



CONVENTION CITIES INDEX

**All the vital stats you need to
select the best destinations
for large events.**

2024 Convention Cities Index

More room to meet
and a rise in safety
levels have made key
cities more attractive
for large meetings

BY ELISE SCHOENING AND
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Over the past year, major cities around the world have expanded their convention centers, grown their hotel room inventories and welcomed new flights to attract large meetings and events, the 2024 Convention Cities Index reveals. For planners, these feel like boom times again in an industry that not too long ago was paralyzed by the pandemic.

The Convention Cities Index is a first-of-its-kind resource developed by Northstar Meetings Group to help time-strapped planners and decision-makers track such changes and make informed site-selection choices. A weighted ranking system is used to determine the top 25 U.S. cities and top 25 global cities that are ideally suited to hosting large conventions. Eligible destinations are

assessed on the following six categories: indoor exhibit space, total hotel rooms, average daily room rates, safety, airlift into the destination, and the travel time from the airport to the convention center(s).

Using the CCI, planners can evaluate and compare potential host cities according to the site-selections factors that are most pertinent to their events. The June 2024 CCI also can be compared to previous editions — which date back to 2020 — allowing event organizers to note shifts in key metrics before, during and after the pandemic.

Major Changes Around the Globe

Key findings from the latest CCI data reveal that monthly flights to the top 25 destinations on the global index

increased 10 percent, and safety scores are up 5 percent over the December 2023 CCI. The total number of hotel rooms in those 25 cities increased 4 percent.

In the U.S., the top 25 CCI destinations experienced a 7 percent increase in monthly flights over the past six months. U.S. cities also grew safer, up 5 percent vs. the December 2023 CCI. Domestic hotel room growth, however, remained steady.

Perhaps the biggest bright spot is hotel daily room rate increases are moderating. Costs are down nearly 2 percent both in the United States and globally from December's CCI.

These trends uncovered by the 2024 CCI led to some significant changes in the U.S. list. Most notably, Chicago bumped Atlanta from the top slot, while



Dallas moved up to number three position and Houston joined the top five. High hotel rates and a declining safety score bumped San Francisco from the list, to be replaced by Atlantic City.

The CCI's top five global destinations were more stable, with China continuing to dominate. Shanghai held on to its top position, with Guangzhou and Shenzhen in second and third place, respectively. Shanghai and Guangzhou both benefited from a substantial rise in their safety scores, while Guangzhou also increased its total exhibit space.

Room Rates, Safety Rise in Importance

Hotel costs can make or break convention city choices, and largely impact where destinations land on the CCI. U.S. cities that saw the largest drops in room rates over the past six months include:

- » Boston, where hotel costs fell 19 percent from \$374 to \$303 per night;
- » Denver, which saw a 17 percent decline from \$247 to \$204; and
- » Chicago, where costs dropped 15 percent from \$281 to \$238.

On the flip side, prices rose the most in Miami Beach, and Anaheim, Calif. The Florida destination experienced a 31 percent increase in rates, from \$181 to \$237, and costs are up 21 percent in Anaheim, from \$257 to \$310. New York remains the most expensive destination on the U.S. list at \$441 per night — up 4 percent over the past six months and surpassing the \$423 rate from the

prepandemic March 2020 CCI.

Globally, Milan saw the largest drop in room rate, falling 18 percent from \$248 to \$204. Prices are also down in Munich (15 percent), Paris (14 percent), and Barcelona, Spain (10 percent). Dubai experienced the highest increase, with hotel costs nearly doubling from \$123 to \$201 — easily exceeding its pre-Covid average rate of \$157.

Recovery in Asia remains mixed, with prices down 5 percent in Shanghai but up 15 percent in Shenzhen, China, over the past six months. Nevertheless, Chinese cities are among the most affordable of all CCI destinations, averaging \$111 per night, with rates still down from the prepandemic average of \$128.

Kim Paine, vice president and cofounder of Site Selection Services, says room rates are “extremely important” to meetings destination decisions. But she cautions that they are “one sliver of the overall pricing pie” and recommends requesting disclosure of all ancillary fees before shortlisting hotels.

Equally important to the site-selection process is safety, including factors such as a city's crime level and how welcoming the destination is to LGBTQ+ travelers.

According to Paine, “Many of our customers prioritize safety as a top factor in selecting a location for an event, as it can lead to legal and liability issues for the event organizer. We have had planners quickly reconsider a property [after] encountering certain issues while on a

site inspection, such as homelessness around the hotel, violence or an overall uneasy feeling.”

