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Hotel prices,
airlift and
safety scores
shifted this
year's U.S. and
global lists.



2023

Convention Cities Index

The world's return to travel is putting pressure on key site-selection factors, raising hotel prices, expanding airlift and shifting safety levels.

BY ELISE SCHOENING AND RICHARD D'AMBROSIO

A FULL YEAR INTO WHAT MOST INDUSTRY observers see as a “return to normal” for meetings, high demand for travel in general has been a major driver of cost increases post-Covid, in addition to strong demand for meetings and conventions. The leisure traveler has fueled rising hotel rates, but there has been a lessening in that unprecedented demand, which could affect travel costs in the near future.

Also complicating the site-selection process are the changing safety landscape and challenges regarding airline rates and routes. These factors, coupled with China's reopening, have created significant shifts in Northstar Meetings Group's 2023 Convention Cities Index. You can download the 2023 CCI and earlier reports at bit.ly/2023-CCI.

For planners of large events trying to help their organizations make smarter choices in this environment, the CCI is

an important tool for understanding how these major markets are performing. The first and only of its kind, the CCI uses an in-depth methodology and weighted ranking system to determine the top 25 U.S. cities and top 25 global destinations for hosting large events.

Each city is evaluated across six categories: available exhibit space, total hotel rooms, average hotel cost, travel time from the nearest international airport to the convention center, the number of direct monthly flights and the city's overall safety level. New this year, STR is being used by Northstar to source the total number of hotel rooms per destination. More details on the methodology and sources can be found at the end of the report.

CCI data is updated twice a year, with a fully refreshed index published each June and an interim report released in January. Planners organizing events sev-

eral years out can compare the latest findings to previous cycles of the CCI for a historical view of how convention city competitiveness has changed since 2020.

Higher Hotel Rates Hold Firm

In an inflationary environment with a potential recession looming, event planners are sensitive to high costs. Data from the June 2023 CCI show that room rates in the United States have fallen slightly over the past six months but remain above their prepandemic levels. For the top 25 U.S. destinations on this year's index, hotel rooms now average \$236 — down 4 percent from six months ago but still 19 percent higher than the 2020 CCI, which averaged \$198 a night.

New York continues to be the most expensive city on the U.S. list at \$450. By contrast, Indianapolis is the most affordable domestic destination at just \$172.





The global CCI has remained more stable and features more affordable rates. The average hotel price for the top 25 global destinations for 2023 is \$167 — on par with the previous CCI and just \$3 less than the prepandemic rate.

Unsurprisingly, room rates in Europe cost more than those in Asia, where Covid-19 recovery has lagged. European destinations now average \$178 a night, just below the 2020 rate of \$181. The most expensive European destination is London at \$263, while Dusseldorf, Germany, is the most wallet-friendly at \$137.

In Asia, room rates average \$116 — down 13 percent from \$133 in 2020. Prices for Chinese cities run between \$93 to \$99, while other destinations — such as Bangkok and Singapore cost \$120 and \$240 per night, respectively.

According to the latest Northstar Meetings Group/Cvent Meetings Industry PULSE Survey, 75 percent of respondents who planned cross-border events pre-Covid are doing so now. These planners are most interested in booking

with the type of destinations featured in the CCI, with the majority (54 percent) saying the demand for major cities and city centers has increased.

But rising prices are sure to influence site-selections decisions. In fact, planners have ranked higher costs as their top concern in the past seven cycles of the PULSE Survey — dating from March 2022 to March 2023.

Cindy Y. Lo, CEO of the Austin, Texas-based event-planning company Red Velvet echoed these sentiments. She notes, “Not all companies have increased their budgets to match inflation,” and sticker shock has forced some groups to cut attendance or cut event expectations.

Capacity could become even more of a challenge this year, as more travelers from nations previously under strict travel rules take to the skies again, creating increased hotel demand and potentially driving up costs even further.

According to Bruce McIndoe, president of McIndoe Risk Advisory, “Hotel prices can go up or down this

year depending on macro factors like the outcome of the debt-ceiling negotiations, economic strength, travel demand, wage pressure, etc.” McIndoe predicts that they are “more likely to increase than decrease, as will be the case for airfares.”

Monthly Flights Rise as Travel Rebounds, China Reopens

Airlift is another major concern for planners, particularly given the onslaught of delays and cancellations that have plagued travelers over the past two years. The good news is that the number of direct flights per month is increasing in many destinations.

