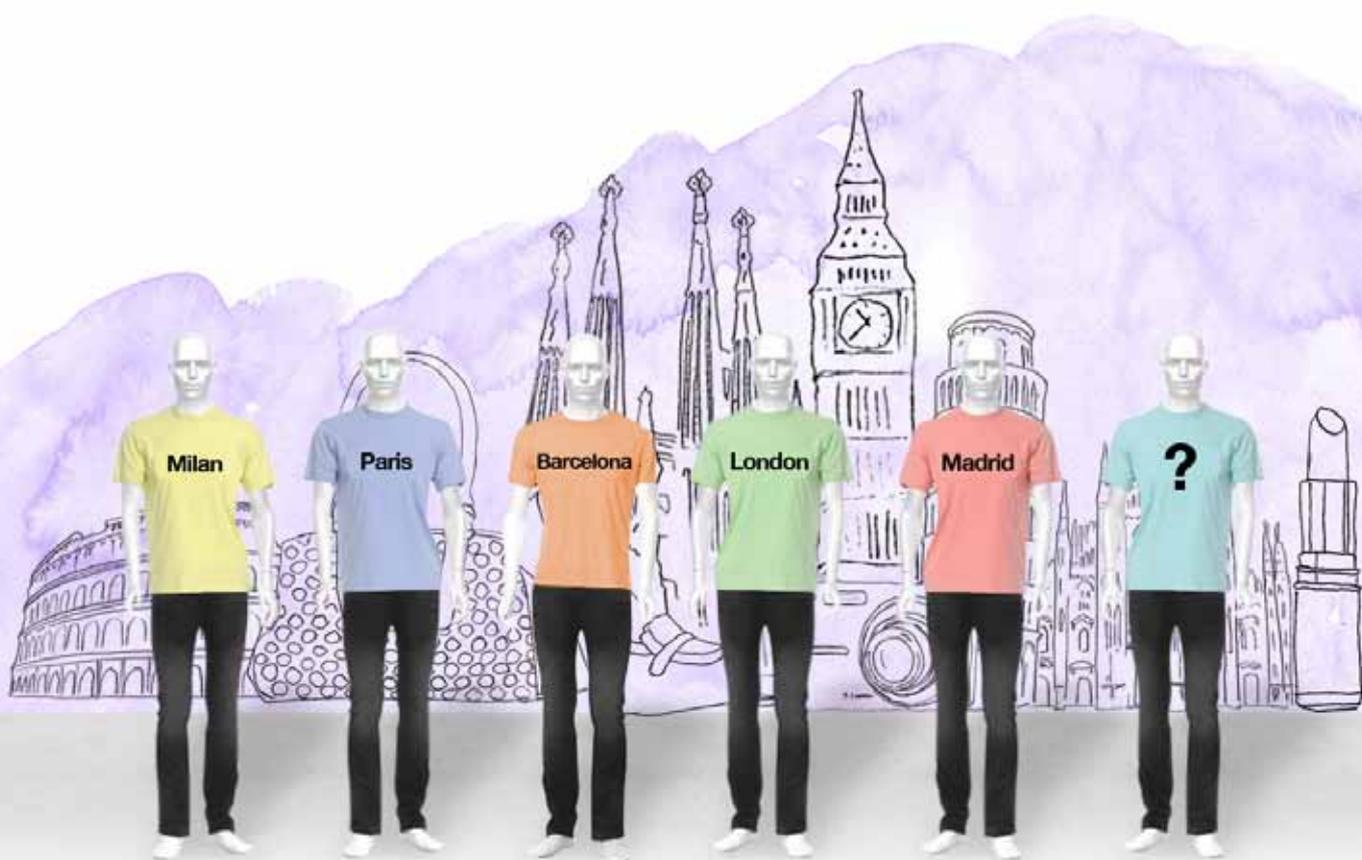# The Globe Shopper Index
Europe

We rank 33 European cities in their quest to be
the world's best shopping destination

Global Blue

Contents

Introduction and key findings

A market worth billions

Shopping tourism is a multibillion dollar global industry, although its exact size is hard to pin down. In 2010 receipts from all forms of international tourism reached US$919bn, according to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), but it does not specify what percentage came from crossborder shoppers.

There is considerable evidence, however, that shopping plays a big role in determining where tourists go and how they spend their money. A 2005 book, *Shopping Tourism, Retailing and Leisure*, cites several studies showing that roughly one-half of tourists say shopping is the first or second most

important priority when choosing a destination. Visa, the credit card company, monitors tourist spending on debit and credit cards for a handful of countries. In the first four months of 2010, retail spending by travellers to France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey reached €2.2bn (around US$3bn). Retail spending amounted to almost one-third of their total outlay and was the single biggest spending category.

Europe is a particular beneficiary of the shopping tourism market. Nearly one-half (44%) of global receipts from international tourism are spent in Europe, according to the WTO. Meanwhile, a small 2010 study of tourists' shopping habits in the International Journal of Tourism Research found that Europe is seen as the world's leading destination for luxury shopping, especially among those who are most interested in shopping while on holiday.

44%
of global receipts from international tourism are spent in Europe.

Europe is seen as the world's leading destination for luxury shopping.

Which cities lead the way?

The Globe Shopper Index - Europe, an Economist Intelligence Unit research project sponsored by Global Blue, seeks to find out which of 33 European cities are best placed to take advantage of the continent's reputation among international consumers. The Index is intended to help international shoppers choose among destination cities based on their priorities, for example price, convenience and city ambience, among other factors. The Index is unique among shopping destination rankings for the comprehensive set of criteria it covers, the strength of its methodology and its interactive features. The Index evaluates cities in five categories: shops; affordability; convenience; hotels and transport; and culture and climate. *For a detailed explanation of the methodology, please see the Appendix.*

Briefly, the five key findings from the Index are highlighted below.

The spice of life

London tops the Index for its variety of goods and choice of locations, but the price-conscious should look elsewhere for bargains. London's most obvious attraction in the Index is the sheer variety of locations and goods available to the international shopper. The city earns its best category score, 80.6 points, for shops, nearly six points ahead of second-placed Paris in this category.

