 65,000 fans.

Berlin is deeply engaged in documenting its layered history, earning a #5 ranking for Museums. Approaching 200 institutions, the city's museum offerings range from ancient treasures on Museum Island to the challenging exhibits on display at the Topography of Terror and the Stasi Museum. The new Humboldt Forum, housing the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, stands as a testament to Berlin's dedication to cultural exchange and global history. The Fotografiska museum adds a contemporary touch to the city's cultural portfolio, located in a storied 1908 building that has been everything from a wartime ruin to an artist squat and rave venue. Meanwhile, the evolving transformation of the historic Tempelhof Airport—a vast site that tells the turbulent story of the city—reflects Berlin's dedication to reimagining its spaces, with open-air galleries and panoramic views of the city's historic and modern districts.

Berlin is not only a cultural hub but also an economic powerhouse, with its #7 ranking in Prosperity and a strong presence of Global Fortune 500 companies (#48 globally). Beyond established industry giants like Deutsche Telekom and Deutsche Bahn, Berlin has emerged as a start-up capital and the city's affordability, renowned universities and skilled labor force have attracted approximately 4,400 start-ups, supported by growing venture capital investment.

10

Sydney

Australia

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 10 Livability
- 12 Prosperity
- 17 Lovability

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Air Quality
- 16 University

POPULATION

Metro 4,836,000



Sydney Harbour Bridge

Sydney-siders 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 amidst the world’s seventh-best Air Quality—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 (CBD) and improve the greater city’s impressive #10 ranking in our overall Livability index (to say nothing of its #17 Lovability spot).

The CBD, once a primarily commercial area, is now a vibrant mixed-use district showcasing Sydney’s drive to balance economic growth with cultural inclusivity. New tram lines and an expanded harbor have made the area more walkable, while green plazas and waterfront promenades breathe life into previously underused spaces. Hotels like Capella Sydney, the first luxury property to open downtown in two decades, have restored historic buildings to modern elegance. Located in a meticulously preserved government building from the early 1900s, Capella represents the city’s aim to blend history with hospitality. Darling Harbour’s new wave-shaped W Sydney is another highlight, anchoring a renewed waterfront experience.

Sydney’s cultural heartbeat has also grown stronger, with the Art Gallery of New South Wales nearly doubling its exhibition space through a new glass structure designed by Japanese architects SANAA. The museum focuses on works by Aboriginal and women artists, signaling a commitment to Indigenous heritage and diverse storytelling. Aptly named Naala Badu, meaning “seeing waters” in the language of the Dharug people, the gallery reflects Sydney’s push for cultural recognition and community engagement. Watch the city’s #50 Museum ranking ascend in short order. Sydney’s “24-Hour Economy Strategy” underpins the resurgence of its nightlife, dining and cultural scenes. Initiatives like permanent al fresco dining licenses have transformed city streets, and events like the Laneway Festival have successfully lured people back into the urban core.

Sydney’s Prosperity rank of #12 indicates its status as an economic powerhouse. The city is actively encouraging growth in tech and innovation through projects like Tech Central, a sprawling urban renewal initiative that aims to foster an ecosystem of start-ups, universities and investors right in the city’s center. Such investments in infrastructure and talent are designed to position Sydney as a key global business hub for years to come.



11 Amsterdam Netherlands

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Biking
- 4 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 2,892,000

Amsterdam is done partying.

Under the stewardship of second-term Mayor Femke Halsema, the Dutch capital is undergoing a transformation that seeks to create a more livable and inclusive environment for residents, attempting to preserve its impressive Livability rank of #12 and Prosperity rank of #13. Long known for its vibrant nightlife and red-light district, Amsterdam has started to rethink how to maintain its famous atmosphere while addressing the concerns of locals. The city ranks #11 for nightlife globally, but the focus is now on improving quality over quantity. To reduce disruptive “party tourism,” smoking cannabis in public was banned in 2023, and new rules require bars and restaurants to close by 2 a.m. on weekends, with the city center no longer allowing new visitors after 1 a.m. The infamous red-light district of De Wallen is undergoing significant changes, with plans to move sex work venues to a newly created Erotic Center in the suburbs.

The city's proactive stance on enhancing public safety, curbing human trafficking and protecting local culture reflects a broader strategy to create a balanced urban experience. Meanwhile, efforts to encourage visitors to explore beyond the city center highlight Amsterdam's broader offerings, including its globally ranked shopping (#8) and a robust museum scene (#11).

12 San Francisco United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Business Ecosystem
- 2 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 4,692,000

The golden city—deeply wounded by the addiction crisis, a lack of affordable housing and violence unimaginable a few years ago—is getting up off the mat.

San Francisco's myriad challenges over the past half decade have been meticulously documented. So much so, in fact, that a Gallup survey in August 2023 found that nearly half of Americans regard San Francisco as unsafe. An office vacancy rate that CBRE recorded at 34.7% in the third quarter of 2023 was among the highest in the world. Despite the bad news, “Everyone’s Favorite City” is still coveted. Maybe now more than ever as rents drop, advocacy and local pride stir, and failed ideas are jettisoned by the world’s top-ranked Business Ecosystem and its second-most educated citizenry raised on disruption and with the means to impact change. San Francisco also trails only New York and Tokyo for the most millionaires residing in any city (285,000 in 2022, according to the 2023 World’s Wealthiest Cities Report), and they’re launching more moderate political movements and investing in local journalism and promotional campaigns to bring businesses back. Despite all the bad press, the city is the global home of artificial intelligence, with AI companies pouring into empty office space (including the Transamerica Pyramid Center, newly renovated by Foster + Partners). The city, meanwhile, is rolling out the most daring bike and pedestrian infrastructure in America.

13 Dubai United Arab Emirates

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Facebook Check-ins
- 2 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 4,945,000

No other city on earth matches Dubai’s audacious ambition and relentless growth.

A magnet for visitors and investors alike, Dubai ranks #8 globally in both our Lovability and Prosperity indices, rankings that are driven by the city’s knack for record-breaking developments. The latest? The One Za’abeel towers, featuring The Link, the world’s longest cantilevered structure. This sky bridge connects the new One&Only urban resort and SIRO, a fitness-themed hotel, and hosts an array of restaurants led by Michelin-starred chefs, from Mehmet Gurs’ Turkish hall Arrazuna to Anne-Sophie Pic’s La Dame de Pic. Small wonder that Dubai’s restaurants are in the Top 20 globally.

Equally luxurious is The Lana, the first Dorchester Collection hotel in the Middle East, with its Foster + Partners design emphasizing haute sophistication overlooking Marassi Marina and the Burj Khalifa. The Lana’s restaurants, led by celebrated chefs like Jean Imbert and Martin Berasategui, are refined culinary experiences in a city known for grandiosity. The recent unveiling of Dubai’s first Dior spa completes this new chapter in upscale hospitality. The city’s vision is on continued urban appeal and the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan aims to create a “20-minute city,” giving residents access to 80% of their daily needs within a short walk or bike ride, reimagining urban life.



14 Los Angeles United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Business Ecosystem
- 8 Instagram Hashtags

POPULATION

Metro 13,112,000

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

After a series of recent centennials, including that of the Hollywood Sign and Warner Bros. Studios, L.A.'s focus is now on its "Decade of Sport." The Memorial Coliseum and the newly built SoFi Stadium will host a slate of global events, from the 2026 FIFA World Cup to the Olympics and Paralympics in 2028, making L.A. the first U.S. city to host the Olympics three times.

The city of storytelling, already ranking #12 in our Lovability index, will only endear itself even more. Cultural investment is equally ambitious. The Hammer Museum reopened with expanded gallery space, while the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures is captivating visitors with film history. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art is reopening its east campus with 110,000 square feet of new gallery space, and the Natural History Museum's NHM Commons and the Getty's PST ART series are also contributing to the booming arts scene (and #10 Culture subcategory ranking).

Transportation efficiency is equally prioritized. The new \$1.7-billion Regional Connector Transit Project offers direct rail travel across the county, and LAX's \$30-billion overhaul includes a people mover train and the world's largest car rental facility. An even bolder move is the high-speed rail project Brightline West, connecting L.A. and Las Vegas by 2028.

15 Toronto Canada

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Tree Cover
- 7 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 6,837,000

As Canada's gateway for skilled immigrants, half of Toronto's population was born outside the country.

Toronto's skyline is buzzing with development—221 cranes tower above the city, more than four times that of second-place L.A. The construction boom has reshaped downtown, from revitalized cultural landmarks like Massey Hall to the new Renzo Piano-designed Ontario Court of Justice. The addition of Love Park, with its heart-shaped pond, adds greenery to the city's core (which already ranks #3 for Tree Cover). The St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts is undergoing a \$400-million transformation to become Canada's first carbon-neutral theater when it reopens in 2028. Meanwhile, Live Nation is set to debut Rogers Stadium, an open-air venue that will hold up to 50,000 attendees, at the site of the former Downsview Airport next June. Intended as a temporary solution to the rising demand for live entertainment, it will operate for five years before the 370-acre site undergoes a \$30-billion redevelopment into 15 new transit-oriented communities.

The city's waterfront unveiled the \$1.3-billion Port Lands Flood Protection Project and the new Villiers Island, formed by the reimagined Don River mouth, is poised to be the crown jewel of the development. The reclamation of the city's neglected lakefront was long overdue.

16 Seoul South Korea

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Restaurants
- 6 Fortune 500

POPULATION

Metro 23,225,000

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

A thriving hub for everything "K"—from K-pop and K-dramas to innovative K-beauty, South Korea's megalopolis capital is home to global cultural icons like BTS and renowned filming location landmarks like Gwangjang Market, frequented by Netflix foodies and Michelin-starred chefs. With 176 Michelin-rated restaurants, Seoul stands #3 in the Restaurants subcategory, perhaps the stealthiest culinary destination on the planet. 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).

With Seoul's digital transformation into a high-tech metropolis with cutting-edge 5G and even 6G networks, it now boasts the sixth-most Global Fortune 500 firms and thousands of start-ups looking to join their ranks.

As travel rebounds, Seoul's popularity soars; it was the fourth-most searched destination on Airbnb in 2022, and the government is capitalizing on this post-pandemic momentum by investing in its events industry, expediting three major international conference clusters to attract global business.

Now if only someone had advised the government to reconsider the city's new "Seoul, My Soul" brand...



17 Chicago United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Parks & Recreation
- 2 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 9,567,000

Few cities on the planet are firing on all cylinders like America's great Midwest metropolis.

Iconic O'Hare International Airport ranks #7 globally and McCormick Place sits at #2 in our Convention Center subcategory. Named the top metro area for corporate investment for the 11th consecutive year by Site Selection, Chicago's infrastructure projects range from the new Chan Zuckerberg Biohub Chicago, a \$275-million biomedical hub, to a \$20-million tech workforce center. These investments are driven by the city's diverse talent pool and global connectivity, as noted by Mayor Brandon Johnson.

Chicago's summer of culture was something to behold courtesy of the free Millennium Park Summer Music Series, while the local nightlife—ranked #13—boasts new hotspots like the Guinness Open Gate Brewery in West Loop. New venues like The Salt Shed, located in a revamped landmark factory, add to Chicago's revitalized music and arts scene. (The city ranks #9 for Culture globally.)

The #28-ranked restaurants continue to impress, with Michelin-starred chefs opening new spots, such as Chef Johnny Clark's Ukrainian restaurant Anelya. Community initiatives like "The 77: A City of Neighborhoods" YouTube series bring attention to local stories and businesses. The city's ambitious projects include the \$500-million Obama Presidential Center, set to open in Jackson Park, and the Marquette Greenway bike trail that will eventually connect Chicago to New Buffalo, Michigan, by 2027, transforming the South Side's landscape.

18 Vienna Austria

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Biking
- 17 Museums

POPULATION

Metro 1,960,000

Are there any European cities as ascendant as the Austrian capital in 2025?

Vienna has long stepped boldly into the Herculean tasks facing global cities serious about their role as urban sustainability beacons. Despite its globally coveted real estate, 60% of the city's population resides in subsidized apartments and 25% of homes are owned by the city. And it's boldly tackling the climate emergency, with 2022's declaration of carbon neutrality by 2040 besting the Paris Agreement by a decade. Already topping the planet in our Biking subcategory, the Austrian capital is adding dozens of bike paths annually to its 1,025-mile cycling network, including the unveiling of its "cycle highway" connecting downtown with the expansive green spaces of the 22nd district, home to Aspern Seestadt, one of Europe's largest urban development projects centered on transit, walking and biking.

No wonder it ranks #7 in our overall Livability index. There's also massive cultural investment—from the extensively renovated Wien Museum, a love letter to the city if there ever was one, to the brand-new House of Strauss museum, dedicated to the four composers of the Strauss family. The city's #17 Museums ranking will only improve this decade. And the launch of Vienna's first food hall, Gleisgarten, and central Europe's first Rosewood Hotel will continue adding to the city's allure.

19 Seattle United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Parks & Recreation
- 4 University

POPULATION

Metro 4,002,000

America's growing tech hub is playing the long game, focusing on inclusive prosperity and bold 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 was battling a housing price dip (since reversed, with prices up almost 12% year-over-year, according to Point2), a homelessness crisis and 20% commercial vacancy rates. But it also boasts a growing population fueled by talent seeking (literally) greener pastures, pulled by the influential titans of industry in town, from Amazon to Zillow. Seattle ranks in the Top 10 in our GDP per Capita subcategory. Heat waves (and, for some, politics) in the American South will only accelerate immigration to a place that ranks #4 for its waterworld outdoors and #13 for Air Quality. Talent pipelines are stocked by the omnipresent UDub—the University of Washington—one of the world's top public research universities (#4 in our University subcategory), endowing the city with the 15th-most educated citizenry on earth. The city is accommodating all that growth by focusing on its long-neglected waterfront, which has also seen the recent opening of the Seattle Aquarium's new Ocean Pavilion, including an oculus window at the entrance allowing passersby to observe sea life from below. The pavilion links to the city's iconic Pike Place Market, which has also recently expanded with new observation platforms and retail spaces. Expect the city's overall #13 Livability ranking to increase as a result of this bold, human-level placemaking.



