

# The Hotel Price Index™

Review of global hotel prices: January - December 2012



Hotels.com

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## Introduction

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The Hotels.com Hotel Price Index™ (HPI®) is a regular survey of hotel prices in major destinations across the world. The HPI is based on bookings made on Hotels.com and prices shown are those actually paid by customers per room per night, rather than advertised rates.

Now in its ninth year, the HPI is respected as the definitive report on hotel prices paid around the world and is increasingly used as a reference tool by the media, hoteliers, financial analysts, investors, tourism bodies and academics.

The HPI tracks the real prices paid per room per night by Hotels.com customers around the world, using a weighted average based on the number of rooms sold in each of the markets in which Hotels.com operates.

The international scale of Hotels.com, in terms of the number of customers, properties and destinations covered, makes the Hotel Price Index one of the most comprehensive benchmarks available. It incorporates both chain and independent hotels, as well as options such as self-catering and bed & breakfast properties.

This edition looks at the full year of 2012, comparing the results with 2011. More than 155,000 of the almost 200,000 properties around the world offered on the site make up the sample set of hotels from which prices are taken.

## About the HPI

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The HPI report focuses on two main sources of data:

The first section (Chapter 1) shows the global Hotel Price Index for 2012, comparing it with previous years.

The Index is compiled from all relevant transactions on Hotels.com during this period, weighted to reflect the size of each market. By representing hotel price movements in an index, Hotels.com can illustrate the actual price movements as paid by consumers, without foreign exchange fluctuations distorting the picture.

The Index was started in 2004 at 100 and includes all bookings across all star ratings from 1- to 5-star.

The second section (Chapters 2-8) shows hotel prices across the world per room per night as paid by travelers from the U.S. in 2012 compared with 2011. This shows the changes in real prices paid by American consumers, reflecting both movements in exchange rates and hotel pricing. This section also highlights price increases and decreases throughout the U.S., upcoming travel trends in 2013 and a spotlight on how to travel based on passions and hobbies.

Prices are rounded to the nearest dollar and percentage figures to the nearest percentage point.

Reports are also available in other currencies. Please contact [hotels.com@finnpartners.com](mailto:hotels.com@finnpartners.com). Follow the discussions on Twitter [@hotelsdotcom](https://twitter.com/hotelsdotcom).



Welcome to the latest edition of the Hotels.com Hotel Price Index, our review of global hotel prices for the full year of 2012.

The headline must be one of continuing recovery. Over the year, guests around the world paid 3% more for their hotel rooms than in 2011. In fact, several major regions grew faster than this, but the Eurozone's problems combined to pull down the global average and slow growth in the second half of the year. This means that while we're reporting the third year of price increases, the average price of a hotel room has only risen to where it was back in 2005.

### **Leaders of the pack**

It was still a tough year for many but three regions drew away from the rest, building on increasing business travel and higher consumer spending. The Caribbean saw a 6% rise, North America had one of its best results in recent years growing at 5% and the Pacific gained 4%, all outpacing the global figure. Asia added 2%, Latin America 1% and the Europe and Middle East region registered a slight fall.

### **Europe trailing**

Europe is lagging behind as domestic markets stutter. The Eurozone crisis not only impacted prices in its own territory but had a knock-on effect across the region as financial insecurity dampened the propensity to travel. With a resurgence of economic prosperity unlikely in the immediate future, hotels have to adapt to new market conditions, to reach out to those travelers who are still on the move, particularly from China and Russia. My advice to consumers? Start packing for that European trip. It is unlikely that prices will continue to fall at this rate and there are some great deals around now just waiting to be snapped up.

### **The London effect**

Anyone who was in London in the summer of 2012 would have been caught up in the atmosphere of excitement and optimism that permeated the city during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Overall hotel occupancy was healthy but did not reach the heady heights predicted, with many travelers avoiding the higher prices initially charged during the Olympic period. The average cost of a room in the capital certainly fell as the event approached and, for the rest of the year, hotels lowered their prices further to drive demand.

London has been left with a legacy of much improved stock with new hotel openings and many other rooms refurbished and it remains one of the best value global cities across all star ratings. The unprecedented worldwide exposure that its time in the spotlight brought will certainly encourage visitors going forward, particularly with the prospect of the Royal birth this summer.

