# Top 100 City Destinations Ranking



Euromonitor International is pleased to release its annual Top City Destinations Ranking, covering 100 of the world's leading cities in terms of international tourist arrivals.

2015 was another turbulent year. Terrorist attacks, geopolitical conflicts, economic uncertainty, and health scares including MERS and Zika were just some of the factors impacting city arrivals. Nevertheless, top cities outperformed global travel flows, registering growth of 5.5% in international arrivals compared to 2014, showing the resilience of global cities as travel destinations.

This report provides the context behind the numbers, explaining why Japanese cities were the big winners in 2015, how Middle Eastern and Western European cities dealt with the turbulence surrounding them, and how Rio de Janeiro performed in a year without a mega-event to host.

Enjoy the read.

**Dr Wouter Geerts** 







# CITY DESTINATIONS RANKING

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# City Destinations Ranking - 1 to 20

Rank	City	Country	2014 Arrivals ('000)	2015 Arrivals ('000)	Y-o-Y Growth 2014- 2015
1	Hong Kong	Hong Kong, China	27,770.5	26,686.0	-3.9%
2	Bangkok	Thailand	17,031.7	18,734.9	10.0%
3	London	UK	17,404.0	18,580.0	6.8%
4	Singapore	Singapore	16,795.6	16,869.4	0.4%
5	Paris	France	15,058.1	15,023.0	-0.2%
6	Macau	Macau	14,566.0	14,308.5	-1.8%
7	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	13,200.0	14,200.0	7.6%
8	Istanbul	Turkey	11,843.0	12,414.6	4.8%
9	New York City	US	12,230.0	12,300.0	0.6%
10	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	11,629.6	12,153.0	4.5%
11	Shenzhen	China	11,825.9	11,423.8	-3.4%
12	Antalya	Turkey	11,506.4	10,868.7	-5.5%
13	Rome	Italy	8,807.0	9,558.7	8.5%
14	Taipei	Taiwan	8,615.0	9,045.8	5.0%
15	Seoul	South Korea	9,389.6	8,826.2	-6.0%
16	Phuket	Thailand	8,115.3	8,821.4	8.7%
17	Tokyo	Japan	6,243.2	8,456.4	<b>1</b> 35.4%
18	Guangzhou	China	7,833.0	7,958.3	1.6%
19	Miami	US	7,260.0	7,604.9	4.8%
20	Pattaya	Thailand	6,427.3	7,487.9	<b>1</b> 6.5%



# City Destinations Ranking - 21 to 40

Rank	City	Country	2014 Arrivals ('000)	2015 Arrivals ('000)	Y-o-Y Growth 2014- 2015
21	Mecca	Saudi Arabia	6,120.6	7,175.2	17.2%
22	Prague	Czech Republic	6,483.0	6,967.4	7.5%
23	Milan	Italy	5,667.0	6,684.0	17.9%
24	Las Vegas	US	6,230.6	6,769.9	8.7%
25	Barcelona	Spain	6,256.9	6,612.2	5.7%
26	Shanghai	China	6,396.2	6,536.0	2.2%
27	Manama	Bahrain	6,105.8	6,413.2	5.0%
28	Delhi	India	4,698.8	5,939.2	<b>1</b> 26.4%
29	Amsterdam	Netherlands	5,714.1	5,897.0	<b>1</b> 3.2%
30	Mumbai	India	4,575.1	5,764.6	<b>1</b> 26.0%
31	Vienna	Austria	5,405.4	5,718.9	5.8%
32	Los Angeles	US	5,272.6	5,552.0	<b>1</b> 5.3%
33	Venice	Italy	4,950.0	5,490.0	10.9%
34	Orlando	US	4,677.1	4,981.1	6.5%
35	Berlin	Germany	4,570.3	4,925.4	7.8%
36	Florence	Italy	4,467.0	4,915.0	10.0%
37	Johannesburg	South Africa	4,769.9	4,872.3	2.1%
38	Ho Chi Minh City	Vietnam	4,400.0	4,700.0	6.8%
39	Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	4,172.7	4,632.0	11.0%
40	Madrid	Spain	4,178.3	4,604.5	10.2%



