

Europe's Best Cities



100 European Cities
Shaping Tomorrow
The definitive place
power rankings

Empowering Places



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

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Welcome to Europe's Best Cities in 2025

As leading advisers in place strategy, place branding and place marketing, Resonance has conducted extensive research on the rise of cities, the key trends propelling their growth and the factors that shape our perception of urban areas as desirable places to live, visit or launch and grow a business.



Chris Fair

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Europe is standing on the cusp of its greatest geopolitical shift since the fall of the Iron Curtain. Regional leaders, from longtime French president Emmanuel Macron to freshly minted German leader Friedrich Merz, are advocating for a groundbreaking European military alliance, potentially reshaping the global order. This isn't merely a military pivot; it's Europe's chance to assert itself as a sovereign global power in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, redefining the role and influence of its iconic cities in the process.

But while geopolitics shift, Europe's cities are embracing transformation at street level, capitalising on the post-pandemic era to redefine livability, sustainability and economic resilience. Resonance Consultancy's third annual ranking of Europe's Best Cities remains dedicated to measuring not only traditional indicators of livability—housing, affordability and green space—but also vital drivers of urban prosperity like nightlife, restaurants and cycling infrastructure. These metrics, which shape a city's "lovability," strongly correlate with economic vitality, investment and talent attraction.

Urban innovation is thriving, catalysed by the geopolitical urgency to reshore critical industries such as microchip manufacturing, energy and agriculture. European cities are seizing this opportunity through initiatives like the ambitious Rail Baltica high-speed rail network connecting

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to Poland, London's Canary Wharf 3.0 transformation, and Paris's monumental Grand Paris Express metro expansion.

Additionally, continental rail's renaissance continues as carbon-conscious travellers embrace overnight journeys from Edinburgh to Porto, promoting sustainable mobility and local entrepreneurship along their routes.

Yet despite these strides, European urban centres continue to grapple with fresh economic, environmental and humanitarian crises, amplified by Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine and a realization that the continent now stands alone. Our rankings reflect these realities, excluding Russian cities from our report for a third consecutive year as a small statement against unprovoked aggression.

Now, more than ever, Europe's fascinating, ancient, inspiring cities have an unparalleled opportunity—and responsibility—to lead by example, elevate ambitions and shape futures worthy of their residents. Our rigorous data and insights will illuminate this journey.

Should you wish to explore how your community can thrive in these dynamic times, or discuss insights from this year's report, I'd welcome the conversation.

European Cities Continue Inspiring the World

Welcome to the third annual Europe's Best Cities ranking, focused on the evaluation of perception and performance for urban economies in an ancient continent that has never felt more current.



Jason McGrath

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Welcome to the third annual Europe's Best Cities report, a vibrant exploration into how Europe's urban landscapes are capturing hearts, minds and wallets. Our findings arrive as cities across the continent are reinventing themselves in a post-pandemic world where travel patterns and living preferences are being dramatically reshaped.

Europe's timeless appeal continues to shine brightly on the global stage. As travellers once again fill the cobblestone streets and sunlit piazzas, iconic destinations like Paris, Barcelona and Amsterdam are experiencing a spectacular revival. These cities are thriving at the intersection where centuries-old heritage meets modern innovation, creating experiences that resonate with visitors from across the globe.

Yet Europe's story is evolving against a complex backdrop. The geopolitical canvas has been redrawn by the Ukraine conflict, the ripple effects of Brexit and shifting EU policies—all of which are forging new connections and barriers across the continent.

Cities finding themselves at these crossroads must now dance more nimbly than ever to maintain their magnetic pull. The European Travel Commission has highlighted that while travellers are increasingly concerned about costs, the dream of multi-city European adventures is flourishing, cementing the continent's status as the world's most captivating travel destination. Beyond Europe's borders, America's changing global position may further spotlight European cities as beacons for visitors seeking new horizons.

For this year's report, Ipsos partnered with Resonance to dive deep into the hearts and minds of more than 7,000 citizens across 10 European countries. We asked them to unveil their urban dreams through three fundamental questions that spanned which European towns or cities—from quaint villages to bustling metropolises—they would most love to call home someday. We then asked which European destinations are on their must-visit list for the coming two years. And we ended with a question about where in Europe they believe the most promising career opportunities are flourishing right now.

Our findings paint a fascinating portrait of urban desire—where established global powerhouses stand alongside rising stars that are capturing imagination in surprising ways. This report weaves together these insights to reveal how livability, lovability and prosperity are crafting the new European urban narrative.

We invite you to journey through these discoveries and join the conversation about how your city can shine even brighter on this competitive stage. Reach out to explore how Ipsos can help you align your urban strategies with the evolving dreams of your target audiences.

Thank you for joining us on this exploration of Europe's Best Cities. We're excited to help you navigate the ever-changing currents of urban magnetism and excellence.

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Our Methodology

How we ranked Europe's Best Cities for 2025

To rank the performance and perception of Europe's Best Cities for 2025, Resonance analysed the principal cities of metropolitan statistical areas with populations of more than 500,000 (according to Eurostat, Demographia and National Statistical Offices, our population sources). We determined the Top 100 cities using a combination of core statistics and user-generated data from online sources such as Google, Tripadvisor and Instagram to measure quality of place when it comes to experiential factors.

This blend of data led to the creation of Resonance's proprietary Place Power™ Score, the foundation of all of our Best Cities rankings. So how does Resonance choose the metrics to effectively measure an urban region's performance relative to its competitors? While many factors shape our perception of urban regions as desirable places to live, work or visit, Resonance's proprietary Place Power™ Score rankings are focused on the shared factors that demonstrate moderate to strong correlations with the performance of urban regions when it comes to attracting prime age population (age 25–44), visitor expenditure and/or business formation.

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

As part of our new partnership with Ipsos (see page 4), we combined the performance data of the subcategories that comprise our overall Livability, Lovability and Prosperity indices with perception data reflecting the opinions and preferences of 7,512 (5,000 weighted) respondents across 10 European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden). Each country was given equal weight in the total data set. The survey was constructed to extract the towns and cities where these 7,512 (5,000

weighted) people would most like to live, where they would most like to visit, and where they believe they would find the best job opportunities. This was accomplished with three open-ended questions where respondents could identify the towns and cities that they prefer.

We asked them, when thinking about places across the globe, including small towns and large cities: which three towns or cities would you most like to live in, most like to visit, and think currently offer the best job opportunities?

This open-ended question methodology enabled us to capture the destinations that are top of mind to survey participants rather than restricting them to a predetermined list of cities. The responses to these questions were aggregated and coded to benchmark the perception equivalent of our performance results, creating a true balance across our three overall indices of Lovability, Livability and Prosperity.

Livability

Our most layered overarching category quantifies a city's physical sense of place.

To score a city within our Livability category, we evaluate the perceived quality of its natural and built environments. This includes how much of an urban area is dedicated to green space and how many quality parks, sights, neighbourhoods and landmarks are recommended online by locals and visitors. We also look at key socioeconomic factors such as the affordability of monthly rents and the cost of housing—factors that not only retain talent, but also attract it (and, by extension, attract skill-seeking companies as well). Livability also looks at the natural attributes of a region such as the amount of green space and the quality of the air residents and visitors breathe.

LIVABILITY METRICS

Sights & Landmarks

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

Price-to-Income Ratio (Housing Affordability)

The affordability of housing by way of a ratio of median apartment prices to the median family's disposable income, showing how many years of income would be needed to buy an apartment. The ratio is lower when apartments are more affordable. This ratio is calculated using a net disposable family income, estimated at 1.5 times the average net salary (based on an assumption that women account for 50% of the workforce), a standard apartment size of 90 square metres, and the average price per square metre in both cities and suburban areas. (Numbeo)

Rent (Housing Affordability)

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

Air Quality

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a measure of air pollutant concentrations in ambient air and their associated health risks. As the AQI increases, this denotes a higher level of air pollution and, as such, a higher percentage of the population is likely to experience adverse health effects in the area. The air quality index ranges from 0 to 500. Good air quality ranges from 0 to 50, while measurements over 300 are considered hazardous. (IQAir)

Healthcare System Index

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

Green Space

This indicator measures the share of an urban area's land that is covered with vegetation that is at least 5 metres in height and with canopy cover that is greater than 50%. (OECD)

Nature & Parks

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

Dedicated Bike Paths (Biking)

This indicator measures the total kilometres of mapped bike pathways. (Bikemap.net)

Cycling Routes (Biking)

This indicator measures the number of cycling routes in a city. (Bikemap.net)

Perception

Ranking in a survey of 7,512 (5,000 weighted) European survey respondents from 10 European countries about the top three cities and towns that they would most like to live in someday. (Ipsos)

Lovability

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

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

Resonance ranks a city's performance in each of these areas based on the number of stories, references and recommendations shared online about that city in key user-generated digital channels like Tripadvisor, Instagram and Facebook, and sought out on Google.

LOVABILITY METRICS

Nightlife

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

Shopping

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

Facebook Check-ins

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

Tripadvisor Reviews

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

Instagram Hashtags

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

Google Trends

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

Museums

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

Restaurants

This indicator measures the total number of restaurants listed within a city on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Culture

This indicator measures the number of concerts, shows and events, rated above 4 stars, as listed on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Attractions

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

Perception

Ranking in a survey of 7,512 (5,000 weighted) European survey respondents from 10 European countries about the top three cities and towns that they would most like to visit in the next 12 to 24 months. (Ipsos)



Seine River at the tip of Île Saint-Louis, Paris

Prosperity

Human capital is becoming a region's most valuable resource when it comes to generating wealth and prosperity. For many cities, it is increasingly in short supply.

To evaluate the relative strength of human capital from one region to the next, Resonance not only measures the number of large companies headquartered in the city, the level of the city's population and the percentage of people participating in the labour force, but also the support a city provides for startups and how the innovation ecosystem is distributed across each city. Wealth and prosperity are also evaluated by core statistics like business infrastructure, such as the region's airport connectivity to other destinations, and the presence and size of the convention centre and its ability to welcome global investment events.

PROSPERITY METRICS

Labour Force Participation

A city's active workforce, defined as the percentage of all people of working age who are employed or are actively seeking work. (OECD)

Large Companies

The number of companies headquartered in a city with 1,000 or more employees. (Crunchbase)

Airport

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

Convention Centre

This indicator measures the size of the largest convention centre in a city based on exhibition space in square metres. (Convention centre websites)

University

This indicator measures the score of the highest-ranking university in a city. (QS World University Rankings)

GDP Per Capita

The GDP per capita in a region in U.S. dollars. (OECD)

Business Ecosystem

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

Unemployment Rate

The rate of unemployment in a region. (OECD)

Poverty Rate

This indicator measures the percentage of the population living below the poverty line in a city. (Eurostat, UK Department for Work & Pensions, and TurkStat)

Educational Attainment

This indicator measures the proportion of the population in a city that has at least a bachelor's degree. (Eurostat & OECD)

Perception

Ranking in a survey of 7,512 (5,000 weighted) European survey respondents from 10 European countries about the top three cities and towns that they think have the best job opportunities. (Ipsos)



Westminster Bridge, ft. Big Ben and Palace of Westminster, London

Europe's Top 100 cities, in detail

European cities are the engines of their national economies and, increasingly, the global economy. In fact, they are the pistons powering a region that accounts for 15% of global economic output.

For centuries, these cities have stood as symbols of human ingenuity and cultural vibrancy, shaping the narrative of progress and resilience.

In this decade of historic shifts, European cities in 2025 stand at a remarkable crossroads, navigating profound economic, environmental and geopolitical challenges with resilience and innovation. The past few years laid bare structural vulnerabilities—from strained housing markets to strained social cohesion—that cities across the continent are now actively addressing. Yet far from retreating, Europe's urban centres are accelerating forward, embracing new strategies for livability, equitable growth and sustainability.

Amid shifting patterns of remote work, global talent mobility and rising affordability pressures, smaller and emerging cities are experiencing a surge in interest. From Leipzig to Valencia, a new class of dynamic hubs is emerging, blending accessibility, quality of life and connectivity to draw in both highly

skilled talent and substantial investment. Meanwhile, governmental reshoring initiatives, alongside ambitious sustainability targets, are positioning these cities as essential nodes in Europe's next economic chapter.

European cities are more than engines of commerce—they are vibrant cultural centres where innovation, creativity and heritage coexist and flourish. From the electric nightlife of Berlin to the pedestrian-first avenues of Paris, cities across Europe are redefining the benchmarks for urban excellence.

The 100 cities profiled in this report represent the core of this continental renaissance. Each city, with its distinct identity and strengths, is shaping Europe's future—and, by extension, guiding the trajectory of urban life around the globe for the remainder of this transformative decade and beyond.

1

London

United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 2 Livability
- 2 Lovability
- 1 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Educational Attainment
- 1 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 12,435,000



Tower Bridge, with views of City Hall and The Shard

The storied metropolis claims the throne atop Europe's Best Cities ranking in 2025 for a third consecutive year. It secures the top position across an unprecedented 14 of our 30 subcategories (almost half!), notably excelling in Lovability metrics as well as Prosperity index subcategories that track educated residents and business ecosystems.

London's magnetic appeal continues to draw a global audience—from students and entrepreneurs to tourists and corporate titans. The city's robust recovery post-pandemic is reflected in its strong international traveller spending, which in 2024 reached almost £16.3 billion (up from £12.8 billion in 2023) and secured London the third-highest global position and the top spot in Europe. Benefiting from a softer pound, London has remained a compelling bucket-list destination. Heathrow Airport recorded record-breaking arrivals, exceeding pre-pandemic passenger levels, and Gatwick Airport's recent £236-million upgrade underscores London's infrastructural excellence, enhancing the visitor experience with new concourses and improved amenities.

City marketing organisation London & Partners' Tourism Vision sets an ambitious goal of positioning London as the most visited, sustainable and diverse global city destination by 2030. Recognising the tourism industry as vital to London's economy, the strategy aims to boost international visitor spending to £21 billion annually and attract 3 million more visitors compared to pre-pandemic levels. How can arguably the world's most coveted city be made even

more alluring? Unique cultural and sporting events, for starters, driving growth in overnight stays and visitor spending, and fostering sustainable tourism practices. Leveraging its world-renowned assets—such as theatre, music, museums and historical landmarks—the vision emphasises collaboration with stakeholders across the hospitality, retail and cultural sectors. Investment in visitor experiences, alongside a dedicated push to distribute tourism benefits across London's neighbourhoods, particularly the outer boroughs, will enhance the city's global reputation, enrich visitor experiences and bolster economic inclusivity, affirming London's position as a premier global destination for decades to come.

Efforts to better connect the city's attributes are underway, with the famed Tube network improving dramatically in recent years—notably through the expansion of the transformative Elizabeth line, connecting Reading, Heathrow, Abbey Wood and Shenfield directly through central London. The Bond Street station, opened in 2022, has further amplified the West End's vibrant allure.



The London Eye on the South Bank of the River Thames

Placemaking remains central to London's strategy, exemplified by the highly anticipated Camden Highline. Inspired by New York's famous High Line, this mile-long elevated greenway, slated to open in 2027, symbolises the city's commitment to enhancing urban livability through creative renewal projects.

Mayor Sadiq Khan, re-elected in May 2024 for an unprecedented third term, continues his vision for a "fairer, safer, greener" London, aiming to construct 40,000 new council homes by 2030 and driving ambitious plans for net-zero carbon emissions by the end of the decade. This synergy, bolstered by alignment between city leadership and the national government, promises to deliver tangible benefits to residents and businesses alike.

The city's foreign direct investment remains compelling, confirmed by London's position as Europe's top city for inward investment in 2023, according to EY. India's rise as London's premier source market for tech investments has reshaped the city's global appeal, exemplified by innovators like InMobi Advertising, iGene DI and VenPep Solutions choosing London as a gateway to international markets. Climate tech, notably, is experiencing meteoric growth, with

companies like Allume, Cloverly and Einride electing to scale in London.

U.S. firms continue to flock to London, attracted by the city's unparalleled financial ecosystem, robust regulatory environment and burgeoning tech sector. Investors recognise London's unique position as a stable, culturally vibrant gateway between the U.S., Europe and emerging markets, boosting confidence in sectors ranging from fintech to pharmaceuticals. This sustained influx underscores London's resilience and attractiveness as a hub for global business and innovation.

American real estate interest in London remains vigorous, with U.S. funds investing £2.83 billion into UK commercial property in the first quarter of 2024 alone. High-profile acquisitions, including MCR's purchase of the iconic BT Tower for transformation into a luxury hotel and Starwood Capital's substantial entry with a £758-million acquisition of 10 Radisson Blu hotels, reinforce London's buoyant property market. The ambitious "Canary Wharf 3.0" project exemplifies London's reinvention, blending traditional banking spaces with a mixed-use

community and Europe's largest life sciences centre, a 70,000-square-metre research hub.

London's luxury hospitality sector has reached new heights, merging historic charm with contemporary luxury. The Peninsula London, which opened in September 2023 near Hyde Park Corner, epitomises elegance with Peter Marino-designed rooms, sweeping views of Hyde Park, and amenities such as a world-class spa and Rolls-Royce fleet. Equally captivating is the opening of Raffles London at The OWO, the meticulously restored Old War Office, now hosting stunning guest rooms and restaurants by Michelin-starred chef Mauro Colagreco, revitalising the previously quiet Whitehall area into a chic nightlife hotspot.

The city's strategic vision is encapsulated in the ambitious London Growth Plan, developed by City Hall and London Councils, which aims to harness London's strengths in finance, technology and sustainability to drive inclusive economic growth. Prioritising productivity growth, the plan targets raising London's economic output significantly by 2035, creating 150,000 high-quality jobs and driving inclusive prosperity through extensive investment in affordable housing, transport infrastructure and skills training. A dedicated

“As a city, our diversity and ability to keep innovating form the backbone of our success. Our experience economy draws the world in and our frontier tech pushes boundaries out. Looking to our next decade of growth, we will continue to evolve without losing sight of our rich history. It’s this unique blend that makes us stand out as a leading destination both within Europe and across the world.”

Laura Citron OBE
CEO of London & Partners

Growth Mission Board is set to co-ordinate these ambitious initiatives, ensuring the plan delivers tangible improvements in living standards for all Londoners.

Investment promotion through Opportunity London, a public-private partnership, targets £100 billion of inward capital focused on low-carbon infrastructure and real estate, underpinning sustainable and inclusive growth. Initiatives like Grow London Global and the London Anchor Institutions' Network ensure the city remains a thriving hub for scaleups, attracting global institutional capital and accelerating business growth.

Tourism and the experience economy also remain critical components of London's strategic vision, with London & Partners leading efforts to attract more diverse and longer-staying international visitors. Major cultural and sporting events, bolstered by innovative promotional campaigns, continue to position London as a global destination.

“As a city, our diversity and ability to keep innovating form the backbone of our success,” asserts Laura Citron OBE, CEO of London & Partners. “Our experience economy draws the world in and our frontier tech

pushes boundaries out. Looking to our next decade of growth, we will continue to evolve without losing sight of our rich history. It's this unique blend that makes us stand out as a leading destination both within Europe and across the world.”

Indeed, as London embraces innovation, attracts investment and commits to sustainability through strategic growth plans and bold infrastructure initiatives like the Camden Highline and Thames Estuary developments, its unparalleled synthesis of historical prestige and contemporary dynamism solidifies its place as Europe's best city and a benchmark for global urban excellence. And yes, the nightlife still rages on, tops again in our ranking.

2

Paris

France

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 1 Livability
- 1 Lovability
- 2 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Restaurants (Tied)
- 1 Sights & Landmarks

POPULATION

Metro 13,171,000



View of Paris with the Eiffel Tower

No other city has coaxed global attention more than the intoxicating French capital. While the 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games showcased athletic achievement, it was Paris that blew our minds with future-focused urban reinvention the likes of which the world has never seen.

A lot of city leaders talk about learning from the pandemic, but La Ville Lumière is actually walking the walk, going all-in on those hard lessons and their applications to molecular urban change. And with half a decade and billions in investment on full display at the city's recent, widely successful Summer Olympics, Paris has codified pedestrianism, biking and alfresco living like nowhere else on the planet.