20 Milan Italy

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Biking
- 7 Sights & Landmarks

POPULATION

Metro 4,962,000

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

The birthplace of Armani, Versace and dozens of other megawatt icons is no longer content with being Europe's fashion and design center. Or even Italy's financial heart. Milan is driven, as always, by its entrepreneurial hunger and increasingly fueled by wealthy newcomers lured to the famed good life (ranked #11 in our overall Livability index) by government tax breaks on foreign income earned abroad. 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. And there are two new W properties on the scene.

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 that includes a long-awaited train link between Milan Bergamo Airport and the centro, with a new four-platform airport rail station. Its #11 ranking in our Airport Connectivity subcategory will only improve. The city is welcoming a torrent of new flights from Asia, and, last June, Milan Bergamo received a record 50,242 passengers in one day. Hopefully Milan's #2 ranking in our Biking subcategory helps everyone get around.

21 Boston United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 University
- 4 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 4,912,000

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

A hub of higher education and home to the fourth-most educated workforce on the planet, Boston 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 our rankings—as well as to Boston's 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. Graduating talent is scooped up fast in a city that ranks in the Top 5 in our Business Ecosystem subcategory, and boasts industry clusters like its 1,000-plus biotech companies.

The buildup 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 1,054-room Omni Boston Hotel at the Seaport on the South Boston waterfront. Happily, the city is making it easy to come and go, namely with the expansion of South Station, Boston's busiest transit hub, and its 51-story condo and office tower opening soon. The new US\$640-million terminal at Boston Logan International Airport will handle the city's increasing passenger numbers.

22 Vancouver Canada

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Tree Cover
- 7 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 2,484,000

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—boasting 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 #15 globally).

An elemental collision of urban velocity and timeless, serene nature means that epic skiing, mountain biking and hiking are 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 two years, Vancouver will host the Invictus Games, 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 may not have room for everyone that wants to visit. 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 and cracking down on Airbnb-only rentals (ostensibly to free up rental housing). 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 beguiling city in the wilderness (yes, Tree Cover is Top 5).



23 Miami United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Instagram Hashtags
- 15 Unemployment Rate

POPULATION

Metro 6,124,000

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

Miami's natural allure continues to captivate, earning the city a #18 global ranking for Parks & Recreation and #7 for Instagram Hashtags. Known for its diverse population, Miami boasts the highest percentage of foreign-born residents in the U.S., attracting not only immigrants but also Silicon Valley transplants and remote workers. Notable new residents like Jeff Bezos reflect the city's growing appeal. The tech sector is expanding, with Amazon seeking 50,000 square feet of office space for its 400-person local workforce. Miami ranks #15 for Unemployment Rate, as venture capital and multinational investments pour in. More than 1,100 multinationals already call the city home, solidifying its role as the U.S. hub for Latin American business. Miami's skyline is evolving rapidly with luxury developments like the Waldorf Astoria Hotel and Residences, set to be the tallest residential tower south of New York by 2028, and the 70-story Okan Tower. Luxury brands like Bentley and Mercedes-Benz are also entering the real estate market with residential towers offering multimillion-dollar apartments. Meanwhile, accessible redevelopment continues with the approval of the four-acre Riverbridge waterfront project and the expansion of The Underline, a 10-mile urban trail under the city's rail lines.

24 Stockholm Sweden

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 Air Quality
- 10 Labor Force Participation

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. The Swedish capital boasts mind-bending geography (the city center was built on 14 islands) and salt- and fresh-water outdoor swimming areas amid bounteous public green space (ranked #33 for Tree Cover and helping create the ninth-best Air Quality among the planet's cities). Then there's Stockholm's history of innovation, from the 1700s architecture and daring modern design of Gamla Stan to the infusion of tradition into its buzzy New Nordic cuisine.

Throw in a multicultural, industrious population (Top 10 for Labor Force Participation) and an epic summer season with near-constant daylight and you've got a place that is equally welcoming and restlessly ambitious. Stockholm built the world's largest open-fibre network in the 1990s, followed a decade or so later by the launch of global hits like Skype, Spotify and Minecraft. More billion-dollar start-ups have launched here than in any place outside of Silicon Valley. This is obvious in districts like Södermalm, once a working-class area, now the epicenter of this tech-driven transformation. The neighborhood's gentrification reflects the city's role as a creative and economic powerhouse (and its #26 ranking for Business Ecosystem).

25 Melbourne Australia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 University
- 17 Sights & Landmarks

POPULATION

Metro 4,709,000

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

Melbourne may not have centuries-old landmarks (although it did finish an impressive #17 in our subcategory), but it more than makes up for it with its vibrant food, coffee culture and arts scene. Graffitied laneways like Hosier Lane, quirky attractions such as the Brighton Bathing Boxes and the adorable St. Kilda penguins all add to the city's charm. As a gateway to 21 wine regions, including the Yarra Valley and Mornington Peninsula, Melbourne truly epitomizes "wine country." The city's annual Australian Open, the first Grand Slam to attract over a million fans in 2024, is a global sports highlight adding to the city's #34 Lovability index score, a reflection of its appeal to both locals and visitors. To address the challenges of population growth (with residents drawn here by its livability, which is ranked #24 globally), the city is undertaking transformative urban projects under Plan Melbourne 2017-2050. Key initiatives include the Metro Tunnel, which will enhance public transport capacity when it opens in 2025, and the revitalization of Federation Square with enhanced pedestrian access and green spaces. Hospitality developments are equally ambitious. The recently opened Ritz-Carlton Melbourne is elevating luxury accommodation, while the expansion of the Queen Victoria Market precinct is reshaping the skyline.



26 Oslo Norway

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 Biking
- 18 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 1,279,000

A compact dynamo's secret formula is enchanting global talent.

No longer overshadowed by Stockholm and Copenhagen, Oslo is proving itself a worthy destination of its own. Its #53 Museums ranking will improve with the recent opening of Munch, a waterfront museum dedicated to the Expressionist painter of "The Scream." The award-winning museum joins the new residential district of Sørena on the recently unveiled eastern waterfront, where the entire harbor is now walkable via a 6-mile trail network. With parking spots being replaced by bike lanes and street furniture, no wonder Oslo ranks #9 for Biking globally. Also new is the downtown National Museum, which replaced several cultural buildings, including the National Gallery. It houses classical and contemporary art and architecture collections and is today the largest art exhibition space in Scandinavia. Above the city, Rose Castle unveiled a permanent installation of paintings and sculptures in 2020 that tells the story of Oslo's resilience during the Second World War. Ranking #49 in our Labor Force Participation subcategory, Oslo now has over 50 start-up hubs that are helping to make it one of Europe's fastest-growing cities. The dozen floating saunas downtown are equally magnetic. Much-needed housing is aggressively being built in places like Fjord City on industrial port lands. As more talent discovers the drivers of Oslo's #17 overall Livability ranking, its magnetism will only strengthen.

27 Munich Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Biking
- 14 Fortune 500

POPULATION

Metro 3,017,000

Bavaria's party capital is also a business behemoth—and a magnetic hometown.

The global Oktoberfest HQ and Germany's third-largest city works as hard as it plays, and has become one of Europe's hottest destinations for talent seeking this elusive balance. The pandemic only highlighted the productivity of understated Bavarian innovation, especially in the public realm when many temporary initiatives—from outdoor seating to a reimagined concrete factory—became permanent. But this is Germany after all and there's productivity to think about. Munich boasts a #14 ranking for Fortune 500 companies globally (made up primarily of automakers, media and manufacturing, but quickly being joined by biotech and IT giants). Expect more commerce now that the city's #16-ranked airport has completed its US\$550-million reno. Not surprisingly, the Technical University of Munich, which brands itself "the Entrepreneurial University," supplies much of the local talent pipeline, as does LMU München. Both universities are considered the best in the country. With all that citizen-focused infrastructure and entrepreneurship, Munich threads the needle for impressive Livability (#23) and Prosperity (#28). This year, Apple will invest an additional billion dollars as part of its Silicon Design Center expansion in the city. And for visitors, the recently opened Rosewood Munich is a must-stay for work or pleasure.

28 Istanbul Türkiye

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Airport Connectivity
- 3 Instagram Hashtags

POPULATION

Metro 15,636,000

Europe's largest city is coming for the crown.

Istanbul, Türkiye's largest city, remains a captivating crossroads of culture and commerce connecting Europe and Asia. Its unique position is evident in its impressive #10 ranking for Sights & Landmarks and a strong #40 spot in the Parks & Recreation subcategory. Recent urban developments have only enhanced its appeal. The 2023 completion of Galataport, a US\$1.7-billion revitalization of the city's historic harbor, includes the world's first underground cruise terminal. This project not only strengthens Istanbul's tourism infrastructure but also adds new cultural spaces like the Istanbul Modern, designed by Renzo Piano. The luxury hospitality sector is booming as well. Recent openings, such as the Peninsula Istanbul and JW Marriott Marmara Sea, complement the city's luxury accommodations, placing it as a top-tier global destination for travelers. These projects showcase the city's blend of modern design with historical significance, underscoring its #9 ranking in Museums and an ongoing drive for urban transformation. Looking ahead, Istanbul is set to expand its global connectivity with major high-speed rail developments, positioning the city as a central hub for rail travel across the region by the end of the decade. The Istanbul Grand Airport, already one of the busiest globally, aims to become the largest airport in the world by 2028, enhancing the city's strategic importance for global trade and tourism.



29 Las Vegas United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Convention Center
- 5 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 2,266,000

Las Vegas is back with a vengeance as the visitor economy surges.

Few American cities have been as supercharged by the return of the visitor economy as Las Vegas, which lives and dies by its #1 industry. After all, this is Vegas, baby, ranking #18 on the planet in our overall Lovability index and in the Top 5 for subcategories ranging from Culture to Convention Center. Almost 41 million people visited Las Vegas in 2023, a 5.2% increase over 2022 and not far back from the record 42.9 million who visited in 2016. Recent additions to the city's skyline reflect its ongoing growth. The US\$4.3-billion Resorts World Las Vegas, with its three hotels and 5,000-seat theater, and the recently opened Durango Casino & Resort, offer luxury in every corner. But the biggest news is the US\$3.7-billion, 67-story Fontainebleau, the tallest residential and hotel structure on the Strip. Meanwhile, the MSG Sphere, a US\$2-billion, 516-foot-wide sphere, has been blowing up your Insta feed since it opened. Beyond tourism, investment continues with a projected US\$15 billion in new developments on the way. Moreover, the approval of a 90,000-square-foot Las Vegas Museum of Art designed by Pritzker Prize winner Diébédo Francis Kéré heralds a growing cultural presence downtown. Construction is slated to start by 2027, further solidifying Vegas as a cultural hub.

30 Helsinki Finland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Air Quality
- 25 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,552,000

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

The capital of the world's happiest country for the seventh year in a row (according to the 2024 World Happiness Report) must be doing something right. And no, it's just not Finland's new NATO membership. For starters, Helsinki doubled down on emergency outdoor placemaking measures during COVID and has kept the massive, purpose-built outdoor seating areas and other similar communal infrastructure projects largely intact, while city leaders continue to generously fund citizen community improvement projects. It's the kind of sensible urban cohesion you'd expect from a city dedicated to its Top 5 Air Quality among global cities, and a Top 25 Biking ranking (both helped by the central cycling tunnel into downtown). The city's embrace of its natural bounty continues to expand with new trails, parks and an urban ferry system that are powering its overall #14 Livability ranking. 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 converted former prison. The recently opened Hotel Maria (housed in four historic city buildings) aspires to be the city's "first true five-star destination," according to founder, developer and former three-time Finnish Olympic gold medallist Samppa Lajunen.

31 Atlanta United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Convention Center
- 10 Airport Connectivity

POPULATION

Metro 6,095,000

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

Long a progressive beacon in Georgia, Atlanta and its rich legacy of American civil rights—the city is the birthplace of Martin Luther King Jr.—is pulling in talent, with almost a quarter of a million relocating here over the past two years. Even more are mulling their options—attracted by the city's #17 spot in our Price-to-Income Ratio subcategory and some of the highest new-grad salaries in the U.S. Good thing the city—ranking #18 on the planet for Fortune 500 companies and #27 for Business Ecosystem—is planning for the influx.

Bold new projects pepper downtown, like the 50-acre Gulch redevelopment called Centennial Yards, featuring 12 million square feet of residential, retail and office space and 1,500 hotel rooms. Just east, along Peachtree, Mitchell and Broad streets, as well as Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, dozens of historic buildings are being revived with a focus on public spaces and walkability. Even Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (from which 80% of the U.S. population resides within a two-hour flight) is renovating, despite already ranking #10 on the planet in our Airport Connectivity subcategory. Its ATLNext project is pumping US\$6 billion into modernization.



