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EIU Global Liveability Index 2026



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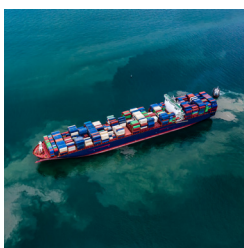
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EIU Global Liveability Index 2026

Gains in Asia have kept the liveability index steady at a global level, despite deteriorating stability in the Middle East.

Key findings

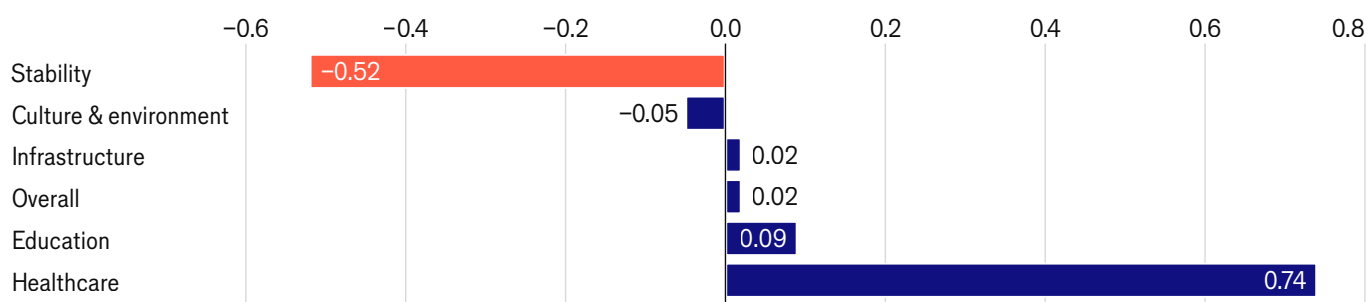
- Copenhagen (Denmark) remains the world's most liveable city, edging out Vienna (Austria) and Melbourne (Australia), which are in second and third place respectively. The rest of the top ten is dominated by cities in wealthy countries such as Australia, Canada, Japan and Switzerland.
- Western Europe is still the strongest region for liveability, but its average score has stagnated in the 2026 index, while Asia's has risen. There are now nine Asian cities in the top 20, and seven European cities.
- The Iran war has undermined stability across the Gulf region, contributing to a 1-point decline in the average liveability score for cities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Muscat in Oman and Kuwait City have seen the biggest decline in our rankings, while Tehran (Iran) has fallen into the bottom ten cities.
- Chinese cities have climbed up the rankings, owing to their improved scores for healthcare. New York's stability score improved noticeably, reflecting years of falling crime rates and a reduced risk of a major terrorist attack.

EIU's Global Liveability Index assesses 173 cities across the world across 30 indicators grouped into five categories: stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure, with the aim of showing how comfortable these cities are to live in. In the latest edition of the survey, conducted in May 2026, the average liveability score across all cities is 76.1 out of 100, the same as last year.

However, scores in the stability category fell by an average of 0.5 points across the 173 cities, continuing a recent trend. The average score for the culture and environment category has also declined marginally, particularly in Europe. This has been offset by an average increase of 0.7 points for the healthcare category, along with marginal increases for education and infrastructure.

Categories: EIU's Global Liveability Index 2026

% change in average score per city; year on year



Source: EIU.

Although previous declines in stability scores were focused on Europe, owing to the Ukraine war and a series of terrorist attacks and public protests, this year the Middle East has borne the brunt of the decline. The main reason for this is the Iran war, which started in February 2026 with Israeli and US strikes on Iran. Iran subsequently launched attacks against several neighbouring countries and blocked

the Strait of Hormuz. On average, the 18 cities in the MENA region have fallen by more than three places in the rankings. For some cities in the region, the downgrades have been substantial. Muscat (Oman) and Kuwait City, for example, have fallen by 14 and 12 places respectively, making them our biggest downwards movers.

Biggest movers down: EIU's Global Liveability Index 2026

Index score out of 100 (100=high); ranking out of 173 cities (1=high)

City		Country	Index	Rank	Rank move	Index move
Muscat		Oman	68	123	-14	-4
Kuwait City		Kuwait	72	105	-12	-3
Amman		Jordan	60	143	-11	-3
Manama		Bahrain	70	116	-10	-3
Doha		Qatar	71	108	-7	-3
Auckland		New Zealand	95	12	-5	-1
Luxembourg		Luxembourg	95	15	-4	-1
Budapest		Hungary	91	36	-4	-1
Portland		US	90	48	-4	-1
Abu Dhabi		UAE	81	76	-4	-3
Dubai		UAE	80	79	-4	-3
Saipan		US	78	87	-4	0
Zurich		Switzerland	96	5	-3	-1
San Juan		Puerto Rico	79	83	-3	0
Athens		Greece	78	88	-3	0

Source: EIU.