It will be interesting to see what lessons were learned in London for hotel pricing strategy in Rio de Janeiro as the city prepares to host two major sporting events with the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games.

## **Build it and they will come**

International tourism is expected to climb again in 2013<sup>1</sup>. Much of the focus of the hospitality industry is now moving east, where the rate of increase is the highest and new infrastructure is helping to drive travel patterns. The Asia/Pacific region added twice as many new rooms as Europe in 2012, with expansion in both the upmarket and economy sectors, and will account for 40% of the world's new builds in 2013<sup>2</sup>. China has plans to build 70 new airports in the next few years and to expand its 100 existing airports<sup>3</sup>. New airlines have come onto the scene offering lower prices, fueling the desire to travel.

At Hotels.com, we are also looking forward to 2013. It is a landmark time for us, particularly in Europe. It was ten years ago that we took the strategic step in expanding our company by launching localized websites in 13 European countries as well as Australia and Canada. Over the last decade, we have expanded further into Europe as well as Latin America, Asia, the Pacific and Africa and now have more than 85 localized sites around the world.

The scope of our network means that the data and consumer insight gathered for this report is substantial and reliable. What's up, what's down, what's blooming or fading, the answer is here.

Thanks for reading and happy traveling.

David Roche  
President, Global Lodging Group, Expedia, Inc.

<sup>1</sup> UNWTO World Tourism Barometer

<sup>2</sup> Smith Travel Research

<sup>3</sup> China CAA Chief Li Jiaxing, IATA AGM, June 2012

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**Victor Owens**  
**Vice President and General Manager**  
**Hotels.com North America**

The American travel industry as a whole faced a destructive calamity, Hurricane Sandy, in October 2012. The impact was heavily felt on the east coast and the Caribbean region with 9,000 flights cancelled, \$30 billion in property damage and 7.5 million power outages according to *Forbes*. With outstanding assistance from first responders and clean-up crews, much of the damage has been repaired.

Turning to industry matters, the North American HPI is seeing some light for hoteliers with a 5% increase in hotel prices last year.

With airlines upgrading their terminals, more jets capable of long-distance flights and visa procedures becoming smoother, the U.S. saw an influx of international visitors in 2012.

Much of this increase was due to the U.S. National Travel and Tourism Strategy implemented in January 2012, which was aimed at bringing more travelers to the United States to experience the broad and wonderful assortment of activities and attractions we have to offer.

Turning to Canada, the popular city of Toronto garnered international attention in 2012 by adding to its current roster of high-end properties. The sheer number of luxury properties in one city is a clear indication that retailer confidence in the market is high.

Canadians overall also had a stronger economic year than their American counterparts and travel was definitely on the radar with a major increase in travel abroad. Combined with the recent increase in the amount of purchased goods cross-border shoppers can now declare and a strong Canadian dollar, we anticipate travel to the U.S. remaining strong in 2013.

### **North America moving forward**

- Average hotel prices in North America rose 5% in 2012, the second highest rise around the world, beating the global rise and equaling its 2011 increase, thereby recording two strong years of growth.
- The good news for travelers was that the North American HPI was still ten points behind its 2007 peak, standing at just 107, the same level as in 2005 and matching the global figure.
- Rates in the U.S. fell the farthest following the global banking collapse and this result is a significant recovery from the 2009 low of 96.



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**Johan Svanström**  
**Vice President**  
**Hotels.com APAC**

Overall the Asian continent saw a price rise of 2% compared to 2011, backed up by a generally positive travel economic and travel industry trend. The overall rates however were still some way off from its peak level in 2007, meaning travelers could find good value in several destinations.

Behind the average number in 2012 is quite a roster of events moving prices up and down across the region. Examples include downward pressure on rates in India, due to a precipitous fall of the Rupee, travel demand shifts due to the politically sensitive situation around the islands in the East China Sea, and price bounce-backs when compared against the 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan and flooding in Thailand. Big business and tourism destinations like

Singapore and Hong Kong saw continued great demand but rate rises were more moderate because of the 25 new hotel openings in Hong Kong, and further room openings in the Singapore mega hotels.



