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WTCF
世界旅游城市联合会
World Tourism Cities Federation

World Tourism Cities Development Report

2023

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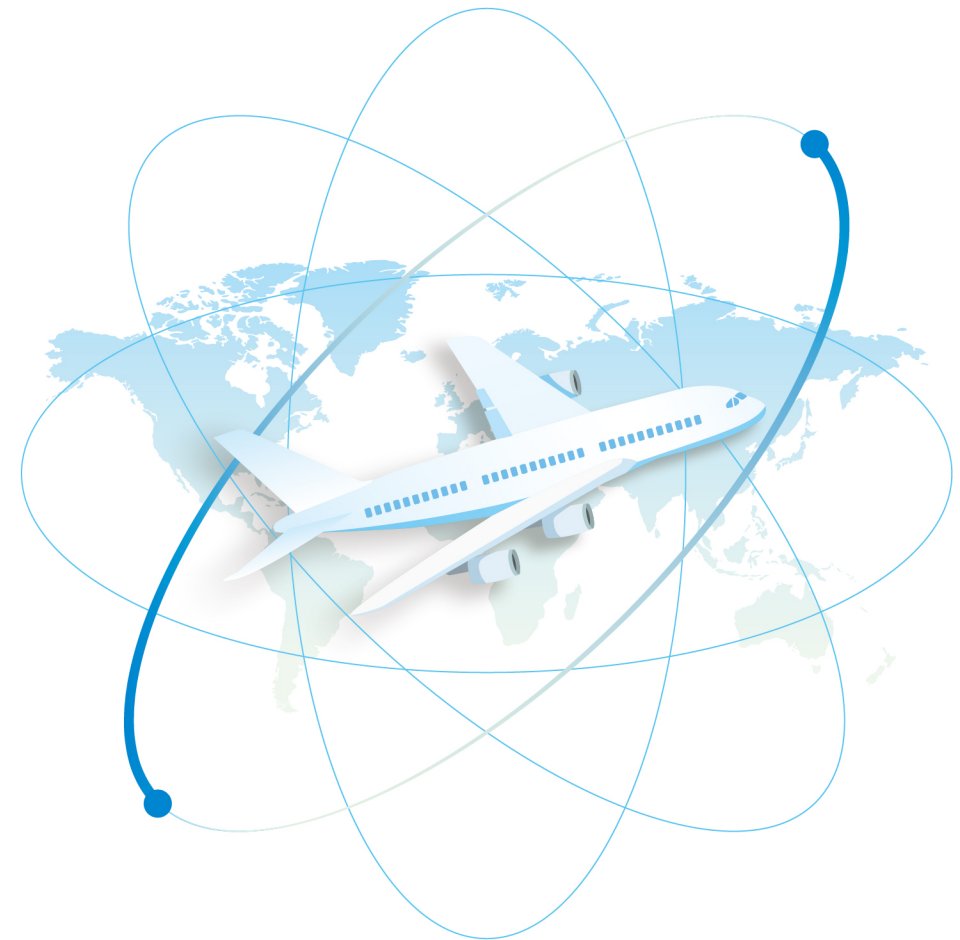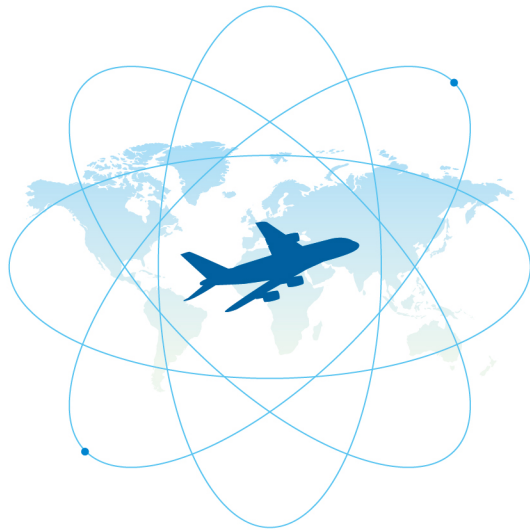世界旅游城市联合会
World Tourism Cities Federation

World Tourism Cities Development Report

World Tourism Cities Development Report(2023)

World Tourism Cities Federation

Section II

Comprehensive Rankings of the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023)

Structure of the Indexes for Evaluating the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023)

Research Objective

Since 2014, WTCF has released the *World Tourism Cities Development Report* and the "Rankings of the Development of World Tourism Cities" to the public every year. It gradually established a scientific and effective evaluation methodology through the analysis and research of different development dimensions and models of tourism cities, promptly summarized tourism cities' experience in their successful development, actively advocated the advanced concept of the development of world tourism, and vigorously promoted the cooperation and exchanges among world tourism cities, so as to effectively enhance the strategic value of tourism cities in the development of world tourism, accelerate the convenient and standardized development of world tourism cities with their own characteristics, and continuously provide intellectual support for the sustainable development of world tourism.

The pace of recovery in the tourism industry noticeably accelerated in 2023. However, despite the overall positive outlook for tourism, tourism cities are facing multiple challenges. Various issues such as a weak global economic recovery, inflation, rising interest rates, oil price fluctuations, and trade disruptions continuously affect transportation and accommodation costs. Besides, changes in consumer spending habits and preferences following the pandemic, the trend of deglobalization, and regional conflicts all pose challenges to the prosperity of tourism cities.

As an organization dedicated to promoting the sustainable development of global tourism cities, WTCF aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth overview of the development status of major tourism cities and the tourism industry in 2023 through research and the publication of an annual report. The report analyzes the key challenges facing the development of tourism cities and offers corresponding recommendations. We hope that the analysis and suggestions will provide valuable insights for the full recovery of world tourism cities and tourism enterprises, thus contributing to the sustainable development of tourism cities worldwide.

In the process of constructing the 2023 World Tourism City Development Evaluation Index, special emphasis is placed on the stability and continuity of the evaluation system. The stability is primarily reflected in the selection of the evaluation system and sample cities to ensure the comparability of the results. To more accurately reflect the development dynamics of global tourism cities, individual indicators have been adjusted and optimized in terms of weighting based on the latest trends and characteristics. This helps to capture the latest progress in various aspects of tourism cities and allows the evaluation index to more flexibly respond to changes in the global tourism industry. Through this approach, the evaluation index can better adapt to the evolving nature of the tourism industry while maintaining its core values and evaluation criteria. In addition, the consistency of the evaluation system is reflected in its emphasis on historical data. By comparing data from different years, we can observe the developmental changes of tourism cities over time and thus provide deeper insights for policymakers, tourism enterprises, and researchers. The consistency helps to assess the current performance of tourism cities and predict their future development trends.

Index System of the Evaluation on the Development of World Tourism Cities in 2023

The overall framework of the World Tourism City Development (2023) City Development Evaluation Index consists of 1 comprehensive index and 6 sub-indexes, also known as the 2023 World Tourism City Development Comprehensive Index.

The 6 sub-indexes include City Popularity Index, Industry Prosperity Index, City Intelligence Index, Tourism Safety Index, Economic Contribution Index and Tourist Satisfaction Index.

City Popularity Index (CPI)

This index is measured mainly from aspects including a city's brand influence, popularity of tourism resources, festivals and events with international influence, number of international MICE activities, large-scale international sports events, and well-known cultural and sports facilities, reflecting the breadth and depth of tourism cities known and understood by the public.

Industry Prosperity Index (IPI)

This index is calculated based on fundamental developments of six core tourism industries related to tourism, including tourism accommodation, commercial services, tourism catering, culture and entertainment, travel services, and tourism transportation, reflecting the overall development status and trend of urban tourism.

City Intelligence Index (CII)

This index evaluates the intelligence and convenience levels of urban public services based on sub-indexes such as the level of smart urban construction, ease of entry and exit, payment convenience, and the level of urban digitalization and informatization.

Tourism Safety Index (TSI)

This index measures the overall level of urban tourism safety and public security and investigates the development and management of the urban tourism safety assurance system from aspects such as the status of social security, the incidence of safety incidents, and the emergency rescue system.

Economic Contribution Index (ECI)

This index measures the driving effect of the urban tourism industry on urban economic development, including its contributions to urban economy, urban employment, and urban investment, from aspects such as the growth rate of domestic tourism, the growth rate of inbound tourism, the proportion of tourism to GDP, the proportion of tourism employment, and the proportion of tourism investment.

Tourist Satisfaction Index (TSI)

This index reflects the satisfaction of tourists with the products and services provided by the city through sub-indexes such as the city's online reputation, tourism complaint rate, and the proportion of tax-free shopping. It indicates how well the services offered by the tourism city align with market demand.

Weight of Sub-indexes of the Evaluation on the Development of World Tourism Cities in 2023

The weight of the Comprehensive Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023) is 100%. According to the ratings given by experts of WTCF, and taking account of the functional role of the sub-indexes in the Comprehensive Index, sub-indexes' respective weights are:

City Popularity Index: 20%; Industry Prosperity Index: 20%;

City Intelligence Index: 19%; Tourism Safety Index: 13%;

Economic Contribution Index: 20%; Tourist Satisfaction Index: 8%.

▲ United Arab Emirates   Dubai

Table 1 Index System of the Comprehensive Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023)

Index	Sub-index	Indicator	Reference Weight
Comprehensive Index on theDevelopment of World Tourism Cities	A. City Popularity Index (weight: 20%)	A1 City brand influence (times of the city being searched on the Internet, the city' activeness on major social media platforms)	4%
		A2 Popularity of tourism resources (number of world heritages, number of well-known attractions)	6%
		A3 Number of festivals and events with international influence	3%
		A4 Number of international MICE activities (number of conferences, exhibitions)	3%
		A5 Number of international sports events (hosted by international sports organizations)	2%
		A6 Well-known cultural and sports facilities including museums (number of well-known libraries, museums, stadiums, theaters)	2%
	B. Prosperity Index (weight: 20%)	B1 Size of the hotel accommodation industry (measured by its contribution to the city's GDP)	5%
		B2 Size of the retail industry (measured by its contribution to the city's GDP)	4%
		B3 Size of the catering industry (measured by its contribution to the city's GDP)	4%
		B4 Size of the leisure and entertainment industry (measured by its contribution to the city's GDP)	2%
		B5 Size of the tourism service industry (measured by its contribution to the city's GDP)	3%
		B6 Size of the tourism transportation industry (measured by its contribution to the city's GDP)	2%

Index	Sub-index	Indicator	Reference Weight
Comprehensive Index on theDevelopment of World Tourism Cities	C. City Intelligence Index (weight: 19%)	C1 Urban information development level (4G/5G coverage, use of smart devices per 10,000 citizens)	2%
		C2 Urban transportation intelligence level (whether the local public transportation system supports mobile payment, whether the city provides Citypass, City Card or other similar services, proportion of online ticketing)	1%
		C3 Online trip bookings (number or usage rate of online trip bookings, total revenue of online travel intermediary businesses, contribution of online travel intermediary businesses to overall travel intermediary businesses)	4%
		C4 Digital tourism development level (number of tourism-related APPs, proportion of tickets of tourist attractions booked online)	4%
		C5 Financial payment convenience (mobile payment coverage, credit card payment coverage)	1%
		C6 Exit-entry convenience (e-visa coverage, visa approval time)	3%
		C7 Tourism information services (activeness of official tourism APPs, official websites, and social media accounts)	4%
	D. Tourism Safety Index (weight: 13%)	D1 Level of public security (number of mass casualty incidents) <the lower the better>	1%
		D2 Crime rate (crime rate per 10,000 citizens) (the lower the better)	4%

Index	Sub-index	Indicator	Reference Weight
Comprehensive Index on theDevelopment of World Tourism Cities	D. Tourism Safety Index (weight: 13%)	D3 Number of safety accidents (the lower the better)	2%
		D4 Tourism emergency rescue system (number of rescue teams)	4%
		D5 Public medical development level (number of hospital bed per capita, number of medical personnel per capita)	2%
	E. Economic Contribution Index (weight: 20%)	E1 Growth rate of inbound tourism (inbound tourist arrivals and its annual growth rate, annual growth rate of inbound tourist expenditure per capita, growth rate of total inbound tourist expenditure)	4%
		E2 Growth rate domestic tourism (domestic tourist arrivals and its annual growth rate, growth rate of domestic tourism revenues)	5%
		E3 City tourism GDP and its contribution to overall city GDP	6%
		E4 Contribution of tourism employment to overall city employment	3%
		E5 Contribution of annual tourism investments to overall city investments	2%
	F. Tourist Satisfaction Index(weight: 8%)	F1 IWOM degree (ratings given by tourists about the city on well-known online tourism websites)	4%
		F2 Tourist complaint rate (ratio of complaints per 10,000 tourists)	2%
		F3 Tourist shopping tax refund rate	2%

Key Data Source of the Evaluation Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities in 2023

The key data of the Evaluation Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023) are mainly the data from Frost & Sullivan in 2023, and some of them are from official authorities such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

The Methodology for Calculating the Evaluation Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023)
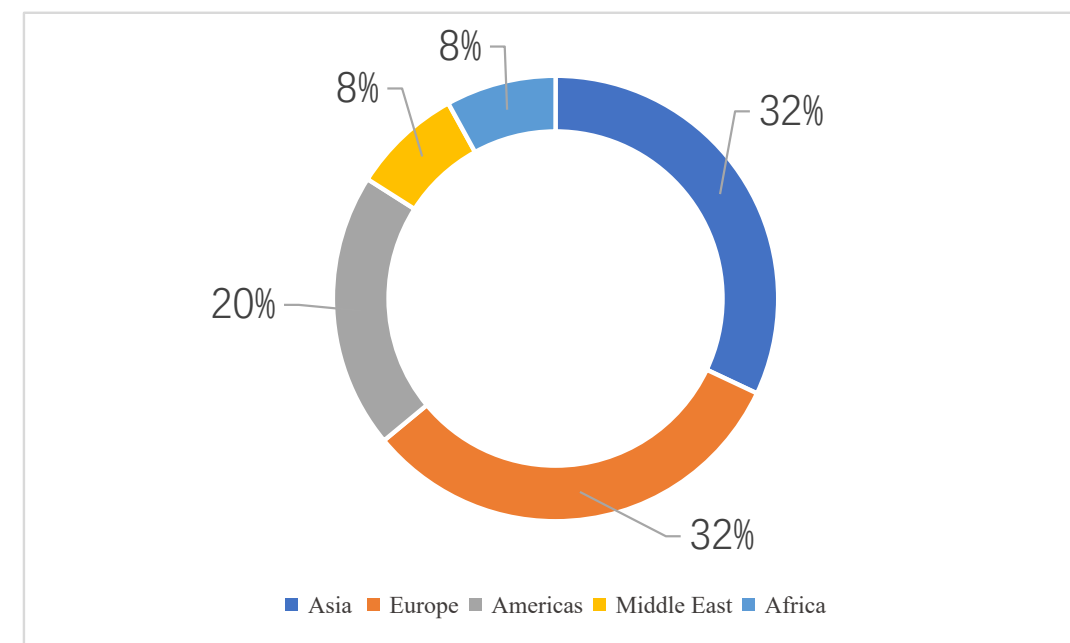
The Evaluation Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023) is derived mainly by aggregating statistical data and data collected from definitive lists, and the score of the six sub-indexes are weighted according to the proportions of 20%, 20%, 19%, 13%, 20% and 8%. The weights of the six sub-indexes are determined by WTCF engaged experts using the Delphi method. The comprehensive ranking is based on the scores under the six sub-indexes, in descending order.

▲　　Finland　Helsinki

Cities Surveyed for Developing the Evaluation Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023)

The report continuously tracks 100 major tourism cities as sample cities to provide an overview of the development of world tourism cities. These 100 sample cities are from 70 countries and regions around the world, covering Europe, America, the Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, and Africa. Specifically, 32 cities are from Asia-Pacific, 32 are from Europe, 20 are from Americas, 8 are from the Middle East, and 8 are from African, accounting for a proportion of 32%, 32%, 20%, 8% and 8% respectively. Of these 100 sample cities, 67 are member cities of WTCF, and 33 are non-member cities.

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Figure 1 Proportion of Member Cities in the 100 Sample

Table 2 The 100 Cities Surveyed for Developing the Evaluation Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023)

Region	Country	City	Membership
Asia-Pacific (32)	China	Beijing	Yes
		Shanghai	Yes
		Guangzhou	Yes
		Hangzhou	Yes
		Tianjin	Yes
		Chongqing	Yes
		Chengdu	Yes
		Qingdao	Yes
		Kunming	Yes
		Xi'an	Yes
		Hong Kong	Yes
		Macao	Yes
		Taipei	No
	Japan	Tokyo	No
		Osaka	No
		Sapporo	Yes
	Korea	Seoul	Yes
		Busan	Yes
	Thailand	Bangkok	Yes
	Vietnam	Ho Chi Minh City	No
	Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	No
	Indonesia	Jakarta	Yes
	Nepal	Kathmandu	Yes
	Australia	Melbourne	Yes
		Sydney	No
		Brisbane	No
	New Zealand	Oakland	No
	India	New Delhi	No
		Mumbai	No
	Tajikistan	Dushanbe	Yes

Region	Country	City	Membership
Asia-Pacific (32)	Kazakhstan	Almaty	Yes
	Indonesia	Bandung	Yes
Europe (32)	Italy	Milan	Yes
		Rome	Yes
		Florence	Yes
		Venice	No
	Spain	Madrid	Yes
		Seville	Yes
		Barcelona	Yes
	Greece	Athens	Yes
	United Kingdom	London	Yes
		Edinburgh	Yes
	Bulgaria	Sofia	Yes
	Austria	Vienna	Yes
	France	Paris Region	Yes
	Hungary	Budapest	Yes
	Sweden	Stockholm	No
	Switzerland	Geneva	Yes
	Czech	Prague	Yes
	Latvia	Riga	Yes
	Poland	Warsaw	No
		Amsterdam	Yes
	Netherlands	Rotterdam	No
	Norway	Oslo	No
	Germany	Berlin	Yes
		Frankfurt	No
		Munich	No
	Russia	Moscow	Yes
		St. Petersburg	Yes
	Portugal	Lisbon	Yes

Region	Country	City	Membership
Europe (32)	Ireland	Dublin	Yes
	Belarus	Minsk	Yes
	Belgium	Brussels	Yes
	Finland	Helsinki	Yes
The Americas (20)	United States	Miami	No
		Washington	Yes
		Chicago	No
		Los Angeles	Yes
		Las Vegas	No
		Hawaii	No
		New York	No
		San Francisco	Yes
	Brazil	São Paulo	No
		Rio de Janeiro	Yes
	Peru	Lima	Yes
	Argentina	Buenos Aires	Yes
	Canada	Vancouver	Yes
		Toronto	Yes
		Ottawa	Yes
	Cuba	Havana	No

Region	Country	City	Membership
The Americas (20)	Mexico	Mexico City	Yes
	Panama	Panama City	Yes
	Uruguay	Montevideo	Yes
	Colombia	Cartagena	Yes
Africa (8)	South Africa	Cape Town	No
		Johannesburg	No
	Morocco	Casablanca	Yes
	Egypt	Cairo	Yes
	Senegal	Dakar	Yes
	Tunisia	Tunisia	No
	Kenya	Nairobi	Yes
	Ivory Coast	Abidjan	Yes
Middle East (8)	United Arab Emirates	Abu Dhabi	No
		Dubai	Yes
	Israel	Jaffa Tel Aviv	Yes
	--	Jerusalem	No
	Iran	Tehran	No
	Qatar	Doha	No
	Turkey	Istanbul	No
	Saudi Arabia	Mecca	No

Evaluation Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023)

Results of the Comprehensive Evaluation on the Development of World Tourism Cities in 2023

List of the comprehensive rankings of the development of world tourism cities in 2023 (Top 20)

Table 3 Rankings of the Comprehensive Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities in 2023 (Top 20)

Ranking	City	Country	Sector
1	New York	United States	The Americas
2	Tokyo	Japan	Asia-Pacific
3	Paris	France	Europe
4	Sydney	Australia	Asia-Pacific
5	San Francisco	United States	The Americas
6	Melbourne	Australia	Asia-Pacific
7	Toronto	Canada	The Americas
8	Beijing	China	Asia-Pacific
9	London	United Kingdom	Europe
10	Shanghai	China	Asia-Pacific

Ranking	City	Country	Sector
11	Hong Kong	China	Asia-Pacific
12	Miami	US	The Americas
13	Milan	Italy	Europe
14	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	Middle East
15	Rome	Italy	Europe
16	Los Angeles	United States	The Americas
17	Seoul	South Korea	Asia-Pacific
18	Amsterdam	Netherlands	Europe
19	Osaka	Japan	Asia-Pacific
20	Moscow	Russia	Europe

