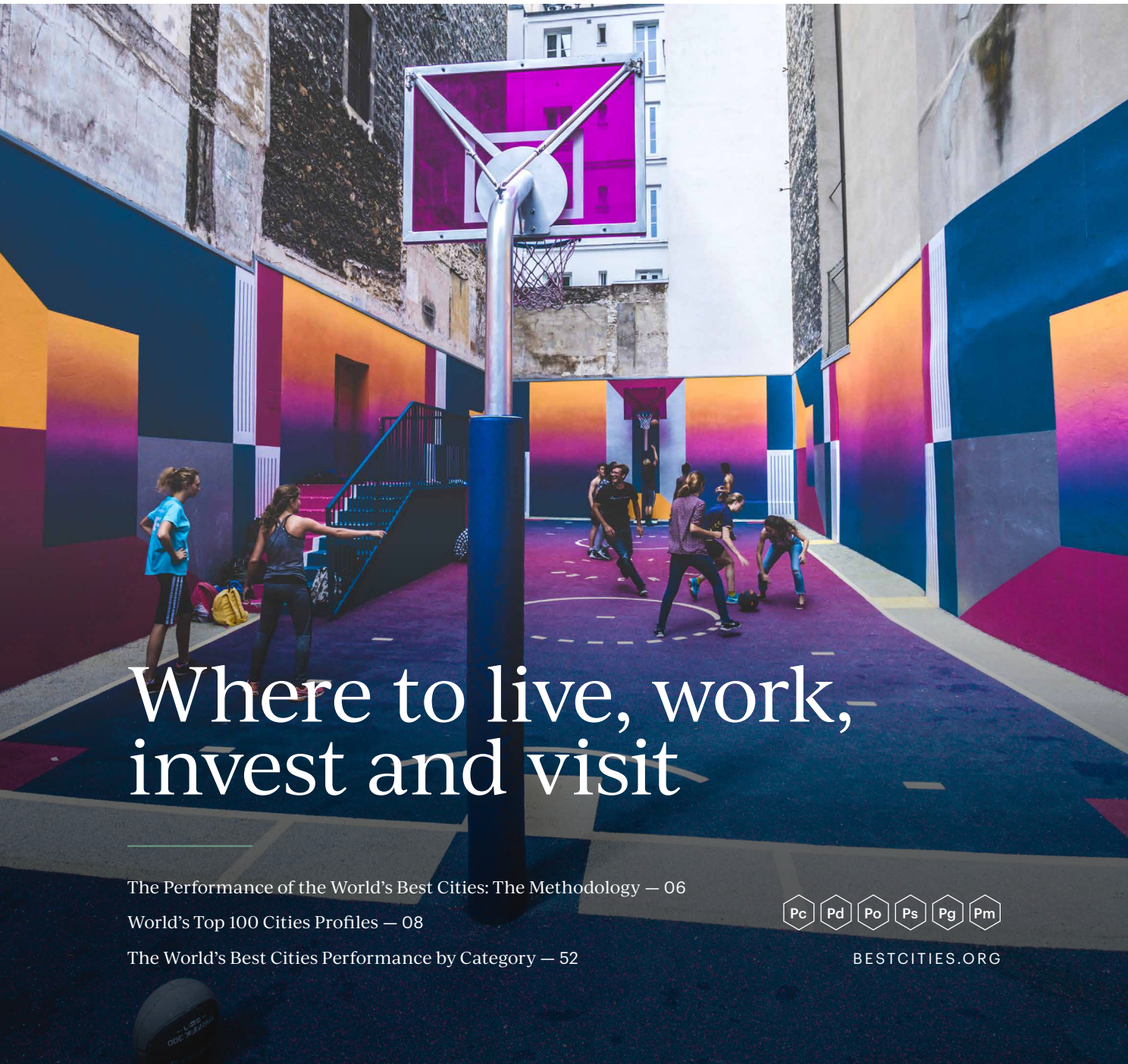


World's

# BEST CITIES

A RANKING OF GLOBAL PLACE EQUITY

2021

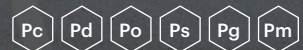


## Where to live, work, invest and visit

The Performance of the World's Best Cities: The Methodology — 06

World's Top 100 Cities Profiles — 08

The World's Best Cities Performance by Category — 52



BESTCITIES.ORG



# WRLDCTY 2020

Virtual Festival

October 22-24

## Love cities?

Join WRLDCTY, the planet's largest virtual cities festival, from home.

October 22 - 24, 2020

Accessible for replay anytime.

Learn more at [WRLDCTY.com](https://wrlldcty.com)

- 3 days to shape the cities of tomorrow and experience them like never before
- 100+ speakers, including Richard Florida, Bjarke Ingels, Jennifer Keesmaat and Chip Conley
- 20+ urban experiences ranging from Sunrise Yoga from Santa Monica to Dim Sum Magic from Hong Kong to Burlesque 101 from Brooklyn
- Thousands of global citizens and city lovers eager to learn about the future of cities

# WELCOME TO THE 2021 RANKING OF THE WORLD'S BEST CITIES

Resonance Consultancy is building the most comprehensive city rankings on the planet. Here's why this matters now more than ever.



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

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us and our cities in ways none of us have ever experienced before. It's caused us to reexamine and rethink the way we'll want to live, work and play in the future. If there's one thing that social distancing has taught us, it's that the shared spaces we were asked to close and avoid—from parks to restaurants to sporting venues, museums and galleries—are what we cherish most about the cities we live in or love to visit.

The planet's large cities—with MSA populations of more than a million people—face imminent and myriad challenges that will define their next decade and beyond.

Just take two obvious and looming but diametrically opposed inevitabilities: flight from the perceived density danger of pandemic-stricken cities by those with the means, and the rising homeless population due to unprecedented unemployment and inability to afford housing.

The world's cities would be derailed by just one of those tsunamis, never mind both barreling down simultaneously. To say a reinvention is upon us is an understatement.

To capture this reality in our rankings—now in their sixth year—we have also expanded and evolved. We have added three new factors to our ranking. For our Prosperity category, we have added the unemployment rate of a city (as of July 2020, the latest numbers available at press time) and the Gini Index of Income Inequality. In our Place category, we added the number of COVID-19 cases per million (as of July 31, 2020) for each city.

While this Best Cities ranking incorporates standard metrics for factors such as these three new ones, as well as our standards like weather, crime and household incomes, what distinguishes our methodology from all others is that we also

incorporate user-generated data to quantify the number of quality restaurants, shops, nightlife and other experiences that make urban living so alluring.

Based on the data we have collected over the past five years, we know that a city's performance for factors such as Facebook check-ins, Instagram mentions, recommended culinary experiences, museums, nightlife, culture and shopping have some of the highest correlations with not only the number of visitors a city receives, but with investment and economic growth as well. Rebooting this software of urban experiences will be even more important than investments in infrastructure when it comes to a city's recovery from this crisis.

The rankings for these experiential factors reflect the performance of cities for each metric prior to the crisis. No doubt some restaurants, shops and other unique local experiences will not survive the loss in clientele and revenue that the pandemic has wrought, and the results a year from now may vary significantly from one city to the next. Our data will continue providing a unique perspective to quantify the impact the crisis has had on cities from an experiential point of view.

But survive they will, and some will even thrive. The most likely candidates being those that sit atop these rankings. We hope this report will inspire you to celebrate and rediscover these global urban centers when the time is right. In the meantime, let's take care of one another and our communities in order to make our cities the best they can possibly be in the weeks, months and years to come.

To discuss how Resonance can help your city or community, please get in touch.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Fair'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'C'.

Chris Fair, President & CEO  
Resonance Consultancy  
cfair@resonanceco.com

# TRAVEL IS A FORCE FOR GOOD

We can play a part in the remaking of the world's great cities, by supporting local businesses and investing in the same things that make a city great—its culture, its people, and its infrastructure.



**As a long-time New Yorker, I find it eerie to see once lively stretches of theaters, comedy clubs, hotels, and cinemas boarded or papered up, advertising events from March 2020 like they're frozen in time. COVID has emptied city streets in the last six months, prompting some fair-weather locals to claim "NYC is dead." (Don't worry: Jerry Seinfeld came to the city's defense.) The notion that a city as vibrant as New York—or London, Paris, Tokyo—could actually "die" short of nuclear intervention or a revolution is a little laughable. But parts like Midtown Manhattan—typically corridors of white-collar business, nightlife, and culture—do seem to be hibernating. And yes, that can be unnerving for the city that never sleeps.**

But look beyond the financial centers or traditional downtowns and you'll see late-night parties in the parks (on a Sunday, no less). Same for Paris, where its locals are reveling in a city free(er) of tourists.

Could COVID prompt a reset of great urban centers around the world? How will they rebound from this pandemic, and how can we continue to support the cities we love from far away? At AFAR, we have believed since the brand's inception a decade ago in travel as a force for good. Travel does not have to be the villain in the COVID narrative—especially if we all learn how to travel responsibly.

What does it take to be a good guest in a host city? It starts with respecting the city's rules—masks on, social distancing in place—and finding ways to support local communities on the neighborhood level, even street by street. The world's great cities are rich with personality, and small business owners are central to the making, and remaking, of a city.

So start small: by shopping local and tipping aggressively; by going off-peak and seeking out lesser-known sites; by having empathy for the people and places you visit. Let your values lead the way you spend, and this year's list of the World's Best Cities, compiled and revised with COVID-era responses in mind by Resonance Consultancy, set your course for future travel.

At *AFAR.com*, the exclusive editorial partner of Resonance Consultancy for the World's Best Cities and America's Best Cities, released this summer, we discuss where, how, and when to be better travelers throughout this crisis. Let's learn to travel responsibly together.

Laura Dannen Redman  
Digital Content Director, AFAR Media

# CONTENTS

The Performance of the World's Best Cities: The Methodology — 06

World's Top 100 Cities Profiles — 08

World's Best Cities Performance by Category — 52

# THE PERFORMANCE OF THE WORLD'S BEST CITIES: THE METHODOLOGY

Resonance Consultancy ranks the world's cities (principal cities of metropolitan areas with populations of more than one million) by using a combination of statistical performance and qualitative evaluations by locals and visitors in 25 areas grouped into six core categories. Principal cities are defined as the largest city in each metropolitan statistical area.

## THE SIX CORE CATEGORIES

Pc PLACE

Po PEOPLE

Pg PROGRAMMING

Pd PRODUCT

Ps PROSPERITY

Pm PROMOTION



Pc PLACE

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

**Weather** Average number of sunny days (National Climatic Data Center, Weatherbase)

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

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

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

**COVID-19 Infections** Number of COVID-19 cases per million (county level data, retrieved July 31, 2020) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)



Pd PRODUCT

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

**Airport Connectivity** Number of direct destinations served by the city's airports (Google Flights)

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

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

**University Ranking** Score of the top local university (U.S. News & World Report, Best National Universities)

**Convention Center** Size of the largest convention center (official convention center website)



## Pe PEOPLE

The more diverse a city's population, the more it produces global ideas... on a local scale. Human capital is often a city's most valuable resource. To evaluate the relative strength of human capital from one city to the next, we consider the diversity of the city's population—something of proven importance when it comes to attracting talent.

**Foreign-Born Residents** Percentage of foreign-born residents (Eurostat, UN Migration, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, U.S. Census and national data sources)

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



## Ps PROSPERITY

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

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

**GDP Per Capita** GDP per capita, in U.S. dollars (McKinsey Urban World)

**Income Equality** The city's Gini Index, a simple measure of the distribution of income across income percentiles in a population (OECD, IMF, U.S. Census and national data sources)

**Unemployment Rate** The city's latest unemployment rate that captures job losses as a result of the economic recession caused by COVID-19 (OECD, World Bank, UN-Habitat, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and national data sources)



## Pg PROGRAMMING

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

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

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

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

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



## Pm PROMOTION

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

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

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

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

**Instagram Hashtags** Most Instagrammed city (Instagram.com)

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



World's

# TOP 100 CITIES PROFILES

Global cities are the engines of the world and the badges of human ingenuity. Yes, they've stalled, exposing long-ignored foundational and institutional problems manifesting on their streets and in their hospitals and seniors homes. But they're also leading—like they always have—the recovery and future-defining next stage of human innovation. Their citizens will gather again, colliding and creating the global culture, wealth and energy that defines the path forward for our planet.





CAMDEN LOCK

**POPULATION**

METRO 12,434,823

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 1 PROMOTION
- 2 PROGRAMMING

# 1 LONDON UNITED KINGDOM

As the “capital of capitals” negotiates the uncharted terrain of a post-Brexit world, for now it still reigns atop the planet’s best cities for the fifth year running.

Khan appointed Amy Lamé as the city’s first “Night Czar” who would interface, encourage and be the ambassador for all things nocturnal.

This year, months into the devastation the pandemic has wrought on every industry dependent on conviviality, it’s probably not surprising that the struggling owners of the city’s remaining clubs are calling for a reconsideration of the Night Czar role. “I believe that I’m doing the best job I can to support the businesses to survive the pandemic,” Lamé said. That may well be true, but the task is beyond Herculean.

Protecting night culture doesn’t appear high on the list of club goers, London authorities or anyone on the national level, who all have rather a lot of other fish to fry. Therese Raphael of Bloomberg Quint points out that not only did the UK have the highest excess coronavirus death rate in Europe—our rankings give London an unimpressive

Since we first began ranking the world’s best cities, we’ve had a firm, data-driven idea about what Best was—prosperity and opportunity; the magnetic aspects of cities that draw talent and visitors; growth. But as the pandemic grinds on, our clear definition of Best is losing some of its sharpness. In our report from 2020, Best had much to do with quality of life rankings like Programming, and London was #1—this year #2—for that category, which includes Culture, Restaurants, Shopping and Nightlife. The nighttime economy was evaluated by Ernst & Young at \$35 billion back in 2014; in 2016, London Mayor Sadiq



TOWER BRIDGE



148th spot out of 263 cities for the number of COVID-19 cases per million residents—it also had the deepest drop in growth among the Group of Seven countries: Britain was officially in recession as of August 2020 for the first time since 2008. There’s also the small issue of Brexit, which was entirely eclipsed by the pandemic for months. In early September, with no deal in sight, Prime Minister Boris Johnson declared an October 15 deadline for reaching a trade agreement with Brussels. A “no deal” could throw a match on many issues, including Scotland’s smoldering separation sentiment.

There’s been speculation on the impact of Brexit on London’s prosperity ever since the referendum vote was counted in 2016: for 2021, our rankings show the city at #5 for number of Global Fortune 500 companies (identical to 2020), 29th for GDP Per Capita and 52nd for Unemployment. But our new ranking subcategory, the Gini coefficient (which we refer to as Income Equality), shows the city’s alarming disparity between rich and not: London ranks 149th of 263 cities. Could a Brexit deal be an opportunity to redress? Certainly, some of those who voted to leave are hoping, perhaps vainly, that it could be so.

While prosperity and nightlife are good indeed, the pandemic has made us value other aspects of city life—critical things, like cool, breathable air, which

is made possible by a city’s trees and its green, open landscapes. London ranks #16 for the quality of its outdoor experiences, many of which come in the form of spectacular parks that are the legacy of dozens of former country estates that served as hunting grounds for generations of kings and queens. But the parks are intimately related to London’s prosperity, and Britain’s Office of National Statistics now has the numbers to prove it. CityLab’s excellent Feargus O’Sullivan shared a report from National Statistics stating that “tree cover saved the capital more than 5 billion pounds (US\$6.56 billion) from 2014 to 2018 through air cooling alone. Additionally, by keeping summer temperatures bearable for workers, trees prevented productivity losses of almost 11 billion pounds.” With more people working from homes that may not have air conditioning, that’s a significant contribution to wellbeing and the bottom line. And in the UK, where the *Guardian* says that toxic air is responsible for 40,000 early deaths,

London has established an Ultra Low Emissions Zone, which penalizes diesel cars in the city.

Perhaps one area that stretches across qualities like outdoor experiences, prosperity and nightlife in London is dining. The struggling restaurant industry has pivoted creatively, moving onto the streets, embracing the Eat Out to Help Out initiative—early-week half-price menus at unexpected venues, like the Michelin-starred Social Eating House, or the cheerful, delicious Sri Lankan Hoppers. Some restaurants are looking to make the love last beyond summer and half-price deals. Brat (Welsh for apron) is moving into indoor/outdoor digs for the winter, where you can gather “in front of the fires for roasted game rice, whole crab with hay butter, grilled mushrooms and wood-fired breads.”

Prosperity good; nightlife better; outdoor space and fresh air essential; sitting in front of the fire with friends—that, right there, is the world’s best.



OLD AND NEW COLLIDE IN LONDON



MIDTOWN VIEW IN NYC

**POPULATION**

METRO 19,979,477

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 1 PROGRAMMING
- 2 PROMOTION

# 2 NEW YORK UNITED STATES

America’s urban heart was broken by the pandemic and has a long way back.

Here we are, in September, writing a story about the planet’s second-best city. Number one in the U.S. and in many people’s hearts around the world.

It’s a grim time to be on top. As cases spiked in March and April, Gotham became the nation’s nightmarish coronavirus epicenter. Statewide, more than 18,000 COVID-19 patients were in hospitals at one point in April. Daily deaths peaked at 799 in April, and have totaled over 24,000.

A few short months ago, all the data made sense. While New York ranks just 64th for the size of its convention center, the Jacob. K. Javits Center was in the process of being renovated to twice its enormity. Most recently, its square

footage had been transformed into a 1,200-bed field hospital, with room, if necessary, for 2,900.

A year ago, we went on gaily about how New York was reinventing shopping, with the mall of the future at Hudson Yards and Nordstrom and Neiman Marcus vying for supremacy in the chic city. This year, in the #2 shopping city on the planet (behind only Tokyo), there is no breakfast at Tiffany’s.

New York, to the surprise of no one, ranks Top 5 in the world for Global 500 companies (#4). And that is part of the enduring allure of the city—the magical thinking that if you hustle hard enough, anyone could be persuaded to meet with you, that the entrepreneur sitting next to you at WeWork might just be the next big thing, and you might be part of it—and you, you of all people, can make it here, just like the song promises.



THE VESSEL

In New York, you shake hands (shake hands!), two humans pressing flesh in the mutual interest of apprising the potential of one to advance the other.

In 2020, in the storied Financial District, only the stock market moves, sometimes wildly.

In the world's top-ranked city for Culture (which factors in the number of quality concerts, shows and events), the MOMA is helping parents teach art from home with "family art-making activities in English and Espanol," and the Metropolitan Opera is streaming performances nightly. We all pine for the frisson of walking into the red velvet-lined jewel box that is the Metropolitan Opera House in Lincoln Center, gazing up at the vast Chagalls, watching the dazzling crowd.

With Broadway still officially shut down, the district where the show must go on is shuttered, a drama. In the city that never sleeps, #2 for Nightlife, night owls order delivery and dream fitfully at home, pivoting to an abnormal new normal.

New York restaurants, #9 on the planet, pivoted faster than most businesses, almost instantly becoming take-out and delivery operations wherever it was humanly possible. Food world icon David Chang, chef of Momofuku Noodle Bar and a dozen other restaurants around the world, creator of the *Ugly Delicious* show, said he thought delivery would come to dominate slowly, over a decade or more, and now it's upon us. Speaking with the *New York Times*, he surveyed the eclipsed scene in despair. "I'm not being hyperbolic in any way," he said. "We have ingredients that if you don't sell, they literally deteriorate. It's the most exposed business. There's a lot of successful chefs I know who have five to nine days left of money. And then what do you do? I don't know."