The mineral and natural resources boom in Australia continued to drive strong city hotel rates, but made it somewhat difficult for leisure destinations dependent on inbound demand. China overtook the UK to become the second largest inbound source market, a trend that is only expected to continue.

Looking forward, two mega trends are affecting the region positively in 2013 and beyond: The continued rise of the Chinese outbound travelers, both the amount of them and the amount of money they spend, as well as the rapid build-up of the low cost and alternative carrier market in North East Asia. Both trends invariably mean more travelers, and will drive hotel industry development and investment for years to come.

### **Strong performance in the Pacific**

- Average hotel prices in the Pacific region rose another 4% during 2012, driven primarily by increases in its main market of Australia. This was higher than the global rise but the speed of growth has slowed when compared with the two previous years which registered an 11% rise in 2010 and 8% in 2011.
- The Pacific HPI for 2012 reached 123, tying in second place with Latin America, another region that has seen significant movement in its hotel rates over recent years.
- The Pacific HPI is now not far behind its 2007 peak of 127.

## Asia on the rise

- Hotel prices in Asia rose 2% during the year, not keeping track with the global rise but a more robust result than in 2011 when prices fell by 2% following the natural and nuclear disasters in Japan which deterred travel both within and to the region.
- The Asia HPI stood at 109 for 2012 and has the farthest ground to make up on its 2007 peak of 131. In fact, it is still behind its 2005 level of 110, although individual cities have performed well.



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**Matthew Walls**  
**Vice President**  
**Hotels.com EMEA**



While hotel prices across Europe have remained relatively flat overall in 2012, the average hides some really interesting shifts in demand at the country and destination level.

There is no doubt that the much publicized economic downturn has impacted hotel prices, especially in the Southern part of the Eurozone. Hoteliers in Greece, Italy and Turkey certainly had to tighten their belts, but this resulted in a surge in great deals especially in the lead up to the summer season.

We've also seen a corresponding strengthening in demand, and hence pricing, in the countries whose economies have remained in relative health. Average hotel rates paid have risen in Germany, Norway and Sweden compared to 2011 and have really rebounded in Iceland since their "dark days" of 2010.

While the overall volume of trips to long-haul destinations is much smaller than the short-haul and domestic market, we've seen a strong resurgence in demand for far-flung markets. Average prices paid by European customers for Latin America, the USA and Australasia have risen on the back of stronger demand. In the Caribbean, resorts were offering all-inclusive rates, helping customers manage their vacation budget more accurately.

The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics in London was big news in 2012. Such a large event inevitably caused volatility in London hotel pricing with significant rises at the start of the year. Once the organizing committee, LOCOG, started releasing the blocks of rooms they were holding, and hoteliers realized demand was not going to be as strong as hoped, pricing fell significantly. These adjustments seemed to coincide with a late surge in demand from the domestic market and so overall the hotel market was able to contribute to the success of what was a fantastic event.

### **Slight drop in Europe and Middle East**

- Average hotel prices across Europe and the Middle East followed a different pattern, registering a fall of just under half a percent during 2012, well behind the global figure and also down on 2011 which saw a 2% rise.
- The HPI for the region for 2012 stood at 101, the lowest of all the regions, only just higher than its starting level in 2004 and significantly behind its 2007 peak of 116.
- Europe has been badly affected by the economic crisis in the Eurozone and the Middle East suffered a lack of confidence in travel during the Arab Spring of 2011, although some destinations have bounced back.

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**Javier Escobedo**  
**Vice President**  
**Hotels.com LatAm**



Latin America has witnessed a sustained period of growth in prices paid by customers over the past few years, driven primarily by the booming economies in the two key markets of Brazil and Mexico. The slowdown now could be explained by two trends: a more stable region in terms of economic and political scenarios and strong domestic activity that has led to a more competitive scenario with plenty of promotions and discounts as hotels worked to attract local visitors.

Brazil, a giant and strategic player for Latin America, has moved away from a scenario of monetary exchange instability with fewer abrupt oscillations in its exchange rate, thus setting the right conditions for a more secure market.