The June 2023 CCI shows that the average number of monthly flights to the top 25 global destinations grew 33 percent from 12,800 in December 2022 to 17,000 in May 2023. In Europe, the average flights per month nearly doubled from 7,800 to 14,300. Among the European cities that saw airlift rise the most are Dusseldorf (up 50 percent from 4,800 to 7,200 flights per month), Frankfurt (up

19 percent from 15,000 to 17,800 flights) and Paris (up 16 percent from 25,400 to 29,400 flights). In addition, London offers the most direct flights per month of all global CCI destinations with more than 49,000 flights scheduled in May 2023.

The average number of flights to Asia per month grew at a slower pace of 13 percent since December — not surprising given China only just reopened fully. Among the cities that are increasing airlift the most are Guangzhou (monthly flights are up 14 percent over the past six months, from 18,400 to 20,900) and Shanghai (up 13 percent from 25,600 to 29,000 flights per month).

In the United States, where air travel resumed to more normal pre-Covid levels in mid-2022, lift among the top 25 cities grew an average of 7 percent since December. Airlift to New York increased 9 percent from 24,600 flights per month in December to 26,800 flights this May. Flights to Dallas increased 8 percent from 28,200 to 30,500. Chicago maintains the title for the best airlift within the U.S. at 32,800 domestic flights this May.

Although the number of flights is increasing, industry experts expect planes will be near capacity and prices will remain high. William J. McGee, senior fellow for aviation at the American Economic Liberties Project, anticipates U.S. load factors during this summer season will average more than 90 percent — up from 78 percent reported by the International Air Transport Association in February. Barring unforeseen changes, McGee predicts, “Flights will likely remain full for some time to come,” allowing airlines to “fill planes and charge more for bookings.”

Tracking Shifts in Destination Safety Levels

Destinations are becoming more safe overall per the latest CCI data, alleviating one concern for meeting planners. Nevertheless, planners must continue to keep this category top-of-mind when selecting a host city for their convention and consider all possible risk factors.

The safety scores of the top 25 glob-

al CCI cities have continued to track upwards. The average safety rating in June 2022 was 68.4 out of 100 (higher numbers indicate a safer city). This rose to 73.72 in December 2022 and now sits at 74.4 on the June 2023 CCI.

These scores are provided by the safety-awareness app GeoSure, which measures seven factors, including health and medical data, nighttime safety, women's safety and LGBTQ+ safety.

This increase in the global average overwhelmingly was due to the Asian destinations included in the CCI, which are dominated by cities in China. Overall, the safety ratings in Asian cities surged 22 percent over the past year, from an average score of 60 in June 2022 to 73.25 in June 2023. In comparison, safety scores for the European destinations in our top 25 increased 5 percent year-over-year from an average of 75.08 to 78.58. The city that scored the highest for safety on the global list was Singapore, with an impressive rating of 92.

In the United States, safety has failed to grow in line with its global CCI counterparts. In fact, average scores have declined slightly year-over-year, from an average of 65.92 in June 2022 to 63.08 in June 2023. San Diego and Phoenix tied for the highest safety rating on the U.S. list, both earning scores of 73.

As safety levels shift regularly, it is critical that planners continue to monitor these numbers closely.

“Cities, especially large metro cities, are struggling with understaffed police forces, increasing crime and pockets of violence,” says McIndoe. “Significant resources are focused on neighborhoods that support tourism and meetings to minimize any safety and economic impacts. Planners need to study a city's safety index, stick to these neighborhoods, and keep an eye on any concerns that might arise.”

Methodology

The Convention Cities Index relies on extensive research and a weighted methodology to calculate the final scores for

each destination. Cities are evaluated based on the following criteria:

Convention center size is the primary benchmark for CCI consideration. U.S. destinations must have at least 500,000 square feet of indoor exhibit space, while global destinations must meet a minimum of 1 million square feet of indoor exhibit space. These amounts are sourced directly from the venues or convention and visitor bureaus.

Total hotel rooms were provided by STR and account for all guest rooms within the city. Past cycles of the CCI relied on research via Google Maps to identify the number of rooms within a 15-minute walk of the convention center.

Average travel times between the convention center(s) and nearest international airport were calculated using Google Maps. Travel times were recorded for 7 a.m. without traffic.

Average room rates were based on Business Travel News' 2023 Corporate Travel Index, which uses hotel data from Advito, HRS, Emburse and Prime Numbers.