Brett J. Sterenson, president of the site-selection firm Hotel Lobbyists, says, “Homelessness and crime have pervaded into the very districts that have long been home to convention foot traffic.” As a result, he says safety has emerged as a “growing concern for my clients in the last year.”

Per the latest CCI data, Dubai saw the largest jump in its safety score — increasing 13 percent to a high of 88 out of 100 points. Other global cities that moved up include Qingdao, China, (up 11 percent); Guangzhou, China (10 percent); Shanghai (9 percent) and Milan (9 percent). Singapore remains unmatched in terms of safety, scoring a whopping 95 points.

On the U.S. list, Atlantic City's safety rating improved the greatest at 9 percent. Meanwhile, San Antonio, St. Louis and New Orleans saw 8 percent increases, and Orlando moved up 7 percent. Phoenix continues to hold the title for the safest U.S. destination at 84 points, followed closely by San Diego (83).

Steady Growth Hurts Negotiations

Despite the fact that the meetings industry is moving beyond the impacts of the pandemic and into a more traditional growth mode, experts remain hesitant to forecast how the marketplace will play out through the end of the year. In particular, economists are still uncertain



about whether a soft or hard landing is ahead.

Global economic conditions, “including inflation, interest rates and consumer spending, are influencing budgets for corporate events and conferences,” says Michael Hudson, CEO of Site Search & Select, “potentially impacting the scale and frequency of large meetings.”

These conditions also are forcing planners to reconsider host-city choices. “For groups accustomed to capitalizing on narrow booking windows, the opportunities are minimal, particularly in tier-one locations,” Sterenson says. “There is less room to negotiate on things as suppliers look for ways to offset unprecedented labor-cost increases.”

A big wild card for future costs, such as room rates and airfare, is the return of Chinese outbound tourism. The country’s citizens were hesitant travelers in 2023, but a stronger recovery this year could lead to price hikes.

Another factor to consider is the delayed delivery of Boeing planes, which has forced many carriers to readjust their schedules.

“Airlines lack a perfectly clear vision about how their capacity will, or will not, grow during the remainder of this year and into next,” says Henry Harteveldt, president and travel industry analyst at Atmosphere Research Group. “This will complicate matters for meeting planners who want or need to negotiate capacity agreements with some airlines. Within the U.S., if our economy remains relative-

ly healthy and air-travel demand continues to be strong, the capacity constraints resulting from grounded or undelivered aircraft are likely to put upward pressure on airfares.”

Per the latest CCI data, U.S. cities with the highest number of direct flights per month are Chicago (36,000), Dallas (34,000) and Atlanta (30,000). London leads the global list with 48,000 monthly flights, followed by Shanghai (33,000) and Paris (30,000).

As all these factors continue to shift, the Convention Cities Index serves as planners’ all-in-one guide for assessing key site-selection factors and determining which destinations meet their groups’ needs for the right price.

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. Facilities in U.S. destinations must have at least 500,000 square feet of indoor exhibit space, while global centers must meet a minimum of 1 million square feet of indoor exhibit space. Square footage is sourced directly from the venues or convention and visitor bureaus.

Total hotel rooms were provided by CoStar, the real estate data firm. The room count for Rosemont, Ill., was unavailable and was calculated

manually using CVB data.

Average room rates were based on Business Travel News’ 2024 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 the factors considered were: health and medical concerns, physical safety, 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.

Average airport travel times were calculated using Google Maps. Travel times to the airports were derived from 7 a.m. without traffic.

Flights per month were sourced from Cirium, an aviation analytics provider that collects 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 was captured for May 2024; 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, all nearby hotels and the average travel time from all eligible convention centers to the nearest international airport.

Download the 2024 Convention Cities Index for details at: bit.ly/CCI-2024.

TOP U.S. CITIES



1 Chicago

This centrally located city with the nation's largest convention center has become both cheaper for overnights and easier to reach. The Windy City offers more than 35,000 monthly direct flights — the most on the U.S. list. Airlift has risen 15 percent over the past six months, while hotel rates have fallen from \$281 to \$238. Add in a slight uptick to safety, and Chicago is ready to host up to 50,000 visitors for the Democratic National Convention.



2 Atlanta

Georgia's capital is home to the nation's busiest airport, through which more than 104.7 million passengers traveled in 2023. Monthly flights are up 7 percent to 30,000. Planners will appreciate the city's two centrally located convention centers — the Atlanta Convention Center at AmericasMart and the Georgia World Congress Center — which offer a combined 2 million square feet of exhibit space. Nearly 113,000 hotel rooms are available at an average rate of \$195 — 14 percent less than the average for all U.S. CCI cities.

