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# 10 cities that should be on everyone's bucket list

by Eric Stoen | Nov 1, 2017 | 576 comments



**Note:** All travel is subject to frequently-changing governmental restrictions—please check federal, state, and local advisories before scheduling trips. This article was last updated November 2021.

Eric Stoen of [Travel Babbo](#) has traveled to more than 450 cities in 84 countries (at last count). We asked him which ten bucket list cities everyone should travel to in their lifetime. Here are his picks for crafting your perfect city-centric bucket list.

Creating a bucket list is tricky! The world is full of amazing cities, and of course you may still be holding off on international travel. It would be easy to put together a list of unique cities that are off the beaten path, or a list of the coolest small towns, or up-and-coming destinations. But for this list I returned to the basics: what are the top ten cities that everyone should see, even if the destinations are already heavily touristed? Here are my ten. Discussion is welcome! And I'm well aware that there are no African or South American cities on my list. A few cities on both continents barely missed the cut.

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## Florence, Italy

[Florence](#) is the birthplace of the Renaissance and has the art and architecture to prove it, but beyond that it maintains a large European city feel on a small walkable scale. Don't judge the city by the daytime crowds of tour groups and cruise ship passengers. Stay in the city center for a few days, walk around early in the morning and late in the evening, and you'll feel the history.



Early morning in Florence

## Istanbul, Turkey

There are countless reasons to visit [Istanbul](#): the hills; the Bosphorus; the Blue Mosque; Hagia Sophia; the Grand Bazaar; its amazing history and importance on the Silk Road. It's Asian and European, secular and devout. And everything comes together magnificently.



Istanbul's Hagia Sophia. Photo credit: Cacinda Maloney, [Points and Travel](#)

## Tokyo, Japan

Visit [Tokyo](#) for the skyscrapers, the arcades, the anime, the iconic [Park Hyatt Tokyo](#), and the amazingly hectic pace of the city, but head to the gardens, temples, and parks as well to see Tokyo's more relaxed side.



A torii gate near Tokyo's Meiji Shrine

## Paris, France

[Paris](#) is the third most visited city in the world, after Bangkok and London. Some go for the food. Some for the museums. Some to take a selfie in front of the Eiffel Tower. We love it for the neighborhoods, the parks, and the frequent picnics.



Nothing beats a sunset picnic at Champ de Mars park

## Venice, Italy

[Venice](#) is magical. Dive in. Get lost. Think about everyone else who has walked the same paths and sailed the same canals for more than 1,500 years. And do it soon, before sea levels rise further.



Venice

## Hong Kong, China

I almost included Beijing instead, but [Hong Kong](#) is easier to visit (no visa required), and is more compact and easier to explore. We love hiking on Lantau Island, watching the city light up at night from Victoria Peak, smelling the incense in the temples, and taking in both sides of the city from the Star Ferry – still the best \$0.25 you can spend anywhere.



Hong Kong's Man Mo Temple

## Varanasi, India

There are several Indian cities I could have included on this list, but I gave the nod to sacred [Varanasi](#) on the banks of the Ganges, where life and death coexist.



Morning along the Ganges in Varanasi

## New York, New York

From morning to night, [New York City](#) has an energy unlike anywhere else on the planet. Visit Central Park, head to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, eat a hot dog from a street cart, dine at a Michelin-starred restaurant, look out over the Statue of Liberty, and see a Broadway show ... all in the same day.



The Oculus – New York City's transportation hub at the World Trade Center

## Jerusalem, Israel

One of the oldest cities in the world, [Jerusalem](#) is key to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. In entering the Old City, you leave behind the 21st century, and when you walk from the Jewish quarter to the Muslim quarter, you may as well be traveling to another country. Utterly fascinating to visit and experience, regardless of your religious beliefs.



In Jerusalem's Old City

## Sydney, Australia



Australia is the number one dream destination of Americans. Stop dreaming and go! [Sydney](#) has iconic landmarks, amazing beaches, and one of the highest quality of life rankings on the planet.



Sydney's Harbour Bridge and Opera House as seen from the [Shangri-La Hotel](#)

What are your bucket list cities? Get started planning your escape to your favorites [here!](#)



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## 576 Comments



**O.S. Nagrampa** on September 1, 2018 at 9:31 pm

Bangkok should be in any travellers' list for a variety of reasons: people, culture, food, sights, shopping...and the reasons are as varied and endless.

[Reply](#)



**Bryan Merker** on September 27, 2018 at 8:20 pm

Agreed