

This Is the Happiest City in the World

The recently released 2024 Happy City Index ranks cities based on the happiness of their citizens. The highest-ranking city is one you perhaps haven't heard of before.

If you've never heard of Aarhus, Denmark's second-largest city, it's a good time to put it on your radar. Located on the Jutland peninsula's east coast, about 120 miles due west of Copenhagen, the city boasts stellar dining (with four Michelin-starred restaurants and a global street food scene), plentiful access to nature, and exceptional museums.

Aarhus is also the world's happiest city, according to the London-based Institute for Quality of Life's recently released 2024 Happy City Index.

What makes Aarhus, Denmark, the happiest city in the world?

While the Institute for Quality of Life recognizes in its methodology that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to happiness and that cities are constantly changing, the report notes that it is possible to look at a variety of indicators "that directly relate to the quality of life and the sense of happiness of its residents."

With that in mind, the organization identified five categories it believes have the most direct impact on happiness, including citizens, governance, environment, economy, and mobility. Within those themes are 24 subcategories, which assess areas such as the availability of green space, educational systems, safe and reliable transportation, and access to culture, including libraries. Through open data and interviews with residents, the institutions then combined the qualitative and quantitative information to rank cities on a point system.

What it found is that the world's happiest cities are "where education, inclusive policies, the economy, mobility, environmental protection, access to green areas, and innovation are not only important components of official policies but are also evident in the implemented solutions, tangible for residents, and have a direct impact on their quality of life."

Based on these factors, Aarhus, Denmark, achieved the highest score, particularly excelling in governance and the environment.

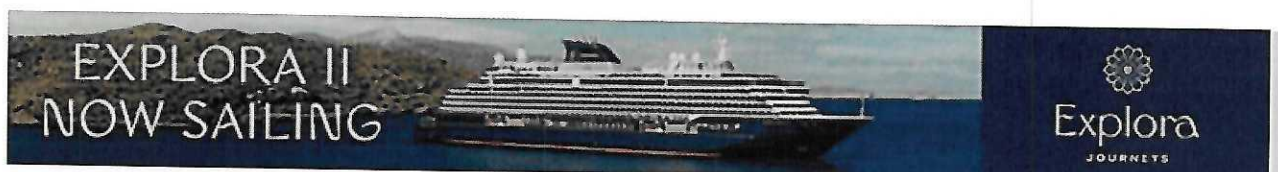
Only cities with at least 300,000 residents were considered for the index, which narrowed the total cities in contention to roughly 1,650 worldwide. Of those, only the top 250 were recognized, split into three groups: gold (the top 37), silver (cities 38 through 100), and bronze (cities 101 through 250).

Here's how the happiest cities in the world ranked.

Aarhus, Denmark
Zurich, Switzerland
Berlin, Germany
Gothenburg, Sweden
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Helsinki, Finland
Bristol, United Kingdom

Copenhagen, Denmark
Geneva, Switzerland,
Munich, Germany
Stockholm, Sweden
Rotterdam, Netherlands
Oulu, Finland
Vienna, Austria

Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Reykjavik, Iceland
Aalborg, Denmark
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Basel, Switzerland
Alesund, Norway



Spinach and Ricotta Dumplings

Level: Easy
Total: 35 min
Prep: 20 min
Cook: 15 min
Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

Kosher salt
1 10-ounce package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
1 1/2 cups whole-milk ricotta cheese
1 cup grated parmesan cheese
6 tablespoons all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling
2 large eggs
Freshly ground pepper
Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
2 cups prepared marinara sauce
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces
Crusty bread, for serving

Directions:

- 1 Bring a large, wide pot of salted water to a simmer. Put the spinach in a large bowl and separate it with your hands. Add the ricotta, 3/4 cup parmesan, the flour, eggs, 3/4 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper and the nutmeg. Mix with a fork to form a slightly sticky dough.
- 2 Spread some flour on a plate. Scoop out heaping tablespoonfuls of the spinach-ricotta mixture and roll into about 24 loose balls using floured hands. Gently roll the balls in the flour.
- 3 Bring the marinara sauce to a simmer in a large skillet over medium heat. Whisk in the butter.
- 4 Meanwhile, gently lower the dumplings into the simmering water and cook until they rise to the surface and are firm, about 5 minutes. Remove the dumplings with a slotted spoon, letting the water drain off, and add to the sauce. Gently toss to coat, then transfer to plates and sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 cup parmesan. Serve with bread.



Photograph by Antonis Achilleos
Courtesy of Food Network Magazine

American Cruise Lines Announces Two New Ships for 2026



American Cruise Lines has unveiled plans for two new vessels, American Maverick and American Ranger, set to launch in 2026. These 125-passenger ships are part of the company's Project Blue series, bringing the total number of vessels in the class to eight.

The new ships will follow the 2025 debuts of American Patriot, American Pioneer and the riverboat American Encore. They represent an expansion of the Project Blue series, which began with four 100-passenger Coastal Cats introduced in 2023 and 2024.