3 Dallas

Southern charm, ample airlift and well-priced room rates helped Dallas gain a spot in the U.S. top five. The Texas city offers nearly 100,000 total hotel rooms, whose average rate is \$201 per night. Airlift is up 10 percent, while the city's safety has improved 6 percent. Even better: Construction is set to begin this year on the new Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, which is expected to open in 2029 and is being built adjacent to the current facility that features 1 million square feet of exhibit space.

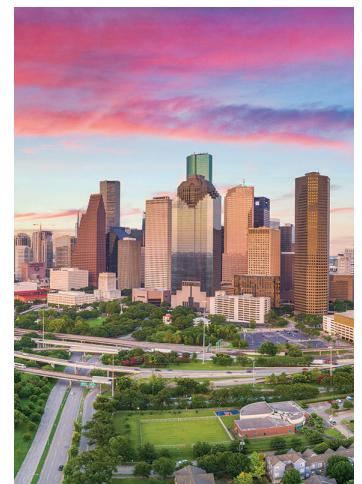


4 Orlando

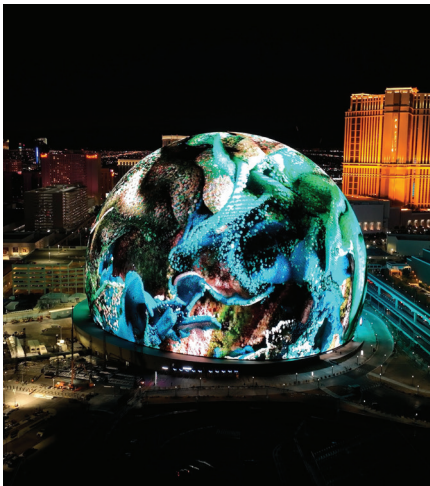
The Florida city's expansive theme parks are equally matched by its meetings space. More than 2 million square feet of exhibit space is available at the Orange County Convention Center, the second-largest exhibition venue in the nation, which is a quick 12-minute drive from the airport. Event organizers can choose from nearly 140,000 hotel rooms to accommodate their groups, and the city's safety score (76) is three points higher than the U.S. CCI average.

5 Houston

Houston has moved into the U.S. CCI's top five spots, joining the elite with an average daily room rate of \$178 — 22 percent lower than the U.S. average. More than 106,000 hotel rooms are available across the city, and planners have two convention venues to choose from: The George R. Brown Convention Center and NRG Park offer a combined 1.9 million square feet of exhibit space. To sweeten the deal: the number of monthly flights are up 7 percent for the United Airlines hub.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (CHICAGO) DRONE DOOD; (ATLANTA) SEANPAVONEPHOTO; (DALLAS) FIIPHOTO; (ORLANDO AND HOUSTON) KEVIN RUCK/ALL ADOBE STOCK



6 Las Vegas

Construction projects abound in Las Vegas, including at all three of the city's convention facilities. Mandalay Bay completed a \$100 million remodel in May, while the Venetian is planning to invest \$188 million in upgrades beginning this summer. A \$600 million renovation of the Las Vegas Convention Center will wrap up in 2025. Monthly flights are up slightly and the city's safety score (76) is above the U.S. CCI average. Room rates run high, however — averaging \$252 per night, up 12 percent from the December index.

7 Rosemont, Ill.

Rosemont might be smaller than its U.S. peers in terms of total rooms and exhibit space, but it offers the shortest travel time with only a three-minute drive from O'Hare International Airport to the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center. Hotel rates are down 10 percent to \$194 per night, and airlift is up 18 percent, adding to its meetings appeal. In fact, Rosemont recently wooed the Chicago Boat Show away from downtown's McCormick Place.



8 Denver

Planners considering the Mile High City will be happy to hear that rooms rates are down 17 percent to \$204 per night, while Denver International Airport has added 4 percent more flights per month. An expansion to the Colorado Convention Center debuted in late 2023, adding the largest ballroom in the state and a rooftop terrace. The city scores high for safety, earning 79 points — 8 percent above the U.S. CCI average.



9 Phoenix

The Valley of the Sun lives up to its name with an average of 300 days of sunshine per year. Phoenix has the highest safety score of all U.S. CCI cities at 84 points — up 6 percent from December. Nearly 18,000 flights arrive monthly, and it's a short five-minute drive from the airport to the Phoenix Convention Center.