While the face of Paris's pandemic evolution is Mayor Anne Hidalgo and her obsession with the empowerment of self-propelled mobility—from a city-wide motorised vehicle speed limit of 30 kilometres per hour introduced in 2021 to the promise of more than 700 kilometres of bike paths by 2026—it's the citizenry's embrace of this master plan that is changing the city's fabric for good.

An incredible 70% of Parisians don't own cars, and they enjoy better air quality and personal health as a result. The all-in commitment to biking, called Plan Vélo, will place the city among the most bike-friendly on the planet, improving on its current #17 spot in our Biking subcategory. Act Two of the plan will teach children to ride bikes in schools, create bike

repair infrastructure in neighbourhoods and promote local cycling tourism to the world.

Pedestrians are getting equal love, with local numbers citing that 65% of all journeys are made on foot, an increase of 12% from 2010 to 2020. Since 2020, city leaders have taken credit for creating an extra 30 hectares of pedestrian areas via widened sidewalks and car-free zones (prioritising school zones in doing so). The plan is for another 100 pedestrianised hectares to be implemented by 2030.

The biggest investment in the city's mobility and getting residents out of their cars is the expansion of the Paris Métro, already the envy of the world with its 800-kilometre, 16-line network seamlessly incorporated into a commuter rail system. In its most significant upgrade in decades, the Grand Paris Express will be a new 200-kilometre network boasting four additional lines, extensions to existing lines (11 and 14) and a mind-blowing 68 new metro stations.

Started in 2016, it is, according to the French government, Europe's largest civilian infrastructure project. The new lines prioritise access to the city's suburban towns, which



"Inside the Horizon" at Fondation Louis Vuitton

were left out of the Parisian ascent for far too long. While the city was future-proofing itself with visionary sustainability and investment attraction, it has and is battling monumental social and economic challenges, perhaps unlike any other capital city on the continent. Wracked by unemployment and economic calamity since 2020, Paris ranks #55 in our Poverty Rate subcategory, which tracks residents living under the national poverty line, and #97 for Unemployment. The systemic inequality is a powder keg in those areas where tourists rarely go.

Even with occasional unrest, last year's international tourist spend continued its march back to pre-pandemic levels. Of course, being able to enjoy a city ranked best in Europe for Sights & Landmarks, and in the Top 3 for Shopping, Culture, Concerts and Museums (the city has well over 100), has a tendency to distract one from the perils of the modern world. Speaking of the #2 Museums ranking (trailing only London), the recently announced "Louvre New Renaissance" will renovate the city icon over the next decade with a budget of €800 million. The highlight? Leonardo da Vinci's iconic Mona Lisa will be given its own dedicated room to ease congestion around the painting. Slated for

completion by 2031, the renovation includes a spacious new entrance near the Seine River and marks the Louvre's first significant overhaul since the iconic glass pyramid was completed in the late 1980s.

Paris was also recently crowned the world's most powerful urban tourist destination by the World Travel & Tourism Council, with the city's hospitality industry worth €34 billion in 2023. And it's projected to grow to more than €45 billion by 2032.

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

And nowhere has the focus been more intense than on the city's revered Seine River and its benchmark for Paris's efficacy in achieving a cleaner, healthier home. Mayor Hidalgo fulfilled her promise to go for a swim before the opening Olympic ceremonies (which featured a flotilla of boats on the Seine). Those Paris heat waves will certainly be more tolerable in the coming years.

Historic placemaking aside, Paris's revered hospitality scene is also flourishing in the afterglow of the global spotlight, with more than 120 Michelin-starred restaurants—a density that speaks to the city's culinary excellence. No wonder the city is tied for first in our Restaurants subcategory.

Over the past three years, 25 new five-star hotels have opened in Paris, bringing the total to 101. Noteworthy openings include Bulgari's new Paris hotel on Avenue George V that introduces sophisticated Italian flair to the city's prestigious Golden Triangle.

Outside the city, Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (ranked #2 globally in our Airport connectivity subcategory) used the past three years of lower volume to invest €259 million into a renovation of Terminal 1. Reopened in 2022, it now has a colossal junction building and a central lobby full of the latest tech to improve the traveller experience.

Rail access and infrastructure are also unprecedented. Direct high-speed TGV routes linking other capitals have launched over the past year, with more ambitious directs like the Venice-to-Paris midnight trains christened this year.

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Too often in the Paris narrative, the city's economic might gets forgotten. This is the place that trails only London in our Large Companies and Business Ecosystem subcategories, all part of its #2 spot in our overall Prosperity index. In 2021, President Macron committed €30 billion to the France 2030 plan: an effort to create "high-tech champions of the future" that is expected to yield 100 French tech unicorns by the end of the decade. There are 31 today, and the 20 of these in Paris are quickly establishing the city as a startup hotbed, with the State of European Tech noting that France has seen the strongest growth in tech-focused job searches of any European country. And where do you think most of that arriving talent will pick as their new home base?



3

Berlin

Germany

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 8** Livability
- 6** Lovability
- 3** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3** Business Ecosystem
- 4** Culture

POPULATION

Metro 5,106,000



The Fernsehturm/Berlin skyline, Nikolaiviertel district

Tolerance, cultural ambition and coveted talent make Berlin a city you'll be hearing a lot more about over the rest of the decade and beyond. Especially as an increasingly unified Europe gets defensive.

Thirty-six years after the fall of its eponymous wall and the Iron Curtain, Berlin's continued embrace of immigrants from all over the world in search of a new life continues to define the city. Its eclectic energy is a reflection of its 12 kiez (neighbourhoods), each with its own distinct character and rhythms that embody the city's unfiltered urbanity and commitment to self-expression. Ranked #4 in our Culture subcategory and #6 for its nightlife, an evening in the city underscores its reputation as a party capital and a hub for festivals and live music. And yes, the urban myth is true: Berlin's techno scene is UNESCO-recognised.

A bustling calendar of events made for a raucous 2024, with major summer experiences like the annual Christopher Street Day, the massive Gay Pride celebration, attracting hundreds of thousands of revellers, activists and policymakers in celebrating the LGBTQ+ legacy of Schöneberg, the world's first "gay village." Berlin's hospitality industry contributes to this welcoming spirit, with the Pink Pillow Berlin Collection—an initiative of 57 hotels dedicated to inclusivity and support for social causes. The city also hosted EURO 2024, with the city's Olympiastadion becoming the largest venue in Germany's first major football tournament since the 2006 FIFA

World Cup. For the record, Spain beat England 2-1 in front of more than 65,000 fans.

Berlin continues its ambitious reinvention as one of Europe's cultural and urban innovation capitals, unveiling one bold development after another. Most eye-catching is the newly opened Reethaus, a spectacular 40-foot-tall thatch-roofed structure resembling a landed UFO, near the Spree River. Designed by Austrian architect Monika Gogl, this radical venue houses a bunker-like performance space featuring omnidirectional speakers by renowned local sound studio MONOM. Since its debut, Reethaus has attracted attention through its intimate sound events and exclusive showcases. These include performances by Carnatic music legend "Flute" J.A. Jayant and a live score of the acclaimed documentary *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*—attended by photographer Nan Goldin herself.

Reethaus anchors the emerging Flussbad campus, which, by later this year, will include a new hotel and clubhouse, redefining the city's cultural landscape. Designed as a sustainable and innovative urban campus, the Flussbad initiative aims to reconnect people to Berlin's waterways through cultural, recreational



Gustav-Heinemann-Brücke

and hospitality experiences. Perhaps the most impressive is the ongoing ecological restoration that will see public swimming in the once-polluted Spree River by 2027, right in Berlin's historic core. Take that, Paris!

The growing demand for the city is being satiated by new rail connections, perhaps the most convenient being the daytime trains between Paris and Berlin courtesy of Germany's Deutsche Bahn high-speed direct connection. Qatar Airways will soon be adding three more flights to its Berlin-Doha schedule, increasing its services from 18 to 21 weekly flights. This will allow the airline to operate a three times daily schedule.

Berlin is deeply engaged in documenting its layered history, earning a #4 ranking for Museums. Approaching 200 institutions, the city's museum offerings range from ancient treasures on Museum Island to the challenging exhibits on display at the Topography of Terror and the Stasi Museum. The new Humboldt Forum, housing the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, stands as a testament to Berlin's dedication to cultural exchange and global history. The Fotografiska museum adds a contemporary touch to the city's cultural

portfolio, located in a storied 1908 building that has been everything from a wartime ruin to an artist squat and rave venue.

Meanwhile, the evolving transformation of the historic Tempelhof Airport—a vast site that tells the turbulent story of the city—reflects Berlin's dedication to reimagining its spaces, with open-air galleries and panoramic views of the city's historic and modern districts. The anticipated Museum of the 20th Century should open on the site by 2026.

Berlin is not only a cultural hub but also an economic powerhouse, with its #3 ranking in our overall Prosperity index and a strong presence of large companies (#7 in Europe). Beyond established industry giants like Deutsche Telekom and Deutsche Bahn, Berlin has emerged as a startup capital. The city's affordability, renowned universities and skilled labour force have attracted approximately 4,400 startups, supported by growing venture capital investment and the city's Top 3 spot in our Business Ecosystem subcategory.

Expect Berlin's status as one of Europe's premier tech hubs to continue to ascend through robust economic momentum, accelerated by ongoing investments and

significant new spending from Germany's newly formed government, especially amid heightened geopolitical tensions stemming from Russian aggression. Volkswagen AG recently announced further increases in tech-focused spending in response to Tesla's regional expansion, significantly bolstering the city's emerging clean-energy automotive cluster. Qualcomm, the U.S.-based semiconductor giant, just opened its new European hub in Berlin, aiming to be closer to the continent's booming electric vehicle and connected mobility industries.

Further enhancing Berlin's digital infrastructure, UK-based data-centre provider Virtus unveiled plans for a €3-billion "mega-campus" just outside city limits, aiming to address growing European data demands. Simultaneously, British developer Verdion announced a €100-million logistics and innovation hub, converting former industrial areas into strategic economic assets.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and subsequent European security concerns, Germany has accelerated strategic investments centred on Berlin. The new German federal government has committed unprecedented defence and security funding,

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and subsequent European security concerns, Germany has accelerated strategic investments centred on Berlin. The new German federal government has committed unprecedented defence and security funding, positioning the capital as a hub for European defence innovation.

positioning the capital as a hub for European defence innovation. This includes significant expansions in cyber defence and intelligence capabilities, supported by Berlin's robust tech ecosystem and research institutions.

Berlin's role in European cybersecurity is already growing, driven by partnerships between the public and private sectors, universities and think tanks. Recent policy changes include increased allocations for cybersecurity research programmes at Berlin-based institutions, designed to fortify digital infrastructure against foreign interference.

Moreover, Berlin is becoming the nexus for pan-European cybersecurity and intelligence co-ordination. In 2026, the city will open a new European Defence Innovation Centre, partnering with NATO, the EU and private-sector leaders to catalyse research and technological development aimed at safeguarding Europe's digital and physical security.

Together, these developments underscore Berlin's central role—not only as a global tech hub, but also as a pivotal European city prepared to defend itself and the continent against emerging geopolitical threats.



Marie-Elisabeth-Lüders-Haus

4

Barcelona

Spain

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 3** Livability
- 4** Lovability
- 12** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Restaurants (Tied)
- 2** Nightlife (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 5,156,000



Arc de Triomf

The Catalan capital is as coveted as ever, but today it's welcoming the world on its own terms, doing right by its residents and long-term economic sustainability.

As if Barcelona, with its near-perfect weather, striking architecture and miles of golden, sandy urban beaches wasn't revered enough already, 2025 has made it a must-visit, across Europe and the world. The big news, of course, is that after almost a century and a half, Gaudí's famous church, the Sagrada Família, is almost finished. The towers of the evangelists John and Matthew lit up the city in 2023, leaving only the sixth and final 568-foot Jesus Christ tower to open this year.

Despite having the EU's highest density of cars and replacing the pro-walking and biking mayor Ada Colau (the city's first woman to hold the role) with the car-championing Jaume Collboni in 2023, the city continues to unveil ambitious pedestrian projects. Its new €52-million Consell de Cent pedestrianised 21 blocks of a four-lane cross-town street, part of what is being called a "green axis" urban park in an area popular with both locals and visitors. Dotted with benches and community squares, the pathway gained its inspiration from a local pilot project that, unsurprisingly, improved citizens' mental health. It's investments like this that have powered the city to a Top 3 spot in our overall Livability index.

Barcelona's #4 Lovability ranking means the 12 million annual tourists who flocked here pre-pandemic, more than doubling Barcelona's population, are back. The city's implementation of some of Europe's strictest vacation rental rules will be tested as it aims to resupply a chronic shortage of resident housing. Mayor Collboni's zero-tolerance short-term rental policy exceeds even New York City's strict Local Law 18.

Obviously, Barcelona is also no longer content with digital nomads, and is now aggressively securing massive foreign investment that will benefit the city over the long term, ranging from Lufthansa Group, the largest airline group in Europe (which opened its first southern European digital hub in 2023) to U.S. real estate developer Panattoni (which will invest €277 million to build the largest data centre in the region). The city's #6 Business Ecosystem ranking will only improve as global innovation investment, like Intel's recent Barcelona Supercomputing Center initiative as part of a €34-billion EU-wide semiconductor push, comes online.

5 Rome Italy

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 4** Livability
- 3** Lovability
- 36** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Restaurants (Tied)
- 2** Tripadvisor Reviews

POPULATION

Metro 4,302,000



St. Angelo Bridge

The Eternal City has always been coveted. These days, the bounty is an immersive step back in time under the global spotlight as millions of pilgrims descend for the 2025 Jubilee.

Few cities serve up the ability to walk through Western history like Roma. Heck, Palatine Hill alone invites you into two millennia's worth if you've got an hour. And that's just the stuff you can see.

In the past two years, construction projects have unearthed everything from a rare fourth-century golden glass depiction of Roma—the goddess personifying the city—to a life-sized marble statue of a Roman emperor dressed as Hercules. Such finds remind us that Rome's rich narrative continues to unfold, as Mayor Roberto Gualtieri aptly states, "The millennial history of our city never ceases to amaze and enchant the world."

The city's appeal extends beyond its historic relics, and the Eternal City ranks in the Top 5 in Europe in both our overall Lovability (#3) and Livability (#4) indices, offering residents and visitors experiences that go beyond tourism—inviting them into the daily rhythms of a city that has in many ways defined Western civilization.

This year, Rome is in the global spotlight, with the 2025 Jubilee, a sacred Catholic event, attracting 32 million pilgrims and

inspiring the beautification of the city, from a renovated Trevi Fountain to a major exhibition of Caravaggio's art. The investment is on top of new openings like the Largo di Torre Argentina site—the scene of Julius Caesar's assassination.

Rome's thousands of historical sites power its Top 3 ranking for Sights & Landmarks, drawing visitors eager to experience the grandeur of the Colosseum, Pantheon and St. Peter's Basilica. Its impressive museums rank #5, and connection to its monumental history has only increased Rome's popularity, placing it just behind London in the global Tripadvisor Reviews subcategory.

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

6 Madrid Spain

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 5** Livability
- 5** Lovability
- 7** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Restaurants (Tied)
- 3** Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 7,113,000



Gran Vía

Madrid's sustainability-driven investment in its bounteous urban and natural assets is an ode to reuse and a conviction that everything old can be new again.

Madrid's sustainability mission is clear in the new Santander Park, an instant citizen and visitor destination that used to be a golf course. A 76-kilometre urban forest network with nearly half-a-million new trees will connect the city's existing forest masses and reuse derelict sites between roads and buildings. Upon completion, this "green wall" is projected to help absorb 175,000 tons of carbon dioxide annually and mitigate the city's worsening urban heat.

This investment in its outdoor realm will improve Madrid's #52 ranking in our Air Quality subcategory, as well as its #15 Nature & Parks ranking, especially combined with how safe the city has become. Madrid's electric bus network trails only that of Berlin in Europe and new EV charging stations and bike lanes are everywhere.

But the biggest news is the recent full approval of Madrid Nuevo Norte, the largest urban regeneration project in Europe, with more than 544 acres in the city's underused northern rail district dedicated to the Madrid of the future. Long seen as a dead, unusable patch on Madrid's otherwise revitalised cityscape, the area choked by the existing railway tracks leading to Chamartín station will

be revitalised as a residential and business destination serviced by an integrated public transport hub.

The city is also going all-in on its already formidable Culture-scape (ranked #3), from recently opened local indie cinemas like Cines Embajadores to the mind-blowing 2023 unveiling of the Royal Collections Gallery, considered the country's most significant museum in decades (and sure to improve Madrid's current #12 spot for Museums). Located next to the Royal Palace of Madrid, the space was dug out from rock under Campo del Moro gardens to Armería square, and is now the centre of all Patrimonio Nacional's cultural activities and royal collections. It's also helping the Spanish head of state restore, conserve and share the country's historical, cultural and natural heritage.

With all this investment, it's a good thing the city's Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport (currently ranked #14 in our Airport connectivity subcategory) has earmarked almost €2.4 billion to become the EU's largest, although work isn't scheduled to be completed until 2031.

7 Amsterdam Netherlands

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 7 Livability
- 8 Lovability
- 4 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Business Ecosystem
- 7 Museums

POPULATION

Metro 2,915,000



Canals of Amsterdam

Amsterdam is done with your partying. But you're welcome to respectfully join the city's 750th birthday celebrations this year.

Under the stewardship of second-term Mayor Femke Halsema, the Dutch capital is pursuing a transformation to enhance livability and inclusivity for residents, seeking to safeguard its impressive Livability (#7) and Prosperity (#4) rankings. Known for its legendary nightlife, Amsterdam is now prioritising quality experiences over quantity. To combat disruptive "party tourism," smoking cannabis in public was banned in 2023, bars and restaurants must close by 2 a.m. on weekends, and no new visitors can enter the city centre after 1 a.m. Meanwhile, Amsterdam's iconic red-light district, De Wallen, is being reimagined with sex work venues relocating to a purpose-built Erotic Centre outside the city centre.

But it's not like 2025 is going to be sleepy. Amsterdam commemorates its 750th anniversary with festivities such as the closure of the eight-lane A10 ring road on June 21 for a citywide solstice celebration—its first traffic-free day in over 50 years. August will see the canals bustling for SAIL Amsterdam, the celebrated nautical festival showcasing magnificent ships in the city's iconic waterways. District-by-district celebrations, including street parties, concerts and community gatherings through

the "24 Hours" initiative, will spotlight Amsterdam's local vibrancy beyond the centre.

Hotels are embracing the milestone with anniversary packages, the most extravagant from the Conservatorium Hotel: five nights in its premier suite, plus unlimited dining, spa treatments, and much more—for a cool €129,000.

Luxury hospitality continues its ascendance, highlighted by Rosewood's anticipated June opening in the historic Palace of Justice building on Prinsengracht, minutes from the Rijksmuseum. The 200-year-old courthouse transforms into a 139-room luxury hotel featuring three restaurants, an indoor pool and a nod to its past with a legal-themed library.

Amsterdam's bold recalibration, balancing residents' needs and visitor experiences, is emblematic of broader European trends toward sustainability and responsible tourism. As the city shifts its narrative from uninhibited revelry to considered enjoyment, Amsterdam proves the power—and necessity—of strategic stewardship to maintain global appeal without compromising local culture...or its #8 spot in our overall Lovability index.

8

Vienna

Austria

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 6** Livability
- 9** Lovability
- 20** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Biking
- 6** Culture

POPULATION

Metro 1,960,000



Austria Center Vienna

The Austrian capital is done waiting for others to save the planet. Investment and visitors flowing into the city validate its bold vision.