Safety scores were provided by GeoSure, an app that synthesizes data from sources such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization. Among factors considered: health and medical concerns, nighttime safety, LGBTQ+ safety, women's safety, theft and basic freedoms. On a scale of 1 to 100, the higher the number, the safer the destination.

Flights per month were sourced from Cirium, an aviation analytics provider that collects flight data from more than 2,000 sources, including airlines, airports and regulators. All direct flights into an area's airports were considered. CCI flight data is for May 2023; results might vary in other months.

Some cities have more than one convention center that meets the exhibit space criteria. The CCI data for these cities includes the total exhibit space and average travel time from all eligible convention centers to the nearest international airport.



U.S. ONLY
DESTINATION



TOTAL
EXHIBIT SPACE



TOTAL HOTEL
ROOMS



AVERAGE
HOTEL COST



MINUTES
TO AIRPORT



TOTAL FLIGHTS
IN MAY 2023
†



SAFETY
SCORE



FINAL
SCORE

Chicago	2,600,000	121,939	\$262.73	12	32,848	63	88.35
Atlanta *	2,002,000	111,418	\$191.80	13	28,838	59	88.31
Dallas	1,000,000	97,601	\$204.89	20	30,536	58	78.57
Las Vegas *	4,621,222	168,218	\$265.32	6	16,525	67	77.92
Orlando	2,053,820	136,492	\$222.40	12	15,213	64	77.61
Houston *	1,934,383	106,254	\$181.27	24	17,997	56	77.41
Denver	584,000	58,250	\$199.28	26	25,452	69	67.35
Rosemont, Ill.	840,000	6,215	\$210.87	3	25,509	61	66.52
Los Angeles	720,000	114,079	\$243.55	20	17,047	69	65.18
Phoenix	584,500	70,026	\$232.32	5	15,499	73	63.63
New York	850,140	124,883	\$449.83	22	26,826	68	60.18
Anaheim, Calif.	1,013,607	5,343	\$252.04	40	18,378	70	58.00
San Diego, Calif.	615,701	64,352	\$226.30	8	7,857	73	57.46
Boston	516,000	61,954	\$295.76	5	13,866	70	54.88
Philadelphia	679,000	52,123	\$245.50	12	9,106	68	54.31
Salt Lake City	515,000	25,314	\$175.57	8	9,039	62	51.98
Indianapolis	749,000	35,350	\$172.48	12	3,876	60	51.55
Louisville, Ky.	674,000	23,866	\$186.58	4	2,379	67	51.13
Washington, D.C.	703,000	111,420	\$288.50	30	12,444	55	50.98
Detroit	723,000	47,107	\$217.36	20	10,800	54	50.94
New Orleans	1,100,000	42,002	\$265.60	16	4,715	58	50.87
San Antonio	514,000	48,551	\$195.63	9	3,417	65	49.48
Miami Beach	500,000	21,685	\$234.74	12	8,666	64	47.11
San Francisco	599,100	54,718	\$300.11	12	12,255	54	46.50
St. Louis	502,000	41,568	\$185.89	14	6,021	50	44.57

* Cities with more than one facility that fit the criteria for indoor exhibit space

† Number of direct flights to the destination in May, U.S. only

TOP U.S. CITIES



1 Chicago | Considering the Windy City has the largest convention center in North America and its average daily room rate has dropped 13 percent over the past six months from \$302 to \$263, it's no surprise that Chicago tops this year's domestic CCI. Monthly airlift has risen 5 percent, and the city features more than 121,000 hotel rooms that will gain extra notice as host of the 2024 Democratic National Convention.



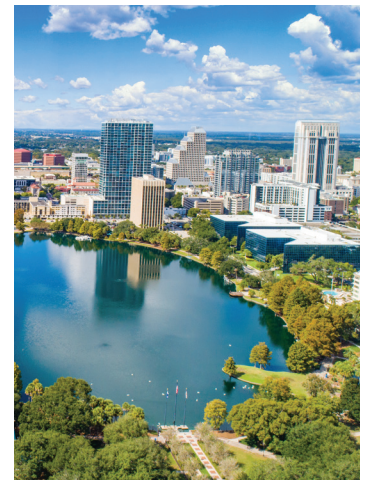
2 Atlanta | Getting to Georgia's capital is a breeze with nearly 29,000 direct flights arriving each month — up 8 percent from December. A combined 2 million square feet of exhibit space is available between the Georgia World Congress Center and the Atlanta Convention Center at AmericasMart. Cost-conscious planners will appreciate that rates for the more than 110,000 rooms have dropped 7 percent over the past six months, and prices average less than \$200 — 19 percent lower than all cities on the U.S. CCI list.

