

The world's most liveable cities in 2022 Copenhagen takes the top spot



Copenhagen, image by Felix Odell.

Now in its 15th year, Monocle's annual quality of life survey honours the world's 25 most forward-thinking, safe, easy, sustainable, and inspiring cities in which to live. Published in the magazine's current (July) issue, the shortlist names Copenhagen the world's best city 2022, closely followed by Zürich, Lisbon, Helsinki and Stockholm.

At a time when many people have been questioning the appeal of city life in a post-pandemic world, Monocle's survey stands as a reminder of what makes urban living so rewarding in the first place. Compiled by the magazine's international editors and contributors, the ranking is based on a multitude of factors encompassing objective data such as crime rates, ambulance response times, employment figures, and income inequality, as well as direct-lived experience from Monocle's global team of correspondents on the ground, and plans for forthcoming infrastructure improvements.

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Reflecting shifts in society and changing lifestyles, Monocle's metrics have evolved over the years, ensuring the rankings take into account contemporary urban priorities. This year, for example, the team has introduced new data points to reflect changing working patterns, rising costs of living and the growing importance of access to nature and the outdoors – represented through a roster of new metrics including hours of sunlight, affordable housing, and places to swim.

Although the rankings are the result of complex fusion of multiple qualitative and quantitative factors – as well as much internal debate – the final list of the world's best 25 cities is a straightforward expression of what matters most to urban dwellers today. "We think clean, safe cities that are simple to traverse, green, fun and easy to live and work in are best," says Monocle editor Josh Fehnert. "In this respect, I don't think there will be too many dissenters."



Vienna waterfront, left and cafe, right. Images by Julius Hitzburger courtesy Monocle.

The greatest Dane: Copenhagen

No stranger to Monocle's best city lists, having featured in the top 25 in several of the last 15 years, become a recent fixture of the top 5, and bagged the top spot last year, Copenhagen continues to lead the way in liveability. The Danish capital consistently scores highly across the board, but is never complacent, always looking for ways to make life better, easier and more rewarding for its residents.

"Copenhagen has consistently put pedestrians, bikes and people at the centre of the city and it has paid off. City hall cleaned up the harbour for swimming and benefits and provisions for citizens are generous. Copenhagen has kept independent retail and restaurants alive; it's an exciting place for entrepreneurs, has world-leading museums and ambitious plans to green the city, recycle more and be a good place to live. It might not be as glamorous as some, but the way to the top of the pile is consistent, human-centred thinking, joined-up planning and creating spaces for neighbourhoods to thrive."

– Josh Fehnert, Editor

"It's a matter of great pride that Copenhagen is first in Monocle's Quality of Life survey. I've lived in the city on and off for 35 years and every time I return it seems as though new improvements have been made. Its greatest strength is that it never rests on its laurels but constantly tries to improve its citizens' quality of life. I'm sure that will continue."

– Lars Thuesen, Denmark's ambassador to the UK.

Nordic and nice: Helsinki, Stockholm, Oslo

Since Monocle's very first Quality of Life Survey, Nordic cities have historically scored very highly, with Helsinki, Stockholm and Oslo consistently winning places alongside Copenhagen in the top 25. This year, Helsinki and Stockholm have both retained spots in the top five (although each has been nudged back a place by the arrival of a resurgent Lisbon) and Oslo has climbed one spot from 24 to 23.

Monocle's editors suggest that the Nordic capitals are such solid performers thanks to their manageable scale (something which contributes to the likes of London and LA being pushed out of contention). Nordic cities are typically compact, pedestrian-

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focused, environmentally ambitious and fastidious about maintaining connections to nature, without neglecting their distinctive character, sociability and charm.

New entries, non-movers and climbers

2022's rankings have seen just one new entry in the top 25; Milan has entered the chart at 21, powered up by a successful Design Week earlier this month and an ambitious programme of public infrastructure development ahead of the 2026 Winter Olympics.

The biggest climber, Lisbon, has shot from 7 to 3 on the back of a tourist renaissance, entrepreneurial upsurge and a progressive plan to repurpose 48,000 empty homes; while the impacts of the pandemic and the disruption of lockdowns have shaken the likes of Tokyo, Brisbane and Auckland down a branch or two of the tree.

A blueprint for urban utopia?