# City Destinations Ranking - 41 to 60

Rank	City	Country	2014 Arrivals ('000)	2015 Arrivals ('000)	Y-o-Y Growth 2014- 2015
41	Dublin	Ireland	4,378.5	4,600.5	5.1%
42	Moscow	Russia	5,126.3	4,420.1	-13.8%
43	Chennai	India	3,857.9	4,243.7	10.0%
44	Beijing	China	4,274.5	4,197.6	-1.8%
45	Agra	India	3,264.4	4,185.0	<b>1</b> 28.2%
46	Johor Bahru	Malaysia	3,631.7	4,176.5	15.0%
47	Athens	Greece	3,388.3	4,155.7	<b>1</b> 22.6%
48	Denpasar	Indonesia	3,731.7	3,924.0	5.2%
49	Budapest	Hungary	3,508.2	3,775.7	7.6%
50	Cancún	Mexico	4,002.5	3,743.3	-6.5%
51	Chiang Mai	Thailand	2,658.7	3,722.2	40.0%
52	Jaipur	India	2,967.6	3,599.7	21.3%
53	San Francisco	US	3,327.5	3,520.5	5.8%
54	Toronto	Canada	3,218.4	3,517.7	9.3%
55	Osaka	Japan	2,246.8	3,417.2	<b>1</b> 52.1%
56	Hanoi	Vietnam	3,000.0	3,300.0	10.0%
57	Munich	Germany	3,042.5	3,251.8	6.9%
58	Punta Cana	Dominican Republic	2,922.2	3,200.1	9.5%
59	Sydney	Australia	3,006.9	3,194.9	6.3%
60	Brussels	Belgium	3,092.0	3,192.5	3.3%



# City Destinations Ranking - 61 to 80

Rank	City	Country	2014 Arrivals ('000)	2015 Arrivals ('000)	Y-o-Y Growth 2014- 2015
61	Edirne	Turkey	3,090.9	3,190.4	3.2%
62	Mugla	Turkey	3,302.7	3,081.5	-6.7%
63	Zhuhai	China	2,913.4	3,079.3	5.7%
64	Doha	Qatar	2,826.0	2,930.0	3.7%
65	Siem Reap	Cambodia	2,584.4	2,920.4	13.0%
66	Lisbon	Portugal	2,713.8	2,906.5	7.1%
67	Jerusalem	Israel	3,020.4	2,902.6	-3.9%
68	Cairo	Egypt	2,772.0	2,896.7	4.5%
69	Burgas	Bulgaria	2,929.1	2,842.8	-2.9%
70	St Petersburg	Russia	2,739.4	2,841.0	3.7%
71	Pulau Pinang	Malaysia	2,593.0	2,774.5	7.0%
72	Halong	Vietnam	2,600.0	2,759.7	6.1%
73	Warsaw	Poland	2,550.0	2,650.0	3.9%
74	Heraklion	Greece	2,606.0	2,559.8	-1.8%
75	Krakow	Poland	2,500.0	2,520.0	0.8%
76	Lima	Peru	2,282.6	2,488.3	9.0%
77	Honolulu	US	2,431.5	2,482.6	2.1%
78	Mexico City	Mexico	2,588.5	2,468.6	-4.6%
79	Tel Aviv	Israel	2,369.9	2,436.3	2.8%
80	Jakarta	Indonesia	2,311.4	2,368.9	2.5%



