Best Countries 2019

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	4	17	3	9	27	25	2	14	5
2	Japan	1	39	17	6	10	5	22	7	13
3	Canada	6	19	2	12	42	39	7	12	1
4	Germany	2	57	12	11	20	34	21	4	10
5	United Kingdom	5	40	11	5	12	53	23	5	12
6	Sweden	7	21	4	10	36	37	4	21	2
7	Australia	9	10	8	8	32	21	14	15	7
8	United States	3	30	16	4	22	27	48	1	17
9	Norway	12	25	1	22	37	30	8	27	4
10	France	16	14	13	2	4	49	31	6	16
11	Netherlands	11	15	6	13	26	45	11	26	8
12	New Zealand	18	6	9	18	39	17	12	34	9
13	Denmark	13	29	7	17	43	59	5	28	3
14	Finland	14	23	5	28	49	36	9	40	6
15	Singapore	10	26	23	15	31	2	6	20	18
16	China	17	58	41	19	11	3	30	3	20
17	Belgium	15	36	10	23	24	69	15	25	11
18	Italy	22	2	19	1	1	31	46	18	22
19	Luxembourg	19	46	14	27	54	70	1	37	14
20	Spain	24	3	18	3	2	38	40	23	21
21	Ireland	21	13	15	25	16	42	13	48	15
22	South Korea	8	63	27	29	44	15	39	10	23
23	United Arab Emirates	20	67	35	16	64	1	60	11	26
24	Russia	23	50	44	20	14	12	79	2	36
25	Portugal	26	11	20	24	7	68	20	49	19

US News

Overall Rankings

Overall Rank	Country	Entrepreneurship	Adventure	Citizenship	Cultural Influence	Heritage	Movers	Open for Business	Power	Quality of Life
26	Thailand	37	5	58	21	9	6	10	54	30
27	India	29	45	55	30	6	4	27	17	34
28	Brazil	39	1	34	7	15	8	57	30	62
29	Israel	25	75	39	42	28	13	70	8	41
30	Greece	33	4	24	14	3	28	51	41	29
31	Qatar	28	73	45	35	77	11	61	24	32
32	Saudi Arabia	30	78	62	40	60	9	77	9	39
33	Poland	27	47	21	45	23	75	41	44	24
34	Turkey	36	28	57	31	8	19	75	16	43
35	Mexico	43	7	48	26	5	22	53	38	46
36	Croatia	38	16	26	33	38	41	32	75	28
37	South Africa	35	27	40	37	30	10	65	31	66
38	Malaysia	34	32	56	43	35	23	16	58	31
39	Vietnam	48	38	66	52	19	16	25	32	35
40	Egypt	57	48	69	34	13	7	74	29	75
41	Czech Republic	31	41	22	51	29	78	47	68	25
42	Morocco	64	35	70	39	21	14	45	61	57
43	Indonesia	50	34	63	49	33	26	19	47	40
44	Costa Rica	65	9	42	36	52	43	18	72	50
45	Sri Lanka	63	43	67	47	45	18	24	60	56
46	Peru	59	20	47	38	17	32	28	66	52
47	Hungary	32	42	25	48	25	79	37	71	27
48	Argentina	40	8	32	32	18	60	64	55	55
49	Dominican Republic	71	12	49	41	61	47	17	69	51
50	Philippines	51	22	59	44	40	46	26	51	37

Overall Rankings

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51	Estonia	44	59	31	57	66	54	29	80	47
52	Panama	54	31	54	58	70	62	3	62	70
53	Chile	55	24	37	50	34	55	44	67	49
54	Tanzania	78	54	64	60	74	20	50	59	60
55	Latvia	47	56	28	64	65	65	35	79	44
56	Slovenia	45	49	33	55	57	72	38	78	42
57	Lithuania	41	65	30	68	69	73	36	76	53
58	Ecuador	66	33	46	56	55	44	42	65	54
59	Slovakia	42	53	29	62	56	77	34	77	48
60	Uruguay	53	37	38	54	50	71	43	74	45
61	Myanmar	76	64	73	66	68	24	56	53	58
62	Romania	49	44	43	59	41	76	54	70	38
63	Oman	61	76	65	67	78	33	59	42	72
64	Guatemala	79	52	60	72	72	51	33	64	61
65	Ukraine	46	51	51	53	51	67	71	39	59
66	Colombia	60	18	53	46	47	64	69	50	63
67	Bulgaria	52	55	36	78	58	80	52	73	33
68	Kazakhstan	74	72	72	80	75	29	68	43	65
69	Ghana	80	66	71	69	79	40	49	57	64
70	Azerbaijan	75	69	61	76	73	35	62	45	69
71	Jordan	62	71	74	70	48	50	63	33	77
72	Tunisia	69	60	76	65	53	63	55	63	68
73	Belarus	56	61	50	71	67	66	76	35	67
74	Nigeria	67	74	77	63	76	57	58	46	74
75	Pakistan	68	77	78	79	71	56	72	22	73