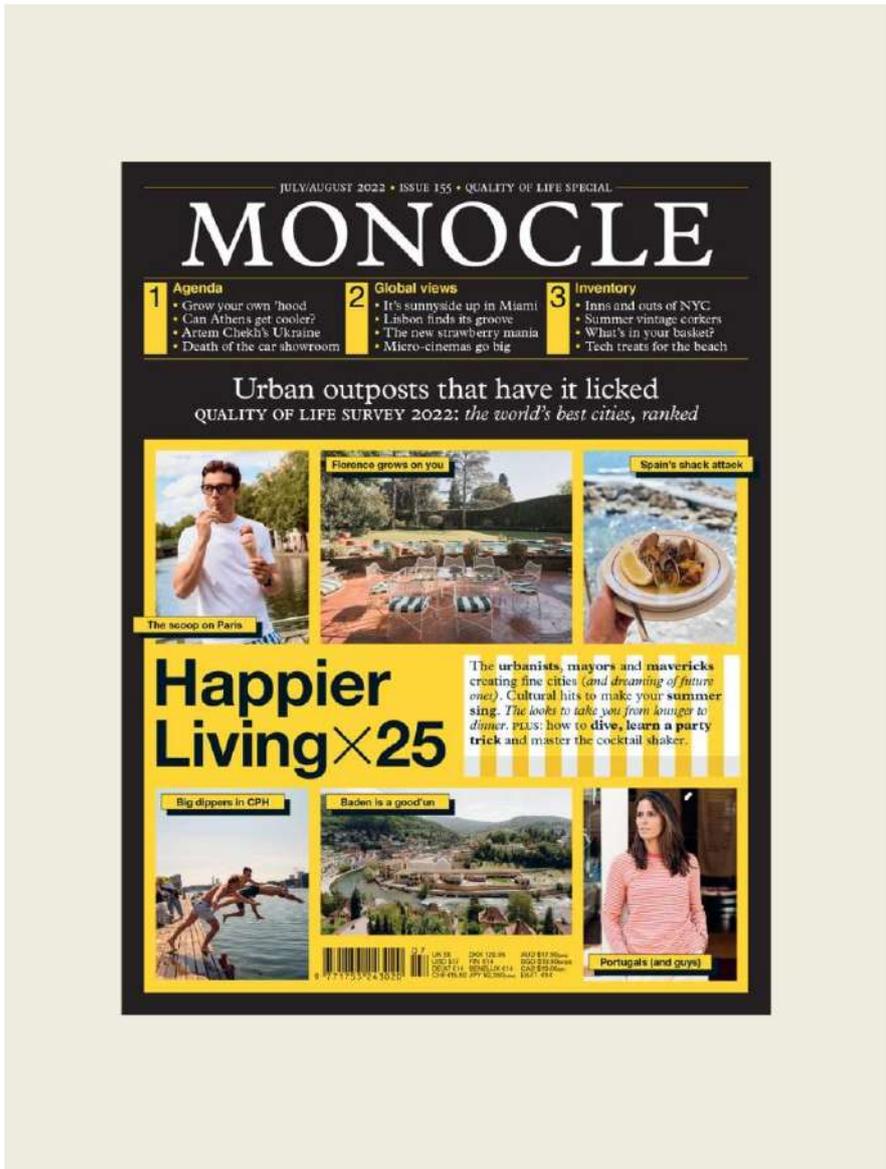
Perhaps the most valuable thing about Monocle's rankings is the fact that they can also serve as an anthology of viable ideas for urban development, bringing together creative planning approaches, sustainability solutions, and socially progressive measures from all over the world. From schemes to improve pedestrianisation or address growing populations to solutions to creative ways to nourish culture or reconnect with nature, they point to the ingredients for the perfect city of the future.

The full detailed rankings are featured in Monocle 155, on newsstands now.

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Notes for editors

For more information about Monocle's Quality of Life Survey, or to view detailed results, please contact sabine@zetteler.co.uk.



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2022 rankings

1 Copenhagen (1 in 2021)	10 Taipei (9 in 2021)	19 Melbourne (17 in 2021)
2 Zürich (2 in 2021)	11 Munich (13 in 2021)	20 Kyoto (18 in 2021)
3 Lisbon (7 in 2021)	12 Seoul (11 in 2021)	21 Milan (new entry)
4 Helsinki (3 in 2021)	13 Berlin (14 in 2021)	22 Fukuoka (22 in 2019)
5 Stockholm (4 in 2021)	14 Amsterdam (15 in 2021)	23 Oslo (24 in 2019)
6 Tokyo (5 in 2021)	15 Madrid (16 in 2021)	24 Singapore (25 in 2019)
7 Vienna (6 in 2021)	16 Auckland (8 in 2021)	25 Brisbane (19 in 2021)
8 Sydney (10 in 2021)	17 Paris (19 in 2019)	
9 Vancouver (12 in 2021)	18 Barcelona (18 in 2019)	

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Launched in 2007, Monocle is a global media brand with a monthly magazine, round-the-clock radio station and budding books business. Founded by editorial director Tyler Brûlé and led by editor in chief Andrew Tuck, it is a world-respected go-to for global affairs, business, culture and design. The magazine is published 10 times a year out of its HQ in Zürich's Seefeld and editorial base at Midori House in London; it sells more than 80,000 copies per issue. Monocle's extensive reporting draws on a network of correspondents in cities from Athens to Bogotá and Canberra, as well as bureaux in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Los Angeles and Toronto. [monocle.com](https://www.monocle.com)