# A Summary of the Liveability Ranking and Overview

February 2011





# The Economist Intelligence Unit's liveability survey

#### How the rating works

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. The Economist Intelligence Unit's 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.

Every city is assigned a rating of relative comfort for over 30 qualitative and quantitative factors across five broad categories: stability; healthcare; culture and environment; education; and infrastructure. Each factor in a city is rated as acceptable, tolerable, uncomfortable, undesirable or intolerable. For qualitative indicators, a rating is awarded based on the judgment of in-house analysts and in-city contributors. For quantitative indicators, a rating is calculated based on the relative performance of a number of external data points.

The scores are then compiled and weighted to provide a score of 1–100, where 1 is considered intolerable and 100 is considered ideal. The liveability rating is provided both as an overall score and as a score for each category. To provide points of reference, the score is also given for each category relative to New York and an overall position in the ranking of 140 cities is provided.

### The suggested liveability scale

Companies pay a premium (usually a percentage of a salary) to employees who move to cities where living conditions are particularly difficult, and there is excessive physical hardship or notably unhealthy conditions.

The Economist Intelligence Unit has given a suggested allowance to correspond with the rating. However, the actual level of the allowance is often a matter of company policy. It is not uncommon, for example, for companies to pay higher allowances—perhaps up to double the Economist Intelligence Unit's suggested level.



Table 1

Rating	Description	Suggested allowance (%)
80-100	There are few, if any, challenges to living standards	0
70–80	Day-to-day living is fine, in general, but some aspects of life may entail problems	5
60–70	Negative factors have an impact on day-to-day living	10
50-60	Liveability is substantially constrained	15
50 or less	Most aspects of living are severely restricted	20

#### How the rating is calculated

The liveability score is reached through category weights, which are equally divided into relevant subcategories to ensure that the score covers as many indicators as possible. Indicators are scored as acceptable, tolerable, uncomfortable, undesirable or intolerable. These are then weighted to produce a rating, where 100 means that liveability in a city is ideal and 1 means that it is intolerable.

For qualitative variables, an "EIU rating" is awarded based on the judgment of in-house expert country analysts and a field correspondent based in each city. For quantitative variables, a rating is calculated based on the relative performance of a location using external data sources.

### 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	

### 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



### 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 field rating of 3 sport indicators
Cultural availability	EIU field rating of 4 cultural indicators
Food and drink	EIU field rating of 4 cultural indicators
Consumer goods and services	EIU rating of product availability

### 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

### 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



### The findings of the survey

The complete Liveability Ranking and Overview can be purchased at www.store.eiu.com

### Little change at the top

Vancouver (Canada) remains at the top of the ranking, a position that can only have been cemented by the successful hosting of the 2010 winter Olympics and Paralympics, which provided a boost to the infrastructure and culture and environment categories. Only petty crime presents any difficulties for Vancouver, although this would be a typical shortfall of any such location. Violence is reportedly on an upward trend in the city, but the figures need to be put in context. A murder rate of 2.6 per 100,000 population recorded in 2009 is certainly above the Canadian average of 1.8. However, it remains on a par with the rate in innocuous locations such as New Zealand and Finland, and amounts to one-half of the US average of 5.4 murders, with New York reporting a rate of 6.3 homicides per 100,000 (both figures are for 2008).

These advantages are shared with a number of other cities in the survey, and the variation between surveys is minimal. Just 2.3 percentage points separate the top ten cities, where the only change in the current survey is a slightly lower score for Vienna. As a result, Melbourne rises to become the second highest ranked city.

#### Context is key

A sense of context needs to be applied and offset against subjective judgments when looking at the best or worst places to live. The aim of the Economist Intelligence Unit's liveability survey is to draw a line of relative liveability based on challenges to lifestyle *beyond* those presented by income or cost of living considerations. Each factor needs to be considered against what would be ideal or intolerable on a global level. For example, within a country there may be significant perceived differences between two cities, but when assessed globally it is more likely that these differences would be marginal.

Conflict is responsible for many of the poorest performing scores. This is not only because stability indicators have the highest single scores, but also because factors defining stability spread to have an adverse effect on other categories. For example, the threat of armed conflict will not just cause disruption in its own right, it will also ravage infrastructure, overburden hospitals and undermine the availability of goods, services and recreational activities. Africa and Asia account for all 11 cities, with



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violence, whether through crime, civil insurgency, terrorism or war, playing a strong role. Although not in the bottom tier of cities, worsening stability relating to violence has seen a 2.5 point fall in the liveability score of Mexico City.

Harare (Zimbabwe) is the lowest-scoring city at just 37.5%. Despite celebrating 30 years of independence in April 2010, the situation remains challenging across all indicators. Despite hopes of elections in 2011, stability and healthcare scores of just 25% and 20.8% respectively highlight a bleak situation

# The top ten cities (100=ideal; 0=intolerable)

Country	City	Rank	Overall Rating (100=ideal)	Stability	Healthcare	Culture & Environment	Education	Infrastructure
Canada	Vancouver	1	98.0	95	100	100	100	96.4
Australia	Melbourne	2	97.5	95	100	95.1	100	100
Austria	Vienna	3	97.4	95	100	94.4	100	100
Canada	Toronto	4	97.2	100	100	97.2	100	89.3
Canada	Calgary	5	96.6	100	100	89.1	100	96.4
Finland	Helsinki	6	96.2	100	100	91	91.7	96.4
Australia	Sydney	7	96.1	90	100	94.4	100	100
Australia	Perth	8	95.9	95	100	88.7	100	100
Australia	Adelaide	9	95.9	95	100	94.2	100	92.9
New Zealand	Auckland	10	95.7	95	95.8	97	100	92.9