3 Dallas | Headquarters of American and Southwest airlines, Dallas lands high on this year's list thanks to an 8 percent rise in monthly flights and a competitive local lodging industry. While the average U.S. CCI room rate was \$236 this year, Dallas came in at \$205 — up only \$2 over the past six months. The city currently offers 1 million square feet of exhibit space, but that number could soon be rising. Earlier this year, city officials revealed a master plan for a \$3 billion reconstruction of the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center.



4 Las Vegas | It's easy to see why Las Vegas ranks No. 1 of all U.S. CCI cities in terms of exhibit space and hotel rooms. A whopping 4.6 million square feet is available across its three state-of-the-art convention venues. The city offers nearly 170,000 hotel rooms, but they cost \$265 per night — up 17 percent over the past six months, when the average U.S. CCI room rate declined 4 percent.

5 Orlando | Central Florida's meetings hub held steady on flights and safety in the June CCI, while its average daily rate dropped more than 2 percent to \$222 per night. Monthly flights ticked up slightly from 14,700 in December to 15,200 in May. Meanwhile, the city's safety score held even at 64, just above the U.S. CCI average. The Orange County Convention Center, the second largest in the country, features more than 2 million square feet of space. The city is lobbying for \$587 million to restart an expansion project.



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6 Houston | The most populous city in Texas, Houston benefits from excellent air service, with nearly 18,000 monthly flights, up 6 percent since December. Between the George R. Brown Convention Center and NRG Park, planners have just under 2 million square feet of exhibit space at their disposal. In addition, the city offers more than 106,000 hotel rooms, and average lodging costs, at \$181 a night, are 23 percent lower than the U.S. CCI average.

7 Denver | The Mile High City draws meeting planners out west with its well-priced room rates (\$199, on average) and a safety score 9 percent higher than the U.S. average. Accessibility is another draw, as the city has more than 25,000 direct flights per month. A \$233 million expansion to the Colorado Convention Center is nearing completion and is scheduled to welcome groups later this year.



8 Rosemont, Ill. | For planners priced out of Chicago, Rosemont offers a nearby alternative with more affordable rates. Hotels here average \$211 per night, significantly less than the \$263 rates found 20 miles away in the Windy City. The Donald E. Stephens Convention Center features more than 800,000 square feet of exhibit space and is just a 3-minute drive from O'Hare International Airport, where attendees have 25,000 monthly flights at their disposal.

9 Los Angeles | California's largest city welcomes conventions with 720,000 square feet of exhibit space and 114,000 hotel rooms. Rates have dropped 10 percent over the past six months, now averaging \$244 per night. Los Angeles International Airport offers ample airlift with more than 17,000 direct flights per month, and \$20 billion is being spent to upgrade LAX ahead of hosting the 2028 Olympics. A 2.25-mile elevated tram connecting the terminals to L.A.'s metro system will debut next year.



10 Phoenix | This desert oasis is tied with San Diego for the highest safety score of all U.S. CCI cities. Another plus for planners is the short travel time to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, just a 5-minute drive from the convention center. Room rates have risen since the December 2022 CCI, but the \$232 per night cost is still below the U.S. average.

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11 New York City

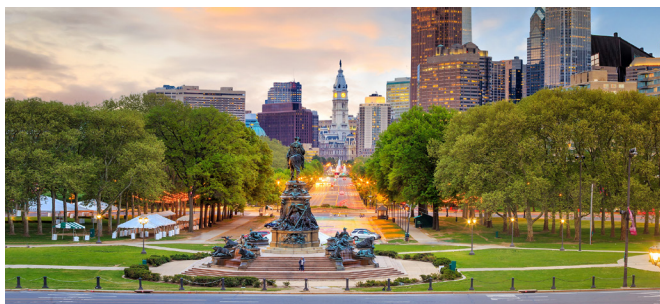
If anything is a sign of New York City's post-pandemic comeback, it's the city's eye-popping \$450 average room rate — up 4 percent over the past six months and nearly double the average hotel cost of all U.S. CCI cities. The recently expanded Javits Center features 850,000 square feet of exhibit space. With 26,800 direct flights per month, New York City ranks fourth on the U.S. list for highest air capacity.

