THE GOOD CITY INDEX

KEY MEASURES

HUB FOR PROGRESS
Where in the city do new ideas crystallize?

TRANSPORTATION
How do locals move around?

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
What ongoing project best shows citizens involved in their city’s improvement?

LOCAL VIBES
What traditions capture the distinctiveness and uniqueness of city life?

GREEN SPACE
Where’s the best outdoor spot in?

DIVERSITY
How do people of different backgrounds come together in the city?

SIGNATURE MOMENT
What time of the year brings out the best in the city?

WORK/LIFE BALANCE
How do locals kick back and slow down?

WE TEND TO THINK OF CITIES as fixed monoliths—as being either fully developed or a complete mess—leaving little room for what many urban centers are poised to become. If you craft a global index of cities based on what’s already been achieved, you get a familiar list of places: Cities in Scandinavia, Western Europe, and the coasts of North America tend to come out on top. But what happens when you create one based on where they’re headed?

Creating an index that measures the elusive quality of “possibility” is, admittedly, an inexact science. There are a lot of city lists that measure things like liveability, competitiveness, or quality of life, but possibility, by definition, involves a big, bold question mark. The list that follows is our big, bold answer.

In producing this index, we first compiled data from various quantitative and qualitative measures: How many trips are actually made on public transportation? How many residents are foreign-born? Is there a decent balance between work and play? How does the city perform environmentally? Next, we sought out local correspondents who could tell us not what an outsider might experience in these cities during a layover, but what it feels like to actually live in them. Where are people connecting? What local food are they eating? Where do they recharge? And most important, how do they engage to help their city reach its potential?

The result is a geographically and culturally diverse list of 20 cities that embody this spirit of possibility. They may not be perfect, but they’re deep into the process of creating what makes a city truly good. In short, these are the cities we’re betting on.
Chaoistic, Frantic, Sprawling, Overpopulated. Earthquake-prone. And did we mention smogging? It’s built on a drained lake basin. For a city as big, crowded, and as geologically vulnerable as Mexico City, it’s a miracle, really, that anything works at all. And yet, the city manages to turn liabilities into improbably and capable solutions. And it does so in an increasingly politically progressive climate, thanks in large part to former Mayor Marcelo Ebrard, who ushered in sweeping social changes in areas as diverse as gay marriage, unemployment and poverty, transportation, environmental initiatives, and public health and safety. All this change means that, for the first time, immigration to Mexico City has reached equilibrium with the U.S., with roughly equal amounts of Mexicans moving north to the U.S. from 2003 to 2010 and those relocating to the city. Suddenly, there’s a sense of possibility permeating Mexico City these days. That’s not to say that life is easy for everyone here. As with cities worldwide, the divide between the haves and have-nots is significant. But a close look at both data and narratives throughout the city affirms that major social change for the good is happening here, and, increasingly, people from other countries want to play a part in it.

**El Museo del Juguete Antiguo**

Mexico is a museum of a nation—it’s an inspiring social experiment. The museum is largely responsible for the recent revitalization of the down-at-the-heels Colonia Doce neighborhood, hosting events that bring people together to celebrate oft-overlooked aspects of modern Mexican culture.

**Corredor,** a twice-yearly event helps mobilize entire neighborhoods by inviting people onto the streets in just how much creativity surrounds them.

Big-box stores from the U.S. are trying to make inroads into Mexico City by selling cheap food in bulk, but local fruit and vegetable markets are vibrant and less pristine pockets of the city, where the usual Singaporean melting pot gives way to more distinct neighborhoods. Yes, buying chewing gum remains illegal here (the same goes for spitting and littering), but the same authority that doesn’t shy away from social engineering has also cultivated an efficient society where different groups enjoy the fruits of a forward-thinking government—and it’s attracting more and more expats every year. As part of a young nation that’s still defining its cultural identity, Singapore recognizes that liberalizing its ideals, staying creative, and working collaboratively can save the capital city from disillusioned youth drunk on fame and wealth.  