Chesapeake Shipbuilding, the company's affiliated shipyard in Salisbury, Maryland, will construct both vessels. As fully stabilized coastwise ships, they are designed for smooth sailing along the Eastern Seaboard, expanding the company's coastal cruise options from Maine to Florida.



Open 24/7

travel.state.gov/renewonline

What's the first step in renewing your passport online?

The first thing you need to do is to make sure that you meet the 10 requirements to qualify for online passport renewal. Once you have confirmed that you are eligible for online passport renewals, you need to make a MyTravelGov account. Once you create an account, you can simply log in when accessing the renewal portal. You must have an account in order to start and submit the application.

Is the online passport renewal portal faster than renewing by mail?

The online portal seems like it could be a simpler alternative to the more tedious renew-by-mail process. However, the online portal will not result in faster processing times. The actual submission is streamlined—no chasing down stamps and checks or heading to the post office—and offers easier ways to track the process of your application. Currently, processing times for the application are estimated to be about the same as the traditional process according to the website. Some TikTok users say that the process is shockingly fast.

What do you need to submit an online passport renewal application?

When the online application portal was first opened, it listed 10 requirements for being eligible to renew online.

Those 10 requirements haven't changed and they are very specific, so make sure you read them if you plan on using the online portal for renewal. You will also still need to pay the passport renewal fee, which starts at \$130 for a standard renewal of a passport book with standard delivery times. You can use the passport fee calculator to determine the exact cost you'll be paying.

If you don't meet the online portal's renewal requirements, you will have to renew your passport by mail. Just make sure to find yourself a checkbook and some stamps and that you have the following information and materials handy when you begin your renewal application:

A current passport photo

Your most recent passport

Any upcoming travel plans (though they cannot be within an eight-week window of your renewal submission date)

Payment details for the passport fees

How long do you have to complete the online passport application?

Once you successfully begin your online passport renewal, you will have 30 days to complete the application. There is an option to save the progress on your application. You'll have to start over if you haven't submitted your application after 30 days.

Can you submit an expedited online passport renewal application?

No. An expedited renewal, which takes between three to eight weeks, must be mailed in. For urgent passport renewals for more immediate travel plans, you must make an appointment and visit a passport agency or center in person.





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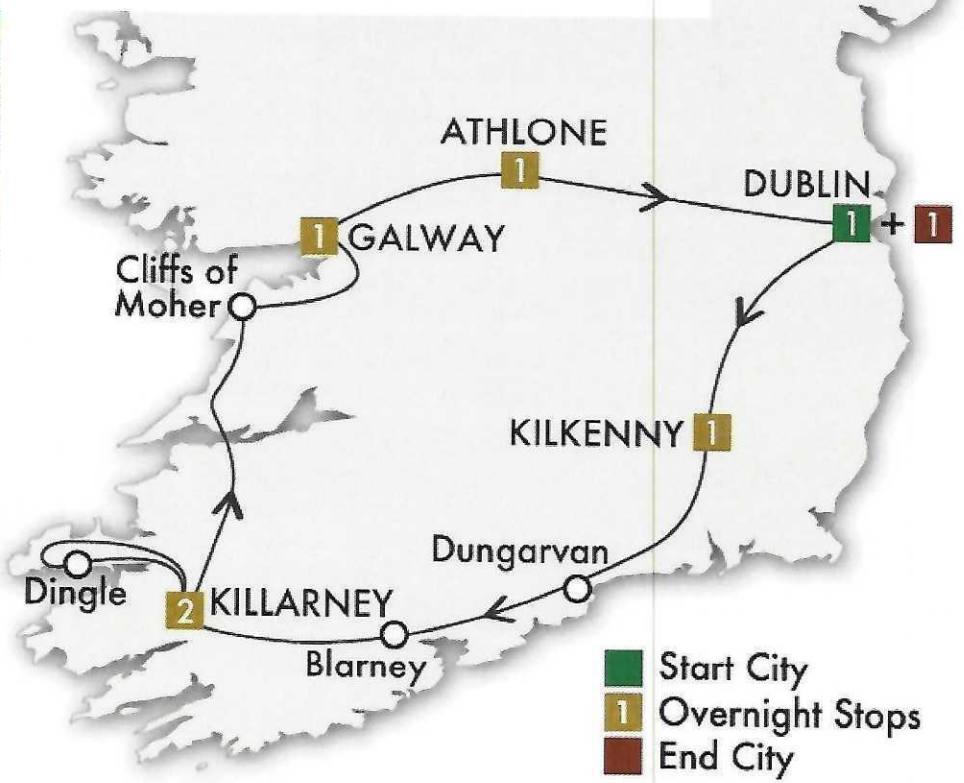
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"UP DATED"

GROUP DEPARTURES 2024, 2025 AND 2026

DECEMBER 7, 2024-ROYAL CLIPPER (round trip Barbados)

SOLD OUT

Would you like to climb the mast to the crow's nest 75 feet above the deck or visit the open bridge where you can help sail the vessel? If so, this tall ship adventure is your ticket. Casual and relaxed with top notch dining and less than 250 passengers. Have a tropical drink while you relax in the bowsprit netting while listening to a steel drum band on deck. Visit Grenada, St. Vincent, Bequia, Martinique and St. Lucia. Rate per person for an outside cabin, including current taxes, is \$2,475.00. Our special pricing also includes pre-paid gratuities and an on-board credit of \$200.00 per person.