Mexico has also witnessed a robust 12 months for the travel industry and has coped positively with the challenges of an election year. The country has also benefited from enhancements in local infrastructure that helped develop less explored regions. Travel to international destinations, in particular the United States, has remained strong for the region, and Europe has emerged as another favorite for Latin Americans, particularly with the lower prices there as a result of the economic downturn.

### **Latin American rise slowed**

- Average hotel prices in Latin America rose by just 1% overall during 2012, a smaller rise than the 4% recorded in the two previous years and also behind the global increase.
- The 2012 HPI for Latin America reached 123, driven primarily by the booming economy in its largest market, Brazil, and tying in second place with the Pacific which has also seen considerable growth over the past few years.
- The 2012 figure of 123 was one of the closest of all the regions to its 2007 peak of 125 and equalled its 2006 level, although the HPI shows that rates in Latin America were less affected by the global economic slowdown than other parts of the world.

### **Highest rises in the Caribbean**

- The Caribbean had a strong year, registering the highest percentage increase of all the regions at 6% and also the highest HPI at 125.
- This is just behind its 2006 rate of 127 and still six points adrift of its 2007 peak of 131.

## Chapter 1 – Global Price Changes

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The average price of a hotel room around the world rose by 3% during 2012 compared with the previous year, having reached 107, just seven points higher than when the Index was launched in 2004. The rate of increase has slowed when judged against the 4% rise in 2011.

This highlights the fact that hotel prices remained a great value for travelers throughout the year as the global Index for 2012 was still 10 points behind its 2007 peak of 117 and only just ahead of its 2005 level of 106.

Prices rose in all regions for the year, apart from Europe and the Middle East where there was a slight fall. There were particularly strong showings in the Caribbean, North America and the Pacific. More in-depth analysis into what caused these changes and how they influenced individual cities and countries can be found below and in subsequent chapters.