10 Los Angeles

The second-largest city in the nation, Los Angeles is home to more than 116,000 hotel rooms and offers nearly 17,000 direct flights per month. Room rates are down slightly to \$245 a night, while the city's safety score is now 77 points — tying it for fifth best on the U.S. index. An automated people-mover will open at LAX next year, and the destination is gearing up to host its third Olympic Games in 2028.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (LAS VEGAS) DRONEVIDEOS; (ROSEMONT) MIRALEM; (DENVER) FIIPHOTO; (PHOENIX) SEANPAVONEPHOTO; (L.A.) LARRY GIBSON/ALL ADOBE STOCK



11 San Diego, Calif.

A major draw for this Southern California city is its downtown waterfront location of its convention center — which is only a short drive from San Diego International Airport. Another is its strong safety score, which increased 5 percent over the past six months and now is the second highest of all U.S. CCI destinations. Room rates fall just below the index average at \$226.



12 New York

An East Coast meetings mecca, New York City offers 850,000 square feet of exhibit space at the Javits Center on the Hudson River. More than 121,000 guest rooms are available throughout the city, one of the highest in terms of total available hotel inventory. Travelers need not worry about airlift, with nearly 25,000 direct flights to the area's airports per month. But room rates are high, averaging \$441 per night — the most expensive of all CCI cities and nearly double the U.S. average.

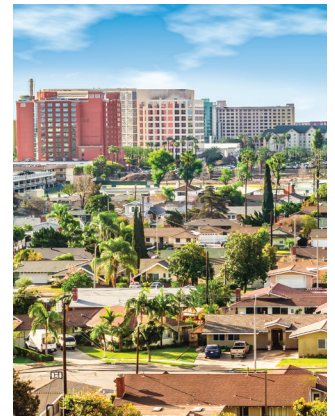


13 Philadelphia

The City of Brotherly Love beckons planners with a safety score higher than the national average and a 24 percent increase in monthly flights. Hotel rooms average \$234 per night, just above the U.S. CCI average, but below New York and Washington, D.C. Planners will also appreciate the convention center's downtown location, just steps from Reading Terminal Market and a short drive from Philadelphia International Airport.

14 New Orleans

The Big Easy is home to one of the nation's largest convention centers, featuring more than 1 million square feet of exhibit space. Construction is underway on the Riverfront District adjacent to the convention center, which will add a Topgolf facility, green spaces and at least one more hotel. Air access is on the rise, with monthly flights up 4 percent, while the city's safety score jumped 8 percent to 70. Next year the city will welcome the Super Bowl for the 11th time, tying it with Miami's record for hosting the most times in NFL history.



15 Anaheim, Calif.

Anaheim might be best known as the hometown of Disneyland, but there's ample space for meetings, too. More than 1 million square feet of exhibit space are available at the Anaheim Convention Center, along with nearly 19,000 flights per month to the city. It is also the third-safest domestic destination, earning a score of 80. A \$1.9 billion expansion of Disneyland is in the works, which will bring more attractions for planners looking to add some magic into the meeting agenda.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (SAN DIEGO) MARK SKERBINEK; (N.Y.C. AND PHILADELPHIA) FIIPHOTO; (NEW ORLEANS) SEANPAVONEPHOTO; (ANAHEIM) NANCY PAUWELS/ALL ADOBE STOCK

16 Salt Lake City

Nestled between the Wasatch Mountains and the Great Salt Lake, this destination offers affordable room rates at \$182 a night — down 6 percent from December and 20 percent below the U.S. CCI average. A quick eight-minute drive takes attendees from the Salt Palace Convention Center to the airport, which is in the midst of a \$5.1 billion redevelopment. The first two phases have been completed, with the third set to debut this fall and the final phase expected to be operational by late 2026.



17 Indianapolis

Cost-conscious planners will love this Midwest destination, which offers the lowest domestic room rates, averaging \$166 a night. Nearly 750,000 square feet of exhibit space is available at the Indiana Convention Center & Lucas Oil Stadium, which is connected to 13 hotels via skywalks. Indiana International Airport is less than 15 minutes away, and monthly flights are up 14 percent.

19 Detroit

The city with the second-highest jump in the June 2024 CCI was Detroit, which moved up three spots on this year's index. Set along the Detroit River, Huntington Place offers more than 700,000 square feet of exhibit space and is LEED Gold certified by the U.S. Green Building Council. Room rates in Motor City average \$203 per night — below the U.S. CCI average and down 11 percent from December. Meanwhile, airlift into the city is up 13 percent.



18 Boston

Boston jumped up five spots on the June 2024 CCI — the most of all cities. Contributing to this is a 16 percent rise in direct flights per month and a 19 percent drop in average daily hotel rates, to \$303. Boston benefits from a favorable safety score of 76 points and a short travel time of only five minutes from the airport to the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center.