Table 4 Rankings of the Comprehensive Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities in 2023 (Top 20)

Ranking	City	Comprehensive Index	A City Popularity Index	B Industry Prosperity Index	C City Intelligence Index	D Tourism Safety Index	E Economic Contribution Index (ECI)	F Tourist Satisfaction Index (TSI)
1	New York	91.1	0.1750	0.2364	0.2100	0.0800	0.1600	0.0500
2	Tokyo	89.9	0.1850	0.2390	0.1800	0.1200	0.1000	0.0750
3	Paris	87.4	0.1950	0.2336	0.1601	0.0850	0.1500	0.0500

Ranking	City	Compre-hensive Index	A City Pop-ularity In-dex	B Industry Prosperity Index	C City In-telligence Index	D Tourism Safety In-dex	E Economic Contribu-tion Index (ECI)	F Tourist Satisfac-tion Index (TSI)
4	Sydney	85.8	0.1450	0.2070	0.1803	0.1200	0.1356	0.0700
5	San Francisco	85.5	0.1600	0.2310	0.2000	0.0750	0.1386	0.0500
6	Melbourne	84.9	0.1500	0.1841	0.2000	0.1050	0.1300	0.0800
7	Toronto	83.4	0.1550	0.2168	0.1802	0.1050	0.1321	0.0450
8	Beijing	83.4	0.1170	0.2318	0.2000	0.1150	0.1100	0.0600
9	London	83	0.1500	0.2345	0.1901	0.1050	0.1100	0.0400
10	Shanghai	82.4	0.1400	0.2334	0.1810	0.1100	0.1050	0.0550
11	Hong Kong	81.8	0.1700	0.2214	0.1897	0.0827	0.1041	0.0500
12	Miami	81.7	0.1200	0.2225	0.2100	0.0750	0.1500	0.0400
13	Milan	81.5	0.1350	0.1652	0.1700	0.0950	0.1800	0.0700
14	Dubai	81	0.1750	0.1384	0.1688	0.0828	0.1700	0.0750
15	Rome	77.4	0.1450	0.1390	0.1700	0.0800	0.1600	0.0800
16	Los Angeles	77.2	0.1650	0.2310	0.1803	0.0658	0.0900	0.0400
17	Seoul	77.2	0.1700	0.1794	0.1900	0.0886	0.0690	0.0750
18	Amsterdam	77.2	0.1000	0.1715	0.2100	0.1100	0.0900	0.0900
19	Osaka	76.5	0.1700	0.2322	0.1602	0.1033	0.0240	0.0750
20	Moscow	76.4	0.1700	0.2138	0.1600	0.0800	0.0800	0.0600

The annual changes in the comprehensive rankings of the top 20 world tourism cities are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Annual Changes in the Comprehensive Rankings of the Development of World Tourism Cities (Top 20)

City	2023	2022	2021
New York	1	1	5
Tokyo	2	2	26
Paris	3	6	1
Sydney	4	11	8
San Francisco	5	15	4
Melbourne	6	14	13
Toronto	7	12	21
Beijing	8	7	7
London	9	5	2
Shanghai	10	8	12
Hong Kong	11	9	46
Miami	12	22	6
Milan	13	19	16
Dubai	14	18	61
Rome	15	38	25
Los Angeles	16	3	3
Seoul	17	4	14
Amsterdam	18	21	38
Osaka	19	10	49
Moscow	20	13	15

Six sub-indexes of the top 20 world tourism cities under the comprehensive development index in 2023 (Top)

The World Tourism Cities Federation divided world tourism citie into global hub tourism cities, intercontinental center tourism cities and regional node tourism cities in terms of influence.

Global hub tourism cities are node cities that assume the functions of tourism gateway and tourism distribution in the world tourism city system. Such tourism cities have a high reputation worldwide and a highly developed tourism industry, and are major destinations and sources of international tourists worldwide, with a strong influence on the formulation of world tourism rules and the development of tourism markets. At present, the generally recognized global hub tourism cities include Paris, London, Berlin, Milan, New York, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Seoul, Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai, Beijing, and Shanghai etc.

An intercontinental center tourism city is typically one of the political, economic, cultural, and tourism centers within a country or region of a continent, exerting significant influence on global tourism development, especially within that continent. These cities generally are the main distribution centers of international tourism as they have better tourism resources and infrastructure. They are the backbone supporting the sustainable development of world tourism as they play a top-down linkage role in the development of world tourism. These cities include Chicago, Miami, Rio de Janeiro, Munich, Sydney, Taipei, Melbourne, Moscow, and Barcelona.

Regional node tourism cities are tourist destinations of a country or region with unique characteristics in a certain aspect. Their political, economic, cultural and other comprehensive service functions may not be very strong, but their tourism products are distinctive. These cities have a greater popularity and appeal in aspects including natural scenery, history and culture, commercial services, and entertainment and leisure, have a greater influence on regional tourism and special tourism, and are important nodes for professional and special tourism routes. For example, Nice, Las Vegas, Hawaii, Athens,

Cancun, Brisbane, Guilin, Xi'an, and Macao etc. are such cities.

According to the report on 2023 World Tourism Cities Development Comprehensive Index, the performances of the top 20 cities in terms of the six sub-indexes were imbalanced compared to the last year. Although these cities rank among top in terms of the overall ranking, they are relatively weak in certain sub-indexes. For example, New York ranks first in the City Intelligence Index, demonstrating its leading position in smart city construction. However, New York ranks relatively low in the Tourism Safety Index and the Tourist Satisfaction Index. Achieving balanced development will be an important goal for future tourism cities. This not only helps to enhance the overall competitiveness of the city but also provides a more comprehensive and higher-quality tourism experience to attract more tourists.

The rankings of the top 20 world tourism cities in 2023 by the six sub-indexes are shown in the table below.

Figure2 Six sub-indexes of the top 20 world tourism cities under the comprehensive development index in 2023

Overall Analysis of Comprehensive Development Index of World Tourism Cities in 2023

The comprehensive rankings of global tourism cities in 2023, along with the changes in the top 20 cities, vividly and profoundly reflect some new characteristics in the development of world tourism cities.

The tourism cities in North America have gained strong development momentum, with rankings rising remarkably

Among the top 20 of the 2023 comprehensive rankings, the majority are European and American cities. There are five cities from the Americas, six from Europe, eight from the Asia-Pacific region, and one from the Middle East. The tourism sectors in Europe and the Americas have recovered best and basically reached pre-pandemic levels, with cities in the Americas showing particularly noticeable ranking improvements. New York ranks first, while San Francisco, Toronto, and Miami have all increased by more than 10 places compared to their 2022 rankings.

First, the U.S. dollar maintains a strong position, and the American tourism consumption market is vibrant. Due to the aggressive interest rate hike policy by the Federal Reserve, the U.S. dollar has continued to appreciate against major global currencies, thus enhancing its purchasing power abroad, reducing the cost of imported goods, and boosting the U.S. consumption market. The U.S. Dollar Index rose by 5.6% from its low in July 2023, stimulating more tourism consumption. In the North American market, traditional tourist destinations such as New York have performed particularly well. In 2023, New York received 62 million visitors, including over 11 million international tourists, which generated more than USD 74 billion of economic benefits for the city. This once again proves the important role of the tourism industry in driving the economic development of New York.
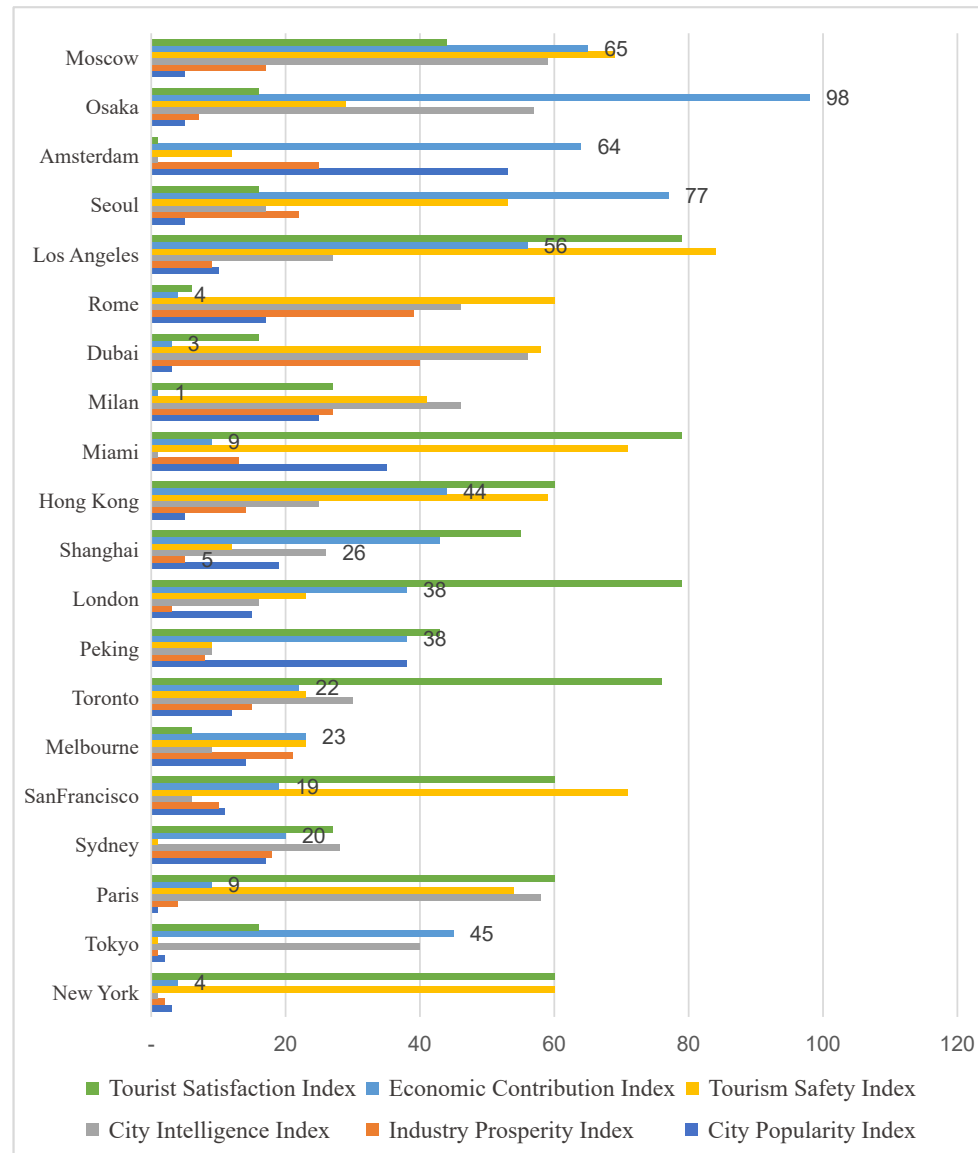
Second, the demand in the North American market is robust, and the supply of tourism products is keeping pace with new developments. Boasting a rich array of tourism products and services, cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago have long been among the most attractive destinations globally. These hub tourism cities in North America have consistently innovated and developed their offerings, with New York remaining the top entry point for inbound travelers to the United States. By the end of 2023, the foot traffic in Times Square had recovered to 78% of the pre-pandemic level. The 2022-2023 Broadway season was the first post-pandemic season, with 12.3 million attendees. The attendance rate had recovered to 88.4%, equivalent to the pre-pandemic level. Over the past three years, New York City has added about 10,000 hotel rooms from major projects, including the Virgin Hotels New York, the new Tempo brand by Hilton, and the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. The Empire State Building, a landmark in New York City, completed a four-year redevelopment project for its observation deck worth USD 165 million in 2023. The project offers tourists a new 360-degree high-definition view of the city. It topped Tripadvisor's 2023 Travelers' Choice list of the most-loved tourist attractions in the United States.

Third, technology is being used for tourism marketing and promotional activities. Tourism cities in North America highly rely on digital tools for marketing. Relevant measures include providing digital toolkits for tour wholesalers and using social tags. In terms of marketing and consumer information collection, the official website of New York City Tourism + Conventions has been upgraded to offer more convenience for tourists planning their itineraries. Moreover, the improvement in digital efficiency allows for online ticket booking on mobile devices, as well as the widespread use of Apple Pay, Google Pay, Alipay, and WeChat Pay, making travel more convenient and tourist experience more efficient and sustainable. To elevate Toronto's tourism brand, Tourism Toronto has built on its previous "Canada's Downtown" campaign by promoting the "Let Yourself In" tourism brand. Through online marketing and offline meetings, the campaign aims to rekindle international tourists' interest in visiting Canada. In addition to promoting traditional tourist destinations, it incorporates more emerging destinations and trending content and facilitates the updating of tourism product itineraries.

Fourth, the highly developed business tourism sector has driven the recovery and growth of the tourism market in North America. According to statistics from the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau, business meetings and incentive travel in 2023 recovered to 98% of pre-pandemic levels, providing important support for the recovery of the tourism market. Before the pandemic, the U.S. tourism industry had a trade surplus of up to USD 54 billion, and the recovery of business tourism after the pandemic has helped to revive its tourism market. In 2023, U.S. airlines maintained relative stability, with both capacity and ticket prices increasing simultaneously. This reflects the growing demand for business travel, which positively impacts the recovery of the tourism market.

Canada Toronto

The tourism cities in the Middle East have maintained their popularity, with rankings steadily rising

Among the top 20 cities in terms of comprehensive ranking, Dubai has climbed 4 places from the previous year to the 14th place.In 2023, the Middle East was the first among the five major regions to surpass its 2019 level, with a total of 301 million tourist arrivals.

First, the popularity of tourism cities in the Middle East keeps growing, but their comprehensive strength is not on par with global hub tourism cities. In 2023, the number of international tourists visiting the Middle East reached 86.3 million, an increase of 22% compared to 2019. Egypt welcomed a record 14.9 million inbound tourists and generated tourism revenue of USD 15 billion, both setting new record highs. Bahrain saw a 51% increase in inbound tourists, with tourism revenue reaching USD 5.15 billion and over USD 10 billion invested in the tourism sector. Qatar's tourist numbers grew by 143%, and it invested USD 17.5 billion in major projects to promote tourism development. Saudi Arabia attracted over 100 million domestic and international tourists. However, apart from Dubai, which ranks as a global hub tourism city, other tourism cities in the Middle East did not make it into the top 20.

Second, the Middle East leverages sports events and MICE brands to enhance its international popularity. The unique culture and long history of the Middle East provide it with unique advantages for the development of its tourism industry. A growing number of Middle Eastern countries have recognized the importance of tourism for economic growth and job creation. Hence, they have viewed tourism as a key strategic priority for economic development. They have introduced various tourism revitalization measures, invested in the construction of tourism projects, promoted the development of tourism resources and the upgrading of tourism products, and developed new forms and models such as sports tourism and MICE tourism, in a bid to promote economic diversification. For example, Qatar attempts to create a diverse range of tourism products related to events such as the AFC Asian Cup and the Doha Horticultural Expo. With a variety of tourism products, 500 kilometers of pristine coastline, and a wealth of museum resources, Qatar has become a uniquely attractive tourist destination.

Third, more convenient services in respect of visa and flight are provided to enhance tourist experience. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) plans to launch a unified tourism visa called "GCC Grand Tours" by the end of 2024. This visa will allow tourists to travel freely between six Middle Eastern countries, namely Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, and Kuwait, and stay in the region for more than 30 days. This visa system is akin to a "Schengen visa" for the Middle East, aiming to simplify the travel process for tourists and promote regional tourism. Chinese tourists are becoming an important target source market for the Middle East. To attract Chinese visitors, countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Qatar, and Iraq are continuously optimizing their visa policies and offering facilitation measures to make it easier for international tourists, including those from China, to enter the region. In 2023, China became the 7th largest source market for Dubai which welcomed 600,000 overnight visitors from China.

Tourism cities in the Asia-Pacific region are recovering quickly, but the pace of recovery is imbalanced.

Among the top 20 cities in the comprehensive ranking, eight are from the Asia-Pacific region, similar to the situation of 2022. Tokyo maintained its second position, Melbourne rose seven places to the 7th, Beijing fell one place to the 8th, and Shanghai dropped two places to the 10th, while other cities saw more significant declines. This is related to the later lifting of travel restrictions in the Asia-Pacific region compared to Europe and America. In 2023, the tourism industry in the Asia-Pacific region recovered to 65% of the pre-pandemic level, lower than that of Europe, America, and the Middle East. The recovery level varied across different regions, with South Asia recovering about 22% more than East Asia.

First, Southeast Asia is experiencing a strong recovery in tourism and adopting multiple measures to create distinctive tourism brands. In 2023, Southeast Asian countries delivered impressive performance in the tourism sector. According to data from Thailand's tourism department, the country received over 28 million foreign tourists

in 2023 and generated tourism revenue of 1 trillion baht. Vietnam welcomed about 12.6 million foreign tourists during the year, exceeding the initial target of 8 million. Indonesia received over 11 million international tourists, surpassing its target. Cambodia welcomed 4.9 million foreign tourists in 2023, with a tourism recovery rate of 92.48%. The recovery rates for Vietnam's and Indonesia's tourism industries were 82.25% and 74.11%, respectively. Tourism is a pillar industry for many Southeast Asian countries. To promote the development of their tourism industries and attract more foreign tourists, these countries are leveraging their unique advantages and implementing diverse measures to build distinctive tourism brands. In September 2023, Bangkok Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Thailand opened a new terminal capable of handling up to 28 aircraft simultaneously and transporting 15 million passengers annually. Cambodia launched the "Visit Cambodia Year 2023" campaign in the first half of 2023, during which dozens of events such as river festivals and marathons were held to attract domestic and international tourists. Laos introduced the "Visit Laos" tourism policy and organized the "Laos Tourism Year" campaign, featuring 79 related events across the country. The Indonesian government plans to create 4.4 million tourism-related jobs by 2024 and invest USD 1.2 billion in personnel training and marketing to boost tourism recovery.

Second, benefiting from factors such as an earlier reopening and increased attractiveness due to currency depreciation, some Japanese cities are facing the issue of over-tourism. From 2019 to March 2024, the yen-to-dollar exchange rate fell from 109:1 to about 152:1, and the dramatic depreciation of the yen became one key factor driving the rapid recovery of Japan's tourism industry. In 2023, the number of foreign tourists visiting Japan surged from 3.83 million in 2022 to 25.07 million, reaching nearly 80% of the peak in 2019 (31.88 million). The total spending by foreign visitors amounted to 5.3065 trillion yen, 10.2% higher than the 4.8135 trillion yen recorded in 2019. The influx of tourists is overly concentrated in areas such as the Tokyo metropolitan area and the Kyoto-Osaka region, where many attractions are often overcrowded. This not only hinders the preservation of the cultural and natural environment of the sites but also causes disturbances to local traffic and residents' daily lives. Especially for long-haul tourists from Europe, America, Australia, and Southeast Asia, their destination choices are

more concentrated than those of tourists from neighboring East Asian countries, further exacerbating the "over-tourism" that already existed before the pandemic. As a result, hotel bookings in some cities have become increasingly difficult, affecting the travel experience for both domestic and international tourists as well as business travelers.

Third, as China eases its pandemic control measures, the inbound tourism market is gradually recovering. With the resumption of international flights, China has gradually simplified entry procedures. On November 1, 2023, China fully lifted the restrictions on entry procedures imposed during the pandemic. Meanwhile, China continues to optimize its entry policies. As of November 17, 2023, Norway became the latest country eligible for China's 72/144-hour transit visa-free policy, expanding the policy to 54 countries. These 54 countries include 40 European countries such as France, Germany, and Russia, six American countries including the United States, Canada, and Brazil, two Oceanian countries including Australia and New Zealand, and six Asian countries including South Korea, Japan, and Singapore. Data shows that Beijing received nearly 1.16 million inbound trips in 2023. Although Asia has always been the main source of inbound tourism for Beijing, the number of inbound tourists from European and American countries continues to increase with the implementation of the visa exemption policy. Beijing has also launched the "International Web Portal of Beijing", which is available in nine languages including English, Korean, Japanese, German, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, and Portuguese. The website is designed to offer diverse and convenient city services for foreign friends and investors in terms of payment, travel, study, life and tourism. Shanghai is also actively promoting the recovery of inbound tourism. Data shows that in 2023, Shanghai received 3.64 million inbound tourists and generated a foreign exchange income of USD 6.2 billion, which recovered to 41% and 74% of the 2019 levels respectively. Shanghai is seeking to attract international tourists by implementing measures such as facilitating payment and internationalizing services, engaging foreign friends to promote the international tourism image of Shanghai, launching the "Foreigners Exploring Shanghai" multimedia product, and adopting the "Introduction by Tourists" model. In addition, some popular cultural museums have specifically reserved a quantity of reservation and ticket purchase resources for overseas inbound tour groups two months

in advance. The departments of culture and tourism, commerce, and sports in Shanghai jointly hosted the "Shanghai Let's Meet" event and introduced 70 top world cultural, sports, tourism, business, and exhibition events to be held in Shanghai for both domestic and foreign audiences, thus continuously promoting and optimizing inbound tourism.