Vienna has long stepped boldly into the Herculean tasks facing global cities serious about their role as urban sustainability beacons, despite being the smallest city in our Top 10 by population. Its real estate may be globally coveted, yet 60% of the city's population resides in subsidised apartments and 25% of homes are owned by the city. And it's boldly tackling the climate emergency, with 2022's declaration of carbon neutrality by 2040 besting the Paris Agreement by a decade. Already topping Europe in our Biking subcategory, the Austrian capital is adding dozens of bike paths annually to its 1,650-kilometre cycling network, including the unveiling of its "cycle highway" connecting downtown with the expansive green spaces of the 22nd district, home to Aspern Seestadt, one of Europe's largest urban development projects centred on transit, walking and biking.

No wonder it ranks #6 in our overall Livability index. There's also massive cultural investment—from the extensively renovated Wien Museum, a love letter to the city if there ever was one, to the brand-new House of Strauss museum, dedicated to the four composers of the Strauss family. The city's #7 Museums ranking will only improve this decade. And the launch of Vienna's first food

hall, Gleisgarten, and central Europe's first Rosewood Hotel will continue adding to the city's allure.

Urban reinvention continues beyond culture and cycling infrastructure. Vienna's ambitious €1.2-billion North Station development, transforming the historic Nordbahnhof area into a vibrant district of apartments, offices, parks and public spaces, is scheduled to complete its first phase by late 2025. This mixed-use project not only emphasises sustainable living but also actively supports Vienna's ongoing economic resilience, already boosted by the presence of global corporations like Siemens and Erste Group.

In hospitality, the anticipated opening of the Mandarin Oriental Vienna will elevate the city's luxury accommodations, complementing recent boutique hotel additions such as The Amauris and Almanac Vienna. Additionally, Vienna International Airport is expanding its terminal capacity to handle increasing passenger traffic, further improving connectivity. With robust investments spanning culture, livability and commerce, Vienna continues its dynamic trajectory as one of Europe's most desirable cities.

9 Prague Czech Republic

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 14 Livability
- 7 Lovability
- 17 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Unemployment Rate (Tied)
- 2 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 2,217,000



View of Charles Bridge and Prague Castle

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

Pandemic lockdowns broke the overtourism wave cresting over Prague's beguiling Gothic streets, allowing for resident-first policies and a sense of ownership. Over the past two years, city leaders made long-lasting decisions to ensure that Prague's #3-ranked museums (ahead of places like Berlin and Rome) and attractions (which trail only London) remain accessible to the citizens who showed up when tourists didn't.

Places like the Čapadlo embankment on the Vltava River have become open-air stages and galleries reminiscent of Paris. Náplavka, with its former ice-storage spaces ensconced in the river's retaining walls, was reborn as a vibrant urban market and series of pop-up bars. Prague's compact, fairy-tale walkability enchants in centuries-old cobbled streets and the (publicly accessible) hilltop Prague Castle, which, alongside Salm Palace—home to National Gallery exhibition spaces—reopened in 2023 after major renovations. The Baroque Clam-Gallas Palace in Old Town also reopened after three years of renovations and is now eager to be admired.

Business is booming, too. The city's four universities, relative affordability and #2-ranked nightlife pull in young talent and

billions in foreign investment—from real estate developers to long-established firms like Microsoft, Cisco and Oracle doubling down on a good thing.

Prague's reputation as a luxury hospitality hub is soaring with recent high-profile openings. Hyatt's Andaz Prague has transformed the historic 'Sugar Palace' on Senovážné Square, while Marriott's W Prague—combining the Art Nouveau grandeur of the former Grand Hotel Evropa with a contemporary elliptical wing by architecture studio DAM—brings bold design to Wenceslas Square. Meanwhile, the former InterContinental Prague is reopening after extensive renovations as the Fairmont Golden Prague, with river views over the UNESCO-listed Old Town. This Fairmont revival on prestigious Parizska Boulevard includes six enticing dining options, from zero-waste fine dining at Zlata Praha to the 1970s-inspired Southeast Asian lounge experience at Golden Eye.

These ambitious projects reaffirm Prague's grasp on the opportunity ahead: enhancing its global appeal to both discerning visitors and affluent investors looking for less crowded, undervalued European capitals ready for takeoff... with the talent pipelines in place to keep that growth sustainable for decades.

10 Stockholm Sweden

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 10** Livability
- 23** Lovability
- 8** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Labour Force Participation
- 2** Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 2,308,000



Ivar Lo's Park

Ambitious tech and transit investment activate an enterprising and educated citizenry that keeps attracting the planet's boldest and brightest.

No other Scandinavian city serves up a sensory feast like Stockholm. The Swedish capital boasts mind-bending geography (the city centre was built on 14 islands) and salt- and fresh-water outdoor swimming areas amid bounteous public green space (trailing only Oxford in our ranking and boasting the fourth-best air quality among European cities).

Then there's Stockholm's history of innovation, from the 1700s architecture and daring modern design of Gamla Stan to the infusion of tradition into its buzzy New Nordic cuisine.

And Stockholm continues to innovate, solidifying its reputation as Europe's pioneering city for sustainable urban living. At the forefront is Stockholm Wood City, the largest mass-timber project globally, spearheaded by property developer Atrium Ljungberg. Replacing concrete and steel with timber, the development is poised to provide 2,000 homes and 7,000 offices by 2035, with the aim to significantly reduce construction emissions. Beyond sustainability, the initiative champions the well-being benefits of living amidst natural materials, creating an integrated vision of urban life and nature.

Lauded as the largest mixed-use wooden neighbourhood on the planet, Stockholm Wood City is sure to become an international showcase, strengthening Stockholm's position as a beacon for talent and investment seeking a hometown not afraid to pursue the greener, healthier and distinctly visionary.

Of course, a multicultural, industrious population that tops our Labour Force Participation subcategory is already thriving here, drawn long ago to an epic summer season with near-constant daylight and a place that is equally welcoming and restlessly ambitious.

Stockholm built the world's largest open-fibre network in the 1990s, after all, followed a decade or so later by the launch of global hits like Skype, Spotify and Minecraft.

More billion-dollar startups have launched here than in any place outside of Silicon Valley. This is obvious in districts like Södermalm, once a working-class area, now the epicentre of this tech-driven transformation. The neighbourhood's gentrification reflects the city's role as a creative and economic powerhouse (and its #4 ranking for Business Ecosystem).



11 Lisbon Portugal

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Nature & Parks
- 9 Tripadvisor Reviews

POPULATION

Metro 3,115,000

You're not imagining it: everyone you know is going to Lisbon.

Portugal's capital rode the wave of the country's record 30 million visitors and almost US\$27 billion in revenue in 2023, with nearly 800,000 passing through Lisbon Cruise Port alone. But it's only partially for the 2,799 annual hours of sunshine—the most of any European capital. There's also the famed public transit, walkability and the miles of new bike paths meandering through the city's #12-ranked Sights & Landmarks. Not surprisingly, Lisbon also ranks Top 5 in Europe in our Nature and Parks subcategory. Newcomers continue to pour in, lured by numerous “best of” lists singing the praises of the city for both digital nomads and international retirees. Of course, this has sent rents and house prices soaring. The government is tinkering with new remote work visas while ending overly generous foreign residencies. Temporary bans on Airbnb licenses have failed and the city is becoming less and less accessible for residents whose minimum wage is among the lowest in Western Europe. Still, new allures like the recent Michelin-starred, Japanese-influenced Kabuki and Kanazawa keep global travellers flowing in (the city ranks #11 in Europe for Restaurants), as do exciting new hotels like the Mateus, a collaboration with the famed rosé vintner.



12 Munich Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 GDP Per Capita
- 4 Unemployment Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 3,066,000

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

The global Oktoberfest HQ and Germany's third-largest city works as hard as it plays, and has become one of Europe's hottest destinations for talent seeking this elusive balance. The pandemic only highlighted the productivity of understated Bavarian innovation, especially in the public realm when many temporary initiatives—from outdoor seating to a reimagined concrete factory—became permanent. But this is Germany after all, and there's productivity to think about. Munich boasts a #6 ranking in our Large Companies subcategory (made up primarily of automakers, media and manufacturing, but quickly being joined by biotech and IT giants). Expect more commerce now that the city's #12-ranked airport has completed its US\$550-million reno. Not surprisingly, the Technical University of Munich, which brands itself “the Entrepreneurial University,” supplies much of the local talent pipeline, as does LMU München. Both universities are considered the best in the country. With all that citizen-focused infrastructure and entrepreneurship, Munich threads the needle for impressive Livability (#19) and Prosperity (#5). This year, Apple will invest an additional billion dollars as part of its Silicon Design Center expansion in the city. And for visitors, the recently opened Rosewood Munich is a must-stay for work or pleasure.



13 Oslo Norway

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Labour Force Participation
- 9 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 1,279,000

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

No longer overshadowed by Stockholm and Copenhagen, Oslo is proving itself a worthy destination of its own. An award-winning Munch museum (of “The Scream” fame) joins the new residential district of Sørenga on the recently unveiled eastern waterfront, where the entire harbour is now walkable via a 10-kilometre trail network. With parking spots being replaced by bike lanes and street furniture, it's no wonder Oslo ranks #9 for Air Quality. Also new is the downtown National Museum, which replaced several cultural buildings, including the National Gallery. It houses classical and contemporary art and architecture collections and is today the largest art exhibition space in Scandinavia. Above the city, Rose Castle unveiled a permanent installation of paintings and sculptures in 2020 that tells the story of Oslo's resilience during the Second World War. Ranking #7 in our Labour Force Participation subcategory, Oslo now has over 50 start-up hubs that are helping to make it one of Europe's fastest-growing cities. The dozen floating saunas downtown are equally magnetic. Much-needed housing is aggressively being built in places like Fjord City on industrial port lands. As more talent discovers the drivers of Oslo's #11 overall Livability ranking, its magnetism will only strengthen.



14 Copenhagen Denmark

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Labour Force Participation
- 13 Business Ecosystem

POPULATION

Metro 1,929,000

One of Europe's most buzzed-about capitals is only getting started.

Copenhagen's compact, park-filled urban grid, connected by serpentine bike lanes that end at clean, city-sanctioned urban swimming spots (and public hot tubs!), continues to capture global attention. This recognition was further solidified by the city's designation as a UNESCO World Capital of Architecture, with events running through 2026 at venues like the Danish Architecture Center and the climate-resilient waterfront Opera Park. Copenhagen's ongoing commitment to sustainability is evident in the ambitious Lynetteholm project, a 275-hectare artificial island that will house 35,000 people and protect the harbour from rising sea levels and storms. The island is set to be a landmark in urban development, combining housing with environmental protection. Cycling remains a cornerstone of Copenhagen's identity (helping its #24-ranked air quality) and the city continues to invest in its extensive biking infrastructure, targeting 50% of all work and school commutes by bike next year. Meanwhile, transit buildout is expanding to connect more affordable districts, with the much-anticipated Sydhavn connector nearing completion and new international transit links to Malmö, Sweden, in the works. As the city pushes toward carbon neutrality by 2050, it remains at the forefront of sustainable urban living (with the #26-ranked Nature and Parks to prove it).



15 Milan Italy

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Convention Centre
- 5 Sights & Landmarks

POPULATION

Metro 4,955,000

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

The birthplace of Armani, Versace and dozens of other megawatt icons is no longer content with being Europe's fashion and design centre. Or even Italy's financial heart. Milan is driven, as always, by its entrepreneurial hunger and increasingly fuelled by wealthy newcomers lured to the famed good life (ranked #16 in our overall Prosperity index) by government tax breaks on foreign income earned abroad. The result is an influx of Brexit (and Russian) capital seeking a home, and the flurry of luxury real estate, hotels and social clubs that such capital inspires. The Ferragamo-owned Lungarno Collection unveiled the Portrait Milano in one of Europe's oldest seminaries, complete with a massive piazza. And there are two new W properties on the scene, along with a soon-to-open Ritz-Carlton. Its strategic proximity to other European capitals—not to mention the alpine resorts that pull in the global elite—won the city the 2026 Olympic Winter Games and a rush of development that includes a long-awaited train link between Milan Bergamo Airport and the centro. The Milano Innovation District (MIND) is rapidly emerging as Italy's leading life sciences hub, driven by major tenants like Ospedale Galeazzi-Sant'Ambrogio and AstraZeneca, significantly boosting the city's innovation ecosystem.



16 Brussels Belgium

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Airport
- 15 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 3,399,000

Belgium's capital welcomes the world as one of the continent's fastest-growing tourism markets.

Brussels is a city where European politics meets cultural sophistication, blending historical grandeur with modern dynamism. The iconic Grand Place, often cited as one of the most beautiful squares in the world, is a testament to the architectural prowess of a city that's also renowned as the birthplace of Art Nouveau. Beyond its historic façades, Brussels is investing heavily in urban renewal projects that enhance its livability and appeal. The repurposed Gare Maritime at Tour & Taxis is now a thriving food market under stunning glass roofs, and the colonnaded neoclassical Grand Hospice has been turned into a public park offering respite in the heart of the city. As the EU's administrative center, Brussels attracts a vibrant international population, and this diversity feeds into its cultural landscape, with neighbourhoods like the Congolese Matonge quarter showcasing flea markets, street art and a unique local flavour. Brussels is also expanding its connectivity, ranking #4 for Airport connectivity and enhancing its role as a European travel hub with new inter-city and night train routes at the Brussels Midi station. Tourism has surged as well, with a 73% increase year-on-year in 2024, making the city Europe's fastest-growing urban destination, according to Chase Travel.



17 Budapest Hungary

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Attractions
- 8 Poverty Rate

POPULATION

Metro 2,969,000

The Old World beguiles in the Hungarian capital, despite the national government's meddling.

Budapest is synonymous with digital nomads and bold companies looking for old European vibrancy on a budget (and the first-mover advantage that comes with it). The city, split by the expansive bend of the Danube River, keeps delivering. On the west bank is medieval Buda, hilly and full of history (home to many of the #7-ranked attractions), and on the east is Pest, modern and bohemian, with its recently revamped City Park. Their unification two years ago featured epic celebrations around the renovated iconic Széchenyi Chain Bridge, a symbol of togetherness for a city that ranks #8 for keeping residents out of poverty. The city's #13 Museums ranking will only keep ascending with the new opening of the Museum of Ethnography, as will the #11 Culture ranking with the new House of Music Hungary and the Hungarian State Opera. All that buzz is drawing big hotel investment like the Párisi Udvar Hotel, W Budapest and the Dorothea Hotel (whose rooftop is a sweet dinner spot before hitting Europe's 12th-best nightlife). City leaders, aware of what makes their city magnetic, recently defeated the Orbán government's attempt to turn parts of the historic Rákospuszta area into a "mini-Dubai."



18 Edinburgh United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Air Quality (Tied)
- 6 University

POPULATION

Metro 894,000

A long-overlooked European capital shines bright and welcomes the world once more.

The Scottish capital has long enchanted creative souls with its UNESCO World Heritage-designated Gothic architecture, moody weather and the legacy of the literary masters who've flocked here for both. But a growing appreciation of the city's arts programming (long powered by the storied University of Edinburgh and the sixth-most educated citizenry in Europe) has inspired hotel investment to accommodate tourists and talent. The renovated Scottish National Gallery project reopened two years ago to showcase the Scottish collection right in the heart of the city, while the upstart Hidden Doors Festival takes over unused spaces for art shows for a third year. The city's world-famous Edinburgh Festival Fringe will be bigger than ever this year, fuelled by increased federal funding. On the heels of 2023's opening of the luxury Gleneagles Townhouse on St Andrew Square in the former Bank of Scotland came the announcement of a 2026 Dalata property a few doors away. These days the buzz is all around the massive redevelopment of St James Quarter, anchored by the 244-room W Edinburgh. Equally exciting is the landmark, £2-billion West Town development, a new neighbourhood comprising 7,000 homes, two schools, retail and community facilities, a 300-bed hotel, and 300 student apartments.



19 Warsaw Poland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Unemployment Rate (Tied)
- 3 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 3,375,000

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

Warsaw is turning on the afterburners it spent a generation fine-tuning. It ranks an impressive #6 in our Prosperity index, boasting Europe's lowest unemployment rate (as low as 1.4% as of June 2024) and the continent's third-most educated residents. To say nothing of finally securing a pro-EU national government last year. Warsaw is buzzing like few times in its history. There's the recent rebuilding of the 17th-century Saski Palace destroyed by the Nazis, the opening of a new cultural complex for both the Museum of Modern Art and the TR Warszawa theatre, and the christening of the once-derelict 19th-century Haberbusch & Schiele Brewery as the craft beer temple Browary Warszawskie. Infrastructure buildout is equally kinetic. The city's poor Biking performance will improve with new pedestrian and bike infrastructure along the Vistula River and its historic streets. The new 1,017-foot Foster + Partners-designed Varso Tower is the EU's tallest building and home to global firms looking to tap into the smart, affordable local talent. The same architecture firm is also designing the CPK Airport—a "transport interchange which brings together air, rail and road" which is planned to open in 2032 about 25 miles southwest of the city.



20 Helsinki Finland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Air Quality (Tied)
- 8 Business Ecosystem

POPULATION

Metro 1,598,000

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

The capital of the world's happiest country for the seventh year in a row (according to the 2024 World Happiness Report) must be doing something right. And no, it's just not Finland's new NATO membership. For starters, Helsinki doubled down on emergency outdoor placemaking measures during COVID and has kept the massive, purpose-built outdoor seating areas and other similar communal infrastructure projects largely intact, while city leaders continue to generously fund citizen community improvement projects. It's the kind of sensible urban cohesion you'd expect from a city dedicated to its fresh air (ranked second in Europe for Air Quality) and a #15 spot in our Green Space subcategory (both helped by the central cycling tunnel into downtown). The city's embrace of its natural bounty continues to expand with new trails, parks and an urban ferry system that are powering its overall #12 Livability ranking. Curious visitors are filling new hotels in repurposed spaces like GLO Hotel's restored 1920s bank location near the port and the Best Western Premier Hotel Katajanokka's converted former prison. The recently opened Hotel Maria (housed in four historic city buildings) aspires to be the city's "first true five-star destination," according to founder, developer and former three-time Finnish Olympic gold medalist Samppa Lajunen.



21 Hamburg Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Green Space
- 11 Large Companies

POPULATION

Metro 3,493,000

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

Hamburg is both Europe's second-largest shipping port and a serious contender for "Venice of the North," with a stunning lake and a latticework of canals. Emblematic of this is the €638-million Elbphilharmonie, a spectacular concert hall that combines 19th-century marine trade warehouses with the crystalline architecture and acoustics of the future. Hamburg's commitment to the arts powers it to #13 in Europe in our Culture subcategory. Its nightlife (made famous by the nascent Beatles in the early 1960s) hasn't lost a beat, ranking #19. Hamburg comes by its opulence and sophistication honestly, as a commercial hub ranking #11 in our Large Companies subcategory, powered by its booming semiconductor industry and ongoing investments from multinationals like Netherlands-based Nexperia, which keeps pouring in hundreds of millions to develop the next generation of semiconductors locally. And this being Germany, inclusion is the price of doing business, evident in the city's signature redevelopment project, HafenCity, set to open in 2026. In Europe's biggest inner-city urban development—which, over more than a decade, is transforming 250 hectares of tumbledown docks along the port area into a buzzing shopping and residential area—a third of housing is subsidised while another third is rental.



22 Dublin Ireland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 GDP Per Capita
- 5 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 1,285,000

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

Relatively safe, gregarious and increasingly wealthy, the Celtic Tiger's capital has never been fiercer, boasting a Top 15 spot in our overall Prosperity index, which includes the second-best GDP per capita (trailing only Luxembourg) and Top 5 educated residents. The magnetism is obvious in places like the Docklands area, called Silicon Docks, home to big tech and digital players including Alphabet, Meta, Amazon, Apple and Airbnb. They come for some of the world's lowest corporate taxes and stay for homegrown economic development initiatives like Ireland's Local Enterprise Office's mentoring, training and grants. The sudden wealth (for some) means a cratered Livability index (#62), with Housing Affordability and Healthcare System subcategories well out of the Top 100. No wonder a dozen or so hotels opened in the past year to embrace the new wealth—including luxury property The Leinster in Merrion Square near the National Museum of Ireland and National Gallery. At least the city is working to improve its equally moribund Biking performance (#118) with the ambitious Dublin City Centre Transport Plan, supported by €290 million in funding for walking and cycling infrastructure. It aims to cut vehicle traffic in the centre by 60% and connect Dublin residents by foot or bike to any key destination in 15 minutes or less.