32 Bangkok Thailand

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Facebook Check-ins
- 4 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 18,884,000

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 and unjustly reduced to stereotypes, Asia's "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 taking advantage of no sanctions and easy passage as they escape conscription to Ukraine's killing fields and Russia's general self-inflicted misery. All this activity is set amid Thailand's own volatile political scene, with crippling street demonstrations last year after Pita Limjaroenrat was barred from running for prime minister. Yet this hasn't stopped the city from rising up the ranks, with a global #11 position in our overall Lovability index thanks to its #4 ranking for Shopping and #13 spot for Attractions. The city is also catering to a growing tourist base—a multi-floor cannabis complex is opening in Chinatown, and more than 40 new hotels will open across the capital by 2027. The city's investment in high-speed rail connectivity will transform it into a hub of Southeast Asia's transport network by 2028, making the sweet sensory overload that is Bangkok more accessible than ever.

33 Prague Czechia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Nightlife
- 3 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 2,260,000

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

Pandemic lockdowns broke the overtourism wave cresting over Prague's beguiling Gothic streets, allowing for resident-first policies and a sense of ownership. Over the past two years, city leaders made long-lasting decisions to ensure that Prague's #4-ranked Museums (ahead of places like New York, Berlin and Rome) and Attractions (which trail only London and Tokyo) remain accessible to the citizens who showed up when tourists 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. Business is booming, too. The city's four universities, relative affordability and #3-ranked nightlife pull in young talent and billions in foreign investment—from real estate developers to long-established firms like Microsoft, Cisco and Oracle doubling down on a good thing.

34 Washington, DC United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Educational Attainment
- 13 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 6,346,000

The world is watching the US capital.

The ubiquity of D.C. in dramas fictional and actual on screens large and small means we're all thinking about the U.S. capital. Often. But D.C. is a roiling cultural destination, with museum investment on full display these days (Museums rank #37). There's the iconic National Gallery of Art making up for lost time this past year with high-profile exhibits like the mind-blowing Mark Rothko show. New and reopening museums include the 32,000-square-foot Rubell Museum in a historically Black public school in the Southwest neighborhood, and the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the world's only major art museum solely dedicated to championing women artists. There's also a hospitality boom, with last year's launch of the 274-room Royal Sonesta Capitol Hill joining new properties like the AC Hotel Washington DC Capitol Hill Navy Yard and Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf. And speaking of The Wharf, phase two of the massive Southwest Waterfront development opened last year, creating yet another destination neighborhood in a city packed with them. Fortunately, the city council recently raised the hotel tax to fill the gap in spending created by federal employees working from home. The move is estimated to add US\$18 million to Destination DC's budget, just in time for an upcoming US\$20-million global marketing campaign to kick-start international visits to the city. New arrivals won't go hungry in one of America's most buzzy food cities, especially with the rise of Black chefs and purveyors in places like Market 7, a sprawling food hall touting Black-owned businesses. Also creating a buzz is Chef José Andrés' The Bazaar in the Waldorf Astoria (rescued from its previous life as a Trump Tower), sure to sate your Chesapeake Bay locavorism.



35 Montreal Canada

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Educational Attainment
- 19 Poverty Rate

POPULATION

Metro 3,750,000

You're about to hear a lot more about Canada's laid-back 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 the time you read this, an innovation hub called Ax-C will be open downtown, uniting entrepreneurs, incubators, university researchers, management experts and investors under one roof—similar to Toronto's MaRS and Paris's Station F. The goal is to reignite downtown in a work-from-home reality. The city's Top 20 ranking in Prosperity highlights its appeal to investors, while its Top 50 global culture ranking will be boosted by the opening of the massive Espace St-Denis in the Latin Quarter, revitalizing the historic Théâtre St-Denis with new performance spaces. Montreal is also becoming more bike- and pedestrian-friendly, thanks to a US\$22-million investment in bike infrastructure and the continuation of nine pedestrian-only streets for another three years. Each local merchants' association will receive US\$700,000 annually to build, program and maintain these popular spaces.



36 Beijing China

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Fortune 500
- 6 Business Ecosystem

POPULATION

Metro 18,883,000

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. A profound transformation is afoot as the megalopolis balances rapid urbanization with the weight of its 3,000-year-old history. While it ranks #22 globally in Prosperity (including boasting the most Fortune 500 companies on earth), the city's #102 Livability index finish reflects the persistent pollution, congestion and pressures of 18 million residents. The government is pushing hard to address these issues, but progress remains uneven. Major infrastructure projects are underway, with a particular focus on expanding green spaces and improving public transport. However, residents express skepticism, as air quality remains a persistent concern despite government initiatives. The recent expansion of Beijing's high-speed rail network, connecting it to key cities across China, promises to ease some transport woes, but the sheer scale of urban sprawl means challenges remain. Beijing Daxing International Airport (ranked #19), a key pillar of China's global connectivity strategy, continues to grow, although there's increasing tension over the city's hospitality sector. New luxury hotels and high-end serviced apartments are sprouting up, targeting international business travelers and tourists, yet many locals are feeling the pinch as real estate prices soar, driven in part by foreign investment.



37 Orlando United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Convention Center
- 6 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 2,679,000

The Mouse's house brings in visiting talent, but a growing hometown dynamism gets them thinking of moving here for good.

Being the largest city in a region that generated more than US\$92.5 billion in tourism-related economic impact in 2023 delivers plenty of international word of mouth. And Orlando knows how to get people talking. Its #6 Attractions ranking represents a firehose of expansions and new openings post-pandemic, with the latest buzz focused on 2025's Universal Studios' Epic Universe theme park, packed with spots like Wizarding World of Harry Potter – Ministry of Magic, and How to Train Your Dragon. Downtown culture booms with the recent opening of music venue Judson's Live, the fourth indoor performance space at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, joining Steinmetz Hall (opened in 2022), the Walt Disney Theater and the Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater. Now you won't be surprised when we tell you Orlando ranks #26 globally in our Culture subcategory. The recently approved US\$500-million mixed-use Westcourt sports and entertainment district will take up nearly nine downtown blocks when it opens in 2027, adjacent to the Kia Center (home of the NBA's Orlando Magic). Getting here has never been easier, thanks to the newly opened, US\$4.2-billion South Terminal Complex at Orlando International Airport, featuring the northern terminus of Brightline, the state's first high-speed rail route that connects Orlando with West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Miami.



38 St. Louis United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Price-to-Income Ratio
- 10 Parks & Recreation

POPULATION

Metro 2,814,000

A city of culture goes big on livability.

America's gateway to the West has always been an understated city of neighborhoods and cultural elegance. Miles Davis is a native son, after all. But it's also an understated beacon in our overall Livability index, boasting amazing value for the money (indicated by its astonishing #3 spot for Price-to-Income Ratio), and within the Top 20 globally in our Healthcare System Index subcategory. Ambitious city building will also boost the city's Top 10 Parks & Recreation ranking, with outdoor-forward developments like the new CityPark soccer stadium adding to the reinvigorated downtown. Similarly, the non-motorized Brickline Greenway now connects city parks and pays tribute to the 20,000 residents of the largely Black community of Mill Creek Valley who were forced from their homes in 1959 for a freeway. The city is also investing in its lauded business infrastructure, especially as it pursues meetings and events once more. The AC Next Gen project that will update and expand the America's Center Convention Complex downtown should be open in 2025, improving the #26 Convention Center ranking. St. Louis is also a stealthy food town and the new Laclede's Landing, a converted warehouse district overlooking the Mississippi, is a good place to start. As is the City Foundry STL food hall, serving an atlas's worth of goodies.

39 Portland United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 Parks & Recreation
- 12 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 2,505,000

America's Left Coast utopia is figuring it out.

Portland's blissful isolation 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 when they can't find what fits their liking—from performance outdoor apparel companies like Columbia and Nike to hospitality brands like Ace and McMenamins. Their #12 GDP per Capita is a testament to that grit. The #26 overall Livability ranking (powered by a Top 10 in Parks & Recreation) is therefore 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. In 2021 the population shrank for the first time in decades. Portlanders are fighting for the city's inclusive livability and identity, one that boasts almost 100 breweries (among the most per capita in the U.S.) and boundary-pushing culture (#18). New public projects prioritizing bikes and pedestrians are everywhere (yes, the Ned Flanders Crossing pedestrian bridge is real). Big projects are also coming online. The new 35-story Ritz-Carlton is the city's first five-star hotel, and as of late 2024, a US\$1.5-billion locally focused investment in the city's airport features a grove of mature trees and mass timber everywhere by Portland-based ZGF Architects.

40 Houston United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

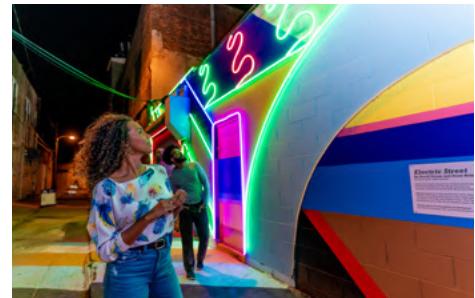
- 3 Parks & Recreation
- 6 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 7,143,000

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. The metro population is above seven million for the first time, and the city today is one of America's most ethnically diverse, with more than 145 languages spoken at home—about even with New York—according to the latest census. Its #34 Culture ranking is a testament to its prism of festivals. In 2025, the city will welcome America's first Ismaili Center, commissioned by His Highness the Aga Khan. But where America's fourth-largest city truly takes off is in its economic heft and wealth, ranking #9 globally for GDP per Capita and #14 for Fortune 500 companies in town. All that rolls up into an overall Prosperity index ranking of #36, which is even more impressive given the #14-ranked Price-to Income Ratio. Houstonians make more and can sock more away. While hometown companies like ConocoPhillips and Exxon Mobil have ensured that 40% of Houston's economy is tied to oil and gas, the energy talent in the city has also made it an unlikely green power destination. According to a recent McKinsey report, investment of up to US\$250 billion may be headed Houston's way by 2040 to leverage the skilled workforce and existing infrastructure.



41 Dublin Ireland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 17 Nightlife
- 18 Fortune 500

POPULATION

Metro 1,285,000

The storied capital has always attracted flâneurs and entrepreneurs. They're just more flush these days.

Relatively safe, gregarious and increasingly wealthy, the Celtic Tiger's capital has never been fiercer, boasting a Top 25 spot in our overall Prosperity index, which includes #18 for Fortune 500 firms that call it home. The magnetism is obvious in places like the Docklands area, called Silicon Docks, home to big tech and digital players including Alphabet, Meta, Amazon, 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's mentoring, training and financial grants. The sudden wealth (for some) means a cratered Livability index result (#134) and one of the lowest rankings for Price-to-Income Ratio. No wonder a dozen or so hotels opened in the past year to embrace the new wealth—including luxury property The Leinster in Merrion Square near the natural history museum and National Gallery. Dublin's three internationally renowned universities (Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and Dublin City University) help the city attract start-ups looking for a smaller (though no longer necessarily more affordable) capital. Good thing the nightlife (ranked #17) still delivers, as do new locally reverent initiatives like the Museum of Literature Ireland, ensuring the city's ancient pride of place for both locals and newcomers.

42 Osaka Japan

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Restaurants
- 3 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 14,916,000

From incredible cuisine to side-splitting laughter, Osaka serves up a menu of 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). Amazingly, it ranks second only to Tokyo in our Restaurants subcategory. 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 Livability and Lovability indices, both at #29. 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 Yumeshma, it's part of a US\$12.8-billion resort due to be completed in 2029. Osaka is also home of the massive annual Tourism EXPO Japan Osaka Kansai, which attracts 150,000 visitors annually—captivating the imagination of travelers through a kaleidoscope of sensory and savory experiences.

43 Philadelphia United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

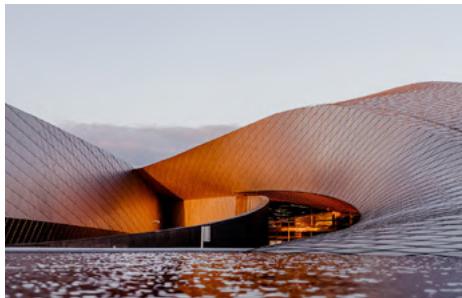
- 8 University
- 17 Parks & Recreation

POPULATION

Metro 6,233,000

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

Philadelphia is a dense, cataloged embodiment of Americana, easily accessible and eagerly shared. Its experiences have always done the talking, whether it's walking the cobblestones of Old City or breathing in the urban green of Fairmount Park. The understated urban tapestry delivers Top 25 Culture to complement its more rugged side. The city ranks #17 in our Parks & Recreation subcategory, helped by its walkability and sure to improve with the extensive development of the multiuse Delaware River Trail that links the city's waterfront destinations. Those preferring their history more regimented will love some of the best museums in the U.S. (ranked #43 globally), 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 its Frank Gehry-led expansion. Important exhibits have also recently opened, none bigger than Disney100 and Wondrous Space at the Franklin Institute, and Black Founders: The Forten Family of Philadelphia at the Museum of the American Revolution. Philly is also finally getting culinary recognition, ranking #44 for Restaurants and boasting more restaurant and chef awards than any other at the 2023 James Beard Foundation competition. The city's coveted University of Pennsylvania is an Ivy League icon, ranked #8 globally and keeping the local talent pipeline stocked.



44 Denver United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 Airport Connectivity
- 17 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 2,959,000

Lifestyle matters. And Denver is selling it to a new mobile investment class.

