



Best Countries 2016

Global rankings, international news and data insights



Overall Rankings

Overall Rank	Country	Entrepreneurship	Adventure	Citizenship	Cultural Influence	Heritage	Movers	Open for Business	Power	Quality of Life
1	Germany	1	45	7	10	16	27	17	4	7
2	Canada	5	15	2	11	29	34	3	11	1
3	United Kingdom	4	33	6	5	12	46	18	5	9
4	United States	3	27	11	3	22	22	23	1	14
5	Sweden	6	18	1	9	36	30	2	18	2
6	Australia	10	6	5	8	25	20	9	13	4
7	Japan	2	32	14	6	7	5	22	7	11
8	France	11	12	12	1	4	40	24	6	13
9	Netherlands	7	16	4	12	23	45	7	19	5
10	Denmark	8	29	3	13	39	44	4	24	3
11	New Zealand	16	5	8	15	34	16	6	34	6
12	Austria	14	24	9	16	14	55	13	28	8
13	Italy	18	2	16	2	1	29	36	15	18
14	Luxembourg	15	38	10	19	45	56	1	32	10
15	Singapore	9	30	18	14	32	2	8	23	15
16	Spain	19	3	15	4	2	37	27	20	16
17	China	13	49	28	17	10	3	42	3	17
18	Ireland	17	13	13	23	18	32	11	40	12
19	South Korea	12	50	22	27	38	13	38	10	20
20	Brazil	29	1	25	7	15	6	37	22	43
21	Thailand	31	4	45	20	8	4	10	43	23
22	India	22	35	39	22	6	1	29	14	26
23	Portugal	23	9	17	24	9	57	26	48	19
24	Russia	20	47	33	25	19	10	60	2	42
25	Israel	21	53	24	35	27	14	52	8	34

Overall Rankings

Overall Rank	Country	Entrepreneurship	Adventure	Citizenship	Cultural Influence	Heritage	Movers	Open for Business	Power	Quality of Life
26	Greece	32	7	21	18	3	26	50	39	36
27	Mexico	34	10	36	21	5	18	41	35	31
28	Malaysia	27	26	40	33	35	19	14	44	22
29	Saudi Arabia	24	59	46	32	47	7	58	9	25
30	Turkey	30	20	44	28	11	21	54	17	29
31	South Africa	25	25	26	34	31	9	55	27	49
32	Vietnam	36	36	50	45	26	11	21	29	24
33	Philippines	33	17	38	38	40	23	16	50	27
34	Peru	54	19	37	37	21	17	20	53	37
35	Morocco	46	23	54	30	17	12	31	52	44
36	Costa Rica	48	8	31	31	46	42	12	59	35
37	Panama	40	22	34	43	52	24	5	55	46
38	Czech Republic	26	41	19	44	28	58	39	49	21
39	Egypt	43	37	57	29	13	8	56	21	57
40	Argentina	35	11	23	26	20	53	51	41	39
41	Sri Lanka	52	34	49	42	42	15	19	51	38
42	Indonesia	37	31	48	39	33	25	25	36	30
43	Chile	38	21	29	41	30	33	28	45	33
44	Hungary	28	40	20	46	24	60	35	57	28
45	Dominican Republic	58	14	35	36	53	49	15	56	45
46	Uruguay	45	39	30	49	50	39	33	58	40
47	Tunisia	56	43	52	47	37	41	34	46	47
48	Bulgaria	42	48	27	52	44	59	32	60	32
49	Colombia	44	28	41	40	48	47	48	37	50
50	Romania	41	44	32	50	43	52	45	54	41

Overall Rankings

Overall Rank	Country	Entrepreneurship	Adventure	Citizenship	Cultural Influence	Heritage	Movers	Open for Business	Power	Quality of Life
51	Jordan	50	52	53	48	41	35	47	25	52
52	Guatemala	60	42	47	57	54	48	30	47	51
53	Azerbaijan	55	54	51	56	57	28	43	38	56
54	Bolivia	57	46	43	54	51	50	40	42	48
55	Kazakhstan	53	56	55	59	59	31	44	31	54
56	Pakistan	47	58	58	55	56	38	53	16	55
57	Nigeria	51	55	56	51	60	43	49	33	53
58	Iran	49	60	60	53	49	36	59	12	60
59	Ukraine	39	51	42	58	55	51	57	26	58
60	Algeria	59	57	59	60	58	54	46	30	59

How We Score

The subrankings, their weights in calculating the overall ranking score and the country attributes factored into each are below. The country attribute scores were equally weighted within each subranking. Subranking weights do not add up to precisely 100.00 due to rounding.

