Global Destination Cities Index

by Mastercard

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Executive Summary

Cities in Motion: Global Economic Changes Drive Regional Dynamics

Now in its seventh year, the Global Destination Cities Index (GDCI) has transcended the race to the number one ranking. Yes, it's an honor to be known as the world's most visited city (Bangkok). And to be recognized as the fastest-growing destination (Osaka) is a confirmation of capturing new dynamics and smart infrastructure management. But it's the stories within that distinguish this year's report and accentuate the wealth of data behind it.

As a tracking study of international travel destinations, cross-border spend, and the internal patterns, the 2016 report has a mass of data that show appreciable trends and impactful stories. The Mastercard GDCI shows three distinct story lines for 2016.
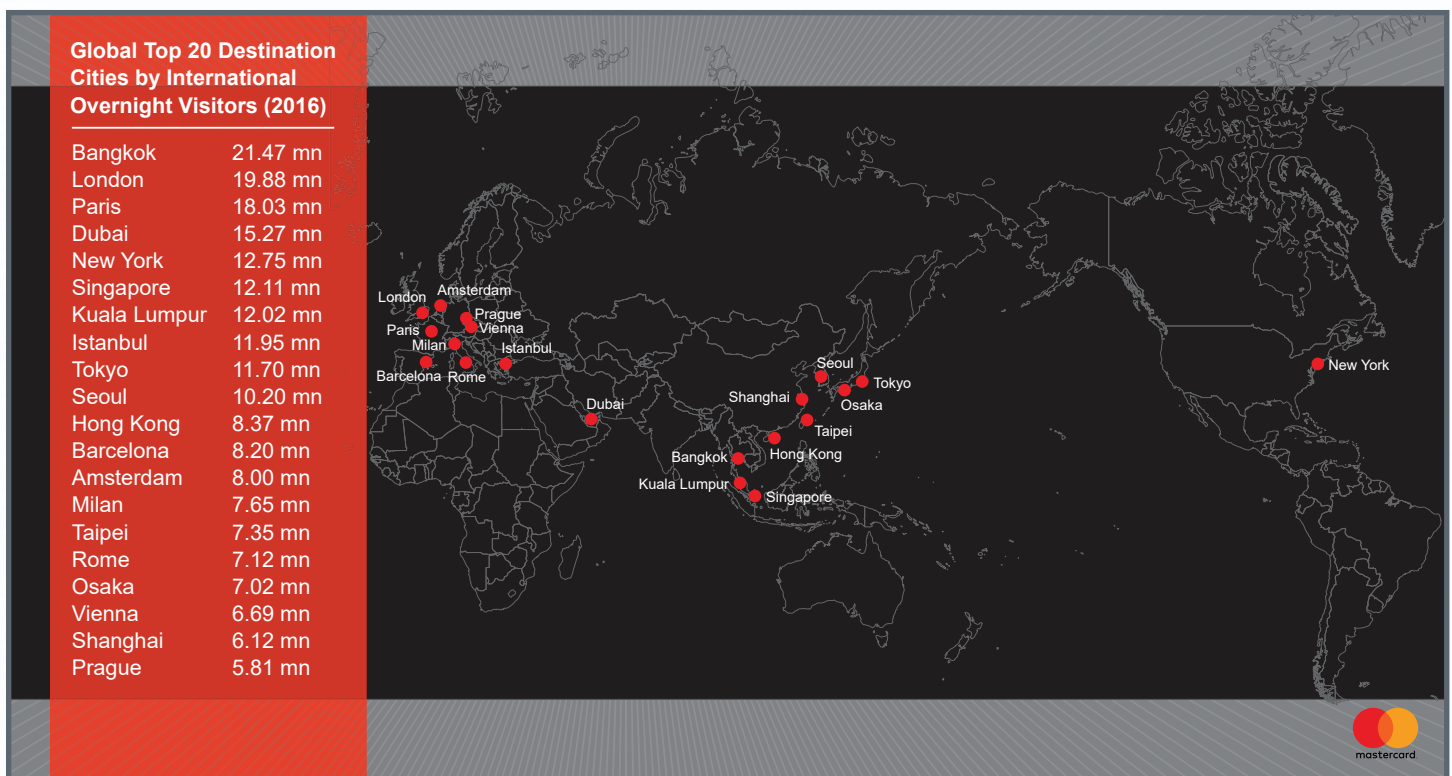
One: The growth trajectory of cities outside of the top 20 list.

Two: The deeper insights into the motivations and travel spend behavior of visitors to those cities.

Three: Changes in regional dynamics, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. Government officials, travel executives, and other sectors of business will find that this year's report reflects the changing nature of regional markets and illustrates the unpredictable nature of the global consumer.

Although the study shows these "below the radar" markets, it is important to note the composition of the top cities in the Index. Here the key metric is international visitors, in which Bangkok has achieved the top-ranked position in 2016. Dubai is top ranked in the Middle East & Africa (MEA) region (and ranked fourth globally). London is the top-ranked in Europe in international visitors and ranked second globally. Lima is top ranked in Latin America. New York tops North America (ranked fifth globally). In terms of visitor spending, also a critical metric, Dubai made a quantum leap to become the global top-ranked, based on a new estimate provided by the Dubai government. London ranks second in terms of visitor spend, followed by New York, Bangkok, and Paris.