Serbia Belgrade

With strong tourism demand in Europe, European and American tourists become the main force

Among the top 20 cities in terms of comprehensive ranking, European tourism cities occupy six spots, an increase of two compared to 2022. Amsterdam and Rome have returned to the list for the first time since they dropped out due to the pandemic in 2020. It has indirectly reflected the overall recovery of the European tourism market.

First, the overall tourism economy in Europe has recovered to near pre-pandemic levels. In 2023, the overall European tourism industry nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels, with the number of international tourists reaching 98.4% of the 2019 figure and

the total number of overnight stays reaching 99.4% of the 2019 figure. Two-thirds of the countries and regions in Europe have seen their key tourism indicators recover to 90% of pre-pandemic levels, and the scope of recovery is further expanding. Data shows that the total number of international tourist arrivals worldwide in 2023 was approximately 1.3 billion. Among them, Europe received 700 million, accounting for 54% of the global total. In Europe, with the recovery of business travel and the growing demand for leisure travel, domestic and regional travel has become popular again. In addition to these factors driving growth in the European tourism market, the United States has contributed to the high demand for leisure travel. With strong purchasing power and a strong dollar, more American tourists are choosing to travel to Europe. Prior to the pandemic, China was the second largest source of international tourists for Europe, accounting for 13% of the total number of overseas tourists.

Second, the tourism economy of traditional tourism powerhouses continues to shine. According to data released by the Bank of France, international tourism revenue in France

Belgium Brussels

reached EUR 63.5 billion in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 12%, setting a new record. The passenger traffic at major French airports has significantly recovered, with passenger flow at Paris Orly Airport surpassing the pre-pandemic level and passenger flow to and from Asia at Pairs Charles de Gaulle Airport doubling from 2022. The accelerating recovery of the French tourism industry after the pandemic is closely related to a series of support measures adopted by the French government. They include various long-term strategies such as the "Destination France Plan", as well as measures adopted in terms of investment guarantee, resource advantages, destination labeling, digital transformation, distinctive routes, international promotion, and talent introduction. By developing multiple tourist routes, creating themed travel routes, and utilizing innovative and digital methods to improve tourism services, France further enhances its attractiveness. In 2023, the Italian tourism industry welcomed its long-awaited "re-prosperity", with the number of tourists visiting Italy surpassing the 2019 level and international tourists increasing by 13.7% compared to 2022. According to data from the Italian Business Travel Association, the number of overnight stays in Italian hotels reached 445.3 million in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 8.1%. The growing number of tourists was mainly driven by the popularity of art cities and mountain resorts.

▲　Austria　Vienna

Third, international sports events have triggered a tourism boom in popular cities. The 2023 Rugby World Cup was held in France. From September 8 to October 28, the number of overnight stays by international tourists from participating countries surged, with a 39% increase in overnight stays in the nine cities hosting the matches. The Paris Olympics also brought rare development opportunities for the French tourism industry. Research by the International Olympic Committee and the Paris Olympic Organizing Committee shows that the Olympics are expected to bring economic benefits of EUR 6.7 billion to EUR 11.1 billion to Paris and its surrounding Greater Paris area, with the tourism sector's revenue expected to be between EUR 1.4 billion and EUR 3.6 billion. The number of air tourists visiting France during the Olympics is expected to increase by 22% year-on-year.

Fourth, emerging tourism markets are showing a trend of rapid development. The tourism industry is one of the important pillar industries of the European economy. In addition to traditional tourism powerhouses such as France, Spain, Italy, and Greece, the tourism industries in emerging tourism markets such as Serbia and Montenegro are also developing rapidly. For example, although there is still a gap compared to the pre-pandemic level in 2019, the recovery speed of the Hungarian tourism market is significantly faster than the EU average. The Hungarian National Tourist Office has taken several measures to promote the recovery of the tourism industry. First, it revised the tourism development strategy for 2030, aiming to improve the risk resistance and sustainable development capabilities of the tourism industry. Second, it divided the country into 11 tourism regions, invested around EUR 10 million in regional development, and formulated new development strategies and unified brands. In addition, the Hungarian National Tourist Office also pays extra attention to the Chinese market. In April 2024, it held tourism promotion events in Beijing, Chongqing, Guangzhou, and Shanghai, and promoted Hungarian tourism to Chinese tourists through social media platforms such as WeChat and Weibo. This is the first large-scale promotional event held by the Hungarian National Tourist Office in China after the restart of the Chinese outbound tourism market. These measures will help Hungary emerge from the intensive competition with surrounding popular tourism destinations, such as Vienna, Prague, Barcelona, and London, and further attract global tourists.

International tourism recovers rapidly, with domestic tourism growing faster than international tourism

As the global economy gradually recovers, people's consumption power and tourism demand have greatly rebounded. Especially after the easing of the pandemic, many countries and regions have relaxed tourism restrictions, further stimulating people's desire to travel. Meanwhile, the release of the pent-up tourism demand has led to a sharp increase in the total number of global tourist arrivals. As a growing number of tourists seek cost-effective tourism projects or choose short-distance travel, the growth rate of domestic tourism is higher than that of international tourism. According to the *Report on World Tourism Economy Trends (2024)*, the year-on-year growth rate of international tourist arrivals is 10.4% higher than that of domestic tourist arrivals, and the year-on-year growth rate of domestic tourism revenue is 2.2% higher than that of international tourism revenue.

Rising aviation and accommodation costs drive up international tourism revenue. Unfavorable economic and geopolitical factors are important reasons for the faster growth of domestic tourism compared to international tourism. Factors such as persistent inflation, high interest rates, oil price fluctuations, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have pushed up aviation and accommodation costs. In 2023, the fuel costs of major U.S. airlines significantly increased with the rise in crude oil prices. For example, in early September, aviation fuel prices in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, and New York increased by 30% compared to two months ago, reaching USD 3.18 per gallon. These rising costs are typically passed on to consumers through higher airfares. The rise in oil costs affects the aviation industry as well as other economic sectors, making goods and services overall more expensive. With the rise in ticket prices, consumers may be more inclined to choose short-distance trips and domestic tourism.

In the wake of the pandemic, tourism cities across the globe have implemented various preferential policies and measures to stimulate market prosperity and tourism consumption. These measures include ticket discounts and travel subsidies. Further efforts are made to launch a range of of new tourism products and services catering to diversified tourist demands, such as rural tourism, ecological tourism, and cultural tourism. These efforts have further propelled the recovery and prosperity of the domestic tourism market. Domestic travel in many countries offers greater convenience. Tourists are spared from dealing with issues such as visa applications, language barriers, and time differences, significantly reducing travel complexity and inconvenience. The rapid development of domestic transportation networks, along with improved railway and highway systems, has further facilitated domestic tourism, contributing to the growth of the tourism market. Furthermore, domestic tourism allows travelers to delve deeper into the culture and history of the motherland and satisfy their need for cultural identity and emotional belonging. For instance, in 2023, Beijing, China witnessed a surge in domestic tourist trips, with 328 million trips taken, marking a year-on-year increase of 80.2% and surpassing the 322 million recorded in 2019. Besides, inbound tourists totaled 1.168 million, falling short of the 3.769 million recorded in 2019.

The economic contribution from tourism in developed economies in Europe and the Americas is higher than in other regions

In 2023, among the top 20 cities in terms of economic contribution, nine were from the Americas and five from Europe, accounting for a combined 70% of the list. The economic contribution of tourism in Europe and the Americas is higher than in other regions.

First, travel restrictions were lifted later in two major tourism countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Prior to the pandemic, the top ten cities in terms of economic contribution in 2019 were mainly in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2023, the travel restrictions were lifted relatively late in China and Japan, two tourism powerhouses in the Asia-Pacific region. This delay resulted in a slower recovery of local tourism capacity and related industries. In contrast, European and American countries reopened earlier, leading to a rapid release of pent-up domestic travel demand. Furthermore, governments in these regions implemented more supportive measures to facilitate the transformation and increase investment in tourism, thereby resulting in a higher economic contribution from tourism in European and American cities.

Second, tourism investment in European and American countries is flourishing.
According to the *2023 Tourism Investment Report* by UN Tourism, greenfield investment projects are thriving, with a year-on-year growth rate of 23%. These greenfield investment projects injected new vitality into the development of the tourism industry. Europe attracted 143 greenfield investment projects with an estimated total value of USD 2.2 billion, highlighting its strong appeal for foreign direct investment. Meanwhile, the Asia-Pacific region secured 42 greenfield projects. Despite a low year-on-year growth rate, these projects still present valuable opportunities for economic growth in the region. It indicates that investors worldwide still have high expectations for the tourism industry in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

Third, the Middle East has increased its investment in tourism. Saudi Arabia, in particular, has launched several mega tourism projects, including the Red Sea Project which spans an area of 28,000 square kilometers and consists of an airport, two resorts, and 14 hotels. The project is designed to deliver exceptional tourism experiences. The kingdom is also developing NEOM, a futuristic city integrating cutting-edge technologies and promising sustainable living experiences for visitors. A series of global events such as the 2029 Asian Winter Games will be also hosted. In addition, the Qiddiya project is set to feature over 300 entertainment and sports facilities, including the world's largest theme park, with the ambition of becoming a global hub for entertainment and sports.

Tourism cities prioritize sustainable tourism and strive to improve tourist satisfaction

In 2023, global tourism cities witnessed a certain improvement in terms of city safety and tourist satisfaction compared to 2022. While the average index of city safety for the 100 sample cities remained consistent at 74, the average index of tourist satisfaction increased from 68.3 to 69.5. It indicates that tourism cities have generally maintained a stable level of travel safety. Tourists are increasingly concerned about travel safety, climate crisis, and sustainable tourism. The protection of local culture and natural environment has become a new selling point for tourism products.

First, consumers are showing a growing preference for sustainable and innovative tourism products. They are increasingly prioritizing more cost-effective tourism products, creating new opportunities for destinations traditionally considered less popular. In 2024, Italy plans to launch a series of new industry initiatives focusing on ecological sustainability and digital transformation of the tourism sector. The German National Tourist Board offers 140 sustainable tourism options, allowing visitors to explore different regions in an environmentally friendly and health-conscious manner. Malaysia has introduced various themed tourism products, enabling tourists to immerse themselves in the natural beauty of rain forests, islands, and national parks, as well as engage in underwater diving adventures. In Indonesia, the Sanur Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Bali, the country's first SEZ dedicated to health, will officially commence operations. It aims to offer health tourism and rehabilitation services to both domestic and international visitors.

Second, Europe has integrated the concept of sustainable travel into diverse tourism products. In Copenhagen, Denmark, waste-to-energy plants and organic restaurants are commonplace. Cycling is a widely embraced mode of transportation, and scenes of people living in harmony with nature can be seen in the city and the suburb. In Lapland, Finland, most popular ski resorts have adopted sustainable development measures such as carbon-neutral accommodation, geothermal heating, and green electricity. In Gothenburg, Sweden, 95% of hotels have received environmental certifications, 65% of public transportation

uses renewable energy, and many restaurants take pride in their eco-labels. Eco-friendly design has been integrated into all aspects of the city.

Third, tourists are seeking personalized travel experiences, thus promoting the growth of eco-tourism and health tourism. The pandemic has changed tourists' travel habits and demands, with an increasing emphasis on travel safety and personalized experiences. The *Global Wellness Economy: Looking Beyond COVID* recently released by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) reveals that global wellness markets have made a powerful recovery from the pandemic. North America, the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe have all witnessed the strongest growth rates since 2019. North America (now a USD 1.9 trillion market) surpassed the Asia-Pacific (now a USD 1.7 trillion market) as the largest regional wellness economy. Per capita spending on wellness is significantly higher in North America (USD 5,108) and Europe (USD 1,596) than elsewhere. With the release of pent-up demand, wellness tourism, spa, and hot spring industries have rapidly recovered in 2023. Looking ahead, global trends such as aging populations, rising chronic and mental health conditions, and evolving consumer values will continue to fuel the robust growth of the global wellness economy.

▲   Italy Florence

Part III

Individual Evaluation Index on the Development of World Tourism Cities (2023)

Individual Ranking of City Popularity in 2023

Ranking List of City Popularity in 2023 (top 20)

Numerous cities appeared on the city popularity ranking list for 2023. Two of the top ten are from Europe, and five are from the Asia-Pacific region. Among the top 20, four positions are held by European cities, while an impressive eight spots are occupied by Asia-Pacific cities. Cities in the Americas are mostly ranked between 10th and 20th, with only two cities in the Americas among the top ten and seven among the top 20. One city (Dubai) from the Middle East has secured a place in the top 10, while no cities from Africa have made it to the top 10.

Table 6 Ranking List of City Popularity in 2023 (Top 20)

Ranking	City	Country	Sector	Ranking	City	Country	Sector
1	Paris	France	Europe	11	Los Angeles	United States	The Americas
2	Tokyo	Japan	Asia-Pacific	12	San Francisco	United States	The Americas
3	Shanghai	China	Asia-Pacific	13	Las Vegas	US	The Americas
4	New York	United States	Americas	14	Toronto	Canada	Americas
5	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	Middle East	15	Melbourne	Australia	Asia-Pacific
6	Moscow	Russia	Europe	16	Bangkok	Thailand	Asia-Pacific
7	Osaka	Japan	Asia-Pacific	17	London	United Kingdom	Europe
8	Chicago	United States	Americas	18	Sydney	Australia	Asia-Pacific
9	Seoul	South Korea	Asia-Pacific	19	Rome	Italy	Europe
10	Hong Kong	China	Asia-Pacific	20	Buenos Aires	Argentina	Americas

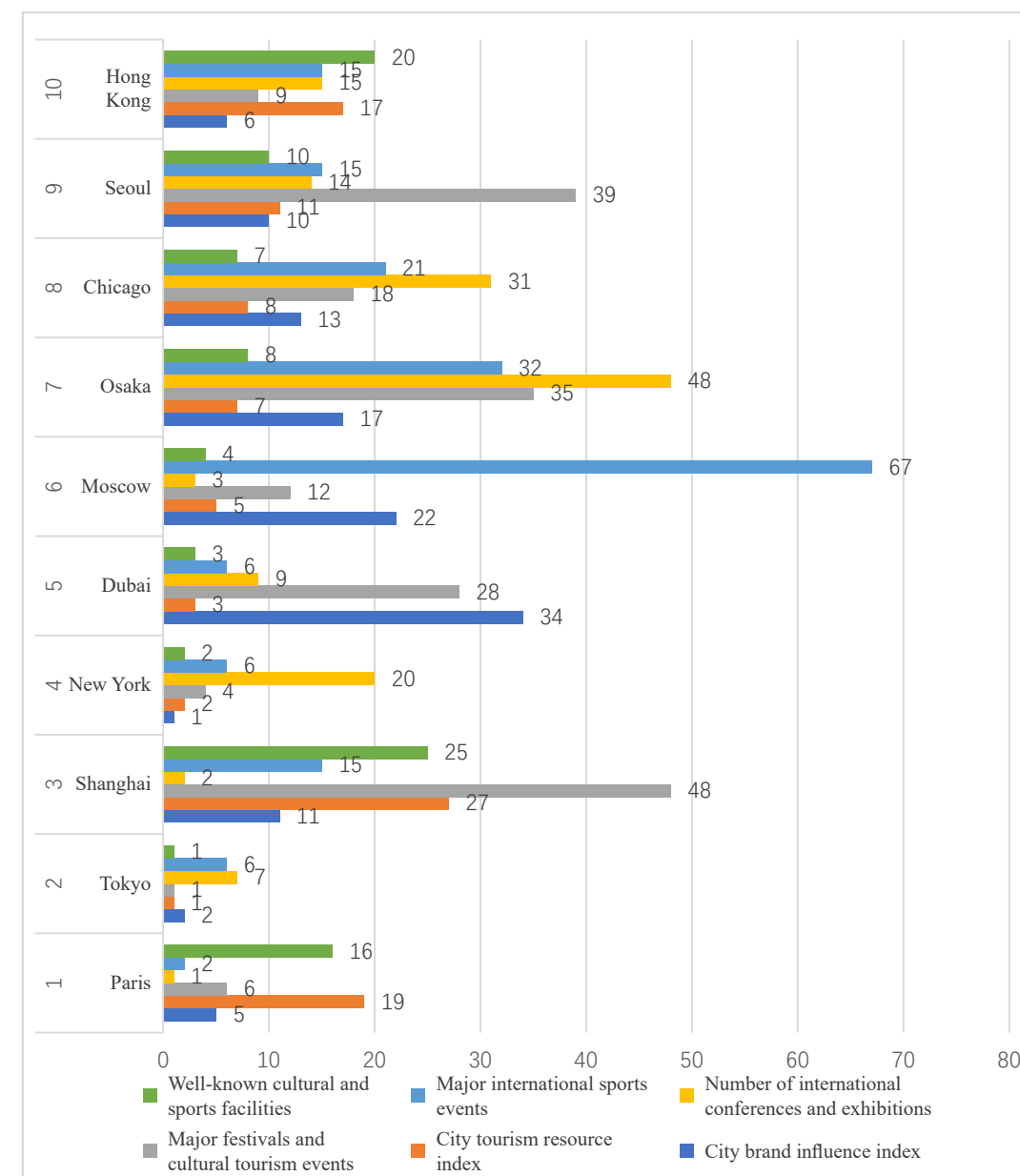**Individual ranking of city popularity in 2023 (top 10)**

Figure 3 City Rankings by CPI Sub-indexes in 2023 (Top 10)

Changes in the annual ranking of city popularity in 2023 (top 10)

Table 7 Changes in the Annual Ranking of City Popularity in 2023 (Top 10)

City	2023	2022
Paris	1	1
Tokyo	2	2
Shanghai	3	9
New York	4	4
Dubai	5	10
Moscow	6	3
Osaka	7	7
Chicago	8	12
Seoul	9	8
Hong Kong	10	6

Analysis of Characteristics of City Popularity Ranking in 2023

Tourism resources are concentrated in global hub cities with outstanding popularity

Global hub cities boast greater popularity and a higher concentration of tourism resources. Among the top ten, there are seven global hub tourism cities, two intercontinental center tourism city (Chicago and Moscow), and one regional hub tourism city (Osaka).

First, the top ten cities perform outstandingly in various sub-indexes. For example, the proportion of renowned tourism resources, festivals and events, international conferences and exhibitions, major international sports events, and well-known cultural and sports facilities held by the top ten cities are 31.8%, 15.8%, 26.9%, 24.1%, and 31.6% of the total sample cities, respectively. In 2023, the top ten sample cities boasted a total of 46,042 tourism resources, accounting for 31.8% of the total of the 100 sample cities; hosted 378 festivities, accounting for 15.8% of the total of the 100 sample cities; held 1,339 international MICE events, accounting for 26.9% of the total of the 100 sample cities;


United States Los Angeles

hosted 45 international major sports events, accounting for 24.1% of the total of the 100 sample cities; and owned 50,354 cultural and sports facilities, accounting for 31.6% of the total of the 100 sample cities.

Second, the top-ranked cities by popularity are also highly concentrated in terms of index distribution. The top 20 cities account for 30% of the popularity index. The top-ranked cities occupy a larger proportion of the six sub-indexes, further reflecting the concentration of tourism resources. Cities such as Tokyo, Paris, and New York not only rank high in terms of cultural and historical resources but also enhance their global popularity and attractiveness by hosting large-scale international conferences and sports events.