12 Anaheim, Calif. | This sun-soaked city in Southern California features more than 1 million square feet of exhibit space. Hotel rates have dropped slightly, from \$258 on the December 2022 CCI to \$252 on this year's Index. Meanwhile, airlift has increased 7 percent to 18,000 direct flights per month. The city's safety ranking holds steady, an impressive score of 70, ensuring Anaheim is a top convention city contender.



13 San Diego | Millions flock to San Diego each year for its idyllic weather and 70 miles of pristine beaches. Meeting planners will also appreciate the short travel time of just 8 minutes between the convention center and the airport, as well as its \$226 room rates — 4 percent less than the U.S. CCI average. Best of all, the city tied with Phoenix for the highest marks of all U.S. CCI cities for safety.

14 Boston | An East Coast meetings hub, Boston offers nearly 62,000 hotel rooms and the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center is just a 5-minute drive from Logan International Airport. Hotel rates are on the higher side at \$296 per night, but the good news is they have dropped 16 percent over the past six months. At the same time, airlift has ticked up 13 percent, with the city now averaging nearly 14,000 direct flights per month.



15 Philadelphia | Philadelphia is one of the most well-priced convention cities in the Northeast. Hotel costs average \$246 per night — significantly less than nearby competitors like New York City and Boston. In addition, the Pennsylvania Convention Center features nearly 700,000 square feet of exhibit space in the heart of downtown. The city's safety ranking has improved notably, rising from 63 to 68 points.

16 Salt Lake City | Utah's capital has seen hotel rates drop 22 percent over the past six months, from \$226 to \$176. The city now ranks as the second-most affordable destination on the U.S. CCI list. Meanwhile, airlift has ticked up 3 percent to more than 9,000 direct flights per month. Salt Lake City has maintained a 62-point safety score, close to the U.S. average.



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17 Indianapolis | For cost-conscious planners, choices don't get better than Indianapolis. The city has the lowest hotel prices of all U.S. destinations on the list. Room rates here average only \$172 per night — 27 percent less than the CCI average. Nearly 750,000 square feet of exhibit space is available at the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium, which are only a 12-minute drive from the airport.



18 Louisville | "Bourbon City," Kentucky's largest, is another fine option for large events. Room rates have held steady over the past six months at just \$187 per night. A high safety score and increased airlift also add to the city's appeal. Getting to the Kentucky Exposition Center is a breeze, as it is just 4 minutes away from the Louisville International Airport.

19 Washington, D.C. | Demand for lodging in the nation's capital has always been strong, so it's no surprise to see Washington, D.C., come in as the fourth-most expensive city on the index, at \$289. That's down 12 percent, however, from \$327 in the December 2022 CCI. The city offers more than 110,000 total hotel rooms, as well as 700,000 square feet of exhibit space at the Walter E. Washington Convention center in downtown D.C.



20 Detroit | The birthplace of Motown and the heart of America's auto industry, Detroit presents an historic backdrop for meetings. At 723,000 square feet of exhibit space, Huntington Place on the Detroit River offers ample space for large groups. Planners will appreciate that the city's hotel costs have remained stable, rising slightly from \$212 to \$217 over the past six months. And airlift has risen 9 percent to nearly 11,000 direct flights per month.

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21 New Orleans | Come for the convention, stay for the beignets and gumbo. New Orleans expertly mixes business and pleasure — and is home to one of the nation's largest convention centers with 1.1 million square feet of exhibit space, which is undergoing a \$557 million upgrade. Attendees have plenty of lodging options at their disposal with more than 42,000 hotel rooms in town. But prices run high, averaging \$266 per night.



22 San Antonio | Alamo City makes for an appealing meetings destination with a centrally located convention center steps from the famed River Walk and less than a 10-minute drive from San Antonio International Airport. Just under 49,000 hotel rooms are spread across the city and accommodation costs average \$196 per night, well below the average for all U.S. CCI cities.



23 Miami Beach | It's hard to beat Miami Beach's 242 days of sunshine and its miles-long pristine beaches. The city also features a recently renovated convention center with 500,000 square feet of exhibit space just a few blocks from the beaches and a short drive from the airport. Lodging costs average \$235 per night — only a \$12 increase from the December 2022 CCI.