Nobody knows, of course, which is the terrible crux of the matter. New York is, above all, a gathering place where brains and bodies in indecent proximity to one another create the



THEATER DISTRICT

sparks of genius, invention, progress. Those 7 p.m. pots and pans clanging in unison have faded, but New Yorkers stand at the ready, together and alone, on their stoops and balconies ready to defend their city. These days, vague federal threats of defunding and shadowy armies against calls for justice and reform loom over the city along with an invisible virus.

New York is #10 in our Attractions subcategory, those places that irresistibly draw humanity from around the world. In the past decade, New York has enjoyed dizzying increases in tourism arrivals, and 64.2 million visitors jostled with locals last year, a record. Now, as New York curmudgeon Fran Lebowitz moaned to Michael Schulman in *The New Yorker*, "For at least 20 years, I have been dreaming of the time there were no tourists in Times Square. Now there are no tourists in Times Square, but, of course, there's no one in Times Square."

Nobody knows when any of this ends, but New York understands a thing or two about coming back from terrible brinks. 9/11 is more than a vague memory. SARS came and went. However the world emerges, evolves or pivots out of our collective force majeure, it will happen here first. New York is, after all, #1—or thereabouts.



GRANDE ARCHE DE LA DÉFENSE, PUTEAUX

## POPULATION

METRO 12,824,378

## HIGHLIGHTS

3 PRODUCT

3 PROMOTION

# 3 PARIS FRANCE

Just as terrorism subsided, the Notre-Dame inferno struck Parisian resolve anew. But the City of Light builds on resiliently.

On April 15, 2019, as the Notre-Dame cathedral went up in flames, people in Paris gathered in the streets to pray. Joining them was just about everyone else across the globe with access to a screen. This, of course, was not an isolated catastrophe for the French capital over the past few years. But despite multiple terrorist attacks and the destruction of its iconic cathedral—seemingly insurmountable disaster and hardship—Paris prevails and comes back brighter.

Amazingly, despite the tragic fire and a year of the Yellow Vest protests that deterred tourists from visiting the city,

Paris matched its 2018 in 2019, with 35.4 million visitors, according to Statista.

The City of Light ranks #3 in our Product category, with the second-best Airport Connectivity in the world, a #5 ranking for Museums (the city has more than a hundred) and #7 for Attractions. Leading up to the 2024 Summer Olympics, infrastructure investment has sped up and the city continues to build hotels at a dizzying rate. Two dozen opened in 2019 and the same amount were scheduled to debut in 2020, including the first Bulgari Hotel at 30 Avenue George V. There have been plenty of pandemic-related delays.

As the saying goes, Paris is always a good idea. And now that swimming in the waters of the Seine is a thing at Bassin de la Villette public pools, even the locals who notoriously leave town in summer are sticking around.

City Hall is promising to build five new outdoor swimming pools in time for



THE TOUR D2 BUILDING IN LA DÉFENSE DISTRICT



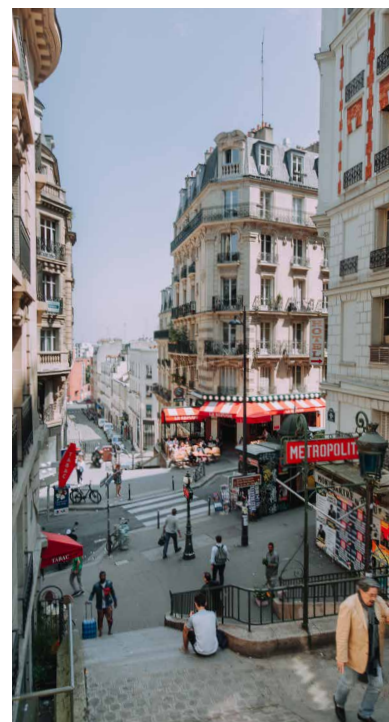
the Olympics. So even though Paris is now #26 globally for Parks & Outdoors in 2020, it's a category ranking that should improve.

Meanwhile, a whole host of rooftop plantations have been cropping up atop buildings across the city. The newest and most striking just opened in July 2020 in the 15th arrondissement. The urban oasis atop the exhibition complex Paris Expo Porte de Versailles is the largest urban rooftop farm on the planet. Tended by some 20 gardeners using organic methods, the three-acre farm will feature more than 30 different plant species and is expected to produce around 2,200 pounds of fruit and vegetables every day in high season.

"The goal is to make the farm a globally recognized model for sustainable production," says Pascal Hardy, founder of Agripolis, the urban-farming company at the center of the project. "We'll be using quality products, grown in rhythm with nature's cycles, all in the heart of Paris."

Run by the city's renowned chain of rooftop venues, Le Perchoir, the farm will have an on-site restaurant and bar with menus showcasing seasonal produce as well as educational tours, team-building workshops and the chance for local residents to lease small vegetable plots of their own.

The city nabs the #3 spot in our Shopping category, behind only Tokyo and New York. Paris continues to improve its shopping experience by scrubbing a few identified streets and sprinkling them with additional police presence, and by encouraging local business through strictly enforced rent caps. With its full renovation complete, the Ateliers Gaîté shopping mall, near Montparnasse Tower, is open for business, with more than 100 shops on three floors and a 25-restaurant food hall. Architect Bjarke Ingels will unveil the massive (and impeccably landscaped) Europa City mixed-use development in the city's northern agricultural district of Triangle de Gonesse.



PARIS IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA

## POPULATION

METRO 17,125,000

## HIGHLIGHTS

1 PRODUCT

2 EDUCATIONAL  
ATTAINMENT

Russia's beguiling capital is a cultural gold mine spanning the ages.

Any traveler to Russia will tell you that Russian influence—at least over visitors to the country's capital—is a very real thing: you'll fall under the spell of Moscow the minute you set foot in this endlessly fascinating and dynamic destination. Curiosity about Russia has increased as political intrigue has grown, which might explain why Moscow was the 14th-most trending city over the past year, according to our Google Search ranking.

The global fascination has as much to do with the spectacular 2018 FIFA World Cup (Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium in the city's 360-acre Olympic complex hosted the pivotal final matches) as with the Kremlin's global ambitions. Accessing all this excitement has never been easier as the curious and opportunistic can fly into Moscow with ease: the city ranks #4 for Airport Connectivity, up one spot over last year.

Once you're on the ground, the recently renovated Moscow subway is increasingly the envy of many Western capitals, as much for its improved efficiency and reach as for its regally art-stuffed stations.

Whatever brings you to the city, you're in for an experience at stark odds with the West's continuously dismaying news about Russia. Moscow is what *Travel + Leisure* calls a "revolution of creativity," giving it an atmosphere of young, free-thinking exuberance that has touched every aspect of city life, from its art and food scenes to quirky, only-in-Russia shared workspaces. The first so-called "post-Soviet generation"

# 4 MOSCOW RUSSIA

of Muscovites has traveled the world, returning with suitcases full of ideas that they're unpacking to huge effect in their always-proud city, sanctions be damned. The fact that Moscow boasts the world's second-most educated citizenry in the world (only behind St. Petersburg) also helps.

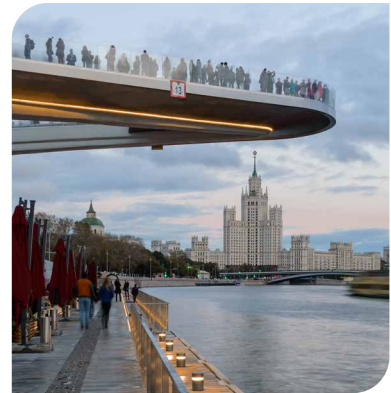
But you need to be schooled in the classics to appreciate the contemporary. Moscow ranks #3 in our Place category, which includes Sights & Landmarks and Parks & Outdoors. The Russian capital ascended this vital category rapidly over the past two years, powered by the aggressive (and divisive) four-year-old My Street program. Costing more than \$3 billion, according to local sources, My Street is narrowing Stalin's tank avenues (and Moscow's car-centric roads) into more walkable experiences. Small wonder it's now a Top 5 most hashtagged global city on Instagram.

Parks are also suddenly on the drawing board, with Zaryadye, the city's first major park opening since the end of World War II, cutting the ribbon on almost 20 green acres beside the Kremlin in 2018. With a museum, concert hall and subterranean food hall, this multi-level space is very intentionally designed to be a gathering place in the bosom of Mother Russia.

Moscow is a city of symbols and icons, and of course you'll take in Red Square and the Kremlin, two of the city's UNESCO heritage sites. Moscow is #6 in the world for Programming, which includes a #3 ranking for Culture, so you'd best get to the Bolshoi, a bastion of classic ballet and Russian intrigue.

Moscow ranks first in the world for Product, which includes our Museums subcategory. The Tretyakov Gallery and Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts are necessary pilgrimages to understand Russia's contribution to world culture. There are wonderful detours to be made to the Museum of Soviet Arcade Machines or the Museum of Cosmonautics, where you can admire Soviet accomplishments in the cosmos

"FLOATING BRIDGE" IN PARK ZARYAD'YE



through 85,000 pieces of space-related stuff, including the taxidermied remains of Belka and Strelka, famed canine cosmonauts. But once you've paid your respects, make a beeline to Gorky Park, home to the \$27-million Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, masterminded by entrepreneur Ilya Oskolkov-Tsentsiper, bankrolled by philanthropist Dasha Zhukova (wife of billionaire Roman Abramovich) and designed by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. It sits in an enormous former Soviet restaurant re-clad in a plastic that reflects the clouds and refurbished greenery of an entirely spectacular park.

The area has become a gathering place for immersing yourself in both Moscow's nature and its culture. One of the museum's young curators remarked that it's one of the only places in Russia where you can speak Russian and still feel you belong to some international context. All Moscow pride—no Gorky Park Cold War sweats here. Other places to take in the modern art vibe of Moscow include the ARTPLAY Design Center, a unique mash-up of art and architecture across the street from the sprawling Winzavod Center for Contemporary Art, a 215,000-square-foot cultural center divided into seven buildings housing the city's leading designers and photographers, along with galleries, artists' studios, cafés, creative showrooms, children's studios, bookstores and a multitude of activities.

**POPULATION**  
METRO 37,977,000

# 5 TOKYO JAPAN

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 PLACE
- 3 PROGRAMMING

The futuristic metropolis is tapping its ancient feudal roots by investing in street-level livability and resident wellbeing—Olympics or no Olympics.

Despite earthquakes, tsunamis and typhoons, Tokyo grabbed the #1 spot for Safety. Which is helpful in a place with so much to explore and discover at all hours of the night. Tokyo continues to mesmerize global

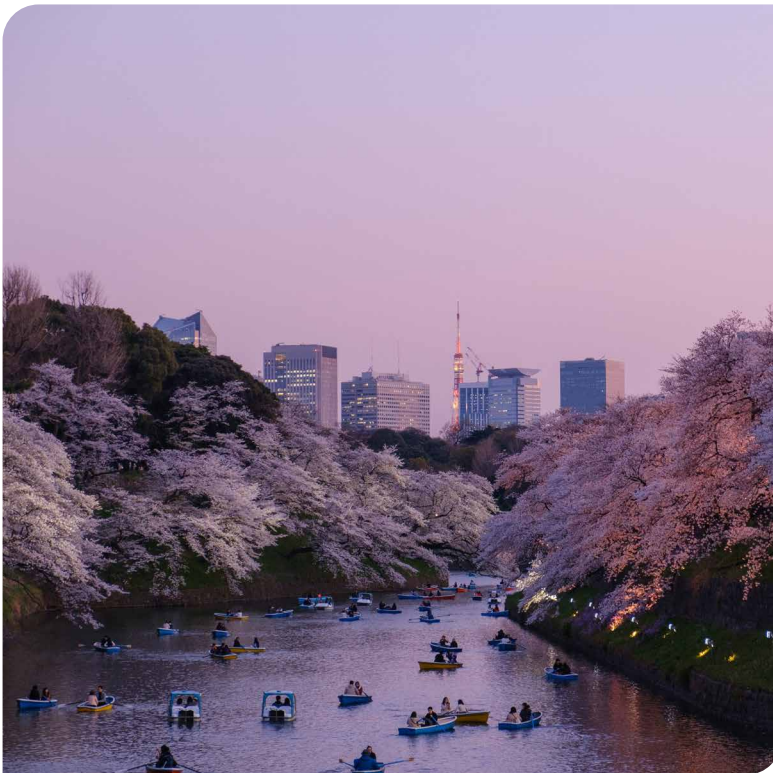
visitors with its innovation, efficiency and round-the-clock kinetic mobility. It earned the #1 rank in Shopping for its world-class experiences, like Ginza's luxury department stores, newly enhanced with the art-bedecked and sharply designed Ginza SIX shopping center. Tokyo boasts the second most restaurants of any city worldwide, and ranks #6 in our Culture subcategory (and #3 overall in our Programming category)—even with the postponement of the 2020 Olympics. The show will go on in 2021, pandemic permitting.

Here, the famous pulsating Nightlife (#9) can be experienced any way you like, from the glaring lights of Shibuya to the, well, glaring red lights of Kabukicho. For a more low-key bar scene, Zoetrope in Shinjuku offers an awe-inspiring selection of Japan's famous whisky. With a #2 global rank for Restaurants,

Tokyo is moving far beyond its internationally beloved food traditions. The metropolis offers as many restaurants as the rest of our Top 5 cities combined—more than 100,000 in total, so visitors and residents alike could never hope to experience them all. Iconic spots like Den (among the top restaurants in Asia) abound, while busy *depachiku* (food halls) can be explored below ground all over the city for a much—much—more affordable price. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many restaurants have switched to take-out or reduced hours, but the overall sense is one of perseverance.

Tokyo ranks #18 for Parks & Outdoors; indeed, parks are considered vital infrastructure here, and essential therapy for its vertical-living citizens. Take, for instance, the Meiji Jingu shrine—tucked into dense woodland in the heart of the city—which celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2020. Then there's teamLab Borderless in the Mori Building, a new kind of digital art museum without boundaries, where visitors wander and explore, map-free, while immersing themselves in a three-dimensional world. This is just the latest addition to the city's 250-plus museums. It's no wonder, then, that Tokyo ranks #4 globally in our Museums subcategory.

The wave of Japan's economic revival under Abenomics—the economic policies advocated by departing Prime Minister Shinzō Abe—may have crested thanks to the pandemic, but Tokyo retains the #3 spot for Prosperity globally. That's driven mainly by a low unemployment rate (ranking #11) and the second-highest number of Global 500 headquarters. Some are household (or at least garage) names: Toyota, Acura, Subaru, Mitsubishi. But SoftBank, while it funds disruptive start-ups around the world, is also changing Japanese business, offering rarely seen perks and benefits to its workers. Japan's record level of female participation in the workforce is also reflected at the company.



THE CHIDORIGAFUCHI MOAT



## POPULATION

METRO 6,036,000

## HIGHLIGHTS

2 PLACE

2 PEOPLE

An alluring blend of over-the-top experiences, Arab heritage and luxury shopping, Dubai rises from the golden sands like a mirage.

Dubai is a city of superlatives: you can ride the elevator to the top of the world's tallest building for a bird's-eye view, bet on the ponies at the world's richest horse race and pose for photos in front of the world's tallest choreographed fountains. These experiences are not by accident: the city reinvented itself yet again throughout the 2010s, growing from a sterile playground for a handful of ultra-rich Emiratis to an international tourism and business destination. That has helped to attract the second-highest proportion of foreign-born citizens of any city worldwide, and they're a sharp crowd, ranking #16 for Educational Attainment globally.

Dubai's next challenge will be weathering the storm of COVID-19. Even after a first wave that saw 6,021 cases per million residents, Dubai is hoping to bring back the tourists who have become critical to its economy. In 2019, the city welcomed 16.7 million tourists; it will be lucky to see a fraction of that in 2020, despite a worldwide campaign to reassure visitors of its COVID-19 safety.

The most visited mall on the planet is here, and helps Dubai climb to #26 in our Shopping subcategory. It would be a mistake to focus on the "mall" part of the name, however; like the city itself, the Dubai Mall is more of an attempt to capture every human experience and repackage it for consumption. It has the aforementioned world's tallest tower, the Burj Khalifa, and one of the largest aquarium tanks anywhere. The city's reinvention goes on through

# 6 DUBAI UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

AL SHINDAGHA MUSEUM



Cityland Mall, the world's first "nature inspired" shopping mall, opened in 2019 and packed with botanical touches, including 200,000 square feet of open-air gardens. Likewise, the Burj Khalifa's time in the sun may be nearing an end: Santiago Calatrava's Tower at Dubai Creek will eclipse the skyscraper as the tallest building in the world when completed, in 2021 at the earliest.

But it's the outdoors that really clinched Dubai's #6 overall ranking. The city offers outdoor experiences that rank fifth-most in quality, and it hit the Top 10 for both Safety and Weather, both at #8. All the better to chase thrills among Dubai's plentiful extreme sport offerings. There's skydiving over the city's more fanciful

developments, the Palm Islands and World Islands. There's dune bashing in the desert, a high-octane way to experience the environment around the city. And Dubai has even pioneered the sport of sandboarding, which is exactly what it sounds like.

Amongst all the glitz and adrenaline, Dubai has some oases of calm. Sufouh Beach, nestled between the opulence of the sail-shaped Burj Al Arab and the Palm Jumeirah, is not well advertised so there's plenty of white sand and azure water for everyone. The XVA Café, inside the XVA Gallery, is a stunning, airy space with rotating gallery pieces, a perfect place to have a quiet conversation or read a book.

## POPULATION

METRO 5,745,000

## HIGHLIGHTS

3 SAFETY

5 GDP PER CAPITA

# 7 SINGAPORE

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

Few cities have achieved as much, as quickly, as the city-state of Singapore has over the past five decades. The meteoric rise from politically unstable, resource-poor and unskilled ex-colony to talent- and capital-hungry shipping hub (the world's busiest) and, subsequently, Asia's wealth management capital is place-brand engineering at its most ambitious.

The result is Singapore as a fast-emerging Asian financial superpower whose city leaders take a methodical

(yes, many would say "heavy-handed") approach to urban planning that considers needs that reach far beyond the next election.

Singapore's reinvestment into research, talent and corporate headquarters recruitment ensures it will be home to a sustainably wealthy citizenry for decades to come. It's why the city-state continues its ascent among the planet's most prosperous cities, with a growing cluster of Global 500 companies (ranking #30 overall).

The government has already committed \$16 billion to establish Singapore as a global research and development hub. Its 2020 Research, Innovation and Enterprise Plan aimed to duplicate Nordic and Israeli innovation and R&D, much of which will strengthen local universities. This focus on research, medicine and tech is designed to open another front for Singapore—one that complements its financial dominance. It builds on the human capital of the citizenry, already Top 5 in our GDP Per Capita subcategory.

Today, manifestations of this wealth and confident swagger are everywhere. From the heights of the cranes on the horizon to the gilded facades of Orchard Road—Singapore's version of Fifth Avenue for high-end fashion and entertainment—the city knows its affluent global audience: moneyed wanderers who seek efficiency, security and exoticism.

Only in Singapore does an airport become a must-see attraction, one that receives millions of passengers a year but also lures locals with a bounty of designer shops, gardens, gourmet food and one-of-a-kind sights. Opened in 2019 and designed by Safdie Architects, the new \$1.7-billion Jewel Changi Airport features a canopy bridge and glass walkway shrouded in fog and suspended 75 feet in the air. But the real showstopper is the seven-story Rain Vortex, an indoor waterfall (the world's tallest) that cascades down from a central oculus in the roof. Although Singapore lands at #57 for Airport Connectivity, it would medal for its gateway's experience alone if we scored such things.



MARINE BAY

## POPULATION

METRO 4,991,133

## HIGHLIGHTS

3 NIGHTLIFE

5 TRIPADVISOR  
REVIEWS

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

Barcelona is an almost ideal European city, one with near-perfect weather year round, miles and miles of beaches, iconic parks, striking architecture and colorful neighborhoods that march to their own beat—artistic, sophisticated, bohemian. No wonder it ranks Top 10 in our Place category, which measures both the natural and built environments of a city.