Table 8 Concentration of Uneven Distribution of City Popularity Index

City	Proportion of city popularity index	City brand influence	Popularity of tourism resources	Number of international festivals	Number of international conferences	Number of major international sports events	Number of well-known cultural and sports facilities
CR4	7%	7%	18%	5%	8%	9%	6%
CR10	16%	17%	32%	12%	15%	19%	14%
CR20	30%	31%	49%	23%	27%	30%	28%
CR50	54%	50%	75%	46%	48%	53%	53%

Note: CR4 represents cities ranking among the top four for this index, with CR10 for the top ten, CR20 for the top 20, and CR50 for the top 50.
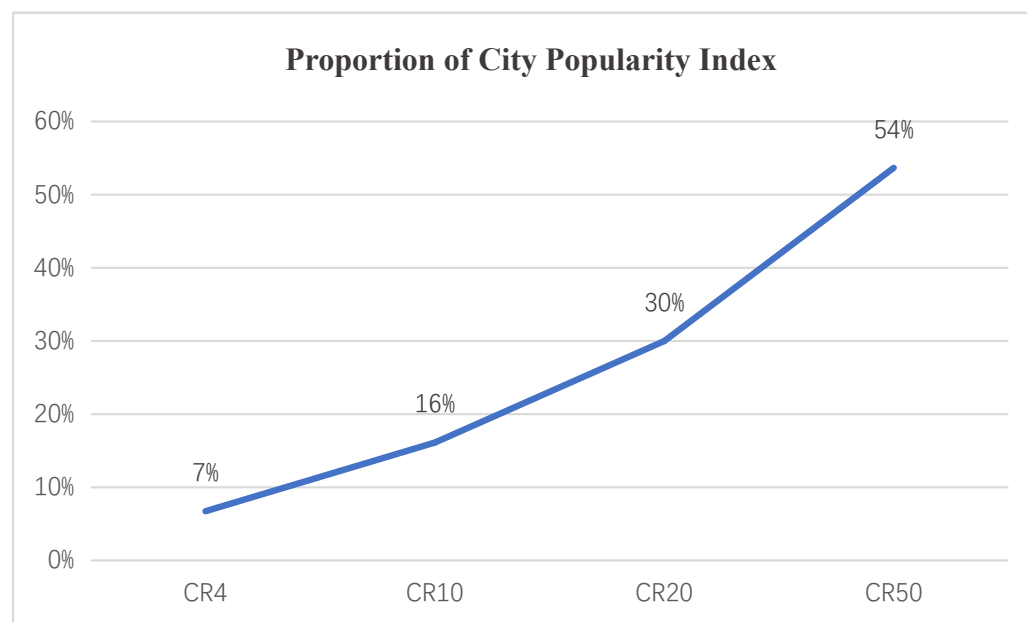
Figure 4 Proportion of City Popularity Index (Top 4, Top 10, Top 20, and Top 50)

Table 9 Concentration of Resources and Activities in the Top 10 Tourism Cities

| City	Quantity of tourism resources	Number of festival activities	International conferences and exhibitions	Major international sporting events	Number of well-known cultural and sports facilities
Number of top ten cities	46,042	378	1,339	45	50,354
Number of 100 sample cities	145,323	2,420	5,030	198	159,939
Proportion of the top ten cities to the 100 sample cities	31.7%	15.6%	26.6%	22.7%	31.5%

Special events play a key role in enhancing city popularity

Festive celebrations, conferences, exhibitions, and major international sports events all contribute to increasing the city's visibility and play a significant role in enhancing its popularity. As the host city of the 33rd Olympic Games, Paris hosted the most major international sports events and conferences worldwide in 2023, securing its top position in terms of tourism city popularity. With the declining attention to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022 and the conclusion of the Beijing Winter Olympics, Moscow and Beijing saw a decline in their rankings in 2023 to varying degrees.

First, renowned festivals and celebrations showcase the cultural charm of cities. Through vivid cultural expressions and unique local characteristics, these events attract a large number of tourists and media agencies, thereby enhancing the city's popularity. In terms of the influence of well-known festival activities on the city popularity ranking, the top ten

cities organized a total of 507 well-known festival activities in 2023, accounting for 21.0% of the total sample cities. The top 20 cities hosted a total of 839 well-known festivals, comprising 34.7% of the total 100 sample cities.

Second, international conferences and exhibitions demonstrate a city's economic strength and service capabilities. These events serve as important platforms for cities to showcase their business capabilities and attract global business elites. For instance, the World Economic Forum annually held in Davos, Switzerland attracts political and business leaders from around the world, garnering extensive media coverage and significantly enhancing the city's international profile. Large-scale international conferences and exhibitions, such as the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas and the Hanover Fair in Germany, bring together companies and professionals from across the globe. These events have fostered business exchanges and cooperation while showcasing the host city's business environment and innovation capabilities.
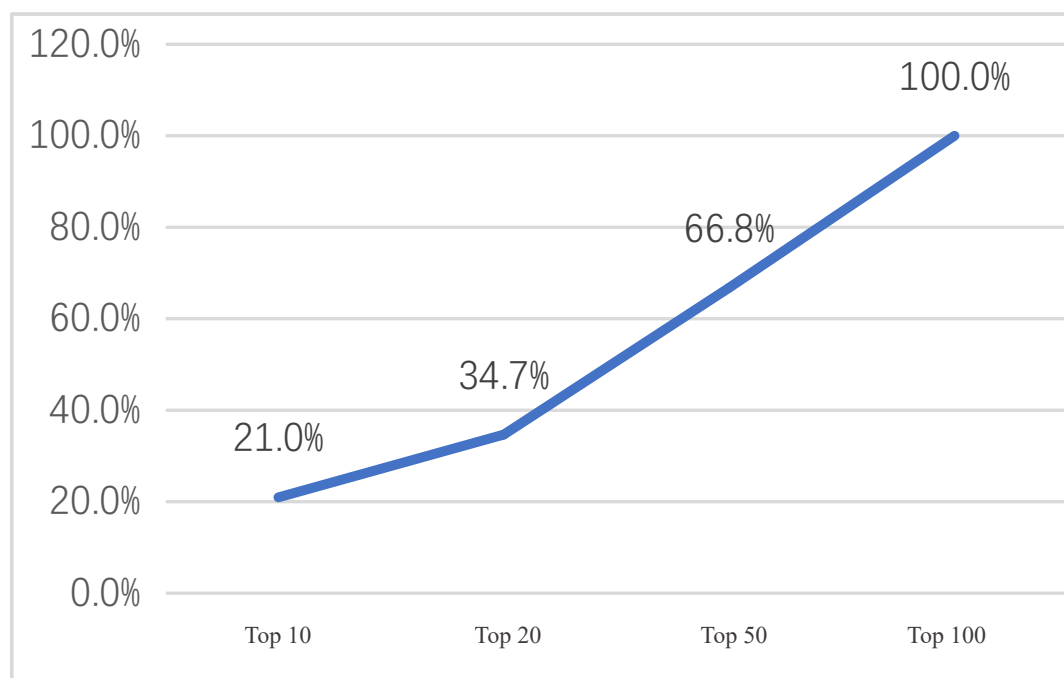

Figure 5 Impact of Well-known Festival Activities on City Popularity Ranking
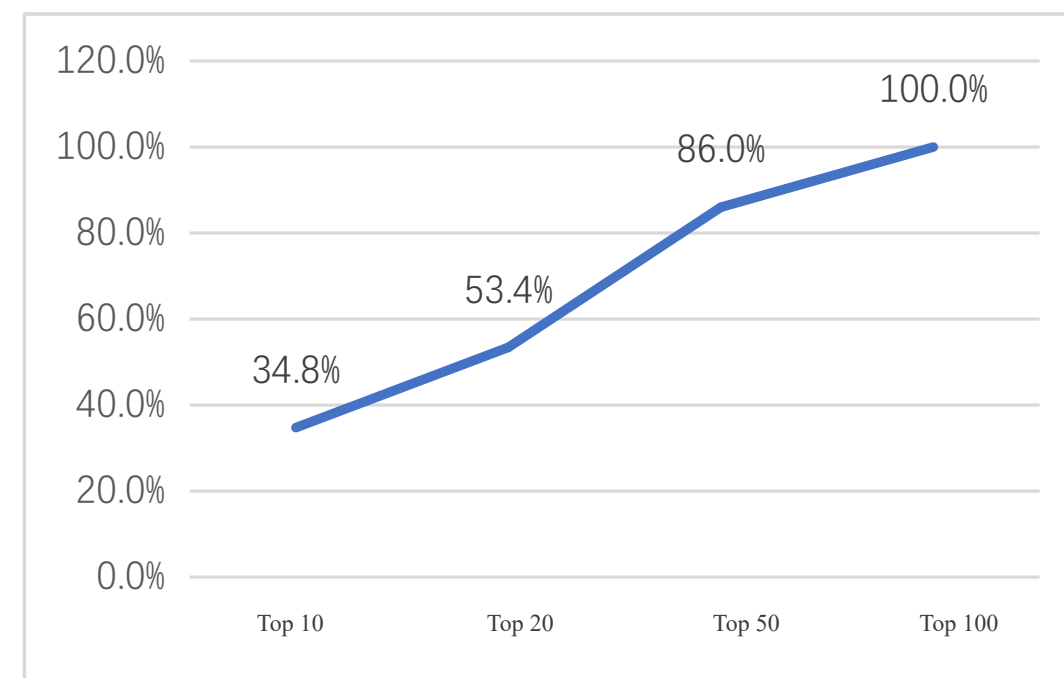
Figure 6 Impact of Major International Conferences and Exhibitions on City Popularity Ranking List

In terms of the impact of international conferences and exhibitions on the ranking, the top ten cities hosted a total of 1748 international exhibitions, accounting for 34.8% of the total 100 sample cities. The top 20 cities hosted a total of 2687 international exhibitions, representing 53.4% of the total, while the top 50 cities organized a total of 4326 international exhibitions, accounting for 86% of the total 100 sample cities. The concentration of international conferences and exhibitions in cities with high reputation also reflects the crucial role these cities play in promoting global business communication, and further enhances their popularity and international influence.

Third, hosting sports events helps to elevate a city's global popularity. Hosting major international sports events is a crucial avenue for enhancing global popularity and attracting international tourists. For instance, the quadrennial Olympic Games not only showcases the host city's urban landscape and cultural heritage but also significantly boosts its international profile through viewership by billions worldwide. From the perspective of the impact of major international sports events on the ranking, the top ten cities have held a total of 75 major international sports events, accounting for 37.9% of the total 100 sample cities. The top 20 cities have hosted a total of 119 major international sports events, comprising 60.1% of the total 100 sample cities. The top 50 cities have held 183 major international sports events, accounting for 92.4% of the total 100 sample cities.
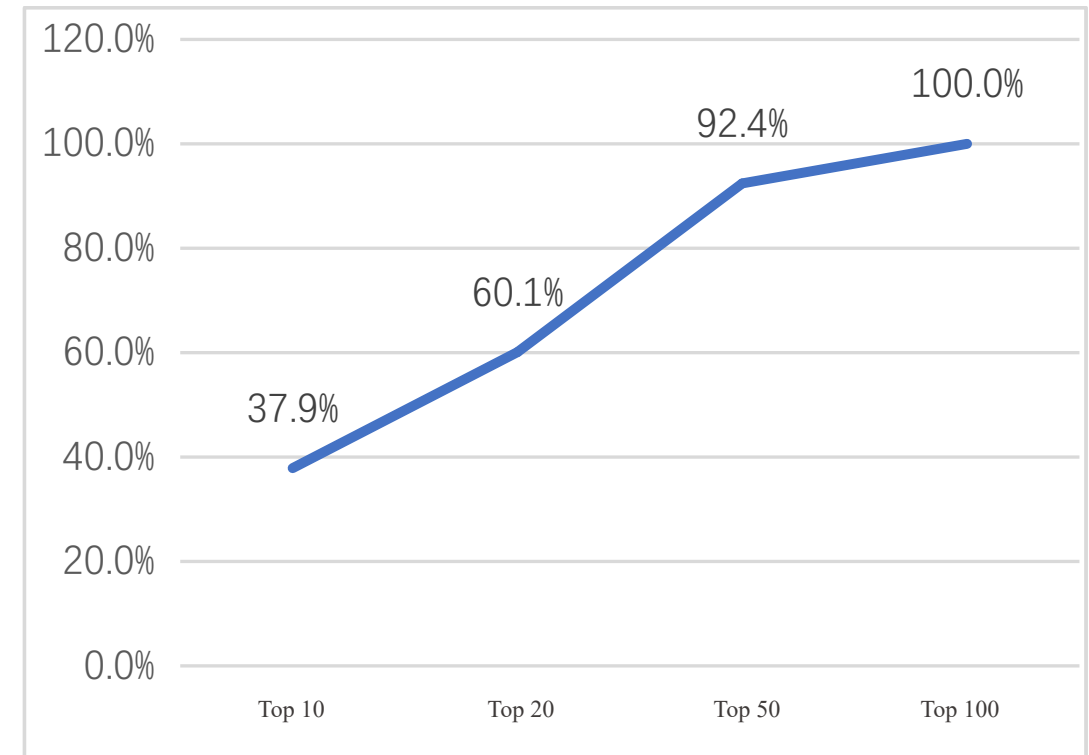
Figure 7 Impact of Major International Sports Events on City Popularity Ranking

Renowned tourist attractions and cultural and sports facilities are essential to enhancing city popularity

By providing modern and high-quality facilities, cities can attract a large number of tourists, establish unique city images on a global scale, and thus enhance their international popularity. For example, Dubai, with its world-class hotels and shopping facilities, attracted a large number of tourists, ranking 5th for city popularity in 2023. Well-known cultural and sports facilities, such as museums, art galleries, theaters, and stadiums, attract tourists and cultural enthusiasts with specific interests. By hosting the Olympic Games and other international sports events in the National Stadium (Bird's Nest), Beijing has significantly enhanced its international popularity with the global broadcast of these events.

From the impact of well-known cultural and sports facilities on the rankings, the top ten cities had a total of 53444 well-known cultural and sports facilities in 2023, accounting for 33.4% of the total sample cities. The top 20 cities had a total of 83055 well-known cultural and sports facilities, representing 51.9% of the total 100 sample cities. The top 50 cities had a total of 135118 well-known cultural and sports facilities, making up 84.5% of the total 100 sample cities.
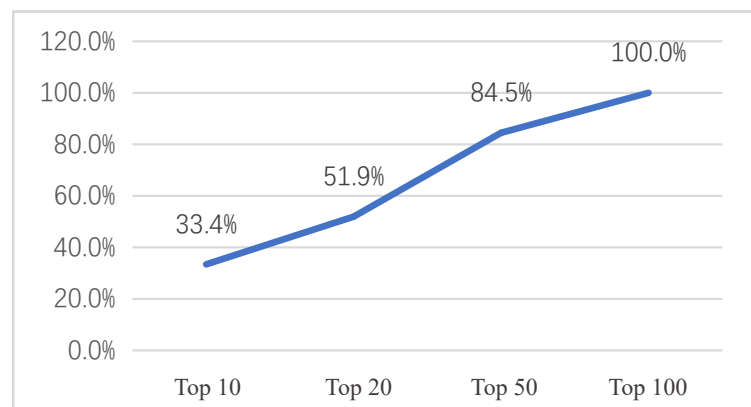

Figure 8 Impact of Well-known Cultural and Sports Facilities on City Popularity

Evaluation Index of Industry Prosperity

Individual Ranking ofIndustry Prosperity in 2023

Ranking list of industry prosperity in 2023 (top 20)

According to the ranking list of industry prosperity in 2023, the top ten cities are mostly from the Americas and the Asia-Pacific region, with four cities from the Americas, four from the Asia-Pacific region, and two from Europe. Among the top 20 cities, there are eight from the Asia-Pacific region, eight from the Americas, three from Europe, and one from the Middle East.

Table 10 Industry Prosperity Ranking of World Tourism Cities in 2023 (Top 20)

Ranking	City	Country	Sector	Ranking	City	Country	Sector
1	Tokyo	Japan	Asia-Pacific	11	Chicago	United States	The Americas
2	New York	United States	The Americas	12	Guangzhou	China	Asia-Pacific
3	London	United Kingdom	Europe	13	Miami	US	The Americas
4	Paris	France	Europe	14	Hong Kong	China	Asia-Pacific
5	Shanghai	China	Asia-Pacific	15	Toronto	Canada	Americas
6	Washington	United States	The Americas	16	Jakarta	Indonesia	Asia-Pacific
7	Osaka	Japan	Asia-Pacific	17	Moscow	Russia	Europe
8	Beijing	China	Asia-Pacific	18	Sydney	Australia	Asia-Pacific
9	Los Angeles	United States	Americas	19	Istanbul	Turkey	Middle East
10	San Francisco	United States	Americas	20	Mexico City	Mexico	Americas

Individual Ranking of Industry Prosperity in 2023 (top 10)

First, in terms of the scale of the hotel industry, four out of the top ten cities are located in the United States, with the remaining ones distributed across Asia and Europe. New York takes the lead by a significant margin, with its hotel industry valued at approximately USD 130.5 billion, about 1.46 times that of second-placed Tokyo. Tokyo and Los Angeles fall into the second tier, with their hotel industries valued at USD 89.5 billion and USD 78.3 billion respectively. Paris, London, Chicago, Shanghai, Washington, San Francisco, and Osaka constitute the third tier.

Second, from the perspective of retail business scale, New York stands out with a retail business scale of USD 243.5 billion, asserting its dominance in the global retail market. Tokyo and Los Angeles follow with retail markets valued at USD 153.3 billion and USD 126.9 billion, respectively. Overall, cities with the largest retail business scale are mainly concentrated in the United States, Japan, and Europe, reflecting the economic vitality and consumption capacity of these cities. The figures for New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, and San Francisco underscore the strength of the United States in the global retail market, while Tokyo, Osaka, Paris, London, and Shanghai demonstrate the economic importance and market attractiveness that megacities can embody. On a year-on-year basis, retail business scales generally showed an upward trend.

Third, in terms of the scale of the catering industry, New York ranks first with a market valued at USD 146.8 billion, followed by Tokyo and Los Angeles with USD 95.5 billion and USD 83.5 billion, respectively. Among the top ten cities, American cities secure five positions, namely New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington. Europe, the Chinese Mainland, and Japan each hold two spots. On a year-on-year basis, the catering industry generally experienced a decline in scale.

Fourth, the scale of the leisure and entertainment industry in New York reached USD 103.4 billion in 2023, surpassing the USD 100 billion mark for the first time. Tokyo and Los Angeles follow with their markets valued at USD 72.9 billion and USD 55.6 billion,

respectively. Chicago, Seoul, London, Paris, and San Francisco share a similar scale of the leisure and entertainment industry ranging from USD 36 billion to USD 42 billion. Beijing and Shanghai enter the top ten, with leisure and entertainment industries valued at approximately USD 31.9 billion.

Fifth, in terms of the scale of the tourism service industry, New York maintains its dominance with a market valued at USD 25.1 billion. Tokyo, Los Angeles, and Chicago follow with their markets valued at USD 17.1 billion, USD 14.2 billion, and USD 11.3 billion, respectively. London and Seoul's markets both exceed USD 11 billion in scale. Paris ranks seventh, followed by San Francisco at USD 9.7 billion. Beijing and Moscow enter the top ten with market scales of USD 8.9 billion and USD 8.7 billion, respectively.

Sixth, in terms of the scale of the travel transportation industry, Tokyo, as a major transportation hub in Asia, ranks first globally with a scale of USD 3.9 billion. New York follows with a scale of USD 3.6 billion. London and Paris secure the third and fourth positions with scales of USD 3.5 billion and USD 3.4 billion, respectively. Shanghai, Beijing, and Hong Kong rank fifth, eighth, and ninth, with scales of USD 3.3 billion, USD 3.2 billion, and USD 3.1 billion USD, respectively, highlighting the significant position of these major Chinese cities in the global transportation industry. Additionally, Washington and Los Angeles rank sixth and tenth, respectively, with scales of USD 3.3 billion and USD 3.1 billion, while Osaka ranks seventh with USD 3.2 billion.

Changes in the annual ranking of industry prosperity in 2023 (top 10)

Table 11 Changes in Annual Rankings of Industry Prosperity for Top 10 Cities

Ranking	2023	2022	Ranking	2023	2022
Tokyo	1	2	Washington	6	9
New York	2	1	Osaka	7	13
London	3	4	Beijing	8	12
Paris	4	5	Los Angeles	9	3
Shanghai	5	10	San Francisco	10	8

Analysis of the Characteristics of Industry Prosperity Ranking in 2023

Industry prosperity is further concentrated, showing a stepped trend

According to the industry prosperity ranking of global tourism cities in 2023, the top five cities in terms of the scale of the hotel industry, retail business, catering, leisure and entertainment industry, tourism service industry, and tourism transportation industry are all super-large global hub cities. The average industry prosperity index of the top four tourism cities is 91.6, which is 70.5 points higher than the average prosperity index. The average industry prosperity index of the top ten tourism cities is 73.2, which is 52.1 points higher than the average prosperity index. The average industry prosperity index in 2023 increased by 6 points compared to 15.1 last year, indicating significant growth in industry prosperity of the 100 sample cities compared to the previous year.