The Spanish advantage

Madrid and Barcelona tie for second place with consistently strong performances across all categories. Although not perhaps usually ranked among Europe's most famous shopping destinations, Madrid and Barcelona possess strong and extensive attractions for the shopper, including good cuisine, convenience, and low prices for brand names.

A menu of attractions

Most Index cities score strongly in at least one specific area, meaning that shoppers can choose their preferred destination from among many options. The Economist Intelligence Unit weighted all categories equally to generate the topline results, but shoppers may "weight" certain parts of the experience more highly than others depending on their priorities (see the next page, "Explorer, cool hunter or deal tracker"). For example, the "deal tracker" might value pricing above all else. The "explorer" might look for sights and experiences along with consumerism. For the "perfect planner", having a wide range of restaurants may be most important.

Convenient truth

Longer opening hours and more discounts could be a way for cities to set themselves apart. It is worth remembering, however, that restricted opening hours and difficulty in finding a bargain, while making shopping itself less convenient, may actually increase the fun for some types of shoppers.

Due east for value

Bargain trips are off the beaten track. The Index shows that the best-performing cities on overall spend are in the east and south-east, in particular Sofia, Bratislava, Bucharest, Kiev and Belgrade. This will not suit everyone's tastes, but it could be just what those who gain pleasure from exploring and finding deals are looking for.

Explorer, cool hunter or deal tracker: What kind of shopper are you?

The American actress, Bo Derek, once said: "Whoever said money can't buy happiness, simply didn't know where to go shopping." It is not necessary to agree with this in order to recognise that the very act of shopping generates, for many, a complex array of pleasures.

Sociologists divide the benefits of shopping into two overall categories:

1 Utilitarian: obtaining needed or desired products at the lowest possible cost.

2 Hedonic: pleasure-related benefits.

"Whoever said money can't buy happiness, simply didn't know where to go shopping."

Bo Derek

Hedonic benefits are more complicated because they involve emotional responses, which vary widely between different people. Several studies have identified different types of benefits. We have divided them into five types:

Explorer: motivated by the stimulation and change of routine shopping provides.

Perfect planner: wants to have a good time, with no surprises.

Brand spotter: interested in international brands.

Cool hunter: wants to keep up with the latest fashion trends and new products.

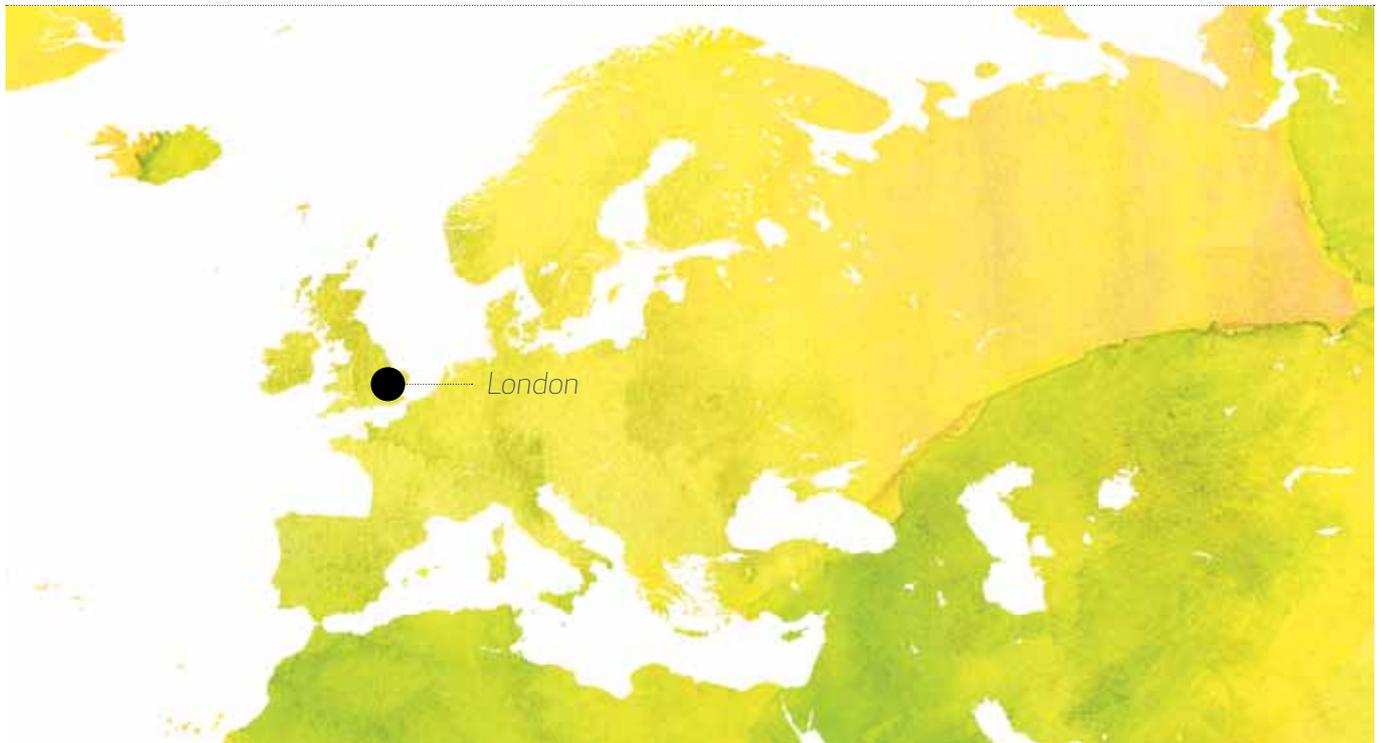**Deal tracker:** the rush of searching out, and finding, bargains.