Steeped in history and wearing its cultural identity proudly on its sleeve, the capital of Catalonia is an autonomous region of Spain with a history of attempted secession—as the October 2017 attempt to leave and resulting police violence that flashed across screens globally demonstrated yet again. Despite five years of terrorist attacks and mass protests, tourism dipped only momentarily before bouncing back—to the possible dismay of the many locals who see the crowds as a threat to their city. Barcelona responded with programs aimed at controlling the effects of runaway tourism—like real estate investors who snatch up apartments only to rent them on Airbnb, depleting an already limited supply.

Ultimately the pandemic took care of “the tourist problem,” with devastating results. Infection flareups meant that tourist founts like France have banned all citizen travel to the Barcelona region and local sources estimate that almost 40% of the shuttered bars and restaurants may never reopen.

# 8 BARCELONA SPAIN

CATALAN STREET



For a city with the #3 ranking for global Nightlife, this is catastrophic. It's impossible to predict when it will be once again possible to fuel up on tapas on Las Ramblas to get the night started before exploring the hidden speakeasies of Barri Gòtic, Europe's largest Gothic quarter and the heart of Barcelona, then grabbing an Uber to the industrial-sized clubbing of Port Olímpic. When the world reemerges from the pandemic, Barcelona's fifth-most TripAdvisor reviews among the world's cities will surely need a somber rewrite.



## POPULATION

METRO 13,291,486

## HIGHLIGHTS

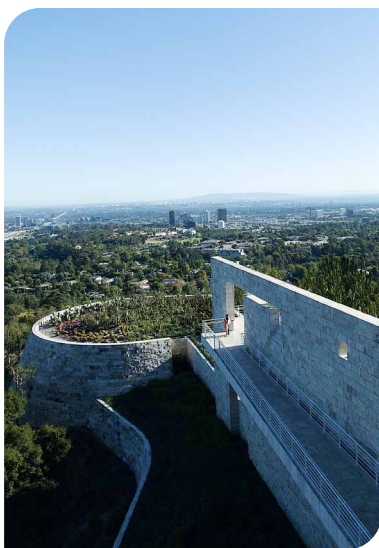
3 UNIVERSITY

7 PROMOTION

Los Angeles keeps breaking tourism records as it rolls out more multi-billion-dollar infrastructure project after another.

Los Angeles has always had “star” power, but when Michelin announced in June 2019 that 24 Greater Los Angeles area restaurants had been awarded with its most prestigious accolade in its inaugural Michelin Guide California selection, it suddenly meant more than just A-listers and cinema cachet. Indeed, of the seven new two-star distinctions in the Guide, six are in L.A., further cementing its standing as “the Most Exciting Food City in America.”

Of course all that means little when sheltering in place has shuttered hundreds of those exciting dining spots. The COVID-19 outbreak has launched



THE GETTY CENTER

# 9 LOS ANGELES UNITED STATES

L.A.—and Mayor Eric Garcetti—into the spotlight. The city was the first metropolis in the U.S. to demand almost full closure, “and the biggest city to go to full closure of all nonessential businesses,” the mayor pointed out recently. Combine that foresight with California’s fast action on lockdowns, and L.A. is positioned to come back brighter. At least when the sun isn’t blocked out by the smoke from nearby wildfires that have become synonymous with late-summer in recent years.

L.A.’s cultural and culinary leaders—so willing to step up and declare the city open for business after a series of natural disasters, helping the city rank #7 in our Promotion category—will be called upon again soon. They’ll do their best to keep their city’s #9 ranking in the subcategory of Facebook Check-ins, #10 for Instagram Hashtags and impressive #5 for Google Search. Anything to get the City of Angels off the ground.

“Los Angeles is a literal melting pot of talent with chefs hailing from a mosaic of cultures who are open to experimentation and innovation. Mix in access to the country’s best produce and an audience of Angelenos who celebrate creativity and you’ve got L.A.’s formula for being the most exciting food city,” said Stacey Sun, executive director of the city’s dineL.A. program, which celebrates L.A.’s thriving global culinary scene through two annual restaurant week programs, Winter dineL.A. and Summer dineL.A. Unsurprisingly, the city ranks high in our Restaurants subcategory, reaching #15 globally.

Speaking of food, when it opens—eventually—on Olvera Street at LA Plaza Village, LA Plaza Cocina will be the first museum and teaching kitchen dedicated to Mexican food in the U.S. Through an array of exhibitions, cooking classes, lectures, workshops and culinary festivals, the multidisciplinary venue aims to educate visitors and celebrate Mexico’s culinary heritage.

Los Angeles ranks #18 globally in our Museums subcategory, which is exemplified by a blossoming of

cultural institutions under development or opening soon. For example, a public art project called Destination Crenshaw is being built by and for the African American community along the newest Metro rail line, which runs the iconic Crenshaw Boulevard. The 1.3-mile-long outdoor art and culture experience will display works of Black artists centered on themes of activism and history. And 2022 is the expected opening date for the first permanent location of the Korean American National Museum, where the mission is to preserve and interpret the history, experiences, culture and achievements of Americans from Korean ancestry. Designed by local architecture firm Morphosis, the venue’s interior will feature a fluid, interconnected ring of galleries, meeting rooms and offices styled to echo the classic courtyard plan of a traditional Korean hanok.

Sports fans in the city will finally get to experience the 70,000-seat SoFi Stadium at Hollywood Park now that the complex has opened. Billed as the future of sports and entertainment, the venue houses the Los Angeles Chargers and the 2019 NFC Conference champion Los Angeles Rams. The state-of-the-art, open-air stadium will also host Super Bowl LVI in 2022, the College Football National Championship game in 2023 and the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2028 Olympics.

Breathing new life into neighborhoods from DTLA to Hollywood is a slew of new boutique hotels, most with chef-led dining programs. There’s the freshly minted Hoxton LA, for example, set in a transformed 1925 building that was once the headquarters of the L.A. Railway Authority. Another 13 new hotels were set to open over the next two years, before the COVID-19 outbreak, including a new project from Grupo Habita—the hotel group has developed some of the hippest hotels in Mexico, Chicago and New York—that takes over a 109-year-old brick warehouse in the Arts District and transforms it with modern accommodations, a rooftop lounge, garden and pool.

## POPULATION

METRO 6,791,667

## HIGHLIGHTS

8 PROGRAMMING

21 PLACE

# 10 MADRID SPAIN

Spain's kinetic capital is currently enjoying a people-powered rebirth.

Madrid suffered greatly during the pandemic, with more COVID-19 cases than any other Top 20 city outside of the United States. It was the world's first wake-up call outside of Asia that the new coronavirus was a real and imminent threat that could bring entire countries to their knees. But the city, a newcomer to the Top 10, is getting back on its feet after a prolonged lockdown.

Its dazzling #22-ranked museums have reopened—at reduced capacity—and with recent expansions to the Prado, Reina Sofia and Thyssen-Bornemisza.

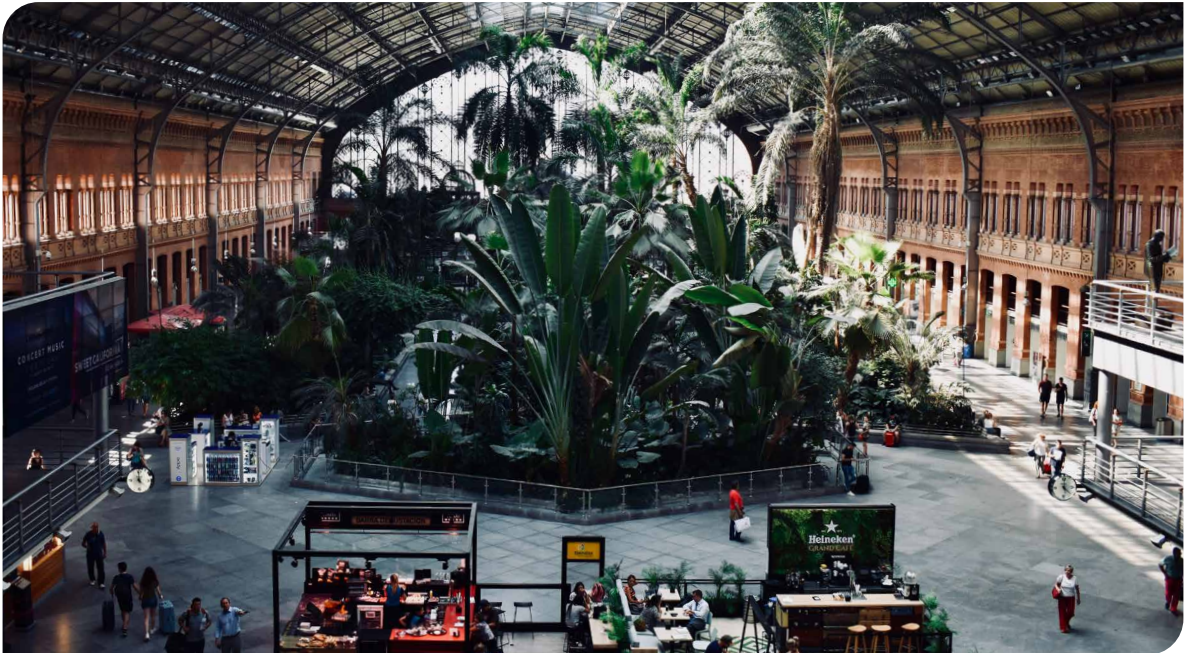
With this much-needed investment in its bounteous (but long-dormant) infrastructure and public assets, the Spanish capital is finally reviving its city-building legacy.

But museums are just the tip of the spear for the city. In Madrid, everything old is new again. It's not just the well-known cultural richness; Madrid is, more importantly, finally committed to the modern reinvention of the city focused on its citizenry. The Buen Retiro ("pleasant retreat") park in the city center was formerly owned by the monarchy, but in 1868 was handed to the public—who have made plenty of use of it ever since. Among its grand gardens and buildings left over from its royal past, sharp-eyed visitors can see a rare public monument to Satan at the Fountain of the Fallen Angel. It's an essential piece of infrastructure for a city that needs plentiful outdoor space, now more than ever. Madrid's #18 ranking in our Sights & Landmarks subcategory is well earned, given long overdue big-budget projects like making the central Gran Vía boulevard far more pedestrian friendly.

The ambitious and futuristic Nuevo Norte redevelopment project, with a focus on meeting UN Sustainable Development Goals, promises to be a roadmap for what a sustainable, livable inner-city development can be. That bodes well for its current middling score (coming in at #80) for Income Equality. The project is set to break ground in 2021.

The pandemic put an instant and long-lasting halt to most of the city's concerts, shows and events, which had earned it a respectable #11 rank for Culture. Those large events are expected to continue to wither as large crowds continue to present an intolerable risk.

Thankfully, with investments to outdoor dining and walking infrastructure, the city with the #6 best Nightlife on the planet (just behind Berlin and ahead of Paris) is finally making it easier and more pleasant to stay out late. The near-perfect climate (ranking #32 in Weather) doesn't hurt, either.



THE BOTANICAL GARDEN IN MADRID'S ATOCHA TRAIN STATION



## 11 ROME ITALY

**POPULATION** METRO 4,429,025

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS
- 6 SHOPPING

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 the history of the Western world like Roma. Heck, Palatine Hill alone invites you into two millennia of Western civilization, if you've got an hour. Mix a safe, accessible modern city and its thousands of portals back in time and it's easy to see how Rome almost cracked the Best Cities Top 10 again this year. Declarations of love for the city have multiplied with the channels of self-expression, of course, and the city's #7 ranking in our extensive Place category has directly fueled its #5 Promotion ranking, including the second-most number of TripAdvisor reviews on the planet and very frequent Google searches. How can it not when so many sing its praises. Take, for one, the late, great chef and scribe Anthony Bourdain: "If I'm in Rome for only 48 hours, I would consider it a sin against God to not eat *cacio e pepe*, the most uniquely Roman of pastas, in some crummy little joint where Romans eat." The curiosity about the Eternal City will only increase as Rome reopens carefully to visitors, who, after gorging on six months of local 'Grams featuring empty summer streets and iconic sites with nary a tourist umbrella to clutter the shot, are keen to time their return before the crowds come back. As of late summer 2020, most sights were reopened, as were most bars and restaurants. It's not exactly *la dolce vita* quite yet, but Roma has persevered once again.



## 12 CHICAGO UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 9,497,790

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES
- 9 PRODUCT

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

Few American cities fell harder in visitor numbers in recent months than Chicago. Whether for business or pleasure, the city had been attracting tourism at record-breaking levels year after year. Indeed, when Rahm Emanuel won the mayorship in 2011, an estimated 39 million people a year visited Chicago. By the time he wrapped up his final term in 2019, that number had ballooned to nearly 58 million annual visitors—an impressive tourism feat and perhaps the biggest success story of Emanuel's mayoral tenure. In the last few years, the Windy City pursued and acquired some big-ticket draws, including the NFL Draft, the James Beard Foundation Awards and the Laver Cup. It also bolstered tourist-friendly attractions like the Riverwalk and events that showcase Chicago's craft beer scene. Its #13 ranking in our Programming category—including #7 in Culture and #11 for global Nightlife—speaks to the plentiful buzz that Chicago was perfecting before everything ground to a halt. In the not-too-distant future, the Obama Presidential Center—to be set in Jackson Park—will become a marquee attraction on Chicago's South Side. "I think President Obama's library can do for tourism what McCormick Place has done for business travel in the city," Emanuel noted during his time as mayor. The city's #32 ranking for Museums among global cities will surely improve as a result.



## 13 TORONTO CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 6,871,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 PEOPLE
- 8 GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES

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

With almost half of its population foreign-born, Toronto's #13 spot among the world's cities—it's highest finish ever—is powered by diversity and education, the two components of our People category, for which the city ranks #3, just behind Dubai and Abu Dhabi. But Toronto's diversity is less tied to migrant labor and more to the long-term opportunity in a city that earlier this summer was crowned as the fastest growing metropolitan area in all of North America. As in, the continent. Ryerson University's Centre for Urban Research and Land Development revealed that Toronto overtook Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington for the top spot. Getting less attention is the projection by the University of Toronto that, in less than 50 years, the city will trail only New York City and Mexico City in North American population. The city's openness, combined with its economy (with the eighth-most Global 500 head offices in the world) has resulted in unprecedented density and a satisfaction with just staying put, sated by real estate wealth and the comfort that the world is already in town. Of course, winning the first NBA title outside of the U.S. in history doesn't hurt the local pride, either.



## 14 SAN FRANCISCO

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 4,729,484

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 UNIVERSITY
- 7 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Job opportunities and infrastructure buildout pave the way as the world continues to rush in.

San Francisco has embraced seekers since the Gold Rush days, when, seemingly overnight, people came from Asia and Europe, from across the continent and from the other side of the world for their shot at the California Dream. Along the way, these immigrants have sowed the seeds for the city's open-minded attitude toward, well, everything. The result is a place that doesn't just welcome differences, but actually encourages and celebrates them. No wonder it ranks #6 globally in our People category, including #7 for Educational Attainment and #23 for Foreign-Born Residents. The promise of high salaries means a torrent of global workers fuel the city's ambition and ideas, ranking it #9 in our GDP Per Capita subcategory and #20 for Global 500 companies. The city is also pursuing inclusivity and taking care of its own—from COVID-19 patients to the swelling homeless population. "We're the city of St. Francis, and if we don't lead on this, then shame on us," said Joe D'Alessandro, CEO of San Francisco Travel. "As a DMO we're taking a leading role on this... looking for small fixes until we can figure it out federally." With that kind of local support, the city is charging into the current crisis well equipped.



## 15 ABU DHABI

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**POPULATION** METRO 1,270,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 PEOPLE
- 4 PROSPERITY

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

While Dubai has massive shopping malls and world's biggest, tallest and most expensive everything, Abu Dhabi is quietly continuing its promotion and focus on heritage and a rich cultural tapestry. It invests in bringing artists and creators as guests for residencies and multi-show dates. The city has a knack for attracting international permanent talent as well, hitting #1 in our Foreign-Born Residents subcategory, and leaping 90 places in the rankings for our Educational Attainment subcategory, all the way up to #16. The buzz could be because the city is positioning itself as a leading global arts and culture hub, with the world's largest mosque, and museums designed by just about every architect you can think of. While the Nouvel-designed Louvre Abu Dhabi is already open, the city is hard at work on Saadiyat Island on the construction of a Norman Foster-designed Zayed National Museum, a Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Tadao Ando's Maritime Museum and a Performing Arts Centre by the late Zaha Hadid. The city's #239 ranking for Museums is bound to improve in coming years. In the #3-ranked city for our Weather subcategory, you need not go far for a place in the sun.



## 16 ST. PETERSBURG

RUSSIA

**POPULATION** METRO 5,230,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 PLACE
- 10 PRODUCT

There are many cities that vie for the title of Venice of the North. Only St. Petersburg is worthy.

Imperial capital for two centuries, city of 40 islands and 342 bridges, St. Petersburg has been steadily climbing the rankings from #54 to #35 and now within sight of the Top 10. It owes much of that recognition to its overwhelming saturation in arts and education: its population claimed the #1 spot for Educational Attainment in a city boasting more than 45 colleges and universities—some dating back nearly three centuries. The word "museum" gets redefined at the State Hermitage, one of the largest museums in the world, with an exquisite, sea-green Winter Palace so beautiful it could melt a czar's heart. Not surprisingly, the city ranks #2 for Museums and #4 for Attractions. The city places #3 in our Sights & Landmarks category, meaning you need to roam Palace Square, Nevsky Prospekt—the elegant geographical anchor of the city—and around Square of the Arts and the Summer Gardens. And don't miss White Nights in early summer. Few European cities rival this celebration of the city's sense of place, nor the general atmosphere in the city come summer—friendly, 'Grammable and oh so romantic.



## 17 AMSTERDAM

NETHERLANDS

**POPULATION** METRO 2,771,661

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 11 PRODUCT
- 19 PROGRAMMING

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

It may be better known for its raunchy nightlife—still going strong at #10—but Amsterdam is stepping away from its seedier elements, going so far as to ban guided tours of its red-light district while it considers corralling sex work and foreigner-friendly cannabis cafés in a special zone. The city has doubled down on its enviable culture, connectivity and quality of life. New museums open regularly, kicked off in 2016 by the Warhol and Banksy-stuffed Moco, followed by renovations to three of the city's most important museums—the Rijksmuseum, the Van Gogh and the Stedelijk. Not surprisingly, Amsterdam ranks #12 globally in our Museums subcategory, climbing the ranks for two years in a row. The city is also embracing corporate Brexit refugees, who are setting up shop after leaving London, drawn by the global connectivity of the airport (ranked #5) and new, direct four-hour London Eurostar rail service (handy if they forgot something in their old offices).



## 18 BERLIN

GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 5,259,363

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 PROGRAMMING
- 17 PRODUCT

Germany has evolved into a symbol of tolerance. No other city in the country embodies these sentiments quite like its capital.

Expats, creatives, entrepreneurs, immigrants, punks and misfits all find their place in Berlin, a city where remnants of a fragile history mingle with an ever-changing present, and where being whatever you want to be is not just encouraged but embraced. Though it was spared the COVID-19 numbers other European capitals experienced during the first wave (possibly thanks to the country's science-friendly attitude and chancellor) the city still had to cancel its celebration of diversity, Karneval der Kulturen, while the famed Berlin Pride Celebration went virtual. In a normal winter, bars are packed to the gills and techno clubs pulse into the wee hours—the city hits #5 globally for our Nightlife subcategory. As soon as the sun comes out, the entire city heads outdoors, to the parks, the beer gardens and one street party or parade after another. Berlin also ranks #8 for Museums, while its art galleries overflow. This year the crowds will be kept smaller for safety, and masks will be enforced, but no one expects that to dampen the city's famous cool factor.