23 Istanbul Türkiye

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Restaurants (Tied)
- 3 Airport

POPULATION

Metro 15,636,000

Europe's largest city is coming for the crown, and it has the goods to expect nothing less.

Istanbul, Türkiye's—and Europe's—largest city, remains a captivating crossroads of culture and commerce connecting Europe and Asia. Its impressive #4 Shopping ranking and #8 Sights & Landmarks speak to millennia of history. Recent urban developments have only enhanced its appeal. The 2023 completion of Galataport, a €1.6-billion revitalization of the city's historic harbour, includes the world's first underground cruise terminal. This project not only strengthens Istanbul's tourism infrastructure but also adds new cultural spaces like the Istanbul Modern, designed by Renzo Piano. The luxury hospitality sector is booming as well. Recent openings, like Peninsula Istanbul and JW Marriott Marmara Sea, complement the city's ascendant luxury, placing it as a top-tier global destination for those who know. These projects showcase the city's blend of modern design with historical significance, underscoring its #4 Shopping spot and #6 for Museums. And nothing is more emblematic than the mind-blowing restoration of the city's Zeyrek Çinili Hamam—a 500-year-old public bathhouse you have to see to believe. Istanbul is also a growing major high-speed rail central hub for the region, and the Top 3 Istanbul Grand Airport, already one of the busiest globally, aims to become the largest airport in the world by 2028.



24 Valencia Spain

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Convention Centre
- 13 Instagram Hashtags

POPULATION

Metro 1,812,000

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

All (continental) eyes were on Spain's third-largest city last year as it basked in its 2024 European Green Capital limelight. Then, tragically, for completely different reasons in late October as flooding killed hundreds of people and devastated the surrounding region. The city has a long road back to regain its ascent. Places like the city's new Parque Central unveiled 25 acres of green space and tree canopy on top of a reused rail yard in 2022. Outside of the centro, Valencia's almost 20 kilometres of pristine European Blue Flag-status beaches are lapped by some of the cleanest water in the country. Amazingly, the city further proved its sustainability bona fides in 2023 when it became the first in the world to verify its carbon emissions from tourist activity. Look it up—it's a big deal. This focus on the long-term health of the planet is mirrored in a #13 spot for Nature & Parks. Valencia's already impressive #19-ranked Sights & Landmarks are poised to climb even higher with the new CaixaForum history museum being joined by the Hortensia Herrero Art Centre in the renovated Valeriola Palace, home of Spanish billionaire Hortensia Herrero's private art collection that includes works by Andreas Gursky and Anish Kapoor.



25 The Ruhr Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Green Space
- 10 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 5,114,000

How did Germany's industrial wasteland become a verdant land of opportunity?
Welcome to the Ruhr.

Western Germany's far-flung former coal-mining and industrial western metropolis is, at 53 towns and cities (Dortmund, Essen and Oberhausen being the best known), the country's largest metro by population. At its industrial peak in the post-war 1960s, the area growled with 150 coal mines extracting the fuel to power blast furnaces and steel mills as the continent rebuilt. When the coal industry was mothballed in 2018, the Ruhr was already building its next chapter, namely with a cultural legacy as the 2010 European Capital of Culture (the first industrial zone, as opposed to city, to earn that distinction). The area spent the next decade transforming thousands of factories and industrial buildings into hundreds of museums, theatres, galleries and festival spaces, earning a #10 ranking in our Attractions subcategory. Today, Duisburg's 6 Lakes Wedau project is continuing the transformation. Even more remarkable is how a centuries-old extraction zone today ranks in the Top 5 in Europe for Green Space. The Ruhr is also leveraging its 22 universities and colleges and some of the cheapest real estate in Western Europe to draw parallels to Berlin of the early 2000s. Naturally, it's also hosting the 2025 FISU World University Games this summer.



26 Frankfurt Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Convention Centre
- 6 Airport

POPULATION

Metro 2,722,000

Frankfurt is quickly growing into Europe's business capital.

Given its enviable location in the geographic heart of Europe (and its #6-ranked airport, soon to be able to serve 100 million passengers annually), combined with its swift courtship of post-Brexit finance firms looking for stability, is it any wonder Frankfurt is today known as “Mainhattan”? More than 200 banks call the city home, including 160 international firms, the European Central Bank and the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, Germany's largest. The city ranks #20 in our Large Companies subcategory and #13 for GDP Per Capita. Then there's the ongoing buildout of the infrastructure required to house all that foreign direct investment, and today Frankfurt boasts 14 of Germany's 15 tallest buildings. Another eight skyscrapers, some well over 200 metres, are being built, like FOUR Frankfurt, a live-work neighbourhood of four towers in the financial district. Besides banking, the start-up ecosystem is also ascendant, with insurance, cybersecurity and fintech inspired by the success of insurance platform unicorn Clark, which hit a valuation of US\$1 billion in 2021. All that rolls up into a record-breaking 2024 with €5.5 billion worth of projects in the city. But it's not all business: the city is working hard to let locals and visitors know about its #19-ranking biking infrastructure.



27 Zürich Switzerland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 University
- 3 Labour Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 1,951,000

Zürich is exactly the kind of place you'd want to call home: efficient, clean, educated, safe and officially happy.

Switzerland's financial centre 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 Top 10 in our overall Prosperity index, powered by an industrious citizenry that ranks Top 3 in our Labour Force Participation and #6 in GDP Per Capita subcategories, with major European players like Migros and UBS AG based here. The city's population is also the largest it's been since the halcyon days of the early 1960s, and in late 2023, a European Commission study named Zürich residents the continent's happiest, at 97%. Some of Europe's highest salaries certainly help, as does the ability to keep the good times going with a local talent pipeline from Insead Business School and ETH Zürich (aka the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology). The city ranks Top 3 in our University subcategory. All that talent is getting on corporate site selector radars, as evidenced by Microsoft's opening of a new technology centre at the Zürich Airport to “deliver immersive industry experiences and deep technical engagement focused on business outcomes to customers,” according to the company. The airport, ranked #17, will only catch up with the city it serves after a multistage renovation is completed in 2026.



28 Glasgow United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Air Quality
- 6 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 1,831,000

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

Glasgow powers to its Top 100 ranking on the strength of education, with the planet's #6 spot for educated citizenry and a world-renowned university founded in 1451, the fourth oldest in the English-speaking world (ranked #14 in Europe). The University of Glasgow counts economist Adam Smith and U.S. Founding Father James Wilson as alumni. And the world is taking notice. Tech start-ups hungry for cheap space and talent are drawn to the city's working-class authenticity over pricier European capitals, even though the business investment metrics have yet to reflect the influx. Glasgow ranks #42 in our Large Companies subcategory and a middling #94 for GDP Per Capita. Still, the city is among the UK's fastest-rising property markets and new hotels are planned for the rest of the decade, with the recently opened The Address Glasgow now welcoming guests. But it's not like Glasgow has gone corporate. This is the home of Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet and the National Theatre of Scotland, and Glasgow is still buzzing from its 2020 designation as the U.K.'s top cultural and creative city by the European Commission. Its Top 25 ranking in our Culture subcategory will rise in the coming years.



29 Kraków Poland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 Unemployment Rate
- 11 Biking (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 1,490,000

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

Few cities in Eastern Europe boast more historical significance than Kraków. Largely spared from Second World War bombing, the city features ancient urban gems ranging from the Wawel Royal Castle—perched on a hill in all its Gothic-meets-Renaissance glory—to the Cloth Hall, which, with its origins in the 13th century, could vie for the title of Europe's oldest shopping centre. It's why the city is increasingly a destination for Europeans looking for new urban holidays, with its #12 ranking in Attractions and #19 in Museums bolstered by 2024's opening of a new home for the Museum of Contemporary Art overlooking the Vistula River. As in Warsaw, foreign investment is everywhere, with the ninth-lowest unemployment rate in Europe. Google continues to invest and Ryanair recently announced a US\$800-million expansion of its Kraków operations. In 2023, Volvo Cars opened an entirely new tech hub to drive electrification, noting the need to beat competitors to Kraków's untapped talent pool. Office and residential investment is also pouring in. The city is also investing in sustainable transportation initiatives.

A recent local government push to expand bike infrastructure powers Kraków to #11 in our Biking subcategory, and the city will break ground on Poland's second metro system in 2028.



30 Birmingham United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Attractions
- 10 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 3,098,000

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

Birmingham (or "Brum"), the second-largest city in England, has resumed the skyward trajectory of its Golden Decade before COVID hit. The 2010s saw a massive influx of Fortune 500 regional offices chasing one of Europe's youngest workforces (about 40% of Brummies are under 25) and their coveted skills in finance and professional services honed at the city's eponymous university (and the Top 10 nightlife scene it fuels). Urban investment followed, from the opening of Europe's largest library to plans (coming to life at the end of this decade) for the HS2 high-speed rail network connecting Birmingham to London in 45 minutes. Brum's #6-ranked attractions will be getting even more attention. This will also make Birmingham's airport (ranked #43) a convenient option to access the country's capital, and there's fittingly an ongoing £294-million investment plan to increase the airport's capacity to 18 million passengers by 2033. The number of jobs being created is staggering, especially within the booming life sciences and green technology clusters as both the government and private local companies like Land Rover and Jaguar rush toward renewables. Given all the big news in town, it's no wonder that Birmingham became the new headquarters of national tourism agency VisitBritain/VisitEngland last year.



31 Geneva Switzerland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Biking (Tied)
- 6 GDP Per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 613,000

The city of peace has a deep resonance in Europe today.

A globally vital city in a snow globe? Geneva comes close. With just 600,000 residents (albeit growing fast) yet home to the European seat of the United Nations, the international headquarters of the Red Cross and more than 200 international organisations, the city does well by doing good, ranking Top 3 in Europe for GDP per capita and #23 in our overall Prosperity index. The commitment to urban tranquillity was made official in 1949 when the Geneva Conventions, which focus on the welfare and protection of prisoners of war, wounded participants and innocents caught up in conflict, were signed here. The city was settled millennia ago and became a Roman outpost cherished for the sparkling waters of its eponymous lake and the confluence of the mighty river Rhône—not to mention the thermal pools that look out onto the soaring Alps and the Jura Mountains. These days, Europe's fifth-best biking infrastructure lets you see it all easily. Not the outdoors type? Get into inner space at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), housing the 27-kilometre Large Hadron Collider particle accelerator just outside of town. The newly opened Renzo Piano-designed CERN Science Gateway is a family-friendly introduction to the future of quantum physics.



32 Liverpool United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Sights & Landmarks
- 6 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 1,534,000

The city that helped win wars and give peace a chance is poised for its next transformation.

Liverpool's place as an integral centre in world history is masterfully documented, from its pivotal role in Britain's trans-Atlantic slave trade at the International Slavery Museum to its strategic importance showcased at the subterranean Western Approaches Museum. Cultural legends emerged here too: four teenagers jammed together and became The Beatles, honoured today by The Beatles Story, the world's largest permanent exhibit dedicated to the band, helping the city's #6 Sights & Landmarks ranking. But the city is evolving again, transitioning from the beloved Goodison Park, home of Everton FC since 1892, to a new £500-million stadium at Bramley-Moore Dock—part of the ambitious £56-million Liverpool Waters redevelopment. This revitalization aims to transform 60 hectares of underused docklands into vibrant, connected neighbourhoods, anchored by Central Park, Liverpool's largest planned public space. Booming tourism and a growing population are drawn to the dynamic city centre, highlighted by Liverpool One and a surge in residential developments. New industries are emerging, from life sciences anchored by the University of Liverpool to digital innovation catalyzed by Kyndryl's planned AI hub. The Mersey Tidal Power Project further positions Liverpool as a beacon of renewable energy and innovation, promising sustainable growth for decades ahead. Appropriately, the city's fresh air ranks #6.



33 Cologne Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Convention Centre
- 15 Google Trends

POPULATION

Metro 2,234,000

Cologne is open for business and pleasure, but it needs to get the word out.

Despite aesthetic riches like the twin-spired Cologne Cathedral that rises above the historic buildings of the city's Old Town, or the cultural bounty of places like the Museum Ludwig with its 20th-century art, perception of Cologne lags behind its virtues. The city ranks bafflingly low in our Sights & Landmarks (#29), Culture (#23) and Museums (#55) subcategories. That last one hurts, given the range of museums in town, from Middle Ages riches at the Schnütgen to classics at the Wallraf-Richartz to the Picassos and more modern marvels at the Museum Ludwig. The city even has its own beer, Kölsch. Its global ascent is inevitable, especially with both Germans and international visitors rediscovering the city—like the more than 1.4 million who attended the city's 2024 Pride festivities, 200,000 more than in 2023. Cologne is also a regional business powerhouse and destination, fuelled by its #4-ranked convention centre and #27-ranking for Large Companies. Home to Lufthansa, traditionally the second-largest airline in Europe, and the European division of the Ford Motor Company, the city is increasingly investing in its aerospace industry ecosystem and leveraging the German Aerospace Centre and HQ for the European Astronaut Centre that calls the city home.



34 Porto Portugal

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Nature & Parks
- 19 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 1,340,000

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

Portugal's kinetic second city is first on the minds of voracious global real estate investors and site selectors either priced out of Lisbon or tired of its crowds. That's not to say that Porto isn't equally coveted, with its colourful old town hugging the banks of the Douro and crowned by Gustave Eiffel's wrought-iron bridge, just unfinished enough to remind you that this was the industrial heart of the nation for centuries. New direct flights are arriving from all over Europe, and tourists often outnumber locals in central Baixa. Current visitor numbers, like real estate prices, have already pushed past 2019 levels, notably among U.S. buyers and visitors emboldened by a strong dollar against the euro. They come for the #12-ranked Nature & Parks, beaches reachable by subway and new ways to experience the city, from the reopened Mercado do Bolhão, Porto's historic central market, to the new metro line to the massive World of Wine cultural district on the Gaia side of the river with its seven museums and a dozen restaurants. Economic development office InvestPorto, meanwhile, is accelerating the city's green transition with expansive investor support and direct connection to the city's talent pool.



35 Bern Switzerland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Green Space
- 3 Biking (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 736,000

The understated Swiss capital (yes, it's Bern, not Zürich) is a walkable, historic wonder with a rare blend of prosperity and hospitality.

Secluded on the banks of the emerald Aare River, Switzerland's capital city is too often overlooked (see its #100 ranking in our overall Lovability category—the lowest-ranked capital by far, with some social media and search metrics well out of the Top 100). We're all sleeping on Bern. This UNESCO World Heritage Old City is peppered with historic architecture, like the Zytglogge medieval clock tower, the Parliament Building and hundreds of magical (and Instagrammable) nooks to grab coffee, raclette or craft beer (Bern boasts the highest density of microbreweries in Switzerland). Tasting and shopping often takes place in 12th-century vaulted cellars built to store grains and wines. If you only have time for one, make it Café Marta, especially at apéro hour for local beverages and baked goods. Here you'll find locals with the #18th-best GDP per capita in Europe. Given that residents also rank #13 for Labour Force Participation, their apéro is well earned. The city also ranks in the Top 3 in Europe for Green Space and Biking, with verdant tree cover that always reminds visitors and residents alike that the city is Switzerland's gateway to the natural majesty of the Alps.



36 Manchester United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 University
- 10 Airport

POPULATION

Metro 3,348,000

A creative and economic rebirth buzzes in England's worker bee city.

You'll be hearing a lot more about Manchester this decade as the historic engine of English industry shifts into high gear across both culture and development. While the UNESCO City of Literature continues to shape global music—with 2024's opening of the 23,500-seat Co-op Live arena and a festival lineup that includes Beyond the Music and Worldwide Music Expo—Greater Manchester is also writing a new chapter in urban reinvention. A newly centralised "single pipeline for growth" coordinates £1 billion of planned annual investment across six targeted Growth Locations, aiming to deliver tens of thousands of homes and jobs at a pace unmatched in the U.K. since the 2012 London Olympics. Among the boldest is the Western Gateway, anchored by the regeneration of Old Trafford around Manchester United's stadium, projected to generate over 90,000 jobs. The Central Growth Cluster includes innovation districts like Crescent Salford and Victoria North. These ambitions build on an £80-billion economy that's grown 50% since 2000 and now leads the nation in FDI outside London. Add a mature devolved governance model and transformative transit investments—like bringing commuter rail into the Bee Network—and the city's Top 10-ranked airport and 15th-most Instagram Hashtags start making sense.



37 Basel Switzerland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Biking
- 3 GDP Per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 574,000

Switzerland's life sciences capital is a cultural and economic powerhouse.

Switzerland's third-largest city is enchanting long-time citizens, new talent and curious visitors like never before. Its appeal may be due to its relative obscurity, tucked on the banks of the Rhine River in the country's north (its northern city limits are minutes from the French and German borders). The natural boundary of the Jura Mountains has also left the city to evolve over the centuries with moderate influence from Bern. From the second-best biking on the continent to centuries' worth of daring architecture, few cities with this few people leave you as breathless as Basel. Locals certainly savour their city's special blend, and, given Basel's Top 3 GDP Per Capita Spot, they're spreading the word to fellow high-performers. Talent here is not only scooped up by the deep culture sector (anchored by the planet's most influential art fair) but also by "Europe's BioValley"—a tri-nation life sciences cluster stretching from Basel into France and Germany. Basel Area Business & Innovation is leading the way, securing major wins like Johnson & Johnson's 2024 Innovation Hub opening at the Switzerland Innovation Park Basel Area. The region is now home to 700+ life sciences firms and 1,000 research groups, supported by renowned accelerators like DayOne and BaseLaunch.



38 Venice Italy

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Biking (Tied)
- 9 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 546,000

Safe, profound and willing to reveal its secrets to those who take the time to look for them.

Few cities are as beloved as Venice, reflected in its #16 ranking in our overall Lovability index, where it ranks #9 among European cities for its distinct Shopping subcategory and #13 for Facebook Check-ins. The city coaxes stories from visitors eager to experience the #17-ranked sights woven into the city's fabric, along with the global ideas that started here, from banking (by the city's Jewish merchants at their benches, or banci) to quarantines (the 40-day isolation required by incoming ships during plagues). But a central city that's just 7.6 square kilometres hosted almost 13 million tourists in 2019 and is expected to exceed that in coming years. As such, on the heels of banning cruise ships over 25,000 tonnes and megaphones wielded by belligerent guides, Venice now requires day-trippers to register before visiting, with those 15 and older paying €5 per day via an online platform on most spring and summer weekends. Those staying in the city are exempt. Investment in La Serenissima continues to pour in, namely with the Nolinski Venezia, Venice's newest luxury hotel whose common spaces—from its 4,000-book Library Bar to its rooftop jacuzzi—almost rival the beguiling nooks of the city outside its gilded doors.



39 Gothenburg Sweden

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Air Quality (Tied)
- 7 Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 1,022,000

Four centuries of innovation on Sweden's west coast means a sustainable future ahead.

Sweden's second city finished its three-year 400th birthday party and is getting back to work as the country's research and development engine. Gothenburg residents rank #28 in our Educational Attainment subcategory, and their skills have long pulled in foreign direct investment to the point where, today, 20% of the workforce is employed by a foreign-owned company. Recently, the investment has come largely from Volvo Cars. While the company has manufactured cars here since 1927, it is today owned by China's Geely, which is investing billions locally to turn Volvo into an electric-and-hybrid-only car company by 2030. Geely is so ubiquitous that it's driving the city's high-profile hotel boom, having built the Clarion Hotel The Pier next to its Uni3 innovation centre. Another rising corporate force is pharmaceutical and biotech company AstraZeneca, which opened one of its three global R&D hubs—further showcasing the local talent that ranks #9 for Labour Force Participation. Aside from the massive city-building for the city's 400th-anniversary celebrations—like the expansion of Jubileumsparken (Jubilee Park) and renovated Maritime Museum and Aquarium—the city is anticipating a US\$100-billion property and infrastructure investment over the next decade.



