Best Countries 2020

Global rankings, international news and data insights

U.S.News & WORLD REPORT   BAV GROUP   Wharton UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

Overall Rankings

Overall Rank	Country	Entrepreneurship	Adventure	Citizenship	Cultural Influence	Heritage	Movers	Open for Business	Power	Quality of Life
1	Switzerland	5	14	7	10	31	19	2	13	7
2	Canada	6	16	2	11	40	37	3	12	1
3	Japan	2	34	17	6	10	5	25	7	14
4	Germany	1	50	10	15	19	41	17	4	10
5	Australia	9	10	8	8	27	16	14	15	5
6	United Kingdom	4	36	11	5	12	49	27	5	12
7	United States	3	33	15	4	18	26	45	1	15
8	Sweden	7	20	1	14	33	47	7	20	3
9	Netherlands	10	13	4	12	24	39	6	21	6
10	Norway	13	23	3	21	48	23	10	23	4
11	New Zealand	18	7	9	17	37	13	13	29	8
12	France	15	12	13	2	4	44	29	6	16
13	Denmark	14	30	5	19	41	51	4	26	2
14	Finland	16	27	6	26	43	32	9	35	9
15	China	11	54	31	16	11	3	21	3	19
16	Singapore	12	25	21	9	22	7	5	22	20
17	Italy	20	2	18	1	1	21	36	17	21
18	Austria	17	22	12	25	20	59	15	27	11
19	Spain	21	3	16	3	2	38	28	19	18
20	South Korea	8	55	24	20	30	11	31	9	23
21	Luxembourg	19	45	14	27	55	56	1	30	13
22	United Arab Emirates	23	63	38	22	63	1	67	11	25
23	Russia	22	48	39	28	15	12	73	2	34
24	Portugal	25	6	19	23	8	57	22	41	17
25	India	27	40	51	30	6	2	35	14	30

Overall Rankings

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26	Thailand	36	5	46	18	9	6	8	49	28
27	Greece	32	4	23	13	3	20	46	43	26
28	Brazil	34	1	30	7	14	9	59	24	52
29	Israel	24	69	32	44	28	15	62	8	46
30	Qatar	28	71	50	35	73	8	55	18	36
31	Saudi Arabia	30	73	58	40	50	10	72	10	42
32	Malaysia	33	29	45	38	32	22	12	58	27
33	Mexico	38	11	41	24	5	24	53	37	39
34	Poland	26	42	20	47	25	70	32	42	22
35	Turkey	31	21	43	29	7	27	63	16	37
36	Egypt	52	39	65	32	13	4	69	25	54
37	Czech Republic	29	41	22	48	34	62	43	56	24
38	Costa Rica	59	8	42	33	46	29	16	66	43
39	South Africa	35	26	37	37	26	17	61	32	56
40	Morocco	58	31	64	36	17	14	40	57	50
41	Indonesia	44	35	59	43	29	28	24	40	32
42	Argentina	42	9	28	31	16	31	66	46	59
43	Vietnam	43	38	63	49	21	30	19	31	33
44	Croatia	37	19	25	34	35	54	37	67	29
45	Philippines	46	17	52	41	42	40	18	51	31
46	Chile	49	24	34	46	36	43	34	64	41
47	Peru	65	28	54	42	23	25	30	59	51
48	Sri Lanka	61	43	67	51	47	18	20	53	55
49	Dominican Republic	66	15	47	39	52	35	23	63	48
50	Panama	51	32	44	52	59	50	11	62	58

Overall Rankings

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51	Colombia	55	18	48	45	39	46	56	48	53
52	Slovakia	39	57	27	59	54	66	41	69	40
53	Kenya	63	47	62	53	60	34	51	52	57
54	Romania	53	44	40	50	38	65	48	65	38
55	Estonia	40	60	26	61	62	73	26	72	45
56	Slovenia	41	51	29	60	58	72	39	73	44
57	Myanmar	69	62	73	66	66	33	54	47	62
58	Bulgaria	54	52	36	64	53	67	47	68	35
59	Lithuania	47	61	35	70	64	71	33	70	47
60	Bolivia	73	49	53	63	57	45	49	54	60
61	Azerbaijan	64	66	60	69	69	36	57	45	69
62	Latvia	48	59	33	68	68	69	42	71	49
63	Ecuador	67	37	55	55	56	53	52	60	63
64	Jordan	60	64	66	58	44	48	58	33	72
65	Guatemala	72	56	61	73	65	52	44	50	64
66	Kazakhstan	71	70	70	72	70	42	65	36	67
67	Ghana	68	68	69	62	71	58	38	55	65
68	Ukraine	45	46	49	56	51	63	71	28	71
69	Tunisia	70	53	72	54	49	61	50	61	61
70	Belarus	50	58	56	67	67	60	70	34	68
71	Oman	57	72	68	65	72	55	64	39	66
72	Serbia	56	65	57	71	61	68	60	44	70
73	Lebanon	62	67	71	57	45	64	68	38	73

Methodology

Here's a look at the global perception data behind our rankings.