Denver's rapid transformation from a second city to a thriving urban hub has pushed it into a new era of growth and opportunity. Once known for its affordability, Denver's real estate market has surged in recent years, with the median home price climbing to US\$581,000. Although it still ranks a respectable #57 for Price-to-Income Ratio, this surge reflects the increasing influx of talent and wealth drawn to the city's dynamic economy and enviable quality of life at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. Ranked highly for its educated workforce, Denver attracts professionals working in industries ranging from Fortune 500 companies like Molson Coors and Western Union to start-ups in cannabis and wellness. The city is a magnet for venture capital, particularly in the tech and wellness industries, with over US\$1.12 billion invested in the region in the first quarter of 2024 alone. Denver International Airport, already #15 globally, continues to expand, with US\$770 million in upgrades to the Great Hall and a US\$2 billion gate expansion completed last year. The city's work-life balance is bolstered by its #17 ranking for Labor Force Participation and its emerging arts and culture scene, anchored by the Denver Art Museum's multi-year renovation.

45 Copenhagen Denmark

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 22 University
- 35 Nightlife

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 urban swimming spots (and public hot tubs!), continues to capture global attention. This recognition was further solidified by the city's designation as a UNESCO World Capital of Architecture, with events running through 2026 at venues like the Danish Architecture Center and the climate-resilient waterfront Opera Park. Copenhagen's ongoing commitment to sustainability is evident in the ambitious Lynetteholm project, a 275-hectare artificial island that will house 35,000 people and protect the harbor from rising sea levels and storms. The island is set to be a landmark in urban development, combining housing with environmental protection. Cycling remains a cornerstone of Copenhagen's identity (#38) and the city continues to invest in its extensive biking infrastructure, targeting 50% of all work and school commutes by bike next year. Meanwhile, transit buildout is expanding to connect more affordable districts, with the much-anticipated Sydhavn connector nearing completion and new international transit links to Malmö, Sweden, in the works. The old Carlsberg brewery, now a reimagined community venue, anchors the city's emerging destination district, further boosting Copenhagen's appeal. As the city pushes toward carbon neutrality by 2050, it remains at the forefront of sustainable urban living (with the #37-ranked Air Quality to prove it).

46 San Diego United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Parks & Recreation
- 11 University

POPULATION

Metro 3,290,000

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

One of the fastest-growing cities in the U.S. pulls in smitten new residents with its 263 full and partly sunny days annually, the natural endowment of its #8-ranked Parks & Recreation and the 23 beaches—70 miles of them—within city limits that make San Diego synonymous with the lore of SoCal surf culture. But these days, new talent is just as likely to arrive for the innovation cluster that spans the San Diego-Tijuana border across the increasingly buzzing 20-mile stretch between the two cities. The region is already ranked #19 in our GDP per Capita subcategory and is fueled by talent boasting the 23rd most educated residents on the planet. The #11-ranked University of California – San Diego may have something to do with it. Both cities shared the biennial designation as the World Design Capital of 2024, with events ranging from museum openings to this fall's week-long World Design Experience, an interactive showcase of design activated across various venues. The city's #62 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.



47 Auckland New Zealand

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Air Quality
- 6 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 1,537,000

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

New Zealand's largest and most cosmopolitan city balances modernity with natural beauty (and the best metro air quality in our ranking). Known for its iconic twin harbors and dormant volcanoes, the city ranks #14 globally for Parks & Recreation. Recent developments have transformed its skyline and urban core, with Commercial Bay leading the way. This mixed-use precinct has revolutionized the Central Business District's retail and hospitality landscape, adding luxury boutiques and elevated dining to the heart of the city. The revitalized Viaduct Harbour is also a focal point, boasting new high-end hotels that cater to both tourists and business travelers. Britomart, once an industrial zone, has undergone a two-decade-long transformation into a vibrant, modern precinct, blending heritage buildings with cutting-edge architecture. The City Rail Link, expected to be completed in 2026, will dramatically improve transit connectivity across the city, easing congestion and fostering economic growth. The Auckland waterfront is also undergoing enhancements to support the America's Cup, which promises to boost tourism and investment in the city. 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. It seems the secret on its #16-ranked Livability is out.



48 Frankfurt Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Airport Connectivity
- 13 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 2,679,000

Frankfurt is quickly growing into Europe's business capital.

Given its enviable location in the geographic heart of Europe (and its #4-ranked airport, soon to be able to serve 100 million passengers annually), combined with its swift courtship of post-Brexit finance firms looking for stability, is it any wonder Frankfurt is today known as "Mainhattan"? More than 200 banks call the city home, including 160 international firms, the European Central Bank and the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, Germany's largest. As a result, the city ranks #18 in our Fortune 500 subcategory and its citizenry's GDP per Capita ranking is #50 globally. Then there's the ongoing buildup of the infrastructure required to house all that foreign direct investment, which today means the city boasts 14 of Germany's 15 tallest buildings. Another eight skyscrapers, some well over 650 feet tall, are currently being built. This year's focus is on FOUR Frankfurt, a live-work neighborhood of four towers in the financial district. Besides banking, the start-up ecosystem is also ascendant, with insurance, cybersecurity and fintech inspired by the success of insurance platform unicorn Clark, which hit a valuation of US\$1 billion in 2021. But it's not all business: the city is working hard to let locals and visitors know about its #13-ranking biking infrastructure.



49 Zurich Switzerland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Fortune 500
- 18 University

POPULATION

Metro 1,937,000

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

Switzerland's financial center and largest metropolis is a magnet for foreigners who, along with multilingual Swiss nationals, enjoy one of the world's highest standards of living. The city ranks #19 in our overall Prosperity index, powered by an industrious citizenry that ranks #21 in both our Labor Force Participation and GDP per Capita subcategories, 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, and in late 2023, a European Commission study named Zürich residents the continent's happiest, at 97%. Some of Europe's highest salaries certainly help, as does the ability to keep the good times going with a local talent pipeline from Insead Business School and ETH Zürich (aka the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology). The city ranks #18 in our University subcategory. 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. The airport, ranked #26, will only catch up with the city it serves after a multistage renovation is completed in 2026.



50 Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Labor Force Participation
- 12 Poverty Rate

POPULATION

Metro 9,387,000

Deep traditions and fearless innovation weave a dense tapestry in Malaysia's buzzing capital.

Kuala Lumpur, or "KL," perfectly blends tradition with modern innovation, creating one of the most dynamic cities in the Asia-Pacific region. Ranking #12 globally for both Labor Force Participation and Poverty Rate, KL's economy thrives on its booming financial and tech sectors, which continue to attract global talent. The city's prosperity is reflected in its #45 ranking in the overall Prosperity category. Major commercial hubs such as KL Sentral and Bangsar South showcase the city's growth, housing numerous multinational corporations and start-ups. The city made global news in 2024 with the opening of the second tallest building in the world after the Burj Khalifa in Dubai. The 118-story Merdeka 118 Tower boasts luxury accommodations and an observation deck offering breathtaking views of the city. KL is also a multiculturalism dynamo, and the city's rich mix of Malay, Chinese and Indian influences serve up a vibrant food scene, with street food like nasi lemak and char kway teow coexisting alongside world-class dining options. This diversity extends to the city's thriving hospitality sector, with the opening of the Bukit Bintang City Centre—a sprawling mixed-use development featuring high-end retail, hotels and entertainment venues—in 2022, and the Park Hyatt Kuala Lumpur in 2025.



51 Minneapolis United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Parks & Recreation
- 16 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 3,678,000

Urban renewal and progressive city-building (and the great outdoors!) at a price you can afford.

Known globally for the George Floyd protests, which sparked an international movement against systemic racism, Minneapolis has emerged as a city of resilience. Over the past decade, significant public infrastructure improvements, including U.S. Bank Stadium, Commons Park and the renovation of Target Center, have positioned Minneapolis as a leading hub for major events like this year's U.S. Olympic Gymnastics Trials, which drew hundreds of thousands of visitors. Hotels in the city reported record-high post-pandemic summer occupancy, underscoring the city's recovery and viability as a destination for conventions and sports. The city is also undergoing extensive redevelopment with eight mixed-use projects in the pipeline, including the Northstar Center redevelopment and North Loop Green. Minneapolis's affordability is fueled by a #18 ranking for Price-to-Income Ratio, and the 12th-best Parks & Recreation, courtesy of its lauded park system. Ranked #33 globally for Prosperity, the city boasts the most Fortune 500 companies per capita in the U.S., coaxed here by the 16th-best-educated residents on the planet and #27-ranked GDP per Capita. The city's #22 spot for Poverty Rate also adds to doing business the right way.



52 Ottawa Canada

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Tree Cover
- 7 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 1,087,000

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

Ottawa is quietly emerging from the shadow of its larger neighbors, Toronto and Montreal, to become a global magnet for brainpower and innovation. The city ranks an impressive #7 globally in our Educational Attainment subcategory, with one in four residents being an immigrant. This influx of talent has fueled nearly 2,000 knowledge-based businesses in sectors ranging from cleantech and life sciences to aerospace, helping Ottawa rank #18 in our Poverty Rate subcategory. Overall, the city ranks #46 in our Prosperity index. While its attractions may be lagging at #81, there has been a spike in global interest in the city's impressive efforts to share Canada's Indigenous reconciliation and reconcile-action story with the world. A notable development is Mâdashòki Farm, where Indigenous communities reconnect with the land through wellness programs and social enterprise. Ottawa is also expanding its outdoor amenities with the renovation of NCC River House and the restoration of Westboro Beach for public swimming. The NHL's Ottawa Senators recently secured a deal to build a new NHL arena at LeBreton Flats, just over a mile from Parliament Hill. This new events center is expected to be a game-changer for the city, replacing the old suburban arena. Expect Ottawa's #7 Google Trends ranking to improve.



53 Austin United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 Educational Attainment
- 13 Parks & Recreation

POPULATION

Metro 2,296,000

The American dream has a new hometown.

Austin continues to position itself as a hub of innovation and talent. Known for its progressive spirit and strong university presence, the city ranks #13 in our Educational Attainment subcategory. The University of Texas at Austin (#29) plays a major role, fostering a dynamic research environment and feeding into the city's thriving tech sector. Over the past decade, the Austin area has become a magnet for major corporations, with Tesla recently establishing headquarters here to join long-standing players like Whole Foods and Dell. The city's new high-rises, such as the Waterline, which will be the tallest building in Texas by 2026, and the upcoming Wilson Tower, are redefining downtown living. These mixed-use developments bring with them luxury living, office space and retail, signaling Austin's transition into a more urban metropolis. Despite this, the city's rapid growth has had downsides. The office vacancy rate is climbing as remote work continues to impact the demand for commercial spaces. Moreover, housing remains among the least affordable in the U.S., despite home prices having dropped 18% from the pandemic highs seen in mid-2022, the most among the 50 largest U.S. metro areas according to Redfin. Good thing the city's Culture subcategory ranking only keeps climbing (at #29 this year).

54 Calgary Canada

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Educational Attainment
- 20 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 1,349,000

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

With a young and entrepreneurial population, Calgary is busy crafting a new urban development and hospitality story after years of economic uncertainty tied to its oil and gas industry. One of the city's most ambitious projects is this year's opening of the BMO Centre—one of Canada's largest convention centers—which will make Calgary a premier destination for international events and conventions (and certainly improve its current ranking of #212). There's also a new luxury hotel opening on-site in 2025. This initiative is complemented by the revitalization of Stephen Avenue and East Village, reinforcing Calgary's commitment to enhancing its urban core. Residential conversions of office towers are addressing the downtown vacancy rate, helping to meet the growing demand for housing in a city that continues to attract new residents while maintaining an impressive #47 ranking in our Price-to-Income Ratio subcategory. Calgary's young workforce is increasingly educated, ranking #7 globally for Educational Attainment, and this talent is supporting the city's prosperity. Calgary also remains a global player in energy (with the majority of its #24-ranked Fortune 500 companies in the extractive space), but the city's diversification efforts are clear, with significant investments in technology, clean energy and life sciences.

55 Dallas United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Airport Connectivity
- 19 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 7,673,000

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

From 2021 to 2022, Dallas experienced the largest population increase of any U.S. metro area, with a net increase of more than 170,000 people, according to the Census Bureau. Home to more than 10,000 corporate headquarters—the largest concentration in the U.S.—the city ranks #33 globally for Fortune 500 companies. Not surprisingly, Dallas also ranks highly for connectivity—with Dallas Fort Worth International Airport the third busiest on earth and ranking in the Top 5 globally. DFW saw almost 82 million passengers in 2023, and its ambitious expansion plans include a new US\$3-billion Terminal C. The city's #19 Convention Center ranking will improve when a new US\$3-billion, 2.5-million-square-foot facility is built next to the current one in 2028. The same year should see the trenching of this car-worshipping city's elevated Interstate 345 that cut off Black neighborhoods in the early 1970s. But Dallas is big on fun and culture, too. This is the home of America's sixth-largest LGBTQIA+ community. And on 20 square blocks of mixed-use space, institutions like the Dallas Museum of Art and Crow Museum of Asian Art join theaters and symphony and opera venues to power the city's #46 Culture ranking.



56 Brussels Belgium

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 Airport Connectivity
- 25 Museums

POPULATION

Metro 3,331,000

Belgium's capital and the de facto home of the European Union increasingly welcomes the world.

Brussels is a city where European politics meets cultural sophistication, blending historical grandeur with modern dynamism. The iconic Grand Place, often cited as one of the most beautiful squares in the world, is a testament to the architectural prowess of a city that's also renowned as the birthplace of Art Nouveau. Beyond its historic façades, Brussels is investing heavily in urban renewal projects that enhance its livability and appeal. The repurposed Gare Maritime at Tour & Taxis is now a thriving food market under stunning glass roofs, and the colonnaded neoclassical Grand Hospice has been turned into a public park offering respite in the heart of the city. As the EU's administrative center, Brussels attracts a vibrant international population, and this diversity feeds into its cultural landscape, with neighborhoods like the Congolese Matonge quarter showcasing flea markets, street art and a unique local flavor. Brussels is also expanding its connectivity, ranking #13 globally for Airport Connectivity and enhancing its role as a European travel hub with new inter-city and night train routes at the Brussels Midi station. Tourism has surged as well, with a 73% increase year-on-year in 2024, making the city Europe's fastest-growing urban destination, according to Chase Travel.

