

# 2015 GLOBAL DESTINATIONS CITIES INDEX



London has retained its position as the top-ranked international travel destination for the fifth time in seven years, according to the annual MasterCard Global Destinations Cities Index released today.

Driven by insights into travel patterns, the Global Destinations Cities Index provides a ranking of the 132 most visited cities around the world. More than just a travel tracker, the Index delivers deeper understanding of how people move around the world and speaks to the importance and prominence of the world's cities as homes, destinations and engines of growth.

According to the study, London is projected to receive 18.82 million international visitors in 2015, just slightly ahead of second-ranked Bangkok. The two cities have topped the Index throughout its five-year history. Forecasted overnight visitors to the rest of the top 10 cities

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- Bangkok - 18.24 million
- Paris - 16.06 million visitors
- Dubai - 14.26 million visitors
- Istanbul - 12.56 million visitors
- New York - 12.27 million visitors
- Singapore - 11.88 million visitors
- Kuala Lumpur - 11.12 million visitors
- Seoul - 10.35 million visitors
- Hong Kong - 8.66 million visitors

“MasterCard understands the importance of cities around the world both for travelers and those who live there,” said Ann Cairns, president of International Markets, MasterCard. “This year’s study helps us understand just how interconnected the world’s cities are the significant role they play in connecting and empowering greater numbers of people than ever before.”

## Intellectual Insights: Understanding What Drives Global Cities

In 2015, it is expected that nearly 383 million overnight trips will be made by international visitors between the Index’s 132 cities, representing a massive demand for goods, services and experiences as they spend at total of US\$360 billion during their visits.

According to the UN report on World Urbanization Prospects, two-thirds of the world’s population will live in cities by 2050. By forecasting the number of international overnight travelers, the Global Destination Cities Index shows the infrastructure needed to meet the expectations of both locals and visitors.

Businesses and governments can use the insights from the study to identify those areas - from transit to cultural experiences to infrastructure - in which investment is needed for continued growth, innovation and sustainability.

“This index is just the beginning. Through a powerful combination of insights, innovation and experiences, MasterCard is partnering to help build the smart cities of the future,” said Cairns.

Infrastructure Innovation and Consumer Experiences

Major cities like London and Chicago are building an open, interoperable transit system facilitated by MasterCard contactless and mobile payments. The streamlined operations help support investments in other infrastructure.

MasterCard has also developed consumer marketing programs to support the significant role cities play as centers of human interaction. In fact, six of the top 10 Global Destination Cities are also Priceless Cities, a one-of-a-kind global platform that curates unique experiences, privileged event and attraction access, and special merchant offers.

Destination Cities: Spotting the Trends

Across the globe, a few key trends stand out, including:

Asia/Pacific - The region is home to three of the top four fastest-growing destination cities between 2009 and 2015 - Colombo, Chengdu and Osaka.

Europe - Istanbul is the most diversified destination, with 50 percent of its international overnight visitors coming from 33 feeder cities.

Latin America - Lima is both the top destination and the fastest growing city in the region, featuring almost 50 percent more international overnight visitors than second-ranked Mexico City.

Middle East and Africa - Dubai continues to be one of the fastest growing cities in the global top ten while Abu Dhabi is the third fastest growing destination city overall between 2009 and 2015.

North America - Houston is the fastest growing in North America since 2009 and is the only destination city in North America with double-digit growth.

## **About the MasterCard Global Destination Cities Index**

The MasterCard Index of Global Destination Cities ranks cities in terms of the number of their total international overnight visitor arrivals and the cross-border spending by these same visitors in the destination cities, and gives visitor and passenger growth forecasts for 2015.

Public data is used in deriving the international overnight visitor arrivals and their cross-border spending in each of the 132 destination cities, using custom-made algorithms; paying special attention to eliminate the hub effects for destination cities such as Singapore, Dubai, Amsterdam and Frankfurt.

This Index and the accompanying reports are not based on MasterCard volumes or transactional data.

Download full report [here](#)

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