40 Utrecht Netherlands

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Labour Force Participation
- 7 Airport

POPULATION

Metro 895,000

A laid-back university hub goes all in on some of the continent's most ambitious city-building.

Utrecht is a distinct hometown and destination all its own, despite being only a 25-minute train ride from Amsterdam. Home to an astounding 29 universities and colleges attended by 70,000 students from 125 countries—of which the biggest is Utrecht University, founded in 1636 and nurturing Europe's eighth-most educated citizenry. Education and research make up most of the local economy and, with global talent pouring in to study here, Utrecht trails only Stockholm in our Labour Force Participation subcategory. Its healthcare system ranks #14. The city's medieval urban grid bursts with Dutch history that can only be possible in a place that for centuries was the cultural and religious heart of the nation. Given its magnetism—combined with that easy access to coveted Amsterdam—the city's leaders are in the midst of the largest new development in the Netherlands, with 30,000 houses and office and industrial space being built in nearby Leidsche Rijn. The full buildout, including a new hospital, schools, retail, places of worship and public transit to the city centre, may be ready over the next year or two. Meanwhile, Merwede is a dense, car-free, climate-forward district near Utrecht's centre, featuring 6,000 homes, green design, shared mobility, and innovative urban sustainability.



41 Florence Italy

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5** Shopping
- 8** Tripadvisor Reviews

POPULATION

Metro 785,000

A city as a museum? Florence is as close as you'll find.

If you've never been—or if it's been a few years since your last visit—it's time to go, presto. The Renaissance beauty continues to rank well in our overall Lovability index (#19) thanks to its #11-ranked museums and the #8-ranked Tripadvisor reviews breathlessly lauding them. Housing masterpieces like Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" and "Allegory of Spring", Michelangelo's "David" and Giotto's "Ognissanti Madonna", to name just a few, is, admittedly, an unfair advantage. Of course, in the birthplace of global fashion brands like Roberto Cavalli, Salvatore Ferragamo and all the "ccis" (Pucci, Gucci, Capucci and Ricci), Florence ranks #5 for Shopping and is going luxe on hospitality this year with the new Collegio alla Querce, Auberge Resorts Collection, housed in 16th-century buildings that served as chapels, theatres and schools. Il Tornabuoni, Florence's grande dame, has reopened as a must-see five-star hotel—with a rooftop bar to match. Speaking of accommodation, Florence's historic UNESCO World Heritage centro has more beds listed on Airbnb than residents, with all the implications you'd imagine. A short-lived ban on new Airbnb listings in the city was overturned, so expect more choice of places to stay, to the detriment of local affordability for the near future.



42 Nice France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4** Healthcare System
- 22** Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 626,000

The Côte d'Azur's urban heart is not taking time off.

In many ways, France's fifth-largest city paved the way for the modern European holiday destination. Quite literally: in the 1800s, visionary city leaders convinced vacationing English aristocracy to pay to pave the five kilometres of beachfront, known today as Promenade des Anglais. These days, the stunning urban heart of the Côte d'Azur is as coveted by travellers—who make it the second-most searched city in Europe—as it was by artists like Matisse and Picasso. Hospitality development is also in full swing, led by last year's opening of the Daniel Libeskind-designed (among others) Gare Thiers-Est, a massive jagged crystal next to the train station, inspired by the mineral forms of azurite found in the region, with high-end shops, a 120-room Hilton hotel, offices and epic public spaces. Old Town just got the luxurious Hotel du Couvent, while Anantara Hotels & Resorts opened recently in a 175-year-old icon, joining post-pandemic openings and renos of historic Belle Époque grand dames. The port district also got a new Mama Shelter for more humble budgets while still serving up the flag's signature destination rooftop bar (and pool!). Newer still, in the Carré d'Or neighbourhood, the Maison Albar-Le Victoria just opened with beach views from many of its 132 rooms.



43 Tallinn Estonia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Air Quality
- 12** Business Ecosystem

POPULATION

Metro 638,000

One of Europe's smallest capitals stands tall.

With its medieval spires and conical, red-tiled roofs sprouting from the city's verdant tree canopy, Tallinn's Old Town is enjoying three decades as a UNESCO World Heritage site. An impressive #23 ranking for its diverse museums is earned by Kumu Art Museum, which houses three centuries of Estonian art. It's a vital look into the region's geopolitically fraught history, seen in pieces illustrating a pastoral Baltic homeland, Imperial Czarist fleets, Soviet propaganda, protest posters and, finally, independent Estonian voices. The PoCo Art Museum is the city's newest, packed with contemporary art from Andy Warhol to Banksy. But this town works hard too, so experience the future of this entrepreneurial city by strolling 30 minutes north to the newly redeveloped old shipyard of Port Noblessner to see what the local ministry of entrepreneurship and IT claims is the highest density of startups in the world, even calling it "Europe's Silicon Valley." (The city ranks #12 in our Business Ecosystem subcategory.) The district is also home to Estonia's first Michelin two-star restaurant, 180° by Matthias Diether. The city is riding its 2023 European Green Capital title, too, with its carbon-neutral public transport and 14-kilometre green corridor through the city—a great way to protect Europe's best air quality.



44 Antwerp Belgium

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Poverty Rate (Tied)
- 23 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 785,000

Ancient affluence meets modern crisis in Belgium's storied river city.

Antwerp has conducted business on the River Scheldt since the Middle Ages—and has the centuries-old Diamond District (and the title of Europe's second-largest port) to prove it. No wonder the city today ranks #23 in our Shopping subcategory while boasting the sixth-lowest poverty rate in Europe. Its cultural wealth is also shared freely, with dozens of museums of all sizes (the MoMu fashion museum is the newest). The big news is the recently renovated Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, with its 11-year, €100-million expansion adding 6,500 square metres. But the city truly shines through its quaint cobblestone townhouse lanes, secret courtyards and alleys that all lead to the soaring Gothic beauty of the Cathedral of Our Lady. The newest placemaking gem opening soon is the seven-hectare Zuidpark and its 30,000 plants. But not all is rosy for this gilded city, currently in the grips of a violent war between drug cartels trying to control the entry point for Latin American cocaine into Europe. In 2024 alone, Antwerp recorded 91 incidents of drug-related violence—a nearly 30% increase compared to 2023—including shootings, kidnappings, and torture linked to gang wars over control of smuggling routes.



45 Athens Greece

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Nature & Parks
- 11 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 3,154,000

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

The ancient capital is busy making up for lost time with ambitious city-building spanning waterfront newbuilds (Ellinikon), new metro lines connecting soulful destination neighbourhoods like Exarcheia (whose central square is considered the heart of this great city) and the reopening of grand buildings as cultural hubs. Right in the city centre, the ancient Municipal Market of Kypseli hosts community parties, concerts and workshops, and the old National Opera building is now the Olympia Municipal Musical Theatre Maria Callas. Appropriately, the famed Greek opera star has a new boutique hotel boasting her nickname, La Divina, set in the former Odeon Athenaeum music hall. Returning visitors stroll the refreshed Grand Promenade, a 2.5-mile tree-lined and car-free walkway at the foot of the Acropolis that connects the city's major archaeological sites, revelling in the city's Top 10 Nature & Parks ranking, a reflection of this investment in green space. The renovated National Gallery reopened in 2021 after eight years that doubled its size and let in ample natural light to showcase the European art. Dozens of new hotels include the One&Only Aesthesis on a private oceanfront estate, the sensual feast that is the Brown Acropol and even a new Ace Hotel & Swim Club in Glyfada.



46 Dresden Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Biking
- 17 Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 976,000

Few European cities evoke the horrors of war like this vital German city.

Known as "Florence on the Elbe" (after its river) until exactly 80 years ago this year, this Baroque masterpiece (and its robust manufacturing infrastructure) was bombed by 800 British planes dropping 2,700 tonnes of explosives over two days, reducing the city to rubble and killing more than 25,000, including refugees and Allied prisoners of war. Today, Dresden is reaping the work of its meticulous rebuild in the decades following the war, with its historic centre finally opening in recent months after extensive restoration. The inspiring natural beauty of the city (validated by its #17 ranking in our Green Space subcategory) is also being celebrated with tributes to Romantic painter and renowned Dresden resident Caspar David Friedrich, born 251 years ago, with several of the city's #51-ranked museums recently holding exhibitions. That ranking will rise with the new opening of the Archiv der Avantgarden — Egidio Marzona, where more than a million pieces of 20th-century art will be housed. Or you can enjoy the sights on two wheels in Europe's seventh-best biking city. Economic development is also big news this year, with billions flowing into the city from Infineon Technologies and the European Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (ESMC) Joint Venture, creating thousands of jobs.



47 Leeds United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Green Space (Tied)
- 11 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 2,619,000

After a year of celebration, Leeds is back to building—and booming.

Following its ambitious Leeds 2023 Year of Culture, the city has doubled down on long-term investments to match its creative clout. The airport is undergoing a £100-million terminal expansion, with the first phase opening this summer to accommodate rising visitor demand (and improve on its tepid #79 Airport ranking). That's just one of many hospitality developments shaping the skyline. Hyatt is debuting two hotels—Hyatt Place and Hyatt House—at Sovereign Square near the rail station, offering 305 rooms, rooftop dining and extended-stay amenities. Premier Inn's parent Whitbread is expanding its city footprint with two new hotels, including a 143-room property as part of the Kirkgate redevelopment. These moves ride the momentum built during the city's culture-filled 2023, including concerts, festivals and storytelling, and cement its legacy as a nightlife capital (#24). Leeds's six universities help sustain its reputation for student-fuelled creativity and economic vitality. Roundhay Park remains a massive outdoor draw, and Leeds ranks in our Top 10 for Green Space (and #11 for Air Quality). The city's skilled workforce and academic engine helped secure its designation as England's third Investment Zone, expected to generate 2,500 new jobs and unlock £220 million by decade's end.



48 Freiburg Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 Biking
- 10 Unemployment Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 602,000

A dynamic university town in Germany's Black Forest dances to its own beat alfresco.

Freiburg's proximity to France certainly gives the outdoor gateway its distinct joie de vivre. Or perhaps it's the region's 2,000 hours of annual sunshine, making it Germany's warmest city and the home of some of the country's best viticulture. Its #17 ranking for Air Quality and #27 for Green Space make it easy to live life alfresco. Given its youthful exuberance and climate, residents access the storybook urban grid and nearby hiking by Europe's ninth-best biking infrastructure. Schlossberg serves up city views (and the 116-metre spire of the city's Gothic cathedral and central square Münsterplatz) for those who hike up the hill. A funicular also accommodates the less intrepid. The University of Freiburg, founded in 1457, is omnipresent in the city's rich cultural scene, from local talks and conferences to a small but mighty nightlife and music scene. Freiburg works hard, too, ranking #29 for Labour Force Participation and Top 10 lowest unemployment on the continent. The city may be small, but its rail connections are growing, most recently with a weekly direct route to fellow wine region Bordeaux to build on the French interest in nearby Europa-Park, the Freiburg region's ever-expanding theme park that's now coaxing visitors with a roller-coaster named "Voltron."



49 Stuttgart Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 GDP Per Capita
- 12 Unemployment Rate

POPULATION

Metro 2,558,000

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

Stuttgart is a hardworking economic engine that performs across multiple metrics with aplomb. Its residents are as international as they are ambitious, ranking #12 for GDP Per Capita while boasting the 10th-lowest unemployment rate in Europe. The city's high score in our overall Prosperity category (#28) is shared among the growing talent base. The economic rev was sideswiped by the pandemic, when Stuttgart's optimised meetings and conventions business fell silent. The #23-ranked convention centre has since reopened and doubled down on sustainability, with more than half its area committed to green space and the solar panels on its roof generating surplus electricity locally. Also buzzing are the streets around the convention centre, as the business travel that fuelled Stuttgart's party mile for decades—a hub of bars, cafés, clubs and intimate drinking dens—has roared back. Given the pent-up demand, this was one place in Germany where the post-pandemic return to business was swiftest. It's not surprising: Stuttgart ranks an impressive #31 in our Large Companies subcategory, and is an economic hub boasting the European headquarters of Bosch, Porsche and IBM. Additionally, Stuttgart 21, the €9-billion transport and urban development project, is transforming the central station into a modern transit hub and unlocking new housing and commercial districts.



50 Rotterdam Netherlands

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Labour Force Participation
- 13 Healthcare System

POPULATION

Metro 1,903,000

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

The urban post-war rebuild wasn't exactly equal in the Netherlands. Take Rotterdam: rebuilt from ruins to provide Europe with its largest port. Today, it still does. Fittingly, the city was also saddled with the continent's largest red-light district. Today, you can start there, in the once-dingy Katendrecht neighbourhood, to witness Rotterdam's current ascent. It's now the city's culinary heart, with its Deliplein Square, an outdoor dining room ringed by restaurants and a waterfront warehouse packed with stalls, breweries and workshops. Rotterdam is also Europe's design and architecture lab. Places like nearby Wilhelminakade, the steamship embarkation point for U.S.-bound Dutch émigrés, is today home to towers designed by Álvaro Siza, Norman Foster and local starchitect Rem Koolhaas. There's even an all-timber floating office building moored nearby, along with Hofbogenpark, Rotterdam's own High Line. On the other side of town, in the M4H district, a new floating farm blends urban food security with community amenities. What rising sea levels? Sustainable architecture elsewhere includes the air-filtering Smog Free Tower and the Windwheel (you'll have to see it to believe it). With that kind of office space, no wonder the city's workers rank in the Top 10 for Labour Force Participation.



51 Lyon France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 18 Google Trends
- 20 Convention Centre

POPULATION

Metro 2,309,000

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

A Roman city founded more than two millennia ago, Lyon is to be savored nose to tail, past to future, literally and figuratively. If the city's middling Attractions (#41) and Museums (#59) rankings rise with the plentiful planned investment, that's just icing on the gâteau. Locals are buzzing about the new OL Vallée development with its massive gym and pool, five indoor football pitches, a 32-lane bowling alley, escape rooms and the City Surf Park. More new investment is pouring into La Confluence, a 150-hectare urban redevelopment that not only brings together Lyon's two fabled rivers—the Rhône and the Saône—but also gives new life to a tract of prime but neglected industrial real estate. The jewel in the new development's crown is the Musée des Confluences, an architectural enigma glittering at the very point where the rivers meet, with an outstretched park disappearing into the flows. Hotels are opening fast, too, including four Hilton brands. You'll also hear much more about Lyon's biking infrastructure (still only ranked #39 but poised to rise). With 1,200 kilometres of bike lanes (a third of which are protected from cars), the new Lyon Routes will add 250 kilometres of bike-only roads to connect the city's suburbs to its heart.



52 Seville Spain

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 Sights & Landmarks
- 18 Culture

POPULATION

Metro 1,568,000

Seville's millennia along the Guadalquivir River, an ancient highway between Cadiz and Cordoba, has threaded city building into its DNA.

Spain's fourth-largest city is as complex and multilayered as the most ornate fan wielded by local flamenco dancers. The Andalusian capital revels in its warm, sunny climate and Top 20 Nature & Parks, and is proudly walkable, narrow and winding, perfect for exploring by foot or bike. Moorish and Baroque architecture radiates in panoramas out from its spectacular cathedral and the Giralda bell tower. Not content with masterpieces of the past, city builders are always looking to visually delight locals and visitors, resulting in a #13 ranking for Sights & Landmarks. Take the 11-year-old Metropal Parasol that rises over the medieval Plaza de la Encarnación. Six massive sculpted sunshades ascend 28 metres up and shade those below from the relentless Andalusian sun. Speaking of heat, the new proMETEO project made Seville the world's first city to name heatwaves in the same way we do hurricanes in a bid to raise public awareness of their impact on health and to encourage people to protect themselves. Its Top 25 spot in our overall Lovability Index means new hotels are opening fast, including the anticipated Thompson Seville in 2026. Expect more if Seville's bid to host the 2030 FIFA World Cup is successful. Seville is pouring millions into cultural restoration projects—and La Cartuja Stadium just in case.



53 Hanover Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Convention Centre
- 14 Unemployment Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 1,310,000

While many cities claim to work hard, play hard, Hanover walks (and bikes) the talk.

The industrious city on the banks of the Leine River is home to a diverse ecosystem of companies (and given the local business community's obsession with collaboration and coordination, it feels particularly symbiotic). Companies here range from Sennheiser to Volkswagen (which just started building the hot new ID.Buzz electrified van in town) to financial services provider Swiss Life. The economic firepower has Hanover finishing an impressive #14 in our Unemployment Rate subcategory. All that business in town is pulling in 500 conferences per year (pandemic aside), with most taking place in the Hanover Messe fairground convention centre, which tops our Convention Centre subcategory this year and helps Hanover rank #35 in our overall Prosperity Index. The city's 50,000 students have plenty of options after graduation, and many stay in this stealthy, magnetic hometown. But Hanover has also long invested in its livability, claiming that 50% of the city is dedicated to green spaces (for which it ranks Top 20 in Europe). Its impressive #26 ranking in our Biking subcategory validates the city's commitment to living sustainably, along with its decade of "no car days" efforts. The arts also matter here, as a recent UNESCO City of Music honour—and seemingly daily theatre, opera and arts programming—would indicate.



54 The Hague Netherlands

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Airport
- 9 University

POPULATION

Metro 1,133,000

The political capital of the Netherlands delivers on livability for citizens while keeping humanity accountable.

The third-largest city in the Netherlands feels a world apart from the country's capital, considering its global purpose. Home of the Dutch royal family, the Peace Palace and the International Criminal Court, where the UN International Court of Justice rules on international law, The Hague keeps an impeccable order. Its university ranks #9 and healthcare system an impressive #11. Top 10 Labour Force Participation is powered by the fact that almost 30% of local jobs are provided by the Dutch government or international institutions. It's also a private-sector dynamo, ranking #39 for Business Ecosystem with national icons like PostNL, Aegon and NIBC Bank based here, and regional offices ranging from Saudi Aramco to T-Mobile. It's packed with 13th-century architecture, like the Binnenhof complex, where you'll find the Dutch government offices right in the heart of the city. Its large fountain and pond add to the overall storybook vibe. Art museums are everywhere, as are attractions for all ages (ranked #60 only from a lack of awareness), ranging from the Madurodam Miniature Town to the Children's Book Museum in The Hague Library and the LEGOLAND Discovery Centre. Not surprisingly, the population has grown almost 30% over the past 35 years.



55 Ghent Belgium

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Poverty Rate (Tied)
- 22 Healthcare System

POPULATION

Metro 680,000

Belgium's second city can't wait to tell the world its centuries-old stories.

Ghent may be the second-largest city in Belgium today, but in the Middle Ages of northern Europe, it played second fiddle only to Paris. The temples to Ghent's past prosperity are everywhere in the old city (and are protected as UNESCO sites). The Museum of Fine Arts is Belgium's oldest museum (and turns 228 this year). Do not miss the newly restored Ghent Altarpiece, aka the Mystic Lamb painting, in St Bavo's Cathedral. An augmented-reality experience will explain everything. In addition to its priceless history, Ghent is fearlessly living in the moment with citizens from 160 nationalities calling the city home (and enjoying Europe's sixth-lowest poverty rate), along with approximately 85,000 university students arriving each autumn to study at the city's two universities and four university colleges, with Ghent University contributing to a #42 ranking in our Educational Attainment subcategory. Local accountability to the future has established programmes like energy-efficient city lighting, canal cleanup tours, low-emission zones, no-meat days and more equitable home-sharing platforms. The city is also building a new village to house Ukrainian refugees comfortably in a city that ranks #22 for Housing Affordability and, with new housing projects on its Old Dockyards brownfield site, is committed to more housing access.



56 Oxford United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Green Space
- 2 University

POPULATION

Metro 545,000

Less than an hour from London by rail, Europe's storied university town is the best of many worlds.