57 Lisbon Portugal

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Sights & Landmarks
- 12 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 3,013,000

One of Europe's hottest capitals is breaking records for visitors and new residents alike.

You're not imagining it: all of your friends are going to Lisbon. Portugal's capital rode the wave of the country's record 30 million visitors and almost US\$27 billion in revenue in 2023, with nearly 800,000 passing through Lisbon Cruise Port alone. 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 miles of new bike paths meandering through the city's #12-ranked Sights & Landmarks. Not surprisingly, Lisbon also ranks #12 in our Biking subcategory. Newcomers continue to pour in, lured by numerous "best of" lists singing the praises of the city for both digital nomads and international retirees. Of course, this has sent rents and house prices soaring. The government is tinkering with new remote work visas while ending overly generous foreign residencies. Temporary bans on Airbnb licenses have failed and the city is becoming less and less accessible for residents whose minimum wage is among the lowest in Western Europe. Still, new allure like the recent Michelin-starred, Japanese-influenced Kabuki and Kanazawa keep global travelers flowing in (the city ranks #38 globally for Restaurants), as do exciting new hotels like the Mateus, a collaboration with the famed rosé vintner.

58 Honolulu United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Air Quality
- 14 Culture

POPULATION

Metro 1,010,000

An urban paradise blooms quickly.

Few U.S. cities cratered economically more than Honolulu during COVID, and the city's tourism economy fights on, grappling with a 50% drop in Japanese visitors as a result of their weaker currency, the lingering pall of the tragic Maui wildfires and persistently high interest rates that are keeping vacation home investment subdued. However, it's not all gloomy for one of the smallest cities in this year's ranking. Six new hotels opened over the past year, including the Wayfinder Waikiki in the quieter Ala Wai Canal area. The buzziest, however, is the Renaissance Honolulu Hotel & Spa, a stunning 39-story luxe sanctuary outside of the Waikiki tourist district and just steps to the Ala Moana Center. The city's clean air (#4) has always been a draw, but it's the ongoing focus on sharing the Islands' bounteous traditions and new Indigenous initiatives that rank it #14 globally in our Culture subcategory. Recent initiatives range from the iconic Outrigger Reef Waikiki Beach Resort's new cultural center (part of its US\$80-million refresh) to the planned 98-acre New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District on the University of Hawaii's grounds in Hālawa, which will include a new 25,000-seat multi-use stadium.



59
Detroit
United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Price-to-Income Ratio
- 13 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 4,376,000

America's comeback story is writing its next chapter.

Detroit has gone from being on top of the world—in its roles as “the arsenal of democracy” during the Second World War and as one of the wealthiest cities on the planet in the 1950s as Motor City—to a cautionary example of severe urban decline in the '90s and early 2000s. But the rebirth buzz of recent years is blooming all over the city, with approximately US\$7 billion in investment driving over 200 projects, including the redevelopment of the historic Eastern Market with its massive food halls and office space. More recently, Michigan Central, the gorgeous former Beaux-Arts train station that was the tallest train station in the world when it opened in 1913, has reopened as a transportation research lab and destination with community spaces, culinary concepts and locally focused shops. Google's also a tenant. Is it any wonder that Motor City ranks #1 on the planet in our Price-to-Income Ratio subcategory? Nowhere else offers such relative affordability. This year, the city's Motown Museum shows off a US\$65-million reno with expanded performance spaces, enhanced interactivity and educational programs. Watch for Detroit's #82 ranking in our Culture subcategory to rise. Also opening later this decade is the 685-foot tower at Hudson's Detroit, the city's second-tallest building, featuring a hotel, residences, retail and offices.



60
Kraków
Poland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Biking
- 7 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 1,423,000

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, with its origins in the 13th century, could vie for the title of Europe's oldest shopping center. It's why the city is increasingly a destination for Europeans looking for new urban holidays, with its #23 ranking in Attractions and #32 in Museums bolstered by 2024's opening of a new home for the Museum of Contemporary Art overlooking the Vistula River. As in Warsaw, foreign investment is everywhere. Google continues to invest and Ryanair recently announced a US\$800-million expansion of its Kraków operations. In 2023, Volvo Cars opened an entirely new tech hub to drive electrification, noting the need to beat competitors to Kraków's untapped talent pool. The investment will create up 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. The city is also investing in sustainable transportation initiatives. A recent local government push to expand bike infrastructure powers Kraków to an incredible #4 on the planet, and the city will break ground on Poland's second metro system in 2028.



61
Shanghai
China

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Fortune 500
- 7 Business Ecosystem

POPULATION

Metro 24,042,000

China's current commercial nucleus is home to 113 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 opposite 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 in our overall Prosperity index (#30), with the second-highest number of billionaire residents on the planet, at 113, helping the cause. To say nothing of its #7 ranking in both our Fortune 500 companies and Business Ecosystem subcategories. 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 (US\$70.2 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).



62 San Jose United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Educational Attainment
- 1 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 1,982,000

Talent, smarts and money empower its citizens to be bold with recovery.

As the global heart of innovation and the urban center of Silicon Valley, San Jose ranks #29 globally in our overall Prosperity index. Excelling in economically vital subcategories like University (nearby Stanford, for which it ranks #2 globally) and Educational Attainment (#1) will have that effect. It's all possible because of San Jose's moat: 2,500 high-tech companies in and around town. Its institutional prosperity is perhaps most obvious in the bounty of universities that are performance drivers all on their own, creating symbiotic integrations with local tech companies and providing funding and training unlike anywhere else. Given the optimal conditions of a lauded, coveted school and the on-ramp it provides to jobs in the city, San Jose will need to develop its talent pipeline more than ever. According to recent Brookings Institution research, Silicon Valley lost nearly 1,400 senior tech workers in the two years leading up to 2023, and the ongoing layoffs and hiring freezes that followed, along with employee expectations of working from home (aka: not in pricey San Jose), further threaten the talent pool. Just consider that the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex gained 30,000 during those same two years. The prospect of high-speed rail to San Francisco and throughout California has never mattered more to access new talent.



63 New Orleans United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Culture
- 15 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 1,264,000

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. It is why the city ranks #38 in our overall Lovability index, which includes the epic experiences behind its Culture (#4) and Museums (#26) subcategory rankings. That Museums ranking will improve with the Warehouse District's new Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, along with last year's massive new Audubon Aquarium and Insectarium right on the Mississippi adjacent to the French Quarter. In a city ranked #22 for GDP per Capita (even more impressive when you consider the post-Katrina exodus), urban investment is everywhere. The French Quarter boasts the One11, the area's first new hotel in 50 years. A new Four Seasons Hotel and Private Residences opened in the former World Trade Center, followed by men's clothing store and local icon Rubenstein's eponymous 40-room boutique hotel. Harrah's \$435-million investment will expand, renovate and rebrand the city's casino with a 340-room hotel tower. And there's still more: the Riverfront for All project broke ground in 2024 on creating one of the country's longest contiguous riverfront parks, and Lincoln Beach, a historically important Black beach, will be the city's first public beach to open in decades next year.



64 Nashville United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 22 Culture
- 28 Unemployment Rate

POPULATION

Metro 1,991,000

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 (and holding an impressive #53 spot in our Nightlife subcategory), Nashville is firing on all cylinders with events like the CMA Fest and Bonnaroo, as well as new shows and attractions. Theuzziest 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, with stories about Elvis Presley, James Brown, Dolly Parton, the Foo Fighters and dozens more. The four-year-old 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 yet another reason why Nashville ranks #22 for Culture. Massive developments like the new home of the Nashville SC Major League Soccer team in Wedgewood-Houston—a 30,500-seat soccer-only facility—join the city-building ambition behind the opening of more than a dozen hotels over the next two years and a major expansion of the city's airport. Nashville is also a health-care innovation hub, home to more than 500 companies, including 17 publicly listed ones—a major reason why Oracle left Austin for Nashville in 2024 after only four years in the Texas city.



65 Edmonton Canada

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Educational Attainment
- 22 Poverty Rate

POPULATION

Metro 1,186,000

Northern Exposure, at long last.

The environment for a molecular evolution from a chilly resource town into a curated hotbed isolated just enough to do its own thing has been here for years. The University of Alberta (ranked #67 globally), healthy immigration and the government dollars that come with being a provincial capital have long empowered the City of Festivals. From Fringe theater to street performers to an increasingly important international film festival, there are now more than 50 large, city-sanctioned events annually. The reinvigorated downtown keeps drawing locals and growing visitor numbers, and the new Edmonton Convention Centre opening in 2025 will create a world-class venue for international conferences—and boost the city's #44 ranking for Convention Centers. The ICE District is also expanding, with new residential towers planned around the Rogers Place arena, home of the NHL's Edmonton Oilers. City leaders are clearly planning for another million residents and 500,000 new jobs over the next 20 years. Boasting some of Canada's most affordable urban real estate will have that effect. The city's stealthy park system helps it rank #24 in our Tree Cover subcategory and there's local excitement around a possible national park designation for the city's iconic North Saskatchewan River Valley.



66 Salt Lake City United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 11 Labor Force Participation
- 13 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 1,255,000

The great outdoors—and high salaries—are calling, and Salt Lake is doing its best to get you (and keep you) here.

Combining spectacular natural and built environments, Salt Lake City is no longer just a gateway to the great outdoors—it's also a welcoming destination with fresh air (#15), relative affordability (#26 for Price-to-Income Ratio) new museums, and... local breweries, which, over the past three years have multiplied thanks to relaxed local potency limits (and public health measures). The transformation began with the arrival of the XIX Olympic Winter Games just over 20 years ago, as the city thawed its reputation as an über-conservative cowboy town with Mormon family values to become the lifestyle magnet of quaint cafés and stylish restaurants it is today. SLC continues to pour millions into development projects and the beautification of its downtown, which pulled in their new NHL hockey team (sorry, Phoenix) that started playing out of the soon-to-be renovated Delta Center this season, along with the NBA's Utah Jazz. Then there's SLC International (ranked #91 but soon to improve), the country's first major hub airport replacement of the 21st century. Its second phase, with new concourses and gates, has recently been completed. The estimated cost of Utah's new global aviation hub? An astonishing \$4.1 billion. Equally astonishing: it was apparently built with no local taxpayer dollars.



67 Baltimore United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 University
- 9 Price-to-Income Ratio

POPULATION

Metro 2,840,000

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 hypercharged 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 are up 10% year over year. Still, the city scores in the Top 10 in our Price-to-Income Ratio subcategory and its beguiling urban pockets and dipping crime rates continue to attract visitors and curious potential residents seeking unvarnished American urbanism and some of the best museums in the U.S. The tragic Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse in March 2024 that killed six shook the community, but with typical Baltimore resilience container ships were back serving the region's vital port a month later. The city marches on, with years of placemaking investment blooming in South Baltimore's industrial Warner Street district (since rebranded to The Walk @ Warner Street) and a proposed new entertainment district between M&T Bank Stadium and Horseshoe Casino Baltimore. The city also boasts the 18th-most-educated residents on the planet, partially the result of Johns Hopkins University, which ranks #7 in our University subcategory and is also Baltimore's largest employer.



68 Bordeaux France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Biking
- 11 Healthcare System Index

POPULATION

Metro 1,364,000

A pandemic exodus from Paris went (partially) to Bordeaux. Today, the reignited city is poised for its own *Années folles*.

Two hours southwest of Paris by high-speed rail, Bordeaux was always a tempting weekend escape for Parisians and tourists pining for fresher air, local cuisine and the largest concentration of wineries in a nation synonymous with viniculture. Wide golden beaches (with surfing!) are an hour's drive away. But as the pandemic suffocated big-city density, younger urbanites sought out more room and cheaper housing. Many landed at this UNESCO World Heritage city with a tenth of the capital's population despite many similarities, from the stealthy gastronomy to the stunning 18th- and 19th-century architecture, kinetic nightlife and spectacular Seine-like promenade along the Garonne River. All those new arrivals spent the past few years exploring the historic streets, home to the planet's #6-ranked biking infrastructure and enviable health care, and staking their claims. The result is an economic and cultural renaissance, with hundreds of new businesses and new hotels like the recently opened FirstName Bordeaux, a fun conversion of a tired 1970s building, and the luxurious six-room Château Fleur d'Aya in an 18th-century stunner. The city's impressive #41 ranking for Attractions got another boost two years ago with the opening of the Bassins des Lumières, a colossal digital art space housed in the city's former submarine base.

69 Gothenburg Sweden

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 17 Air Quality
- 23 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,022,000

A 400-year-old powerhouse on Sweden's west coast has smartened up for a sustainable future.

Sweden's second city has wrapped up its three-year 400th birthday party and is getting back to work as the country's research and development engine. Gothenburg residents ranked #58 in our Educational Attainment subcategory, and their skills have long pulled in foreign direct investment to the point where, today, 20% of the workforce is employed by a foreign-owned company. Recently, the investment has come largely from Volvo Cars. While the company has manufactured cars here since 1927, it is today owned by China's Geely, which is investing billions locally to turn Volvo into an electric-and-hybrid-only car company by 2030. Geely is so ubiquitous that it's driving the city's high-profile hotel boom, having built the Clarion Hotel The Pier next to its Uni3 innovation center. Another rising corporate force is pharmaceutical and biotech company AstraZeneca—which opened one of its three global R&D hubs here, further showcasing the local talent that ranks #29 globally for Labor Force Participation. Aside from the massive city-building that took place for the city's 400th anniversary celebrations—like the expansion of Jubileumsparken (Jubilee Park) and renovated Maritime Museum and Aquarium—the city is anticipating a US\$100-billion property and infrastructure investment over the next decade. Maintaining its clean air (#17) and adding to its bike network (#23) are priorities of the build-out.