**JENNIFER LIEN, DAYLON SOM, CHIARA MARIA DE CASTRO**

**SINGAPORE**

If what you’ve heard about Singapore is that it’s little more than high-rise buildings occupied by the world’s highest concentration of billionaires, you’ve only scratched the surface. While this city-state did transform itself in just two generations by pursuing economic growth at all costs, its rigid reputation is quickly dashed by those willing to explore its distinct neighborhoods. Yes, buying chewing gum remains illegal here (the same goes for spitting and littering), but the same authority that doesn’t shy away from social engineering has also cultivated an efficient society where different groups enjoy the fruits of a forward-thinking government—and it’s attracting more and more expats every year. As part of a young nation that’s still defining its cultural identity, Singapore recognizes that liberalizing its ideals, staying creative, and working collaboratively can save the capital city from disillusioned youth drunk on fame and wealth.

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BUDAPEST

Hungary

Budapest, a city of contradictions. Amid the eclectic architecture of Habsburg and Baroque grandeur, crowds on the hunt for cheap beer fill ruined courtyards outfitted with mismatched furniture and graffiti-covered walls, known as “ruin pubs.” The city has a troubled past, and even perhaps a troubled present. There is still a sense of political unease and a worrying undercurrent of anti-Roma sentiment and anti-Semitism. At the same time though, indie creative spaces, nonprofit organizations, and ecological groups are emerging from the underground. Budapest’s beating heart is beyond the sights of the Danube or the city’s resident’s delight in the city's informal settlements. But spend just a couple of days here, and you’ll quickly realize that Nairobi is about to boom. Everyday, new roads, buildings, and exciting projects pop up as signs that things are on the cusp of change. Considered to be the economic and political capital of East Africa, Nairobi is home to a vibrant tech scene as well as a healthy cohort of innovative social entrepreneurs. Add to this a dynamic nightlife and a distinctly cosmopolitan flavor, and you get the recipe for an up-and-coming metropolis. The challenge for city leaders in the next decade will be to figure out how to make Nairobi more socially inclusive, so that more people can enjoy all that it has to offer.

Jennifer Walker

04

NAIROBI

Kenya

Life in Nairobi can be rough. Crime is high, traffic is a living nightmare, and urban poverty is a pressing issue with more than 60 percent of the population living in informal settlements. But despite the challenges, Nairobi is a city of hope and resilience. It’s a place where creativity and innovation thrive, and where small businesses and startup companies are on the rise. From tech hubs to hipster cafes, there’s always something new to discover.

Flavia Malais

One Sunday a month, Nairobi’s collective counterpart, the collaborative crisis of innovation and technology, political debates, and gender issues.

The Parklands area is a hub of Nairobi’s tech industry and community, and also the place where you can experience the rich culinary culture of the city. At Mainland Plaza, a local shopping arcade, you can find the city’s best-founding restaurants, splashing, fresh flowers, and boutique Indian fabrics for a minimal price. On a Sunday, Nairobi’s community gatherings happen, and the main event is Blankets and Wine, a leisurely afternoon spent listening to the region’s best Afro-fusion, soul, jazz, and hip-hop bands while enjoying a glass of wine in a local backyard.

In addition to distinct communities of Indian and Somali origin, a large diversity of festivals in Nairobi means residents of the city are usually celebrating religious holidays or festivals—whether it’s Christmas, Hanukkah, or a traditional non-Kenyan fall.

Twenty-one government-sponsored dormitories of Nairobi residents working in the formal employment sector have plenty of free time to explore the world-class wildlife that surrounds the city. With game drives in Nairobi National Park, camping at Lake Naivasha, and climbing Mount Kenya, Nairobiites are spoiled for choice, and the city’s vibrant arts and culture scene will keep you entertained year-round.
SEULOSOUTH KOREA

Seoul has a tenacious grit. It seems like everything in this city is 24/7: from bathhouses and massage parlors to traditional markets. But while the prevailing stereotype may be that this city is all work and no play, Seoul is also a place that knows not to take itself too seriously. This is evidenced in everything from the city-wide expectation that residents party nearly every day of the week to the international viral phenomenon of “Gangnam Style,” which irreverently mocks a pompously wealthy Seoul neighbor.