# City Destinations Ranking - 81 to 100

Rank	City	Country	2014 Arrivals ('000)	2015 Arrivals ('000)	Y-o-Y Growth 2014- 2015
81	Marrakech	Morocco	2,230.5	2,367.0	6.1%
82	Vancouver	Canada	2,175.5	2,338.7	7.5%
83	Buenos Aires	Argentina	2,355.5	2,331.9	-1.0%
84	Melbourne	Australia	2,025.7	2,311.9	14.1%
85	Nice	France	2,204.9	2,266.8	2.8%
86	Frankfurt	Germany	2,076.4	2,244.0	8.1%
87	Auckland	New Zealand	2,029.6	2,217.1	9.2%
88	Jerba	Tunisia	2,550.0	2,108.3	-17.3%
89	Kyoto	Japan	1,424.1	2,101.4	47.6%
90	Kolkatta	India	1,854.8	2,064.4	11.3%
91	Samui	Thailand	1,856.2	2,060.3	11.0%
92	Sofia	Bulgaria	1,914.1	2,046.8	6.9%
93	Krabi	Thailand	1,825.4	2,044.4	12.0%
94	Washington DC	US	1,924.0	2,023.5	5.2%
95	Varna	Bulgaria	1,884.6	1,999.4	6.1%
96	Sharm el Sheikh	Egypt	2,160.6	1,998.5	-7.5%
97	Taichung	Taiwan	1,835.5	1,982.3	8.0%
98	Jeju	South Korea	1,940.7	1,940.9	0.0%
99	Marne-La-Vallée	France	1,959.4	1,932.0	-1.4%
100	Rhodes	Greece	1,926.7	1,902.1	-1.3%





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# Europe: Highlights



- London is the top-ranked city in Europe (ranked third globally), with international arrivals growing just short of 7% in 2015, boosted by England's hosting of the Rugby World Cup in September 2015.
- Paris witnessed the Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan attacks in 2015. Although the impact was minimal in 2015, 2016 arrivals are expected to be harder hit.
- Istanbul proved largely immune to a decline in Russian arrivals due to the weak rouble, and unlike Turkish beach destinations registered growth.

  However, the Atatürk Airport bombing and military coup show it remains a volatile city.



## **Europe: Winners and Losers**

- Countries with a comparable offering to France, Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia (which were hit by terrorist attacks) saw booming international arrivals. Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy, in particular, attracted growing numbers of visitors.
- With the exception of Heraklion, on Crete, and Rhodes, which continued to be impacted by the continuing migrant crisis, all cities in these countries showed strong growth.
- Athens had another record year with arrivals growing by 22.6% in 2015, despite political and economic turmoil
- In Italy, Milan performed strongly thanks to the Expo Milano 2015. The Expo event counted more than 21 million visitors and it attracted many international arrivals, especially during the summer months.
- Moscow saw arrivals slump due to worsening ties with the EU, economic sanctions and a slump in the rouble.

# Top Five Strongest and Weakest Performers in Europe for Inbound Arrivals 2014-2015





# Americas: Highlights



New York City, the top destination for international travellers in the Americas, was hit by the strong US dollar compared to other currencies, but the city still showed slight growth and remained in the top 10.

Cancún remains immensely popular, but saw a decline in visitors as the Mexican government promotes other destinations to spread the benefits of tourism across the country.

Lima had a strong performance, with growth of 9% in 2015. The city is benefiting from the improvement of the Peruvian economy and the upcoming international recognition of Peru as a travel destination.



### Americas: Winners and Losers

- The biggest news story coming out of North America has been the election of Donald Trump. Whether, and how, this will impact arrivals to the US (and possibly Canada as a substitute destination for travellers from across the Atlantic) will become evident from the 2016 and 2017 arrival numbers.
- While the top Mexican cities performed weakly in 2015, Mexican tourism overall is booming. The drop in the top cities is due to the fact that other cities have been heavily promoted to both business and leisure tourists. Cancún, for example, is losing some visitors to nearby Playa del Carmen, which has a more laidback reputation.
- While Rio de Janeiro was the fastest growing city in last year's ranking (mainly due to the 2014 World Cup), in 2015 the city has dropped out of the ranking again due to a 28% fall in international arrivals. The city might bounce back in 2016 with the Olympic Games, which despite Zika and issues around the organisation of the event was generally seen as a success.

# Top Five Strongest and Weakest Performers in Americas for Inbound Arrivals 2014-2015







# Asia and Australia: Highlights

10 Largest Cities in Asia and Australia for Inbound Arrivals 2015



- Hong Kong remained the top city destination by some margin, despite falling arrivals. The city faces increasing difficulties to maintain its attractiveness, especially among younger Chinese travellers.
- Bangkok benefited from the declining popularity of Hong Kong with growth of 10% in arrivals, despite the Erewan Shrine bombing in August 2015. The city jumped to take second place.