Adventure (3.24%): Friendly, fun, pleasant climate, scenic, sexy

Citizenship (16.95%): Cares about human rights, cares about the environment, gender equality, progressive, religious freedom, respects property rights, trustworthy, well-distributed political power

Cultural Influence (12.93%): Culturally significant in terms of entertainment, fashionable, happy, has an influential culture, modern, prestigious, trendy

Entrepreneurship (17.42%): Connected to the rest of the world, educated population, entrepreneurial, innovative, provides easy access to capital, skilled labor force, technological expertise, transparent business practices, well-developed infrastructure, well-developed legal framework

Heritage (3.17%): Culturally accessible, has a rich history, has great food, many cultural attractions

Movers (10.00%): Different, distinctive, dynamic, unique

Open for Business (11.99%): Bureaucratic, cheap manufacturing costs, corrupt, favorable tax environment, transparent government practices

Power (7.42%): A leader, economically influential, politically influential, strong international alliances, strong military

Quality of Life (16.89%): A good job market, affordable, economically stable, family friendly, income equality, politically stable, safe, well-developed public education system, well-developed public health system

Methodology

Behind a country's wealth and success are the policies that create possibilities, the people that drive the effort and the history that shapes the environment and perspective.

Globalization has expanded a country's presence beyond its physical borders, and the 2016 Best Countries rankings seek to understand a nation's worth beyond hard metrics.

The 2016 Best Countries rankings are based on how global perceptions define countries in terms of a number of qualitative characteristics, impressions that have the potential to drive trade, travel and investment and directly affect national economies. Sixty nations were measured for the inaugural report, and more will be included in future studies.

Ranking the Countries

U.S. News & World Report worked with partners at WPP's brand strategy firm BAV Consulting and The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania to identify a set of 65 country attributes - terms that could be used to describe a country and that are also relevant to the success of a modern nation. Attributes by nation were presented in a survey where participants assessed how closely they associated one with the other. The study and model was developed by John Gerzema, David Reibstein and Anna Blender.

Each country was scored on each of the 65 country attributes based on a collection of individual survey responses. The more a country was perceived to exemplify a certain characteristic in relation to the average, the higher that country's attribute score and vice versa. These scores were normalized to account for outliers and transformed into a scale that could be compared across the board.

Attributes were grouped into nine subrankings that rolled into the Best Countries ranking: Adventure, Citizenship, Cultural Influence, Entrepreneurship, Heritage, Movers, Open for Business, Power and Quality of Life.

These thematic subrankings were formed by grouping country attributes that had similar global trends in survey responses. Subranking scores for each country were determined by averaging scores that country received in each of the attributes comprising each subranking.

To determine the weight each subranking score had in the overall Best Countries score, each was correlated to 2014 gross domestic product purchasing power parity per capita, a measure of inclusive prosperity, as reported by the International Monetary Fund. More prevalent relationships that demonstrated an interconnectedness with the wealth metric were weighted more.

The Movers subranking represents a version of BAV's BrandAsset Valuator Model of Brand Building, a metric developed by BAV that is predictive of a country's future growth in terms of gross domestic product purchasing power parity per capita. Instead of one year of data, it was correlated to predicted growth of the metric from 2014 to 2020.

To arrive at a country's rank, we first calculated its standardized scores in each of the 65 country attributes. Each country received nine subranking scores by averaging its scores for the country attributes grouped into that subranking. A country's overall score reflects the weighted sum of its subranking scores. The subranking and overall scores were rescaled so that the top country in each category received a value of 100, and others were calculated as a proportion of that top score. Scores were ranked in descending order.

Additional lists rank the countries on more specific topics, such as the Best Countries for Women and the Best Countries for Education. Groups of relevant country attribute data were used to score and rank countries for these lists, but they do not affect the overall Best Countries score or ranking.

Choosing Survey Participants

To understand how countries are perceived, we endeavored to survey engaged citizens who were broadly representative of the global population, with an emphasis on

those who would deem the topic and findings most relevant to their lives.

Self-identification in demographic questions distinguished respondents into three defined groups: informed elites - college educated individuals who consider themselves middle class or higher and who read or watch the news at least four days a week; business decision-makers - senior leaders in an organization or small business owners who employ others; and general public - adults at least 18 years old who were nationally representative of their country in terms of age and gender.