The recovery of the tourism service and tourism transportation industries rapidly boosts industry prosperity

In 2023, the scales of the tourism service and tourism transportation industries basically recovered to pre-pandemic levels. The pent-up travel demand for several years has ushered in a rapid rebound, thus boosting the rapid recovery of the transportation industry.

The average industry prosperity index for the 100 world tourism cities in 2023 revenues to recover to 21.1. By sector, the retail business industry has the highest industry prosperity, with an average industry prosperity index of 56.8 for the 100 sample cities in 2023. It is followed by the tourism service industry and the tourism transportation industry with industry prosperity indexes of 54.2 and 53.1 respectively. The leisure and entertainment industry still recovered slowly, with an index of only 25.4.

Table 12 Average Industry Prosperity Index for Cities with Different Rankings

City	Industry prosperity index	Accommodation industry index	Commercial service index	Tourism catering index	Leisure and entertainment index	Tourism service index	Tourism transportation index
CR4	91.6	93.8	92.8	81.4	67.3	92.0	87.6
CR10	73.2	65.0	61.7	74.3	48.3	75.5	83.5
CR20	49.3	43.5	51.9	55.6	36.6	63.3	68.4
CR50	33.1	33.0	36.3	31.3	20.4	46.0	43.8
Average of sample cities	21.1	36.0	56.8	33.2	25.4	54.2	53.1

Note: CR4 represents cities ranking among the top four for this index, with CR10 for the top ten, CR20 for the top 20, and CR50 for the top 50.

Figure 9 Industry Prosperity Index of 100 Sample Cities

The Asia-Pacific market shows steady improvement in prosperity, while the Americas tourism market continues to perform strongly.

The 2023 Global Tourism City Industry Prosperity Ranking shows that the tourism industries of Asian, European, and American cities are all performing strongly. The global tourism industry is being multi-polarized, and tourism cities are competing for a larger market share by improving tourism service quality and international influence.

In 2023, cities in the Asia-Pacific region saw a significant rise in industrial prosperity rankings. Tokyo climbed from second place in 2022 to first, Shanghai rose from tenth to fifth, Osaka jumped from thirteenth to seventh, and Beijing moved up from twelfth to eighth. In China, with the comprehensive lifting of pandemic restrictions, the long-suppressed desire to travel among tourists was unleashed, which strongly propelled the rapid recovery of the tourism economy from the demand side. In 2023, the Chinese tourism market started strongly and gained the momentum to restore inbound and outbound tourism supply chains gradually. This led to a quantitative growth and qualitative improvement in the tourism economy. The Japanese government introduced policies to ease entry restrictions and support nationwide travel, which injected new vitality into the tourism industry hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2023, the Japanese government launched the New Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan, which set forth three goals, namely "sustainable tourism", "increase in tourism consumption", and "promote regional attraction". In May 2023, the New Era Inbound Tourism Expansion Action was implemented to further promote the flourishing development of Japan's inbound tourism market in areas such as business, education, and culture & arts.
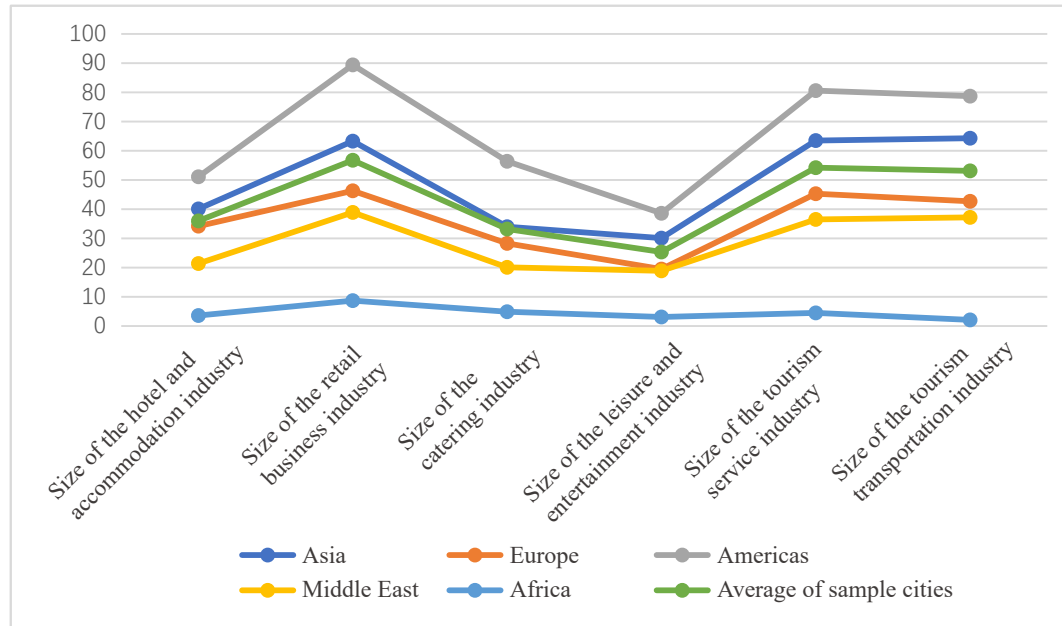
In terms of industry prosperity index, tourism cities in the Americas region have maintained the momentum in 2022 and achieved the highest industry prosperity index in accommodation, retail business, tourism catering, leisure and entertainment, tourism services, and tourism transportation. Their average scores were 51.1, 89.4, 56.4, 38.6, 80.6, and 78.7, respectively. In the Asia-Pacific region, various indexes outperformed the average levels of the sample cities. Notably, the Tourism Service Index, Tourism

Transportation Index, and Commercial Service Index stood out with scores of 63.5, 64.3, and 63.3 respectively, each approximately 10 points higher than the average of the sample cities. The Accommodation Index, Tourism Catering Index, and Leisure and Entertainment Index were relatively balanced, all slightly above the average levels of the sample cities.

Moreover, the retail business sector in Europe has the highest industry prosperity index, averaging at 46.3. It was followed by the rapidly recovering Tourism Service Index and Tourism Transportation index, both averaging at around 43. In contrast, the Leisure and Entertainment Index was the lowest, with an average of only 19.5.

Table 13 Sub-indexes of Industry Prosperity in Various Regions

Region	Accommodation industry index	Commercial service index	Tourism catering index	Leisure and entertainment index	Tourism service index	Tourism transportation index
Asia-Pacific	40.1	63.3	34	30.1	63.5	64.3
Europe	34.2	46.3	28.3	19.5	45.3	42.7
The Americas	51.1	89.4	56.4	38.6	80.6	78.7
Middle East	21.4	38.9	20.1	18.9	36.5	37.2
Africa	3.6	8.7	4.9	3.1	4.5	2.1
Average of sample cities	36.0	56.8	33.2	25.4	54.2	53.1

▲　Figure 10 Average Scores of Sub-indexes of Industry Prosperity in Various Regions

▲　United Kingdom　Edinburgh

Evaluation index of city intelligence

Individual Ranking of City iIntelligence in 2023

Ranking list of city intelligence (top 20)

According to the ranking list of city intelligence in 2023, most of the top ten cities are from the Americas and the Asia-Pacific region, with five cities from the Americas, three from the Asia-Pacific region, and two from Europe. Among the top 20 cities, there are seven cities from the Americas, six from Europe, and seven from the Asia-Pacific region.

Table 14　Ranking List of City Intelligence in 2023 (Top 20)

Ranking	City	Country	Sector
1	Macao	China	Asia-Pacific
2	Amsterdam	Netherlands	Europe
3	Rotterdam	Netherlands	Europe
4	Miami	United States	The Americas
5	New York	United States	The Americas
6	Las Vegas	United States	Americas
7	Hawaii	United States	Americas
8	San Francisco	United States	The Americas
9	Beijing	China	Asia-Pacific
10	Melbourne	Australia	Asia-Pacific

Ranking	City	Country	Sector
11	Brisbane	Australia	Asia-Pacific
12	Oakland	New Zealand	Asia-Pacific
13	Geneva	Switzerland	Europe
14	Vancouver	Canada	Americas
15	Ottawa	Canada	Americas
16	London	United Kingdom	Europe
17	Seoul	South Korea	Asia-Pacific
18	Busan	South Korea	Asia-Pacific
19	Seville	Spain	Europe
20	Oslo	Norway	Europe
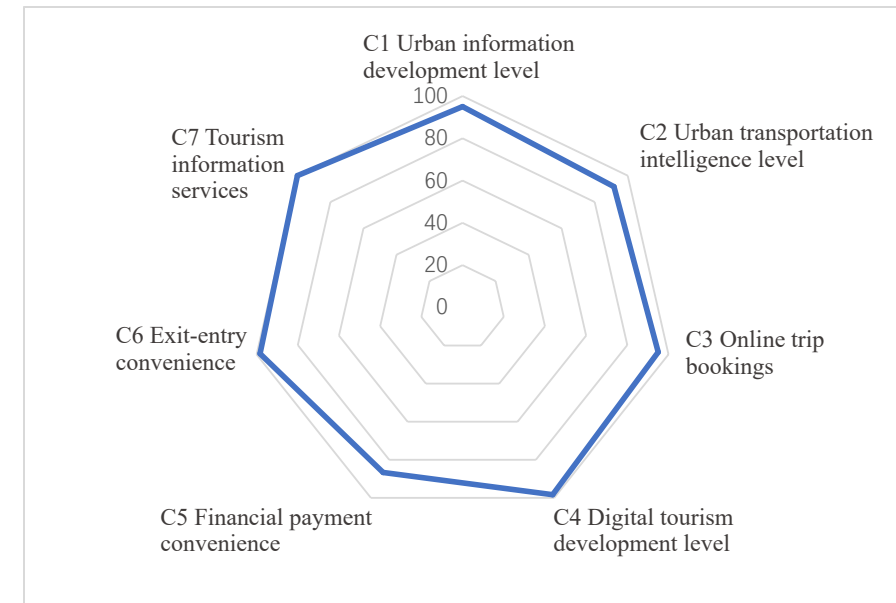
Figure 12 Average Scores of Individual Index of City Intelligence for Top 20 Tourism Cities

Individual ranking of city intelligence in 2022 (top 10)
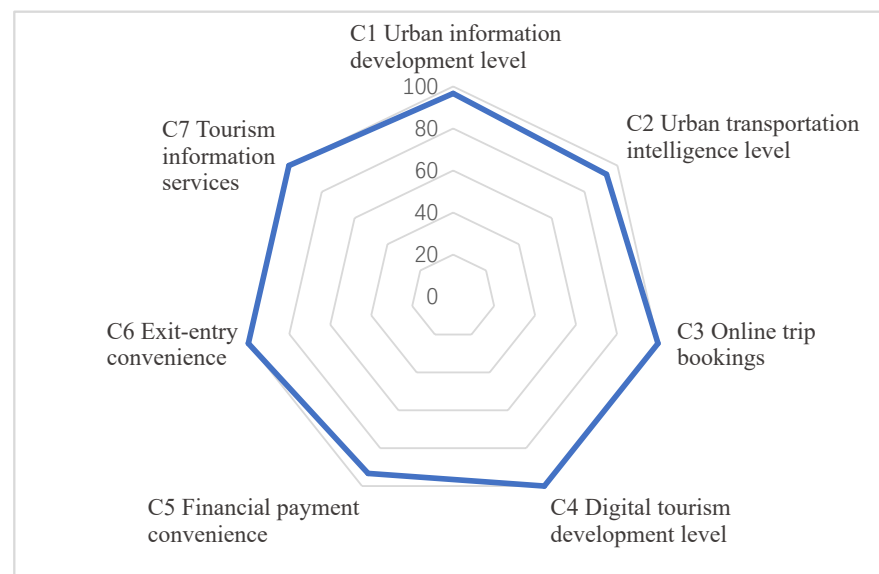
Figure 11 Average Scores of Individual Index of City Intelligence for Top 10 Tourism Cities

Table 15 Average Scores of City Intelligence Index with Different Rankings

City	C1 Urban information development level index	C2 Urban transportation intelligence level index	C3 Online trip bookings index	C4 Digital tourism development level index	C5 Financial payment convenience index	C6 Exit-entry convenience index	C7 Tourism information services index
Top 10 tourism cities	97	93	100	100	93	100	100
Top 20 tourism cities	95	93	97	98	85	98	100
Top 100 tourism cities	56	72	71	91	68	87	93
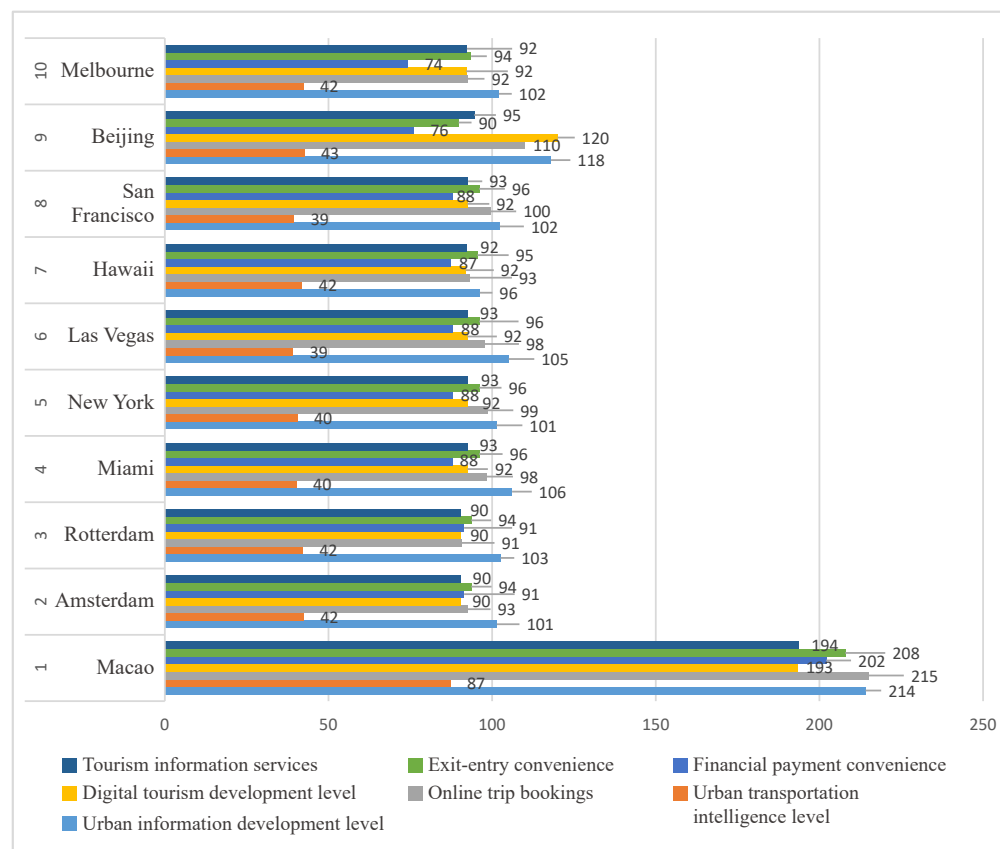
Figure 13 Individual Ranking of City Intelligence Index (Top 10)

Changes in the Annual Ranking of City Intelligence in 2023 (top 10)

The ranking of city intelligence index among the top ten cities varied dramatically in 2023. Compared to 2022, Macao, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, New York, and San Francisco remained among the top ten. However, other cities saw a decline in their Smart City Index rankings, falling out of the top ten. Notable climbers in the 2023 rankings include Miami (rising to 4th place), Las Vegas (rising to 6th place), Hawaii (rising to 7th place), and Beijing (rising to 9th place).

Table 16 Changes in the Annual Ranking of City Intelligence in 2023

	2023	2022
Macao	1	1
Amsterdam	2	8
Rotterdam	3	9
Miami	4	18
New York	5	6
Las Vegas	6	20
Hawaii	7	26
San Francisco	8	7
Beijing	9	31
Melbourne	10	13

Analysis of Characteristics of City Intelligence Ranking in 2023

There is an overall trend toward digital tourism

From the perspective of city intelligence, in 2023, the 100 sample cities, compared to that of 2022, slightly increased such as urban information development level, urban intelligent transportation level, online trip bookings, and financial payment convenience,except for the urban information development level, which has decreased. It indicates that technology continues to be comprehensively integrated into the development of urban tourism. Overall, there is a slow trend toward digital tourism, which lays a solid and stable foundation for the future development of smart cities around the world.

First, exit-entry convenience has been significantly enhanced. The Tourism Information Services Index, the Digital Tourism Development Level Index, and the Exit-Entry Convenience Index all maintain leading positions, reaching 93, 91, and 87 respectively.

The high Tourism Information Services Index reflects the continuous improvement in tourism information application and service quality of tourism cities. With the resumption of international flights after the pandemic, countries around the world have relaxed entry and exit management policies and introduced convenient measures such as landing visa, e-visa and visa-free travel, resulting in a clear trend towards more convenient entry and exit procedures.

Second, traditional tourist experiences are expanding into the virtual world. The trend of digital tourism and the increasingly open global tourism policies continue to attract investment in the construction of smart cities and promote the improvement of information services. The continuous development of digital technology has expanded traditional tourist experiences into the virtual world, thus injecting new vitality into the tourism industry and making digital technology an important investment target of the tourism industry. For instance, the renovated Liangma River International Style Waterfront in Beijing has leveraged cutting-edge digital technologies, such as digital light and shadow and naked-eye 3D, to provide a "city culture + technology" development path and operation model that is characterized by technological sense and cultural heritage charm for old city renovation and urban renewal.

The convenience of global financial payment still remains to be improved

Among the top 10 rankings of city intelligence, the index score for financial payment convenience decreased to 74. From the analysis of the ranking, the ratio of financial payment convenience to the city intelligence index is 14% for the top ten cities, 25% for the top 20, and 59% for the top 50. This indicates that financial payment convenience plays a crucial role in supporting the development of top-tier tourism cities. Compared to Asian countries, particularly China, where mobile payment has become the mainstream payment channel, many countries and regions in Europe and America still predominantly use credit card and cash for transactions. The different payment habits and payment barriers in different regions significantly lower the experience quality for tourists engaging in cross-

regional international travel. For instance, due to the large wealth disparity in India, 70% of the population still uses cash for transactions. The Financial Payment Convenience Index for the two major cities, Mumbai and New Delhi, remains at the bottom of the 100 sampled tourism cities, with a score of only 36.3.

The index of urban informatization development level shows significant differentiation

Among the sub-indexes of city intelligence, the Urban Information Development Level Index is the only sub-index that fell below its 2022 level, with a score of 55. Besides, the average values for the top 10, 20, and 100 tourism cities have all declined. This indicates a clear disparity in information development among cities. The reason for this disparity may be that well-developed tourist destinations typically have higher information development levels and better economic conditions. Consequently, these locations often have more resources and motivation to drive information development. In contrast, less developed tourist destinations, particularly emerging tourism cities and areas, are still engaged in the construction of infrastructure and the development of tourism resources. Therefore, their information development level is relatively low. Asian cities, such as Macao in China, have an edge over cities in the Americas and Europe in terms of urban information development. Countries in Asia, such as China and South Korea, which were early adopters of 5G technology, have a significantly higher number of 5G base stations per capita and a higher 5G user penetration rate, driving the development of urban information development.

Cities in North America have a clear advantage in the development of city intelligence.

According to the ranking list of city intelligence in 2023, most of the top ten cities are from the Americas and the Asia-Pacific region, with five cities from the Americas, three from the Asia-Pacific region, and two from Europe. Among the top 20 cities, there are

seven cities from the Americas, six from Europe, and seven from the Asia-Pacific region.