With a legacy spanning nine centuries as a place of learning, Oxford's eponymous university—imprinted on the city itself to the point of being indiscernible from it—offers 350 graduate courses, affiliated societies and hundreds of education-focused organisations and businesses. Students of all kinds continue to pour into the compact city (one of the smallest in our ranking), and first-timers become instantly smitten by the jagged cobblestones, the 500-year-old pubs and the Gothic and neoclassical buildings and spires above, all standing sentry to the enlightenment here. The city's 40,000 students help Oxford rank #2 in our University subcategory while enjoying the best Green Space ranking in Europe for after-class strolls, just like JRR Tolkien, Dorothy Sayers and Philip Pullman before them. In addition to the usual magnetism of this curated, stewarded urban treasure on the banks of the Thames (called "Isis" locally), new post-pandemic investments are buzzing, from the Randolph Hotel's reno by new owners Graduate Hotels to East Oxford's new restaurant wave. There's also buzz around Oxford United Football Club's proposal to build a new 16,000-capacity, all-electric stadium at the Triangle site near Kidlington, featuring a convention centre, and a 180-room Radisson-branded hotel, with most guestrooms overlooking the pitch.



57 Sheffield United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 Healthcare System
- 12 Housing Affordability (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 1,189,000

From a steel city to the Outdoor City, few European urban centres have experienced a rebirth like this.

Looking at Sheffield today, it's difficult to understand why George Orwell called it the "ugliest town in the world." Mind you, that was in 1936, back when "in whichever direction you look you see the same landscape of monstrous chimneys pouring forth smoke." More than 80 years later (in 2021), the U.K.'s fifth-largest city was named the greenest in the country by a University of Southampton study. An incredible 61% of the city is designated as green space and more than a third is within the boundary of the Peak District National Park. The city's Top 20 ranking in our Green Space subcategory abides. Amidst all those trees (the most per capita in Europe, according to proud local boosters), 80 stands are classed as ancient woodlands. Local government has also been expanding walking and biking routes in an effort to limit car use, an investment in the more than 60,000 students who call the city home (half of whom attend the #22-ranked University of Sheffield—and its #33-ranked nightlife locales). Small wonder, then, that the city has been recognised as one of the best places to live in the UK in 2025 by The Times, led by its #12-ranked housing affordability.



58 Eindhoven Netherlands

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Labour Force Participation
- 16 Unemployment Rate

POPULATION

Metro 778,000

A small but mighty dynamo shows Europe how it's done while welcoming the world.

Eindhoven may be the Netherlands' fifth-largest city, but it has emerged as a beacon of technological innovation and economic vitality. Central to this transformation is the Brainport Eindhoven region, renowned for its high-tech ecosystem and collaborative spirit among companies, knowledge institutions, and government bodies. The synergy has propelled the area to be one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, with a projected economic growth of 3.5% in 2025, outperforming the national average. The city's #8 Labour Force Participation ranking and #16 Unemployment Rate should come as no surprise.

The Dutch government, alongside regional partners, is working to keep the talent in town, committing €2.5 billion to enhance public facilities, housing, and transportation in the Brainport area in 2024. The initiative aims to accommodate the anticipated creation of over 70,000 jobs and 60,000 homes by 2030, ensuring the region remains attractive for businesses and residents alike. The city's prowess in semiconductor technology further proves its economic significance: in November 2024, the European Union announced a €133 million investment in Dutch photonic chip production facilities—with Eindhoven playing a pivotal role.



59 Bratislava Slovakia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Unemployment Rate (Tied)
- 5 Biking (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 724,000

Slovakia's overlooked capital city is reclaiming its rich history from Soviet-era monotony.

Located close to the geographic centre of Europe, the Slovakian capital competes with Vienna, Prague, Kraków and Budapest for both tourism and investment. In fact, no two national capitals are geographically closer than Vienna and Bratislava, so much so that the two are sometimes considered one large metro. An increasing number of foreigners venturing off the beaten path discover a compact, cobblestone-lined Hapsburg heart, crowned by St Martin's Cathedral and the revitalised but no less historic Kapitulska Street. It's worth taking in the urban evolution by bike along the city's bike paths (ranking an impressive Top 5 in Europe), away from the beautiful chaos of fairy-tale spires and Soviet-era monstrosities—like the 95-metre-high UFO Tower, a perch over the Danube River since 1972. (But do grab a drink in its penthouse bar.) Outside Bratislava's centre, the intrepid can view the future of its skyline: the first towers of the Zaha Hadid Architects-designed Sky Park development that, upon buildout, will feature new residences, an office block and even a heating plant. It's a welcome addition to an industrious citizenry that ranks #7 for GDP Per Capita, in a local economy that ties for the fifth-lowest poverty rate and forth-lowest unemployment in Europe.



60 Bilbao Spain

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Healthcare System
- 12 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 1,045,00

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

Yes, Bilbao, in the heart of Spain's Basque Country, is still basking in the three-decade afterglow of the 1997 opening of the Guggenheim Bilbao, Frank Gehry's titanium-clad museum that made both the city and its architect global icons. It has also leveraged its vision into building one of Europe's most ambitious secondary cities. Today, Bilbao revels under the cover of its own political autonomy, optimising a hybrid tax system that funds Europe's Top 3 healthcare system which includes accessibility-first investments like free public elevators that link the city's #13-ranked green spaces. Sure, the Guggenheim's destination architecture still draws hundreds of thousands annually, but as one of Europe's most welcoming cities (ranked #33 in our overall Livability index), Bilbao is building a resilient hometown that's not afraid to take risks. Consider the daring architectural innovations of Santiago Calatrava's Zubizuri Bridge and Bilbao Airport, and Zaha Hadid's redevelopment of Zorrotzaurre, a 2.4-kilometre artificial peninsula in the heart of Bilbao that is being transformed into a smart city district. Then there's the mind-boggling transit and mobility infrastructure buildout. No wonder this is also a stealthy, affordable business headquarters that includes multinational utility company Iberdrola and financial giant BBVA—drawn here by the continent's 126th most-educated citizenry.



61 Southampton United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Green Space
- 20 Unemployment Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 688,000

An overlooked port city on England's south coast (yes, the Titanic departed from here) bubbles with potential.

Less than a 90-minute train ride from London, Southampton is leveraging its rich heritage as a maritime gateway to optimise plentiful opportunities. Residents are well versed in the city's attributes as a hometown that takes care of its own. With more than 50 city parks and urban forests (powering the city's #8 spot in our Green Space subcategory) and within 30 minutes of the New Forest National Park (and wildlife park!), the outdoors are never far. And neither are spectacular beaches further afield, with the bucolic Isle of Wight a short ferry ride away. Long called the U.K.'s "gateway to the world" (even before the departure of the Titanic), the city is drawing investment with its port potential, with proposals ranging from the Maritime Gateway (to funnel visitors from Southampton Central Station to the waterfront) to the billions of pounds proposed to better link the island to increase tourism (which already thrives here, given the city's cruise ship traffic). In light of this ambition, it's easy to see how Southampton ranks #47 in our overall Prosperity index, including a Top 20 lowest unemployment rate. Its two universities and economic resilience mean Southampton boasts Europe's 13th-most educated residents, who are increasingly staying put after graduation.



62 Düsseldorf Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Convention Centre
- 10 GDP Per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 1,482,000

A vibrant economy humming with defence contracts and immigration balance efficiency and revelry.

Düsseldorf has the special blend that makes an efficient, prosperous city do right by residents and (business) travellers alike. The city is home to dozens of corporate headquarters, none more globally renowned these days than Rheinmetall, Germany's largest defence contractor, flush with European rearmament contracts that will only increase the city's Top 10 GDP Per Capita ranking. No wonder the city boasts a Top 5 convention centre to house all that global commerce flowing into town. The understated multiculturalism (including Germany's largest Japanese community) helps the city nurture a small but mighty arts scene with more than 100 galleries. Joseph Beuys, the sculptor and performance artist, remains a local icon almost 40 years after his death. The Kunstsammlung North Rhine-Westphalia museum is home to important classical and contemporary European art collections, performances and screenings. The architecture at MedienHafen—a waterfront development juxtaposing old with new—boasts buildings and hotels by Frank Gehry, David Chipperfield, Jo Coenen, Steven Holl and Claude Vasconi alongside restored historic warehouses that maintain the industrial port character of the Rhine. And in 2028, the Japanese starchitect-designed Tadao Ando Campus & Towe in the city's north will house a hotel, museum, offices, food hall and (this being Germany) a local brewery.



63 Aachen Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Healthcare System
- 11 Biking (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 601,000

A historically key European centre keeps doing right by citizens local and global.

Germany's westernmost city is closer to Brussels and Amsterdam than to Berlin, and it occupies a key role in European history, first as a Roman thermal bath complex, then as the medieval imperial residence of Emperor Charlemagne, long credited as a unifier of Europe. (The city's International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen is the oldest and best-known prize awarded for work done in the service of European unification, most recently given to Pinchas Goldschmidt, President of the European Rabbinical Conference and Jewish communities in Europe.) The city also crowned dozens of Holy Roman Emperors as kings of the Germans until the 1500s. The walkable historic centre is a joy to explore (the city ranks #11 in our Biking subcategory), especially its spectacular Aachener Dom, constructed more than 1,200 years ago and one of the first 12 buildings to appear on the UNESCO list of World Heritage sites. Today, it's the site of epic Christmas markets. Schools like the Aachen University of Applied Sciences, the largest and most prestigious technical university in Germany, help the city rank Top 20 in our University subcategory, while the city's impressive healthcare system ranks Top 10 in Europe. The Altstadtquartier Büchel project, meanwhile, is rejuvenating the city's stunning historic centre.



64 Luxembourg Luxembourg

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 GDP Per Capita
- 11 Biking (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 639,000

Folded into cliffs and rivers, with a moneyed, international citizenry, this may be Europe's best-kept urban secret.

Luxembourg may be tiny in relation to larger neighbours Belgium, France and Germany, yet its capital city over-performs in the talent that calls it home. A city that boasts the highest share of foreign-born residents of any European city maintains its coveted hometown status by boasting Europe's highest GDP per capita. More than 170 nationalities live here, making Luxembourg a true economic, social and cultural melting pot—fitting, given the destruction it endured during the Second World War. Where does the city's wealth originate? The efficient bank sector (finance comprises 25% of local GDP) for one, as well as being the Secretariat of the European Parliament and headquarters of the European Court of Justice. The Bank of London is establishing its EU headquarters (and 300 new jobs) here, with The China Taiping Insurance Group doing the same.

The capital of the only Grand Duchy in the world—you might run into the duke in your wanderings—remains one of the continent's best-kept secrets (given its #117 Lovability ranking among the Top 100 in Europe) despite being an urban UNESCO World Heritage site, the only city to have been crowned a European Capital of Culture twice, yet one that's rarely overrun by visitors. Fortunately, the city has vowed to invest €500 million in affordable rental housing.



65 Leipzig Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Housing Affordability
- 18 Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 979,000

Arts and commerce forge a stealthy German urban gem.

Calling Leipzig a “secondary” German city is an understatement. There may be fewer than a million people living here, but this industrial centre, so heavily damaged by Allied bombing at the end of the Second World War, has emerged as an exciting urban renewal story in a country full of them. Yes, there are the typical German economic attributes: an enviable convention centre; booming regional offices for Porsche, BMW, Amazon and others; a cargo airport that’s one of DHL’s global hubs; and, impressively, the 8th-best housing affordability in Europe. But there are also growing global bona fides about the city’s arts and culture. The New York Times even called it “Germany’s new cultural hot spot” and “better than the capital” a few years back. A lot of the buzz is around Spinnerei, a 19th-century cotton mill adapted into a community hive, housing 13 galleries and hundreds of artists’ studios. The centre also features indie cinema, a restaurant and a beer garden. Expect the city’s #88 Culture ranking to ascend rapidly. The cultural lineage of Leipzig is well earned: Wagner was born here, while Mahler and Bach all lived and worked in the city. Also naturally endowed, Leipzig ranks #18 in Europe for both Green Space and Biking subcategory.



66 Belfast Ireland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Housing Affordability
- 15 Air Quality (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 787,000

Few European capitals are growing with the voraciousness of Northern Ireland’s storied capital.

Belfast is making up for lost time, intent on leveraging the architectural bounty sprinkled throughout its Georgian streetscapes to draw investment and new talent searching for an affordable, connected and supportive hometown willing to do the work. And Belfast has always gotten it done, all the way back to when it was the shipbuilding capital of the world, at the turn of the last century, drawing makers and craftspeople who crowned the city “Linenopolis” as it crafted linen for Europe. The Titanic was built here, and today the Titanic Quarter is one of Europe’s largest urban waterfront regeneration projects, with 20,000 people already living, working and visiting daily. Many more are visiting now that the Titanic Belfast museum has expanded. Nowhere else on the planet will sate your obsession (whether historical or Hollywood) like here. Dockside converted warehouses hum with Deloitte and PwC, along with homegrown firms like FinTrU and Options Technology, each eager to tap into Belfast’s extensive 20-something talent in a global skills crisis, while local leaders build affordable housing to keep them here, creating Europe’s Top 10 city for Housing Affordability. As does the music and stealth cultural bounty, which was on full display all last year as the city celebrated its Year of Culture in 2024.



67 Bristol United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 University
- 10 Unemployment Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 956,000

Welcome to the Bristol decade. Please try to keep up.

Much like Manchester, Bristol is going all in on creative industry and capital over the next few years, nowhere more so than with the planned 2026 opening of YTL Arena at Brabazon Hangars on the city’s former Filton Airfield. The 10.5-hectare facility’s middle hanger is so massive that it could swallow London’s O2 arena. A convention centre is planned for the east hanger, while the west will serve as a food hall, work spaces and leisure facilities. Carbon neutrality, of course, is a given in the U.K.’s first official Cycling City and the 2015 European Green Capital. Bristol’s middling #42 Culture ranking will also improve as the town that gave the world artists like Massive Attack, Portishead and Banksy reopens the Bristol Beacon music venue, following a five-year, £48-million transformation. The city is also leveraging its residents’ Top 10 University ranking and Top 25 Education Attainment bona fides to further own nuclear and renewables in the U.K., with the opening of the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station an hour south of the city. The 2023 opening of the Vertical Energy Centre brought cutting-edge electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft to town. Speaking of aircraft, Bristol’s #52-ranked airport is also expanding.



68 Vilnius Lithuania

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Educational Attainment
- 5 Labour Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 748,000

Distilled urbanism on the Baltic edge.

Lithuania's tiny capital (it has fewer than 750,000 people) is focusing on its small but mighty attributes. There's history, and the city threw a rager for its 700th anniversary in 2023, with an all-year party featuring summer music festivals, citizen-led placemaking projects, and an art biennial that drew a global cognoscenti. They discovered a UNESCO-protected walkable centre replete with Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance layers that are never too crowded. This year is all about the city's second-most educated residents (trailing only London) and Top 5 labour force participation revealing the launch of the €100-billion Tech Zity campus. Spanning 55,000 square metres and housing 5,000 digital workers, it will eclipse Paris's Station F, today Europe's largest startup campus. Housed in the New Town district in new and renovated warehouses, the area will feature housing, restaurants, bars and classrooms, further boosting the local tech industry that launched global unicorns like cybersecurity firm Nord and used clothing retailer Vinted. The hits will keep coming in 2025 as Vilnius becomes the European Commission's European Green Capital. Its airport also just doubled its capacity, and Michelin just awarded Pas Mus Restoranas a star and recommended a dozen other rooms in the city. Now, if residents could only stop looking over their shoulders at Russian aggression in the region.



69 Marseille France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Healthcare System
- 27 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 1,889,000

A port since 600 BCE, France's oldest city sparkles with 300 days of sunshine and plenty of global delights.

The designation as Europe's Capital of Culture a decade ago had Marseille modernise its seedy port city reputation (for the most part). A swath of new waterfront buildings demonstrates the commitment across city leadership in France's third-largest city. To that end, Marseille recently announced its most ambitious investment plan since the 1940s, committing almost €2 billion across reconstruction, acquisition and modernisation of schools, public services and the housing crisis. Until then, don't miss the fruits of earlier investment in Vieux Port, designed by Norman Foster, who turned a site that's been here for 26 centuries into a mesmerising pedestrian-only zone. The showstopper is at Quai des Belges, where a dramatic blade of reflective stainless steel creates a dreamy canopy and shade. Nearby is the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations with its fishnet-inspired design, linked by a pedestrian bridge to the 17th-century Fort Saint-Jean. Another new ode to the old is the just-opened Cosquer Méditerranée, housing a full-scale replica of the nearby Grotte Cosquer cave, decorated with prehistoric artwork before it flooded. Given how coveted this magical city is, local leaders are cracking down on overtourism by proposing the toughest short-term rental rules in France, with short-term licenses dropping from 82% to 4% this past year.



70 Bordeaux France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Healthcare System
- 18 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 1,394,000

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

Two hours southwest of Paris by high-speed rail, Bordeaux was always a tempting weekend escape for Parisians and tourists pining for fresher air, local cuisine and the largest concentration of wineries in a nation synonymous with viticulture. Wide, golden beaches (with surfing!) are an hour's drive away. But as the pandemic suffocated big-city density, younger urbanites sought out more room and cheaper housing. Many landed at this UNESCO World Heritage city with a tenth of the capital's population despite many similarities, from the stealthy gastronomy to the stunning 18th- and 19th-century architecture, kinetic nightlife and spectacular Seine-like promenade along the Garonne River. All those new arrivals spent the past few years exploring the historic streets, home to Europe's #26-ranked biking infrastructure and Top 5 health care, and staking their claims. The result is an economic and cultural renaissance, with hundreds of new businesses and new hotels like the recently opened FirstName Bordeaux, a fun conversion of a tired 1970s building, and the luxurious six-room Château Fleur d'Aya, in an 18th-century stunner. The city's impressive #18 ranking for Attractions got another boost three years ago with the opening of the Bassins des Lumières, a colossal digital art space housed in the city's former submarine base.



71 Bonn Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Green Space (Tied)
- 22 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 800,000

A former capital keeps its advantages.

Bonn may have a relatively small population today, but its importance to Europe and the world can't be understated (if only because Ludwig van Beethoven was born here in 1770 and his three-storey stucco house draws tens of thousands annually). The capital of West Germany from 1949 to 1990, it was among the world's most important decision centres. It was also the seat of government of the reunited Germany from 1990 to 1999. Two millennia prior, it was deemed a strategic imperial outpost by the expanding Roman army and was constructed as such, in effect becoming one of Germany's oldest cities. Today, the German federal government maintains a substantial presence here and a third of national ministerial jobs are still located in the city, as well as 20 United Nations institutions, the most in the country. Old capitals don't relinquish their advantage easily and, besides being a government town, Bonn remains the headquarters for publicly listed Deutsche Telekom and Deutsche Post, giving the city a #26 spot in GDP Per Capita. The local talent pipeline is served well by the University of Bonn and the Top 10 ranking in our Green Space subcategory, as well as a #22 for Biking.



72 Wrocław Poland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Poverty Rate (Tied)
- 20 Sights & Landmarks

POPULATION

Metro 963,000

A Polish power is hard to pronounce but easy to love.

Founded in the 10th century, Wrocław is the fourth-largest city in Poland and among its most beautiful. A turbulent history has forged a city stacked with diverse, colourful pan-European architecture and an open door to new residents, especially if they want to hang a shingle and get down to business. The city has always been an economic pocket power, boasting one of Europe's largest market squares and easy access to the Odra River and its tributaries (spanned by 100-plus bridges), earning it the nickname "The Venice of Poland." Its Top 20 Sights & Landmarks ranking is no surprise. It's also the third-largest academic centre in the country, with more than 130,000 students at 28 institutes, including the University of Wrocław with its medicine, economics, science, tech and music schools. Wrocław also boasts the 10th-lowest poverty rate in Europe and prioritises equity, especially as wealth grows from foreign investment, whether from the dozens of multinationals that have set up shop here—from IBM to the Volvo Group—or the digital nomads and solopreneurs increasingly calling "The Polish Silicon Valley" home. A strategic location also supports a warehouse and logistics boom, led by Panattoni Development's recent purchase of 35 hectares to build 160,000 square metres of space called the Wrocław Campus.