FEBRUARY 26 to MARCH 4, 2025-ICELAND

FOUR SEATS LEFT

Our annual Iceland adventure begins with flights on Icelandair round trip from Newark Liberty Airport to Keflavik. We will begin with a stop at the Viking World Museum for a heavy continental breakfast before heading to the Blue Lagoon for a sunrise cocktail. Our package includes four nights at Midgardur Center Hotel with a buffet breakfast daily, full day Golden Circle tour with a tomato soup lunch at Fridheimar Greenhouse, shared Northern Lights tour, optional tours will be available to the glacier and South shore black sand beaches and Sky Lagoon. Price per person double \$2,100.00 included all current air and government taxes. A few singles are available at a surcharge of \$650.00. Insurance is recommended and a valid passport is required.

MARCH 24-30, 2025, SOUTHERN CHARM (with Collette Vacations)

Explore warm southern hospitality in America's southeast. Come to know its rich history and deep traditions on this tour highlighted by stays in Charleston, Savannah and Jekyll Island. Included are round trip transfers from Home Town Travel to Newark airport, six breakfasts and three dinners, professional escort for the duration of the trip, all accommodations and entrance fees. The rate per person, based on double occupancy is \$3,799.00. Cancel for any reason insurance is optional at the rate of \$429.00

MAY 18 to 25, 2025, BERMUDA CRUISE ABOARD THE CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE

TWO CABINS LEFT

Start next summer off right; especially if you missed this year's Bermuda group. Enjoy all that Bermuda has to offer while enjoying your beverage package and wi-fi relaxing on your balcony as you sail from Cape Liberty (Bayonne, NJ) passing the Statue of Liberty enroute to the beautiful pink sand beaches this beautiful island has to offer. Your special group rate includes your balcony accommodation, all current port and government taxes, beverage package and wi-fi for \$1,859.00 per person double.

NOVEMBER 5-16, 2025, OLD WORLD SICILY AND MALTA (with Collette Vacations)

This is a small group departure for Home Town Travel with a maximum of 24 passengers on this adventure. These legendary isles are nestled amongst the deep blue water of the Mediterranean. Discover how ancient traditions blend into modern society as you travel along timeless Italian Maltese and Sicilian towns. This eleven-night tour begins with a four-night stay in Malta with a ferry to Sicily where you will stay three nights in Ragusa and three nights in Taormina. This package includes round trip transportation to Newark airport from our office, round trip air from Newark airport with an overnight flight to Malta, 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners, professional escort throughout the trip and all accommodations and entrance fees. The rate per person based on double occupancy is \$5,399.00. Cancel for any reason insurance is optional and at a rate of \$549.00. Please call for more information.

NOVEMBER 25, 2025-ICONIC CHRISTMAS MARKETS ABOARD AMA REINA (Nuremburg to Budapest)

ONE CABIN LEFT

Travel back through centuries as you walk along cobblestone streets through grand cities and historic towns bedecked with twinkling Christmas trees and lined with wooden huts gleaming with handcrafted treasures. Nuremberg's festive Christkindlemarkt, the largest and oldest Christmas market in Germany, Regensburg's Artisan Christmas Market, one of Bavaria's most beautiful and romantic, Vienna with its impressive Christmas Market and Budapest where most products are handmade. Revel in a feast for the senses: sparkling lights, festive sounds of children dressed as angels singing carols and the enticing smells of hot-mulled wine, roasted chestnuts, sausages, and sweet treats of every kind. Rates start at \$3,699.00 per person double occupancy. Air fare and pre and post stays are optional and will be available in January 2025.

MARCH 13-26, 2026—TWELVE NIGHT VIETNAM & THAILAND CRUISE ABOARD THE CELEBRITY SOLSTICE

This bucket list trip starts in Hong Kong and visits Hanoi (Halong Bay), Hue/Danang, Ho Chi Minh (Phu My), Bangkok/Laemchabang and Ko Samui Thailand, and disembarking in Singapore. Pre and post land packages will be available. Cruise includes balcony accommodations (V1), all current port and government taxes, beverage package, gratuities, and Wi-Fi. SAVE OVER \$1,500 PER CABIN. Rate per person based on double \$3,350.00. A deposit of \$900/cabin is required to reserve your cabin. Final payment is not due until December 1, 2025.

REMEMBER-IF YOU FIND SOMETHING THAT INTERESTS YOU, BOOK EARLY SO YOU WILL NOT TO BE DISAPPOINTED. OUR SPECIAL RATES TEND TO SELL OUT AND PRICES ARE NOT GUARANTEED UNTIL DEPOSITED.