

GLOBAL DESTINATION CITIES INDEX 2013 - BANGKOK TOPS THE LIST



The Global Destination Cities Index released by MasterCard for the second quarter of 2013 puts Bangkok on the top of the list. The Asian city edged its way past London by a thin margin on the basis of international visitor arrivals. An Asian city is topping the index for the first time after MasterCard introduced it in 2010.

Paris remains in the third position and it is the only city in the top 20 to register a 0.7 percent fall in the number of international visitor arrivals expected. Paris is followed by Singapore, New York and Istanbul.

On the other hand, Istanbul and Dubai reveal a strong growth in international visitor arrival numbers for 2013. The ranking of the top 20 destination cities remains the same as in 2012, except for Bangkok beating London to occupy the first position.

Except for Moscow, all the 12 cities that are anticipating the fastest increase in terms of air travel connectivity are located to the east as well as south of Istanbul. In the other regions, the cities showing an increase in air travel connectivity index from 2009 are Toronto (rank 13, Berlin (rank 17), Cairo (rank 19) and Bogota (rank 22).

Bangkok recorded tourist arrival growth rates of more than 18 percent in 2011 and 2012. The growth for 2013 is expected to be 9.8 percent. Istanbul and Dubai anticipate the strongest growth rates of 9.5 percent and 10.9 percent, respectively.

Despite the slow recovery following the financial crisis of 2008 and the continuing global economic uncertainty, data from 132 cities gathered by MasterCard revealed that international travel visitor arrivals as well as cross-border spending remained resilient. International visitor arrivals grew two times faster and cross-border spending grew 2.3 times faster than world real GDP.

If the top 10 destination cities continued to maintain their current international visitor arrival growth rates for a few years, then Istanbul is likely to overtake Singapore, New York and Paris by 2016 and Dubai is likely to overtake Singapore and New York by 2016 and Paris by 2017.

New York retains the world's top rank in 2013 with cross-border spending estimated US\$18.59 billion and is followed by London (US\$16.32 billion), Paris (US\$14.6 billion), Bangkok (US\$14.3 billion), Singapore (US\$13.5 billion) and Tokyo (US\$12.7 billion).

Among the top 5 destination cities, Bangkok shows the highest growth in cross-border spending from 2010 to 2013 with 20 percent, 36 percent and 11.4 percent in 2011, 2012 and 2013, respectively. Paris experienced severe volatility, but expects to recover to a decrease of 0.7% in 2013 from a decrease of 9.2 percent in 2012. Singapore experienced a continuous decline during the period, but it was more or less stable in the case of London and New York.

Among the top 10 destination cities in the Asia-Pacific region, Bangkok tops the list and interestingly, five of the cities are located in Greater China. **Among the Asian cities, Seoul, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur anticipate lower growth rates in the current year when compared**

to that in 2010. As regards cross-border spending Bangkok and Singapore occupy the first two spots. Tokyo ranked 7 on the visitor arrivals list and occupies the third position because of the higher cost of living in the city. The Australian cities Sydney and Melbourne come in the fifth and tenth places, though they do not figure in the top ten destination cities, reflecting the higher cost of living and the tendency of the tourists to stay longer.

The emerging geographical pattern shows that the fastest expansion in terms of getting connected to the world by introducing more flights and increasing frequency is happening in emerging markets in Asia and the Middle East. This is expected to drive not only visitor arrivals but also cross-border spending in the future.

[Global Top 10 Destination Cities by International Overnight Visitors](#)

- 1/ Bangkok (15.98 mil)
- 2/ London (15.96 mil)
- 3/ Paris (13.92 mil)
- 4/ Singapore (11.75 mil)
- 5/ New York (11.52 mil)
- 6/ Istanbul (10.37 mil)
- 7/ Dubai (9.89 mil)
- 8/ Kuala Lumpur (9.20 mil)
- 9/ Hong Kong (8.72 mil)
- 10/ Barcelona (8.41 mil)

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