## Asia and Australia: Winners and Losers

- Next to a strong performance for Bangkok, other Thai cities also performed well. Chiang Mai, in particular, performed well due to its proximity to the Chinese, Myanmar and Laos borders.
- Japanese cities saw even more impressive growth than their Thai counterparts. Tokyo rose six places to rank 17th, and Osaka and Kyoto jumped 27 and 11 places respectively. These cities benefit from the popular Golden Route, which sees overseas tourists arrive in Tokyo, and travel to Kyoto and Osaka via Mount Fuji.
- International arrivals to Seoul fell in 2015 due to the spread of MERS, with arrivals particularly impacted from June to August, as the number of people affected by MERS rose rapidly.
- Macau also registered falling arrivals after years of strong growth. In 2015, arrivals declined as the Chinese authorities cracked down on corruption and illegal activity on the gambling tables that the city is famous for.

# Top Five Strongest and Weakest Performers in Asia for Inbound Arrivals 2014-2015





# Middle East and Africa: Highlights

10 Largest Cities in Middle East and Africa for Inbound Arrivals 2015



Dubai is the top performer in the region, ranking seventh and seeing continued steady growth in 2015 with 8% increase in inbound arrivals. The city is benefiting from years of extensive investment in state-of-the-art and world-leading infrastructure, luxury shopping, hotels and entertainment.

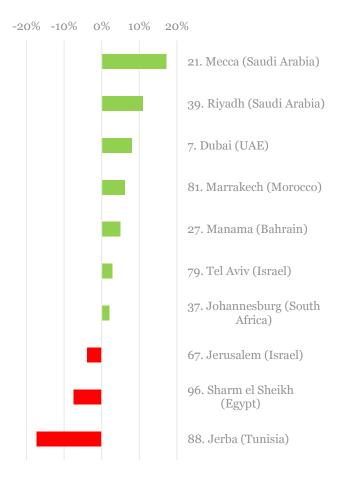
The Middle East and Africa region has 12 cities in the Top 100, but the vast majority are located in the Middle East and North Africa. Johannesburg is the only city from the rest of the African continent that makes it into the ranking.



## Middle East and Africa: Winners and Losers

- The October 2015 bombing involving a Russian plane stopped tourism to Egypt in its tracks. Sharm el Sheikh, the departure city of the aircraft's fatal flight, saw the most significant effects of tour operators axing flights to the city.
- Tunisia also fell on hard times with multiple terrorist attacks, including the shooting on the beach of a resort in Sousse in June 2015. Jerba is the only Tunisian city in the Top 100 ranking, but all cities in the country registered double-digit declines, with Sousse experiencing a decline of 61% compared to 2014.
- Mecca in Saudi Arabia was the strongest performer in the region, as 2015 saw strong growth in the number of religious tourists flocking to the city. To benefit from these visitors, the Saudi government has launched the Post-Umrah Programme, an initiative that allows pilgrims to convert their Umrah visas into tourist visas, in the hope that religious visitors will extend their stays in the country.

# Top Five Strongest and Weakest Performers in MEA for Inbound Arrivals 2014-2015







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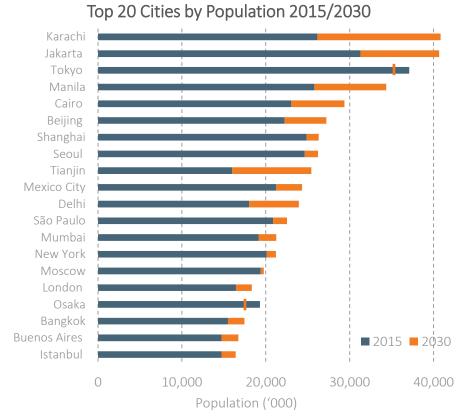
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# Cities Lead the Way

- City populations around the world are growing rapidly, meaning that the future will see more people travelling to and from cities.
- By 2030, New York's economy will be the 11th largest in the world, larger than the economies of many countries including Australia, Mexico and Russia.
- Chinese cities are becoming powerhouses in terms of population and economies, with Beijing leading the way.