## 19 PRAGUE

CZECH REPUBLIC

**POPULATION** METRO 2,259,981

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 PROSPERITY
- 12 PROGRAMMING

Still the fascinating gateway into Eastern Europe's secrets, Praha radiates confidence and dares visitors to keep up.

"Egalitarian" is an odd word to apply to a city in which the most prominent feature is a huge walled castle, but Prague claims #4 worldwide for Income Equality and #7 in our Unemployment subcategory. That's not to say it's abandoned the indulgent splendor of the past: Prague's fairy-tale spirit can still be found in its century-old cobbled streets and its (publicly accessible) castle perched on a hilltop, in its hidden alleys, grand squares, ancient bridges and dreamy spires. But take a closer look and you'll see a city constantly reshaped by citizens eager to write their own history. Here you can find shopping that's at once sophisticated and daring, adventurous chefs creating a new Czech cuisine and an anything-goes club scene. Its COVID-19 response was second only to Tokyo's among the world's Top 20 cities, allowing its tourism to rebound faster than elsewhere; to celebrate, Prague offered 50% off entry fees to its museums, ranked #7 globally.





## 20 WASHINGTON

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 6,251,240

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 GOOGLE SEARCH
- 5 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Power meets play in America's intriguing capital city.

The ubiquity of the U.S. capital in dramas on screens small and large (to say nothing of the real-life stuff) has escalated its resonance in the zeitgeist and helped propel it into the Top 20 global cities. The winning of Amazon's coveted HQ2 in nearby Arlington, Virginia, dominated local chatter over the past two years—the 25,000 jobs created will be located in what Amazon calls National Landing, a newly minted place brand for the neighborhood near Reagan National Airport known as Crystal City. The jobs will improve D.C.'s already impressive economic footing, powered by its #12 spot for GDP Per Capita globally and #14 for Global 500 companies. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, 2020 was going to be one of the busiest ever for D.C. development, with Capitol Hill's the Roost, a 12,500-square-foot community-based food hall, kicking things off. Ward 7, two blocks away from the Minnesota Avenue metro station, will be home to Market 7, powered by a variety of Black-owned businesses including a grocer and retail installations by local makers. The jewel in the city's culinary crown is the \$250-million River Point, two blocks from Audi Field, between Capitol Riverfront and the Wharf, with piers, waterfront activity and plans for new restaurants that include a veggie-friendly eatery by James Beard-winning chef Spike Gjerde.

## 21 ISTANBUL

TURKEY

**POPULATION** METRO 15,154,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 PROMOTION
- 16 PRODUCT

Istanbul is the only major city that straddles two continents, and globetrotters have long praised it for its incomparable blend of East and West.

The meeting of East and West, old and new, and conservatism and liberalism that Istanbul's history is built upon colors everything here. Minarets and church spires dot the bright skyline, while down at street level women in black abayas and those in tight-fitting Armani dresses walk side by side. A few more steps away, Arabic house music from sidewalk cafés and bars all but drowns out the call to prayer. Get your bearings with a walk down Istiklal Caddesi, a pedestrian avenue in the Beyoğlu district that fuses modern with tradition to great effect. Here, impressive 19th-century buildings house cultural centers, shops, restaurants and cafés: for an elevated yet eclectic mix of old and new, Râna Meyhane offers both traditional and modern tasting menus, pulled together with an impressive wine list. Out on the streets, however, the old ways are regaining power: a recent government crackdown on freedom of expression, including social media, threatens to derail the country's impressive Promotion showing.

## 22 LAS VEGAS

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,231,647

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS
- 6 ATTRACTIONS

This pulsing destination has never been quieter than in the COVID-19 reality. Its resilience and response will define it for decades.

The story of Las Vegas blossoming into a "real city" has usually been told of late with breathless praise for its economic success. Tourism—the number one economic driver for Southern Nevada—has long paid for Las Vegas' roads, parks, school construction and teachers' salaries. According to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, more than 41% of Southern Nevadans are employed directly or indirectly because of tourism. But this single reliance on the visitor economy also means that the COVID-19 outbreak decimated Las Vegas like few other American cities. When Governor Steve Sisolak took the unprecedented step of ordering every casino and gaming operation—the lifeblood of the state's economy—to shut down in March 2020, citizens were thrust into an unimaginable financial crisis. Overnight, hundreds of thousands were furloughed or lost their jobs outright. Perhaps the city's pursuit of transforming into a hometown will accelerate its rebound as the lockdown begins to lift. If there is a silver lining for locals, it's that they'll have the world's #18-ranked Programming, including #8 for Culture (concerts, shows and events) and #17 in Nightlife, to themselves for a few months, all while helping their fellow citizens put in the reps to once again host the world.



## 23 DOHA

QATAR

**POPULATION** METRO 1,827,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 PROSPERITY
- 10 PEOPLE

Qatar has its sights set on becoming the next tourism hot spot in the Middle East. And it has the means to do it.

In less than a century, Qatar went from poor UK colony with a dwindling fishing industry to independent nation with booming infrastructural development and radically improved lifestyle. Thanks to shrewd investment of oil wealth, the Qatar Investment Authority is estimated to be worth US\$335 billion, a portion of which is channeled back into the country and into Doha. That's led to #1 global rankings this year in our GDP Per Capita and Unemployment subcategories as the country reinvests to build more highways, a metro system, universities, the I.M. Pei-designed Museum of Islamic Art and the breathtaking new National Museum of Qatar. Doha hopes to use the 2022 FIFA World Cup to show off its dynamic mix of traditional souks, iconic landmarks, ritzy shopping malls and five-star hotels. But with a poor migrant labor force toiling for a small, oligarchic elite leading to a dismal ranking of #250 for Income Equality, the city has some work ahead to maintain its reputation.



## 24 SEOUL

SOUTH KOREA

**POPULATION** METRO 21,794,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 32 COVID-19 CASES
- 5 PROGRAMMING

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

Throughout the first six months of the coronavirus pandemic, Seoul emerged as the envy of the world. Its secret? A high-tech sector and experienced government collaborating to detect, contain and treat cases early. That response was a blessing to the city's restaurant and dining scene, tops globally for the second year in a row for the sheer volume of places to eat in town. To feed the body and mind, start your visit at Zaha Hadid's futuristic Dongdaemun Design Plaza. Then, for a deep dive into the soul of Koreans, visit the National Folk Museum of Korea, which includes a room devoted to the deep and pervasive roots of Confucianism. Still hungry? Explore Mukja Golmok, literally "Let's Eat Alley," the vegetable-centric Temple Cuisine at Dooreyoo, Michelin-starred chef Tony Yoo's oasis, and Gwangjang Market, a century-old food hall where you can eat everything from a soup of rice cakes and kimchi-tofu dumplings to squirmy live octopus (really).



## 25 SYDNEY

AUSTRALIA

**POPULATION** METRO 4,578,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 PEOPLE
- 26 PROMOTION

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

If Sydney weren't so (relatively) isolated, chances are it would be challenging Paris and London for visitor number supremacy. It's the laid-back, safe and sunny manifestation of the good life. Let's use new residents as a benchmark: according to local numbers, Sydney has been gaining more than 80,000 annually, ranking #16 in our People category. Many of those people are foreign-born, too, with a #6 ranking in the subcategory. The city's staggering growth is indicative of the pull of the golden beaches, the big-city harbor and the mellow, generous, welcoming citizens who call this spectacular location home. Sydney's big outdoor spaces likely helped the city weather the coronavirus pandemic—within the Top 20, it had the third-fewest cases per million residents—and some green spaces saw double the usual number of visitors. The city is gifted with perfect integration of the natural and built, and accessible by all manner of ferries and watercraft, from which new angles on icons like the Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge are revealed.



## 26 BEIJING

CHINA

**POPULATION** METRO 19,433,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 PROSPERITY
- 13 PLACE

Come for the prosperity, stay for the profound sense of place.

If the 21st century belongs to China, Beijing will be the place to watch its rise. The capital city earned the #1 rank for Prosperity, but also for two separate features within the category: it has both the highest number of Global 500 headquarters, and the highest Income Equality worldwide. The social cohesion that comes with such an egalitarian society likely aided its breathtakingly low number of COVID-19 cases (just 19 per million residents, if official statistics are to be believed). The sight of the grand Forbidden City deserted during the pandemic will not last long as travel restrictions ease, with Beijing's frequent direct flights and a brand-new airport already picking back up. The spectacular, \$12-billion Zaha Hadid-designed Daxing International Airport opened its doors in late 2019, just in time to slam them shut as the pandemic hit. Airport officials say it will eventually see high-speed rail, inter-city services and downtown-to-airport express trains all stopping right beneath the terminal, making for quick connections to Beijing's roiling downtown.



## 27 MIAMI

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 6,198,782

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 PARKS & OUTDOORS
- 11 FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS

Miami's creativity is fueled by its arms-wide-open acceptance of new immigrants.

Miami's natural attributes—the turquoise waters of Biscayne Bay lapping gleaming sand while sun-kissed bodies frolic everywhere—have always captured the world's imagination and crystallized the city's hedonistic brand. But it's the city's openness to immigrants (and, more recently, the LGBTQ+ community) that ranks it #17 in the world in our People category, including #11 for in Foreign-Born Residents. Indeed, the city boasts more than 100 languages spoken at home, according to the latest census. Miami's historic embrace of a crossroads of the Americas has also meant a business advantage few other cities claim. It's home to one of the largest concentrations of international banks in the U.S., as well as the largest hub—outside of Mexico City, New York and L.A.—of Spanish-language media. It's also at the crossroads of Latin America, both in geography and in culture: Miami intends to promote its connectivity and globalism, and the region's selection as a host city candidate for the 2026 World Cup will go a long way in showcasing these qualities. The city is also continuing its aggressive pursuit of events and conferences, and last year it approved the hotel design for the new Miami Beach Convention Center—a 185-foot-high, 17-story structure to be completed by 2022.



## 28 MUNICH

GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 2,883,373

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 PRODUCT
- 10 PROSPERITY

Bavaria's party capital is also a business behemoth.

Yes, there's Oktoberfest every autumn, but Munich works as hard as it plays, becoming one of Europe's hottest destinations for new residents seeking this elusive balance. It boasts the world's top ranking for its convention center—and its airport is ranked #10 (soon to improve after its \$550-million reno is done in 2023), ensuring ease of access to all that business. It also just broke the Top 25 in our University Ranking subcategory—thanks to Technical University of Munich, which brands itself “the Entrepreneurial University.” All these attributes make up our Product category, for which the city ranks in the Top 5 for the first time ever, helping propel the city nine ranks higher overall this year. Small wonder, with all that infrastructure and entrepreneurship, that Munich is also ranked #20 for Global 500 headquarters (made up primarily of automakers, media and manufacturing, but being quickly joined by biotech and IT giants).



## 29 MILAN

ITALY

**POPULATION METRO** 5,145,657

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 PRODUCT
- 24 PROMOTION

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

Formerly synonymous with fashion and culture, Milan grabbed the world's attention in all the wrong ways with one of the first serious outbreaks of COVID-19 outside of Asia. Italy's financial hub was hard hit, but its recovery will emanate from here as well. Let's start with tourism: of any Italian city, Milan scores highest in the Product category, which measures the number of quality museums (it ranks #20 worldwide) as well as universities (#68), convention centers (#9) and direct flights (#30). The two latter subcategories may well suffer in our new, smaller world—fewer people are expected to travel internationally and large conferences are likely out for now—but many of its museums have reopened with new distancing rules. That's great news for anyone hoping to see works by Italian masters in the gorgeous former monastery at Pinacoteca di Brera, or immerse themselves in the clean lines and surprising cultural variety of Armani designs at Armani Silos. Not sure where to go first? The city's sights are mapped to an impressive resolution by the #9 highest number of TripAdvisor reviews.



## 30 SAN DIEGO

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION METRO** 3,343,364

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 UNIVERSITY
- 11 PARKS & OUTDOORS

Southern California's urban ideal offers free sunshine and keeps a good thing going—across two borders.

You could say that San Diego is where California began. It was here that Spanish settlers established the region's very first mission in 1769—251 years ago, on a hillside overlooking what is now known as Old Town San Diego. Two and a half centuries later, this city of 1.4 million (with an MSA population approaching 3.5 million) is one of the fastest-growing in the U.S. It ranks #15 in our deep Place category—with an impressive finish for Parks & Outdoors, at #11. And, of course, there's its weather. San Diego is as naturally endowed as any place has a right to be—its sublime 263 full and partly sunny days annually help place it at #14 globally, while the 23 beaches—70 miles of them—within the city limits make it synonymous with SoCal surf culture. After a festive 2019 celebrating its 250th, the city is now pausing somewhat to reap the fruits of a torrid few years of development. Of course, with the COVID-19 outbreak and California's stringent shelter-in-place orders, San Diegans don't really have a choice. When they do get back out of the house and into their beloved city, they'll beeline for the famous eponymous zoo—which is one year closer to the opening of its \$69-million children's zoo, to be named after Denny Sanford, a San Diego philanthropist who donated \$30 million to this endeavor, the largest single gift the San Diego Zoo has ever received.



## 31 BANGKOK

THAILAND

**POPULATION METRO** 17,066,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 PROGRAMMING
- 17 PROMOTION

Eat, shop and repeat in Thailand's intoxicating capital city and, increasingly, stealth design center.

Rumors of the demise of street food in Bangkok's Yaowarat (Chinatown) appear to have been greatly exaggerated, and that's something worth celebrating: the city ranks #21 on the planet in our Restaurants subcategory. Indeed, in the wake of COVID-19 lockdowns (which helped the city fare exceptionally well against the virus) the district's vendors triumphantly relit their grills and started serving up heaping portions of curry and noodles, albeit across Plexiglas barriers. There are also plentiful markets with dedicated spots for food vendors, so don't skip a visit to Chatuchak, the biggest one. Bangkok also ranks high (#4) in Shopping, so once you tire of haggling, head to the sixth floor of Central, an upscale department store, to stock up on traditional Thai merchandise like tableware and decorative items made by artisans in Chiang Mai. Many more vendors can be found through Facebook (where Bangkok's check-ins rank #6 globally), having turned to the online marketplace when the real ones shut down. The change may be permanent for some.



## 32 VIENNA

AUSTRIA

**POPULATION** METRO 2,405,593

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 INCOME EQUALITY
- 11 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

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

Fresh ideas are blowing through the city where modernism was born—the 4th district seems to be just one hub of change on its own. Better tasting coffee is coming to the UNESCO-ranked coffeehouses, like the Landtmann and the Central—places where radical philosophical and aesthetic movements were hatched over mediocre joe. And along with Gustav Klimt at the Belvedere and Egon Schiele at the Leopold, there’s a dynamic contemporary art scene made up of places like TBA21 and the Museum of Applied Arts—which combines applied art, design, architecture and contemporary art in historic splendor. The annual Vienna Design Week is an anticipated takeover of the entire city. Not for nothing does Vienna rank #30 overall for its Programming. It’s also a green city leader, with safe streets, great weather and a history of methodical city planning that has given the world everything from the English garden-inspired City Park (opened in 1862) to an actual national park just outside of town (Nationalpark Donau Auen). Vienna is also the European benchmark for public transit, with almost half of the city’s population holding an annual transit pass—and using it religiously.



## 33 DUBLIN

IRELAND

**POPULATION** METRO 1,793,902

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 PROSPERITY
- 37 PROGRAMMING

The storied capital is made for flâneurs and entrepreneurs.

Dublin’s Docklands area, known as Silicon Docks, is home to major tech and digital players including Google, Facebook, Amazon, eBay, Apple and Airbnb, to name just a few. The major international firms are attracted by the city’s giveaway corporate tax rates—among the lowest in the world—but if taxes were the whole story the gleaming offices would be manned by skeleton crews. Among many other reasons to invest in earnest is Ireland’s Local Enterprise Office, which supports international companies by providing mentoring and training as well as a number of financial grants. And it’s not just household names setting up shop in the Irish capital. The site of several internationally ranked universities (Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and Dublin City University), the city continues to attract smaller start-ups that choose it over traditional head office cities like London and New York. It helps to be able to offer eager young employees something to do outside of work, which Dublin’s famous—though increasingly costly—pub-centric nightlife (ranked #15) handily takes care of along with an abundance of concerts, shows and events (#21).



## 34 VANCOUVER

CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 2,395,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 PEOPLE
- 15 UNIVERSITY

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

As the terminus of a cross-country railroad constructed by laborers from all over Asia, Vancouver was built with a foundation of Asian sensibility. It ranks #5 in our People category, a combination of Educational Attainment and Foreign-Born Residents. Increasingly, the term “visible minority” doesn’t mean anything here. Despite the success of this eden of coexistence, not all is calm. Always on the lookout for foreign investment, various incarnations of provincial and federal governments made citizenship available to foreigners with sufficient capital, with little oversight on taxing outside funds. As such, Vancouver’s housing prices are now mostly hitched to a global context, largely decoupled from local wages. Fortunately, Silicon Valley and Seattle tech giants are coming to town with plenty of jobs, coaxed by Canada’s openness to immigration from global tech talent largely spurned by four years of nationalist policies south of the border. Additionally, Canada’s—and Vancouver’s in particular—comparatively pro-active response to and containment of the pandemic has endeared the city to even more global nomads who can work from anywhere. The University of British Columbia, ranked #15, is also a draw for the next generation of Vancouver’s increasingly global citizenry.



## 35 BOSTON

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 4,875,390

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 UNIVERSITY
- 8 GDP PER CAPITA

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

A hub of higher education and home to the fourth-best-educated workforce in the nation, Beantown produces a steady stream of new talent to help attract start-ups and established companies alike. Future talent gravitates to Harvard, of course—the country's top school (and a big reason why the city is #1 in our University subcategory and scored #35 in our overall Product category, which measures hard-to-build infrastructure in subcategories like Airport Connectivity and Convention Center)—as well as to Boston's density of other world-class universities and colleges. The city is bursting with lecture halls, labs and classrooms of the more than 75 institutions of higher learning, and is energized by the estimated 200,000 post-secondary students creating stories, ideas, solutions and technologies that will help drive the economy and incubate innovation districts nationally and globally in the coming decades. New students flock here, to arguably the continent's largest university town, by the tens of thousands every year and become smitten with the crooked narrow streets and storied pubs, blended with American optimism and East Coast connectivity. This is the birthplace of America, after all. And Facebook. No wonder Boston ranks an impressive #21 in our People category, including #9 for the percentage of the population with postsecondary education.



## 36 ZURICH

SWITZERLAND

**POPULATION** METRO 1,369,041

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 PROSPERITY
- 15 PEOPLE

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

Switzerland's financial center and largest metropolis is a magnet for foreigners who, along with multilingual Swiss nationals, enjoy one of the world's highest standards of living—the city ranks #15 for GDP Per Capita and #9 for Unemployment. Zurich also lands at #15 in our People category, which includes the Educational Attainment (#13) and Foreign-Born Residents (#27) subcategories. It also breaks the Top 10 for Global 500 companies, with major European players like Migros, Credit Suisse and UBS AG based here. For the uninitiated, Zurich may seem like a bourgeois and reserved kind of place, but under the buttoned-down oxford you'll find a thriving arts landscape, an adventurous restaurant scene and plenty of vintage finds that won't break the (Swiss) bank account. A hub for European travel, Zurich suffered economically from its 126 COVID-19 cases per million residents. Its airport (ranked #24 for Connectivity) was hit by a substantial drop in revenue, which it expected to affect capital spending in the city over the coming years.