Overall results

All scores 0-100, where 100=best shopping environment

	Overall score	
1	London	67.3
=2	Madrid	67.1
=2	Barcelona	67.1
4	Paris	65.5
5	Rome	62.9
6	Berlin	62.3
7	Lisbon	61.6
8	Amsterdam	61.3
9	Prague	59.7
10	Budapest	59.6
11	Milan	59.3
12	Vienna	59.1
13	Istanbul	58.4
14	Dublin	57.6
15	Brussels	56.8
16	Athens	56.2
17	Munich	55.5
18	Copenhagen	54.1
19	Moscow	53.9
=20	Stockholm	53.4
=20	Hamburg	53.4
22	Lyon	53.3
23	Bratislava	52.3
=24	Sofia	52.2
=24	Bucharest	52.2
=26	Kiev	51.4
=26	Edinburgh	51.4
28	Warsaw	50.9
29	St. Petersburg	49.1
30	Helsinki	48.2
31	Belgrade	43.6
32	Oslo	43.1
33	Geneva	41.0

	Shops	
1	London	80.6
2	Paris	74.7
3	Madrid	69.3
4	Dublin	61.9
5	Amsterdam	61.7
6	Barcelona	61.2
7	Milan	59.9
8	Moscow	58.6
9	Vienna	56.7
10	Rome	56.1
11	Berlin	51.8
12	Istanbul	51.1
13	Stockholm	50.7
14	Lisbon	48.2
15	Prague	47.9
16	Brussels	47.0
17	Munich	46.0
18	Budapest	44.5
=19	St. Petersburg	44.0
=19	Lyon	44.0
21	Warsaw	43.7
22	Oslo	43.5
23	Hamburg	43.3
24	Copenhagen	42.7
25	Edinburgh	42.2
=26	Kiev	41.7
=26	Helsinki	41.7
28	Bucharest	40.3
29	Sofia	37.5
30	Athens	37.2
31	Belgrade	32.0
32	Bratislava	30.9
33	Geneva	28.3

	Affordability	
1	Sofia	86.4
2	Bratislava	83.6
3	Bucharest	79.0
4	Kiev	78.7
5	Belgrade	75.9
6	Budapest	75.7
7	Lisbon	72.1
8	Athens	72.0
=9	Rome	70.9
=9	Barcelona	70.9
11	Berlin	69.7
12	Madrid	69.3
13	Lyon	69.2
=14	Istanbul	67.2
=14	Edinburgh	67.2
16	Warsaw	67.0
=17	Hamburg	66.5
=17	Brussels	66.5
19	Dublin	66.3
20	Vienna	66.1
21	Munich	64.1
22	Milan	62.1
23	Prague	59.0
=24	London	55.0
=24	Helsinki	55.0
26	Amsterdam	54.4
27	Copenhagen	48.7
28	Paris	48.6
29	St. Petersburg	46.2
30	Moscow	42.8
31	Stockholm	36.9
32	Oslo	27.4
33	Geneva	27.3

All scores 0-100, where 100=best shopping environment

Convienience		
1	Istanbul	58.7
=2	Prague	58.3
=2	Kiev	58.3
4	St. Petersburg	57.0
5	Bucharest	56.4
6	Barcelona	56.3
=7	Sofia	55.4
=7	Lisbon	55.4
9	Edinburgh	55.2
10	Moscow	54.7
11	Madrid	53.9
12	Dublin	53.1
13	Rome	52.9
14	Amsterdam	52.8
15	Paris	52.7
16	Stockholm	52.6
17	Bratislava	52.4
18	Milan	52.3
19	London	51.4
20	Warsaw	48.6
21	Budapest	47.8
22	Copenhagen	46.8
23	Athens	46.6
24	Lyon	46.0
=25	Geneva	45.3
=25	Belgrade	45.3
=27	Vienna	44.4
=27	Helsinki	44.4
29	Oslo	44.0
30	Hamburg	43.7
31	Munich	43.0
32	Berlin	42.7
33	Brussels	42.5

Hotels and transport		
1	London	72.2
2	Copenhagen	70.2
3	Barcelona	68.3
4	Paris	67.2
5	Madrid	66.4
6	Berlin	65.1
7	Amsterdam	63.4
8	Hamburg	61.0
9	Stockholm	60.6
10	Athens	59.4
=11	Prague	59.3
=11	Budapest	59.3
13	Istanbul	55.9
14	Munich	55.7
=15	Vienna	55.6
=15	Moscow	55.6
=15	Lisbon	55.6
18	Brussels	54.0
19	Bucharest	52.1
20	Milan	51.6
21	Oslo	51.3
22	Geneva	50.8
23	Rome	50.5
24	St. Petersburg	48.2
25	Bratislava	45.2
26	Lyon	44.8
27	Helsinki	42.8
28	Dublin	41.3
29	Sofia	39.6
30	Warsaw	38.0
31	Edinburgh	36.4
32	Belgrade	34.9
33	Kiev	31.6

Culture & climate		
1	Paris	84.5
2	Rome	84.0
3	Berlin	82.1
4	Barcelona	78.7
5	London	77.6
=6	Madrid	76.7
=6	Lisbon	76.7
8	Brussels	74.3
=9	Prague	74.2
=9	Amsterdam	74.2
11	Vienna	73.0
=12	Milan	70.9
=12	Budapest	70.9
14	Munich	68.7
15	Stockholm	66.1
16	Athens	66.0
17	Dublin	65.2
18	Lyon	62.6
19	Copenhagen	62.0
20	Istanbul	58.9
21	Moscow	57.7
22	Helsinki	57.3
23	Warsaw	57.1
24	Edinburgh	56.0
25	Geneva	53.6
26	Hamburg	52.7
27	St. Petersburg	50.1
28	Bratislava	49.4
29	Oslo	49.2
30	Kiev	46.8
31	Sofia	42.1
32	Bucharest	33.3
33	Belgrade	30.2

The spice of life

London

London tops the Index for its variety of goods and choice of locations, but the price-conscious should look elsewhere for bargains.

London's most obvious attraction in the Index is the sheer variety of locations and goods available to the international shopper. The city earns its best category score, 80.6 points, for shops, nearly six points ahead of second-placed Paris.