Individuals who were likely to fit these descriptions were targeted and sent the link to an online survey through Lightspeed GMI, a global market research and data collection firm. We aimed to gather an equal share of responses from each type of citizen.

A total of 16,248 individuals from 36 countries in four regions - the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East and Africa - were surveyed.

Of the respondents, 8,092 were informed elites and 4,513 were business decision-makers. Some respondents were considered both informed elites and business decision-makers. The remaining 6,381 respondents were from the general public.

Regardless of demographics or participant type, each individual's responses weighed equally in the results.

Data Source: About the Survey

Survey participants were given a random subset of countries and country attributes to consider. The combinations were presented in a grid form where participants were prompted to check off the characteristics they associated with each country. If a participant indicated that they were not familiar with a country, it was removed from their survey.

Each participant considered about half of the country attributes for about a third of the countries. In this way, each attribute and country pair was reviewed at least 270 times per constituency/region combination. The more times an attribute-country pair was checked off in the grid, the higher the attribute score was for that country.

In addition to considering countries in terms of attributes, each survey participant was asked to assess their randomly assigned subset of countries in additional engagement and intention metrics, including travel, doing business and general regard.

A set of standard demographic questions helped to screen for global diversity and equal weight among participant groups

Choosing the Countries to Rank

We narrowed the world's nations down to a statistically manageable group by looking at how a country's performance in a number of key business, economic and

quality of life indicators compared against others.

The 60 countries in the 2016 Best Countries rankings are the only countries whose achievements reached four reputable benchmarks: the United Nation's top 100 countries in terms of 2013 gross domestic product, the World Bank's top 100 countries in terms of 2012 international tourist arrivals, the CIA World Factbook's top 100 countries in terms of 2014 exports and the top 150 countries of the United Nation's 2014 Human Development Index

Those that did not reach all four of these benchmarks and those that did not report these statistics were not included.

Collectively, the 60 countries in the report account for about 90 percent of global gross domestic product and represent about three-quarters of the world's population. They span the globe, covering Africa, Asia, Central America, Eurasia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, Oceania and South America.

Methodology FAQ

Some of the country attributes reflect more unfavorable aspects of a country. Could high scores on these attributes help raise a country's score or rank?

Scores for the negative country attributes - bureaucratic and corrupt - were inverted when calculated into the sub-ranking and overall scores. In this way, the countries that were the most closely associated with these attributes performed worse.

Were there ties?

No, scores were calculated in relation to each other in a way that did not allow for ties

Could survey participants answer about their country of residence or citizenship?

Yes, but this did not happen very often. Survey participants could answer about any country that was randomly assigned to them as long as they did not indicate that they were not familiar with that country.

The survey refers to 65 country attributes, but there are not that many listed.

Correct. Eight country attributes were not included in any of the sub-rankings and therefore do not factor into the overall Best Countries score or rank. These data may be used in future analysis.

This methodology mentions a group of 60 countries and a group of 36 countries. What's the difference?

Sixty countries were reviewed in a survey to create these rankings. People from 36 countries answered that survey. In many cases, countries overlapped, but the survey was fielded in some countries that were not ranked and vice versa.

Why are a few rankings missing some countries?

In the Best Countries to Invest In and Best Countries to Start a Career, we thought it was best to compare survey responses between two types of participants.

Countries with low initial scores were excluded from the list as the comparison would create misleading results. Neither of these lists affect the overall Best Countries scores or ranking.

Where can I learn more about the study and the model?

Our partners advise governments, corporations and NGO's on nation branding including bespoke country analysis and other reports. Professor David Reibstein can be reached at reibstein@wharton.upenn.edu. John Gerzema is jgerzema@bavconsulting.com and Anna Blender is ablender@bavconsulting.com. For more information see www.bavconsulting.com/bestcountries.

FAQ

What is Best Countries?

Best Countries is a dynamic, multimedia portal that includes rankings, video content, interactive data visualization tools, original reporting and op-eds from international thought leaders. The content leverages data derived from a proprietary survey produced in partnership with [U.S. News & World Report](#), [Y&R's BAV Consulting](#) and the [Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania](#).

The 2016 Best Countries rankings include an overall list of 60 nations numerically ranked as well as nine subrankings: [Citizenship](#), [Cultural Influence](#), [Entrepreneurship](#), [Quality of Life](#), [Power](#), [Heritage](#), [Open for Business](#), [Movers](#) and [Adventure](#).

Additional “Best of” lists were produced, including the countries that are best to [headquarter a corporation](#), [raise a family](#), [receive an education](#), [invest in](#), and more.