Daehangno

Seoul is also a place that knows not to take itself too seriously. This is evidenced in everything from the city-wide expectation that residents party nearly every day of the week to the international viral phenomenon of “Gangnam Style,” which irreverently mocks a pompously wealthy Seoul neighbor. The modest size of the city’s living spaces means residents spend much of their time outside of their homes, which, coupled with Seoul’s reputation as an exceptionally safe city, makes for thriving street life. Even relics of its two-thousand-year history remain visible, modern-day Seoul is shedding its stereotypes and its past of isolationism, intent on forging a progressive, ambitious, vibrant future.

SUYEON CHO

The Maboneng Precinct is a cluster of rejuvenated buildings in the center of the old Central Business District. It acts as a self-sustaining, creative economy, and is attracting young entrepreneurs to the center of the city. In an instant, you can find yourself drinking coffee outside a cafe, chatting with strangers, reading a book locally written with them in a studio overlooking the city, and then partying with them at the Zebra Inn, a dry-goods bar decorated with taxidermied animals.

JOHANNESBURG

Despite its oppressive past and sometimes-turbulent present, the forested, continental heart of Johannesburg boasts with heartfelt gestures of creativity and possibility. It’s normally overlooked as Cape Town’s younger, uglier sister, but there is more to the city than being an inconvenient airport stop for international tourists heading off to a safari and ocean views. For what the Golden City lacks in mountains and beach penguins, it makes up for in its earnest and friendly people, true multicultural integration, inner-city renovation, innately good weather, and great parties. With that said, Jozi does have its fair share of problems. It’s riddled with poverty and crime, and labor and human rights problems are deeply entrenched as the entire nation of South Africa negotiates its post-Mandela existence. However, it maintains the type of place where, if you have a voice and are good at what you do, you can truly make a difference.

STYXIE E. MCKEOWN

African football’s most heated rivalries:

JOHANNESBURG IS HOME

As a hot spot for South Africa’s past, Jozi residents have seemingly embraced all forms of diversity, taking great pleasure and pride in celebrating cultural heritage in all its various forms, from releasing lanterns on Chinese New Year to parades matching fireworks light the skyline in celebration of Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights. Over the course of the year, Jozi hosts events of all shapes and sizes, from night markets and the new trend of late-night licenses, dawn yoga sessions, studio overlooking the city, and then partying with them at the Zebra Inn, a dry-goods bar decorated with taxidermied animals.

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ISTANBUL

Turkey

Fascinating, frenetic, and often frustrating, Istanbul can sometimes seem like it’s defined by its unmet potential. With its young population and incredibly rich history, Istanbul should be a hornet of innovation, but is unfortunately hampered by a lack of diversity, a vast wealth gap, and a political system that limits civic participation—onions plain to see during this past summer’s mass protests. That said, there’s no shortage of progressive qualities to the city: small neighborhood purveyors of cheese, baked goods, or traditional sweets—what elsewhere might be called “artisanal” foodstuffs—remain a loyal customer base, as do craftsmen who will still fix everything from shoes to small electronics. And young people seem increasingly eager to put their own stamp on how the city will still fix everything from shoes to small electronics. And young people seem increasingly eager to put their own stamp on how

The rahat lokum (honey) market is a colorful, compact place to experience the exuberance of Istanbul’s traditional culinary art (mountains), from the ofﬁcial butcher to the pickle-makers.

ISTANBUL'S GAY PRIDE PARADE (Onur) since it began in 2003. The 1,300-acre City Park is home to a stunning collection of live oak trees and is now bursting with natural sensory like Couturie Forest, which provides a taste of the swamp for city dwellers.

NEW ORLEANS

United States

Government dysfunction at every level post-Hurricane Katrina regrettably left a spirit of self-determination in New Orleans that has been a powerful driving force over the past eight years. Grand experiments in civic innovation, like the creation of more than 80 new charter schools, are both highly controversial and indicative of the scale of change that the storm made possible. The intoxicating charm and resilience of New Orleans would seem to credit the traditional values that NOLA has boasted about for decades: fierce support for local artists, commitment to celebration and tradition, and caring for one’s neighbors and community. Yet it is precisely these qualities that some think are at risk as New Orleans welcomes an inflow of young, mostly white, college-educated newcomers with entrepreneurial goals and hipster tastes.

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BEIRUT

Lebanese youth speak freely about politics and are increasingly going into the streets. Political and philosophical graffiti run alongside the bars of Gemmayzeh and through industrial Karantina. If your Arabic script is a little rusty, look up side streets in Mar Mikhael to spot colorful artwork reclaiming Beirut’s long flights of stairs.