Even so, the MENA region continues to see improvements in some categories, particularly healthcare. There have also been upgrades to the healthcare scores for the Chinese cities in the index, following years of public investment. Five of these cities now score above 80 out of 100 for healthcare, with another four scoring just slightly lower. As a result, Chinese cities dominate the list of biggest upwards movers this year, led by Fuzhou, an industrial city in the south-east. However, culture and environment scores in most Chinese cities remain low, owing to restrictions on political freedoms, limiting further gains in their rankings.

Another notable upward mover in the index is New York (US), which saw one of the biggest score leaps of all the 173 cities, gaining by 1.2 points and moving up three places in the rankings; however, it remains the third-lowest-ranking US city. The gains were all in the stability category, following years of falling crime rates and lower risks of terrorist attacks. Lisbon (Portugal) also moved up sharply, reflecting notable improvements in its healthcare provision. Tokyo (Japan) increased its score for culture and environment.

Biggest movers up: EIU's Global Liveability Index 2026

Index score out of 100 (100=high); ranking out of 173 cities (1=high)

City		Country	Index	Rank	Rank move	Index move
Fuzhou		China	75	93	7	1
Lisbon		Portugal	89	54	6	1
Wuxi		China	72	106	4	1
Nanjing		China	74	98	4	1
Zhuhai		China	72	105	3	1
Qingdao		China	70	114	4	1
Tokyo		Japan	96	10	3	0
New York		US	87	66	3	1
Shenyang		China	79	84	3	1
Dalian		China	74	101	3	1
Xian		China	73	102	3	1
Johannesburg		South Africa	71	108	3	0
Rio de Janeiro		Brazil	71	108	3	0
Chongqing		China	70	113	3	1
Guangzhou		China	73	104	3	1

Source: EIU.

These improvements in China and Japan drove a 0.3-point increase in average scores for Asian cities in the index, making Asia the most improved region this year. The average score for the 58 Asian cities in the index is now 73.9, just ahead of eastern Europe. However, Asia's average continues to be dragged down by low scores for cities in its least developed countries, including Dhaka in Bangladesh. Most other regions saw marginal

increases in their average scores, but western Europe and Latin America saw marginal declines, in Europe's case as a result of lower scores for culture and environment. MENA saw a full 1-point drop as a result of the Iran war. Overall, western Europe remains the most liveable region in the index, with an average score of 91.7, putting it just ahead of North America on 90.4.

Regional averages: EIU’s Global Liveability Index 2026

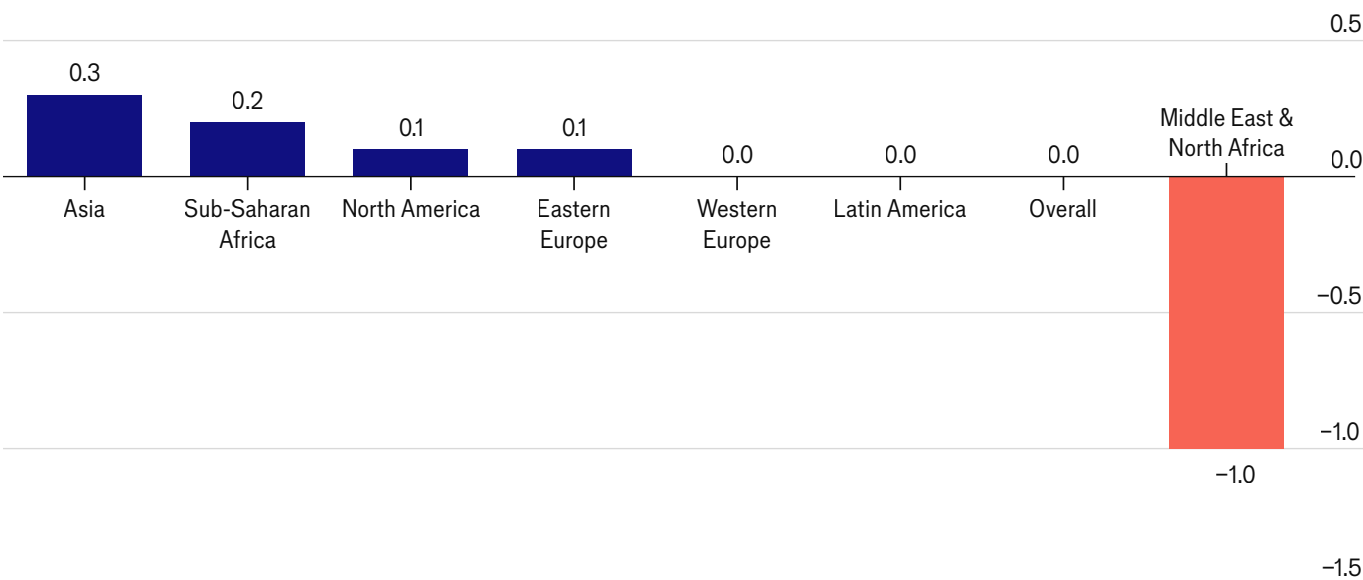
Index score out of 100 (100=high); ranking out of 173 cities (1=high)