## 37 MELBOURNE

AUSTRALIA

**POPULATION** METRO 4,539,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 22 PEOPLE
- 34 PROMOTION

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

While Sydney is known for its laid-back vibe and breezy style, Melbourne goes for edgy aesthetics and urban panache. For proof, explore a multitude of tiny alleys, where the city's spray-can artists turn dreary walls into colorful canvases. You might stumble upon a laneway, those locally loved narrow passageways open only to pedestrian traffic, with a charming little bar or an award-winning restaurant. In the art capital of Australia, you can while away the morning at Gertrude Contemporary, a gallery that showcases the work of emerging homegrown artists, or you can lose yourself in the happening Fitzroy neighborhood, where the city's street-art scene began in the aforementioned alleys. Melbourne ranks #23 for Sights & Landmarks and #27 for Culture. Its diversity is a major strength, ranking #10 for Foreign-Born Residents, and a better educated populace helped its People score rise four spots.



## 38 BUDAPEST

HUNGARY

**POPULATION METRO** 2,978,067

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 27 PROGRAMMING
- 46 PROSPERITY

The Old World beguiles in the Hungarian capital.

There's much to see and do on either side of the Hungarian capital, which is split in half by the expansive bend of the Danube River. On the west bank is medieval Buda, hilly and full of history, and on the east is Pest, modern and bohemian. The two were first linked in 1849 by the iconic Széchenyi Chain Bridge and together they now offer an alluring whole that ranks high for Programming (#27) and for Prosperity (#46). Ornate baths, old-fashioned cafés, lively markets, Art Nouveau splendors and a fascinating history sweep visitors off their feet. Don't miss a hike to Gellért Hill, which rises 770 feet above the city and offers sweeping views of the river below, the Buda hills, Pest and the mountain ranges in the distance. At night, Budapest's Communist-era factories and parkades come alive as "ruin bars," a distinctly Eastern European approach that keeps the city's nightlife (ranked #16) fresh and surprising.



## 39 HOUSTON

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION METRO** 6,997,384

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 GDP PER CAPITA
- 10 GOOGLE SEARCH

Smart, skilled and soulful, Houston is the American city of the future.

International immigration in the past decade has contributed to explosive population growth and has made Houston one of the most ethnically diverse big cities in America, with more than 145 different languages spoken at home, according to the latest census—about even with New York. No wonder its dining is ranked #35 in the world. The fourth-largest city in the U.S. is also home to the fourth-largest concentration of Fortune 500 companies in the country, and ranks an impressive Top 20 globally. The city is also #10 on the planet in our GDP Per Capita subcategory. Despite this, the city ranks a middling #76 overall in Prosperity, including #200 in our Unemployment ranking and #214 for Income Equality. But there is room for inclusion in the city's ambitious plans. The recent development of the Houston Spaceport, a hub for innovation, education and commercial spaceflight, is the future of the region's space industry—and brings us all a step closer to space tourism. For now, Houston's 22.3 million annual visitors (2018)—of which 3.28 million were international travelers—arrive and depart by more conventional means—at least they did before the city was devastated by the pandemic. The city ranks #29 for Airport Connectivity.



## 40 SEATTLE

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION METRO** 3,939,363

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 11 GDP PER CAPITA
- 20 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

America's boomtown is playing the long game to keep the (supervised) party going.

Seattle's self-reliance and dedication to taking care of its own has fostered over 150 years of city-building on the far-flung northwest coast of the U.S., setting the stage for its current "it" status. In many ways, Sea Town reverse-engineered its success. With a focus on education and an optimized workforce, the very environment that launched and held on to Boeing (still the biggest local employer despite the relocation of its headquarters to Chicago) as well as Microsoft and Weyerhaeuser has also attracted more recent captains of industry, like Amazon, Costco and Starbucks. Keeping the talent pipeline stocked has always been Seattle's secret—and it's paid off. Today, it ranks in the Top 20 globally for educated citizenry and #11 in our vital GDP Per Capita subcategory, powered by its #30 ranking for Global 500 companies in town (and growing). The city's boom has slowed significantly, with rising COVID-19 cases and its lowest-ever employment rate (ranked #229 nationally as of late July 2020). At the same time, residents, workers and businesses have been hobbled by the closure of the West Seattle Bridge, the city's busiest.



## 41 MONTREAL

CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 3,625,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

22 INCOME EQUALITY

25 CULTURE

Canada's exotic French heart was hit hard with COVID-19. But a return to brighter days is never far here, *mes amis*.

Outgoing, two-cheek-embracing, convivial-above-all Montreal took a hard, early hit as the pandemic struck. Deaths in residences for the elderly exposed the ugly underbelly of an underfunded industry and brought about a reckoning for both governments and families in terms of the meaning of care. Montreal's coronavirus cases were the worst in Canada for weeks at a time in 2020. Despite the cancellation of iconic programming like the Grand Prix, the city acted swiftly to turn major streets into creatively-styled outdoor hangouts with art and music, and vastly increased bike lanes. The summer of 2020, as ever in the city, was delightfully enjoyable and tragically short—not for nothing does Montreal rank 25th in the world for the number of quality activities, shows and events. Montreal also ranks 31st for its number of foreign-born citizens, and 30th for the percentage of residents with higher education. Universities are highly rated—highly respected McGill climbed in the rankings—and Université de Montréal has become a hot spot of the Artificial Intelligence kind. Montreal's growing tech expertise hasn't put the city out of reach: it hit #22 in our Gini coefficient ranking for inequality. But it's becoming increasingly clear: the city's future may be more dependent on its growing brains than on its considerable heart.



## 42 HONG KONG

HONG KONG

**POPULATION** METRO 7,347,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

15 PROMOTION

28 PLACE

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

The East-meets-West spirit of the place; the forest of skyscrapers as seen on a hike to Pok Fu Lam Reservoir; the sounds, smells and tastes from the dai pai dong (open-air food stalls) of Temple Street Night Market and the city's electric pulse all captivate visitors and locals alike. The sublime embrace of the city was shattered in April 2019 when Hong Kong citizens opposing a law to extradite criminal cases to China first took to the streets. The demands quickly spread to broader human rights reforms targeting China's encroachment on the region—and now, the draconian new security law imposed by Beijing has cast a pall on Hong Kong's Safety (#8), currently a high point of its score for Place (#28). It's hard to imagine as many foreigners still wishing to visit a city where they could very easily be detained for wearing the wrong shirt. Hong Kong was well prepared for COVID-19, with acute memories of the last generation's SARS epidemic, and so snuffed out the newer virus more quickly than most cities outside the region.



## 43 FRANKFURT

GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 2,693,115

### HIGHLIGHTS

26 PROSPERITY

5 PRODUCT

Frankfurt smartly *defines* conventions.

Frankfurt has perfected the art of air access. Germany is in the middle of Europe, Frankfurt is in the middle of Germany, and its airport—the largest in the country—is one of the world's aviation hubs (#3 in our Airport Connectivity subcategory). The city rises above most others with its #2-ranked convention center, which draws more than 4.5 million visitors annually (pandemic years excepted). In 15 minutes, conventioners who fly into FRA can find themselves at the massive Messe Frankfurt, the world's largest trade fair and event organizer, featuring its own exhibition grounds. A short stroll in any direction takes visitors to shopping, restaurants, museums and other pleasures to mix with the business of the day. The convention center is scrambling to salvage its business during the COVID-19 pandemic, and has managed to quickly bounce back with the "hygiene concept," a typically German comprehensive system for safely organizing an event, from the catering services to teleconferencing technology to contactless access.





## 44 SÃO PAULO

BRAZIL

**POPULATION METRO** 22,046,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 PROGRAMMING
- 11 PROMOTION

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

Brazil's biggest metropolis greets you not with beaches but with high-rises, traffic, smog and more than the occasional downpour. But as Paulistanos will tell you in person or via Facebook check-ins (#5), they live in the best city on the planet. With the largest population of Italian descendants outside of Italy, the largest community of people of Japanese descent and a large Arab community fueled mostly by Lebanese and Syrian immigrants, culinary delights are a given. The city lands at #3 for Restaurants. Brazil's late and half-hearted response to COVID-19 meant São Paulo suffered more cases of the virus than almost any non-U.S. city, and worse even than many parts of the particularly hard-hit U.S. That's likely to put a damper on the city's Top 5 ranking for concerts, shows and events until big crowds are safe again. The city canceled the spring edition of its famous fashion week—the biggest in Latin America—and its Pride Parade, the world's biggest.



## 45 TEL AVIV

ISRAEL

**POPULATION METRO** 2,654,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 PEOPLE
- 49 PROGRAMMING

A beach town with serious cultural chops, Tel Aviv is drawing on its past to forge an exciting future.

With its year-round perfect weather, laidback lifestyle and burgeoning tech industry, it's no surprise that Tel Aviv has become a popular place to live for foreign-born Millennials and Gen-Xers (the city ranks #16 in terms of diversity). Tel Aviv also reaches #8 in our People category, and ranks an impressive #39 for Museums. Located in the city center and opened in 1932, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art houses a comprehensive collection of works by local and international artists. The new building of twisting geometric surfaces, designed by Preston Scott Cohen, is one of the city's landmarks. Opened in 2018, across the Yarkon River from the art museum, is the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, a grand monument to the natural world that also makes allowances for the country's Abrahamic faith: Torah literalists can avoid the section on evolution. The two museums boast gorgeous architecture, but you don't have to go to a museum to be immersed in art and design. In a city with the planet's largest concentration of Bauhaus-style buildings, fascinating architecture is everywhere you look.



## 46 COPENHAGEN

DENMARK

**POPULATION METRO** 1,928,612

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 30 PRODUCT
- 32 PROSPERITY

One of Europe's new culinary capitals lets you eat it up and work it off.

René Redzepi put Nordic cuisine on the map when his restaurant Noma was named the world's best in 2010—and, since then, it's only dropped a single place, with a new location in the countryside outside of town. It's not something everyone can afford, but with a strong showing in Income Equality (#17) the standard of living is high enough for many of the other luxuries the city offers. And the Danish capital continues to be a hotbed for innovative cuisine, as well as for contemporary art and design. Surprisingly, Copenhagen only ranks at #121 in our Restaurants subcategory, but trust us when we say you should go here hungry. Compact enough so you can walk or bike everywhere, Copenhagen offers not just plenty of culinary delights, but also a rich cultural heritage and lots of green spaces and pretty canals to explore—alongside an impressively educated populace (#19). The city ranks #75 for Parks & Outdoors but only #226 for Weather, so dress accordingly.



## 47 CALGARY

CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 1,326,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 PEOPLE
- 23 GDP PER CAPITA

Canada's energy capital is building for its future, despite a struggling oil industry.

Although Toronto is Canada's business heart, it's Calgary—with Canada's youngest population and home to its oil industry—that's always been second. People here walk with the velocity of New Yorkers and cut to the chase like Texans. Ranking #23 globally in GDP Per Capita, by far the highest in Canada, the city is now in the midst of an economic hardship not seen in decades due to the struggling oil and gas industry (the fortunes of Calgary rise and fall with the price of crude). The pandemic added to the misery, which has manifested into the highest unemployment rate in Canada, at 15.5% over the summer of 2020. The challenge in this city of risk-takers has always been to even things out by diversifying away from fossil fuels, building an economically resilient home town for a place that ranks #9 globally in our People category, including #11 for Educational Attainment and #24 for Foreign-Born Residents. New projects, like the recently opened Central Library in the burgeoning cultural hub of East Village, reinforce the city's long-lauded quality of life, despite current struggles.



## 48 ORLANDO

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,572,962

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS
- 13 ATTRACTIONS

Yes, there are theme parks. But Orlando is also a thriving food destination with plenty to enjoy without kids in tow.

Being the largest city in a region that generates more than \$60 billion in tourism-related revenue every year (2020 being the notable exception) gets you plenty of lift from a rising tide. That's a lot of visitors with a story to tell if you give them the means to tell it. Orlando knows how to get people talking. Its #32 ranking in our Promotion category drove its Top 50 overall global ranking, including the eighth-most TripAdvisor reviews of any global metropolis. Orlando plans buzzy product releases with military precision—and suffered deeply when confronted with an invisible enemy it couldn't defeat quickly, its many high-budget tourism-reliant initiatives cut short, from SeaWorld's new Sesame Street, rolled out for the show's 50th anniversary, to LEGOLAND Resort's debuted Lego Movie World. The city has also expanded its attention beyond family fun. The new Exploria Stadium houses the local MLS men's and women's teams, with seats for 25,500 fans. Orlando's middling Restaurants ranking (#102) looks to be on the long-term upswing as the world's chefs focus on the post-pandemic opportunity in a place with so many diners on vacation. The NBA making its pandemic season hub in the city will help a little, but Orlando faces massive challenges in a state where infection rates set daily records.



## 49 ATLANTA

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 5,950,828

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 GOOGLE SEARCH
- 14 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY

Affluent, charming and dripping with history, this giant of the American South is creating the future on its own terms.

Long a progressive beacon of diversity in conservative Georgia, Atlanta has a rich legacy of American civil rights, along with laying claim as the birthplace of Martin Luther King Jr. The city embraces and shares its rich, living history—from the must-see Center for Civil and Human Rights to the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change. These days, it's also front and center in the U.S.'s escalating pursuit of social justice and equality, with Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms even being rumored to be among the competition for Kamala Harris when Biden was choosing a running mate. Atlanta has always been a crossroads—open to new ideas, and to the new arrivals who came to this lush, hot, rolling land when the city rose as a railroad terminus. Today, it's still a transportation hub, with Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport one of the busiest airports in the world (80% of the U.S. population resides within a two-hour flight). It's why the city ranks #14 for Airport Connectivity globally, as well as #34 in our Convention Center subcategory, resulting in an overall #24 ranking for Product. Atlanta, like most optimized hubs, also boasts efficient, inexpensive, direct public transit links to the city from its airport. It's also a long-time business titan, ranking Top 20 worldwide for most Global 500 companies based in town.



## 50 DALLAS

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 7,540,371

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY
- 19 GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES

Dallas-boosters like to say that “Big Things Happen Here,” and as the city climbs up our ranking, we’d have to agree.

It’s not only city branding that’s big in Dallas, which is home to more than 10,000 corporate headquarters—the largest corporate head office concentration in the U.S. and #19 in the world for Global 500 companies. Of course, a city with lots of corporate headquarters is a city that’s easy to get to: Dallas ranks #8 in the world for Airport Connectivity, a measure of direct flight access into a city’s principal airport. But the city isn’t just big on money; it’s big on fun and culture, too. Dallas is also home to America’s sixth-largest LGBTQ+ community, with bars and restaurants concentrated in Oak Lawn, and to the Dallas Arts District, the largest contiguous urban arts district in the nation. On 20 square blocks of mixed-use space, museums like the Dallas Museum of Art, the Crow Museum of Asian Art and the renowned Nasher Sculpture Center—as well as theaters, symphony and opera venues and restaurants and bars—all contribute to a #59 ranking in our Culture subcategory (concerts, shows and events).



## 51 HAMBURG

GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 3,309,215

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 PROSPERITY
- 47 PROGRAMMING

Germany’s second city is a creative wild child with global impact.

Hamburg is both Europe’s second-largest shipping port and a serious contender for Venice of the North, with a lake and a latticework of canals that elevate the city into visually stunning territory. The landmark that tells the story is the \$933-million Elbphilharmonie, a spectacular concert hall that combines 19th-century warehouses with the crystalline architecture and acoustics of the future. But don’t let the opulence fool you: Hamburg boasts the 13th-best Income Equality worldwide. Lower-income people are not being left behind, even in its signature redevelopment project, HafenCity. In Europe’s biggest inner-city urban development project—which, over more than a decade, is transforming almost a square mile of tumble-down docks along the city’s port into a buzzing shopping and residential area—a third of housing must be subsidized while another third is set aside for rentals. The project is due to be completed within the next five years, and includes new additions to Hamburg’s bustling nightlife (#22), such as a new offshoot of the popular rum-soaked Boilerman Bar.



## 52 OSAKA

JAPAN

**POPULATION** METRO 14,977,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 21 PROSPERITY
- 22 PROGRAMMING

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

This city has swagger, perhaps because it was the capital of what is today modern Japan a millennium before Tokyo. Osaka served as “the nation’s kitchen”—the distribution point for rice, the most important measure of wealth. Since industry begets industry, it’s now ranked #10 on the planet for most Global 500 companies. Amazingly, the city’s economy dwarfs Hong Kong’s. But it’s the impressive #22 ranking in our Programming category—led by a #7 spot for its shopping scene—that is making Osaka the fastest-rising Japanese tourist city. That ranking leapfrogged its already stellar showing for Restaurants (#13). Best known for its okonomiyaki—cabbage pancakes stuffed with an ever-changing lineup of fillings—Osaka is home to several restaurants specializing in this fabulous dish as well as its distant octopus-containing cousin, takoyaki. Annual foreign visitors to Osaka could reach 26 million by 2030, according to Takeshi Yamaguchi of estate consulting firm CBRE.



## 53 LISBON PORTUGAL

**POPULATION** METRO 2,989,427

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 PLACE
- 34 PROGRAMMING

The once sleepy capital on the edge of Western Europe is today one of Europe’s hottest destinations.

The Portuguese capital is a tactile, multisensory experience best explored on foot with no particular agenda, allowing a few of the 2,799 hours of sunshine a year—the most of any European capital—to warm your sense of discovery. Its seven hills play with the senses, reverberating sounds, light and scents, to say nothing of providing perches from which to watch the sun setting ablaze the yellow and white architecture—and the Atlantic beyond. To save you some time, the best spot to do so is the Castelo de São Jorge, a view you have to earn through winding ancient alleys in one of Europe’s oldest neighborhoods. The city’s #21 Safety ranking—which draws from UN, European and FBI statistics—shot up 92 places this year. Indeed, safety was the country’s focus in trying to win back the tourists Lisbon depends on: from temperature checks to high testing rates, Lisbon is eager to show the world that its neighborhoods (ranking #15 for Sights & Landmarks) and open spaces (at #19 for Parks & Outdoors) are ready to welcome them back.

## 54 AUSTIN UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,168,316

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 18 UNIVERSITY
- 24 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The home of SXSW and the purported best live music scene on the planet fights hard to keep it weird.

The rebellious Texas city—forged with the Longhorn State’s can-do persistence cut with a university town’s political activism and social diversity—has long attracted the misfits who don’t quite fit into the American south’s expectations. The city ranks #33 in our People category, including #24 for Educational Attainment. A lot of the brainpower arrives for the 18th-ranked university on the planet, The University of Texas at Austin, and many never leave. That foundation of thinking differently drew dreamers for decades. The local marketing organization, Visit Austin, trademarked the city as the “Live Music Capital of the World.” On any given night—pandemic notwithstanding—the city’s entertainment districts serve up performances like nowhere else. SXSW (South by Southwest), the annual summit of film, interactive media and music festivals and conferences (plus a fair share of historic product launches like Airbnb), has seeded the area’s magnetism for new ventures. As such, monikers like “Silicon Hills” have followed campus openings by Apple, Facebook, Google, Oracle, Dell, Cisco and Hewlett-Packard. A skills shortage—tempered by the pandemic—is being mitigated somewhat by a steady flow of graduates pouring out from UT Austin and new residents streaming in from both coasts.

## 55 PHOENIX UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 4,857,962

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 WEATHER
- 15 ATTRACTIONS

Latin soul, daring architecture and a reverence for the outdoors blends a heady mix in the heart of the American Southwest.