# The bottom ten cities (100=ideal; 0=intolerable)

Country	City	Rank	Overall Rating (100=ideal)	Stability	Healthcare	Culture & Environment	Education	Infrastructure
Sri Lanka	Colombo	131	48.5	45	41.7	47.7	66.7	51.8
Senegal	Dakar	132	48.3	50	41.7	59.7	50	37.5
Iran	Tehran	133	45.8	50	62.5	35.9	50	33.9
Cameroon	Douala	134	44.0	60	25	48.4	33.3	42.9
Pakistan	Karachi	135	40.9	20	45.8	38.7	66.7	51.8
Algeria	Algiers	136	39.4	50	33.3	38	25	41.1
Nigeria	Lagos	137	39.0	25	33.3	52.3	33.3	48.2
PNG	Port Moresby	138	38.9	30	37.5	44.2	50	39.3
Bangladesh	Dhaka	139	38.7	50	29.2	43.3	41.7	26.8
Zimbabwe	Harare	140	37.5	25	20.8	53	66.7	35.7



## Liveability profile: Vancouver

### How the best city scores

Liveability rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	98
Relative liveability index (New York=100)	113
Liveability rank (out of 140 cities)	01
Stability	EIU rating
Prevalence of petty crime	Tolerable
Prevalence of violent crime	Acceptable
Threat of military conflict	Acceptable
Threat of civil unrest/conflict	Acceptable
Threat of terrorism	Acceptable
Stability rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	95
Relative stability index (New York=100)	136
Healthcare	EIU rating
Availability of private healthcare	Acceptable
Quality of private healthcare provision	Acceptable
Availability of public healthcare	Acceptable
Quality of public healthcare provision	Acceptable
Availability of over the counter drugs	Acceptable
General healthcare indicators	Acceptable
Healthcare rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	100
Relative healthcare index (New York=100)	109



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Culture & Environment	EIU rating
Climate: Humidity/Temperature rating	Acceptable
Climate: Discomfort to travellers	Acceptable
Cultural hardship: Corruption	Acceptable
Cultural hardship: Social/Religious restrictions	Acceptable
Cultural hardship: Level of censorship	Acceptable
Recreation: Sports	Acceptable
Recreation: Culture	Acceptable
Recreation: Food and drink	Acceptable
Availability of consumer goods and services	Acceptable
Culture & Environment rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	100
Relative culture & environment index (New York=100)	109
Education	EIU rating
Availability of private education	Acceptable
Quality of private education provision	Acceptable
General public education indicators	Acceptable
Education rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	100
Relative education index (New York=100)	100
Infrastructure	EIU rating
Transport: Quality of road network	Acceptable
Transport: Quality of public transport	Acceptable
Transport: Quality of regional or international links	Acceptable
Availability of good quality housing	Tolerable
Utilities: Quality of energy provision	Acceptable
Utilities: Quality of water provision	Acceptable
Utilities: Quality of telecommunications infrastructure	Acceptable
Infrastructure rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	96
Relative infrastructure index (New York=100)	108



# **Liveability profile: Harare**

### How the worst city scores

Liveability rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	37
Relative liveability index (New York=100)	43
Liveability rank (out of 140 cities)	140
Stability	EIU rating
Prevalence of petty crime	Intolerable
Prevalence of violent crime	Undesirable
Threat of military conflict	Undesirable
Threat of civil unrest/conflict	Intolerable
Threat of terrorism	Tolerable
Stability rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	25
Relative stability index (New York=100)	36
Healthcare	EIU rating
Availability of private healthcare	Uncomfortable
Quality of private healthcare provision	Undesirable
Availability of public healthcare	Intolerable
Quality of public healthcare provision	Intolerable
Availability of over the counter drugs	Uncomfortable
General healthcare indicators	Intolerable
Healthcare rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	21
Relative healthcare index (New York=100)	23



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Culture & Environment	EIU rating
Climate: Humidity/Temperature rating	Tolerable
Climate: Discomfort to travellers	Tolerable
Cultural hardship: Corruption	Uncomfortable
Cultural hardship: Social/Religious restrictions	Tolerable
Cultural hardship: Level of censorship	Undesirable
Recreation: Sports	Uncomfortable
Recreation: Culture	Uncomfortable
Recreation: Food and drink	Uncomfortable
Availability of consumer goods and services	Uncomfortable
Culture & Environment rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	53
Relative culture & environment index (New York=100)	58
Education	EIU rating
Availability of private education	Tolerable
Quality of private education provision	Tolerable
General public education indicators	Uncomfortable
Education rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	67
Relative education index (New York=100)	67
Infrastructure	EIU rating
Transport: Quality of road network	Undesirable
Transport: Quality of public transport	Intolerable
Transport: Quality of regional or international links	Uncomfortable
Availability of good quality housing	Tolerable
Utilities: Quality of energy provision	Undesirable
Utilities: Quality of water provision	Undesirable
Utilities: Quality of telecommunications infrastructure	Uncomfortable
Infrastructure rating (1-100, 100=Ideal)	36
Relative infrastructure index (New York=100)	40



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Ranking & overview - Key findings of the survey and the global city ranking Global liveability survey - All scores broken down and available by city Global liveability matrix - A premium interactive Excel workbook of all scores

### **Worldwide Cost of Living service**

To calculate equivalent salaries and compare the cost of living between different cities, please see our Worldwide Cost of Living service.

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