First, North America maintains its advantage, with a high concentration of tourism cities. Compared to 2022, the distribution and number of the top ten cities in terms of city intelligence remained unchanged in 2023. The Americas account for five of the top ten cities, all of which are in the United States. Vancouver (14th) and Ottawa (15th) of Canada were also included in the list. The stable economic growth in the United States and Canada, coupled with government investment in tourism, injects substantial funds into the development of tourism cities. With high-quality transportation systems, modern urban planning, and advanced technological support, these cities have set a good example for neighboring cities and countries in the process of developing smart cities. However, the significant disparity in city intelligence development across the Americas may lead to a "siphon effect". High-intelligence cities attract more tourism resources and investment, squeezing the space for the development of the tourism industry in Central America and South America.

Second, the construction of smart cities in Asia and Europe is experiencing steady growth. Compared to the previous year, tourism cities in these regions have shown an overall increase, with one or two additional cities entering the top 20, and the national distribution of these cities is relatively balanced. The top three tourism cities, namely Macao, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, are all from Asia and Europe. Their scores of the sub-indexes are above 90 except for the Urban Transportation Intelligence Level Index. This reflects their comprehensive development advantages. Macao's scores are nearly twice as high as those of all other cities, which is attributed to the "1+4" moderately diversified economic development strategy proposed by the Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao SAR) government in 2023. The "1" means promoting the comprehensive development of tourism and leisure, enhancing and strengthening the tourism and leisure industry, and providing continuous vitality to Macao's tourism information services and intelligent transportation. Moreover, the inclusion of Seoul and Busan in the list indicates that the smart tourism of South Korea has reached a mature stage. They have made remarkable progress in the construction of "U-City", building smart infrastructure, and achieving deep coverage of

information networks. Amsterdam and Rotterdam from Europe have shown significant growth momentum, rising to second and third places, respectively. The Netherlands integrates smart technology into urban development. The Amsterdam Smart City initiative is dedicated to promoting sustainable development through smart management systems and advanced technological equipment, making smart technology a driving force and growth engine for long-term smart city development. The European Union has named Seville, Spain the European Capital of Smart Tourism for 2023 in recognition of its outstanding performance in accessibility, sustainability, digitization, cultural heritage, and creativity. Seville, in collaboration with mobile phone operator Vodafone, has established a smart city lab and a sustainable urban tourism lab to address post-pandemic tourism challenges and issues arising from Seville's sustainable development plan and urban smart spaces.

Digitalization further fosters tourists' preference for digital travel

The average online trip bookings index slight increased over last year. From the analysis of the ranking, the ratio of online trip bookings to the city intelligence index is 14% for the top ten cities, 27% for the top 20, and 66% for the top 50, respectively. As a result, tourism cities with higher levels of city intelligence can make better use of technologies to enhance the quality and efficiency of tourism services. For example, with the aid of intelligent navigation systems, tourists can gain a better understanding of city attractions and cultural heritage more easily. Digital tourism services facilitate ticket, hotel, and transportation bookings, allowing travelers to plan their trips in advance and thus saving time and energy. It not only enhances the attractiveness and competitiveness of tourist cities, but also to bring more convenient and comfortable travel experience for tourists. After the pandemic, the penetration rate of OTA platforms such as Booking, Trip, and Expedia has significantly increased, and tourists have become more accustomed to using online platforms for itinerary bookings. Government agencies in tourism cities are also actively developing technological applications to provide tourists with more convenient and efficient information services.

Table 17 Development Level of Sub-indexes of 100 Sample Cities

City	C1 Urban information development level index	C2 Urban transportation intelligence level index	C3 Online trip bookings index	C4 Digital tourism development level index	C5 Financial payment convenience index
Top 10 tourism cities	17%	13%	14%	11%	14%
Top 20 tourism cities	34%	26%	27%	22%	25%
Top 50 tourism cities	69%	59%	66%	52%	59%
Top 100 tourism cities	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
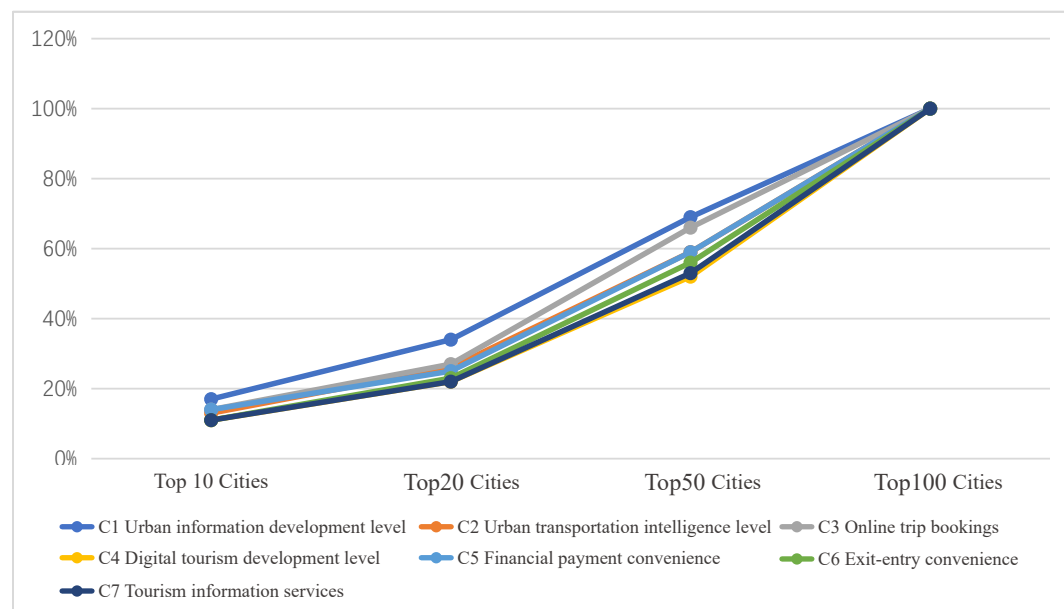
▲ Figure 14 Intelligent Development Level of 100 Sample Cities

Tourism Safety Evaluation Index

Individual Ranking of Tourism Safety in 2023

Ranking list of tourism safety in 2023 (top 20)

According to the ranking list of city tourism safety, among the top ten cities, four cities from the Asia-Pacific, two from Europe, and three from the Middle East. Among the top 20 cities, there are 8 from the Asia-Pacific, six from Europe, two from the Americas, and four from the Middle East.


▲ China Guangzhou

Table 18 Ranking List of Tourism Safety in 2023 (Top 20)

Ranking	City	Country	Sector
1	Tokyo	Japan	Asia-Pacific
2	Sydney	Australia	Asia-Pacific
3	Brisbane	Australia	Asia-Pacific
4	Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates	Middle East
5	Doha	Qatar	Middle East
6	Geneva	Switzerland	Europe
7	Oslo	Norway	Europe
8	Ottawa	Canada	Americas
9	Beijing	China	Asia-Pacific
10	Mecca	Saudi Arabia	Middle East
11	Helsinki	Finland	Europe
12	Shanghai	China	Asia-Pacific
13	Taipei	Taiwan, China	Asia-Pacific
14	Sapporo	Japan	Asia-Pacific
15	Busan	South Korea	Asia-Pacific
16	Jerusalem	-	Middle East
17	Vienna	Austria	Europe
18	Amsterdam	Netherlands	Europe
19	Lisbon	Portugal	Europe
20	Vancouver	Canada	Americas

Individual ranking of tourism safety in 2023 (Top 10)
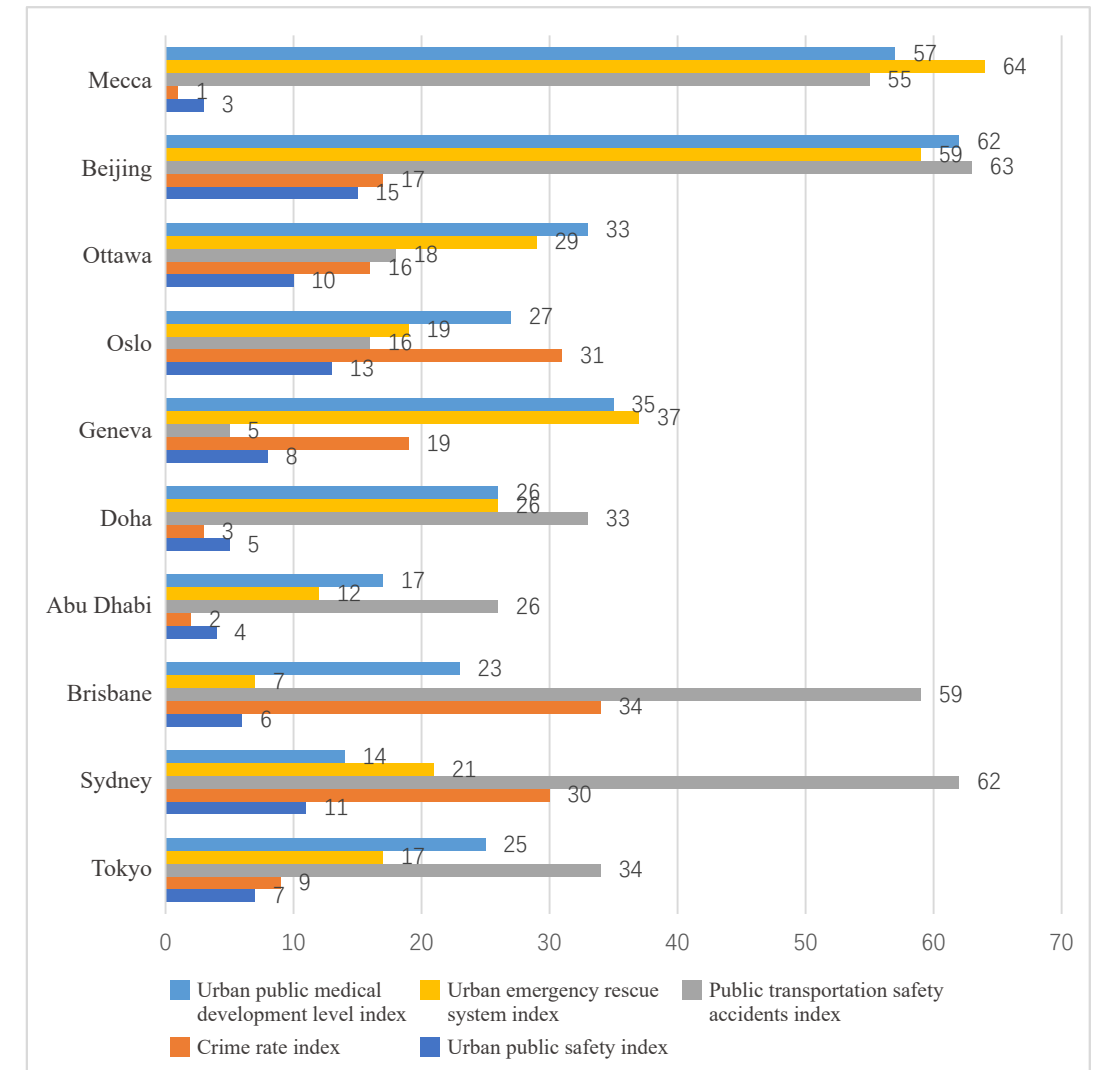
Figure 15 Individual Ranking of Tourism Safety among Top 10 Cities in 2023

Note: The rankings of crime rate and public transportation safety accidents have been converted from negative to positive. A higher ranking represents a higher level of urban tourism safety.

Analysis of Characteristics of Tourism Safety Ranking in 2023

The tourism safety of tourism cities worldwide remains stable

Overall, the average tourism safety index for the 100 sample tourism cities in 2023 is the same as in 2022, which stands at 74. This indicates that tourism cities have entered a stable phase in terms of tourism safety.

In terms of different sub-indexes, there are significant differences in development levels. Depending on geographical location, political situation, and security policies, different cities focus on different aspects of city safety. Although some cities show outstanding advantages in certain sub-indexes and overall evaluation, there is still room for improvement based on the results of index analysis. For example, Brisbane ranks 6th for the Urban Public Safety Index but 34th for the Crime Rate Index, which indicates that the city still needs to improve its overall emergency response capabilities and social security. Tokyo ranks only 34th for the Public Transportation Safety Accidents Index, which means that there are shortcomings in its management of public transportation safety. Mecca ranks 1st for the Crime Rate Index and 3rd for the Urban Public Safety Index, but its rankings for other indexes such as the Urban Emergency Rescue System Index are below 50. It implies that this tourism city may have some deficiencies in aspects such as emergency rescue resources.

East Asia remains the region with the highest level of tourism safety

By region, Asia-Pacific and Europe tourism cities boast the highest level of tourism safety, followed by those in Americas and the Middle East, and Africa generally have relatively lower levels of tourism safety.

Among the top 20 cities, there are eight tourism cities from the Asia-Pacific region, with Tokyo ranking first in terms of tourism safety. In the context of the pandemic, Asia-Pacific

tourism cities have added more weight to tourism safety compared to their counterparts in Europe and the Americas. Hence, these cities have made greater efforts to ensure the safety of visitors to the utmost extent. The Japan Tourism Agency has set a long-term goal of attracting 60 million international tourists by 2030. To achieve this goal, the Japanese government is committed to creating an environment that allows foreign visitors to easily and comfortably enjoy their travels in Japan, and also ensuring their safety, especially during emergencies or disasters, achieving remarkable results. Notably, Asia-Pacific cities generally conduct comprehensive assessments of the reception pressure faced by tourist attractions due to factors such as visitor capacity. For instance, cities such as Shanghai and Beijing have implemented safety checks on facilities and conducted high-capacity stress tests. As the number of tourists grows and even surpasses the peak capacity, these cities make a plan to address various safety risks. The tourism cities in the Asia-Pacific region have provided a safe travel environment for tourists by prioritizing their safety and the details of their journeys. This has helped to shape a positive international image and reputation for these cities.

Among the top ten cities in terms of tourism safety, there are three cities from Europe, representing a significant improvement compared to 2022. The improvement in tourism safety in Europe in 2023 is primarily due to the relaxation of pandemic control measures, rising safety ratings, better economic and social conditions, and enhanced hygiene and cleanliness measures.

The high occurrence of public transportation safety accidents in tourism cities has not been reduced

Due to the rapid recovery of the transportation industry in world tourism cities after the pandemic in 2023, the population density and vehicle ownership rates in large cities continue to increase. As a result, cities ranked among the top ten for tourism safety often have lower rankings for the occurrence of public transportation safety incidents. For example, Brisbane ranks 59th for this index, and Sydney ranks 62nd. Traffic congestion and overcrowding are common in Sydney, which not only increases stress for drivers

but also may lead to more traffic accidents. In addition, Sydney's urban planning and infrastructure may not fully meet the demands of modern transportation. Although Sydney's public transportation system is well-developed, it may still face challenges during peak tourism times. As a result, residents have to travel by car, thus increasing traffic risks.

Compared to other top 10 cities, Helsinki ranks first in terms of the occurrence of public transportation safety accidents. This achievement is due to the deployment of the intelligent infrastructure solution (IIS) from Velodyne Lidar, which is used to collect traffic data and enhance road safety. These smart devices can monitor traffic flow, classify and detect near-miss collision incidents, thereby improving the efficiency and accuracy of traffic management.

The overall emergency response system of tourism cities has shown improvement

Among the sub-indexes of tourism safety, the Urban Emergency Rescue System Index of the 100 sample tourism cities reached 57.8 in 2023, an increase of 1.9 compared to last year. This indicates that the overall emergency rescue guarantee system in these cities has improved to some extent after the pandemic. For example, Tokyo has established an efficient and comprehensive emergency rescue and management system, including detailed emergency plans for different types of disasters, regular emergency drills, emergency material reserves, and a nationwide earthquake, tsunami, and volcano eruption instant warning system called J-ALERT. These efforts can provide reference for the relevant construction in other tourism cities, thus enhancing their ability and efficiency in handling emergency rescue events. Countries in the Middle East and Europe have also made substantial progress in building their city emergency rescue systems. In terms of the Urban Emergence Rescue System Index, the top three cities are Mecca, Helsinki, and Geneva, which reflects their significant investment of resources and efforts in constructing emergency rescue systems. These efforts have also facilitated the development of their tourism industries.

Table 19 Distribution of Tourism Safety Index for Tourism Cities with Different Rankings

City	D1 Urban public safety index	D2 Crime rate index	D3 Public transportation safety accidents index	D4 Urban emergency rescue system index	D5 Urban public medical development level index
Top 10 tourism cities	18%	12%	13%	12%	11%
Top 20 tourism cities	32%	25%	26%	12%	22%
Top 50 tourism cities	70%	55%	60%	57%	55%
Top 100 tourism cities	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Economic Contribution Evaluation Index

Individual Ranking of Economic Contribution in 2023

Ranking list of economic contribution in 2023 (top 20)

According to the ranking list of economic contribution for 2023, among the top ten cities, there are four cities from the Americas, two from Europe, three from the Asia-Pacific region, and one from the Middle East. Among the top 20, there are six from Europe, seven from the Americas, four from the Asia-Pacific region, and three from the Middle East.

Table 20 Ranking List of Economic Contribution in 2023 (Top 20)

Ranking	City	Country	Sector
1	Milan	Italy	Europe
2	Las Vegas	United States	Americas
3	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	Middle East
4	Macao	China	Asia-Pacific
5	Rome	Italy	Europe
6	Hawaii	United States	Americas
7	New York	United States	The Americas
8	Ottawa	Canada	Americas
9	Brisbane	Australia	Asia-Pacific
10	Oakland	New Zealand	Asia-Pacific
11	Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates	Middle East
12	Athens	Greece	Europe
13	Paris	France	Europe
14	Barcelona	Spain	Europe
15	Miami	United States	The Americas
16	Buenos Aires	Argentina	Europe
17	Mexico City	Mexico	Americas
18	Shanghai	China	Asia-Pacific
19	Doha	Qatar	Middle East
20	San Francisco	United States	The Americas

Individual ranking of economic contribution in 2023 (top 10)
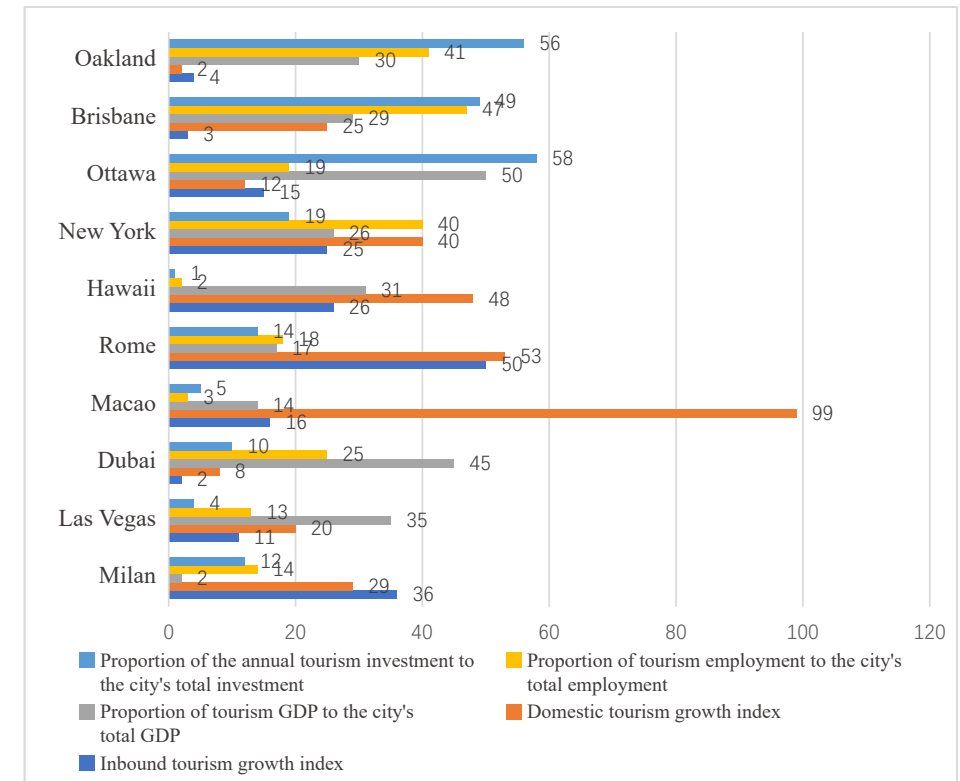
Figure 16 Sub-index Ranking of Economic Contribution of Top 10 Cities

Changes in the annual ranking of Economic Contribution in 2023

Table 21 Changes in Annual Rankings of Economic Contribution for Top 10 Tourism Cities

City	2023	2022
Milan	1	2
Las Vegas	2	5
Dubai	3	6

City	2023	2022
Macao	4	23
Rome	5	7
Hawaii	6	3
New York	7	16
Ottawa	8	32
Brisbane	9	34
Oakland	10	4

▲ Italy Milan

Analysis of Characteristics of Economic Contribution Ranking in 2023

The economic contribution of tourism is comprehensively recovering with a strong growth momentum

In 2023, the proportion of tourism-related GDP in world tourism cities increased, further highlighting the role of tourism as a pillar industry. The purchase and consumption of city goods and services by tourists, along with the investments in the tourism sector, all contribute to the tourism-related GDP. These activities have become a significant source of revenue for city governments, fostering urban economic growth. In 2023, among the 100 sample cities, the proportion of tourism employment to the city's total employment reached 5.7%, while the average proportion of urban tourism investment to total social investment was 9.6%.