A thriving desert metropolis, Phoenix offers some of the best Mexican food this side of the border, a number of fine museums, a vibrant artist community and 300 days of sunshine—with the #12-ranked Weather globally. Start your visit with a stroll through Roosevelt Row Arts District, or RoRo, as locals have taken to calling it. Art galleries, studios, restaurants and bars sit side by side in this walkable creative district in the downtown core—helping the city to a #15 ranking globally in our Attractions subcategory. Don’t miss the Desert Botanical Garden, which, with more than 50,000 plants, has one of the world’s largest collections of desert flora. Want to see some cacti and succulents in their natural element? Take a close-up look at Camelback Mountain. Summit trails are not for the faint of heart, especially in 100° Fahrenheit heat, but the base of the mountain offers easier and equally beautiful trails for beginners. Phoenix ranks #53 in the nation for its Parks & Outdoors. If you’re looking for a respite from the heat, visit the Phoenix Art Museum, where Carlos Amorales’ *Black Cloud*, a site-specific installation consisting of 25,000 individual, life-sized black paper moths and butterflies, weaves its way in a swarm up the walls and ceilings of a gallery space.



## 56 NAPLES

ITALY

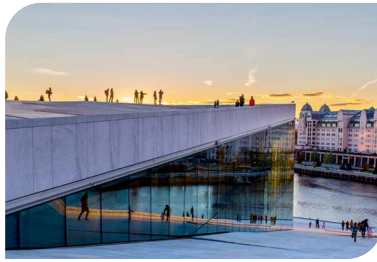
**POPULATION METRO** 3,406,777

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 PLACE
- 15 MUSEUMS

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

Even by European secondary-city status, Naples is often overlooked and underestimated—both by international visitors and by Italy's power centers. The city's three millennia of existence make it one of the oldest urban centers on the continent—with the accompanying layers of beauty, conflict and lore (ciao, Elena Ferrante). Naples ranks an impressive #4 overall in our deep Place category, including #5 for Sights & Landmarks—like its centuries-old Naples Cathedral, which rivals any other in the sensual feast that is Italy. Like in Rome and Istanbul, a mere stroll here (or a ride up the funicular to the surrounding hillside neighborhoods) reveals forgotten history every few minutes. The city's waterfront, nearby beaches and parks result in #7 ranking for Parks & Outdoors on the planet. Naples has long been associated with crime and mafia, but tourism has doubled over the past decade, and crime dropped by almost 50% between 2018 and 2019, according to local sources—resulting in a #87 Safety ranking for the city globally. Of course, both positive indicators are at risk given the country's struggles with the economic devastation of the pandemic. A region with an unemployment rate of 20% in normal times is far worse off today.



## 57 OSLO

NORWAY

**POPULATION METRO** 1,588,457

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 20 PEOPLE
- 20 PROSPERITY

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

No longer playing second fiddle to Scandinavian cities like Stockholm and Copenhagen, Oslo is proving itself a worthy destination all its own, with stunning natural beauty, as well as a thriving nightlife scene, Michelin-worthy restaurants and a storied past. The holder of our #20 spot in the People category, Oslo has some of the most educated residents in the world (#10 for Educational Attainment) as well as a high percentage of international citizens (#35 for Foreign-Born Residents). The economy is performing well, offering its residents admirable levels of social wellbeing and employment, which is a good thing, since Oslo is not a cheap place to live in or visit. But a high Income Equality ranking (#10) and access to education means that status symbols like the Teslas quietly prowling its streets are not just playthings for a rich few. In fact, thanks in part to generous subsidies and breaks on Oslo's downtown congestion pricing, the luxury electric vehicle brand owns a quarter of Norway's car market.



## 58 DENVER

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION METRO** 2,932,415

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 17 AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY
- 23 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Light rail, legal pot and buzzing 'hoods put Denver on the fast track.

Since its Wild West beginnings, Denver has attracted people from a variety of cultures who've created a rich tapestry and a diverse cultural heritage. Today, with its secondary-city affordability and epic location tucked at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, Denver is an increasingly wealthy, healthy Millennial magnet of a city. These days, an increasing number of companies are locating in Downtown Denver, which points to its reputation as one of the best places in the country to start and grow a business. The city ranks an impressive #24 globally in our GDP Per Capita subcategory, as well as #23 for Educational Attainment. But it's not just an abundance of jobs and a lower cost of living that's attracting a highly educated and in-demand workforce to the city. Blessed with 300 days of sunshine a year and surrounded by mountains, hiking paths and numerous indoor/outdoor spaces, the city is in the vanguard of the growing trend toward office wellness. Lest we forget, cannabis is legal in the Mile High City and the entire state of Colorado.



## 59 STOCKHOLM SWEDEN

**POPULATION METRO** 2,308,143

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 31 PRODUCT
- 34 PEOPLE

An ambitious tech scene with daring cuisine to fuel the Scandinavian fire.

Very few Scandinavian cities are as dynamic as Stockholm, with its mix of rustic, traditional and New Nordic cuisine, its idyllic parks and outdoor swimming areas, quaint cobblestone streets lined with buildings erected in the 1700s, cutting-edge design and mid-century modern aesthetics. Throw in a varied, multicultural population that speaks near flawless English (Stockholm ranks #34 in our People category with a #14 ranking for Educational Attainment) and epic summer season with near-constant daylight, and you've got yourself one very attractive destination with plenty of experiences for any mood. This truly international city underwent an IT boom in the late 1990s, which was followed a decade later by a second wave with the launch of global hits like Skype, Spotify and Minecraft—earning Stockholm the moniker “The Unicorn Factory” for its record of launching more billion-dollar start-ups than anywhere outside of Silicon Valley. A wander through the swanky, recently gentrified Södermalm neighborhood, the birthplace of many of these tech giants, will reveal why the city ranks #48 in the GDP Per Capita subcategory. But be sure to mask up: the country's push for “herd immunity” during COVID-19 caused a spike in infections and deaths, and the worst COVID-19 numbers in Scandinavia.



## 60 PHILADELPHIA UNITED STATES

**POPULATION METRO** 6,096,372

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 UNIVERSITY
- 32 CULTURE

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

Given its deep foundation in the creation of the Union almost 250 years ago, Philadelphia is a dense, cataloged embodiment of American values and traditions, easily accessible and eagerly shared. Small wonder, then, that it ranks an impressive #38 in our Sights & Landmarks subcategory, and #32 in our Culture (comprised of concerts, shows and events). It's home to places like the Liberty Bell Center, of course. And various must-see cultural centers with the term “Independence” in their names. It might be America's birthplace, but the City of Brotherly Love only keeps one foot firmly rooted in its rich history. The other is stepping into the future, with the 30th-most Global 500 companies located here, a growing population and a glittering skyline heading ever upward. Philadelphia is also a city rich in hometown pride, with locals reliably turning out to celebrate everything from Super Bowl victories to National Cheesesteak Day. Strong employment prior to the pandemic, driven by a diverse economy, meant population growth, a resilient real estate market and a boom in new construction. But with a poor ranking in its number of COVID-19 cases and in our Income Equality subcategory (#210), the city will need to battle hard to win back the good times.



## 61 RIYADH SAUDI ARABIA

**POPULATION METRO** 6,881,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 37 PROMOTION
- 53 PEOPLE

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

Seeing the continued success of the tourism industry in neighboring Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Oman and keen on moving the economy away from a dependency on oil, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia started issuing tourist visas in April 2018 for the first time in eight years. Even before that, the city saw plenty of tourism—18 million people visited the country in 2016—but now, Prince Mohammed Bin Salman has launched an ambitious plan to attract 30 million visitors by 2030, including phase one of the astonishing Red Sea development, to be completed by the end of 2022. Already the capital city ranks #29 for Facebook Check-ins, as well as #6 for both Weather and GDP Per Capita. Saudi Arabia's ultraconservative leanings—public displays of affection between heterosexual couples are discouraged while LGBTQ+ couples could find themselves in serious danger—present a threat to the country's plans for tourism growth, as does its reputation for murdering journalists and other outspoken critics.



## 62 DELHI

INDIA

**POPULATION** METRO 29,617,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 18 PLACE
- 23 PROMOTION

Chaotic, mind-bendingly sprawling and layered like few cities on earth, Delhi is a sensory bounty for the prepared.

Honk, beep, moo! Vans, scooters, rickshaws, street food sellers, beggars, cows and even monkeys come together in the Indian capital. There are few places on earth with the hectic, pulsating pace of Delhi, which explains its #18 spot for Place, including a #29 ranking for Sights & Landmarks. Indeed, Delhi is a city built upon or near the ruins of a previous city, and today visitors can trace through the eras, exploring centuries-old forts, tombs, shrines and mosques. Old Delhi is where to soak it all in while weaving in and out of the chaos, shopping for trinkets and handicrafts in the frenetic street bazaars and gaping in wonder at the Red Fort. Unsurprisingly, Delhi also ranks highly (#17) for Restaurants, and sampling everything you can is a must. Now, add a “click” to Delhi’s cacophony: despite its ancient roots the city is bursting into the new millennium with a #23 ranking for Promotion. Its rankings in Facebook Check-ins (#14), Google Trends (#13) and Google Search (#9) all reveal a city eager to show itself off to the world.



## 63 BUENOS AIRES

ARGENTINA

**POPULATION** METRO 16,157,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 CULTURE
- 16 SIGHTS & LANDMARKS

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

Elegant mansions line cobblestone streets, drivers maneuver broad boulevards according to rules only they comprehend and the wild nightlife goes on until dawn. Porteños, as the local populace is called, have mastered the art of whiling away the hours at cafés, drinking espresso and arguing over politics or yesterday’s fútbol match. A chaotic, beautiful mess, it’s hard not to fall in love with Buenos Aires. Making the Top 100 list for the second year in a row, “Baires” scores an impressive #16 for Sights & Landmarks, boosted by the distinction of neighborhoods like La Boca, a vibrant quarter where everything from walls, lampposts, fire hydrants and even tree trunks are painted in vibrant shades of green, red, yellow, purple and blue. Buenos Aires is also an emerging force in our Programming category (#21), ranking #10 for Culture thanks to its pre-pandemic torrent of events and concerts—from tango in the park in Belgrano to the increasingly buzzy arteBA art fair. After dark, the city boasts the #23-ranked Nightlife on the planet. No wonder it’s the third-most googled city, one that just saw its largest visitor numbers in 2019.



## 64 SAN JOSE

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 1,945,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 PEOPLE
- 4 GDP PER CAPITA

Talent, smarts and money are a potent mix that’s given this city the highest household income in the USA.

It’s fascinating what a well-educated, well-paid and diverse population can do for a city’s rankings. In the case of San Jose, the economic, cultural and political capital of Silicon Valley, it’s everything, and it’s given the city its highest-ever finish. The city boasts the #4 GDP Per Capita on the planet. All that capital lures the best talent on earth, meaning San Jose also excels in our People category, with the fourth-best educated residents on the planet and the 14th-most diverse. The bounty of universities is a performance driver all its own, creating symbiotic integrations with local tech companies with access to funding and innovation like few others. Given the optimal conditions of a lauded, coveted school and the on-ramp it provides to jobs in the same city, San Jose will continue to stock its talent pipeline. The region, home to Google, Facebook, Cisco Systems, eBay and PayPal, is #30 for Global 500 HQs eager for graduates. There are a massive number of corporate offices in the city—with plans for a new Google campus over the next few years that could house up to 25,000 employees—but given the plentiful prosperity, San Jose is an incredibly livable and worthwhile destination. As California’s oldest civilian Spanish settlement, the city has many museums spanning its fascinating history.



## 65 BRUSSELS

BELGIUM

**POPULATION** METRO 2,667,824

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 37 PRODUCT
- 48 PROGRAMMING

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

Here you’ll find breathtaking architecture—surely the Grand Place is one of the most beautiful squares in the world—along with some of the ugliest buildings in Europe (there are entire blogs dedicated to the city’s “distinct” architecture). Brussels is the EU’s administrative center, yet one of its most famous landmarks is the Manneken Pis, a statue of a naked boy peeing into a fountain—a symbol not just of the city’s contempt for authority but also of the locals’ enduring deadpan humor. Brussels has a vibrant, multi-ethnic population (ranking #34 for Foreign-Born Residents), and boasts under-the-radar neighborhoods such as the hip Congolese Matonge quarter—worthy of exploration for the flea markets and street art alone. Its Museums (#30) are ostensibly led by the grand Belgian Royal Museums of Fine Arts, but they’re truly brought to the next level by the Museum of the City’s collection of over 600 outfits worn over the years by the aforementioned peeing boy.



## 66 PORTLAND

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,478,996

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 GDP PER CAPITA
- 17 GOOGLE SEARCH

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

Portland’s Left Coast isolation, ambivalence toward established norms and legacy of cooperation and neighborliness—to hew trees and carve out one’s place among the encroaching wilderness—makes this one of the most earnest cities in America. It’s also one of most beautiful, ranking #61 for Sights & Landmarks and #70 for Parks & Outdoors. One of the zingers in the popular TV show *Portlandia* identified its lampooned target as “a place young people go to retire.” But it’s more like reinventing themselves, taking what was there all along, finding its best parts and doubling down on what works. The proof of its people is in Portland’s performance: its citizenry ranks #28 for Educational Attainment and #14 for global GDP Per Capita. Portlanders work hard to play hard. The city ranks Top 50 globally for its lively concerts, shows and events (#43 in our Culture subcategory) and its diverse nightlife (#46). But Stumptown (referring to Portland’s logging past) isn’t a hippie pacifist. As the eyes of the world focus on the city’s battle against shadowy federal military deployed there to quell Black Lives Matter and social justice protest, Portlanders are once again forging their reputation as an uncompromising citizenry.



## 67 OTTAWA

CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 1,036,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 19 PEOPLE
- 52 PROSPERITY

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

Canada’s capital—“the city that fun forgot” to Canadians—has forever lived in the shadow of its exciting big-city sisters, Toronto and Montreal. But a national 150th birthday in 2017 brought attention the citizens (ranking #19 in People) of a city where one in four is an immigrant (Ottawa ranks #40 in the world for Foreign-Born Residents). Ottawans are uncommonly intelligent: the city ranks #6 in Educational Attainment and the highest-ranking of its four universities, Carleton, places #82 globally. All that brainpower has poured into some 1,750 knowledge-based businesses—everything from clean technology to life sciences to digital media, aerospace and software. About 68,000 jobs are the result—along with an 80th-place ranking in global GDP Per Capita. In a city with a relatively low cost of living, that means there’s money to spend on its plentiful things to do (with a #60 ranking in Attractions) and underrated good times.





## 68 HELSINKI FINLAND

**POPULATION METRO** 1,490,142

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 23 PROSPERITY
- 38 PEOPLE

Irreverence and saunas are the thing in Scandinavia’s emerging hot spot.

Though Helsinki has been named the World’s Happiest City by the United Nations three years running, it’s only in the past few years that the Finnish capital has become popular with young vagabonds, perhaps due to the country’s impressive tourism campaigns. A few of them are centered around Helsinki’s airport (ranked #63), which in 2019 Airports Council International named “Best in the World” for customer experience. If you do fly into Helsinki, start with a visit to Teurastamo, a former slaughterhouse that’s now home to restaurants, cafés and bars. And don’t leave town without experiencing the sauna culture: one of the coolest is Löyly, its impressive cascading architecture set at the edge of the Baltic Sea. The city also ranks highly (#14) for both Educational Attainment and Income Equality.



## 69 VALENCIA SPAIN

**POPULATION METRO** 1,733,606

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 WEATHER
- 18 CONVENTION CENTER

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

The Spanish city ranks #35 globally for Place, which includes its weather—the 16th best in the world—along with neighborhoods, landmarks and parks and outdoor activities. For instance, here’s a landmark: the UNESCO World Heritage site called La Lonja, a 15th-century silk exchange and one of the best examples of Gothic civil architecture in Europe. The Mercado Central, one of Europe’s largest and oldest food markets, is across the street. The futuristic City of Arts and Sciences, designed by Santiago Calatrava and Félix Candela, is a marvel of a more modern sort. Valencia’s parks include several beaches, some within Albufera Park, a wetlands reserve with a lake and walking trails. It’s all very Instagrammable and helps the city rank #51 for Instagram Hashtags.



## 70 BRISBANE AUSTRALIA

**POPULATION METRO** 2,180,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 31 CONVENTION CENTER
- 44 PEOPLE

Rugged and cultured, Australia’s capital of Queensland does it in balance.

You go to Sydney for beaches and to Melbourne for culture. So what does Brisbane offer that you can’t find elsewhere in Australia? Quite a bit, actually. Brisbane, which scores high for Foreign-Born Residents (#18), is sunny, sophisticated and offers plenty of outdoor adventures right within the city limits. Named after the river that runs through it, Brisbane is best explored from the water. At night. And on a kayak, too: we recommend you take in the shimmering lights of the cityscape during a leisurely paddle down the river. Culture vultures can soak up the art at the Queensland Art Gallery and at the Gallery of Modern Art, Australia’s largest gallery of modern and contemporary art. Brisbane ranks #35 for Attractions and #66 for Parks & Outdoors. It has also fared exceptionally well so far in controlling COVID-19 cases—its 66 cases per million residents as of late July 2020 are an impressive testament to the country’s trust in its experts as much as to its island geography.



## 71 WARSAW

POLAND

**POPULATION METRO** 3,100,844

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 21 SAFETY
- 24 ATTRACTIONS

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

It’s been decades since Warsaw shook off its dreary Cold War cloak, and while other members of the EU have suffered economic woes in recent years, Poland has flourished, slowly but surely becoming an economic powerhouse in the region formerly known as “behind the Iron Curtain.” With the addition of high-profile architectural projects, new museums and a couple of Michelin-starred restaurants under its belt, the Polish capital is finally coming into its own as a tourist destination. And a safe, affordable one at that. (Warsaw ranks #21 globally in our Safety category.) It ranks an impressive #42 for Product, which includes a #24 spot for Attractions and #45 for Museums, of which the city has dozens if you look hard enough. For a bird’s eye view of what post-war reconstruction looks like (the entire city was almost completely destroyed by the Nazis in World War II), climb the 150 steps to the top of Taras Widokowy. Once you’re done reflecting, go on the hunt for the city’s understated nightlife (#58), which will roar back post pandemic with a ferocity not seen since Communism was abolished.



## 72 MINNEAPOLIS

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION METRO** 3,629,190

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES
- 18 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

A low unemployment rate prior to the pandemic, culture and affordability make Minneapolis a talent magnet.

As the site of the George Floyd murder at the hands of local police officers that inspired a global movement against systemic racism and police violence, Minneapolis has become a household name. In addition to their vital role in a fight for justice, residents have long advocated for their city, the results of which can be seen in numerous parks, bike trails and placemaking along a prime location on the mighty Mississippi. With 18 Fortune 500 companies—the most per capita of any American metro area—Minneapolis scores an impressive #14 for in our Global 500 subcategory. The city’s residents rank #26 for GDP Per Capita globally. The highly educated workforce (ranked #18 globally for Educational Attainment) enjoys easy access to the rest of the world via Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Airport (#55 for Airport Connectivity). Locals are eager to show off the Walker Art Center—featuring contemporary works like the giant spoon sculpture, which has become a city trademark—and the Minneapolis Institute of Art, known affectionately as “Mia.” With a #59 ranking for Culture, the city’s heart still belongs to beloved hometown recording artist Prince, whose suburban home and studio, Paisley Park, opened as a museum in 2016.



## 73 SHANGHAI

CHINA

**POPULATION METRO** 22,120,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 PRODUCT
- 36 PROGRAMMING

One of the world’s largest cities (proper) is surprisingly navigable, inviting and ready to blow your mind.