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Lebanon is complicated. The Lebanese War stopped time, and, in many ways, little has changed since the 1970s. Shockingly poor infrastructure means gridlocked traffic, and having nowhere left to build means rents strange in popular areas. Forget Solside (Beirut’s controversial billion-dollar regeneration project) and the Beirut-pumped Lebanese elite that show of the latest Cavalli outfit there. The beating heart of Beirut is Achrafieh (where the trendy streets of Gemmayzeh and Mar Mikhael are located) and, increasingly, the expat enclave Hamra. Young Bierte (residents of the city) speak three languages fluently, often moving them together in a single sentence: “Hi, keeffak ca va?” (“Hi, how are you?” in English, Lebanese Arabic, French). And if you’re wondering of the locals know how to party—yes, they do. When bombs threaten the city, the party just moves to the mountains. Beirut is neither efficient nor convenient, but people fall in love with its energy and the vibrancy of street-level life.

PHILIPPA YOUNG

PHOTO BY: ALPER ÇUĞUN

BEIRUT LEBANON

Service cars are almost exclusively moto taxis 1970s-80s model Mercedes. In these years, when warning lights split Beirut in two, service cars could cross no man’s land by turning alive to the car estrene, a side note while flag in steering wheels guarantee safe passages.

Beirute in Beirut, right? To spell the theories known paradise Tsarlet be Beirut Street. Every day a new cook prepares typical food from this region. The Souk el Tayeb farmers market launched the restaurant after people fell in love with the local produce and producers. The best way to great a vendor? “Shou talkebe o uma jen?“ or “What’s cooking today, Mr.?”

Lebanese is the golden boy of Middle Eastern cinema. Syrian filmmakers from this country exhibition all others in the region thanks to three top film schools. Middle Eastern films are showcased at the Beirut International Film Festival, while Metropolis Cinema, Beirut’s first art-house cinema, hosts the documentary Docs Days and the European Film Festival.

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RIO DE JANEIRO

RIO DE JANEIRO BRAZIL

Rio de Janeiro’s character—unburied, casual, and creative—is shaped by its carnaval, or native inhabitants of the city. But like any city, it has struggles that leave obvious marks. A corrupt government, economic inequality, and poor infrastructure are just some of these. Below the pretty exterior of postcard-perfect images, beautiful landscapes, and wild Carnival parties, the city experiences highs and lows—all of which are collectively providing the government to make changes for the better. While it’s likely that this awakening has been aided in part by the looming global spotlight that will be placed on the city for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics, what matters is that it’s happening now, and that no one’s taking part in it. With the same drive as a quick-paced samba, Rio de Janeiro’s spirit is producing projects and movements that are leading to a brighter future.

DIANA HOLGUIN

PHOTO BY: CHEWY GIBBS

CHERY CHEW’S 1995 comedy Fletch

Chevy Chase’s 1995 comedy Fletch ends with the titular character taking his own interest on a trip to... and charging it all to Mr. Underhill’s American Express card.
Buenos Aires often feels like a city made up of smaller cities. With each neighborhood maintaining its own distinct vibe, you don’t need a map to tell you that you’ve passed from San Telmo into Barracas—it’s evident in the pavement, the sidewalks, and the architecture. Street art is part of the landscape, new buildings and advertisements mingle with colonial structures, and sidewalks are permanently in disrepair. Buenos Aires may be famous for its tango, beef, and nightlife, but many neighborhoods go to sleep early, and you won’t find liquor for sale legally in any shops after 10 p.m. It’s a place where people get out and enjoy their free time in the city’s parks or take a post-work cinq-à-sept (a happy-hour style) opportunity to drink with colleagues and friends and appreciate the beauty the city has to offer, no matter the season.

Despite a history of poorly designed infrastructure, lingering French-English tensions, and forbidding winter weather, Montreal is one of the most animated and people-friendly cities in the world. The city’s iconic architecture is punctuated with colorful exterior staircases and balconies. Come spring, the ubiquitous restaurants, bars, and cafés beckon with open windows and welcoming terraces. Driving a car (or trying to find parking) might be a nightmare here, but the streets are made for walking, and riding a bike or a Bixi from the city’s public bike-share system is an easy and convenient way to cover longer distances (at least before the snow sets in).