70 Cleveland United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Price-to-Income Ratio
- 19 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 2,080,000

Where American second-tier-city cool meets affordability.

Few American cities boast a rebirth story like Cleveland's. Fifty-five years after the Cuyahoga River infamously caught fire in 1969, the City of Champions walks tall. Increasingly diversified universities and colleges welcome students with open arms, and the city boasts 40-plus breweries, growing urban wineries (you read that right) and lauded restaurants that don't just fill bellies but also mission statements. Take the EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute in the Buckeye-Shaker neighborhood, which teaches former prisoners culinary trades and gives them a professional footing. It's just one reason why the city's #149 Restaurants ranking will only improve. The city is full of this practical ambition and doing the right thing: from the newly renamed MLB Cleveland Guardians (and this year's accessibility-focused renos to Progressive Field) to the work of the new Cleveland Talent Alliance that aims to make the city "one of the fastest growing and most diverse, inclusive and welcoming metro areas in the Midwest by 2030," according to David Gilbert, president and CEO of Destination Cleveland. Young talent has plenty of reasons to stay, from affordable housing (the city trails only Detroit globally in our Price-to-Income Ratio subcategory) to a revitalized, walkable downtown of late 19th-century architecture and stately streetscapes. The city is also home to the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic and ranks #26 in our Healthcare System Index subcategory.



71 Valencia Spain

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 19 Sights & Landmarks
- 24 Healthcare System Index

POPULATION

Metro 1,768,000

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

All (continental) eyes were on Spain's third-largest city this year as it basked in its 2024 European Green Capital limelight. Then, tragically, for completely different reasons in late October as flooding killed hundreds of people and devastated the surrounding region. The city has a long road back to regain its ascent. Places like the city's new Parque Central unveiled 25 acres of green space and tree canopy on top of a reused rail yard in 2022. Outside of the centro, Valencia's almost 10 miles of pristine European Blue Flag-status beaches are lapped by some of the cleanest water in the country. Amazingly, the city further proved its sustainability bona fides last year when it became the first in the world to verify its carbon emissions from tourist activity. Look it up—it's a big deal. This focus on the long-term health of the planet is mirrored in a Top 25 place in our Healthcare System Index. Valencia's already impressive #19-ranked Sights & Landmarks are poised to climb even higher with the new CaixaForum history museum being joined by the Hortensia Herrero Art Centre in the renovated Valeriola Palace, home of Spanish billionaire Hortensia Herrero's private art collection that includes works by Andreas Gursky and Anish Kapoor.

72 Glasgow United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 Air Quality
- 21 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 1,831,000

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

Glasgow powers to its Top 100 ranking on the strength of education, with the planet's #21 spot for educated citizenry and a world-renowned university founded in 1451, the fourth oldest in the English-speaking world (ranked #32 globally). The University of Glasgow counts economist Adam Smith and U.S. Founding Father James Wilson as alumni. And the world is taking notice. Tech start-ups hungry for cheap space and talent are drawn to the city's working-class authenticity over pricier European capitals, even though the business investment metrics have yet to reflect the influx. Glasgow ranks #88 in our Fortune 500 subcategory. The city's airport will improve on its #114 ranking, too, with plenty of international flights added in 2024. Emirates, for example, has seen forward bookings between Dubai and Glasgow up by 51% year-on-year. No wonder new hotels are planned for the rest of the decade, with the recently opened The Address Glasgow now welcoming guests. But it's not like Glasgow has gone corporate. This is the home of Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet and the National Theatre of Scotland, and Glasgow is still buzzing from its 2020 designation as the U.K.'s top cultural and creative city by the European Commission. Its #86 ranking in our Culture subcategory will rise in the coming years.

73 Doha Qatar

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 GDP Per Capita
- 1 Unemployment Rate

POPULATION

Metro 2,160,000

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

Qatar's epic makeover from a fishing and pearl-diving settlement into a gleaming (and sometimes improbable) vision of the future is an urban tale for the ages. 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 this growth reflects the bold "Qatar National Vision 2030," which aims to transform the country into a knowledge-based economy. The city is already #1 globally in our GDP per Capita, Unemployment Rate and Labor Force Participation subcategories. 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 still making headlines, with its new Education City Mosque able to host 1,800 worshippers in its main prayer hall and another 1,000 in its exterior courtyard. No other city in the Middle East is hurtling toward its audacious goals at such breakneck speed... and Doha is only just getting started.



74 Warsaw Poland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 20 GDP Per Capita
- 24 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 3,190,000

Poland's capital city is an ascendant economic and entrepreneurial hotbed that has captured investor imaginations.

Warsaw is turning on the afterburners it spent a generation fine-tuning. Already in the Top 20 for GDP per Capita and boasting the planet's 24th-most-educated citizenry, to say nothing of finally securing a pro-EU national government a few months back, Warsaw is buzzing like few times in its history. There's the recent rebuilding of the 17th-century Saski Palace destroyed by the Nazis, the opening of a new cultural complex for both the Museum of Modern Art and the TR Warszawa theater, and the christening of the once-derelict 19th-century Haberbusch & Schiele Brewery as the craft beer temple Browary Warszawskie. Infrastructure build-out is equally kinetic. The new 1,017-foot Foster + Partners-designed Varso Tower is the EU's tallest building and home to global firms looking to tap into the smart, affordable local talent and keep the city improving on its Top 50 overall Prosperity index ranking. The same architecture firm is also designing the CPK Airport—a "transport interchange which brings together air, rail and road"—that will open in 2032 about 25 miles southwest of Warsaw. Plans are for it to link into the massive Rail Baltica high-speed railway connecting Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to Poland and the rest of Europe.



75 Sao Paulo Brazil

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Restaurants
- 8 Culture

POPULATION

Metro 21,486,000

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 Rino Levi's pyramidal FIESP Cultural Center are just two eye-catching architectural icons of São Paulo (and explain the city's #8 global ranking in our Culture subcategory). But Brazil's largest city, home to more than 21 million "Paulistanos," draws its cultural identity from global influences as diverse as Japan, Italy, Lebanon and France. This amalgamation creates a day-to-day experience that is among the most vibrant and multifaceted on earth. Another happy benefit of the São Paulo stew? It's Top 5 global ranking for Restaurants. 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 Top 20 ranking in our overall Lovability index. While Prosperity is lower, at #92, Livability is a very distant #172 globally. However, despite facing challenges, the Brazilian economy maintains its resilience. Notably, the past year has witnessed robust real GDP growth, largely attributed to impressive crop yields. Inflation is now on a rapid descent, which is prompting calls for more interest rate reductions by Brazil's central bank.



76 Taipei Taiwan

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Healthcare System Index
- 7 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 9,662,000

From urban jungle to real-life nature, Taipei serves up a balanced landscape of future-defining tech manufacturing and its coveted good life.

Nestled on the western fringe of the Pacific Ocean, Taipei is the home of beloved boba, Mongolian BBQ and Din Tai Fung's Michelin-starred soup dumplings, to say nothing of markets like Shida and gourmet restaurants like RAW and Mume—all of which help Taipei's restaurants rank #22 globally. The city checks our Lovability (#51) and Livability (#56) overall indices almost equally. Its quality of life is easy to experience, and highlighted not only by food but also the #29 ranking in our Tree Cover subcategory. The city's plentiful parks satiate residents between visits to the natural beauty of Yangmingshan National Park just a short drive away, and the planet's sixth-best Healthcare System keeps them going. Taipei is also a global tech and semiconductor hub, home to companies like Acer and Asus, and boasts the 14th-most Fortune 500 headquarters globally, along with the 18th-highest GDP per Capita. All that homegrown innovation helps the city rank #13 in our Shopping subcategory, where tech gadgets and cultural treasures coexist. New developments such as Sky Taipei Tower further enhance the city's retail appeal, providing luxury experiences for both tourists and locals. The city's progressive social policies, including being the first in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage, make it an inclusive and welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike.



77 Tucson United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Air Quality
- 20 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 1,042,000

Arizona's second city is ascending fast, with bold city leadership and placemaking.

Fast-growing Tucson is getting its sun-kissed, well-toned arms around its distinct sense of place. Take its unique culinary attributes: America's first UNESCO City of Gastronomy boasts citizens like Barrio Bread's James Beard Award-winning Don Guerra, who serves up baked perfection using locally grown heritage grains, and local favorites like Borderlands Brewing, which recently released an ale made with local white Sonora wheat. Buzzy newcomers are also launching locally first, whether it's BATA (where 80% of ingredients are sourced within 20 miles of your table) or openings by Maria Mazon, of Top Chef fame, whose BOCA Tacos y Tequila has long been required eating. Tucson's #179 Restaurants ranking will only rise once word spreads. Local stewardship has also embraced Tucson's urban bounty, especially with the 150-acre Barrio Viejo neighborhood, sprinkled with Pueblo Revival architecture dating back to the 1800s. New creative businesses occupy the historic buildings, the iconic 109-year-old Teatro Carmen should reopen by 2026 (which will bolster Tucson's already impressive #28 Culture ranking) and there are whispers that a National Historic Landmark designation for the district is imminent. Saguaro National Park is a 25-minute drive away and was recently certified as one of nine global Urban Night Sky Places. Not bad for one of the smallest cities in our global Top 100 this year.



78 Pittsburgh United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 24 University
- 28 GDP Per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 2,366,000

Good things brewing.

Steel City's affordability and the famous ambition of its citizens have filled America's business mind pipeline for more than a century. You see it in the rankings for GDP per Capita (#28) and Educational Attainment (#29). There's a storied sports scene (this city competes on every level) with a sports tourism industry that contributes more than a billion dollars annually in visitor spending, and a legacy of culture (ranked #75) with venues and festivals celebrating everything from local son Andy Warhol (with a new six-block Pop District) to the steel industry that forged the city, called Rivers of Steel. Carnegie Mellon and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center power the city's #24 University ranking and an overall sense of practicality and stewardship (a reason why urbanist and author Richard Florida launched his career here). New Pittsburgh residents often marvel at the city's walkability, 440 bridges, #42-ranked Tree Cover and hills made more fun by Mount Washington's funiculars—the last operating inclines in America and remnants of a system that once had 17 around the city. Pittsburgh Brewing is writing the city's next sudsy chapter with a 42-acre destination site along the Allegheny River in an 1883 complex. Meanwhile, Pittsburgh International Airport's new US\$1.4-billion terminal should open next year.



79 Charlotte United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

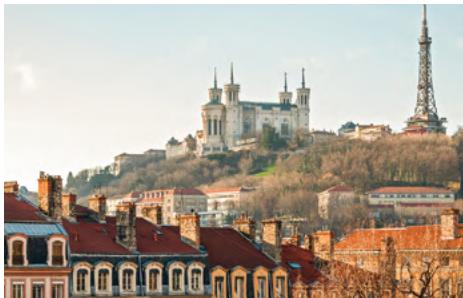
- 24 Fortune 500
- 24 Airport Connectivity

POPULATION

Metro 2,669,000

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 globally in our Fortune 500 subcategory. All that productivity comes with relative housing affordability, and combined with a Top 25 globally connected airport, it's no wonder the city finished #60 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 continuing to invest in massive projects like the medical school campus and an innovation district called The Pearl—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 in 2022 as the Visual and Performing Arts Center, a new home to dozens of galleries, studios, theaters and classrooms.



80 Lyon France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 Biking
- 15 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 2,281,000

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 (#77) and Museums (#123) rankings rise with the plentiful planned investment, that's just icing on the gâteau. Locals are buzzing about the new OL Vallée development with its massive gym and pool, five indoor football pitches, a 32-lane bowling alley, escape rooms and the City Surf Park. More new investment is pouring into La Confluence, a 150-hectare urban redevelopment that not only brings together Lyon's two fabled rivers—the Rhône and the Saône—but also gives new life to a tract of prime but neglected industrial real estate. The jewel 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. You'll also hear much more about Lyon's biking infrastructure (already an impressive #14 globally). With 745 miles of bike lanes (a third of which are protected from cars), the new Lyon Routes will add 155 miles of bike-only roads to connect the city's suburbs to its heart.



81 Nagoya Japan

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Restaurants
- 7 Price-to-Income Ratio

POPULATION

Metro 9,439,000

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

Completely rebuilt after the bombings of the Second World War, Nagoya today 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 ranks #27 in our overall Livability category, highlighted by its #7 ranking for Price-to-Income Ratio and #10 in our Healthcare System Index. The city may rank outside of our Top 100 for Museums (#104), but it still has a bounty of obscure must-sees: 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. In 2022 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 world's seventh-best Restaurants and a local food culture that's characterized as comfort food balancing sweetness with spices. With its Top 50 ranking for Fortune 500 companies—all humming along under the 13th-most-expansive Tree Canopy on the planet—Nagoya offers balanced urban living that not enough people appreciate.



82 Porto Portugal

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Biking
- 33 Healthcare System Index

POPULATION

Metro 1,291,000

Everyone wants a piece of
Portugal's king of the north.