This powerhouse of finance, international trade, culture, science and technology ranks #10 for the number of Global 500 companies headquartered here. Yet Shanghai is made of more than money, and the city is lauded for its exhilarating blend of past and present, industry and leisure. It ranks #35 for Shopping, #7 for Restaurants and #35 for Sights & Landmarks. This eminently walkable city and its personality are split by the Huangpu River: Pudong (east bank) is the financial district, fringed with towers that include the landmark spike of the retro-futuristic Oriental Pearl Television Tower. Puxi (west bank) is home to the Bund, lined with the neo-Renaissance edifices that were home to Western businesses in the 1930s, and to the wonderfully layered French Concession. A tight lockdown early in the COVID-19 pandemic—when it was still only an epidemic—led to Shanghai reporting just 11 cases per million residents, if official numbers are accurate.



**74 LYON**  
FRANCE

**POPULATION** METRO 2,084,490

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 42 PROSPERITY
- 64 PRODUCT

Delicious and daring, Lyon is an ancient river city with big plans.

Lyon is a city to be savored nose to tail, past to future, literally and figuratively. If the city’s middling Attractions (#87) and Museums (#124) rankings rise with the plentiful planned investment, that’s just icing on the gâteau. Besides being a UNESCO World Heritage site, the home of chef Paul Bocuse is also renowned for its cuisine, and its #108 Restaurant ranking will ascend in the future as visitors catch fragrant wind of it. Don’t miss La Confluence, a 370-acre urban redevelopment that not only brings together Lyon’s two fabled rivers—the Rhône and the Saône—but also gives new life to an industrial urban wasteland. Most notable in the new development’s crown is the Musée des Confluences, an architectural enigma glittering at the very point where the rivers meet, with an outstretched park disappearing into the flows. Lyon also takes care of its people, scoring an impressive #17 globally for Income Equality. But it’s also a business city, finishing #37 for the Convention Center subcategory.

**75 ADELAIDE**  
AUSTRALIA

**POPULATION** METRO 1,205,000

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 7 PEOPLE
- 127 PRODUCT

Alive with the energy of a diverse population and a dynamic music scene, Adelaide (literally) sings.

The southern coastal city earns a respectable Parks & Outdoors ranking of #100. But where Adelaide shines is in the People category: it’s an astounding #8 in the world for Foreign-Born Residents and ranks #42 in Educational Attainment. That’s generally a recipe for an emerging cultural scene—indeed, Adelaide is where to find the country’s best Aboriginal art, and it’s the only designated UNESCO City of Music in Australia. Some 300 live gigs a week can be savored in this city—or could, before COVID-19 hit, largely sparing the city in terms of case numbers, but inflicting economic and cultural hardship as the region stamped out its cases. Did we mention the pandas? Wang Wang and Funi, which have been at the city’s zoo for a decade, will continue to attract visitors, and hopefully to breed, until at least 2024, thanks to a new deal reached with China in late 2019.

**76 EDMONTON**  
CANADA

**POPULATION** METRO 1,150,000

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 28 PEOPLE
- 34 INCOME EQUALITY

Northern exposure, at long last.

The environment for a molecular evolution from chilly productive resource town into curated hotbed isolated sufficiently to do its own thing has been here for years. The University of Alberta (ranked #59 globally), healthy immigration and the government dollars that come with being a provincial capital have already created a place known around the world as “The City of Festivals.” From Fringe theater to street performers to an increasingly important international film festival, there are more than 50 large, city-sanctioned events every year. A recent downtown revival has now catapulted the city into the “urban renewal” conversation that has been happening in other North American industrial regions. The catalyst has been the new Rogers Place arena downtown, occupied by the National Hockey League’s Edmonton Oilers. But it’s not all good news. The fossil fuel-based economy was already in a tough position before the pandemic and has only descended since, making Alberta among Canada’s economically hardest hit provinces in 2020.



## 77 MARSEILLE

FRANCE

**POPULATION** METRO 1,330,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 56 PROSPERITY
- 63 PEOPLE

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

Leading up to its designation as Europe's Capital of Culture, the city spent billions cleaning up and modernizing as it attempted to shed its seedy reputation. With a #161 ranking for Safety, it's not certain that it has truly moved on, but a swath of new buildings on the waterfront are trying regardless. Don't miss Vieux Port, designed by Norman Foster, who turned a site that's been here for 26 centuries into a mesmerizing pedestrian-only zone with a buzzing sense of place. The showstopper is at Quai des Belges, where a dramatic blade of reflective stainless steel creates a dreamy canopy and shelter from the sun, which shines almost year-round (Marseille ranks #79 for Weather). Nearby is the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations, with a bridge designed like a fishnet made of glass that links to the 17th-century Fort Saint-Jean—a perfect example of the ancient and new coming together. The city's residents are looked after as well: Marseille ranks #29 for Income Equality globally.



## 78 MUSCAT

OMAN

**POPULATION** METRO 1,205,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 PROSPERITY
- 32 PLACE

Oman's ancient and oil-rich urban heart shares the wealth.

Muscat is a newcomer to the Top 100, but with the #3 ranked Weather, a diverse population (ranking #7 for Foreign-Born Residents) and a high GDP Per Capita (#7) it's sure to rise over time. The city on the Gulf of Oman shines with the white of its buildings—so painted to reflect the hot midday sun, with summer temperatures frequently rising above 40°C—and is referred to in writings by Ptolemy and Pliny the Elder, dating it back millennia. The oil-rich city saw the writing on the wall in the late 1990s and began diversifying its economy, and the Arab Spring convinced leaders that a broader distribution of wealth would be prudent. Today, Muscat ranks #8 for Income Equality. In Old Muscat (just south of the modern city center) take a drive down to the waterfront at Palace Beach in the cool evenings for a view of the 15th-century Al Jalali Fort, lit up on a rocky outcrop, protecting the colorful Al Alam Palace.



## 79 ATHENS

GREECE

**POPULATION** METRO 3,828,434

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 25 NIGHTLIFE
- 34 MUSEUMS

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

The ancient capital has had a difficult decade, but it has come back stronger, just like it always does. Despite the cutbacks and the sacrifice, the city's heritage itself was rarely compromised. As such, the sustained investment is now blooming as jobs trickle back and tourist numbers snap back to levels not seen since the good old days. What those tourists find is the Grand Promenade, a 2.5-mile-long, car-free and tree-lined walkway running along the foot of the Acropolis and connecting the city's major archaeological sites. The relative affordability of a European capital (\$500 downtown studios!), as well as the ingrained openness of Athenians, means new ideas and art are flourishing. Athens ranks #32 in our Programming category, including Top 25 for global Nightlife and #29 in our Shopping subcategory. Its museums—as iconic a part of the city as its archaeology—rank #34.



## 80 STUTTGART GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 2,778,591

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 PROSPERITY
- 81 PLACE

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

Stuttgart is a hardworking economic engine that performs across multiple metrics with aplomb: it ranks #46 both for Foreign-Born Residents and for its Convention Center, an unusual site in that more than half its area is green space, and the solar panels on the hall roofs and parking lot generate surplus electricity for 1,350 households. But the area around the convention center is also buzzing with pleasure and activity, as businesspeople and convention-goers have fueled the nearby area along Stuttgart's party mile for the past few decades—a hub of bars, cafés, clubs and intimate drinking dens. Of course the pandemic has crushed both the convention business and general revelry, but this is one place in Germany where the bounceback will be swiftest. Fortunately, Stuttgart ranks #3 on the planet for Safety. The city is also an economic hub, boasting Global 500 European headquarters of companies like Daimler AG, Porsche, Bosch, IBM and Sika. Not surprisingly, the city also boasts some can't-miss automotive museums.



## 81 RIO DE JANEIRO BRAZIL

**POPULATION** METRO 12,272,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 19 GOOGLE SEARCH
- 25 UNIVERSITY RANKING

Cidade Maravilhosa oozes with sensory delights.

Tropical and sexy, with dazzling beaches, samba-fueled nightlife and lush mountains that rise to the heavens, Rio is stunning. It ranks #9 for Parks & Outdoors and #33 for Sights & Landmarks, and you could certainly spend your entire visit exploring al fresco. Lapa is the edgy red-light district teeming with live-music clubs, and on weekends the party spills into the street. In Copacabana there's the Museum of Image and Sound by the New York-based architects behind the High Line park. Once you've done the beach, swap your Havaianas for hikers and visit Tijuca Forest, a national park with waterfalls, wildlife and Christ the Redeemer, which stands in all its glory atop the 2,329-foot Corcovado Mountain. For a less crowded but still spectacular view of the city, Sugarloaf Mountain offers a cable car at the mouth of Guanabara Bay. Safety (#236) is Rio de Janeiro's biggest liability, further reinforced by the country's poor response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The city had 204 cases per million residents.



## 82 BALTIMORE UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,802,789

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 UNIVERSITY
- 28 GDP PER CAPITA

Baltimore is far more than what you know about it from television. And that's a very good thing.

Less than an hour's commute from Washington, D.C., Baltimore offers a slower pace of life and significantly cheaper housing than its hyper-charged neighbor to the south. But the time to buy into one of Baltimore's diverse, historic communities may just be right now—home prices in the city reached a 10-year record in July 2020. Baltimore is also home to world-class institutions like Johns Hopkins University (ranked #6 globally) and the National Aquarium, as well as a quirky culture that makes Charm City a place like no other. Johns Hopkins is Baltimore's largest employer, and while this may be the biggest city without a single Fortune 500 company (and ranking #98 in our Global 500 subcategory), Maryland boasts a \$35-billion aerospace industry, and the defense contractor Northrop Grumman is a Top 5 employer of Baltimore residents. The city ranks an impressive #28 in the world in our GDP Per Capita subcategory, and #37 for Educational Attainment. It also earns a #72 ranking for Museums, and many—from historic ships to the highly acclaimed Port Discovery Children's Museum—are clustered around the Inner Harbor, which for 50 years has served as a nationwide model for the reuse of post-industrial waterfront. With impressive airport connectivity (#39) and established urban infrastructure, Baltimore is Top 50 in our vital Product category.



## 83 AUCKLAND NEW ZEALAND

**POPULATION** METRO 1,333,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 PARKS & OUTDOORS
- 20 FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS

On the north island of New Zealand is a spectacular checklist of a city.

Natural bounty rules in Auckland, as far as visitor and resident perception is concerned. The city ranks #13 globally for Parks & Outdoors, with almost too many green spaces to count despite its diminutive size. Roam the paths leading to one of the 48 dormant volcanic cones, many of which offer spectacular views, or cross the island on foot (just a five-hour hike)—just to be able to brag that you swam on one coast and surfed on the other, all on the same day. But Auckland is also its neighborhoods. Parnell is for food lovers, markets and “made in NZ” design. Downtown’s Ponsonby has a New York West Village vibe and good restaurants. Not surprisingly, the city is becoming more cosmopolitan—the coveted hometown for risk-averse, isolationist tech billionaires and young talent craving proximity to outdoor adventure alike. The city today ranks Top 20 globally for Foreign-Born Residents. Given the state of the world, Auckland’s ascent in this category is likely. Fortunately, the city’s original inhabitants are not going anywhere, and Auckland remains home to the largest Polynesian population of any city on earth.



## 84 COLOGNE GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 1,994,524

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 25 PROSPERITY
- 32 PRODUCT

Cologne is open for business and pleasure.

Despite aesthetic riches like the twin-spired Cologne Cathedral, which rises above the old town’s High Gothic spires, and the cultural bounty of places like the Museum Ludwig with its 20th-century art, the perception of the city lags behind its virtues. Cologne ranks cruelly low in our Culture, Attractions and Museums subcategories. But given that this is Cologne’s third year in the Top 100 cities, it’s bound to ascend future rankings. It already ranks #32 in our Product category, an amalgam of University Ranking, Airport Connectivity, Convention Center, Attractions and Museums. The reason for its high score? Its convention center—ranked #14 for its size globally. The city is also rising in the ranks for Safety, hitting #8 globally. Cologne is home to Lufthansa, the second-largest airline in Europe (COVID-19-fallout willing), helping to earn it a #20 spot for Global 500 corporate headquarters.



## 85 NEW ORLEANS UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 1,270,399

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 25 GDP PER CAPITA
- 26 PROGRAMMING

Few cities of this size radiate the lore that New Orleans does.

In the face of poverty and injustice—and environmental catastrophes compounded by both—NoLa has created a culture of presence, music and festivals that may pale in size to others in the world, but never in their intensity. It’s why the city ranks #26 globally for Programming, our category spanning shopping, dining, after-hours life and cultural events. Given the need to celebrate, to seize the day, to revel in all that fusion of humanity and culture and sweaty new people and ideas, the city ranks #20 in our Nightlife category. After all, the party only begins in the French Quarter. It grows more refined and local as it weaves into Marigny, Bywater or the timeless jazz seduction of Frenchmen Street. NoLa also shines in our Shopping category, scoring a #15 ranking internationally, helped by the intoxicating treasures of Magazine Street convincing visitors that their finds are only available here and now. And they often are. In the last few years, the city has been renovating and expediting projects languishing since the Hurricane Katrina rebuild. Today, with one of the highest rates of COVID-19 infections among cities in the U.S., New Orleans is getting ready to rebuild again.



## 86 KUWAIT CITY

KUWAIT

**POPULATION METRO** 4,022,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 26 PEOPLE
- 45 PROMOTION

The Gulf's next emerging city gleams with startling contradictions.

In one of the hottest cities on the planet, it's fitting that Kuwait's most prominent landmarks include its water towers. If you're picturing the bucket-on-stilts aesthetic of a Midwestern U.S. construction, though, you're mistaken: this glittering cluster of towers projects a modernity and efficiency that the city has become known for, especially on Instagram (#7). But with the Silk City megaproject currently under construction, the city will soon have an impressive new series of landmarks to hashtag, including what could be a record-breaking Mubarak al-Kabir tower. Kuwait has attracted the fourth-largest foreign-born population, which is nearly canceled out by the low level of education among the citizenry (#215). But overall, the city's #26 result for People reflects its global attraction. Extreme inequality (#263) similarly undoes its impressive GDP Per Capita (#3) and Unemployment (#5) rankings. Like much of its surrounding region, Kuwait suffered greatly from the COVID-19 pandemic.



## 87 KIEV

UKRAINE

**POPULATION METRO** 2,851,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 INCOME EQUALITY
- 27 MUSEUMS

Architecturally endowed, friendly and creative, Kiev is a subdued European capital on the rise.

Kiev, Ukraine's capital, may not be the first European capital that pops to mind, but it's one of the most distinct. The city—a 1,500-year-old living encyclopedia of Slavic history—is as colorful and vibrant as its nation's flag, with buildings painted like Ukrainian Easter eggs and the skyline topped with gold domes gleaming up the hills from the Dnieper River. It all somehow makes the winters tolerable as much as does the self-deprecation and bonhomie of Kiev's spirited locals. The city appears in our Top 100 for the first time in 2021, powered by its #28 ranking in our Sights & Landmarks category, led by All. Those Churches. The Pechersk Lavra complex, an UNESCO World Heritage site, stretches back a millennium and has been key to the Orthodox Christian faith for almost that long. Another UNESCO site, Saint Sophia Cathedral, rewards a climb up its bell tower with one of the best views of the city. Then there's the storybook beauty of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery and St. Volodymyr's Cathedral. Kiev's museums rank #27 globally and range from obvious (the National Museum of Arts) to the "only-in-Kiev" (National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War).



## 88 HANOVER

GERMANY

**POPULATION METRO** 1,310,558

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 PROSPERITY
- 25 PRODUCT

Hello Hanover, it's time for your close-up.

Hanover has all of the ingredients for upward mobility, rankings-wise: the 69th safest place in the world is #70 for GDP Per Capita and #30 for Global 500 companies. Business congregates, it would seem, at the 4th-ranked city in our Convention Center subcategory. All work and no play, you say? It's been dubbed the most boring city in Germany, but you'd think otherwise if you spent an afternoon at Herrenhausen Gardens, one of the most important baroque gardens in Europe, wandered the bright, playful Niki de Saint Phalle grotto and sculpture and strolled the Old Town. Most of Hanover, including its glorious half-timbered Medieval buildings, were obliterated in the Second World War; the remaining facades were cobbled back together to create what has become the new-old heart of the city, a strollable place of cafés and culture, and a welcome break from the grind. However, Hanover will decidedly have to make an effort to tell the world its story; it's a challenging #245 in TripAdvisor Reviews and falling. For resilient Hanoverians, that's all in a day's work.



## 89 PERTH AUSTRALIA

**POPULATION** METRO 1,978,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 27 PEOPLE
- 99 PROMOTION

A beautiful, isolated and wealthy city of nearly two million people awaits.

Perth has always been home for the first Australians. At places like Six Seasons Gallery you can see some 3,000 Indigenous works of art from across Australia, each offering insights into the Aboriginal experience. The Noongar experience is woven throughout the 60,000-person Perth stadium, in art installations, trails, interpretative storyboards and digital storytelling—an enriching foil for the cricket and football played there. Perth ranks #27 for People, including #9 for Foreign-Born Residents. Perthites of every provenance are avid outdoors people, and the city’s #88 ranking for Parks & Outdoors will improve as more people discover the city’s investment in accessing all of that natural bounty, including the 50 miles of beachfront on Perth’s coastline. Perth’s poor result for Income Equality (#205) and Unemployment (#105) dragged its ranking down in 2020.



## 90 MINSK BELARUS

**POPULATION** METRO 2,107,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 25 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
- 62 ATTRACTIONS

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

Minsk—and Belarus—are fighting for their lives. While the rest of the world was preoccupied with the pandemic, Russian-backed dictator Alexander Lukashenko “won” another election with apparent overwhelming support. Allegations of rigging (again) sent hundreds of thousands of protestors marching all over the country—but mostly in Minsk. The suppression of dissent by secret masked and unmarked police combined with the jailing of opposition leader Maria Kalesnikava all point to ongoing volatility in this fascinating city. With Top 25 most-educated citizens globally, it’s not surprising that the hunger for change is ravenous in a place where you can’t drink the tap water or speak your mind freely. The city itself is a snapshot in history: almost entirely rebuilt after its destruction by the Nazis in WWII to post-war Soviet urban planning, and little changed since. But with a #62 ranking in our Attractions subcategory, there are untouched relics, like the Medieval castle at Mir, scattered nearby.



## 91 BUCHAREST ROMANIA

**POPULATION** METRO 2,478,618

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 11 PROSPERITY
- 81 PROGRAMMING

Affordable, entrepreneurial and likes to party. Romania’s capital swipes right.

Bucharest flies into a first-time showing in the Top 100 in 2020, thanks in no small part to the city’s astounding #3 rank for Income Equality. The city has been a bright spot in Eastern Europe’s burgeoning technology industry, attracting offices for heavy-hitters like Amazon, Adobe, Microsoft, IBM and Oracle but also spawning its own successful tech companies, like Bitdefender. With cheap rents and an extremely high standard of living, it’s easy to see why young people are attracted here, and they bring the nightlife (ranked #51) with them. The Lipscani district—an ancient commercial zone with streets named for the historic trades plied on them—contains the city’s best collection of bars and restaurants as well as a growing list of shopping opportunities, ranked #91 globally.





## 92 NASHVILLE

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 1,932,099

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 34 UNIVERSITY
- 41 CULTURE

Music City lets you worship your idols, and toast them frequently.

The city and its citizens have always taken care to invest their money wisely, including for the preservation of historic buildings and to revitalize neighborhoods like Germantown, which was established in the 1850s by European immigrants. Such focus on placemaking and tactical urbanism will put Nashville on the map globally in future years. Until then, we have the city's music scene thriving, particularly as a younger generation of musicians—Jack White and the Black Keys come to mind—have chosen to live and set up recording studios in town. You can start your visit at the Country Music Hall of Fame, which traces the history of the genre. If you want to delve deeper into the personal stories of Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and George Jones, well, they've got their own museums, too—at least they will when they fully reopen after the pandemic. With a #41 ranking for Culture, the city is finally getting the recognition it deserves for its long but subtle influence on the American fabric. Should you need a respite from culture and the #56-ranked Nightlife, Nashville offers a sprawling park system with more than 12,000 acres to explore by bike (B-Cycle bike-rental stations are located at greenway trailheads), or by kayak and canoe on the Harpeth River. Good thing about all that open space, too, given the high infection rates in the city after some citizens ignored early warnings about the spread of COVID-19.