20 Louisville

Home to the Kentucky Derby, Louisville is accustomed to welcoming large crowds. More than 150,000 people flocked to the city for the 2024 event. Travel is hassle-free, with the Kentucky Exposition Center adjacent to the Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport — and just down the road from Churchill Downs for those who want to glimpse the famed racetrack. Good news for planners: Hotel costs are down 5 percent to \$184 per night and average monthly flights are up 21 percent.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (SALT LAKE CITY) ART_ME2641; (INDIANAPOLIS) SEANPAVONEPHOTO; (BOSTON) MAGLARA; (DETROIT AND LOUISVILLE) FIIPHOTO/ALL ADOBE STOCK



21 **San Antonio**

In the heart of San Antonio's historic downtown sits the Henry B. González Convention Center, just steps from the River Walk and the Alamo. The city has some of the lowest room rates of all U.S. CCI cites, as hotels here average only \$191 per night — 16 percent less than the list's national average. A safety score of 77 points and a short travel time to the airport add to the Southern Texas city's appeal.

22 **Washington, D.C.**

The nation's capital offers more than 700,000 square feet of exhibit space and 113,000 hotel rooms — one of the highest hotel inventories on the U.S. CCI list. Room rates are down 5 percent from December to \$264, while monthly flights are up 9 percent to more than 12,000. The city now has 25 Michelin-starred restaurants, and Mayor Muriel Bowser recently announced a \$3.5 million grant program to draw large nonprofit events.



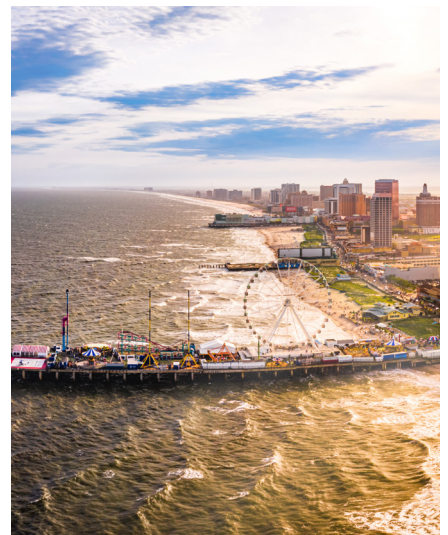
23 **St. Louis**

Mouth-watering barbecue and hard-to-beat hotel rates await in St. Louis. The city is the third most affordable on the U.S. CCI list, averaging \$180 a night. Airlift has risen 7 percent from December, while the destination's safety score jumped up 8 percent. A multimillion-dollar expansion project at the America's Center Convention Complex is underway, currently expected to debut in 2025.



25 **Atlantic City**

New to this year's index is Atlantic City, which replaced San Francisco, thanks to a drop in room rates and a bump in the overall safety level for travelers. The East Coast gaming mecca, which offers nine casino-hotels, saw average daily room rates fall 13 percent to \$201 per night. Meanwhile, safety rose 9 percent to 75 points. Renovations abound at many of the city's casinos, and \$26 million is being invested to repair the historic boardwalk.



24 **Miami Beach**

The south Florida city expertly blends business and pleasure. Its LEED Silver-certified convention center is across the street from the New World Center concert hall and a few blocks from the beaches. Attendees choose from nearly 10,000 monthly flights to Miami Beach, where the temperature averages 74 degrees. Room rates are just above the U.S. CCI average at \$237, and the safety score is up to 72.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (SAN ANTONIO, ST. LOUIS AND MIAMI BEACH) SEANPAVONEPHOTO; (D.C.) FLIPPHOTO; (ATLANTIC CITY) MANDRITOU/ALL ADOBE STOCK