	Overall	Stability	Healthcare	Culture & environment	Education	Infrastructure
Asia	74	76	76	67	82	74
North America	90	85	92	90	100	92
Western Europe	92	86	95	92	96	93
Eastern Europe	71	70	71	70	81	70
Latin America	67	58	68	75	80	63
Middle East & North Africa	61	55	68	52	78	64
Sub-Saharan Africa	55	49	47	65	65	51
Overall	76	73	78	74	85	76

Source: EIU.

Regional averages: EIU’s Global Liveability Index 2026

% change in average score per city; year on year



Source: EIU.

In our 2026 survey, Copenhagen (Denmark) retained pole position for the second year running, scoring a perfect 100 out of 100 in three categories and above 95 in the other two, with Vienna (Austria) and Melbourne (Australia) close behind. However, as for most of the cities in the top ten, there has been no improvement in the scores for these three cities in the past year. The top ten also includes two

other Australian cities, two from Switzerland and two from Japan. Vancouver (Canada), which had led the index for many years, is the only North American city represented. All of the top ten have perfect scores for education, with most also scoring 100 for healthcare provision. The two Swiss cities saw declines in their culture and environment scores.

Top ten positions: EIU's Global Liveability Index 2026

Index score out of 100 (100=high); ranking out of 173 cities (1=high)

City		Country	Rank	Overall	Stability	Healthcare	Culture & environment	Education	Infrastructure
Copenhagen		Denmark	1	98	100	96	95	100	100
Vienna		Austria	2	97	95	100	94	100	100
Melbourne		Australia	3	97	95	100	96	100	96
Sydney		Australia	4	97	95	100	94	100	96
Zurich		Switzerland	5	96	95	100	94	100	96
Geneva		Switzerland	6	96	95	100	92	100	96
Osaka		Japan	7	96	100	100	87	100	96
Adelaide		Australia	8	96	95	100	91	100	96
Vancouver		Canada	9	96	95	96	97	100	93
Tokyo		Japan	10	96	100	100	89	100	93

Source: EIU.

The bottom ten cities in our index have nearly all been affected by war or poverty, or both, with all scoring particularly poorly for stability. Damascus (Syria) remains the lowest ranked city as it continues to recover from its civil war. However, its scores for healthcare have improved markedly since December 2024, when the regime of Bashar al-Assad, the then president, was overthrown.

Tripoli (Libya) has also seen improvements in the healthcare category, but remains the second-lowest-ranked city. Tehran (Iran) is a new entrant to the bottom ten, as a result of the war there, joining Kyiv (Ukraine), whose ranking has fallen further. By contrast, Caracas (Venezuela) has narrowly escaped the bottom ten this year, after the US instigated a change of government there in January 2026.

Bottom ten positions: EIU's Global Liveability Index 2026

Index score out of 100 (100=high); ranking out of 173 cities (1=high)

City		Country	Rank	Overall	Stability	Healthcare	Culture & environment	Education	Infrastructure
Tehran		Iran	164	45	40	63	37	58	39
Harare		Zimbabwe	165	45	40	33	57	67	36
Kyiv		Ukraine	166	45	40	42	53	75	27
Port Moresby		Papua New Guinea	167	44	30	42	53	58	46
Lagos		Nigeria	168	44	30	38	54	42	54
Algiers		Algeria	169	43	35	54	45	58	30
Karachi		Pakistan	170	43	20	54	36	75	52
Dhaka		Bangladesh	171	42	45	42	41	67	27
Tripoli		Libya	172	41	30	50	38	58	41
Damascus		Syria	173	32	20	33	41	33	32

Source: EIU.

About EIU's liveability survey

What is liveability?