Portugal's kinetic second city is first on the minds of voracious global real estate investors and site selectors either priced out of Lisbon or tired of its crowds. That's not to say that Porto isn't equally coveted, with its colorful old town hugging the banks of the Douro and crowned by Gustave Eiffel's wrought-iron bridge just unfinished enough to remind you that this was the industrial heart of the nation for centuries. New direct flights are arriving from all over Europe, and tourists often outnumber locals in central Baixa. Current visitor numbers, like real estate prices, have already pushed past 2019 levels, notably among U.S. buyers and visitors emboldened by a strong dollar against the euro. They come for the #10-ranked Biking, beaches reachable by subway and new ways to experience the city, from the reopened Mercado do Bolhão, Porto's historic central market, to the new metro line to the massive World of Wine complex on the Gaia side of the river with its seven museums and 10 restaurants. Economic development office InvestPorto, meanwhile, is accelerating the city's green transition with expansive investor support and direct connection to the city's talent pool.



83 Perth Australia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 Air Quality
- 24 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 2,101,000

A beautiful and resilient city where wealth, culture and nature converge on Australia's west coast.

Australia's fourth-largest city is a thriving coastal metropolis known for its natural beauty, economic prosperity and cultural depth. Set on the remote western coast, Perth's #62 ranking in our overall Prosperity index highlights its strong economic sectors of mining, energy and technology and its Top 25 position for Labor Force Participation. The city is also benefiting from significant investment in hospitality and tourism, with new luxury hotels and waterfront developments enhancing its appeal for both residents and visitors. No wonder it sits at #45 in our Google Trends subcategory. Perth's cultural scene is deeply influenced by its Indigenous heritage, particularly that of the Noongar Nation. The Six Seasons Gallery at the Art Gallery of Western Australia showcases over 3,000 Indigenous artworks, offering profound insights into Aboriginal life. At Optus Stadium, Noongar culture is celebrated through art installations, trails and digital storytelling, enriching the visitor experience beyond traditional sports events. And then there's the city's natural bounty, thanks to its pristine beaches, 50 miles of coastline and the expansive Kings Park, one of the largest urban parks in the world. Perth's commitment to preserving its natural environment, while also investing in sustainable urban development, has positioned it as one of Australia's ascendant second cities.



84 Bilbao Spain

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Healthcare System Index
- 17 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,049,000

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

Yes, Bilbao, in the heart of Spain's Basque Country, is still basking in the three-decade afterglow of the 1997 opening of the Guggenheim Bilbao, Frank Gehry's titanium-clad museum that made both the city and its architect global icons. It has also leveraged its vision into building one of Europe's most ambitious secondary urban centers. The city revels under the cover of its own political autonomy, optimizing a hybrid tax system that funds impressive biking (#17) and transit infrastructure, as well as the seventh-best Healthcare System Index ranking on the planet, which includes accessibility-first investments like free public elevators. Sure, the Guggenheim's destination architecture still draws hundreds of thousands annually, but as one of Europe's most welcoming cities (ranked #36 in our overall Livability index), Bilbao is building a resilient hometown that's not afraid to take risks. Consider the daring architectural innovations of Santiago Calatrava's Zubizuri Bridge and Bilbao Airport, and Zaha Hadid's redevelopment of Zorrotzaurre, a 1.5-mile artificial peninsula in the heart of Bilbao that is being transformed into a smart city district. No wonder this is also a stealthy, affordable business headquarters, with the 33rd-most Fortune 500 companies—including multinational utility company Iberdrola and financial giant BBVA—and the planet's 26th-most-educated citizenry to power it all.



85 Cape Town South Africa

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

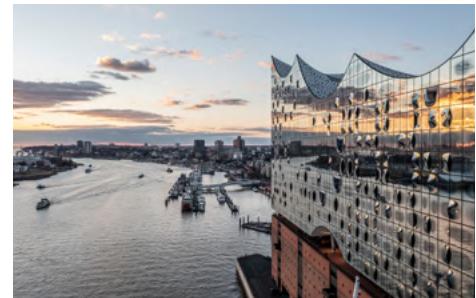
- 12 Air Quality
- 34 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 4,595,000

A new waterfront and urban development show off plenty of natural assets.

As Africa's highest-ranking city, Cape Town, South Africa's oldest and second-largest, is in the midst of reshaping its urban and economic landscape. This past year, the city's iconic Victoria & Alfred Waterfront introduced a new marine research facility, reinforcing its status as a hub for marine science and eco-tourism. This aligns with Cape Town's efforts to promote sustainability, which include ongoing upgrades to the Green Point Urban Park and efforts to expand pedestrian-friendly zones in the city center. You'd expect nothing less from a city boasting the planet's 12th-best air quality. Investment in infrastructure is also ramping up, on heels of a robust expansion of the Cape Town International Convention Centre a few years ago, enhancing the city's appeal for global conferences like 2025's massive Hotel & Hospitality Expo Africa. There's also a hospitality boom underway, with the InterContinental Table Bay Cape Town opening in late 2025 as part of the multimillion-dollar redevelopment of the V&A Waterfront. Cape Town is investing in cultural districts, including the rejuvenation of the District Six Museum precinct to highlight the city's rich history. Unchanged and unspoiled is Cape Town's natural bounty, resulting in a #41 ranking in our Parks & Recreation subcategory.



86 Sapporo Japan

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Healthcare System Index
- 10 Tree Cover

POPULATION

Metro 2,168,000

A four-season spot with plenty on offer, Japan's fifth-largest city is an increasingly cool destination in every sense of the word.

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 in 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. Or a dip in one of the dozens of open-air hot-spring baths. Not surprisingly, the northern city ranks an impressive Top 20 globally in our overall Livability index, helped by its enviable rankings of #3 in our Healthcare System Index, #10 for Tree Cover and #27 for Air Quality. The city is doubling down on its natural attributes with its new Second Sapporo City Development Strategic Vision that features sustainable urban development, increased urban greenery and enhanced public transportation.

87 Athens Greece

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 19 Shopping
- 22 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 3,154,000

It may be the 2,500-year-old cradle of Western civilization, but Athens is also Europe's new It City (again).

The ancient capital is busy making up for lost time with ambitious city-building spanning waterfront newbuilds (Ellinikon), new metro lines connecting soulful destination neighborhoods like Exarcheia (whose central square is considered the heart of this great city) and the reopening of grand buildings as cultural hubs. Right in the city center, the ancient Municipal Market of Kypseli hosts community parties, concerts and workshops, and the old National Opera building is now the Olympia Municipal Musical Theatre Maria Callas. Returning visitors are equally busy catching up, strolling 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. Athens ranks #24 in our Biking subcategory and #28 for Sights & Landmarks, with the Athens Olympic Museum in the northern suburb of Marousi now showcasing the history of the Olympic Games. The city's #28 ranking for Museums will improve soon enough. Another new (well, technically renovated) cultural destination is the National Gallery, which reopened in 2021 after an eight-year reno that doubled its size and let in ample natural light to showcase the European art. Dozens of new hotels include the One&Only Aesthesia on a private oceanfront estate and the sensual feast that is the Brown Acropol.

88 Hamburg Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 23 Nightlife
- 45 Culture

POPULATION

Metro 3,422,000

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 its stunning lake and latticework of canals. The city's commitment to the arts powers it to #45 globally in our Culture subcategory, with the US\$690-million Elbphilharmonie, a spectacular concert hall combining 19th-century marine trade warehouses with the crystalline architecture and acoustics of the future, elevating Hamburg's international profile when it opened in 2017. The city's nightlife (made famous by the Beatles in the early '60s) hasn't lost a beat, ranking #23. But Hamburg comes by its opulence and sophistication honestly, with a workforce that ranks #55 for GDP per Capita. And this being Germany, inclusion is the price of doing business, evident in the city's signature redevelopment project, HafenCity, that's set to open in 2026. In Europe's biggest inner-city urban development—which, over more than a decade, is transforming 250 hectares of tumbledown docks along the port area into a buzzing shopping and residential district—a third of housing is subsidized while another third is rental. Ambitious city-building continues in the burbs, too, with an innovative car-free neighborhood being built just a 15-minute train ride from the city center.



89 Phoenix United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 23 Convention Center
- 24 Price-to-Income Ratio

POPULATION

Metro 4,864,000

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

A thriving desert metropolis that's now just outside of the Top 10 nationally by population, Phoenix has seen some of the fastest growth of any major U.S. city over the past decade. Credit goes to its #24 ranking for Price-to-Income Ratio. According to the latest census data, the city added 163,000 residents, bringing the core population to 1.6 million, with its metro on the cusp of five million. Phoenix has also defied persistently high interest rates, with an almost 14% home price increase in 2023 according to Point2. And what's not to love? A growing roster of fine museums, a vibrant artist community and 300 days of sunshine make the city buzz like never before (failed NHL hockey team be damned). The downtown arts district was revitalized over the past four years by the Pemberton PHX—part art exhibit and part foodie magnet, where locally loved restos like Baba's Falafel and Saint Pasta would host pop-up dinners. And while the Pemberton has recently closed, the city's #75 Restaurants ranking will continue to soar with innovative concepts like the Global Ambassador, the first hotel by restaurateur and 12-time James Beard nominee Sam Fox. The 141-room property has five distinct restaurants and is just one of several recent openings, joining a US\$70-million reno of the iconic Arizona Biltmore, as well as expansions of The Wigwam and JW Marriott Phoenix.



90 Brisbane Australia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 Air Quality
- 21 University

POPULATION

Metro 3,039,000

Rugged and refined, Brisbane is Australia's stealthy thriving cultural hub.

Brisbane, Australia's third-largest city, offers a seamless blend of natural beauty, modern sophistication and a growing economy. Endowed with both #13 Air Quality and #59 Healthcare System Index rankings, Brisbane's subtropical climate and proximity to the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast make it an increasingly coveted Australian hometown. The city is experiencing rapid growth, fueled by significant investments in urban development. The US\$3.6-billion Queen's Wharf project, featuring a riverfront casino, luxury hotels and entertainment venues, is transforming Brisbane's skyline and reinforcing its status as a major economic hub. The city's upcoming role as host of the 2032 Olympics is set to accelerate its growth even further. Preparations for the Games are expected to bring tens of thousands of jobs to the city, particularly in construction and infrastructure development. This is in addition to the local talent cranked out by the University of Queensland (ranked #21 in our University subcategory). The city is also benefiting from expansions to its cultural landscape, including the development of a new 1,500-seat glass theater in the South Bank precinct that will enhance Brisbane's reputation as a cultural destination. Despite its rapid urbanization, Brisbane retains a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere with its many riverfront parks, promenades and weekend markets.



91 Tampa United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 36 Air Quality
- 37 Price-to-Income Ratio

POPULATION

Metro 3,194,000

Florida's outdoor wonderland has a taste for the finer things.

Few American cities balance the natural and built environments quite like Tampa. A low crime rate, 246 days of annual sunshine and the #36-ranked Air Quality on the planet make the city's #38-ranked parks and outdoor activities, including nearby beaches, a joy to explore. Don't miss the Tampa Riverwalk, a 2.6-mile continuous waterfront corridor along the banks of the Hillsborough River and Garrison Channel. From the expanded Florida Aquarium you can stroll to the Tampa Bay History Center, the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts and the convention center. The city is also flexing its downtown investment these days, with the year-old, multi-billion-dollar Water Street Tampa neighborhood in the heart of the city spearheading the way with The Tampa EDITION, a truly five-star luxury property with Michelin-starred Chef John Fraser feeding guests. The waterfront development also boasts a new promenade, a dozen high-end condos and hotels, and bars and restaurants that are making Tampa a culinary destination soon to improve on its Restaurants ranking currently well out of our Top 100. Ambitious rooms seem to open weekly these days in a city that's already home to three Michelin-starred restaurants (Rocca, Koya and Lilac). Now if only those intensifying hurricanes would just leave this urban gem alone.



92 Naples Italy

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Sights & Landmarks
- 10 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 3,299,000

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 has been overlooked and underestimated—both by international visitors and by Italy's power centers. Three millennia of urbanism make it one of Europe's oldest—with the accompanying layers of beauty, conflict and lore (grazie, Elena Ferrante). Naples ranks #28 for its underappreciated Parks & Recreation, buoyed by the city's historic waterfront, nearby beaches and parks ranging from master-planned parcels to secret public gardens. Napoli also ranks Top 5 globally for Sights & Landmarks—its 14th-century Naples Cathedral rivals any other in the architectural feast that is Italy, and new archaeological discoveries near Pompeii will only add to global bucket lists. As in Rome and Istanbul, strolling here reveals forgotten history on every block. Despite the city's lawless reputation, tourism has doubled over the past decade and crime has dropped dramatically (being now more confined to the "victim knew the suspect" variety). New international investments (like the W Naples inside a historic bank building on the kinetic Piazza del Municipio) are finally reaching one of the continent's most beguiling cities. A new high-speed rail link from Rome's Fiumicino airport is increasingly delivering curious first-timers eager to hit la città's Top 10 Nightlife and then recharge the next morning by strolling its #14-ranked Museums.



93 Richmond United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 21 Price-to-Income Ratio
- 26 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 1,316,000

Mellow and understated by design, Richmond is a quiet influence on the union.

Richmond has always radiated a "genteel and understated nature," as The New York Times observed in a sugar-coated acknowledgment of the cruel history of this capital of the Confederacy. The city today is a radiant blood diamond stepping bravely toward confronting a past that slavery built, and becoming stronger and more vital to the union for it. The city's understated #86-ranked Culture demonstrates Richmond's legacy and its fight to do right by it. Richmond has always embraced green space, with gems like the James River Park system contributing to a Tree Cover ranking of #36—which is sure to improve as Confederate monuments are reimaged as inclusive public spaces across the city. A middling Museums ranking will improve with the recently unveiled US\$30-million reno of the Virginia Museum of History and Culture and its partnerships with institutions like the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia. With an educated workforce (#26) and so many Fortune 500 companies (ranking #33 globally) in such a small city, the economy is booming, highlighted by the upcoming 2027 opening of a 1,700-job Lego Group Factory in nearby Chesterfield.