 U.S. ONLY DESTINATION	 TOTAL EXHIBIT SPACE	 TOTAL HOTEL ROOMS	 AVERAGE HOTEL COST	 MINUTES TO AIRPORT	 TOTAL FLIGHTS IN MAY 2024 †	 SAFETY SCORE	 FINAL SCORE
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Chicago	2,600,000	122,305	\$238.32	12	35,586	72	88.93
Atlanta *	2,002,000	112,965	\$194.88	13	30,046	69	86.61
Dallas	1,000,000	99,489	\$201.26	20	33,834	69	79.32
Orlando	2,053,820	139,682	\$200.82	12	15,139	76	78.17
Houston *	1,934,383	106,749	\$178.41	24	19,520	67	77.45
Las Vegas *	4,621,222	166,712	\$252.00	6	16,737	76	76.84
Rosemont, Ill.	840,000	6,215	\$194.05	3	28,611	71	67.73
Denver	584,000	57,539	\$203.73	26	27,508	79	66.14
Phoenix	584,500	70,917	\$223.17	5	17,877	84	64.66
Los Angeles	720,000	116,046	\$244.88	20	16,993	77	62.47
San Diego	615,701	64,668	\$225.85	8	8,195	83	56.45
New York	850,140	121,263	\$440.98	22	24,839	76	56.08
Philadelphia	679,000	51,930	\$233.61	12	10,714	75	53.83
New Orleans	1,100,000	42,786	\$223.70	16	4,659	70	53.66
Anaheim, Calif.	1,013,607	5,728	\$309.54	40	18,515	80	52.24
Salt Lake City	515,000	25,410	\$181.94	8	9,666	73	51.19
Indianapolis	749,000	36,033	\$165.69	12	4,182	69	51.10
Boston	516,000	60,392	\$302.76	5	13,919	76	51.10
Detroit	723,000	47,814	\$203.36	20	11,439	63	50.88
Louisville, Ky.	674,000	24,345	\$183.56	4	2,528	77	50.64
San Antonio	514,000	48,720	\$191.01	9	3,652	77	49.84
Washington, D.C.	703,000	113,028	\$264.03	30	12,266	60	49.33
St. Louis	574,000	40,925	\$179.68	14	6,124	64	46.90
Miami Beach	500,000	21,286	\$236.81	14	9,511	72	45.22
Atlantic City	500,000	21,169	\$200.96	55	11,000	75	42.79

* 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 GLOBAL CITIES



1 Shanghai

Shanghai's winning streak continued in the 2024 CCI, as the city's more than 352,000 hotel rooms and 6.4 million square feet of exhibition space across its two main convention centers is unmatched. China's most populous city offers a daily room rate of just \$110 — far below the CCI average of \$175. The destination also experienced one of the highest increases in safety scores (10 percent) and a 5 percent bump in monthly flights.



2 Guangzhou, China

This sprawling industrial city in Southern China now houses the world's largest exhibition venue. The Canton Fair Complex completed an expansion project in 2023, which brought its total indoor exhibit space up to an enormous 5.4 million square feet. To accommodate more business travelers, the city's hotel inventory has increased 9 percent, while monthly flights have jumped 16 percent over the past six months. Guangzhou is also one of the safest cities on this year's global CCI list, scoring 86 out of 100 possible points.

3 Shenzhen, China

Rounding out China's dominance on the 2024 CCI is Shenzhen, a coastal city that connects Hong Kong to the mainland. Shenzhen features an impressive 5.4 million square feet of exhibition space across two convention centers, and a room rate of only \$120 a night. Air access is a breeze, with nearly 18,000 flights into the city per month.



4 Frankfurt, Germany

The country's financial hub welcomes groups with an impressive 4.3 million square feet of exhibit space at Messe Frankfurt. The venue is only a 10-minute drive from Frankfurt Airport, one of Europe's busiest facilities, offering nearly 20,000 direct flights a month — up 17 percent over the past six months. Average daily room rates are just above the global CCI average at \$179, and the city's safety score is 80.



5 Las Vegas is #6 on the U.S. list.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (SHANGHAI) TTSTUDIO; (GUANGZHOU) CHUNGKING; (SHENZHEN) LILI.Q;
(FRANKFURT) FIIPHOTO; (LAS VEGAS) DRONEVIDEOS/ALL ADOBE STOCK



6 Barcelona, Spain

Host of the Mobile World Congress and IBTM World, Spain's second-largest city welcomes large groups with the 2.5 million square feet of exhibit space at the Fira de Barcelona Gran Via. Only eight minutes away is the airport, where the number of monthly flights is up 21 percent. Also up is the city's safety score (88 points), which is 7 percent higher than the global CCI average. More good news: Room rates are down 11 percent to \$203, and construction on the iconic La Sagrada Familia church is nearing completion, with a finish date set for 2026.

7 Kunming, China

The capital of China's southern Yunnan province, Kunming offers ample meeting space and low room rates, averaging only \$109 per night. Hotel inventory is up 20 percent since the December index — a sign of China's post-pandemic comeback. Dubbed the "City of Eternal Spring" for its year-round warm weather, Kunming also experienced a 7 percent jump in monthly flights and an 8 percent increase in overall traveler safety.



8 Paris

Paris will welcome the 2024 Summer Olympics in July, and more than 15 million people are expected to visit, including the 10,000 athletes. The City of Lights is equipped to handle large meetings, as well, with two convention centers offering a combined 4.9 million square feet of exhibit space and a whopping 90,000 hotel rooms. While lodging rates are expected to soar during the Summer Games, CCI data reveals prices now average \$256.