Chart A. Global Destination Cities Index 2016 Top 20

Global Top 20 Destination Cities by International Overnight Visitors (2016)

City	Visitors
Bangkok	21.47 mn
London	19.88 mn
Paris	18.03 mn
Dubai	15.27 mn
New York	12.75 mn
Singapore	12.11 mn
Kuala Lumpur	12.02 mn
Istanbul	11.95 mn
Tokyo	11.70 mn
Seoul	10.20 mn
Hong Kong	8.37 mn
Barcelona	8.20 mn
Amsterdam	8.00 mn
Milan	7.65 mn
Taipei	7.35 mn
Rome	7.12 mn
Osaka	7.02 mn
Vienna	6.69 mn
Shanghai	6.12 mn
Prague	5.81 mn

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Global cross-border travel and spending among the 132 cities covered by Mastercard's Global Destination Cities Index continues to grow at a faster pace than world GDP. Looking deeper into this measurement, the growth trajectories of many of the global destination cities are dynamic and increasingly diverse, as many of them tapped into new sources of growth (feeder cities). Accordingly, this report features the fastest-growing destination cities over the 2009 to 2016 period both globally and regionally. At the global level, Asia-Pacific dominates with 11 cities in the top 20, followed by Middle East & Africa, which has four cities in the global top 20. Half of these 20 fastest-growing cities are currently not among the global top 20 destination cities. The fact that so many of the fastest-growing destination cities are not among the top 20 indicates strong and complex sources of momentum propelling many of these cities forward.

New to this year's report are spending breakdowns for each city. Defining where visitors eat, shop, and stay is a key source of insights for governments as well as the hospitality and travel category. It represents a detailed look at cross-border spend by business vs. leisure and then by key categories. Details of visitor expenditures by key categories, purpose of their visit, and the seasonal peaks of visitor arrivals are summarized in the chart below.

Global Top 20 Destination Cities Expenditure Breakdown

2016 rank	Destination City	Purpose of Visit		Expenditure Breakdown at Destination						Peak Months for Visiting
		Business	Leisure Plus Other Purposes	Accommodation	Food & Beverage	Shopping	Local Transport	Local Services	Misc.	
1	Bangkok	14.4%	85.6%	26.0%	19.4%	21.7%	9.9%	20.8%	2.2%	April, January
2	London	20.9%	79.1%	30.1%	16.5%	46.7%	4.3%	1.9%	0.5%	July-August
3	Paris	29.7%	70.3%	44.8%	23.6%	16.7%	6.6%	8.3%	0.0%	December, March-May
4	Dubai	20.0%	80.0%	27.0%	15.0%	31.0%	9.0%	18.0%	0.0%	December-January
5	New York	13.6%	86.4%	29.1%	18.9%	24.7%	11.4%	13.1%	2.7%	July-August
6	Singapore	22.7%	77.3%	29.0%	12.3%	22.5%	4.5%	31.8%	0.0%	December, July-August
7	Kuala Lumpur	26.8%	73.2%	30.8%	16.0%	30.7%	12.8%	7.0%	2.7%	December-January, March, July
8	Istanbul	9.2%	90.8%	20.4%	30.8%	24.6%	11.0%	7.1%	6.1%	June-September
9	Tokyo	27.5%	72.5%	28.2%	20.3%	43.1%	6.9%	1.4%	0.3%	April, October, July
10	Seoul	16.3%	83.7%	24.1%	9.8%	58.7%	2.7%	2.8%	1.8%	December-January, October
11	Hong Kong	23.4%	76.6%	35.4%	19.5%	30.9%	4.5%	5.8%	4.0%	October-December
12	Barcelona	9.7%	90.3%	35.2%	29.0%	16.9%	6.8%	12.1%	0.0%	July-August
13	Amsterdam	27.0%	73.0%	44.0%	25.0%	11.9%	8.3%	4.8%	6.0%	July-August
14	Milan	27.2%	72.8%	40.4%	20.9%	20.1%	12.7%	5.8%	0.1%	July-August
15	Taipei	13.4%	86.6%	32.7%	15.0%	33.9%	13.6%	3.6%	1.2%	March, November-December
16	Rome	13.6%	86.4%	40.4%	20.9%	20.1%	12.7%	5.8%	0.1%	July-August
17	Osaka	12.0%	88.0%	23.5%	22.4%	43.4%	7.0%	1.9%	1.8%	April, July
18	Vienna	17.9%	82.1%	40.1%	18.7%	10.1%	12.5%	18.6%	0.0%	June-July
19	Shanghai	54.6%	45.4%	21.2%	9.9%	28.6%	4.8%	22.3%	13.3%	October, August, December
20	Prague	12.8%	87.2%	29.2%	27.4%	25.5%	4.8%	13.2%	0.0%	June-July

Historical data in each time series presented above has been updated with the latest figures or estimations and may not be comparable to the time series from previous editions of this report.

These details combine to form more granular profiles for each of these destination cities, and highlight their differences. For example, a vast majority of international visitors to Bangkok are there for leisure as opposed to business. Compare this to Shanghai, where a slight majority are there for business purposes.