## 93 DÜSSELDORF

GERMANY

**POPULATION** METRO 1,552,097

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 29 PROSPERITY
- 34 PRODUCT

Is Düsseldorf Germany's city of the future? Global investment dollars definitely seem to think so.

Sharply dressed and modern, Düsseldorf is leading Germany's charge into the 21st century. While the city tests and builds the 5G infrastructure of the future, it's acting as the country's telecommunications hub, and among its #30 ranking in Global 500 companies are the headquarters for Vodafone and E-Plus. But deliberate investments from the city in growing its tech appeal are paying off outside telecommunications: it's the third-largest location for foreign direct investment in Europe and the largest in Germany, leading to impressively low Unemployment (#31) and enviable Income Inequality (#37). Centrally located for European travel with a #35 rank for Airport Connectivity and #11 for Convention Center, Düsseldorf is an easy choice for anyone seeking a convenient location for a major meeting. That is, if the future indeed includes such luxuries as flights and conferences. If it doesn't, well, the city is extremely well positioned to handle the teleconferencing boom as well.



## 94 MANCHESTER

UNITED KINGDOM

**POPULATION** METRO 3,348,274

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 43 PROMOTION
- 58 PRODUCT

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

Manchester's reputation as the bucking engine of English industry is serving it well on the international stage, as it revisits that history through the lens of the 2020s. Castlefield, an "urban heritage park," is one portal into that storied past: the canal running through it formerly transported coal into the city's industrial hub, but today it transports tourists through its historic waters. The University of Manchester scores the city one of its highest rankings globally (#32) in the Product category, which also measures Airport Connectivity (#26) through direct flights, as well as Attractions (#67). The university is home to a dazzling legacy of 25 Nobel laureates, among whom four currently remain on staff. Manchester's conversion from producing goods to ideas is well underway, and the history of the workers who made that possible is on grand display at the People's History Museum. That's something to brag about, maybe contributing to its #18 rank for Google Trends or its #52 ranking for TripAdvisor Reviews.



## 95 SACRAMENTO

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 2,345,210

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 32 UNIVERSITY
- 36 WEATHER

Green, bountiful and affluent, California’s capital is big on local stewardship and keeping a good thing going.

California’s state capital is peaceful and wealthy, ranking well in our GDP Per Capita subcategory (#51) and even better for its natural attributes, including epic weather (#36) courtesy of its Mediterranean temperatures. The City of Trees—residents claim more trees per capita than anywhere besides Paris—isn’t a stranger to cataclysmic fires: the Great Conflagration of 1852 burned 40 square blocks of the fledgling city, leaving what is today called Old Sacramento, with its cobbled streets, historic buildings, steam-hauled trains, horse-drawn carriages and the western terminus of the Pony Express. Hokey? Maybe, but it undoubtedly contributes to the city’s rising visitor numbers—at least before COVID-19 hit. Some help from Mother Nature has stewarded the city toward declaring itself America’s “Farm to Fork Capital,” surrounded by fertile farms that feed a robust fresh-and-local ethos. Sacramento’s restaurants are only happy to tap the localism. Taste it for yourself at La Cosecha in Cesar Chavez Plaza, in the heart of the city. The place serves up another local attribute: the city ranks #41 for Foreign-Born Residents, with *Time* magazine even declaring it “America’s most diverse city.” With its highly educated citizenry, California’s capital ranks an impressive #43 in our key People category.



## 96 GLASGOW

UNITED KINGDOM

**POPULATION** METRO 1,830,710

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 57 PROSPERITY
- 67 PROGRAMMING

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

Known as a working-class city with working-class values, Glasgow has made the Top 100 on the strength of those characteristics. Its high Income Equality (ranking #47) and low Unemployment (ranking #52) highlight its success in bringing everyone along for the ride as its reputation grows. And it’s growing, as tech startups hungry for cheap space and talent willing to bet on changing the world are moving in from pricier European cities like Dublin and Amsterdam. Of course Glasgow’s brain power isn’t new. The eponymous university was founded in 1451 and is the fourth-oldest in the English-speaking world. It counts economist Adam Smith and U.S. founding father James Wilson as alumni. Being a university town, Glasgow performs well in our Nightlife subcategory (#41) and the city roars to prominence at gritty venues like the Sub Club, where live shows dominate. Glasgow was designated the UK’s first UNESCO City of Music in 2008, but the COVID-19 pandemic has presented an existential threat to many of its most popular venues. The government is allowing drive-in outdoor concerts, but that’s small comfort to the club owners who won’t be allowed to welcome their patrons back for a long time to come.



## 97 MEXICO CITY

MEXICO

**POPULATION** METRO 20,996,000

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 41 PROMOTION
- 62 PROGRAMMING

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

The largest city in North America is also one of its longest continually occupied urban centers. Founded as Tenochtitlan by the Aztecs in 1325 before the Spanish invasion 260 years later, Mexico City’s layers of struggle, beauty and triumph have been immortalized by its citizens like few other places have on the continent. In recent years, CDMX has been cleaning up its act, with safer streets and revamped public spaces, new designer hotels and exciting cultural offerings. And, of course, there’s the culinary scene, arguably one of the most intriguing and deeply complex on the planet. Is it any wonder that Mexico City—known locally as D.F., or distrito federal—is holding on to its spot on our Top 100 list? In this cosmopolitan jungle of more than 20 million inhabitants, there’s plenty to see and do, from the Casa Luis Barragan, a UNESCO World Heritage site and Insta eye candy (the city is #16 for Facebook Check-ins) to strolling the stylish neighborhoods of Roma and Condesa, which drip with greenery and an explosion of color in their century-old mansions. The city lands at #47 for Sights & Landmarks, #16 for Museums and #47 for Restaurants.



## 98 SALT LAKE CITY

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 1,222,540

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 18 GDP PER CAPITA
- 54 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Great Outdoors are calling, and Salt Lake is doing its best to keep you in town.

Combining spectacular natural and built environments, Salt Lake is no longer just a gateway to the great outdoors but also a welcoming destination with a high cool quotient. The transformation began with the arrival of the XIX Olympic Winter Games in 2002, as the city thawed its reputation as an über-conservative cowboy town with Mormon family values and instead presented a slew of quaint cafés and stylish restaurants. SLC continues to pour millions into development projects and the beautification of its downtown, and the city has matured into an urban experience as much as an outdoor one. Of course, the proximity of the Wasatch Range’s stunning canyons and 11,000-foot peaks is the reason many adrenaline junkies travel and move here. And they work as hard as they play: Salt Lake City ranks #18 globally for GDP Per Capita. Its citizenry brings the smarts as much as the snowboards, ranking #54 globally for Educational Attainment. The University of Utah ensures the brainpower keeps flowing, with its #59 ranking globally in our University subcategory.



## 99 RALEIGH

UNITED STATES

**POPULATION** METRO 1,362,540

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
- 62 GDP PER CAPITA

A booming economy and global intellect poise the Carolina powerhouse for the future.

The City of Oaks checks all the boxes for a bright, ambitious city of the new American South: Raleigh is part of North Carolina’s Research Triangle, one of the country’s largest and most successful research parks—think high-tech and biotech research and advanced textile development. Ranked #62 for GDP Per Capita globally, Raleigh is also a magnet for immigrants. It ranks #31 in our People category, comprising the subcategories of Educational Attainment and Foreign-Born Residents. But it’s in education where Raleighites truly shine bright—ranking #8 on the planet for educated big-city citizenry. So what do all these smart people do for fun? They’re indoors and out: the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences attracts more than a million people annually; there’s a Contemporary Art Museum, bluegrass festivals and craft brews. While our rankings don’t tell the food story yet (the city comes in at #199 for Restaurants), the culinary scene is vividly imaginative: *Bon Appétit* granted one of its coveted Top 10 America’s Best New Restaurants for 2017 to a quirky and beautiful combination brewery, bookstore, flower shop and dim sum restaurant called Brewery Bhavana.



## 100 KRACOW

POLAND

**POPULATION** METRO 1,395,838

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 17 INCOME EQUALITY
- 27 ATTRACTIONS

Affordable and walkable, Eastern Europe’s ancient gem is shining bright.

The historic heart of Eastern Europe is increasingly beating loudest in Krakow, Poland’s former capital city and the country’s oldest university town. To sample the ancient city’s #27 globally ranked attractions, all you need to do is walk, starting in Krakow’s historic center, its Rynek Główny marketplace. The Gothic spires and ornate facades set the table for what’s to come: namely, Wawel Hill and its eponymous castle, a Renaissance palace built as a gift from Italy to the 16th-century Polish king Zygmunt the Old. Famous local Pope John Paul II wasn’t exaggerating when he called Wawel “a sanctuary of Poland’s history which cannot be entered without awe and inner trembling.” The museums, ranked #41 globally, are equally stunning. The Czartoryski, for one, is the country’s oldest museum and boasts a large collection of Polish art and memorabilia, with some immersive Italian works, too. But a city so ancient is very much looking to improve livability in the future. It ranks Top 50 in our Safety subcategory and an impressive #17 for Income Equality. The beneficiary of all that security and disposable income? The city’s kinetic #35-ranked Nightlife, of course, powered by university students and—before the pandemic—growing international visitors.

World's

# BEST CITIES PERFORMANCE BY CATEGORY



<b>RANK</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>PRODUCT</b>	<b>PROGRAMMING</b>	<b>PEOPLE</b>	<b>PROSPERITY</b>	<b>PROMOTION</b>
1	London	United Kingdom	20	2	2	18	41	1
2	New York	United States	16	8	1	23	27	2
3	Paris	France	11	3	4	36	5	3
4	Moscow	Russia	3	1	6	12	64	16
5	Tokyo	Japan	1	6	3	134	3	29
6	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	2	94	45	2	31	4
7	Singapore	Singapore	63	26	24	11	13	6
8	Barcelona	Spain	9	12	11	62	84	9
9	Los Angeles	United States	23	15	17	25	136	7
10	Madrid	Spain	21	23	8	46	68	13
11	Rome	Italy	7	19	7	129	62	5
12	Chicago	United States	87	9	13	41	83	12
13	Toronto	Canada	134	20	35	3	38	25
14	San Francisco	United States	17	27	20	6	81	30
15	Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates	43	119	234	1	4	62
16	St. Petersburg	Russia	10	10	15	13	182	72
17	Amsterdam	Netherlands	34	11	19	65	24	28
18	Berlin	Germany	163	17	14	60	39	18
19	Prague	Czech Republic	68	18	12	67	8	39
20	Washington	United States	106	45	68	14	63	10
21	Istanbul	Turkey	31	16	16	156	126	8
22	Las Vegas	United States	29	39	18	79	193	14
23	Doha	Qatar	72	103	220	10	2	105
24	Seoul	South Korea	99	22	5	122	36	64
25	Sydney	Australia	37	54	51	16	152	26

<b>RANK</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>PRODUCT</b>	<b>PROGRAMMING</b>	<b>PEOPLE</b>	<b>PROSPERITY</b>	<b>PROMOTION</b>
26	Beijing	China	13	13	38	237	1	124
27	Miami	United States	44	74	52	17	203	22
28	Munich	Germany	188	4	78	91	10	47
29	Milan	Italy	33	14	29	148	58	24
30	San Diego	United States	15	65	41	30	123	38
31	Bangkok	Thailand	65	57	10	171	43	17
32	Vienna	Austria	22	28	30	110	22	44
33	Dublin	Ireland	51	56	37	54	9	56
34	Vancouver	Canada	162	72	72	5	59	61
35	Boston	United States	113	35	63	21	79	42
36	Zurich	Switzerland	151	47	115	15	7	127
37	Melbourne	Australia	77	63	43	22	156	34
38	Budapest	Hungary	54	51	27	77	46	51
39	Houston	United States	139	38	55	49	76	31
40	Seattle	United States	145	60	40	24	77	46
41	Montreal	Canada	175	53	42	29	47	57
42	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	28	44	28	160	101	15
43	Frankfurt	Germany	205	5	106	87	26	88
44	São Paulo	Brazil	150	33	9	181	230	11
45	Tel Aviv	Israel	95	75	49	8	91	152
46	Copenhagen	Denmark	202	30	58	32	32	126
47	Calgary	Canada	124	97	108	9	28	113
48	Orlando	United States	111	48	53	45	181	32
49	Atlanta	United States	156	24	93	50	120	33
50	Dallas	United States	117	36	82	51	87	40

<b>RANK</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>PRODUCT</b>	<b>PROGRAMMING</b>	<b>PEOPLE</b>	<b>PROSPERITY</b>	<b>PROMOTION</b>
51	Hamburg	Germany	131	67	47	92	12	58
52	Osaka	Japan	38	78	22	139	21	69
53	Lisbon	Portugal	14	59	34	115	199	54
54	Austin	United States	85	95	56	33	137	55
55	Phoenix	United States	39	43	46	71	175	83
56	Naples	Italy	4	71	23	185	106	71
57	Oslo	Norway	238	68	150	20	20	142
58	Denver	United States	127	62	80	37	99	68
59	Stockholm	Sweden	248	31	124	34	49	84
60	Philadelphia	United States	126	52	59	59	124	60
61	Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	66	92	212	53	75	37
62	Delhi	India	18	41	39	209	111	23
63	Buenos Aires	Argentina	42	89	21	151	216	27
64	San Jose	United States	101	207	187	4	69	163
65	Brussels	Belgium	247	37	48	48	93	89
66	Portland	United States	157	111	44	42	85	76
67	Ottawa	Canada	212	130	116	19	52	139
68	Helsinki	Finland	214	66	146	38	23	177
69	Valencia	Spain	35	55	102	105	104	81
70	Brisbane	Australia	122	49	107	44	172	96
71	Warsaw	Poland	154	42	76	114	54	80
72	Minneapolis	United States	167	69	105	35	78	156
73	Shanghai	China	94	7	36	236	51	101
74	Lyon	France	136	64	89	98	42	94
75	Adelaide	Australia	148	127	154	7	179	166

<b>RANK</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>PRODUCT</b>	<b>PROGRAMMING</b>	<b>PEOPLE</b>	<b>PROSPERITY</b>	<b>PROMOTION</b>
76	Edmonton	Canada	191	115	169	28	44	155
77	Marseille	France	104	86	134	63	56	100
78	Muscat	Oman	32	185	256	55	6	225
79	Athens	Greece	40	61	32	140	129	85
80	Stuttgart	Germany	81	99	162	89	16	122
81	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	25	91	25	189	244	19
82	Baltimore	United States	173	50	114	57	108	117
83	Auckland	New Zealand	69	96	118	52	88	133
84	Cologne	Germany	225	32	110	121	25	90
85	New Orleans	United States	128	114	26	113	158	70
86	Kuwait	Kuwait	92	197	253	26	117	45
87	Kiev	Ukraine	211	101	71	94	61	66
88	Hanover	Germany	174	25	214	125	15	200
89	Perth	Australia	120	128	197	27	145	99
90	Minsk	Belarus	240	136	173	39	14	130
91	Bucharest	Romania	135	113	81	120	11	103
92	Nashville	United States	169	104	60	78	138	73
93	Düsseldorf	Germany	190	34	160	124	29	146
94	Manchester	United Kingdom	262	58	74	101	105	43
95	Sacramento	United States	109	126	151	43	159	151
96	Glasgow	United Kingdom	260	88	67	81	57	118
97	Mexico City	Mexico	73	77	62	141	228	41
98	Salt Lake City	United States	133	100	174	58	86	181
99	Raleigh	United States	178	139	156	31	144	192
100	Kracow	Poland	195	79	64	132	60	95



# SHAPE THE FUTURE OF YOUR CITY, COMMUNITY OR DEVELOPMENT.

As leading advisors in tourism, real estate and economic development, Resonance helps places realize their full economic potential. We take a uniquely future-focused approach to research, strategy, branding and marketing, and help our clients understand market trends, assess strengths and weaknesses, engage local communities, create strategies, envision the future and produce branding and communications that influence their audiences.



## RESEARCH

Resonance tracks the sentiments of the most influential consumers and travelers today, and our original benchmarking and assessment methodology offers new ways to understand the way people truly perceive and “consume” communities, cities and destinations. This World’s Best Cities report is an example of our expertise in providing destinations and developers with new tools and perspectives on the key factors that shape a city’s competitive identity, community wellbeing and future prosperity. Our research is used by National Geographic, and Bloomberg has called our city rankings “the most comprehensive study of its kind.”

---

**Consumer Research**

---

**Destination Assessments**

---

**Performance Benchmarking**

---

**Economic Analysis**

---



## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Resonance has extensive experience creating strategies for destinations from cities to mixed-use urban developments and resort communities. Our destination development strategies are the product of custom benchmarking and consumer research, stakeholder engagement and the crafting of a clear vision for the future. The result is a strategic roadmap that prioritizes the actions required to realize the full economic potential of place.

---

**Real Estate Development**

---

**Tourism Development**

---

**Economic Development**

---



## BRANDING & MARKETING

We approach the branding and marketing of places by thoroughly understanding market trends, uncovering the aspirations of consumers and vividly articulating sense of place in a manner that resonates with target audiences, be they prospective residents, visitors, tenants or investors. Brands are then propelled by marketing strategies that guide the journey of building audiences, credibility and meaningful connection. The goal isn't merely to bring more attention, awareness and people to the brand, but to elevate the quality, value and loyalty of specific audiences in order to achieve targeted objectives.

---

**Brand Strategy**

---

**Brand Identity**

---

**Advertising**

---

**Digital**

---

**Activation**

---

**Environment**

---



## PLACEMAKING

Placemaking is a way to design underused spaces to be more enjoyable and engaging for the communities around them. Resonance placemaking strategies leverage the power of art, culture and experiential retail to help animate public, private and under-utilized spaces, test alternative uses and create gathering places and unique points of interest that draw both locals and visitors.

---

**Art**

---

**Culture**

---

**Experience**

---



# RESONANCE

---

## VANCOUVER

801 - 602 W Hastings St.  
Vancouver, BC V6B 1P2  
P +1.604.681.0804  
E [info@resonanceco.com](mailto:info@resonanceco.com)

## MONTREAL

3500 St Jacques St.  
Montreal, QC H4C 1H2  
P +1.438.888.0161  
E [info@resonanceco.com](mailto:info@resonanceco.com)

## NEW YORK

110 East 25th  
New York, NY 10010  
P +1.646.413.8887  
E [info@resonanceco.com](mailto:info@resonanceco.com)



@ResonanceCo  
[ResonanceCo.com](http://ResonanceCo.com)

---

The Resonance Report is produced for general interest only; it is not definitive. It must not be relied upon in any way. Although high standards have been used in preparing the information and analysis presented in this report, no responsibility or liability whatsoever can be accepted by Resonance Consultancy Ltd. for any loss or damage resultant from any use of, reliance on, or reference to the contents of this document. We make no express or implied guarantee of its accuracy. Please be advised that your use of The Resonance Report document constitutes your agreement to (i) use the content under a limited license only for your own internal purposes, and (ii) not disclose, publish or otherwise make public or provide the content, in whole or in part, to any third person or entity without the prior written consent of Resonance Consultancy Ltd. The content is and remains at all times the exclusive intellectual property of Resonance Consultancy Ltd. Copyright © 2020 Resonance Consultancy Ltd.