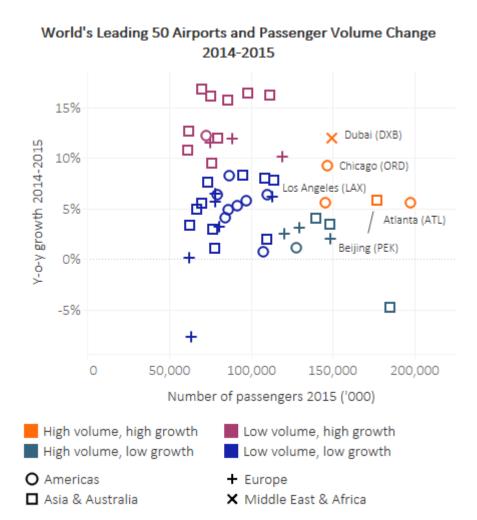
#### The 50 Largest Economies by GDP in 2030





## Strong Air Passenger Growth Potential in Asian Cities

- The recent approval for a third runway at London Heathrow shows airport capacity continues to be on the top of many city planners' agendas. Accessibility by air is of utmost importance to most cities.
- •While the US accounts for some of the largest airports in the world, and with airports such as Chicago, Los Angeles and Atlanta showing healthy growth between 2014 and 2015, it is especially airports in Asia that are showing strong growth, and are expected to grow over the coming years.
- The Chinese government is investing heavily in infrastructure improvements, announcing an investment plan worth US\$80 billion for 193 aviation projects mid-2015. The focus is on improving facilities in second- and third-tier cities with 82 new airports, and better high-speed rail links connecting airports.

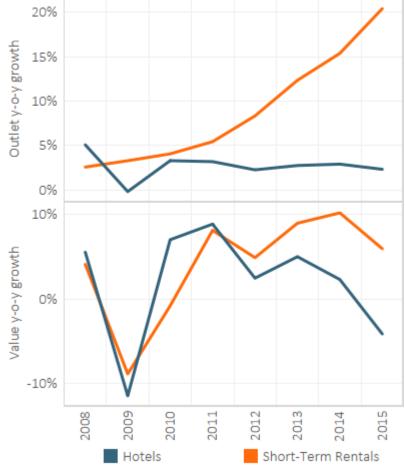




## Short-Term Rentals Changing Lodging Landscape

- The economic crisis that started in 2008 is often cited as the turning point for short-term rentals, and when comparing volume growth for hotels and short-term rentals it is clear to see that the number of outlets (or listings, as most online platforms call them) for the latter has grown rapidly over the past five years. And since 2012, short-term rentals have also outperformed hotels in value sales growth.
- Key short-term rentals player Airbnb was founded in 2008, focusing specifically on private accommodation in urban areas. Airbnb has proved well positioned to benefit from the growth in arrivals to city destinations, as it offers generally cheaper and arguably more authentic accommodation, in neighbourhoods which are often out of bounds for hotel developers.







## Airbnb Flourishes in Global Cities

- Paris was one of the first cities to allow short-term renting by changing its law in 2014. This accommodating stance by local councils makes Paris Airbnb's largest market.
- London has overtaken New York as the second city in 2016, as New York has taken a hostile stance towards the platform, while London has been more accommodating.
- The top 10 list shows Airbnb's reliance on Europe as a key market driving sales, with only two North American cities, compared to six European cities, in the top 10.
- Rio de Janeiro has seen a boost in listings due to the World Cup in 2014 and Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2016. The city has historically had an underdeveloped hotel industry, and although many hotels were built for the Games, Airbnb was announced as the official alternative accommodation provider, and reportedly accommodated 66,000 visitors during the Games.

Airbnb: Top Destination Cities 2016

	City	Airbnb Listings
1	Paris	78,000
2	London	47,000
3	New York	46,000
4	Rio de Janeiro	33,000
5	Los Angeles	26,000
6	Barcelona	23,000
7	Rome	23,000
8	Copenhagen	20,000
9	Sydney	20,000
10	Amsterdam	17,000

Source: Airbnb Data & Analytics



# **Urban Mobility is Changing**

- Vehicular congestion can take its toll on cities.
   Productivity is hampered and this has negative economic implications.
- The development of "smart" city projects, aimed to control and analyse traffic flows through technological innovation are becoming more common.
- Smartphone integration with urban mobility has been pivotal to increasing the variety of urban transport methods. From car- to bicycle-sharing schemes, smartphones are making it easier to get around.
- Modern urban transport systems of today benefit from multimodal integrations, flexible pricing, sharing economy, digitally-friendly and user-responsive services.