24 San Francisco | This technology hub in Northern California holds the title for the second-highest hotel costs of all U.S. CCI cities. Room rates average a steep \$300 per night — although they have fallen 15 percent over the past six months. Luckily, attendees can choose from nearly 55,000 hotel rooms. Another plus for planners: Airlift is up 14 percent, with more than 12,200 direct flights arriving in the city per month.



25 St. Louis | Another Midwest destination worth considering, St. Louis features one of the lowest hotel room rates of all U.S. CCI cities, averaging a low \$186 per night. Monthly flights have risen 10 percent over the past six months to more than 6,000, and the America's Center offers 502,000 square feet of downtown exhibit space near the iconic Gateway Arch and the Mississippi River. A \$240 million expansion and facelift to the facility are scheduled for completion next year.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (NEW ORLEANS) SEANPAVONEPHOTO; (SAN ANTONIO) SEANPAVONEPHOTO; (MIAMI BEACH) SEANPAVONEPHOTO; (SAN FRANCISCO) HEYENGEL; (ST. LOUIS) SEANPAVONEPHOTO/ALL ADOBE STOCK



GLOBAL
DESTINATION



TOTAL
EXHIBIT SPACE



TOTAL HOTEL
ROOMS



AVERAGE
HOTEL COST



MINUTES
TO AIRPORT



TOTAL FLIGHTS
IN MAY 2023
†



SAFETY
SCORE



FINAL
SCORE

Shanghai *	6,458,346	336,739	\$95.09	18	29,029	72	67.08
Shenzhen, China *	5,435,774	114,093	\$98.74	35	16,187	72	63.46
Guangzhou, China	3,638,201	132,519	\$95.54	40	20,896	76	61.48
Frankfurt, Germany	4,305,564	56,618	\$167.99	10	17,846	78	59.85
Paris *	4,978,793	83,893	\$232.99	19	29,363	73	55.96
Barcelona, Spain	2,583,338	75,162	\$182.97	8	13,504	83	54.90
Las Vegas *	4,621,222	168,218	\$265.32	6	17,387	67	54.38
Madrid	2,583,338	56,907	\$165.61	4	15,332	81	53.17
Kunming, China	3,229,173	31,728	\$92.88	24	15,406	68	51.22
Chongqing, China	2,152,782	58,010	\$92.88	24	14,162	73	50.67
Cologne, Germany	3,056,950	20,325	\$146.86	12	3,212	84	49.98
Hanover, Germany	4,224,328	10,556	\$148.70	24	1,604	76	49.54
Dusseldorf, Germany	2,820,144	20,887	\$137.00	8	7,185	79	48.93
Milan	3,713,549	35,690	\$184.82	24	15,272	71	48.29
Munich	2,152,782	58,755	\$178.06	24	12,262	84	46.65
Dubai	1,051,085	146,717	\$178.32	7	16,857	78	45.56
Qingdao, China	1,614,586	55,609	\$92.88	30	7,749	71	45.18
Bangkok	1,151,738	105,984	\$120.01	16	19,380	62	45.15
Orlando	2,053,820	136,492	\$222.40	12	16,949	64	43.77
Chicago	2,600,000	121,939	\$262.73	12	36,475	63	43.67
Singapore	1,076,391	73,242	\$239.92	5	12,970	92	43.35
Birmingham, England	1,959,031	20,493	\$148.50	4	3,491	76	42.58
Valencia, Spain	2,475,699	11,030	\$174.29	5	3,300	79	42.50
Atlanta	1,500,000	111,418	\$191.80	14	31,878	59	41.15
London	1,076,391	147,124	\$262.81	4	49,229	79	39.70

* Cities with more than one facility that fit the criteria for indoor exhibit space

† Number of direct flights to the destination in May, U.S. and international

TOP GLOBAL CITIES



1 Shanghai | With Covid restrictions loosened in China, Shanghai soars to the top of the global CCI list. The city is the undisputed champion in terms of total exhibit space, with nearly 6.5 million square feet across its two major convention centers: the Shanghai New International Expo Center and the National Exhibition and Convention Center. Shanghai benefited from dramatically increased airlift, up 13 percent over the past six months, and its nearly 337,000 hotel rooms that average a low \$95 per night.



