

The worlds most welcoming cities ranked

A new global index measures which cities still welcome visitors as guests while highlighting the growing threats of overtourism and commercialisation.

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New Human Access Index Ranks the World's Most Welcoming Cities as Over-tourism Threatens Authentic Travel

The [Chef](#) Tours launches the Human Access Index, a new global benchmark measuring not landmarks, but the ease with which visitors become guests rather than customers.

Berlin, Germany – Every year, cities compete to be named the world's most livable, most beautiful, or most visited destination. The Chef Tours believes they have been measuring the wrong thing.

Today, the chef-led travel company announced the launch of the **Human Access Index**, a new annual report designed to answer a different question:

“

The future of travel won't be decided by AI. It will be decided by the cities that still make strangers feel like guests instead of customers.”

Chef Karl Wilder

Which cities still make it easy to have a genuine human experience?

Rather than ranking museums, hotel rooms, or visitor numbers, the Human Access Index evaluates destinations on qualities that cannot be replicated by artificial intelligence or guidebooks. The index measures factors such as independent businesses, family-owned restaurants, opportunities for meaningful interaction with

locals, preservation of traditional food culture, affordability for residents, neighbourhood identity, and the likelihood that a traveller leaves with friendships rather than photographs.



"Technology has made information almost free," said Chef Karl Wilder, founder of The Chef Tours. "What has become rare is access. Anyone can ask AI where to eat. Only another human being can introduce you to the baker they've known for twenty years or invite you into a conversation that changes how you see a city."

The Inaugural Human Access Index

The first edition places the following cities among the world's leaders for authentic human connection:

1. Tbilisi
2. Oaxaca
3. Istanbul
4. Naples
5. Buenos Aires
6. Mexico City
7. Seville
8. Kyoto
9. Lisbon
10. Paris

The rankings are intended to begin a global conversation rather than declare a definitive winner.

Introducing the Human Access Threat Index

Alongside the rankings, The Chef Tours is also launching the ****Human Access Threat Index****, highlighting forces that are making meaningful travel increasingly difficult.

The report identifies several growing threats:

- * Overtourism replacing neighbourhood life.
- * Pricing that excludes local residents from their own cultural institutions.
- * Independent businesses disappearing in favour of international chains.



A guest on tour



The Insider look at Mexico City

- * Traditional markets are giving way to souvenir retail.
- * Short-term rentals reducing permanent local populations.
- * Rising commercial rents are forcing out family-run restaurants.
- * Experiences designed primarily for social media instead of cultural exchange.

"When residents can no longer afford the cafés, bathhouses, markets, theatres, or restaurants that define their own city, visitors eventually lose them too," Wilder said. "Protecting local life isn't just good for communities. It's essential for the future of tourism."

Tourism with a social purpose

The Human Access Index also recognises organisations proving that tourism can strengthen communities rather than simply consume them.

Among the inspirations behind the project is [Secret Street Tours Dublin](https://www.secretstreettours.org/?utm_source=chatgpt.com), the nonprofit social enterprise that trains and employs people with lived experience of homelessness to lead walking tours of Dublin. The organisation demonstrates how tourism can create employment, challenge perceptions, and foster genuine human connection between visitors and local communities. ([Secret Street Tours][1])

"The future of travel isn't about seeing more places," Wilder added. "It's about meeting more people. The destinations that thrive over the next generation will be those that protect their communities, celebrate independent businesses, and continue to welcome strangers as guests rather than transactions."

The Chef Tours plans to publish the Human Access Index annually.

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Wine is food

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