# TomTom's 10 Most Congested Developed Cities in 2015

City	Country	%
Los Angeles	US	41
Rome	Italy	38
London	UK	38
Marseille	France	38
Manchester	UK	37
Athens	Greece	36
Sydney	Australia	36
San Francisco	US	36
Paris	France	36
Brussels	Belgium	35

Source: TomTom

Flexible

pricing

Elements of modern urban transport systems

Welldeveloped networks Digitally-

friendly

services

Multimodal integrations

User- Based esponsive real-tir services traffi Sharing economy

Based on real-time vehicles



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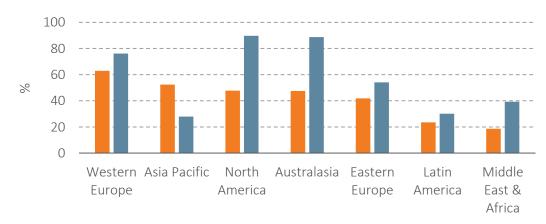
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### The Decline of the Personal Car

•Over the period 2010-2015, a significant cohort of developed cities recorded a fall in the number of passenger cars. In some countries (such as the UK), there has been a drop in the number of people obtaining driving licenses.

Less car use is partly a result of people swapping suburban living in favour of city centre life. Commuting by walking and cycling is becoming more popular, as are car-sharing and carhailing services such as Zipcar and Uber. The latter company is now available in 545 cities worldwide.

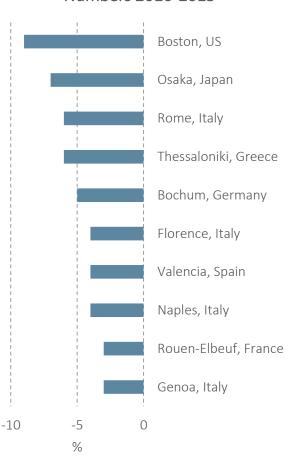
#### Spread of Cars and Bicycles in Cities by Region 2015



■ Average % of Households in Cities with At Least One Bicycle 2015

■ Average % of Households in Cities with At Least One Car 2015

#### Developed Cities with Most Rapidly Declining Vehicle Numbers 2010-2015





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# **Growing Concerns About Pollution**

• Many developed cities are aiming to transform their traditional urban mobility systems, which have long been characterised by high automobile use, to ones that aim to take on a more eco-friendly approach through the use of smartphone-integrated transport solutions. Despite this, some cities in the developed world are still beset by significant levels of vehicular congestion and air pollution.

•Accessibility is very important for travellers, which can be hampered by congestion and pollution, but boosted through a strong network of alternative forms of transport and innovative policies of city planning. For example, some US cities such as Miami and Boston

have witnessed an increase in

the number of restaurants,

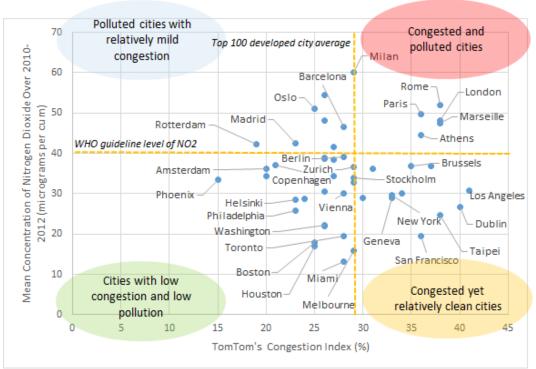
shopping and entertainment

that are best served through

venues popping up in locations

walking and/or public transport.

Scatter of TomTom's 2015 Congestion Index and the Mean Concentration of Nitrogen Dioxide



Source: Euromonitor International from TomTom





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# Research Methodology (1)

Euromonitor International's Top City Destinations Ranking (2015 edition) was built from the results of the global travel research programme conducted in 58 core countries by in-country analysts, which follows Euromonitor International's methodology and definitions for travel and tourism. The research for this report was undertaken in 2016, and the report was first published in January 2017.