94 Birmingham United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Attractions
- 12 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 3,098,000

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

Birmingham (or "Brum"), the second-largest city in England, has resumed the skyward trajectory of its Golden Decade before COVID hit. The 2010s saw a massive influx of Fortune 500 regional offices chasing one of Europe's youngest workforces (about 40% of Brummies are under 25) and their coveted skills in finance and professional services honed at the city's eponymous university (and the #12-globally ranked Nightlife scene it fuels). Urban investment followed, from the opening of Europe's largest library to plans (coming to life this decade) for the HS2 high-speed rail network connecting Birmingham to London in 45 minutes. Brum's #10-ranked global attractions will soon get even more attention. This also makes Birmingham's airport (ranked #61) a suddenly convenient option to access the country's capital, and there's fittingly an ongoing US\$380-million investment plan to increase the airport's capacity to 18 million passengers by 2033. The number of jobs being created is staggering, especially within the booming life sciences and green technology clusters as both the government and private local companies like Land Rover and Jaguar rush toward renewables. Given all the big news in town, it's no wonder that Birmingham just became the new headquarters of national tourism agency VisitBritain/VisitEngland in April 2024.



95 Raleigh United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Educational Attainment
- 15 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 1,421,000

A booming economy and a global intellect position this Carolina powerhouse for the future.

Raleigh, the City of Oaks, is part of North Carolina's Research Triangle, one of America's largest and most successful research parks—think high-tech and biotech, along with advanced textile development. The city also boasts three major research universities, which supply a pipeline of young, cheap and brilliant talent that ranks Raleigh #6 for Educational Attainment globally. Is it any wonder, then, that Apple recently announced plans for a \$1-billion, 281-acre Raleigh campus with up to 3,000 employees for later this decade? New arrivals are increasingly drawn to the city for its affordable housing (although ascendant with a median average now of \$434,741, according to Point2), and Raleigh currently ranks #75 in our Price-to-Income Ratio subcategory. With all the potential residents pouring into town to try before they buy, exciting hotel openings are plentiful, from long-stay-focused Tempo by Hilton Raleigh Downtown to the new Kimpton opening in late 2025. Placemaking matters here, too. The one-acre North Carolina Freedom Park just opened in the heart of downtown, honoring the African American struggle for liberty. Raleigh's already improving Tree Cover ranking (#50) will keep climbing as a result.

96 Rochester United States

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 11 Price-to-Income Ratio
- 25 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 1,087,000

The faded industrial Great Lakes titan is doing the work.

Rochester was one of the country's first boomtowns. The fertile Genesee River Valley powered rampant entrepreneurship in flour mills, then manufacturing, then world-rattling innovation, from Kodak to Western Union to Xerox. Today, the third-largest city in New York State may no longer boast the head offices it once did, but the stately homes—now so affordable, with a median single-family house price of around \$200,000 (for now)—remain. Want proof? See Rochester's #11 ranking for Price-to-Income Ratio. The region's universities (including the #85-ranked University of Rochester and Rochester Institute of Technology) have renowned research programs, staying true to the local R&D legacy. The pipeline of talent could turn the trickle of companies opening up in the city into a torrent as the war for skilled talent intensifies. Its #41 ranking in Educational Attainment speaks volumes about the good hands that steer this former industrial titan, especially these days. Fresh off of hosting the 2023 PGA Championship, Rochester is also unveiling its newly expanded children-focused Strong National Museum of Play, which anchors the newly developed "Neighborhood of Play" district in the former Inner Loop area that will include housing, commercial space, retail, a brewery, restaurants and a hotel.

97 Hong Kong China

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Parks & Recreation
- 10 Fortune 500

POPULATION

Metro 6,468,000

A global business destination fights to reclaim its magnetism and livability.

On any given day in Hong Kong you can 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. Beijing has been chipping away at Hong Kong's freedoms—and sparking mass protests in the process. It's what makes the city rank only #82 for its once-enviable Livability, but local pride and passion makes it all the more lovable (at #40) despite the fraught politics. Still, Hong Kong moves onwards and upwards: the 100-acre West Kowloon Cultural District designed by Foster + Partners has just opened on reclaimed land fronting Victoria Harbour. World-class museums, an opera house, theaters and new parkland made the 30-year wait worth it. Hong Kong International Airport (ranked #57 globally) has also been investing in its Airport City development, which includes the impressive Sky Bridge that gives travelers countryside views before and after their urban immersion.



98 Nantes France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Biking
- 20 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 1,011,000

A revived port city plays the long game.

The third-smallest city in our Top 100 (just a few thousand residents behind Ottawa and Honolulu), Nantes is the historic capital of Brittany and France's sixth-largest city. It rose to prominence as one of Europe's leading ports in the 1700s and was an industrial engine until shipbuilding, hit hard by the 1970s oil crisis, ground to a halt. The manufacturing and shipping center—Île de Nantes in the middle of the Loire River—was left a derelict wasteland in the city's heart. All that changed in 2007 when centuries of warehouse and factory stock was repurposed as a new cultural hub. Spots like Les Machines de l'Île, a collection of interactive art exhibits featuring giant walking machines inspired by local son Jules Verne's novels and plays, delight visitors. The city was also designated the European Green Capital in 2013, further helping habitat rehabilitation, food security and sustainable transportation (Nantes ranks an astonishing #5 for Biking globally). It also boasts a Healthcare System Index ranking of #28 and cultural institutions to spare, none more impressive than the Musée d'Arts, established by Napoleon in 1801 and fully renovated a few years ago. Its collection of the masters rivals anything in Paris (but without the capital's crowds).

99 Toulouse France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Healthcare System Index
- 21 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,454,000

An ancient city keeps climbing.

The heart of France's aeronautics and space industry is a rare hometown that's both a globally recognized innovator and a 2,000-year-old urban treasure trove committed to its citizens—current and future. Airbus, Airbus Defence & Space, Thales Alenia Space and dozens of other aeronautics firms alone employ almost 100,000. The sectors have long attracted complementary investment, and today Toulouse is among the European leaders in intelligent transport, from autonomous vehicles (both driving and flying) to feasible hyperloop implementation. It also ranks #21 for Biking and an impressive #12 in our Healthcare System Index. France's longest urban cable car just opened here, spanning the tree-lined Garonne River. But the Pink City (named for the distinct rose hue of its buildings) is also an emerging cultural hotbed, with a torrent of recent and upcoming investments—like its conversion of the Saint-Michel prison into an auditorium for the Orchestre National Capitole Toulouse in its efforts to become France's City of Dance. Locals are buzzing about Les Halles de la Cartoucherie, a 145,000-square-foot former munitions factory that opened recently with a food hall, co-working space, and sports and cultural center. With high-speed rail bringing Paris within three hours by 2030, expect a lot more buzz about France's fourth-largest metro.

100 Rio de Janeiro Brazil

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 11 Facebook Check-ins
- 13 Instagram Hashtags

POPULATION

Metro 12,306,000

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

Known 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 an unhurried way of life. The ever-popular Copacabana and Ipanema beaches cater to sun worshippers while the city offers numerous free museums and cultural centers (ranking #15 in our Culture subcategory) for art aficionados. Outside the city, the mountains and Tijuca National Park beckon adventurous souls and give the city a #38 ranking for Parks & Recreation. Despite its rougher edges, Rio has left behind its era of widespread crime—even the favelas, the city's brightly painted shanty-town communities, now offer an engrossing setting for cultural immersion. But watch your stuff, just in case. The city will continue to be one of the most lovable places in the world—this year it ranks #24, including #11 for Facebook Check-ins and #13 for Instagram Hashtags—and ambitious 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.

Ranking cities' Place Power™ Score, by category

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
1	London	United Kingdom	3	1	2	12,434,823
2	New York	United States	2	3	1	19,908,595
3	Paris	France	1	2	3	13,114,718
4	Tokyo	Japan	4	4	6	37,785,000
5	Singapore	Singapore	8	10	5	5,926,000
6	Rome	Italy	5	5	72	4,303,821
7	Madrid	Spain	9	7	18	7,005,286
8	Barcelona	Spain	6	6	38	5,111,749
9	Berlin	Germany	35	9	7	4,979,867
10	Sydney	Australia	10	17	12	4,836,000
11	Amsterdam	Netherlands	12	14	13	2,891,907
12	San Francisco	United States	22	26	4	4,692,242
13	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	60	8	8	4,945,000
14	Los Angeles	United States	34	12	10	13,111,917
15	Toronto	Canada	19	25	11	6,837,000

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
16	Seoul	South Korea	25	15	27	23,225,000
17	Chicago	United States	33	23	15	9,566,955
18	Vienna	Austria	7	22	59	1,960,000
19	Seattle	United States	13	50	17	4,001,701
20	Milan	Italy	11	21	74	4,961,743
21	Boston	United States	30	67	14	4,912,449
22	Vancouver	Canada	15	49	32	2,484,000
23	Miami	United States	28	19	40	6,123,949
24	Stockholm	Sweden	18	44	23	2,308,143
25	Melbourne	Australia	24	34	34	4,709,000
26	Oslo	Norway	17	46	31	1,278,827
27	Munich	Germany	23	60	28	3,016,834
28	Istanbul	Türkiye	54	13	73	15,636,000
29	Las Vegas	United States	65	18	70	2,265,926
30	Helsinki	Finland	14	76	57	1,551,959
31	Atlanta	United States	43	66	26	6,094,752
32	Bangkok	Thailand	126	11	64	18,884,000
33	Prague	Czechia	69	16	79	2,259,981
34	Washington	United States	107	54	16	6,346,083
35	Montreal	Canada	92	41	20	3,750,000
36	Beijing	China	102	37	22	18,883,000
37	Orlando	United States	74	32	49	2,679,298
38	St. Louis	United States	21	96	55	2,813,523
39	Portland	United States	26	78	56	2,505,312
40	Houston	United States	57	64	36	7,142,603
41	Dublin	Ireland	134	33	24	1,285,000
42	Osaka	Japan	29	29	118	14,916,000
43	Philadelphia	United States	48	74	39	6,232,894
44	Denver	United States	75	87	25	2,959,386
45	Copenhagen	Denmark	78	55	37	1,928,612
46	San Diego	United States	64	57	44	3,289,701
47	Auckland	New Zealand	16	69	99	1,537,000
48	Frankfurt	Germany	44	88	48	2,678,557
49	Zurich	Switzerland	112	70	19	1,936,563

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
50	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	88	47	45	9,387,000
51	Minneapolis	United States	61	137	33	3,678,328
52	Ottawa	Canada	55	89	46	1,087,000
53	Austin	United States	99	73	35	2,296,377
54	Calgary	Canada	62	97	41	1,349,000
55	Dallas	United States	124	84	21	7,673,379
56	Brussels	Belgium	77	90	52	3,331,496
57	Lisbon	Portugal	42	48	114	3,013,027
58	Honolulu	United States	37	83	85	1,010,100
59	Detroit	United States	32	133	76	4,375,604
60	Kraków	Poland	46	53	109	1,423,151
61	Shanghai	China	181	43	30	24,042,000
62	San Jose	United States	121	130	29	1,981,584
63	New Orleans	United States	76	38	98	1,264,357
64	Nashville	United States	120	68	53	1,990,873
65	Edmonton	Canada	84	136	51	1,186,000
66	Salt Lake City	United States	90	163	47	1,254,675
67	Baltimore	United States	70	212	43	2,840,005
68	Bordeaux	France	31	103	132	1,363,711
69	Gothenburg	Sweden	45	152	80	1,021,831
70	Cleveland	United States	41	153	82	2,079,759
71	Valencia	Spain	38	77	124	1,768,205
72	Glasgow	United Kingdom	80	80	77	1,830,710
73	Doha	Qatar	216	204	9	2,160,000
74	Warsaw	Poland	157	58	50	3,189,533
75	Sao Paulo	Brazil	172	20	92	21,486,000
76	Taipei	China	56	51	142	9,662,000
77	Tucson	United States	47	101	117	1,042,393
78	Pittsburgh	United States	91	126	65	2,365,501
79	Charlotte	United States	94	150	60	2,668,688
80	Lyon	France	52	113	96	2,280,845
81	Nagoya	Japan	27	109	156	9,439,000
82	Porto	Portugal	50	72	134	1,290,627
83	Perth	Australia	117	85	62	2,101,000

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
84	Bilbao	Spain	36	142	120	1,048,966
85	Cape Town	South Africa	39	61	160	4,595,000
86	Sapporo	Japan	20	108	182	2,168,000
87	Athens	Greece	149	27	123	3,154,000
88	Hamburg	Germany	137	62	69	3,421,692
89	Phoenix	United States	130	112	58	4,864,209
90	Brisbane	Australia	97	171	61	3,039,000
91	Tampa	United States	72	131	87	3,194,310
92	Naples	Italy	51	42	184	3,298,730
93	Richmond	United States	79	149	78	1,316,145
94	Birmingham	United Kingdom	113	59	103	3,097,965
95	Raleigh	United States	128	135	54	1,420,825
96	Rochester	United States	59	170	94	1,086,859
97	Hong Kong	China	82	40	167	6,468,000
98	Nantes	France	49	138	137	1,011,020
99	Toulouse	France	63	119	133	1,454,158
100	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	146	24	157	12,306,000

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