2 Shenzhen, China | Adjacent to Hong Kong, this metropolis saw airlift climb 7 percent over the past six months. A meetings mecca, Shenzhen has two convention centers for large events: the Shenzhen Convention & Exhibition Center with more than 1 million square feet of exhibit space, and the Shenzhen World Exhibition & Convention Center with 4.3 million square feet of space. The latter will become the largest convention center in the world once its second phase of development is complete. Planners also appreciate Shenzhen's high safety score and affordable room rates of less than \$99 per night.

3 Guangzhou, China

Cementing Asia's lead on the global index is Guangzhou, known for its universities and many cultural institutions. This city's annual Canton Fair, the oldest and largest trade fair in the country, helps anchor interest in Guangzhou's 3.6 million square feet of exhibition space. With more than 132,000 hotel rooms, hotel space isn't an issue, either. Like most other Chinese cities, Guangzhou benefited over the last year from the reopening of international travel. Airlift jumped 14 percent since December and hotel costs continue to average a hard-to-beat \$96.



4 Frankfurt, Germany

Host of the annual IMEX convention, Frankfurt clinched the top spot on the global CCI outside of Asia with help from its high safety score and the location of its convention center — only 10 minutes from Frankfurt Airport, where the number of direct flights grew 18 percent over the past six months. With 4.3 million square feet of exhibit space (second only to Paris in Europe), this global CCI leader also is value priced, with an average room rate of \$168.

5 Paris

A perennial bucket-list destination for many travelers, the City of Light currently is gearing up to host the 2024 Summer Olympics. The two major convention centers feature nearly 5 million square feet of exhibit space between the Paris Expo Porte de Versailles and Paris Nord Villepinte. Room rates have dropped 19 percent over the past six months, from \$287 to \$233, and airlift rose 16 percent, giving attendees more options for getting in and out of the city.



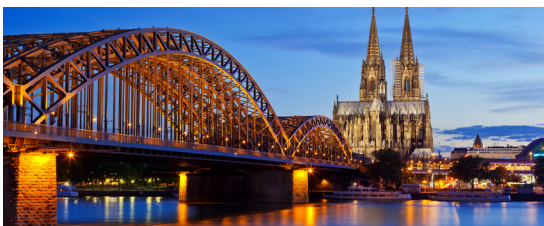
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6 Barcelona, Spain | Barcelona makes this year's top 10 due in great part to its lower-than-average daily hotel rate (\$183), a 25 percent jump in monthly flights since December and one of the highest safety scores in Europe. It doesn't hurt that the seaside destination averages 74°F year-round and has an airport-to-convention center drive time of 8 minutes.



9 Kunming, China | This city in Southern China is a major transportation hub with extremely competitive hotel rates, averaging just \$93 per night. The Kunming Dianchi International Convention and Exhibition Center features more than 3 million square feet of exhibit space and sits less than half an hour's drive to Kunming Changshui International Airport, where attendees have access to more than 15,000 flights a month from more than 50 international airlines.



7 Las Vegas | is #4 on the U.S. list

8 Madrid |

Affordability is a key driver for Spain's capital reaching the upper echelon of the Global CCI. The city comes in this year with an average hotel rate of \$166, down 21 percent from over the past six months. Madrid also is poised to benefit from its extraordinarily short convention center commute of 4 minutes from Adolfo Suarez Madrid-Barajas Airport, which offers nearly 15,500 direct flights per month.



10 Chongqing, China |

At the confluence of the Yangtze and Jialing rivers, China's fourth-largest city has a solid 73 safety score and offers 58,000 hotel rooms that average less than \$95 per night. The city features more than 2.1 million square feet of exhibition space and the airport welcomes 14,000 direct flights per month, a number that could rise soon. China has announced plans to build another airport 30 miles from the city center; the facility will be able to handle up to 80 million passengers a year.



11 Cologne, Germany |

As this is one of the safest cities on this year's global CCI, planners can rest easy knowing it scored an impressive 84 on the safety index. The Koelnmesse center, just 12 minutes from Cologne Bonn Airport, has more than 3 million square feet of exhibit space, the third-largest trade-fair grounds in Germany. Affordable hotels are another selling point: The city's \$147 average daily room rate is 17 percent lower than the CCI European destination average.

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12 Hanover, Germany

One of the country's smaller cities, Hanover is much bigger on the convention and meetings stage, with 4.2 million square feet of exhibit space — second only to Frankfurt. The city also features one of the lowest average daily room rates for a European city in this year's CCI (\$149). Hanover is a popular choice for planners around the world, with two rail stations that supplement its 1,600 direct monthly flights with other sustainable travel options.