London leads

	Top ten cities for shops	Score / 100
1	London	80.6
2	Paris	74.7
3	Madrid	69.3
4	Dublin	61.9
5	Amsterdam	61.7
6	Barcelona	61.2
7	Milan	59.9
8	Moscow	58.6
9	Vienna	56.7
10	Rome	56.1

Designed with the shopper in mind

London of course has a wealth of world famous shopping districts, each offering distinctive atmospheres and products, such as Oxford Street and Regent Street, Mayfair, Savile Row, Knightsbridge and Carnaby Street. In addition, famous markets such as Covent Garden, Portobello Market, Camden Market, the Borough Market, Shoreditch and Brick Lane—to name just a few—provide a range of goods through small traders. London also boasts three large malls in and around the city including Westfield Stratford City, which is the largest urban mall in Europe. This number of malls is unusual in Europe—only Moscow and Istanbul have more.

Few European cities can match the number of shops in London. However, London truly leaves the rest behind when it comes to the availability of international and local brands. In this category, London's score was 24 points ahead of the second-best city, Paris, and nearly 40 points ahead of Moscow in third place.

Welcome distractions

London also has an excellent selection of other attractions for tourists when relaxing from their shopping. It comes first, or tied for first, in the Index for sights, events, and even the variety of cuisine on offer, reflecting how much the city has changed in recent decades. The only factors keeping London out of first place in the culture and climate category is a less straightforward visa regime and the city's world-famous rainy weather.

Finally, London is accessible. It has the most annual passenger flights of any Index city, at 950,000, which is nearly four times the Index average of 240,000, and 200,000 more than the next city on the list, Paris.

London truly leaves the rest behind when it comes to the availability of international and local brands.

High life, high prices

Although the overall Index leader, London is not without drawbacks. Hotel rooms are in high demand and the quality of transport is among the middle group of performers in the Index. If the volume of air travel were dropped from the hotels and transport category, London's ranking would fall precipitously from first to 17th in the category.

The biggest problem for London, according to the Index, is its high prices. The Index's affordability category measures the cost of the entirety of the shopping experience, not only the cost of the items, and on that criteria London ties with Helsinki for 24th place. In particular, the price of accommodation is especially high compared with the other cities. London ranks 32nd out of 33 cities for the average cost of two-star and four-star hotel rooms. Getting from shop to shop is also relatively expensive in the UK capital—London is placed 25th for the cost of taxis and buses. The prices of goods in the shops are less of a problem (such a large commercial sector inevitably generates some competition). London is ranked 11th for its shopper favourites—the average price of a standard basket of high-end items

including women's jeans, a men's suit and a luxury watch. And the price of refreshments puts the city again in the top half of Index cities, at 10th place. Likewise, the London sales season, lasting about eight weeks, is about average for Index cities, but London is not the best place for cut-rate prices—it comes 22nd for the likelihood of getting a discount.

Deal trackers beware: London is near the bottom for overall affordability	
Top ten cities for affordability	Score / 100
1 Sofia	86.4
=24 Helsinki	55.0
=24 London	55.0
26 Amsterdam	54.4
27 Copenhagen	48.7
28 Paris	48.6
29 St. Petersburg	46.2
30 Moscow	42.8
31 Stockholm	36.9
32 Oslo	27.4
33 Geneva	27.3

The risk of petty crime has always been more of a concern in London than in many other European cities. As a result of the recent riots, London's safety score has dropped further, tying London with Moscow and St. Peterburg at 29th, above only Belgrade and Istanbul.

Overall, the Index shows that London has much to excite the international shopper, but more budget-conscious travellers who get their pleasure from shopping for value may want to look for other options elsewhere.

The biggest problem for London, according to the Index, is its high prices.

The Spanish advantage

Madrid .... Barcelona

Madrid and Barcelona tie for second place with consistently strong performances across all categories.

The Index's two Spanish cities are tied for second place, and were just edged out of first place, with less than half a point separating them from the number one city, London.

While London's performance is volatile, with the UK capital city scoring very well in some areas and very badly in others, Madrid and Barcelona took a different route to the top. Consistency, rather than overwhelming leads in individual areas, explains their robust results.

Consistency explains their robust results.

Never far from the top

Only rarely in the Index do either of the two Spanish cities come first in any of the five individual topline categories: shops; affordability; convenience; hotels and transport; and culture and climate. Their best result is third place: Barcelona is third for hotels and transport and Madrid for shops. Delving into more detail in the Index tells a similar story. Among the Index's 22 indicators, only once do either of the two cities outperform the other cities—Barcelona comes first for "shopper favourites", reflecting the relatively low cost of a range of high-end luxury items. Barcelona or Madrid lead in two other individual indicators, but in each case they are tied with a large number of cities. The cities tie with 20 other cities for relative ease of travel in terms of visa regulations, and for availability and variety of restaurants Madrid ties with 11 cities. Barcelona ties with three cities for the quality of its public transport.

Shopper favourites:
The Spanish cities
top the Index for the
low cost of a range
of luxury goods

Top five cities for cost		Score / 100
1	Barcelona	80.7
2	Vienna	79.1
3	Madrid	78.9
4	Amsterdam	77.7
5	Bratislava	75.4

When Barcelona and Madrid score less well, they remain largely in the middle of the league table, which drives their overall 2nd place result. Among the five categories, Barcelona never finishes below ninth place (for affordability) and is in the bottom half of the table for the 22 indicators only twice, for cost of dining (20th) and cost of accommodation (17th). Madrid is less consistent, but only slightly so—finishing 11th in the affordability category—and has a bottom-half result for just four indicators, although never sinks below 23rd place, its ranking for the cost of dining.

Barcelona comes first for "shopper favourites", reflecting the relatively low cost of a range of high-end luxury items.