73 Málaga Spain

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 30 Google Trends
- 31 Nature & Parks

POPULATION

Metro 903,000

Urban inspiration in the sun and sea.

Málaga is the urban gateway to the sun-drenched Costa del Sol in Spain's southwest, within close proximity to 16 spectacular beaches that help the city rank #31 in our Nature & Parks subcategory. And we're not kidding about the sun-drenched part: with 3,000 hours of sunshine a year, Málaga is the sunniest city on the continent. But while the busy port city buzzes with hedonistic vacationers who pour into the oceanfront high-rise hotels, this is also one of Spain's most culturally significant cities—and not only because the modern skyline is dwarfed by two massive hilltop citadels (the Alcazaba and the ruins of the Moorish Gibralfaro) or because of the soaring Renaissance cathedral. Two years after the 50th anniversary of the death of native son Pablo Picasso, the city continues reclaiming the famous artist and sharing his local inspiration with the world throughout this year. Tours of the church where he was baptised to the ring where he watched the bullfights, exhibits and workshops are still running, none more comprehensive than by the Picasso Museum Málaga. The anniversary is a good reminder of the city's 40 museums (ranked #51), including the cube-shaped waterfront Centre Pompidou Málaga, opened in 2015, and the Contemporary Art Centre of Málaga in the city's kinetic Soho district.



74 Toulouse France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Healthcare System
- 19 Housing Affordability

POPULATION

Metro 1,491,000

An ancient city keeps climbing.

The heart of France's aeronautics and space industry is a rare hometown that's both a globally recognised innovator and a 2,000-year-old urban treasure trove committed to its citizens—current and future. Airbus, Airbus Defence & Space, Thales Alenia Space and dozens of other aeronautics firms alone employ almost 100,000. The sectors have long attracted complementary investment, and today Toulouse is among the European leaders in intelligent transport, from autonomous vehicles (both driving and flying) to feasible hyperloop implementation. It also ranks an impressive #6 for Healthcare System and #19 for Housing Affordability. France's longest urban cable car just opened here, spanning the tree-lined Garonne River. But the Pink City (named for the distinct rose hue of its buildings) is also an emerging cultural hotbed, with a torrent of recent and upcoming investments—like its conversion of the Saint-Michel prison into an auditorium for the Orchestre National Capitole Toulouse in its efforts to become France's City of Dance. Locals are buzzing about Les Halles de la Cartoucherie, a 145,000-square-foot former munitions factory that opened recently with a food hall, co-working space, and sports and cultural centre. With high-speed rail bringing Paris within three hours by 2030, expect a lot more buzz about one of France's ascendant second cities.



75 Aarhus Denmark

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 Healthcare System (Tied)
- 17 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 846,000

Denmark's second city does it by design.

It has centuries-old storybook streets and a buzzing student population (mostly from Aarhus University, the largest in Scandinavia and #34 in our University subcategory), but Aarhus hits different among second cities. Maybe it's the afterglow of a blistering decade, its 2017 European Capital of Culture honours, and a commitment to considered urbanism already underway. Or perhaps it goes back further, to 1941, when Aarhus City Hall unveiled its iconic modernist clock tower as a beacon to democracy while under Nazi occupation. The 2004 expansion of the ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, today one of the largest in northern Europe, was followed by similarly daring architecture in the city's underused industrial Isbjerget quarter. A decade after its first residential project—modelled on a cluster of floating icebergs—caught the design world's attention, it still draws design lovers. This year, you'll see design-obsessed locals and visitors posting about the newly restored, 112-year-old Ole Rømer Observatory. Aarhus is also a walkable feast (especially in the old city), featuring four Michelin-starred restaurants that also boast the guide's green stars for sustainability. (Try the local lobster at Substans.) Sated locals rank #35 for Labour Force Participation, buoyed by the #16-ranked healthcare system in Europe, along with its 17th-best air quality.



76 Gdańsk Poland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Unemployment Rate
- 7 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 1,224,000

A defiant Polish city savours sacrifice through art and commerce.

Resilience, thy name is Gdańsk. The Baltic history is visible in its architecture, more reminiscent of Amsterdam or Stockholm than Kraków. But it's also in the DNA of residents, bent but not broken by over a century of seismic change. The earliest shots of the Second World War were fired here by the Nazi battleship Schleswig-Holstein. And, 40 years later, Gdańsk became the birthplace of the Solidarność (Solidarity) movement that expedited the fall of the Iron Curtain. Today, the city revels in doing right by those who fought for its freedom by drawing industries like finance, engineering and manufacturing, and boasts the seventh-most educated residents in Europe with the third-lowest unemployment. Gdańsk is also a nascent creative dynamo, with the historic Młode Miasto (Young City) shipyards currently being developed into a 16-hectare mixed-use cultural and business district. Its Communist-era apartment blocks are livened up by 60 murals, including images of Chopin and Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa. The city's #29 Biking ranking gets a boost this year with the Velo-city world cycling summit in town. The city is also grateful for its buoyancy, reflected in the EU's 2024 Quality of Life in European Cities report, where Gdańsk finished #4.



77 Nuremberg Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Unemployment Rate (Tied)
- 15 Convention Centre

POPULATION

Metro 1,198,000

Historic and entrepreneurial, Nuremberg is a Bavarian tiger on the rise.

Few cities embody their nation's historical gravitas and industrial mettle like Nuremberg. The northern Bavarian city is layered with time: its Altstadt (Old Town) brims with half-timbered houses and the imposing Kaiserburg Castle, while the 14th-century Frauenkirche cathedral anchors a walkable urban core. But this is no museum piece. The city pulses with rich beers, vibrant nightlife, and the famed gingerbread that wafts from its bakeries in winter. Nuremberg's darkest history—its ties to the Nazi regime and the resulting postwar reckoning of the Nuremberg Trials—is confronted head-on in new cultural projects like the redevelopment of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds into a hybrid memorial, learning space, and civic park this year. Economically, Nuremberg is thriving. Anchored by regional heavyweights like Adidas, Puma, Diehl, Faber-Castell and Playmobil, the city has the fourth-lowest unemployment rate in Europe and the #15 convention centre. A new innovation corridor focused on AI and healthtech, spearheaded by partnerships between the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and the city, will support more than 15,000 new jobs by 2030. With investments in green mobility—including tram system expansions and a low-emission zone rollout by 2027—Nuremberg is reshaping its industrial past into a climate-smart, innovation-rich future.



78 Bologna Italy

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Poverty Rate
- 9 Convention Centre

POPULATION

Metro 785,000

Youthful exuberance and incredible cuisine fuel Italy's academic and cultural dynamo.

Timeless Bologna, home of the oldest continuously operating university in the world (ranked #29), is a well-balanced meal of a city, founded more than 2,000 years ago (with its streets today comprising a massive, textured open-air urban museum), yet kinetic, happy and optimistic, powered by thousands of international students. It also serves up some of the best actual meals in Europe as the nationally recognised culinary capital of this culinary country. Bolognese kitchens of centuries past invented parmesan, mortadella, parma ham, ragù, lasagne and balsamic vinegar. No wonder Italians love referring to it as La Grassa (the fat one). More visitors and residents are casting their eye on the city, especially after it topped the national *Il Sole 24 Ore* newspaper's 2023 annual quality of life survey. Bologna is also a cultural feast, with an epic 2025 lineup that includes the opening of the inaugural Italian Basketball Museum at the 5,000-seat PalaDozza (sure to improve the #40 Museums ranking). Last year, the city also celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Guglielmo Marconi, the father of wireless and one of Bologna's most illustrious citizens. Today, the city is stealthily prosperous, with the second-lowest poverty rate in Europe and a Top 10 convention centre.



79 Naples Italy

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Restaurants
- 8 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 3,297,000

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

Even by European second-city status, Naples has been overlooked and underestimated—both by international visitors and by Italy's power centres. Three millennia of urbanism make it one of Europe's oldest—with the accompanying layers of beauty, conflict and lore (grazie, Elena Ferrante). Naples ranks #32 for its under-appreciated Nature & Parks, buoyed by the city's historic waterfront, nearby beaches and parks ranging from master-planned parcels to secret public gardens. Napoli also ranks #16 for Sights & Landmarks—its 14th-century Naples Cathedral rivals any other in the architectural feast that is Italy, and new archaeological discoveries near Pompeii will only add to global bucket lists. As in Rome and Istanbul, strolling here reveals forgotten history on every block. Despite the city's lawless reputation, tourism has doubled over the past decade and crime has dropped dramatically. New international investments (like the luxury hotel property inside a historic bank building on the kinetic Piazza del Municipio) are finally reaching one of the continent's most beguiling cities. A new high-speed rail link from Rome's Fiumicino airport takes just two hours and increasingly delivers curious first-timers eager to hit la città's Top 10 nightlife and then recharge the next morning by strolling its #9-ranked museums.



80 Bucharest Romania

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Poverty Rate
- 14 Unemployment Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 2,479,000

You're going to be hearing big things about 'Little Paris'.

More than three decades after it left the Iron Curtain, Romania's capital is finally getting the attention it's sought since the '90s. Culturally endowed, historically vital and gastronomically mind-blowing: no wonder the city was just named tops in Europe for digital nomads based on a study by Panache Cruises, driven by its tech infrastructure and affordability. (Apparently, one can live like a count for less than €1,400 per month, all in. Meanwhile, the city ranks #37 in our Housing Affordability subcategory.) The #19 Attractions ranking demonstrates that the Old World beckons here, despite Soviet-backed dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu's zealous bulldozing of centuries-old architecture. Must-sees include the Arcul de Triumf, and, of course, the ornate beer halls that rival those of Vienna. Foreign investment is picking up, inspired by locally born software and robotics company UiPath, which went public with a \$1.3-billion software IPO on the NYSE in 2021, one of the largest in U.S. history. Local culinary talent is also returning, following chefs like Alex Petricean (formerly of Copenhagen's Noma) and London's Radu Ionescu. It's also a low-key luxury frontier, led by the Mondrian Bucharest opening in 2026. Bucharest still tops Europe for lowest poverty rate, helped by its #14 ranking for Unemployment Rate.



81 Newcastle United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 Healthcare System (Tied)
- 17 Air Quality (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 1,175,000

Those sounds you hear coming from northeast England are the gasps from people who haven't visited in a while.

One of England's fastest-growing tech regions was setting the stage, long before the pandemic, as a destination for nascent companies ranging from data sciences and subsea technology to advanced manufacturing, as well as convincing iconic brands like Siemens Energy, Nissan, Formica and others to base their UK operations here. With a location just 2.5 hours from London by train and an airport that connects to 85 destinations, the Newcastle-as-HQ pitch is working, with more than 50,000 registered businesses, according to local numbers, and the city's buildings either being reused or replaced entirely. The landmark development to watch is the Newcastle Helix, a 10-hectare central city quarter situated where the former Scottish and Newcastle Brewery once stood. Developed in partnership with the University of Newcastle, the site will be a "testbed for innovative technologies and solutions tackling some of the most pressing challenges facing cities around the world." Appropriately, it will feature plenty of affordable housing to rent or purchase. The city's special blend of history-meets-youthful-energy is captured by Newcastle's #34 and #35 rankings for our Sights & Landmarks and Nightlife subcategories, respectively. The 12th-best air quality in Europe helps with the cardio on the historic trails... and dance floors.



82 Cardiff United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 29 Housing Affordability
- 31 Unemployment Rate

POPULATION

Metro 915,000

Is this the UK's new second city?

The Welsh capital has spent the past decade positioning itself as an irresistible European hometown. The pitch: more castles than any other city globally; abundant parks (Green Spaces rank #32); Blue Flag beaches to the south; and mountains (with more castles!) to the north. And perhaps the checkmate: the closest European capital to London by train, reachable in under two hours. But it's what Cardiff has achieved within city limits recently that is truly astonishing. The Cardiff Bay regeneration project has reinvigorated downtown. Once one of the world's busiest docks during the coal mining boom, the area now boasts the massive Wales Millennium Centre, the Welsh Parliament building, and enhanced access to cultural treasures like the Neo-Gothic Pierhead visitors and events centre, as well as the Norwegian Church where Roald Dahl was christened. The Cardiff Bay Wetland Reserve is also part of the site's rebirth. Next up is the transformative Atlantic Wharf redevelopment with 1,000 new homes (enhancing the #29-ranked Housing Affordability), hotels, offices, a public square, and a 15,000-capacity indoor arena. Construction should start soon, with arena doors opening in late 2027. Complementing this, Cardiff Central train station is set for a £140 million revamp, enhancing connectivity and further solidifying Cardiff's status as a premier European capital.



83 Poznań Poland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Unemployment Rate (Tied)
- 30 Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 1,051,000

Poland's business heart wants Europe's affection.

Poznań's fifth-largest city (and storied birthplace of the nation) continues to solidify its reputation as a business and scientific hub, attracting multinational corporations such as Roche, Amazon, and Unilever. The city's vibrant academic environment, bolstered by numerous universities, provides a steady stream of skilled graduates, making it a magnet for international companies. Enhancing its global connectivity, Poznań offers direct flights to Dubai three times a week through flydubai, facilitating business and leisure travel between the two cities. Poznań also serves as a centre for international events, conferences, fairs, and exhibitions, with the Poznań Congress Center playing a pivotal role. This multifunctional venue offers over 4,000 conference seats across 38 fully-equipped rooms, accommodating a wide range of events. It is set to transform into a vibrant cultural centre with the addition of two new concert halls. A testament to its rich history, the city's Old Market Square, originally established in 1241, underwent significant renovations and was reopened to the public in late 2023. The revitalised square now features improved infrastructure and public spaces, reinforcing its status as Poland's third-largest town square and a central hub for cultural and social activities. With its #30-ranked Nature & Parks, the city takes urbanism as seriously as its economic development.



84 Strasbourg France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 18 Healthcare System
- 19 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 865,000

A medieval jewel near the French-German border is one of Europe's best-preserved centres of history.

Tucked on the French side of the Rhine River, Strasbourg was only "strategically" bombed during the Second World War. As such, its medieval and Renaissance history was mostly spared and its Grande Île historic heart became the first urban centre in France to be recognised in its entirety by UNESCO. The city's gothic Notre Dame de Strasbourg cathedral was built just 94 years after the Paris icon and is a portal into the history of this under-appreciated city, especially in light of the Rhine panorama from its 142-metre spire. Strasbourg has also worked diligently for its "French Cycling Capital" bona fides (ranking #19 in our Biking subcategory), with more than 600 kilometres of bike paths and almost 20% of citizens biking to work across the 21 bridges and footbridges that connect Grande Île to the rest of the city. As the formal seat of the European Parliament, Strasbourg has long put citizens first, indicated by its relative affordability (#32 for Housing Affordability) and an impressive #18 for Healthcare Services, as well as ingenious public services like the new Solidarity Concierge, a one-stop post office, laundry, tool and small household appliance rental, and shoe repair venue. No wonder that the city excels in our overall Livability index, at #59 overall.



85 Lausanne Switzerland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 University
- 22 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 589,000

A stunning sense of place and strategic prosperity serve up the good life on the banks of Lake Geneva.

Nestled between Lake Geneva and vineyards that climb up to snow-capped Alps, Switzerland's fourth-largest city often resembles a CGI setting in a Lord of the Rings film. The local vibe is distinctly working to live, with efficient commerce carried out in the largely car-free medieval city centre powered by the focused, vital companies that call Lausanne home, as diverse as the International Olympic Committee (since 1914), Logitech and Nespresso. The result is a #26 ranking for Business Ecosystem (with a #30 GDP Per Capita ranking). The pipeline of global talent that pours into the city also gives Lausanne a high-end campus feel, courtesy of places like the International Institute for Management Development, a leading business school, as well as the multitude of graduate studies offered by the University of Lausanne (which ranks Top 5 in Europe). The city's nascent culture scene is also on the rise with the recent opening of Plateforme 10, an arts district launched in 2020 that's been buzzing with new galleries like Photo Elysée, shops and museums, including the new home of the city's international art museum and the recently opened Museum of Contemporary Design and Applied Arts (mudac). New hotel openings like the Zleep Hotel Lausanne-Chavannes only add to the natural urbanism.



86 Liège Belgium

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Housing Affordability
- 14 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 803,000

Belgium's comeback city is building a greener, smarter future on the banks of the Meuse.

Long defined by its industrial past, Liège is rapidly reinventing itself as a city of sustainable innovation and cultural renewal (along with some of Europe's freshest air, at #14). The biggest news of 2025 is the long-awaited opening of the Liège tramway, an 11.7-kilometre line with 23 stations linking the Sclessin district to the Coronmeuse eco-district. Years in the making, and at an estimated final cost of over €1 billion, the line will ease congestion and boost access to key districts including Guillemins Station and the historic city centre, reinforcing Liège's ambition to become Belgium's most livable mid-sized city. Europe's fourth-best housing affordability will help, too. Nowhere is this ambition more visible than in Rives Ardentes, the massive brownfield redevelopment along the Meuse. This energy-neutral, car-free eco-neighbourhood is adding 1,300 new homes, shops and public green spaces by 2026, turning a former industrial site into one of Europe's most closely watched urban sustainability projects. Liège is also investing in energy security with a new 875 MW gas-fired power plant set to open in late 2025 in nearby Awirs, replacing a shuttered coal plant and helping Belgium's energy transition. Culturally, Liège continues to shine, from its UNESCO-recognised commitment to lifelong learning to its bold street art and festival scene.



87 Leicester United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Housing Affordability (Tied)
- 15 Air Quality (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 897,000

History and creativity keep things ascendant in the U.K.'s East Midlands.

It's been a storied decade for Leicester, where every layer of soil seems to reveal another chapter of British history. The 2012 discovery of Richard III's remains beneath a city car park—and his 2015 reinterment at Leicester Cathedral—put this East Midlands city on the global map. And the surprises keep coming: the city is preparing to reopen the Jewry Wall Museum in 2025 after a £15-million revamp. The immersive experience transports visitors back 2,000 years, fortifying Leicester's reputation as the most excavated city in Britain, with over 15% of its historic centre unearthed to reveal Iron Age, Roman and medieval treasures. Above ground, the Cultural Quarter is enjoying a fresh burst of energy. Anchored by Curve Theatre and the Phoenix Cinema, the district is seeing the transformation of St. George's Churchyard into a new public green space, linking to the lively Orton Square and stitching together old and new Leicester. At the city's edge, Space Park Leicester—a collaboration between the University of Leicester and government and industry partners—keeps booming. A 2025 partnership with aerospace firms Sidereus Space Dynamics and Perpetual Atomics positions Leicester as a hub for space and Earth observation tech. Europe's 12th-best housing affordability and 15th-best air quality should help attract the talent to make it all work.



88 Palma Spain

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Healthcare System
- 18 Nature & Parks

POPULATION

Metro 729,000

A historic centre is coveted by investors seeking their place in the sun.

Palma's glow is no longer a secret. The Balearic capital has spent the past two decades morphing from package holiday cliché into one of the most desirable Mediterranean capitals for investors, creatives and global nomads in search of heritage, sunshine and connectivity (given the #26 Airport ranking). Now, Mallorca's largest city is reaping the rewards of this reinvention—with major upgrades that celebrate its past while looking boldly to the future. In spring 2025, the city officially completed its €38-million revamp of the Paseo Marítimo, Palma's famous waterfront promenade. The project has reshaped the seafront into a more human-scaled boulevard, with wider pedestrian paths, bike lanes, shaded green spaces and traffic reduction measures to reconnect the city to the sea. Adjacent to this is the newly relaunched Club de Mar, one of the Mediterranean's most prestigious marinas, now with over 70 superyacht berths and the largest wharf in Spain. Palma takes the top spot in Europe for its healthcare system, and the city's real estate and hospitality sectors are booming, headlined by the reopening of the Hotel Victoria Gran Meliá this year after a €12-million renovation. But given Palma's #18 ranking for Nature & Parks, life here is lived outside in the sun, no matter how luxe the accommodations get.



89 Nantes France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 Poverty Rate
- 21 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,032,000

A revived port city plays the long game.