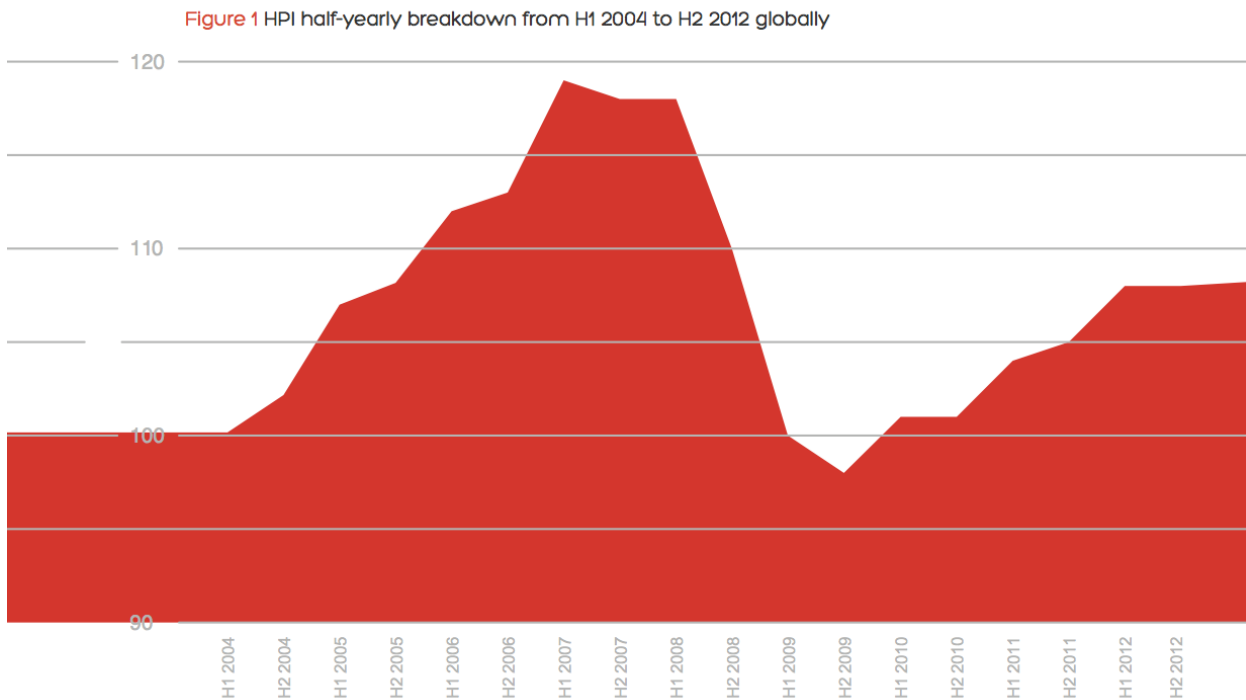
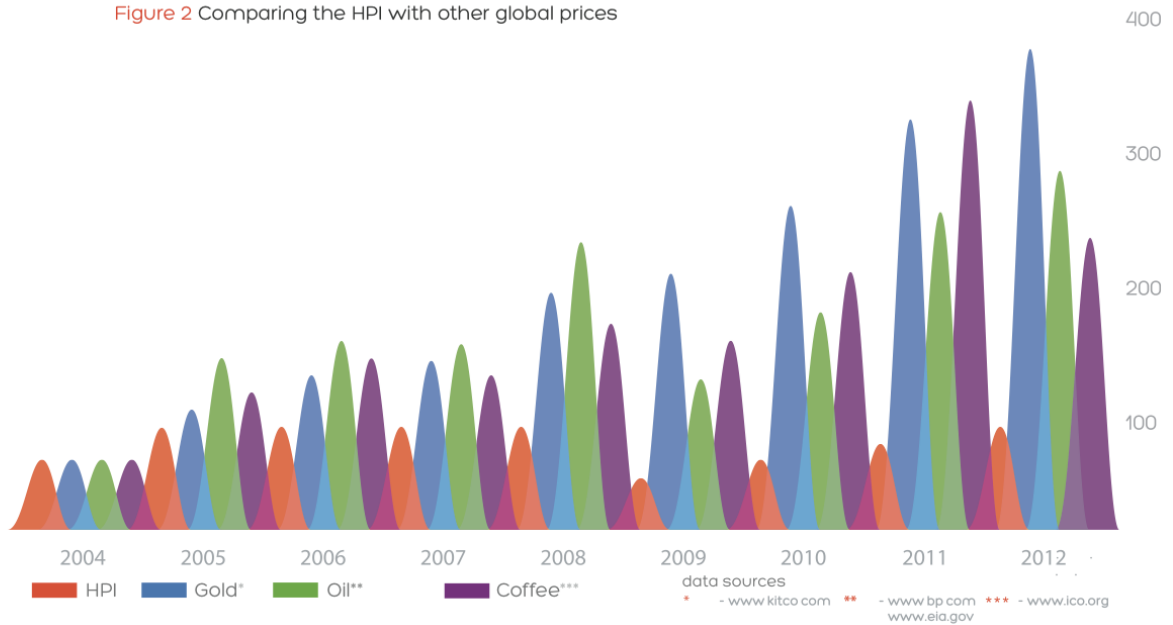


Figure 2 Comparing the HPI with other global prices



Although not directly comparable, the relative stability of global hotel prices can also be seen in a less technical fashion by comparing the fluctuation of the HPI with other global commodities such as gold, oil and coffee in an index. Swings there have been considerably more volatile and prices have risen substantially, reinforcing the great value that hotel prices still represent. At the end of 2012, the index for gold, for instance, was four times higher than in 2004, with oil three times higher and coffee more than double.

## Chapter 2 - Prices Change in Global Destinations

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### Most Expensive Countries and Cities

For the fourth consecutive year islands have topped the Hotels.com® World's Most Expensive Countries list. This year they are: [Maldives](#), [French Polynesia](#), [Seychelles](#), [Turks and Caicos](#) and [Anguilla](#).

Furthermore, eight of the 10 most expensive destinations on The World's Most Expensive Cities list are situated on islands. [Big Sur](#), along California's central coast, and [Tremezzo](#), nestled on the banks of [Italy's](#) world-renown [Lake Como](#), are the only two destinations not located on islands to make the list.

