Travel + Leisure Readers’ 15 Favorite Cities in the United States of 2023

The best cities in the United States in our annual "World’s Best Awards" survey for 2023.

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While the return of international travel took center stage in 2022, by no means did U.S. destinations fall to the wayside. T+L readers were equally drawn to the buzz and vibrancy of cities spanning from San Diego, California, to Alexandria, Virginia — no passport required. While warm-weather hot spots throughout the South were ranked most popular, voters also looked up to the Northeast and the Midwest.

How Voting Works
Every year for our World’s Best Awards survey, T+L asks readers to weigh in on travel experiences around the globe — to share their opinions on the top hotels, resorts, cities, islands, cruise ships, spas, airlines, and more. Nearly 165,000 T+L readers completed the 2023 survey, an increase of nearly 25 percent over pre-pandemic voting levels. A total of more than 645,000 votes were cast across over 6,000 unique properties (hotels, cities, cruise lines, etc.).

Cities were specifically ranked on the criteria below:
- Sights/landmarks
- Culture
- Food
- Friendliness
- Shopping
- Value

For each characteristic, respondents could choose a rating of excellent, above average, average, below average, or poor. The final scores are averages of those responses.

What Readers Loved
Readers’ favorite cities ran the gamut this year, from destinations filled with old-fashioned charm to modern bustling metropolises. One thing that remained consistent from last year was readers’ love for Charleston, South Carolina, which ranked No. 1 yet again. Santa Fe, Savannah, New York City, and Boston also returned to the list. From coast to coast, the cities that made the list this year captured a variety of cultures and cuisines — and proved that travelers may not need their passports to see a new and exciting place.

The Full List

1. Charleston, South Carolina

Once again named T+L readers’ absolute favorite U.S. city, Charleston, also known as The Holy City, has the perfect combination of southern charm and city vibe. "This place is a destination to behold," gushed one reader. Others praised the friendly locals, historic sites, and the shopping and dining along King Street. "So many incredible restaurants" have made Charleston a foodie destination, and "the mix of hotels makes the city a perfect fit for any type of traveler."

Reader Score: 85.63

"This place is a destination to behold."
— T+L Reader