Overall Rankings

Overall Rank	Country	Entrepreneurship	Adventure	Citizenship	Cultural Influence	Heritage	Movers	Open for Business	Power	Quality of Life
76	Lebanon	72	70	75	61	46	48	73	36	78
77	Serbia	58	62	52	75	63	74	67	52	71
78	Angola	77	68	68	74	80	58	66	56	76
79	Iran	70	79	80	73	59	52	80	13	79
80	Iraq	73	80	79	77	62	61	78	19	80

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 (2.00%): 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, 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

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

The 2019 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 80 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 in 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.

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 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 20,301 individuals from 36 countries in four regions - the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East and Africa - were surveyed. Of the respondents, 11,238 were informed elites and 5,963 were business decision-makers. 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, politics, 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 80 countries in the 2019 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 2016, based on World Bank data

• Top 100 countries in terms of foreign direct investment inflows in 2016, based on World Bank data

• Top 100 countries in terms of international tourism receipts in 2016, based on World Bank data

• Top 150 countries in the U.N.'s Human Development Index, based on the 2016 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, the 2019 Best Countries analysis includes five new countries: Belgium, Estonia, Iraq, Lithuania and Slovakia. Similarly, five countries failed to meet all four benchmarks this year and have dropped out of the rankings: Algeria, Austria, Bahrain, Bolivia and Kenya.

Collectively, the 80 countries in the report account for about 95 percent of global gross domestic product and represent more than 80 percent 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

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

While the Best Countries rankings are based largely on perception, the four benchmarks used in the methodology and

category weights are driven by hard data. Incorporating the most recently available data into these elements resulted in two key changes. First, the weight of each subranking in the overall Best Countries score shifted slightly relative to changes in how closely their trends matched updated gross domestic product data. Second, more recent data changed the set of countries that met the four benchmarks needed to be included in the analysis. Belgium, Estonia, Iraq, Lithuania and Slovakia were added, while Algeria, Austria, Bahrain, Bolivia and Kenya 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 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 additional analysis.

This methodology mentions a group of 80 countries and a group of 36 countries. What's the difference?

Eighty 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 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.

The 2018 Best Countries rankings include an overall list of 80 nations numerically ranked – up from 60 in the inaugural edition – 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 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 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 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 2019 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?

Eighty 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 80 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 80 countries chosen?

Collectively, the 80 nations represented in the 2019 Best Countries rankings account for nearly 95 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP) and represent more than 80 percent 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 2019 rankings had to meet four benchmarks within the most recent

year for which data are available:

- Top 100 countries in terms of GDP in 2016, based on World Bank data.

- Top 100 countries in terms of foreign direct investment inflows in 2016, based on World Bank data.

- Top 150 countries in the U.N.'s Human Development Index, based on the 2016 report.

- Top 100 countries in terms of international tourism receipts in 2016, based on World Bank data.

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

While the Best Countries rankings are based largely on perception, the four benchmarks used in the methodology and category weights are driven by hard data. This year, the rankings incorporated the most recently available data into these elements, resulting in two key changes. First, the weight of each subranking in the overall Best Countries score shifted slightly relative to how closely their trends matched updated GDP data. The "Movers" subranking, which evaluates up-and-coming economies, shifted the most with an increase of four percentage points. Second, using the more recent data changed the set of countries that met the four benchmarks needed to be included in the analysis. Belgium, Estonia, Iraq, Lithuania and Slovakia were added, while Algeria, Austria, Bahrain, Bolivia and Kenya did not make the cut.

Who should I email with questions?

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