KATE SEDGECICK

ON THE 29TH DAY OF EACH MONTH, residents of Buenos Aires eat gnocchi (or any pasta they desire), a tradition traced to Italian immigrants who came to the city in the early 20th century and couldn’t afford to eat more than these potato dumplings at the end of each month, just before the monthly paycheck arrived.

DOWNTOWN MONTREAL

As Montreal neighborhoods fill up with creative types moving in the multitude of cafés, a blog called “Montreal Coworking” lists crowded up to point and the best places to collaborate.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY hosts the upcoming, public University of the Street Fair, a series of liveness-oriented conversations open to all Montreal residents regardless of age or education level. Topics are diverse, such as the future of 3D printing or how to best respond to cultural appropriation and stereotyping.

Montreal's best food—and that’s saying a lot—is still affordable, and the crisscrossing subway lines traverse the span of the city with incredible efficiency.

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Montreal has been the northerner’s answer to SXSW, only more intimate, accessible, and focused on music, an integral aspect of the city’s culture and history. Indie bands, like Arcade Fire, often get their starts at the now iconic festival. For the past 12 years, Pop Montreal has been the northerner’s answer to SXSW, only more intimate, accessible, and focused on music, an integral aspect of the city’s culture and history. Indie bands, like Arcade Fire, often get their starts at the now iconic festival.
Paris isn’t for the faint of heart. It can feel dirty, expensive, and impossibly big, all at the same time. And yet, just as they’ve done for centuries, creatives still flock to the City of Light. While it’s hard not to notice that the city is full of cars, the Vélib’ bike-share system, instituted in 2007, has spurred growth in Parisian bike culture, and environmental efforts can be seen everywhere—from L’Oasis d’Aboukir, a vertical green wall in the 2nd arrondissement, to the small co-op gardens dotting the city. And thanks to greater efforts to support local agriculture and producers, a city with a reputation for food snobbery seems to be fostering a growing sense of cooperation. Paris may be one of the most highly visited cities in the world (with more than 13 million visitors annually), but the fixed cultural cities in the world (with more than 13 million PARIS FRANCE

Part of a new wave of socially and environmentally conscious businesses in La Ruche, a space located in the diverse 10th arrondissement that brings social innovators and startups together for projects like @Montreal, is an informal meeting where innovators share the tools they’re using to spur change.

Given its proximity to the agricultural region in the Loire Valley, Paris has thrived as a center to local produce. Parisians get connected to local producers through the Association Pour le Progrès de l’Agriculture, which operates as a co-op, and La Bocche qui Dit Oui, a weekly pop-up market that gets set up in various parts of the city.

Parisians are famously curious about their art and culture. Locals take the first Saturday in October, known as Mauvaise Blanche ("White Night"), as an opportunity to indulge in the city’s finest art and cultural institutions late into the night, completely free of charge.

While Parisians are known for working hard and long hours, they hardly need to be convinced to slow down and enjoy their impressive 25 government-mandated days off. In August, the city is a little emptier, as many Parisians head south to the Côte d’Azur or the countryside.

PARIS FRANCE

Known for being one of the most remote cities on earth, Perth—the only state capital on the west coast—has long struggled to shake off its “Dullsville” tag. But while the mining and resources boom brought an influx of wealth and cashed-up newcomers to the city, it has also brought new energy to Perth’s cultural and creative sectors. New spaces are emerging for people to create and collaborate; the small bar scene has exploded; and there’s a greater focus on what’s happening locally as people look for opportunities beyond the mining boom, rather than looking to their east coast rivals. While it’s frequently dubbed one of the world’s “most livable cities,” Perth still faces many challenges including a quickly changing climate and a lack of affordable housing, particularly for those not working in the resources sector, but residents are increasingly taking pride in what their city has to offer.

SUZANNAH LYONS

ANNA BROKES

In the center of the Central Business District, Spacecubed’s one-of-a-kind working spaces are a place where entrepreneurs and change-makers can share ideas and collaborate. The community is made of the social, technological, and creative industries, and is credited with igniting Perth’s fledgling startup scene.