Nantes, the historic capital of Brittany and once one of Europe's busiest shipbuilding centres, has completed one of the continent's most ambitious urban reinventions. Where derelict warehouses and rusting cranes once defined the Île de Nantes, today you'll find a green, walkable cultural playground. Its crown jewel, Les Machines de l'Île, continues to evolve in 2025 with expanded programming and public art, captivating visitors with Jules Verne-inspired creations like the towering Grand Éléphant and the rotating Carrousel des Mondes Marins. Just across the Loire, the Musée d'Arts de Nantes—founded by Napoleon—remains one of France's finest regional art institutions, with a collection that spans from classical masters to modern provocateurs. It's yet another reason the city is increasingly seen as a quieter, more sustainable alternative to Paris.

The former European Green Capital (2013) continues to double down on its eco-credentials, expanding its cycleways and public transport options, helping Nantes rank #21 for Biking. Tourism is up again this year, thanks in part to new direct Ryanair flights from across the UK and a growing international reputation for uncrowded, under-the-radar cities. The 15th-lowest poverty rate in Europe is yet another ingredient in the Nantes special blend.



90 Malmö Sweden

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Housing Affordability
- 7 Air Quality (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 669,000

Sweden's third-largest city revels in the hustle of its citizens and its outdoor playground.

Often overshadowed by its flashier neighbour across the Øresund Bridge, Malmö has quietly become one of Scandinavia's most dynamic cities. The former shipbuilding powerhouse still bears the bones of its industrial past—particularly around the Kockums and Västra Hamnen waterfronts—but today, those same shipyards are buzzing with tech firms, design studios, and universities. The transformation of Västra Hamnen into a model for sustainable urban living—with housing, office towers, and Sweden's first carbon-neutral neighbourhood—is now studied by cities across Europe. Malmö's brainpower is anchored by Malmö University, now home to more than 24,000 students and faculty, located in the heart of the redeveloped harborfront. That academic engine powers a #24 ranking for Educational Attainment and helps explain the city's #17 rank for Labour Force Participation.

But Malmö isn't all hustle—it's also home to a beloved network of public spaces. From the lush, 19th-century Kungsparken to Ribersborg Beach, where locals swim and sauna year-round, nature is woven into everyday life. Last year, the city briefly stepped into the global spotlight, hosting the Eurovision Song Contest at Malmö Arena. With over 160 million viewers watching, Malmö reminded the world to come for the fresh air (#7) and stay for the housing affordability (also #7).



91 Sofia Bulgaria

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 23 Google Trends
- 23 Unemployment Rate

POPULATION

Metro 1,532,000

Sofia is the city you recommend to that friend who's been "everywhere."

Often overlooked and infrequently lauded, Bulgaria's capital is ready for takeoff as an affordable, talent-rich metropolis hungry for a seat at the European table with the confidence that comes from being a crossroads of commerce for millennia. A hometown for the Ottomans, Romans and (least inspiring, architecturally) the communists over its incredible 7,000-year history, Sofia today is a treasured hometown and destination for those who know (and has the Top 50 Lovability ranking to prove it). Her attractions (ranking an impressive #26) span the epochs, from Roman baths to Orthodox churches to quirky communist time capsules like the Red Flat, an interactive apartment that never fails to depress. The city's treasures are increasingly walkable, and residents now report travelling by foot 30% more than in 2019, according to the new European Commission's Quality of Life in European Cities survey. Tech entrepreneur and Sofia native Vasil Terziev, elected mayor in late 2023, has become the face of the city's entrepreneurial swagger. The co-founder of global software firm Telerik, Terziev is spearheading a bold pro-EU, pro-startup agenda, and his administration is expected to unveil a sweeping General Development Plan by the end of 2025 to guide the capital through its next phase of growth.



92 Bremen Germany

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 23 Housing Affordability
- 32 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 1,058,000

A maritime heavyweight wields its North Sea advantage.

In tandem with sister city Bremerhaven, just 50 kilometres downstream, Bremen forms the continent's fourth-largest container port. And big things are on the horizon: starting in 2026, Bremerhaven's container terminal will undergo a massive expansion to accommodate next-generation mega-ships—an upgrade designed to siphon market share from nearby Hamburg and boost Germany's global shipping footprint. Even before this investment lands, Bremen's economy punches above its weight, anchored by trade, logistics and a diversified industrial base. The city ranks #47 in our Large Companies subcategory and #52 for GDP Per Capita in Europe, both testaments to the stability provided by its waterfront economy (and #23-ranked Housing Affordability). But Bremen is far more than cranes and commerce. Last year marked the 20th anniversary of its UNESCO World Heritage designation for the stunning Town Hall and Roland statue on its storybook Market Square. The square is a postcard of northern German Gothic architecture, layered with tributes to the Grimm brothers' "Town Musicians of Bremen." The city is also riding a cycling boom. Bremen's 2025 Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan has introduced premium bike routes, and its new Bre.Bike public bike-share system is launching with over 1,100 bikes. The city's #42 Biking ranking will soon climb.



93 Montpellier France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Healthcare System
- 38 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 823,000

France's fastest-growing city looks like a sure bet.

The French call it *la surdouée* (the gifted one). The term of endearment has had particular resonance over the past 20 years, as Montpellier became the country's fastest-growing city by population, with almost half of residents today aged 34 or younger. Most come for the University of Montpellier, founded in the 1100s, which makes it not only one of the oldest in the world, but also the planet's oldest medical school still in operation. Several other universities and dozens of other schools mean that 70,000 students call the city home and provide ample talent for a rising economy. The U of M's centuries of medical expertise have nurtured a growing life sciences ecosystem, joining existing tech and IT regional operations for IBM, Ubisoft and Dell, with dozens more firms arriving every year. The magnetism is obvious: a great climate, sun, the seventh-best healthcare system in Europe, and Mediterranean beaches a 20-minute bus ride away. The medieval walkable grid is enhanced with 150 kilometres of bike paths throughout the city, and even more leading to the sea—all contributing to a #39 ranking in our Biking subcategory. As of last year, there's free public transportation for all residents, and Montpellier is the largest European metropolis to implement such an initiative.



94 Graz Austria

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Biking
- 40 GDP Per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 605,000

Austria's lush second city is smart, prosperous... and communist?

Green, clean and historic, Graz was, given its urban perfection, a fitting recipient of both the European Capital of Culture title for 2003 and the UNESCO City of Design in 2011. Mid-rise, red-roofed white city blocks snake out from the medieval tangle of Baroque and Renaissance buildings, rising and falling with the verdant undulations of the topography. Trees and forests share the urban grid, rising up to Graz's Schlossberg, once the site of a strategic medieval fortress, and sliced by the Mur River below. The walkable city is dissected by Europe's eighth-best biking infrastructure.

The rare blend of aesthetics, relative isolation and warm, sunny microclimate (Graz is one of Austria's winemaking clusters) has long pulled in mavericks. The city boasts eight universities and much of the population is made up of current and former students who revel in its impressive #42-ranked healthcare system. Many settle here, launching more than 1,400 companies annually according to local boosters, driven by the #40 GDP Per Capita ranking. In 2021, the city also elected Elke Kahr of the Communist Party of Austria as mayor, who seems to be a rising tourist attraction all her own if international media is a metric.



95 Bournemouth United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Poverty Rate (Tied)
- 25 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 532,000

From beach town to hometown on the U.K.'s south coast.

This coastal resort town is a pocket-sized shot of California two hours by train from London. A rare microclimate means more sunshine, warmer weather and (for the surfers and swimmers who play on its eponymous beach, often lauded as one of the U.K.'s best) warmer seas. The area's golden beaches, it should be noted, are Blue Flag-certified. With its seafront promenade, Ferris wheel and piers, the city has embraced its unique beach-town vibe for decades, readily drawing families with one-of-a-kind, Instagrammable attractions—like the only pier-to-shore zipline on the planet. A new £20 million investment will further restore and improve facilities along Bournemouth's and neighbouring Poole's coastline. Aside from its robust hospitality industry, Bournemouth is also a financial industry hub, recently boosted by newly arrived tech firms and remote workers who prefer a morning surf to a tube commute. The result is a #64 spot in our overall Prosperity index and the 10th-lowest poverty rate in Europe. Two local universities favoured by international students help the town rank Top 25 for Educational Attainment. This year brings big changes to the city's skyline with the 29-storey Oxford Garden rental tower (and its 487 homes) under construction.



96 Zagreb Croatia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Poverty Rate (Tied)
- 21 Convention Centre

POPULATION

Metro 1,161,000

A Balkan capital reaches new heights in culture and city building.

As Croatia's capital and largest city, Zagreb's rich history is etched into its architecture and urban fabric. The Upper Town (Gornji Grad) enchants visitors with its cobblestone streets, medieval buildings, and landmarks such as St. Mark's Church, renowned for its colourful tiled roof. In contrast, the Lower Town (Donji Grad) showcases Austro-Hungarian influence through its grand boulevards, parks, and neoclassical buildings. This seamless integration of old and new underscores Zagreb's unique character. The city's underrated cultural scene (ranked #70) is vibrant and diverse, fuelled by events like the INmusic Festival, held annually in June and powered by massive global artists and crowds. The #42-ranked museums are bolstered by only-in-Zagreb gems like the Museum of Broken Relationships, which offers unconventional yet poignant insights into human connections. Infrastructure developments are set to transform Zagreb's urban landscape. A significant €200 million investment aims to overhaul the city's transportation network by 2028, marking the most ambitious infrastructure project in two decades. Additionally, plans are underway to expand the tram network, enhancing public transit accessibility. Tourism remains a cornerstone of Zagreb's appeal and the introduction of the Zagreb Card provides tourists with convenient access to public transportation and #49-ranked attractions.



97 Nottingham United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 24 University
- 31 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 919,000

The birthplace of the Robin Hood legend has emerged as one of the U.K.'s small cities to watch.

Long dogged by clichés of “men in tights and men in fights,” Nottingham has spent the past decade rewriting its story—and in 2025, the city feels more like a headline act than a punchline. A major turning point came with the £33-million restoration of Nottingham Castle, completed in 2021 and now a national destination. With new interactive galleries and an upgraded visitor centre, the historic site now regularly hosts immersive medieval events and draws families from across the country. That momentum continues throughout the city. In 2025, planning is advancing for the Broad Marsh regeneration—one of the UK's most ambitious city centre redevelopments. The 20-acre site will be transformed into a green, car-free district with over 1,000 homes, offices and a new entrance to the city's cave network, reimagining the heart of Nottingham for the next generation. The city's tram network—already one of the longest in the UK outside of London—spans 32 kilometres and continues to knit together districts like Hockley, a former lace industry hub now reborn as Nottingham's creative quarter. With vibrant nightlife (#31 in Europe), a fast-growing tech economy and a student population anchored by two Top 25 universities, Nottingham is writing its next chapter.



98 Rennes France

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Healthcare System
- 14 Poverty Rate

POPULATION

Metro 771,000

The capital of Brittany comes for the talent while delivering on livability.

It's a transformative time in Rennes, marked by significant investments and ambitious projects set to redefine its urban DNA by the end of the decade. Central to this evolution is the EuroRennes development, a large-scale urban project revitalising the area surrounding the central train station. This initiative aims to establish a vibrant economic zone, integrating modern infrastructure with sustainable urban planning. In tandem, the Quais de Vilaine project is reimagining the riverbanks of the Vilaine, with plans to enhance public spaces and construct new structures over the water by the end of the decade to reconnect residents with the river through pedestrian-friendly zones and green spaces. The city's commitment to the health of its citizens is evident in its #2 Healthcare System ranking and a massive biking infrastructure rollout that will improve on its currently middling #71 ranking. The city's economy is also on the move, with automaker Stellantis reinforcing its commitment to ramp up production at its La Janais plant until 2028 and likely longer (U.S. tariffs being the obvious wildcard). This move reflects confidence in the plant's competitiveness and secures employment in the region. And this being France, high-speed rail connectivity is always around the corner, with the Avelia Horizon high-speed trains set to connect Rennes to Paris in 90 minutes by 2028.



99 Portsmouth United Kingdom

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 Educational Attainment
- 20 Unemployment Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 542,000

A strategic and historic military port city finds a new kind of victory.

With a rich maritime heritage spanning over 850 years, Portsmouth has played a pivotal role in British naval history—from establishing Europe's first dry dock in 1495 to serving as an embarkation point for the D-Day landings. In 2024, the city commemorated the 80th anniversary of D-Day with a series of events centred around The D-Day Story museum, the UK's sole institution dedicated to the Normandy landings. These commemorations included special exhibitions and public engagements, drawing visitors and dignitaries alike. Today, Portsmouth's economy is significantly bolstered by its status as a major naval base, employing a substantial portion of the local workforce that ranks #13 in our Educational Attainment subcategory and #22 for Labour Force Participation. The city's economic landscape is further diversified by tourism, particularly in the cruise sector. In 2024, Portsmouth International Port welcomed 168,000 passengers, marking its busiest cruise season to date. This influx was facilitated by the port's capacity to accommodate larger vessels, such as TUI Cruise's 293-metre-long Mein Schiff 3, which became the largest ship to ever enter the harbour in May 2023. Not surprisingly, the city boasts the 20th-lowest unemployment in our ranking.



100 Riga Latvia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Housing Affordability (Tied)
- 19 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 928,000

Latvia's capital is just warming up.

A walkable medieval old town resembling an epic gingerbread village (especially in winter), with a UNESCO World Heritage designation and the largest collection of Art Nouveau buildings in Europe? All the while home to half of its country's residents? Welcome to Riga, where the centuries of galleries, concert halls and arts venues help the Latvian capital rank in the Top 20 in our Attractions subcategory. That this cultural bounty costs half of what it does in most continental capitals (Housing Affordability is the 12th-best in Europe) only adds to the allure. Fortunately, the great prices extend to the emergent Baltic cuisine, ranging from Ukrainian comfort food at the Āgenskalns market on the Daugava River's left bank to the €10 Baltic seafood tartare, ceviches and carpaccios at new restaurant Tails. While casual travellers are still sleeping on Riga's special blend, investors like Abu Dhabi-based Eagle Hills are planning to pour €3 billion into the city's Andrejsala neighbourhood and its Riga Free Port by 2040. Given the city's #54 ranking for Labour Force Participation, the talent justifies the investment. As do the growing high-speed rail links like the recently launched four-hour daily to Vilnius, and the larger Rail Baltica network by 2030.

Ranking cities' Place Power™ Score, by category

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
1	London	United Kingdom	2	2	1	12,434,823
2	Paris	France	1	1	2	13,171,056
3	Berlin	Germany	8	6	3	5,106,083
4	Barcelona	Spain	3	4	12	5,156,444
5	Rome	Italy	4	3	36	4,302,129
6	Madrid	Spain	5	5	7	7,113,230
7	Amsterdam	Netherlands	7	8	4	2,915,114
8	Vienna	Austria	6	9	20	1,960,000
9	Prague	Czech Republic	14	7	17	2,216,746
10	Stockholm	Sweden	10	23	8	2,308,143
11	Lisbon	Portugal	9	10	54	3,115,288
12	Munich	Germany	19	26	5	3,066,200
13	Oslo	Norway	11	22	11	1,278,827
14	Copenhagen	Denmark	15	17	14	1,928,612
15	Milan	Italy	25	12	16	4,954,464

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
16	Brussels	Belgium	29	21	9	3,398,857
17	Budapest	Hungary	42	13	18	2,968,809
18	Edinburgh	United Kingdom	13	20	38	893,610
19	Warsaw	Poland	81	27	6	3,374,742
20	Helsinki	Finland	12	34	26	1,598,377
21	Hamburg	Germany	26	24	21	3,493,121
22	Dublin	Ireland	62	18	15	544,107
23	Istanbul	Türkiye	89	11	55	15,636,000
24	Valencia	Spain	16	29	71	1,811,626
25	The Ruhr	Germany	17	32	58	5,114,416
26	Frankfurt	Germany	64	47	13	2,722,157
27	Zürich	Switzerland	95	41	10	1,951,341
28	Glasgow	United Kingdom	20	39	50	1,830,710
29	Kraków	Poland	34	31	51	1,489,912
30	Birmingham	United Kingdom	45	28	42	3,097,965
31	Geneva	Switzerland	37	60	23	613,102
32	Liverpool	United Kingdom	23	40	69	1,533,860
33	Cologne	Germany	52	38	30	2,234,016
34	Porto	Portugal	27	30	95	1,339,620
35	Bern	Switzerland	24	100	41	736,061
36	Manchester	United Kingdom	51	36	39	3,348,274
37	Basel	Switzerland	40	103	24	573,945
38	Venice	Italy	57	16	105	546,193
39	Göteborg	Sweden	28	86	48	1,021,831
40	Utrecht	Netherlands	74	95	19	895,000
41	Florence	Italy	56	19	94	784,846
42	Nice	France	18	48	102	626,218
43	Tallinn	Estonia	22	51	83	638,076
44	Antwerp	Belgium	73	50	32	1,172,740
45	Athens	Greece	114	14	87	3,154,000
46	Dresden	Germany	21	84	77	976,166
47	Leeds	United Kingdom	35	64	60	2,619,128
48	Freiburg	Germany	30	116	49	602,022
49	Stuttgart	Germany	75	78	28	2,558,400

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
50	Rotterdam	Netherlands	94	63	25	1,902,704
51	Lyon	France	77	43	43	2,308,818
52	Seville	Spain	41	25	107	1,567,827
53	Hanover	Germany	53	105	35	1,310,004
54	The Hague	Netherlands	87	77	27	1,132,975
55	Ghent	Belgium	48	75	44	679,694
56	Oxford	United Kingdom	70	94	37	544,849
57	Sheffield	United Kingdom	38	79	61	1,189,393
58	Eindhoven	Netherlands	79	106	29	777,804
59	Bratislava	Slovakia	103	66	31	723,714
60	Bilbao	Spain	33	67	88	1,044,944
61	Southampton	United Kingdom	46	108	47	687,971
62	Düsseldorf	Germany	72	73	46	1,482,443
63	Aachen	Germany	32	127	78	600,855
64	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	88	117	33	639,070
65	Leipzig	Germany	39	101	70	979,428
66	Belfast	United Kingdom	50	74	62	787,135
67	Bristol	United Kingdom	101	62	40	955,541
68	Vilnius	Lithuania	90	68	45	747,864
69	Marseille	France	54	45	85	1,888,788
70	Bordeaux	France	55	46	84	1,393,764
71	Bonn	Germany	44	114	59	800,465
72	Wrocław	Poland	67	65	68	963,311
73	Málaga	Spain	31	33	120	903,175
74	Toulouse	France	69	57	79	1,490,640
75	Aarhus	Denmark	47	111	67	845,971
76	Gdańsk	Poland	92	69	56	1,223,884
77	Nuremberg	Germany	113	90	34	1,197,848
78	Bologna	Italy	108	58	53	784,945
79	Naples	Italy	111	15	123	3,297,202
80	Bucharest	Romania	126	44	22	2,478,618
81	Newcastle	United Kingdom	49	82	92	1,175,274
82	Cardiff	United Kingdom	76	85	75	915,466
84	Poznań	Poland	93	89	57	1,051,414

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
84	Strasbourg	France	59	72	91	864,993
85	Lausanne	Switzerland	98	109	52	588,892
86	Liège	Belgium	36	112	106	803,474
87	Leicester	United Kingdom	80	96	74	896,515
88	Palma	Spain	43	59	112	729,196
89	Nantes	France	61	88	98	1,031,953
90	Malmö	Sweden	63	97	93	669,471
91	Sofia	Bulgaria	118	49	76	1,531,867
92	Bremen	Germany	65	98	101	1,058,197
93	Montpellier	France	71	87	104	823,120
94	Graz	Austria	86	115	80	305,404
95	Bournemouth	United Kingdom	105	107	64	532,293
96	Zagreb	Croatia	117	56	73	1,161,259
97	Nottingham	United Kingdom	115	81	66	919,484
98	Rennes	France	60	119	103	771,320
99	Portsmouth	United Kingdom	109	113	65	542,040
100	Riga	Latvia	100	55	97	927,953

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