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 Best Countries rankings – now in their fifth year – seek to examine a nation's worth beyond hard metrics.

The 2020 Best Countries report and 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. The report covers perceptions of 73 nations.

Ranking the Countries

The study and model used to score and rank countries were developed by BAV Group and The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, specifically professor David J. Reibstein, in consultation with U.S. News & World Report.

A set of 65 country attributes – terms that can be used to describe a country and that are also relevant to the success of a modern nation – were identified. Attributes by nation were presented in a survey of more than 20,000 people from across the globe. Participants assessed how closely they associated an attribute with a nation.

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 the scores that country received in0 each of the attributes comprising that subranking.

To determine the weight each subranking score had in the overall Best Countries score, each was correlated to 2017 gross domestic product at purchasing power parity per capita, a measure of inclusive prosperity, as reported by the International Monetary Fund. Subrankings that

demonstrated a stronger relationship with the wealth metric were weighted more heavily, and all weights were standardized to total 100.

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 at purchasing power parity. Instead of one year of data, it was correlated to projected growth through 2022.

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 differ slightly from previous years, as they are tied to more recent gross domestic product data. They may not add up to precisely 100.00 due to rounding.

Adventure (2%): friendly, fun, pleasant climate, scenic, sexy.

Citizenship (15.88%): cares about human rights, cares about the environment, gender equality, progressive, religious freedom, respects property rights, trustworthy, well-distributed political power.

Cultural Influence (12.96%): culturally significant in terms of entertainment, fashionable, happy, has an influential culture, modern, prestigious, trendy.

Entrepreneurship (17.87%): 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 (1.13%): culturally accessible, has a rich history, has great food, many cultural attractions.

Movers (14.36%): different, distinctive, dynamic, unique.

Open for Business (11.08%): bureaucratic, cheap manufacturing costs, corrupt, favorable tax environment, transparent government practices.

Power (7.95%): a leader, economically influential, politically influential, strong international alliances, and a strong military.

Quality of Life (16.77%): a good job market, affordable, economically stable, family friendly, income equality, politically stable, safe, well-developed public education system, well-developed public health system.

To arrive at a country's rank, we first calculated its standardized scores for 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, the Best Countries to Raise Kids, the Best Countries for Green Living 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 are 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 20,548 individuals from 36 countries in four regions - the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East and Africa - were surveyed. Of the respondents, 11,591 were informed elites, 6,081 were business decision-makers and 6,927 were considered general public. Some respondents were considered both informed elites and business decision-makers.

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 by each of the three types of survey participants in each of the four regions.

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 respond to a set

of questions that gauge perceptions of the state of the world today on a variety of topics including the economy, the environment, leadership and technology.

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 comparing the performance of countries in a number of key business, economic and quality of life indicators.

The 73 countries in the 2020 Best Countries rankings had to meet four criteria within the most recent year for which data are available specific to each benchmark to be included in the study:

• Top 100 countries in terms of gross domestic product in 2017, based on World Bank data

• Top 100 countries in terms of foreign direct investment inflows in 2017, based on World Bank data

• Top 100 countries in terms of international tourism receipts in 2017, based on World Bank data

• Top 150 countries in the U.N.'s Human Development Index, based on the 2017 report

Those that did not reach all four of these benchmarks and those that did not report these statistics were not included. Reflective of global trends captured in the

most recently available benchmark data, ten countries that were ranked last year failed to meet all four benchmarks this year and have therefore dropped out of the rankings: Angola, Belgium, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania and Uruguay. Similarly, three countries have been added back into the analysis: Austria, Bolivia and Kenya.

Collectively, the 73 countries in the report account for about 95% 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.

Best Countries first launched in 2016 based on a model of a country's brand evaluation created by BAV Consulting former CEO John Gerzema and Professor David Reibstein, tested by former BAV Group Senior Vice President Anna Blender and validated by WPP Senior Advisor David Sable.

Methodology FAQ

What's different about this year's Best Countries report?

The Best Countries rankings are based largely on perception, and countries are assessed on the same set of 65 country attributes each year. However, the four benchmarks used to determine the set of countries that are assessed each year are driven by hard data. Incorporating the most recently available data for these benchmarks – gross domestic

product, foreign direct investment inflows, international tourism receipts and the U.N.'s Human Development Index – changes the set of countries that meet the four benchmarks needed to be included in the analysis annually. This year, three countries were added back into the analysis, while 10 other countries did not make the cut.