Graff Perth’s rapidly growing population, topics like urban development, sustainability, and loneliness are key conversation starters in the city. The work of nonpartisan groups like FuturePerth and Committee for Perth gives residents a voice in civic life.

Urban Laxawen sources the best deal with its second-hand clothing and shoes. The company’s aim is to support smaller growers and producers, and to encourage consumers to not necessarily just locally.

Perth’s cultural calendar gets crowded at the beginning of the year, but it’s the Fringe World Festival that attracts the most diverse audiences. Pop-up venues, elder care acts, cheaper tickets, and four-day passes mean there’s something to suit the artistic taste of every resident.

Perth’s urban sprawl is a problem when it comes to using public transport, but a plan to double the length of bike travel in the Central Business District by 2016 would see the establishment of pedestrian priority zones, one-way streets being converted to two-way streets, and reduced speed limits.

In the middle of the urban jungle of the city, the Perth Cultural Precinct has been transformed by the Metropole&Renovation Authority from an unloved public space into a home of an urban orchard, wetlands, and a lively monthly market. Yes, it even has free Wi-Fi.

A 25-minute drive from central Perth is the Yagan Memorial Park, the site of burial for Yagan, a leader and warrior of Aboriginal groups to repatriate their hero’s remains from Britain, where they were taken for supposed anthropological reasons during colonial rule.

Perth thrives on its outdoor lifestyle and its 25 government-mandated days off per year. Residents love its strong beach culture, local wineries, beautiful natural environment, and western Australian staple—liveband Sunday sessions listening to live music in a beer garden or pub.
In Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur directly translates to “muddy confluence,” which illustrates just how far this modern city has come from its 19th-century beginnings as a jungle at the intersection of the Gombak and Klang rivers. Today, the city boasts an eclectic mix of architectural styles, visible in its Baroque Chinese and Dutch showplaces and in the modern Islamic design of the iconic Petronas Twin Towers. In KL, people of all faiths meet for a trob tan, a hot Indian milk tea; temples, mosques and churches are within walking distance of one another; and conversations at roadside mamaks, or food stalls, can take place in four languages. Amid all of this multiculturalism, however, there are problems. In fact, public transportation systems is that is not up to par with other Asian cities and a high petty crime rate.

Creative hub M&F KL consists of two spaces—a 6,500-square-foot White Galaxy and a 219-seat Black Box new media space. Both are used for workshops, talks, exhibitions, film screenings, and games. 

The super popular Tel Aviv International Salsa enables locals to learn about social, political, cultural, and environmental issues through a host of meeting lectures and debates given by international newsmakers, speakers, journalists, ambassadors, and professors.

Tel Aviv’s biggest contribution to the city’s soul is its thriving local culture. Tel Aviv’s nightlife is the best in Israel, and not just for the locals. The city’s urban Talim (a pint-sized Tel Aviv) is packed with bars, restaurants, cafes, and entertainment venues.

The best way to measure the civic participation in social media, friendship and opportunities is the key to the famed laidback Ghanaian attitude and indomitable sense of humor. The upside of the city’s sometimes frustrating moments is that it’s ripe for entrepreneurship and opportunities abound. But it’s impossible to ignore the fact that life in Accra is full of real hardship for most people. The future of Accra is uncertain, but what’s making it such an exciting place to be.

In Accra, a city that is transforming fast: Buildings and luxury apartments shoot up overnight, even while growing numbers of people live in slam-like conditions. In response to all that change, life in Accra has to be all about improvisation. Sometimes the electricity doesn’t. Relaxing and being willing to figure things out as you go is the key to the famed laidback Ghanaian attitude and indomitable sense of humor. The upside of the city’s sometimes frustrating moments is that it’s ripe for entrepreneurship and opportunities abound. But it’s impossible to ignore the fact that life in Accra is full of real hardship for most people. The future of Accra is uncertain, but what’s making it such an exciting place to be.
Despite its sprawling geography, Atlanta is more a community than city—it’s diverse, yet collaborative in culture and soul. With schools like The Creative Circus, Portfolio Center, and Savannah College of Art and Design’s Atlanta campus, the city is also nurturing some of the country’s most creative minds, evidenced by the world-class design spilling outside of its classrooms. However, you can forget trying to maneuver the main roads, as traffic remains one of the city’s biggest downfalls, along withcrime and sex trafficking, both of which the city is struggling to clean up. But as Atlanta’s local culture continues to gain traction, the city is staking its claim not just as any old Southern city in the U.S., but as a major center of ingenuity and creativity.

