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World's Best Cities To Live In 2020

Global Finance selects the world's 10 best cities to live in based on eight metrics, including pandemic response.

OCTOBER 14, 2020 | Author: Marc Getzoff

Global Finance's best cities ranking is based on a score that reflects a comprehensive list of eight unique factors. These are: economic strength; research and development; cultural interaction; livability; environment; accessibility; GDP per capita (nominal in USD); and COVID-19 deaths per million for the country. Each of these factors brings with it a critical way of understanding the quality of life in the cities and each of the metrics was normalized in order to properly quantify them into a single overall score. It is important to note that we weighted the Covid-19 deaths metric by a factor of three in order to underline how a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic affected which cities would be best to live in.

Where did we get the data?

The first six factors (economic strength, research and development, cultural interaction, livability, environment, and accessibility) all come from the [Global City Power index](#), which provides an in-depth view of and scores different aspects of city life, including cultural importance and accessibility. Their report's list of cities forms the basis for our decision of what cities to include in our list. The nominal GDP per capita comes from the [World Bank Database](#). The Covid-19 deaths per million comes from a combination of [Johns Hopkins University](#) and [Statista](#) for the remaining cities.

TOP 10 BEST CITIES TO LIVE IN 2020



#10 | Sydney, Australia

Sydney made it into the top 10 thanks to a high scores on environmental factors and Australia's efficient effort to combat COVID-19. Australia was one of the first countries outside of China to impose lockdowns and social distancing rules to stop uncontrolled spread of the coronavirus.

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MARKET SUMMARY

Americas Europe Asia Currencies Commodities

► S&P 500 CASH SPOT INDEX	4620.6401	-1.03%
► DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE INDEX	35365.4414	-1.48%
► NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX	15169.6816	-0.07%

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#9 | Berlin, Germany

Berlin ranks ninth on our list, scoring slightly above average across the board on quality-of-life metrics. Germany's comparatively low COVID-19 death rate helps place the city above where it would have ranked before the pandemic.



#8 | Seoul, South Korea

Seoul ranks eighth in this list mostly due to its strong focus on research and development as well as South Korea's early and aggressive response to Covid-19. South Korea has often been held up as an example of how to effectively [deal with the pandemic while maintaining strong economic performance](#) because their response did not require shutting down non-essential businesses or entire cities to stop the spread of the coronavirus.



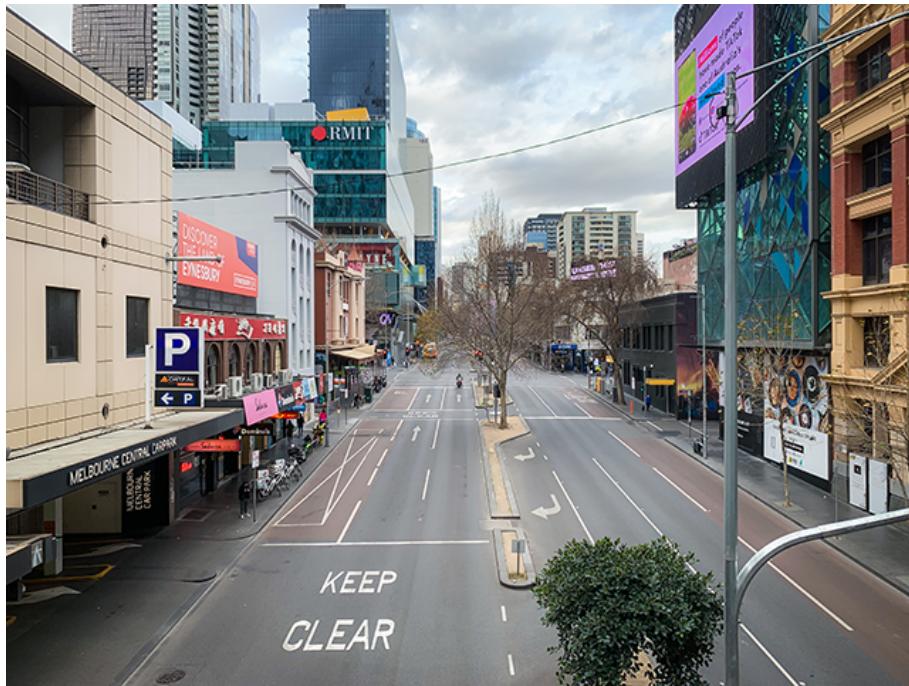
#7 | Paris, France

Paris, usually ranking amongst or near the top of best city lists, ranks seventh in the year of the coronavirus. Paris has a strong cultural importance that can be felt throughout the city. It also scores highly in livability and accessibility. However, like many other European cities, its ranking suffers the difficulties combatting Covid-19 as [France began to experience a second wave of infections](#).