The economic contribution of tourism has significantly increased compared to 2022, laying the foundation for the future rapid growth of the tourism industry. Prior to the pandemic, the tourism industry accounted for one-fifth of the world's new job opportunities between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, it constituted 10.3% of total employment (334 million jobs) and contributed 10.4% to the global GDP (USD 10 trillion). In 2023, the pent-up travel demand was unleashed, leading to a strong recovery of tourism markets worldwide. The sector supported nearly 348 million jobs worldwide and generated over USD 9.9 trillion in revenue, accounting for 9.1% of global GDP. This marks the best overall economic performance for the industry since the golden tourism year of 2019. Official statistical agencies in countries including Portugal, Spain, and Greece predict that tourism revenue will hit new highs in 2024 and the sector will become a key driver of economic growth for Southern Europe.
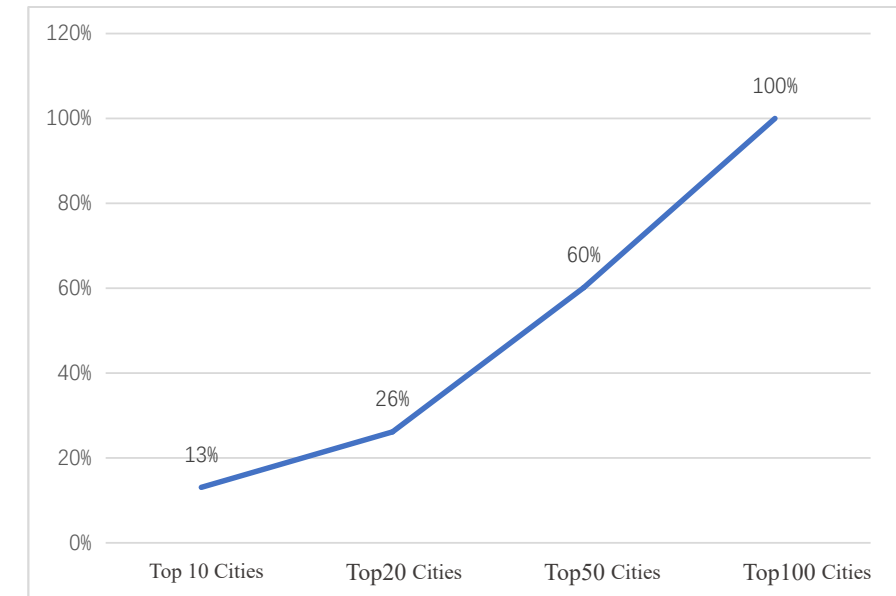

Figure 17 Impact of the Proportion of Tourism Revenue to Total GDP on Economic Contribution Ranking
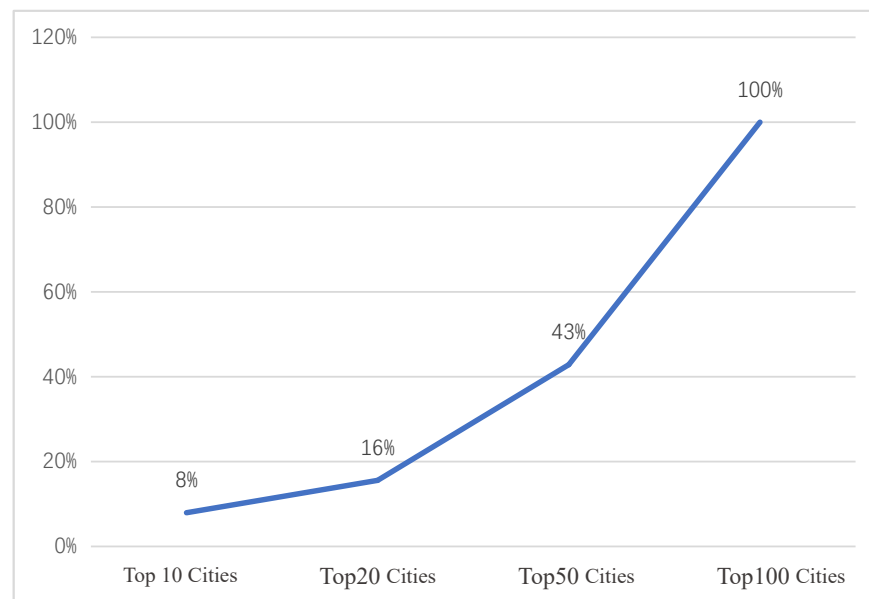
Figure 18 Impact of the Proportion of Tourism Employment to Total Employment on Economic Contribution Ranking

Figure 19 Impact of the Proportion of the Annual Tourism Investment to Total Investment on Economic Contribution Ranking

The demand for tourism resources in tourist cities has increased, highlighting the potential for investment

From the perspective of the effect of the ratio of annual tourism investment to overall city investment on economic contribution, the top ten cities account for 13%, the top 20 for 26%, and the top 50 for 60%. Compared to 2022's figures of 12%, 20%, and 57%, there have been slight increases. However, the overall supply of tourism investment is less than anticipated, indicating significant investment potential.

First, digitization and diversification are empowering the tourism industry, thus ushering in new development opportunities for the global tourism industry. The pandemic has changed tourists' travel habits and the service models of the tourism industry. High-tech applications have been widely integrated into various tourism scenarios, enhancing the overall travel experience. After the pandemic, the digital and intelligent tourism sector has entered a new phase, with more practical and widespread smart technologies propelling the global tourism industry into a new

stage of development. From smart city management to innovative applications in tourism projects, from AR/VR technology to artificial intelligence (AI), from robots to drones, and from big data analysis to mobile applications and services, digitization has become a new direction for investment in the tourism industry.

Second, tourism cities that are highly dependent on tourism resources have a higher proportion of investment in tourism. Among the 100 sample cities, those with a higher dependency on tourism require substantial funding to develop tourism projects and attractions, thereby driving tourist consumption. The proportion of tourism investment is higher in these cities. For example, Las Vegas, known for its casino industry, and Hawaii, famous for its vacation spots, rank high in this category, at first and sixth places respectively. Global hub tourism cities have a lower proportion of tourism investment compared to node tourism cities. Capital cities such as London in the UK and Washington D.C. in the U.S., which serve as national economic centers, have relatively smaller tourism investments due to their strategic roles in international trade, finance, technology, and transportation. As the pandemic comes to an end, resource-dependent cities need to increase their investment in tourism to further improve tourism infrastructure, offer a diverse range of products and services, strengthen marketing efforts, and enhance tourism input and innovation, in order to meet new tourist demands and drive economic development and recovery.

The recovery of international tourism in Asia and Africa has been relatively slow

In 2023, the recovery of international tourism accelerated compared to 2022, and the level of recovery varied remarkably among different regions. Tourism cities in the Middle East, Americas, and Europe regions have taken the lead in the recovery of inbound tourism, while the inbound tourism in the Asia-Pacific and Africa regions has recovered more slowly. In terms of the growth rate of inbound tourism, among the 100 sample tourism cities in 2023, Asia-Pacific tourism cities averaged at 15.6%, which was lower than that of the Americas (18.6%), Europe (16.3%), and Middle East (17%), and higher than that of Africa (14.1%).

First, the openness of policies varies by region. The recovery of tourism in the Asia-Pacific region has been relatively slow, primarily due to inconsistent opening policies among different economies. As a result, the recovery of cross-border tourism activities varies. Although China's outbound tourism market has begun to restart, the overall pace of recovery remains slow. In contrast, the Middle East has seen the strongest recovery in its tourism industry, with the fastest pace of recovery in international tourist arrivals. This is attributed to strong intra-regional demand and the increasing number of countries lifting travel restrictions.

Second, safety and transportation have hindered the recovery of international tourism in Africa. The impact of safety and transportation conditions on tourism varies by region. While the overall tourism industry in Africa has recovered relatively quickly, the number of international tourist arrivals to Sub-Saharan Africa has only recovered to about 90% of the pre-pandemic level, whereas North Africa has seen the international tourist volume surpass the pre-pandemic level.


▲   Africa   Cairo

Domestic tourism continues to outperform international tourism in terms of growth rate and economic contribution

Among the 100 sample cities, except for Hong Kong and Macao, where the domestic tourist arrivals declined due to geographical factors, the other 98 tourism cities achieved different levels of growth in domestic tourist arrivals, with an average growth rate of 9.3%.

It is observed that the Inbound Tourism Growth Index and Domestic Tourism Growth Index account for 12% and 18% of the Economic Contribution Index for the top ten cities, respectively. For the top 20 cities, the figures are 22% and 32%, respectively. For the top 50, the figures stand at 55% and 70%, respectively.

Facilitated by the implementation of convenient global entry and exit measures, the international tourism market is recovering rapidly. However, the rising cost of living, fluctuating inflation rates, and geopolitical turmoil have prompted tourists to choose their destinations more rationally and seek more cost-effective tourism products. As a result, most tourists tend to choose domestic or nearby regions as their travel destinations. In 2023, the number of domestic tourists exceeded that of international tourists by nearly 8 times, representing a year-on-year growth of 42.7%. However, domestic tourism revenue was only 2.7 times that of international tourism revenue, which highlights the cost-effectiveness of domestic travel. First, international tourism has become less attractive due to the higher tourism consumption brought about by the increasing air transportation and accommodation costs. Second, domestic travel involves relatively fewer language and cultural barriers compared to international travel, reducing the demand for tourism agencies, tour guides, and other related tourism services. Hence, domestic travel is more convenient.
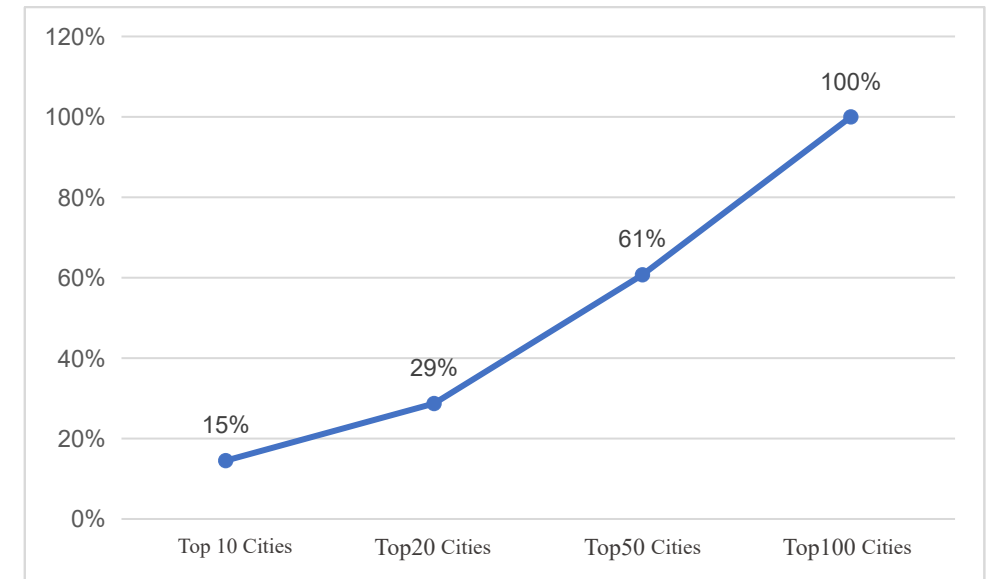
Figure 20 Impact of Inbound Tourism Growth on Economic Contribution Ranking

Figure 21 Impact of Domestic Tourism Growth on Economic Contribution Ranking

Tourist Satisfaction Evaluation Index

Individual Ranking of Tourist Satisfaction in 2023

Ranking list of tourist satisfaction in 2023 (top 20)

According to the ranking list of tourist satisfaction index for 2023, the top ten cities are mostly from the European region, with seven cities from Europe and three from the Asia-Pacific region. Among the top 20 cities, there are eleven cities from the Europe, and two from the Asia-Pacific region.


▲   UK   London

Table 22 Ranking List of Tourist Satisfaction in 2023 (Top 20)

Ranking	City	Country	Sector
1	Brussels	Belgium	Europe
2	Helsinki	Finland	Europe
3	Prague	Czech	Europe
4	Amsterdam	Netherlands	Europe
5	Oslo	Norway	Europe
6	Brisbane	Australia	Asia-Pacific
7	Melbourne	Australia	Asia-Pacific
8	Oakland	New Zealand	Asia-Pacific
9	Frankfurt	Germany	Europe
10	Munich	Germany	Europe
11	Chongqing	China	Asia-Pacific
12	Rome	Italy	Europe
13	Jerusalem	-	Middle East
14	Stockholm	Sweden	Europe
15	Rotterdam	Netherlands	Europe
16	Abu Dhabi	UAE	Middle East
17	Osaka	Japan	Asia-Pacific
18	Tokyo	Japan	Asia-Pacific
19	Seoul	South Korea	Asia-Pacific
20	Geneva	Switzerland	Europe

Individual ranking of tourist satisfaction in 2023 (top 10)
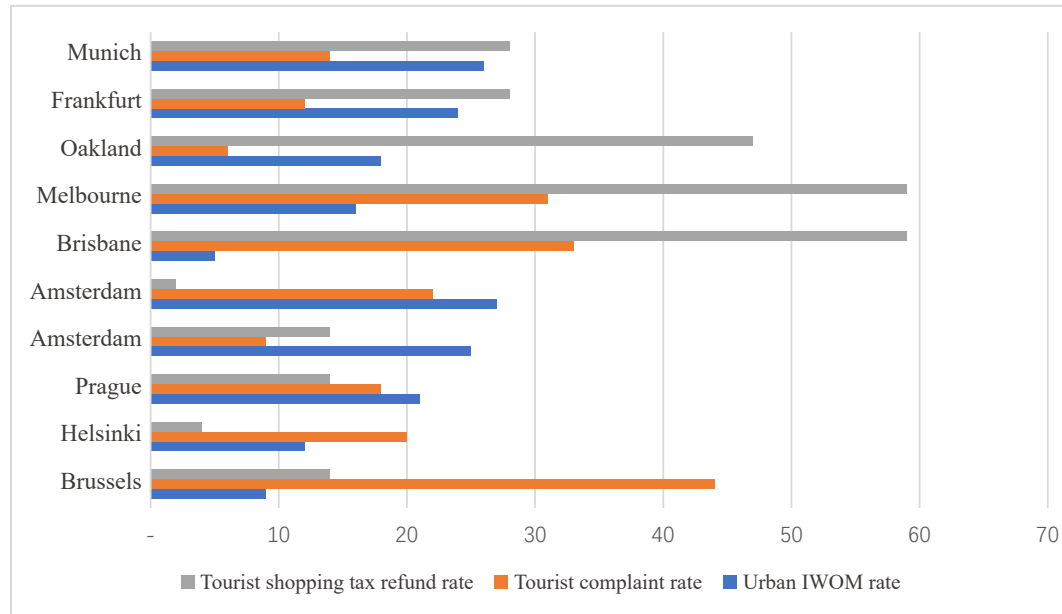
Figure 22 Individual Ranking of Tourist Satisfaction among Top 10 Cities

Changes in the annual ranking of tourist satisfaction in 2023 (top 10)

Compared to 2022, European tourism cities saw a significant increase in their tourist satisfaction index in 2023. Cities such as Brussels (rising to 1st place), Helsinki (rising to 2nd place), Prague (rising to 3rd place), Amsterdam (rising to 4th place), Frankfurt (rising to 9th place), and Munich (rising to 10th place) in Europe saw considerable improvements in their rankings. The Tourist Satisfaction Index of Asia-Pacific tourism cities has also experienced a slight improvement, including Brisbane (rising to 6th place), Melbourne (rising to 7th place), and Auckland (rising to 8th place).

Table 23 Changes in Annual Rankings of Tourist Satisfaction for Top 10 Cities

City	2023	2022
Brussels	1	5
Helsinki	2	6
Prague	3	7
Amsterdam	4	15
Oslo	5	4
Brisbane	6	13
Melbourne	7	11
Oakland	8	14
Frankfurt	9	18
Munich	10	49

Analysis of Characteristics of Tourist Satisfaction Ranking in 2023

European tourism cities have an advantage in tourist satisfaction due to their higher tax refund rates

With the economic recovery, tourists' willingness to travel and shop has gradually increased. Tourist tax refund rates are highest in European tourism cities, averaging at 15.7%. In the Asia-Pacific region, the average tourist shopping tax refund rate is 9.5%. The Americas region has the lowest average tourist shopping tax refund rate, which is only 4.3%. European cities, with their higher tax refund ratios, have effectively increased tourists' willingness to consume and their overall satisfaction. For example, in Brussels, tourists can find luxury brand stores with a glamorous atmosphere, as well as unique boutique designer stores. Belgium's tax refund policy allows for refunds on most retail goods, including clothing, jewelry, electronics, cosmetics, and skincare products. After refunds, the prices of these goods are almost 20% lower than in Asian countries. Moreover, European cities such as Helsinki, Prague, Amsterdam, Oslo, Frankfurt, and Munich have tax refund rates exceeding 16%. These cities have improved tourist satisfaction and attracted a large number of tourists to consume through their high tax refund rates, further promoting the development of local tourism economy.

Tourism cities in the Middle East lead the world in online popularity, while Africa lags behind

As the global tourism market develops rapidly, tourism cities in various regions have adopted diverse measures to improve tourist satisfaction, which has delivered tangible results. According to the tourist satisfaction data in 2023, tourism cities in the Middle East have significantly increased their online popularity through strategic cooperation with

major travel platforms, and their tourist complaint rates are significantly lower than other regions.

Tourism cities in the Middle East boast the highest IWOM rate, with an average of 90.6. The tourism cities in the Middle East have greatly enhanced their online popularity through cooperation with major travel platforms. In April 2023, Trip.com Group signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Saudi Tourism Authority to promote Saudi Arabia as a tourist destination through channels such as Trip.com and Travix. In September, the Saudi Tourism Authority also partnered with Ant Group and Fliggy, and made it possible to travel all over the kingdom with just one e-wallet through Alipay+. These efforts have greatly enhanced the tourism popularity of Middle Eastern countries. The average IWOM scores of Europe and Asia-Pacific tourism cities are close, with 75.0 and 74.2 respectively, ranking second and third. African tourism cities have the lowest IWOM score, which is only 56.3 and below the average score of the 100 sample cities.

In terms of tourist complaint rates, tourism cities in Africa have the highest tourist complaint rate of 17.0%, a slight improvement from last year's 17.3%. The relatively low level of tourism infrastructure and service quality in Africa has led to more inconvenient and unsatisfactory situations for tourists during their travels. Furthermore, with the increasingly severe international situation, some parts of Africa are facing issues of unstable public security and other safety risks. Besides, tourism cities in the Americas region have an average tourist complaint rate of 14.0%. The Middle East region has the lowest tourist complaint rate which stands at only 9.8%.