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 subranking 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. Survey participants could answer about any country that was randomly assigned to them as long as they indicated that they were 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 additional analysis.

This methodology mentions a group of 73 countries and a group of 36 countries. What's the difference?

Seventy-three 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 Study Abroad, 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?

See the answers to some frequently asked questions here, and contact pr@usnews.com to reach U.S. News. Our partners advise governments, corporations and nongovernmental organizations on nation branding, including bespoke country analysis and other reports. Professor David Reibstein can be reached at reibstein@wharton.upenn.edu. For more information see www.bavgroup.com.

FAQ

What is Best Countries?

Best Countries is a dynamic multimedia portal that includes rankings, video content, interactive data visualization tools, original reporting from journalists 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, BAV Group and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, specifically professor David J. Reibstein.

The 2020 Best Countries rankings include an overall list of 73 nations numerically ranked as well as nine subrankings: Citizenship, Cultural Influence, Entrepreneurship, Quality of Life, Power, Heritage, Open for Business, Movers and Adventure.

Additional featured rankings were produced, including the countries that are best to headquarter a corporation, raise a family, receive an education and more.

Why rank countries?

The Best Countries project 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 behind the rankings can help 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, business leaders and governments to better evaluate their countries.

The rankings are the centerpiece of the Best Countries portal that combines daily journalism, op-eds and video content from experts in government, business and academia to offer a range of perspectives and analysis on global issues, including foreign policy, immigration, human rights, security and more.

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, BAV Group 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 65 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 BAV's BrandAsset® Valuator Model of Brand Equity, the world's largest database of consumer perceptions of brands and the 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 Group, a unit of VMLY&R, led market research for 2020 Best Countries, using their proprietary BrandAsset® Valuator, the world's largest brand management tool and database of consumer perceptions of brands.

Marketing professor David Reibstein of The Wharton School 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?
Seventy-three nations were ranked using

data fielded from a proprietary perception survey developed by U.S. News, BAV Group and the Wharton School.

Perception data were derived from a survey of more than 20,000 respondents – general population, informed elites and business decision makers – across 36 countries in four regions: the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia. The surveys were conducted online.

Respondents were asked to share their perceptions of 73 nations in terms of specific country characteristics, or attributes. These attributes were 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 gross domestic product per capita purchasing power and rolled into one overall Best Countries ranking.

See the methodology for more details.

How were the 73 countries chosen?
Collectively, the 73 nations represented in the 2020 Best Countries rankings account for nearly 95 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP) and represent about three-quarters of the world's population.

These countries were selected based on composite performance in key business,

economic and quality of life data. Nations included in the 2020 rankings had to meet four benchmarks within the most recent year for which data are available:

• Top 100 countries in terms of GDP in 2017, based on World Bank data.

• Top 100 countries in terms of foreign direct investment inflows in 2017, based on World Bank data.

• Top 150 countries in the U.N.'s Human Development Index, based on the 2017 report.

• Top 100 countries in terms of international tourism receipts in 2017, based on World Bank data.

See the methodology for more details..

Are the rankings objective?
To ensure the objectivity of the ranking methodology, each of the subranking variables was weighted based on its correlation with the GDP per capita purchasing power. Variables with higher correlations to GDP per capita purchasing power were weighted more heavily.

To keep the rankings comparable, the Best Countries ranking only included nations that reached benchmarks on four composite performance rankings: the Top 150 Countries in the U.N.'s Human Development Index, the World Bank's Top 100 countries in terms of foreign direct investment inflows, the World Bank's Top 100 Countries in terms of GDP and the

World Bank's top 100 countries in terms of international tourism receipts.

To make the rankings comprehensive, perception data were derived from a survey of more than 20,000 respondents – including the general population, informed elites and business decision makers – across 36 countries in four regions: the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia.

What's different about this year's Best Countries report?
The Best Countries rankings are based largely on perception, and countries are assessed on the same set of 65 country attributes each year. However, the four benchmarks used to determine the set of countries that are assessed each year are driven by hard data. Incorporating the most recently available data for these benchmarks – gross domestic product, foreign direct investment inflows, international tourism receipts and the U.N.'s Human Development Index – changes the set of countries that meet the four benchmarks needed to be included in the analysis annually. This year, three countries – Austria, Bolivia and Kenya – were added back into the analysis, while 10 other countries did not make the cut: Angola, Belgium, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania and Uruguay.

Who should I email with questions?
For questions about Best Countries, please email pr@usnews.com.