13 Dusseldorf, Germany

With an average daily room rate of just \$137, Dusseldorf enjoys the lowest lodging costs of any CCI destination outside of Asia. The city's total of more than 7,100 monthly flights this June is up 50 percent from December. Dusseldorf also benefits from an extensive intercity rail network. Little more than a one-hour train ride gets attendees to Frankfurt Airport, giving meeting planners an additional 17,800 monthly flights.



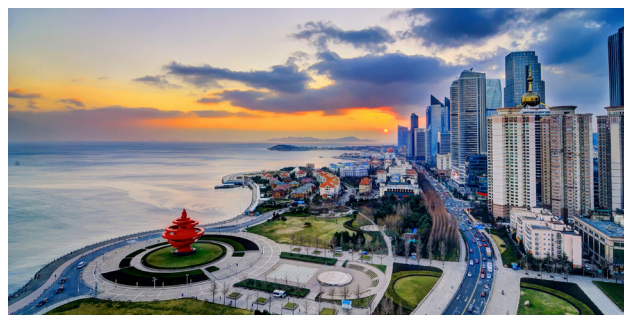
14 Milan | More than just a fashion capital, Milan features one of the largest convention centers in Europe. Sporting 3.7 million square feet of exhibit space and more than 15,000 incoming flights per month, the Italian city has ample space and access to accommodate large groups. Nearly 36,000 hotel rooms are available throughout the city and rates have dropped 25 percent over the past six months to \$185.

15 Munich | Home to the annual Oktoberfest, Munich is well practiced in welcoming large crowds. The capital of Germany's Bavaria state has 2 million square feet of exhibit space and a high safety score of 84. Hotel rates average \$178 per night, slightly above the global CCI average. It is one of the most accessible cities in Germany, as well, with more than 12,000 direct flights per month.



16 Dubai | Dubai has the fourth-largest number of hotel rooms among the global CCI destinations — a whopping 146,000 rooms await in the United Arab Emirates' most populous city. Hotel costs average \$178 per night, up from \$155 on the December 2022 CCI. With nearly 17,000 direct flights per month and a safety score of 78, it's easy to see how Dubai is drawing more meetings to the Middle East.

17 Qingdao, China | This port city on the Yellow Sea is home to 1.6 million square feet of exhibit space and nearly 56,000 hotel rooms. Its average daily room rate of \$93, coupled with a strong safety score of 71, make Qingdao a favorable convention city in Asia. In addition, airlift has risen 11 percent since December to more than 7,700 direct flights per month.



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18 Bangkok | Thailand has always been known for its extremely affordable lodging costs, and Bangkok's \$120 average daily room rate stands out among the top 25 global destinations in this edition of the CCI. Only its neighboring competitors in China can outdo the city for affordability. Bangkok also offers more than 105,000 hotel rooms and nearly 20,000 direct flights per month, making it one of the most accessible destinations on the global CCI.

19 Orlando | is #5 on the U.S. list.
20 Chicago | is #1 on the U.S. list.



21 Singapore | Singapore takes the lead when it comes to safety. This island nation scores an unmatched 92 out of 100 on GeoSure's safety index — far above the global CCI average of 74.4. Additional selling points are the city-state's more than 73,000 hotel rooms and 5-minute drive from the convention center to Singapore Changi Airport. However, room rates do run rather high at nearly \$240 per night.



22 Birmingham, England

Sandwiched between Manchester and London, Birmingham is a gem that is often overlooked, with especially affordable lodging costs. Its average room rate in this year's CCI is only \$149, 11 percent lower than the Global CCI average. What's more, Birmingham's nearly 2 million square feet of exhibition space is just a 4-minute drive from the airport.

23 Valencia, Spain | Who can deny the charm of this historic and busy port city, and its 300 days of annual sunshine? Valencia's room rate of \$174 is very competitive compared with its European peers on the global CCI. In addition, the city's 2.5 million square feet of exhibit space and short travel time from the convention center to Valencia Airport place it ahead of many of its global competitors.



24 Atlanta | is #2 on the U.S. list.



25 London | England's capital is second to none when it comes to airlift. The city offers an impressive 49,000 direct flights per month — far above the global CCI average of 17,000. Accommodations are also abundant, with more than 147,000 rooms available throughout the city. Room rates, however, are on the higher end at \$263 per night — far above the global CCI average of \$167.