The application of technologies such as AI has further enhanced tourist satisfaction

Amid the global tourism competition of 2023, enhancing tourist satisfaction has become a key strategy for major tourism cities and countries. By improving the overall quality of tourism services and reducing the number of complaints, tourism cities and countries have made remarkable progress in the global tourism market. The Average Tourist

Satisfaction Index of the 100 sample tourism cities has risen from 68.3 in 2022 to 69.5, which is closely related to the application of technologies such as artificial intelligence. For example, the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT) in Japan developed a machine translation device that can translate 12 languages into Japanese and help station staff communicate with foreign tourists. The system is able to provide real-time translation of passengers' questions and staff's responses through the transparent displays and microphones. Less than 1% of Japan's 400,000 taxi drivers are fluent in English, and the simultaneous interpretation system helps drivers communicate with tourists, eliminates language barriers, and reduces tourist complaints caused by language issues, thereby attracting more tourists. This measure has improved the tourist satisfaction of Japanese tourism cities in 2023, with Osaka being selected among the top 20 in terms of tourist satisfaction, compared to 2022.
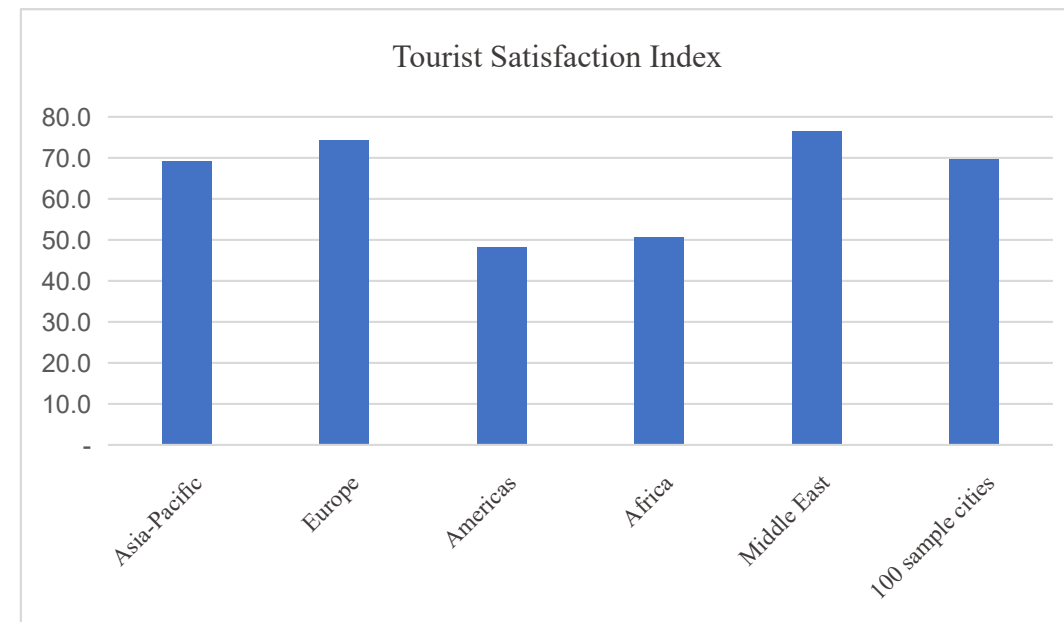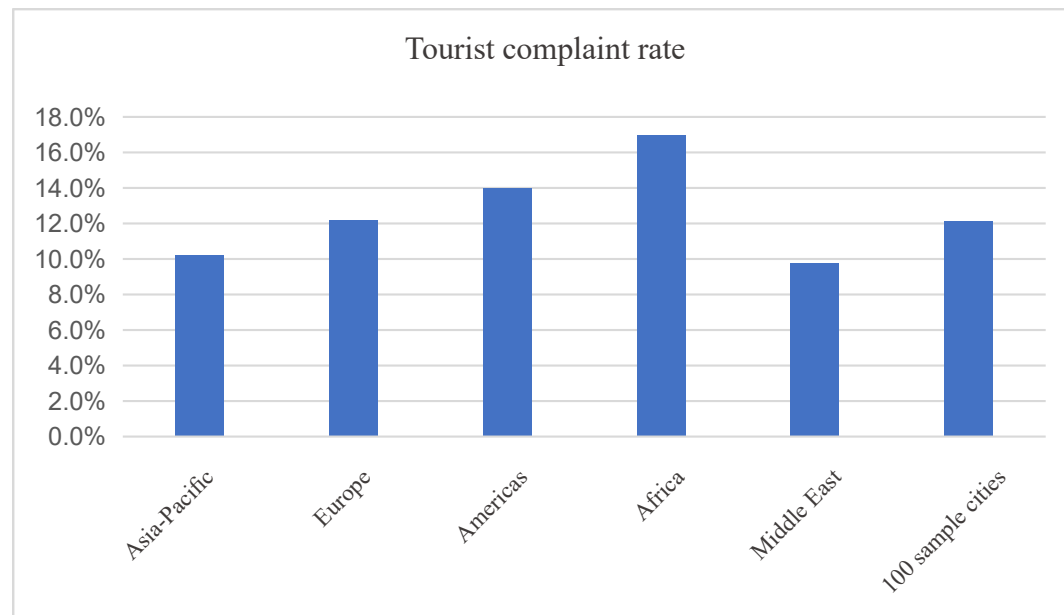

▲　Japan　Tokyo
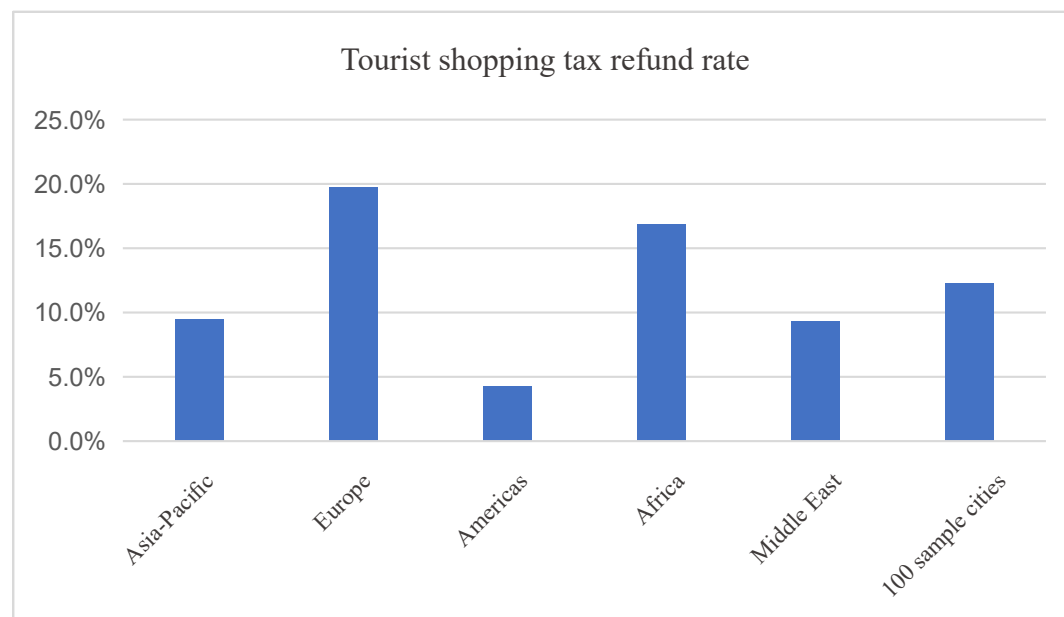

▲　Figure 23　Tourist Satisfaction Index in Different Regions
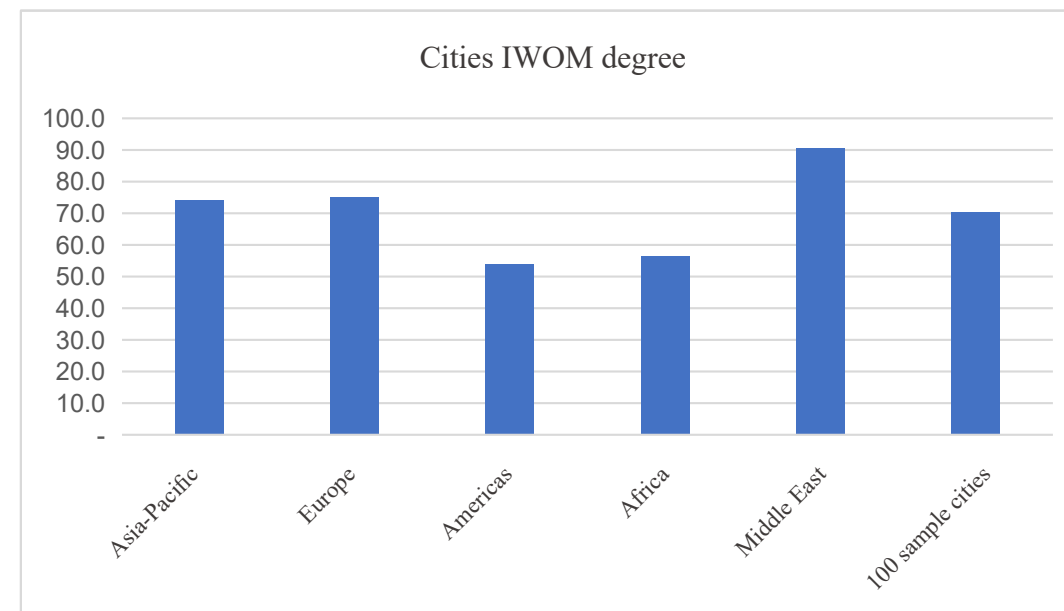
▲　Figure 24　Average IWOM Score in Different Regions

Tourist complaint rate

▲　Figure 25　Tourist Complaint Rate in Different Regions

Tourist shopping tax refund rate

▲　Figure 26　Average Tourist Shopping Tax Refund Rate in Different Regions

Countermeasures and Suggestions for Promoting the Comprehensive Development of World Tourism Cities

With the end of the pandemic and the full lifting of global travel restrictions, the tourism industry experienced a strong recovery wave in 2023. The surge in tourist demand has not only injected new vitality into the tourism economy but also signaled the formation of a vibrant and promising tourism market. Behind the recovery is people's desire for unrestricted travel and their pursuit of new experiences. However, the rapid market rebound has also brought a series of challenges, including how to maintain tourism safety, improve service quality, address environmental pressures, and meet tourists' expectations for personalized and sustainable tourism.

To address these challenges and trends, tourism cities need to continuously innovate and adapt in order to maintain a leading position in the fiercely competitive market. In order to accelerate the recovery of tourism cities, the World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) has summarized six recommendations for the development of world tourism cities based on the comprehensive characteristics of their development in 2023.

Strengthening policy support and market strategy planning

In the aftermath of the pandemic, various factors have led to a sluggish global economic recovery. The tourism industry has become a vital force in driving global economic resurgence. To promote the economic recovery and prosperity of tourism cities, municipal governments should increase their support for tourism development, implement effective

policies, and devise practical development strategies. They should also optimize the allocation of resources towards tourism and create a policy environment conducive to tourism growth and innovation.

First, municipal governments should comprehensively assess the development needs of the tourism industry, stay abreast of market trends, and fully leverage local distinctive resources. They should conduct in-depth research on the various factors influencing tourism consumption, use big data models to analyze key elements, and provide basis for formulating precise and effective tourism policies and strategies. Second, governments should introduce supportive policies, including tax reduction and exemption, financial subsidies, and preferential loans, to lower operational costs for tourism enterprises and encourage tourism investment and entrepreneurship. In addition, they should increase funding for tourism resources and boost public investment in tourism infrastructure, such as improving transportation networks, enhancing the accessibility and convenience of tourist attractions, and strengthening tourism information service systems. Third, municipal governments need to actively establish incentive mechanisms that encourage innovation in tourism products and services, foster new business models, and expand into new markets, thereby creating new drivers of economic growth through high-quality supply. They should also promote the adoption of new technologies, such as big data and artificial intelligence, to improve the level of intelligence in tourism services and enhance visitor experience. Lastly, cities should strengthen brand marketing strategies to boost the popularity and appeal of tourism cities. Cities can effectively showcase their unique charm by leveraging multiple channels such as advertising, social media, and cultural tourism festivals.

The close integration of policy support and market strategy will inject vitality into the economic recovery of tourism cities, propelling them toward a more prosperous future. Through this dual-pronged approach, tourism cities will be better equipped to meet the needs of visitors, enhance their tourism experience, and foster economic diversification and sustainable development.

Promoting digital transformation and smart services

From the characteristics of the tourism market in 2023, digitalization and technological innovation have emerged as key drivers of industry development. The application of emerging technologies such as online booking, mobile payment, and virtual reality (VR) experience not only enhances the convenience of travel but also provides tourists with more diverse experiences. In the post-pandemic era, the demand for high-tech applications and experiences in tourism scenarios has surged. Accelerating digital transformation and promoting smart tourism and intelligent services are effective measures to enhance travel experience and promote the innovative development of the tourism industry. Tourism cities should encourage enterprises to actively invest in digital technologies, cultivate new types of smart tourism, and drive industry innovation and upgrading. First, cities should encourage and support the design of comprehensive smart tourism solutions. Various AI applications such as large language model-generated intelligent Q&A systems and personalized travel assistants should be used to optimize travel experience and content creation. Intelligent Q&A systems can provide tourists with information and recommendations in a real-time manner. Personalized travel assistants can customize travel routes and experiences based on individual interests and needs, thereby improving visitor satisfaction and enhancing the service quality and competitiveness of tourism enterprises. Second, cities should improve service quality through technologies such as 5G, big data, and cloud computing. With the aid of new technologies such as VR, AR, and smart tourism equipment, the experiential and interactive aspects of tourism products can be enhanced. Digital technologies can also be used to promote new cultural forms, and advancements in areas such as materials science and biotechnology can be leveraged to improve visitor experience. Lastly, cities should emphasize innovation in tourism development models, concepts, and systems. Further efforts should be made to accelerate the development of a digitalized, network-based and smart tourism and deepen the integration of "Internet + tourism". By using new technologies to transform traditional tourism sectors such as scenic areas, travel agencies, and hotels, tourism cities can accelerate the transformation and upgrading of traditional tourism models, thereby promoting the development of smart and sustainable cities.

Facilitating the integration of cultural creativity and tourism services

The pandemic has profoundly reshaped tourists' preferences. Consumers are increasingly seeking travel experiences that are rich in local characteristics and cultural essence. They are willing to pay for cultural experiences, meaningful content, and high-quality services, which has driven the growth of niche markets such as cultural tourism, heritage tourism, and eco-tourism. The cultural and creative industry, with its unique originality and artistry, injects fresh vitality into tourism services. Tourism cities should place greater emphasis on the development of the cultural and creative industry. On one hand, the integration of culture and creativity helps to create more personalized and differentiated tourism products catering to tourists' desire for novel and unique experiences. For example, tourist destinations can develop themed parks, cultural festivals, art exhibitions, and performances that highlight local cultural features, enabling tourists to not only enjoy the beautiful natural landscapes but also immerse themselves in the cultural and artistic charm of the area. On the other hand, the cultural and creative industry offers new avenues for innovation in tourism services. With the support of modern technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), tourists can engage with rich content and immersive experiences before, during, and after their trips. The cultural and creative industry can also develop tourism derivatives with cultural value, such as souvenirs and handicrafts, thereby increasing the added value of the tourism industry. Moreover, tourism cities should further meet the evolving demands of tourists for tourism products and services and promote the integration and upgrading of the tourism industry. By deeply integrating with other sectors such as eco-tourism, high-tech tourism, educational tourism, wellness tourism, and creative tourism, cities can achieve resource sharing and complementary advantages, forming a more comprehensive industry and value chain.

▲　China Sanya

Enhancing city brand influence through international events

During the pandemic, the demand for live events was suppressed due to travel restrictions and social distancing requirements. Once the pandemic subsided, this pent-up demand was rapidly released, leading to a surge in the demand for large-scale events. International sports events, conferences, concerts, and arts festivals offer opportunities for people to interact with each other and enjoy cultural experiences. With significant brand value and international influence, these events can attract global tourists and enhance the international image of the host city. First, cities should actively leverage international sports events, conferences, and festivals to showcase their unique culture and landscapes, draw global attention and boost their popularity on the international stage. Second, relevant

measures should be taken to optimize tourism services, such as improving infrastructure, providing multilingual services, and enhancing the overall visitor experience, so as to attract more international tourists. Effective measures include optimizing transportation routes, improving the quality of services at tourist attractions, and offering distinctive cultural experiences. Furthermore, cities should develop specialized tourism plans centered around major events to expand their global impact. Sports tourism has become an important component of the new cultural economy, and tourism cities can create attractions and services related to sports events to draw visitors. By crafting special tourism packages for large-scale sports events and festivals, cities can attract sports enthusiasts and festival-goers from around the world, thereby boosting local tourism. Concert tours by renowned artists are also a significant driver of tourism revival, as they can not only increase a city's popularity but also stimulate growth in related industries such as hotels, transportation, dining, and retail. For instance, Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour in 2023 had a notably positive impact on tourism revenue. Reports indicate that the tour's global economic impact exceeded USD 10 billion. In Singapore alone, Taylor's concerts generated S$500 million in tourism revenue, with airfares to Singapore nearly doubling during the concert period and bookings at tourist attractions increasing 23-fold compared to usual times.

Advocating for the innovative protection and promotion of tourism resources

The pandemic has profoundly influenced consumers' travel preferences. With the end of the pandemic, habits such as social distancing and hygiene concerns, along with increased attention to eco-tourism and sustainable tourism, have reshaped the overall landscape of the tourism industry. To more effectively promote the sustainable development of tourism resources, tourism cities should adopt comprehensive measures to enhance their international appeal and sustainability. First, it is crucial to manage tourist numbers rationally to prevent the damage that overcrowding can cause to attractions and the environment. Tourism cities should also develop scientific plans for visitor numbers

and visiting times to ensure that every tourist can enjoy a high-quality experience while protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the sites. Second, tourist routes within attractions should be planned comprehensively. In areas prone to congestion, such as narrow streets, bridges, or pathways, measures should be taken to divert and manage the flow of visitors, thus ensuring orderly tourism activities. Properly planning and guiding visitor flow can not only enhance tourist experience but also effectively alleviate traffic pressure around attractions. Furthermore, city management authorities should actively address the impacts of climate change on tourism resources by implementing scientific protection and restoration plans. For instance, in coastal or mountainous areas susceptible to climate change, it is necessary to conduct regular inspections and take reinforcement and protective measures to prevent damage from natural disasters. Through these comprehensive measures, tourism cities can meet the growing demand for health, safety, and sustainability among tourists, and effectively protects the unique heritage and environment of tourist destinations, enabling them to better showcase the city's charm while maintaining sustainability.

Encouraging communication and cooperation among world tourism cities

In the post-pandemic era, world tourism cities face the dual tasks of recovery and development. To address these challenges and promote the revival and prosperity of the tourism industry, it is essential for cities to strengthen cooperation. By facilitating people-to-people exchanges, tourism cities can share best practices, coordinate health and safety measures, stimulate market vitality, and boost consumer confidence.

The friendly exchanges and deep cooperation between tourism cities have immeasurable value in promoting the sustainable development of the international tourism industry. Tourism cities can share experience and integrate resources in areas such as environmental protection, cultural heritage preservation, tourism education, and training. Such practices

can enhance the quality of tourism services and contribute positively to the goals of sustainable development in the international tourism sector. Tourism cities should join hands to address global challenges such as climate change and resource overexploitation, so as to ensure the long-term prosperity and healthy development of the tourism industry. Through these efforts, tourism can truly become a bridge connecting people from different countries and regions, fostering global peace and development, and facilitating win-win and shared development of the international tourism ecosystem. Through cooperation and exchange, tourism cities can jointly develop new tourism products and services, drive tourism innovation, attract more international tourists, increase tourism revenue, stimulate new economic growth, create job opportunities, and inject new vitality into urban economic development. Moreover, tourism cities can leverage platforms provided by international tourism organizations to engage in a wide range of people-to-people exchanges, sign multi-level strategic cooperation agreements, and establish sister city relationships. These efforts will deepen mutual understanding and trust on an international level, promote cultural exchange and mutual learning among civilizations, facilitate people-to-people connectivity, and enhance friendship and understanding among people from different countries and regions.

The World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) is the first international tourism organization focusing on cities. Through various activities, WTCF actively provides a platform for sharing experience, enhancing cooperation, and building consensus in the global tourism industry, with the vision of promoting the sustainable development of world tourism cities. International tourism conferences and forums are crucial platforms for fostering exchange and cooperation among tourism cities. The Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit and World Conference on Tourism Cooperation and Development, annually organized by WTCF, offer representatives from countries and cities valuable opportunities to share best practices and experience, enhance communication and cooperation among tourism cities, and jointly address changes and challenges faced by the global tourism market. These events not only propel the development of regional tourism but also offer invaluable platforms and opportunities for global tourism cooperation and development.

Cooperation among tourism cities is a key driver of the prosperous development of the tourism industry. Strengthening cooperation and exchange among world tourism cities can facilitate the sharing of tourism resources, market information, and management experience between cities, enhance their competitiveness and service quality, and promote the common development of regional tourism. Furthermore, it increases the appeal and popularity of tourism cities, fosters mutual learning and integration among different civilizations, deepens exchanges and understanding among people, and contributes to world peace and development.

▲　China　Beijing