Multiple options for the serious shopper

Although not perhaps usually ranked among Europe's most famous shopping destinations, Madrid and Barcelona possess strong and extensive attractions for the shopper. Spain takes its shopping seriously—globally recognised Zara, Mango, Desigual, Camper and Custo are Spanish brands. Barcelona, among its other shopping areas, has a 5-km stretch of largely pedestrianised streets, from Las Ramblas through the Plaça de Catalunya and the Passeig de Gràcia to the Avinguda Diagonal. Madrid has shopping districts to suit every taste, from the luxury brands in Salamanca and Goya to the trendier offerings of the Chueca district and its Fuencarral market. Moreover, although total trip costs are a weak point for both cities overall, they perform very well for the prices of goods in the Index basket, with Barcelona—as noted above—the cheapest city, and Madrid coming in third.

Finally, there is little to complain about in the surroundings, with the second (Madrid) and third (Barcelona) best climates in the Index, excellent cuisine and convenient hotels and transport. Even when they perform poorly compared to peers, neither city is without charms. Madrid, for example, finishes 21st overall for attractions and sights, but still boasts the Palacio Real (Royal Palace) and the Prado Museum's world famous collection.

Madrid has shopping districts to suit every taste.

Outlook sunny	
Top ten cities for climate	Score / 100
1 Lisbon	84.8
2 Madrid	82.4
3 Barcelona	82.2
4 Rome	78.9
5 Istanbul	73.5
6 Milan	68.1
7 Athens	66.4
8 Geneva	64.1
9 Dublin	63.6
10 Bratislava	62.1

The second and third best climates in the Index, excellent cuisine and convenient hotels and transport.

A menu of attractions

Kiev

Most Index cities score strongly in at least one specific category meaning that shoppers can choose their preferred destination from among many options.

London's uneven performance seems to be more typical of most cities than the consistency of Madrid and Barcelona. In the top five places in each of the five Index categories, 17 different cities appear in these 25 slots. Just over one-half of the cities finish in the top five in at least one category.

Seven cities appear in the top five of one category and the bottom five of another. Kiev goes further, appearing in the top five for two categories (convenience and affordability) and bottom five for two others (hotels and transport, and culture and climate).

Kiev goes further, appearing in the top five for two categories and bottom five for two others.

A tale of one city: Kiev's up and down results

Convenience

Rank		Score /100
1	Istanbul	58.7
=2	Prague	58.3
=2	**Kiev**	**58.3**
4	St. Petersburg	57.0
5	Bucharest	56.4

Affordability

Rank		Score /100
1	Sofia	86.4
2	Bratislava	83.6
3	Bucharest	79.0
4	**Kiev**	**78.7**
5	Belgrade	75.9

Hotels & transport

Rank		Score /100
1	London	72.2
29	Sofia	39.6
30	Warsaw	38.0
31	Edinburgh	36.4
32	Belgrade	34.9
33	**Kiev**	**31.6**

Culture and climate

Rank		Score /100
1	Paris	84.5
29	Oslo	49.2
30	**Kiev**	**46.8**
31	Sofia	42.1
32	Bucharest	33.3
33	Belgrade	30.2

Pick your poison

The good news about such a diverse range of results in different areas is that international shoppers have a wide-ranging menu of destinations from which to choose. The Economist Intelligence Unit weighted all categories equally to generate the topline results, but shoppers may "weight" certain parts of the experience more highly than others depending on their priorities. For example, the "deal tracker" might value pricing above all else. The "explorer" might look for sights and experiences along with consumerism. For the "perfect planner", the range of restaurants may be most important. The website that accompanies this report allows visitors to select destination cities based on their personal preferences.

Small mall: Europe has so far resisted the world's craze for mega-centres

In much of the world, malls are central to shopping and the mega-mall has become a tourist attraction in its own right. The West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, Canada, is North America's largest mall and the world's fifth-biggest in terms of area, and is one of the city's biggest tourist draws. According to independent research, in 1986, one year after the West Edmonton Mall completed the third of its four major expansions, it brought in 5 million tourists and created 13,800 jobs. The craze for large malls has also spread to Asia, but they can represent a significant risk. The world's largest mall, the South China Mall in Dongguan, China, remains largely unoccupied six years after opening.

Shoppers from outside Europe, however, will find that malls play less of a role in retailing. In the Index, only 15 cities of the 33 cities have even one mall of greater than 100,000 sq metres within 20 km of the city centre, and only eight have more than one. As previously noted, the biggest urban mall in Europe is about to open in London, but in terms of size it is hardly remarkable on the global scene: its projected 177,000 sq metres will not even place it in the world's top 20.

The presence of malls does represent an advantage for cities seeking to attract shopping tourism, in Europe at least. The study of luxury tourist shoppers cited earlier found that for those most interested in shopping on vacation, the two preferred locations are malls and city centres—in that order. If tourists to Europe prefer substantial shopping malls, they will need to focus on Moscow (with eight large malls), Istanbul (with four), London (with three) and Paris (with three). However, in this case, shoppers may wish to adjust to local customs, and when in Rome, so to speak, do as the Romans do.

One year after the West Edmonton Mall completed the third of its four major expansions, it brought in 5 million tourists.

Convenient truth

Better opening hours
and more discounts could
be a way for cities to set
themselves apart.

In the overall results, 26 points separate the top and bottom cities. In four of the five categories (shops; affordability; hotels and transport; and culture and climate), the top and bottom cities are separated by an average of 52 points. The highest range occurs in the affordability category, with Sofia, in first position, scoring 86 points, almost 60 points more than Geneva, in last position, at 27 points. Only in one category, convenience, is the range remarkably small: only 16 points separate top finisher Istanbul, at 59 points, from bottom finisher Brussels, at 43 points.

Open to confusion?

Opening times is one of the common weaknesses in the convenience category. Very few cities have extensive Monday to Saturday opening hours. In only five Index cities are shops open on average 10 hours per day—for example, from 9 am to 7 pm—or longer. In two cities, Brussels and Stockholm, shops are open less than eight hours per day. Local closure traditions can cause problems for outsiders too. In some cities, such as Rome, Milan, Lyon and to a lesser extent Paris, small shops and even some larger stores can sometimes be closed on Monday morning. In addition, in order to provide time for evening openings, some cities have lunchtime closures of up to two hours or more. These closures are not universal of course, leading to even more potential confusion for visitors about what shops will be open when.