Why rank countries?

The Best Countries project was motivated by globalization and is designed to help citizens, business leaders and policymakers better understand how their nations are perceived on a world scale.

As a growing number of businesses and people have the ability to choose where in the world to invest their time and money,

it has become increasingly valuable to understand how a nation's policies, politics and products affect its perceived standing in the world. Perceptions have an impact on the willingness of people to invest in, conduct trade in and travel to nations, thereby having a direct impact on national economies.

The data can help to determine the current and future possibilities of economic, political and cultural success in a nation and can be used as a strategic decision-making tool for citizens, governments and other organizations.

The daily journalism, op-eds and video content offer an ongoing platform for highlighting the efforts of countries and their leaders in making their nations among the best in the world.

How is this different from existing country rankings?

Best Countries was produced using a proprietary survey and methodology developed in partnership with U.S. News, Y&R's BAV Consulting and the Wharton School. It is the only study of this magnitude to evaluate how perceptions about countries impact a nation's economy.

The Best Countries rankings are based on 75 metrics, making it the most comprehensive global evaluation of nations to date. The breadth and depth of the proprietary survey uncovers exclusive trends and correlations that tell new stories about nations.

The methodology was inspired by Y&R's BrandAsset® Valuator Model of Brand Equity, the world's largest and longest running study of brands, uniquely tying the Best Countries rankings to a proven model of measuring perceptions.

What role did each partner play in producing Best Countries?

U.S. News, the global authority in rankings, news and analysis, designed and hosts the online platform. It leads the daily editorial direction of the website.

BAV Consulting, a subsidiary of Y&R – one of the world's leading and most iconic marketing companies – led market research for 2016 Best Countries, using their proprietary BrandAsset® Valuator, the world's largest brand management tool and database of consumer perceptions of brands.

The Wharton School's SEI Center for Advanced Studies in Management, one of the world's first think tanks for management education, oversaw the methodology's development.

All three partners were involved in producing the proprietary survey and

methodology used in the global study.

How were the countries ranked?

Countries were ranked using data fielded from a proprietary perception survey developed by WPP, U.S. News and the Wharton School.

Perception data was derived from a survey of more than 16,200 respondents – general population, informed elites and business decision makers – across 36 countries in four regions: the Americas, Europe, Middle East/North Africa and Asia. The surveys were conducted using Y&R's proprietary BrandAsset Valuator®, the world's largest database of consumer perceptions of brands.

Respondents were asked to share their perceptions of 60 nations in terms of specific country characteristics, or attributes. These attributes were each scored individually and separated into nine thematic groupings that had similar trends in survey responses.

The relative importance, or weight, given to each of the nine subrankings was based on the magnitude of that subranking's correlation with per capita purchasing power gross domestic product and rolled into one overall Best Countries ranking.

Only nations featured on four composite performance rankings were included in the study: the United Nation's Top 100 Countries in terms of 2013 GDP, the World Bank's Top 100 Countries in terms of international tourism, the United

Nation's Top 150 Countries in the 2014 Human Development Index and the World Factbook's Top 100 Countries Top Exporters report. See the methodology for more details.

How were the 60 countries chosen?

The 60 countries were selected based on a composite performance ranking of key business, economic and quality of life data.

To be included in the Best Countries rankings, a country had to be ranked in the United Nation's Top 100 Countries in terms of 2013 GDP, the World Bank's Top 100 Countries in terms of international tourism, the United Nation's Top 150 Countries in the 2014 Human Development Index and the World Factbook's Top 100 Countries Top Exporters report.

In future reports, the aim is to expand the Best Countries rankings in ways that will make the methodology as comprehensive as possible.

Are the rankings objective?

To ensure the objectivity of the ranking methodology, each of the subrankings variables was weighted in correlation with the per capita purchasing power gross domestic product of each country.

To keep the rankings comparable, the Best Countries ranking only included nations featured on four composite performance rankings: the United Nation's Top 100 Countries in terms of 2013 GDP, the World Bank's Top 100 Countries in

terms of international tourism, the United Nation's Top 150 Countries in the 2014 Human Development Index and the World Factbook's Top 100 Countries Top Exporters report.

To make the rankings comprehensive, perception data was derived from a survey of more than 16,200 respondents – including the general population, informed elites and business decision makers – across 36 countries in four regions: the Americas, Europe, Middle East/North Africa and Asia.

Who should I email with questions?

For questions about Best Countries, please email pr@usnews.com.