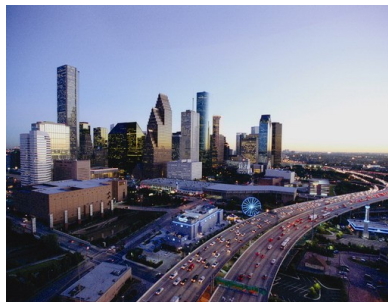


TOP CITIES WITH THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF LIFE



What city is the best to live in? Where are enough parks, shops and other services for your life to be as comfortable as possible? The western standards are getting higher and higher, people are moving in and out more frequently for better job opportunities as well as for better quality of life and they are also getting harder to please. Mercer Human Resource Consulting Company has recently done a research focused on the quality of life and general living standards in cities and capitals around the world. People were asked to judge the quality of their life and to estimate how comfortable and content they are about their lives. The output of this research is the list of the world's top ten inhabitant-friendly cities.

1. Zurich

It is no surprise that Switzerland has three cities in the top 10, two of them in the top 3. The living standards in this Alpine country, rich in industry as well as nature and cultural sites, have long been one of the highest in Europe (Switzerland has been fighting for victory with Iceland and Norway). In the overall satisfied country, the inhabitants of its largest, yet not capital, city are the most content ones and feel their lives to be as good as they can be.

2. Geneva

The second largest city in Switzerland and also the second one in this ranking is Geneva. The Swiss are obviously a very happy nation! We should nevertheless admit that high living standards are connected with very high living costs. The most expensive cities are Oslo, Tokyo and Reykjavik; Zurich and Geneva nevertheless ranked eighth and nine respectively in this contest. They are still the only cities from the "most expensive" list, who are at the same time members of the "best for living" group.

3. Vancouver

The only representative of the Americas, Vancouver, the largest city of the Canadian province of British Columbia, holds the third position. It is remarkable that there is no U.S. city in the top ten. Maybe USA ceases to be the paradise it used to be. If you want to live an American dream, forget America, your countries are Switzerland and Canada.

4. Vienna

Another European city on the fourth position. And another German-speaking one! Actually, there are only German-speaking European cities on this list, which probably means that the Germans, except for being "pünktlich" and obsessed by cleaning are also very happy with the way and the place they live their lives (did you know that there are more expressions for cleaning of all kinds in German than in any other language?).

5. Auckland

The second one of the three Commonwealth cities in the top ten is Auckland, the largest city of New Zealand. It is especially the large amount of parks and generally the closeness to the nature that the inhabitants appreciate the most. Auckland resides 1,4 million inhabitants, which is about one fourth of the overall population of New Zealand. Unlike Vancouver, that stands for the North America alone, Auckland has an Australian backup - Sydney - on the rank 9.

6. Düsseldorf

Positions 6 to 8 are occupied by German cities. From these three, Düsseldorf, the centre of German advertising industry, situated in the largest German industrial area called the Ruhr area (with Cologne, Duisburg or Dortmund for neighbours) is the winner. It is quite a surprise that Berlin did not make it to the top ten, as it is widely considered a multicultural and a very pleasant place to live. Beat it, Berlin, viva Düsseldorf!

7. Frankfurt

Frankfurt am Main is the fifth largest city in Germany and obviously also the second most popular and pleasant city for life. One of the city's characteristics is its skyline with many skyscrapers that count among the tallest ones in Europe and a huge airport.

8. Munich

The third and last German representative, Munich seems to be the least surprising one. The capital of Bavaria, the largest and one of the richest states in Germany, definitely is a nice place to live. One of the things that make Munich interesting and exceptional is the Oktoberfest - the biggest beer celebration in Europe. During this event, people drink beer from one-liter glasses. It is thus no wonder that they are happy and smiling all the time.

9. Bern

The third Swiss city on this list is the capital of Switzerland. Thus there are three German and three Swiss cities in the top ten, which makes Germany and Switzerland the total winners of this little competition. On the other hand, the losers are also clear - Asia, with no representative in the top 10, and the Americas, with only one of them.

9. Sydney

Sydney shares the ninth position with Bern, which is quite a success, considering it was founded to be the put-off place for the British criminals! Its first inhabitants would scarcely believe that one day people will be so fond of living here. Of course, Sydney has changed a lot since then and belongs, with its modern architecture, many parks, beaches and multicultural atmosphere to the most beautiful cities in the world.

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