9 Chongqing, China

Known for its dense skyscrapers built against a mountainous backdrop, Chongqing sports an 82 safety score, up 8 percent. The city, at the junction of the Yangtze and Jialing rivers in southwestern China, registered a 16 percent jump in the total number of hotel rooms. But room rates have held steady at less than \$110 — 38 percent below the global average.

10 Madrid

Like many European cities, Madrid lost ground in the June 2024 CCI to Chinese cities on the rise. The Spanish capital's average room rate is 11 percent higher than the global average, even though prices dropped 2 percent from December. Air access, however, rose 8 percent to nearly 17,000 monthly flights. The IFEMA Madrid convention center is only a four-minute drive from the airport, tying it with Birmingham, England, for the shortest travel time on the global CCI list.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (BARCELONA) MAPICS; (KUNMING) APHOTOSTORY; (PARIS) MARINADEART; (CHONGQING) AN QI WANG; (MADRID) BASICZTO/ALL ADOBE STOCK



11 **Düsseldorf, Germany**

Lodging rates for European cities in the 2024 CCI average \$190 a night, making Düsseldorf the most wallet-friendly at only \$131 a night. Dubbed the fashion capital of Germany, Düsseldorf has a safety score of 86 — up 9 percent from December. Monthly flights nearly doubled, and getting around the “10-minute city” is a breeze, as travel from Messe Düsseldorf to the airport takes only eight minutes.



12 **Hanover, Germany**

Tucked away in northern Germany is one of the world's largest convention facilities. The sprawling Hannover Fairgrounds offer more than 4 million square of indoor exhibit space, as well as an on-site train station. Hotels are well priced at \$155 per night — 11 percent below the global CCI average and 18 percent under the average for European CCI cities. The city has one of the strongest security ratings, scoring 84 points in the June 2024 index, up 5 percent from December.



14 **Cologne, Germany**

The fifth and final Germany city to make this year's CCI is Cologne, a cultural hub along the Rhine River. Koelnmesse, 12 minutes from the Cologne Bonn Airport, offers more than 3 million square feet of exhibit space and has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2030. Competitive room rates (averaging \$159) and a strong safety rating (86 points) add to the city's convention appeal.



15 **Milan**

Italy's fashion and banking capital historically has some of the highest room rates on the global CCI. However, Milan's hotel costs have moderated over the past six months, falling 18 percent to \$204. Airlift, though, rose 14 percent to nearly 17,000 flights per month. These changes, along with a 9 percent bump in its safety score, helped the city jump four positions on the 2024 global CCI.

13 **Munich**

Munich is one of only three destinations to move up three or more spots on the 2024 global CCI. Its ascent is due in large part to a 15 percent decline in room rates to \$157. Planners also have their pick of host hotels, with nearly 60,000 rooms available across the city. Home to Germany's second-largest airport, there are more than 14,000 direct flights per month. Better yet, the city has a safety score of 91 points, second only to Singapore.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (DÜSSELDORF AND MUNICH) RUDI1976;
(HANNOVER) MAPICS; (COLOGNE) NOPPASINW;
(MILAN) BORIS STROUJKO/ALL ADOBE STOCK

16

Qingdao, China

A major port city on the Yellow Sea, Qingdao is the second global destination to make a four-position leap in the June 2024 CCI. The city in eastern China is famed for its beaches and European-style architecture. Planners will appreciate the low room rates (\$109), as well as the 20 percent uptick in inventory to nearly 67,000 total rooms. There are more options for flights as well, with airlift up 18 percent over the past six months.



18 Singapore

When it comes to traveler safety, Singapore is unmatched: The city-state has maintained its score of 95 points — the highest of all 2024 CCI cities. Another plus for planners is the five-minute drive between Singapore Expo and Changi Airport. Travel and accommodations are hassle-free with nearly 15,000 direct flights per month and 77,000 hotel rooms. While room rates run higher than the Chinese CCI cities, prices have fallen 6 percent over the past six months to \$220 per night.

17

Orlando is #4 on the U.S. list.



19

Chicago is #1 on the U.S. list.