Making time for customers:		
Shopping hours rankings		Score / 100
1	Istanbul	93.2
=2	Kiev	90.9
=2	St. Petersburg	90.9
4	Prague	84.1
5	Bucharest	83.0
6	Moscow	81.8
7	Sofia	77.3
8	Lisbon	75.0
9	London	70.5
10	Amsterdam	68.2
=11	Dublin	65.9
=11	Edinburgh	65.9
13	Warsaw	61.4
14	Belgrade	56.8
15	Bratislava	55.7
=16	Barcelona	51.1
=16	Milan	51.1
=18	Rome	50.0
=18	Stockholm	50.0
20	Paris	46.6
21	Madrid	44.3
22	Budapest	43.2
23	Copenhagen	39.8
24	Brussels	30.7
25	Athens	28.4
26	Munich	21.6
27	Berlin	20.5
=28	Hamburg	19.3
=28	Lyon	19.3
30	Oslo	19.3
31	Helsinki	15.9
32	Geneva	14.8
33	Vienna	12.5

For all their potential inconvenience, varying opening times reflect deep-seated social norms often supported by local laws. Even proposing changes can rouse great controversy. Until 2006, shopping hours across Germany were covered by national laws. Many consumers and larger shop owners favoured loosening the regulations, while trade unions and small shop owners lined up against this. In the end, the government left it up to individual states to decide. Despite this capacity for choice across Germany, the three German cities in the Index, Berlin, Munich and Hamburg, score near the bottom for the average number of opening hours.

Room for manoeuvre

Another indicator in the convenience category, the opportunity for obtaining a discount on a fixed-price good, is also culturally specific. No city does very well in this indicator— even the best performers score only 50 out of 100 points. Quite simply, in much of Europe haggling is not considered socially acceptable and tends to be reserved for market stalls or very specific types of merchants, such as antique dealers. In some countries, notably in the north and west of Europe, discounts are difficult to come by even in such situations.

Local knowledge, however, can be valuable. For example, although Oslo and Stockholm both tied for last place, along with several others, on the ability to obtain a discount, in both Sweden and Norway it is socially acceptable to bargain over a hotel room rate when arriving in the evening without a reservation.
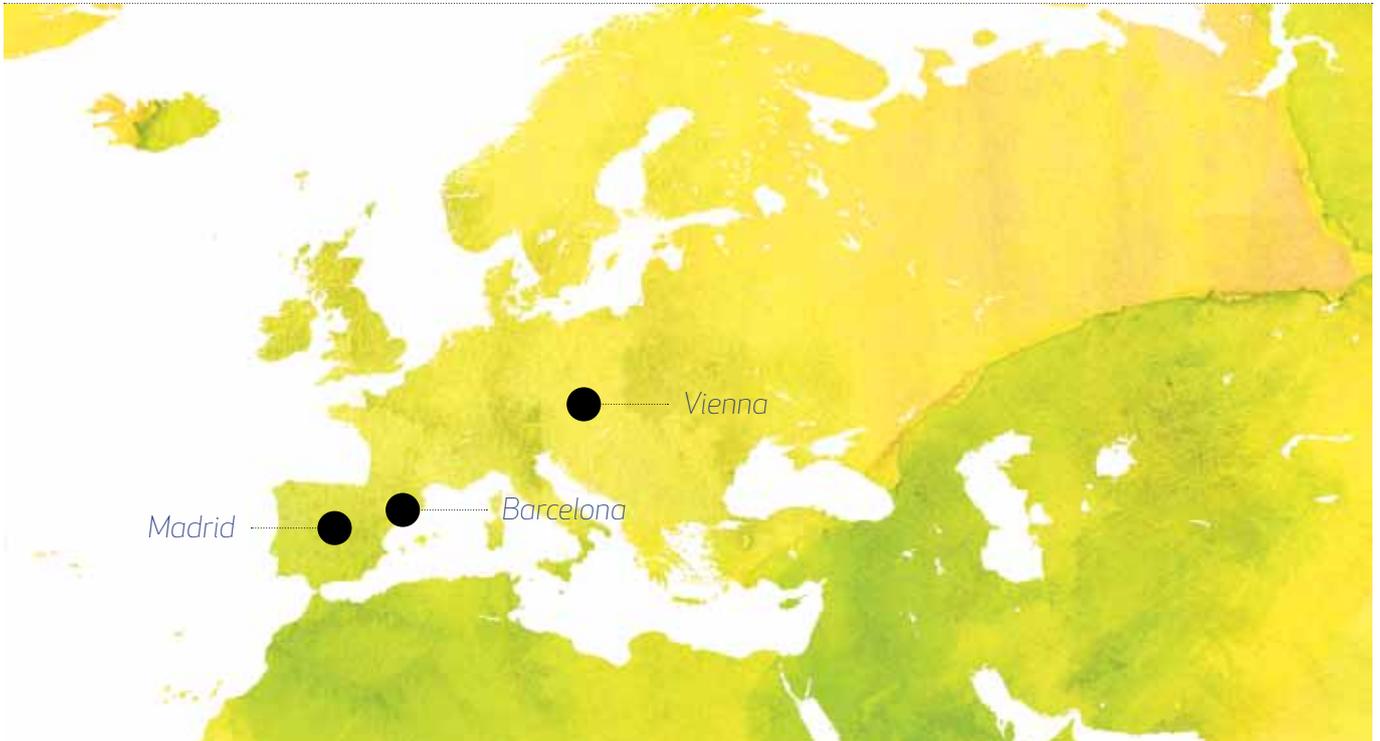
It is worth remembering, however, that restricted opening hours and difficulty in finding a bargain, while making shopping itself less convenient, may not reduce the fun of shopping.

Those looking for fashion ideas to take home can window shop if the stores are closed. "Deal trackers" might get a greater sense of triumph if they have succeeded in difficult conditions. More importantly, working hours and social norms help define the tempo and lifestyle of city life. Long café lunches may be economically viable only because most inhabitants, including shop keepers, have a lengthy break at that time.