Wellington boasts a lot to make up for its sometimes unpleasant weather. In addition to being New Zealand’s cultural and creative capital, it boasts the untouched greenery of the Botanic Garden and native bird sanctuary of Zealandia, which seem straight off the big screen. It is also the political capital, home to Parliament, the government’s ministries, and foreign diplomats. Despite a rocky past regarding indigenous people’s rights, Wellington’s ethnic relations are now harmonious, for the most part, and any unfavorable changes to laws affecting Maori land rights are likely to draw tens of thousands of Maori and Pakeha (New Zealanders of European descent) together in protest. Wellington may be the nation’s capital, but its relatively small population (around 400,000) gives it a small city feel.

**ATLANTA**

UNITED STATES

The Goat Farm Arts Center, located in Atlanta’s Micklehood neighborhood, is an urban farm that connects creative types with performing arts, design, and technology. The Goat Farm hosts not only a performing arts center, but also a community space and coffee shop, making it one of the city’s most unique and vibrant spots.

**WELLINGTON**

NEW ZEALAND

Atlanta boasts 243 parks and public spaces. The Atlanta Botanical Garden, a 20-acre attraction, includes 10 acres of woods with walking trails and outdoor sculptures. Winter brings the Garden Lights event, when all 20 acres are illuminated by 1.5 million energy-efficient lights in one of the city’s most anticipated holiday events.

A brand new, $100 million National Center for Civil and Human Rights is set to open in 2014. It will pay tribute to the city’s past struggles and forge a link between the American civil rights and global human rights struggles.

**SARAH SPEAR**

Music Midtown, Atlanta’s largest music festival, recently returned to the city’s 189-acre Piedmont Park after a six year hiatus. The two-day event attracts more than 300,000 people from all over the southeastern U.S.

With a low percentage of Atlantans using public transportation, new projects such as the Atlanta Beltline—a 22-mile loop around Atlanta’s central neighborhoods—have cropped up in response, creating trails and several new parks along the beltline.

**LAURA MCBRILLIAN**

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When it comes to bright ideas and Wellington’s emerging tech scene, organizations like Bizhub, Empiral, and Lightning Lab are connecting big thinkers with one another, as well as providing space, mentoring, and even money to help get innovations off the ground.

When the Wellington City Council launched a campaign to encourage people to stop giving money to beggars and instead try a charity using a QR code instead, many Wellington residents were less than impressed. Some responded by adopting the practice of suspended coffee, where a customer buys a cup for an anonymous person in need.

A recent Sunday, purveyors of fresh produce and food stalls gather in Wellington’s waterfront, on the nearby Chaffers Dock Building hosts bacon sandwiches, or “butties” as they’re known here, made by one of the city’s best-known chefs, Martin Bosley.

Each February, gaggles of rugby fans dressed as everything from Smurfs and Elmos to internet memes take over the city’s streets during the Wellington leg of the IRB Rugby Sevens tourna-

**LAURA MCBRILLIAN**

As we’ve already acknowledged, measuring “possibility” is an elusive science. We realize that there are cities out there that currently surpass some of the selections in our top 20 when it comes to “livability”—that is not what we’re measuring here. The Good City Index measures potential, anticipatory energy, and promise. That said, here are the cities that didn’t quite make the cut this time around, but easily could have, and perhaps will, when we update our index next year.

1. Bogotá, Colombia
2. Taipeh, Taiwan
3. Mumbai, India
4. Bruges, Belgium
5. Kampala, Uganda
6. Christchurch, New Zealand
7. Lisbon, Portugal
8. Tokyo, Japan
9. Dublin, Ireland
10. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
11. Lima, Peru
12. Detroit, United States
13. Shanghai, China
14. São Paulo, Brazil
15. New Delhi, India
16. Amsterdam, Netherlands
17. Cape Town, South Africa
18. Zurich, Switzerland
19. Melbourne, Australia
20. Kigali, Rwanda
21. Sarajevo, Bosnia
22. Bangalore, India

**NOTABLE MENTIONS**