City arrivals data were sourced directly from national statistics offices, airport arrivals, hotel/accommodation stays or other methods for all 58 core countries and 77 additional market insight countries under review.

Main secondary sources included: governmental, inter-governmental and other official sources; national and international specialist trade press and trade associations; industry study groups and other semi-official sources; and reports published by major operators, travel retailers, online databases and financial, business and mainstream press. Trade interviews were conducted with national tourist offices, trade associations and travel operators to fill gaps in secondary research.



# Research Methodology (2)

Country data were then cross-checked on a regional basis by the regional research teams based in London, Vilnius, Chicago, Dubai, Shanghai, Santiago and Singapore. Examples of regional sources reviewed include TourMis for European cities. Further top-down checks were conducted by the in-house global research team. Where irregularities were found between editions, supplementary research was conducted to confirm or amend those findings. Euromonitor International is satisfied that the results of the in-country research, coupled with the top-down global perspective, ensure that the Top City Destinations Ranking is robust with a high level of data validation.

It is important to note that the Top City Destinations Ranking is not an exhaustive list and that its purpose is to highlight leading cities gleaned from the findings of Euromonitor International's annual research programme, with the emphasis on cities, rather than popular holiday resorts.



# Research Methodology (3)

#### Chinese arrival inclusions

Overnight visitors from mainland China are included in the Hong Kong arrivals data. Overnight visitors from mainland China and Hong Kong are included in the Macau arrivals data. Overnight visitors from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan are included in Chinese city arrivals data.

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All countries/cities - excludes day trippers and domestic visitors.

- Singapore includes Malaysian citizens arriving by land, but excludes same-day visitors.
- Saudi Arabia official data are for provinces only.

Data Research Method	City
Airport Arrivals	Agra, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkatta, Moscow, Mumbai, Punta Cana, Taichung, Taipei
Airport Arrivals and Hotel/ Accommodation	Buenos Aires, Cairo, Sharm el-Sheikh
Hotel/Accommodation	Amsterdam, Berlin, Cancún, Jerba, Kuala Lumpur, Lima, Marrakech, Mexico City, Milan, Paris, Prague, Rome, Vienna
National Statistics Office	Athens, Auckland, Bangkok, Barcelona, Beijing, Brussels, Budapest, Chiang Mai, Denpasar, Doha, Dubai, Dublin, Florence, Frankfurt, Guangzhou, Hanoi, Halong, Heraklion, Ho Chi Minh City, Hong Kong, Honolulu, Jakarta, Jeju, Jerusalem, Johor Bahru, Krabi, Krakow, Kyoto, Las Vegas, Lima, Lisbon, London, Los Angeles, Macau, Madrid, Manama, Mecca, Melbourne, Miami, Munich, New York City, Nice, Orlando, Osaka, Pattaya, Phuket, Rhodes, Riyadh, Samui, San Francisco, Seoul, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Siem Reap, Singapore, Sydney, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, Toronto, Vancouver, Venice, Washington DC, Zhuhai
Other Method	Antalya, Burgas, Edirne, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Marne-La-Vallée, Mugla, Pulau Pinang, Sofia, St Petersburg, Varna, Warsaw



## **Definitions**

International arrivals by city includes visitors from abroad who arrive at the city under review as their first point of entry, and also includes those visitors to the city who arrived in the country via a different point of entry, but then go on to visit the city in question during their trip.

Arrivals refers to international tourists, ie any person visiting another country for at least 24 hours, for a period not exceeding 12 months, and staying in collective or private accommodation. Each arrival is counted separately and includes people travelling more than once a year and people visiting several countries during one holiday. Domestic visitors are excluded. This encompasses all purposes of visit, such as business, leisure and visiting friends and relatives.

Euromonitor International's arrivals figures **exclude** same-day visitors, people in transit and cruise passengers as this can distort arrival figures at important border crossings and cruise destinations, respectively. It also excludes those in paid employment abroad. Students that stay in a country for a period of more than 12 months are excluded and are considered as temporary residents. Military personnel and transportation crew are excluded, along with displaced people because of war or natural disasters.

The ranking focuses on **city hubs** and tends to exclude beach and ski resorts that may enjoy high volumes of international visitors.



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