Quite simply, in much of Europe haggling is not considered socially acceptable.

Due east for value

Bargain trips are off the beaten track.

Bargain hunters can find what they need in popular western destinations (although not necessarily the ones most strongly associated with shopping tourism) such as Barcelona, Vienna and Madrid.

These three cities have the lowest overall average prices for a uniform basket of goods, including brand name women's jeans, a men's suit and a luxury watch.

Barcelona, Vienna and Madrid have the lowest overall average prices for a uniform basket of goods.

Risk or adventure?

The shopper looking for total value, considering the cost of travel, accommodation and incidentals, will need to go off the beaten track to save money. The Index shows that the best-performing cities on overall spend are in the east and south-east, in particular Sofia, Bratislava, Bucharest, Kiev and Belgrade. Here, the Index shows a striking range of prices for the same goods and services. A short taxi ride in Geneva costs 17 times more than in Kiev. The cost of a two-star hotel room is more than three times more expensive in Paris than in Bucharest or Sofia. Shopping in these low-cost cities, however, brings its own challenges. All five feature in the bottom third of the Index for the hotels and transport, culture and climate, and shops categories. They also bring certain risks: with the exception of Bratislava, which is tied in 6th place, they all finish below 20th place for crime and political threats (although so does Index-leading London).

Just as important for the shopper is that all of the lowest-cost cities also have bigger issues with counterfeit goods, finishing below 20th place for this indicator. However, these cities do yield some pleasant surprises. Kiev and Sofia are tied with Dublin for having the longest sales season—a substantial 12 weeks—and all finish in the top half of the Index for length of store opening hours and likelihood of negotiating a discount, with Kiev tied for second place in the former and for first place in the latter.

In other words, some tourist shoppers seeking bargains may want to consider travel that involves more difficult conditions (and occasionally even more expensive items) but lower overall costs. This will not suit everyone's tastes, but it could be just what those who gain pleasure from adventure and value shopping are looking for.

Best Bargains	
Top ten cities for affordability	Score / 100
1 Sofia	86.4
2 Bratislava	83.6
3 Bucharest	79.0
4 Kiev	78.7
5 Belgrade	75.9
6 Budapest	75.7
7 Lisbon	72.1
8 Athens	72.0
=9 Barcelona	70.9
=9 Rome	70.9

The best-performing cities on overall spend are in the east and south-east, in particular Sofia, Bratislava, Bucharest, Kiev and Belgrade.

Conclusion

The real "best" destination depends on the shopper's priorities

Europe provides a range of options for those who travel to shop, or merely like to shop while travelling. Although London, Madrid and Barcelona finish at the top overall, their strengths vary, and even the cities that score lower in the Index usually have something to offer.

People gain differing degrees of pleasure from different aspects of shopping. This, in turn, means that there is no universally ideal shopping

tourism trip. For some, the most pleasure might come from going across a border on a day trip to replenish alcohol stocks at low cost; for others, it arises out of spending a week checking out the latest Milanese or Parisian fashions. It follows that there is no single best shopping tourism location, as the attributes of a given city will appeal differently to individuals depending on how they value a range of hedonic and utilitarian benefits.

Ultimately, then, the value of *The Globe Shopper City Index - Europe* will depend on how its users match up the data it contains with the benefits they value most. Such digging and comparison, however, rather than representing a hardship, will come as second nature to the seasoned shopper.

People gain differing degrees of pleasure from different aspects of shopping.

Appendix: Methodology

The Globe Shopper Index - Europe measures the attractiveness of 33 major European cities for international travel shopping. It is composed of 22 indicators, aggregated into five categories: shops; affordability; convenience; hotels and transport; culture and climate.

Eleven of the 22 indicators are based on quantitative data, nine indicators are based on qualitative scores, and two indicators are based on quantitative data and qualitative assessments. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) developed the indicators and categories independently.

Selecting cities

The cities were selected with a view to having the widest possible geographical diversity. First, the EIU chose cities in European countries with GDP of more than €50bn. Each country with GDP of more than €1tn was then represented by two cities. Those over €2tn in GDP were represented by three cities. Finally, the EIU selected the most visited cities in each country, chosen on the basis of visitor data.

Selecting indicators

The EIU's goal in selecting indicators for the Index was to establish overall criteria to help international travel shoppers select their ideal destination. Initial questions included: How easy is it to fly to the city? How easy is it to move around once there? Is the city safe? How is the climate? Are there other attractions beyond shopping? How expensive is it?

Based on this set of questions, the EIU chose objective quantitative and qualitative indicators, and grouped them according to themes, such as the quality of hotels and transport,

convenience, cultural attractiveness, variety of shops and products, and prices. Examples of measures used to construct quantitative indicators included the number of flights in and out of the cities' airports, the average number of opening hours of the main shops or the number of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural (UNESCO) World Heritage sites within a 20-mile radius. Qualitative assessments were used, for example, to score cities on public transport quality, the ease of using a foreign language in stores, or restaurant availability and variety.

Calculating scores

In order to make indicators directly comparable across all cities, all values were turned into standardised scores on a 0 to 100 scale. In the case of quantitative indicators, the city with the best value scored 100 points and the city with the worst value scored zero points. All other cities received a score between 0 and 100, reflecting the distance of the value to the best and worst values. Most qualitative indicators were scored on a scale of 1 to 5. Those scores were then normalised to a score of 0 to 100, to make them comparable with the quantitative indicators. The exception is the indicator on the use of foreign languages. In this case, the EIU used a scoring system that assessed the economic importance of the language and the likelihood of the language being spoken by a shopkeeper in the city centre.

Economic importance was calculated using the aggregated GDP (at purchasing power parity) of countries officially using a particular language. The EIU considered the six official UN languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Language skills were assessed by the EIU's global network of contributors and analysts, using a scoring system based on bands of 20%, that is 0-20% (of shopkeepers who use one of the languages), 20-40%, 40-60%, 60-80% and 80-100%.