#6 | Frankfurt, Germany

Frankfurt places sixth due to Germany's strong response to COVID-19 and the city's extremely strong performance in just one metric: GDP per capita. Frankfurt has one of the highest GDP per capitias of any city in Germany at slightly over \$106,000 in USD. Germany also has [outperformed many other neighboring European countries](#) in its coronavirus death rate.



#5 | Melbourne, Australia

Melbourne is an interesting and competitive fifth place as it scores largely slightly above average on every metric except for COVID-19. Melbourne also scores highly in the environmental metric after setting strict and aggressive targets for zero-carbon emissions.



#4 | New York City, United States of America

New York City ranks fourth, below its historical rankings, as it scores well in its economy, research and development, and cultural interaction. The main factor pushing it downwards is the same that was true of London: high per capita COVID-19 death rate. The United States has struggled to contain the virus and has lost more than 200,000 people.



#3 | Singapore, Republic of Singapore

Singapore places third in the ranking with relatively moderate scores in most metrics but it has performed well in countering the consequences of COVID-19. So while Singapore actually ranks below the average on livability, and only slightly above average on the economy and research and development, its response to COVID-19 has resulted in more than 99% of infected people recovering.



#2 | London, United Kingdom

London ranks as second with extremely high scores in the economy and cultural interaction metrics. In normal years where COVID-19 was not a factor, London would have ranked number one. However, the United Kingdom's struggles with **COVID-19 and the high number of deaths** per capita significantly decreased its score and it is only by its resilience in other metrics that it remains in second place.



#1 | Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo ranks first as the city with the highest quality of life in 2020 due to its overall relatively good scores in most metrics and Japan's strong response to COVID-19. Japan has had **very low case counts, a subsidized advanced transportation system**, and an overall high quality of life.

Because of the critical importance of COVID-19 in affecting quality of life, there are results in the ranking that would be surprising in any other year. Many highly developed European cities such as Brussels (43), Milan (40), Barcelona (38), and Madrid (35) are now ranked towards the bottom. These cities are often considered to have high quality of life and score respectively well in Cultural Interaction, Livability, and Environment. However, the Covid-19 deaths per million in Belgium, Italy, and Spain are very high as these countries faced both the initial wave

and are currently experiencing a limited second wave. The spread of COVID-19 and the subsequent deaths have pushed these cities towards the bottom of the list.

The COVID-19 deaths, however, are also the reason why many cities in East Asia are punching above their weight. Tokyo (1), Singapore (3), Seoul (8), and Hong Kong (11) are ranked respectively high because of the extremely low spread of Covid-19 and the low death rates per capita for these countries. In fact, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea have often been praised as models for dealing with the virus. In Tokyo and throughout Japan, nightlife has largely reopened despite earlier concerns of the spread of the virus. The same is true for Seoul and South Korea, which was able to avoid a large economic fallout while maintaining relatively low case counts. The low rate of COVID-19 deaths is also the main reason why Kuala Lumpur (23) and Bangkok (32) and are ranked above many U.S cities such as Los Angeles (33), Boston (36) and Washington D.C (39) as the United States has a high rate of COVID-19 deaths.

Best Cities to Live in 2020 Full Ranking

Rank	City	Country
1	Tokyo	Japan
2	London	United Kingdom
3	Singapore	Republic of Singapore
4	New York	United States of America
5	Melbourne	Australia
6	Frankfurt	Germany
7	Paris	France
8	Seoul	South Korea
9	Berlin	Germany
10	Sydney	Australia
11	Hong Kong	China
12	Copenhagen	Denmark
13	Vienna	Austria
14	Amsterdam	Netherlands
15	Helsinki	Finland
16	Zurich	Switzerland
17	Dubai	UAE
18	Osaka	Japan
19	Toronto	Canada
20	Geneva	Switzerland
21	Shanghai	China
22	Beijing	China
23	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia
24	Vancouver	Canada
25	Moscow	Russia
26	Taipei	China
27	Dublin	Ireland
28	Tel Aviv	Israel
29	Stockholm	Sweden

Rank	City	Country
30	Istanbul	Turkey
31	San Francisco	United States of America
32	Bangkok	Thailand
33	Los Angeles	United States of America
34	Fukuoka	Japan
35	Madrid	Spain
36	Boston	United States of America
37	Chicago	United States of America
38	Barcelona	Spain
39	Washington, D.C.	United States of America
40	Milan	Italy
41	Buenos Aires	Argentina
42	Jakarta	Indonesia
43	Brussels	Belgium
44	Cairo	Egypt
45	Mumbai	India
46	Sao Paulo	Brazil
47	Mexico City	Mexico
48	Johannesburg	South Africa

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