The concept of liveability is simple: it assesses which locations around the world provide the best or the worst living conditions. Assessing liveability has a broad range of uses, from benchmarking perceptions of development levels to assigning a hardship allowance as part of expatriate relocation packages. Our liveability rating quantifies the challenges that might be presented to an individual's lifestyle in any given location, and allows for direct comparison between locations.

How is the rating calculated?

Every city is assigned a rating of relative comfort for more than 30 qualitative and quantitative factors across five broad categories: stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and

infrastructure. For qualitative indicators, a score is awarded based on the judgement of in-house analysts and in-city contributors. For quantitative indicators, the score is calculated based on the relative performance across a number of external data points. These quantitative indicators are also used to benchmark the qualitative scoring.

The scores are then compiled and weighted within each category to provide a category score of 1-100, where 1 is considered intolerable and 100 is considered ideal. These category scores are then compiled and weighted into an overall liveability score out of 100. The resulting final scores are grouped as acceptable (over 80 out of 100), tolerable, uncomfortable, undesirable or intolerable (under 40). To aid comparison, we also rank all 173 cities on their overall score. A ranking of 1 is the best, while 173 is the worst.

Category 1: Stability (weight: 25% of total)

Indicator	Source
Prevalence of petty crime	EIU rating
Prevalence of violent crime	EIU rating
Threat of terror	EIU rating
Threat of military conflict	EIU rating
Threat of civil unrest/conflict	EIU rating
Source: EIU.	

Category 2: Healthcare (weight: 20% of total)

Indicator	Source
Availability of private healthcare	EIU rating
Quality of private healthcare	EIU rating
Availability of public healthcare	EIU rating
Quality of public healthcare	EIU rating
Availability of over-the-counter drugs	EIU rating
General healthcare indicators	Adapted from World Bank
Source: EIU.	

Category 3: Culture & environment (weight: 25% of total)

Indicator	Source
Humidity/temperature rating	Adapted from average weather conditions
Discomfort of climate to travellers	EIU rating
Level of corruption	Adapted from Transparency International
Social or religious restrictions	EIU rating
Level of censorship	EIU rating
Sporting availability	EIU rating of 3 sport indicators
Cultural availability	EIU rating of 4 cultural indicators
Food & drink	EIU rating of 3 cultural indicators
Consumer goods & services	EIU rating of product availability
Source: EIU.	

Category 4: Education (weight: 10% of total)

Indicator	Source
Availability of private education	EIU rating
Quality of private education	EIU rating
Public education indicators	Adapted from World Bank
Source: EIU.	

Category 5: Infrastructure (weight: 20% of total)

Indicator	Source
Quality of road network	EIU rating
Quality of public transport	EIU rating
Quality of international links	EIU rating
Availability of good quality housing	EIU rating
Quality of energy provision	EIU rating
Quality of water provision	EIU rating
Quality of telecommunications	EIU rating

Source: EIU.

Meet the team



Ana Nicholls
Director of
industry analysis

★ **Specialist subjects**
Automotive, business
environment, healthcare

🌐 **Languages**
English and French

Ana oversees EIU's industry subscription services in London, managing websites, reports, data and forecasts across six industry sectors and acting as lead analyst for our healthcare and automotive analysis. Ana also works closely with clients in those two sectors, particularly on projects related to value-based health and healthcare policymaking. Ana is an experienced analyst who has previously spent time specialising in global economic and business development as well as analysis of healthcare policy. She has a particular interest in the transition countries of Eastern Europe.



Akshay Rathi
Senior data analyst

★ **Specialist subjects**
Data analytics,
statistical modelling,
data visualisation

🌐 **Languages**
English and Hindi

Akshay manages EIU's city-level data, including The Global Liveability Index. His work focuses on analysing data and ensuring accuracy and structure, while collaborating with multiple stakeholders to support robust, reliable insights. He also leads data operations for other key indices such as sustainability and cost of living, and contributes to data workflows and visualisation across EIU's rating products.

Navigate an ever-changing global market

The EIU Liveability Index provides trusted, data-driven insights into the relative liveability of 173 cities worldwide, helping organisations make informed decisions on mobility, investment and location strategy. The Index is available as an annual report, rankings and the underlying survey results through the EIU Store. Historical data is also available via Snowflake Marketplace or through our Tailored Data Feed for enterprise users.

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The complete analysis outlined in this report is exclusively available through the **EIU Store**. The full Liveability rankings, survey and report are also available via **Snowflake Marketplace**. Please **contact us** for more details on our Tailored Data Feed.

Contact us

To learn more about the Global Liveability Index, including access through the EIU Store, Snowflake Marketplace or our Tailored Data Feed, please contact us or visit eiu.com.

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