20 Bangkok

Famous for offering some of the best lodging value in the world, Bangkok's average room rate only inched up 3 percent, from \$119 to \$122 in the 2024 index. At the same time, hotel inventory rose 8 percent to more than 114,000 rooms. The city's safety score is up nearly 6 percent from December, and more than 22,000 flights are available per month to the Southeast Asian hub.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (QINGDAO) LIANXUN ZHANG; (SINGAPORE) FIIPHOTO; (CHICAGO) DRONE DODD; (ORLANDO) KEVIN RUCK; (BANGKOK) LUCIANO MORTULA-LGM/ALL ADOBE STOCK



21 Dubai

Dubai experienced its best year for tourism in 2023, welcoming 17 million international travelers and solidifying its global position as one of the most-visited destinations of the year. The United Arab Emirates' most populous city offers more than 150,000 hotel rooms, averaging \$201 per night. Travelers can rest easy with a safety score of 88 points (up 13 percent since December) and more than 18,000 monthly flights.

22 Birmingham, England

The United Kingdom's largest convention venue can be found in Birmingham, about 100 miles northwest of London. The National Exhibition Centre features nearly 2 million square feet of exhibit space and is a four-minute drive from Birmingham Airport. With a nightly room rate of \$161, prices run below the global CCI average. The city is home to nine Michelin starred restaurants and has grown so popular that England's national tourism agency, VisitBritain/VisitEngland, moved its headquarters there in April.



23 Valencia, Spain

Valencia is a popular pick for avoiding the bustle of Madrid or Barcelona. The seaside city offers comparable meeting space, with nearly 2.5 million square feet, just five minutes from Valencia Airport. Lodging rates have dropped 7 percent to just below \$200, while the city's safety level rose to 86 points. Another plus: Valencia was named the Green Capital of Europe by the European Commission in March.



25 London

Stubbornly high hotel costs continue to hold London in the 25th spot of the index, unchanged from December. At \$283, the city's average room rates are 62 percent higher than the global CCI average, and 49 percent higher than its European peers. Still, the city holds the title for the most flights per month — up 16 percent to 48,000 in May. An expansion to the London ExCel convention facility, which is expected to open in October, will add 25 percent more meeting space and could move the city up on planners' shortlists.



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



PHOTOGRAPHS: (DUBAI) AJANDALI; (BIRMINGHAM) SAKHANPHOTOGRAPHY; (VALENCIA) STEFTACH; (ATLANTA) SEANPAVONEPHOTO; (LONDON) HORVATH BOTOND/ALL ADOBE STOCK

 GLOBAL DESTINATION	 TOTAL EXHIBIT SPACE	 TOTAL HOTEL ROOMS	 AVERAGE HOTEL COST	 MINUTES TO AIRPORT	 TOTAL FLIGHTS IN MAY 2024 †	 SAFETY SCORE	 FINAL SCORE
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Shanghai *	6,458,346	352,448	\$110.04	18	33,388	81	67.65
Guangzhou, China	5,425,010	144,060	\$110.20	40	22,582	86	64.94
Shenzhen, China *	5,435,774	125,291	\$120.27	35	17,788	68	59.32
Frankfurt, Germany	4,305,564	57,088	\$178.65	10	19,074	80	59.10
Las Vegas *	4,621,222	166,712	\$252.00	6	17,670	76	57.01
Barcelona, Spain	2,583,338	75,335	\$203.06	8	14,977	88	54.67
Kunming, China	3,229,173	38,023	\$108.65	24	15,514	81	53.90
Paris *	4,978,793	90,540	\$255.51	19	30,318	74	53.54
Chongqing, China	2,152,782	67,193	\$108.65	24	15,057	82	52.96
Madrid	2,583,338	57,571	\$194.97	4	16,590	84	51.48
Dusseldorf, Germany	2,820,144	21,121	\$131.37	8	7,362	86	51.09
Hanover, Germany	4,224,328	10,672	\$155.42	24	1,835	84	50.80
Munich	2,152,782	59,190	\$156.60	24	14,322	91	50.51
Cologne, Germany	3,067,714	20,837	\$159.43	12	3,244	86	49.55
Milan	3,713,549	36,177	\$203.61	24	16,618	82	49.29
Qingdao, China	1,614,586	66,536	\$108.65	30	9,014	83	48.62
Orlando	2,053,820	139,682	\$200.82	12	17,002	76	47.77
Singapore	1,076,391	77,003	\$220.42	5	14,508	95	47.01
Chicago	2,600,000	122,305	\$238.32	12	39,550	72	46.89
Bangkok	1,151,738	114,074	\$122.17	16	22,630	73	46.70
Dubai	1,051,085	150,013	\$200.61	7	18,135	88	46.36
Birmingham, England	1,959,031	20,332	\$160.96	4	3,977	86	43.97
Valencia, Spain	2,475,699	11,613	\$199.02	5	3,419	86	42.32
Atlanta	1,500,000	112,965	\$194.88	14	33,635	69	42.15
London	1,076,391	150,110	\$283.25	4	47,841	86	39.83

* 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