

LISBON NAMED THE WORLD'S HAPPIEST HOLIDAY DESTINATION



Finding the perfect holiday destination can be a tricky task considering how many there are to choose from. What if you could base your decision on something as simple as happiness? Well, according to BookRetreats' Holiday Happiness Index, which measures different factors associated with higher levels of happiness, the Portuguese capital of Lisbon has been crowned the world's happiest holiday destination.

The index compared 47 worldwide destinations to determine where people are likely to be the happiest on their holidays based on certain criteria. The criteria included higher exposure to sunlight, levels of walking (and the benefits it provides), an abundance of green space, opportunities to eat healthily and sleep well. **These things have a positive impact on our bodies as they promote the production of happiness-inducing hormones.** The research was done by medical expert Natalie Dattilo-Ryan, a clinical psychologist and holistic wellness expert at Harvard.

What Sets Lisbon Apart

The city has a large variety of positive aspects. Let's start with the food. A staggering 10 percent of the city's restaurants are classified as healthy dining - ranking second in the Happy Index. More than this, due to the rich gastronomic offerings, the variety of cuisines, and the affordability, Lisbon continues to be a foodie's paradise.

A place like this would of course be a great place to stroll around and enjoy the view. The capital is extremely walkable, and has plenty of viewpoints to enjoy the beautiful city and distant sea views. It is also fairly easy to access nature in Lisbon. The city has 49 square meters of green space per person, compared to just 13 square meters in Madrid, making it almost four times greener. For those who want a more intense nature experience, the beaches of Cascais and Costa da Caparica are the perfect escape, only a short train-ride away.

And what's a city break without some sun? Lisbon gets an astounding 2,828 hours of sun annually, so there is no excuse not to enjoy all this beauty.

Lisbon is the perfect city-break destination, which is why its tourism officials strive to maintain the conditions that make the city so special. Their goal is to keep a variety of different offerings so that it continues to be a valuable asset for both the visitors and the locals.

The Other Happiest Holiday Destinations

Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is also a fantastic place to visit. It comes in second place in the Happy Index, being the home of one of the world's most consistently happy countries. Nature is abundant throughout the city in the form of spectacular parks and tree-lined streets, leading into extensive networks of forest trails. Helsinki has 126 square meters of green space per person, which is more than double the European average, and more than 50 times that of Hong Kong. The capital is very safe and family friendly with excellent transport links and a population that values hard work and trust, which provides a sense of security for tourists visiting the city.

The third happiest place to spend a holiday is Orlando, Florida. Home to Walt Disney World and Universal Studios, the city is famous for its theme parks. It also has a wealth of natural reserves and lakes, and plenty of sunny days (2,930 hours per year) to enjoy them in.

Besides Orlando, the rest of the top 10 happiest holiday destinations are all European. After third place, Athens comes fourth, followed by Edinburgh, Madrid, Vienna, Budapest, Oslo, and Vilnius.

As you can see, making a holiday more enjoyable is possible if you know where to go. The most important factors are associated with **more outdoor activities, such as green space, walking, and getting fresh air**. Of course, eating well and sleeping soundly are important too. With its great selection of restaurants, abundance of greenery and parks, long sunny days, and accessibility to fresh water and beaches, Lisbon was ultimately rated the happiest holiday destination.

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