Once all indicator scores were calculated, they were aggregated into their respective category scores. The category scores were then aggregated to determine the overall score. In each of these steps, scores were aggregated according to an assigned weighting for each indicator. The default weight for each indicator and category is an equal weight. The user can, however, change the weightings and recalculate scores according to personal preferences through the online tool that accompanies this report.

Sourcing data

The EIU collected data for the Index between May and July 2011. Wherever possible, the EIU used publicly available data from official sources. Primary sources included data from city tourism bureaus, city airports and other official city sources. EIU contributors collected data on prices by visiting shopping establishments. The EIU used data and reports from statistical offices to support qualitative judgments, For example, statistics on the share of pupils in a secondary school learning individual foreign languages were used to compare and guide the assessment of foreign language skills. The EIU also used travel guides where relevant. For example, in order to assess the availability and variety of restaurants, analysts combined in-city contributor assessments with travel guide listings.

List of categories, indicators and their weightings

	Indicator	Type	Weighting	Description	Sources
Shops					
	Malls & boutiques	Quantitative	25%	Composite score based on the number of shops, as listed by Lonely Planet, and on the number of malls with over 100,000 sq metres of retail space within a 20-km radius of the city centre.	ICSC, Google Earth, Lonely Planet, EIU
	International brands	Qualitative	25%	Score on the presence and variety of leading local and international brands, as published by CB Richard Ellis.	CBRE
	Seasonal sales	Quantitative	25%	Duration of sales seasons (in weeks per year).	City tourism bureaus, city sources
	Genuine as opposed to counterfeit goods	Qualitative	25%	Qualitative assessment of the prevalence of counterfeit goods in department stores, shops and markets.	EIU
Affordability					
	Exchange-rate stability	Quantitative	20%	Change in value of local currency, measured against a basket of currencies (US dollar, yen, euro, renminbi, rouble) over the last year. A devaluation scores positively.	EIU
	Dining	Quantitative	20%	Composite score based on the average cost of a three-course meal at the Hilton hotel restaurant (or equivalent), the average cost of a Big Mac meal and on the average cost of a drink (based on the combined price of a pint of beer, bottle of water and glass of wine) at the Hilton hotel restaurant (or equivalent).	EIU
	Hotels	Quantitative	20%	Composite score based on the average cost of a room at a 4-star hotel and on the average cost of a room at the Ibis hotel closest to the city centre (or equivalent).	EIU
	Shopper favourites	Quantitative	20%	Composite score based on the cost of a pair of Zara women's skinny jeans, cost of a Shorn Wool, James/Sharp2 suit by Boss Black, average cost of a Rolex Oyster Perpetual Datejust (116233, steel and yellow gold), average cost of a Canon EOS 600D (body only), and on the average cost of a Chanel No. 5 perfume (7.5ml/0.25oz flask).	EIU
	City transport	Quantitative	20%	Composite score based on the cost of initial meter charge and an additional km in a taxi and on cost of a single ride bus ticket within city centre.	EIU

Indicator	Type	Weighting	Description	Sources
Convenience				
Use of foreign languages	Qualitative	25%	Ease of using a UN language (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish) in main shopping areas, based on qualitative assessments and historical national statistics on the uptake of the individual foreign languages at a secondary education level. The languages are weighted according to their share of global GDP in PPP terms, measured on the basis of the GDP of the countries that officially use the respective language.	EIU, Eurostat, national statistics offices
Shopping hours	Mixed	25%	Composite score based on a qualitative assessment on whether major shops open on Sundays and public holidays, and on the average number of hours high street shops open per week (Mon-Sat).	City tourism bureaus, city sources
Price negotiation	Qualitative	25%	Qualitative assessment of the likelihood of obtaining a discount at a department store, a boutique store and a market stall.	EIU
Safety	Qualitative	25%	Qualitative assessment of the prevalence of violence and petty crime, as well as the threat of military conflict, political unrest and terrorist attacks.	EIU
Hotels & transport				
Quality hotels	Mixed	25%	Composite score based on the annual average hotel occupancy rate and on a qualitative assessment of quality hotels within the city, based on the number of 4- and 5-star hotels as well as the city size.	STR Global, Lonely Planet, Expedia, EIU
Airports & flights	Quantitative	25%	Total number of arriving and departing flights in 2009 at all airports linked to the city.	City airports, Airports Council International
Convenient transport to city centre	Qualitative	25%	Composite score based on a qualitative assessment of the ease of accessing the city centre using public transport, based on the availability and frequency of bus and rail links, and on the distance to main international airport – determined by the number of flights – from city centre, measured as the crow flies using Google Earth.	City sources, city airports, ACI, Google Earth, EIU
Dependable city transport	Qualitative	25%	Qualitative assessment of the quality of the public transport system, based on the availability of underground transport and on the frequency of night buses on weekends.	City sources, EIU

	Indicator	Type	Weighting	Description	Sources
Culture & climate					
	Attractions & UNESCO sights	Quantitative	20%	Composite score based on the number of sights within city, as listed by Lonely Planet, and on the number of UNESCO World Heritage sites within 20-mile radius of city centre, whereby historical city centres are awarded double points.	Lonely Planet, UNESCO, Google Earth, EIU
	International cuisine	Qualitative	20%	Qualitative assessment of the availability of restaurants, based on the respective number and variety of restaurants listed by Lonely Planet.	Lonely Planet, EIU
	Popular events	Qualitative	20%	Qualitative assessment of the availability of sports and cultural events.	EIU
	Strictness of visa regulations	Quantitative	20%	Composite score based on the number of countries whose citizens require a visa for entry into the country as well as on the usability of the visa for entry into other countries.	Country sources, EIU
	Agreeability of climate	Quantitative	20%	Composite score based on the number of wet days (+0.25 mm) per year; on the number of uncomfortably hot months per year, scored based on the National Weather Service's Heat Index and the cities' respective average maximum temperatures and average afternoon humidity; on the number of uncomfortably cold months per year, scored based on the National Weather Service's Chill Index and the cities' respective average maximum temperatures and average wind strength; and on the average daily hours of sunshine.	BBC, city sources, National Weather Service, EIU

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