

Road-Testing the World's Most Liveable Cities as Travel Destinations!

The phrase “most liveable city” pops up in headlines several times a year as numerous agencies including The Economist, EIU, and Mercer all announce their favorites. While totally subjective, the winners are usually compact, well-organized, very walkable, and offer plenty of culture and a low crime rate – so they’re usually pretty great holiday spots too!



10. Stockholm, Sweden

Spread across numerous islands in perhaps the world's most beautiful urban archipelago, [Stockholm](#) is a must on any Scandinavia tour, rolling every good Swedish cliché into one package. Sustainable, innovative, progressive, practical, highly accessible, and packed with interesting museums and galleries, Stockholm ticks all the boxes of a great city getaway, making it worth the admittedly high cost. Just don't forget to recharge with a *fika* break – a sit-down coffee and pastry – a couple of times a day.



Cafes & Restaurants in Old Town, Stockholm

9. Kyoto, Japan

The old emperors would be proud to know Japan's ancient capital is still known to be one of the world's most liveable cities centuries later. Since [Kyoto](#) is a staple on many [Japan tours](#), it's easy to enjoy the seamlessly integrated transit, the surprising treats of Kyoto's culinary scene, not to mention its sheer beauty as you zip between famous temples such as Kinkaku-ji (the Golden Pavilion), and shrines such as Fushimi Inari, known for its endless parade of red torii gates.



8. Sydney, Australia

Sydney tends to get heaped on for coming second to Melbourne on these lists, but the locals are too busy enjoying year-round great weather and one of the world's most spectacular harbor locations to care. Nowhere can match [Sydney](#) for its combination of urban cool and natural beauty. Best of all, while Sydney can be an expensive city to live in, it's a surprisingly affordable highlight on any [Australia vacation](#), with relatively low room rates, and many of the best attractions being free.



7. Fukuoka, Japan

Located on the island of Kyushu just two hours northeast of Nagasaki, Fukuoka is known to the Japanese as a great city for foodies, and for the popular beaches right outside the city. Just be ready for some stares if you visit. Compared to [Tokyo](#), Kyoto, or [Osaka](#), you'll see very few fellow *gaijin*. Even if few Japan tours come by, it's a worthwhile stop if you're anywhere in the country's southwest, if only to see the Japanese 'good life' at its most local and authentic.



6. Melbourne, Australia

Ah, there it is! We knew The Economist's favorite (for the past six years and counting) couldn't be far away, and while it's been pipped out of the top 5 this year, [Melbourne](#) secures its healthy #6 position with Australia's best food and cultural scenes. The attractions (and beaches) aren't as iconic or attractive as Sydney's, but the galleries and museums are larger, the nightlife more vibrant, and the day trips just as spectacular, making it a bona fide Australia vacation highlight.



5. Munich, Germany

German speaking Europe does remarkably well on Monocle's list. [Munich](#), for its part, is much more a Bavarian city than a German one (yes, there's a difference). While the city is far more than beer halls and bratwurst, it's more than willing to indulge your appetite for both. Friendly locals, picture-perfect architecture, excellent public transit, superb day trips, and one of the world's most efficient large airports make this Germany vacation is an out and out winner.



4. Copenhagen, Denmark

Comparisons to Stockholm are reductive, but [Copenhagen](#) does share that city's appetite for good, sustainable living, adding its own unique delights such as Tivoli Gardens. Yes, you're going to spend a lot of money in this Scandinavia tour stop, and you're going to enjoy it. Eminently walkable, with a superb rail system connecting it to the surrounding sights (including Malmo in [Sweden](#)), Copenhagen deserves its "wonderful" reputation among visitors, and we wouldn't blame anyone for wanting to stay.



3. Vienna, Austria

Another Economist regular, Monocle likes [Vienna](#) too, and so do we. The European river cruises that pass through reveal only a fraction of the city's story. Vienna's relaxed coffee house culture and friendly attitudes make it a great spot to catch your breath for a few days amid splendid architecture. Of course, the palaces, opera house, and local history will keep you busy if you'd prefer. You can even spend the day exploring another European capital, [Bratislava](#) in [Slovakia](#), just an hour's train ride away.



Aerial view of Vienna

2. Berlin, Germany

No surprise to anyone who's been! Many "most liveable" lists (and [Germany tours](#)) bypass [Berlin](#), but travelers aren't making that mistake anymore. In fact, many are choosing to stay. The city has been luring young people in droves for over a decade, giving it an energetic, yet very relaxed, spontaneous, and bohemian vibe. The central area of Mitte is packed with historic attractions and museums, but it's the surrounding neighborhoods that capture the real allure of decentralized, highly liveable Berlin.



1. Tokyo, Japan

Frenetic, impossibly huge, and often contradictory, [Tokyo](#) deserves top spot for keeping it all together while still giving its workaholic citizens ample opportunity to play. Tokyo nightlife is endless, from upscale clubs, to cozy local pubs and bars, to late night shopping every night, to kitschy cabarets, to options too numerous and quirky to list here. But it's an impressive city at all hours, with perhaps the world's most efficient public transit system, a peerless culinary scene, incomparable shopping and cultural experiences to suit all budgets, plus plenty of green space for when you need to get away from it all. It's also one of, if not the safest big city on earth. Many [Japan tours](#) devote just a few days to Tokyo, before venturing out to see the sights of "classical" Japan. The truth is, you could spend years in the capital and not see it all (but a few days is still a good start).