[Maldives](#) remains at the top of the list of most expensive countries for travel in 2012. The small nation located in the Indian Ocean, with over 1,100 islands, made global headlines in 2012 with news of political instability and an alleged coup. The turmoil resulted in hotel prices decreasing slightly (-2%) as hotel occupancy dropped. [Bora Bora](#) and [Moorea, French Polynesia](#), named top islands in *Travel + Leisure's* "World's Best Awards," saw a 17% increase in hotel prices. Rates rose to \$426 though remain more than \$150 less than Maldives.

[Seychelles](#), an increasingly popular island destination between [Madagascar](#) and the Maldives, was again on the Most Expensive Countries list and saw a [7% increase in visitor arrivals](#) - twice as many visitors as its total population. This can most likely be contributed to Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge's visit to the island last year and the [increased airline service](#) to the tropical paradise.



Bixby Bridge overlooking California's coastline in Big Sur

A popular vacation destination along [California's](#) coastal highway, [Big Sur](#) made its debut on The World's Most Expensive Cities list. Between its desirable location and extremely expensive land, it's no surprise that Big Sur has risen to be the most costly locale. Travelers can pamper themselves at the cliff-side, eco-friendly [Post Ranch Inn](#), where one Hotels.com [Guest Review](#) raved, "...stunning location in Big Sur. Come and relax and be pampered. Great restaurant. Friendly, accommodating staff. First class all of the way."

The World's Most Expensive Countries			
Country	2012 ADR	2011 ADR	YoY ADR
1. Maldives	\$581	\$594	-2%
2. French Polynesia	\$426	\$366	16%
3. Seychelles	\$394	\$387	2%
4. Turks and Caicos	\$392	\$358	9%
5. Anguilla	\$377	\$329	15%

The World's Most Expensive Cities (by greatest price)			
City	2012 ADR	2011 ADR	YoY ADR
1. Big Sur, California, U.S.A	\$771	\$655	18%
2. Bora Bora, French Polynesia	\$768	\$646	19%
3. Tremezzo, Italy	\$569	\$485	17%
4. Soufriere, St. Lucia	\$463	\$405	14%
5. Paynes Bay, Barbados	\$453	\$472	-4%
6. Moorea, French Polynesia	\$444	\$435	2%
7. Wailea (Maui), Hawaii, U.S.A	\$439	\$399	10%
8. Cap Estate, St. Lucia	\$413	\$386	7%
9. Vihamanafushi, Maldives	\$405	\$424	-5%
10. West End, Anguilla	\$404	\$348	16%

## Price Drops

The ongoing European bank bailouts discussion and debt crisis has caused turbulence throughout the European Union. Hotel prices have reflected the region's overall skepticism as prices dropped by 2%. Two countries at the center of the controversy, [Greece](#) and [Spain](#), witnessed nationwide hotel prices drop 7% and 4%, respectively. [Minsk](#), Belarus, [Ronda](#) and [Sant Just Desvern](#), Spain, [Corfu](#), [Greece](#), and [Lijnden, Netherlands](#) were the hardest hit European destinations - prices dropped between 39% and 30% in 2012. [San Remo, Italy](#) home of the San Remo [music festival](#) that hosts the likes of Andrea Bocelli, dropped significantly as well, but is still the second most expensive on the list.

In the U.S., [Victor](#), Idaho and [Charlevoix](#), Michigan saw hotel prices decrease from 2011 to 2012. Both towns are hidden tourist destinations. Victor, Idaho, just on the western side of [Yellowstone National Park](#) and the Grand Tetons, saw prices dip 35% in 2012. Located on Lake Michigan, Charlevoix, Michigan, home of [Fisherman's Island State Park](#) and the [Venetian Festival](#), saw a downturn in hotel prices in 2012 by 32%.

The World's Greatest Price Drops			
City	2012 ADR	2011 ADR	YoY ADR
1. Minsk, Belarus	\$112	\$185	-39%
2. Victor, Idaho, U.S.A	\$195	\$299	-35%
3. Colima, Mexico	\$75	\$113	-34%
4. Lijnden, Netherlands	\$110	\$165	-33%
5. Antofagasta, Chile	\$110	\$163	-33%
6. Ronda, Spain & Canary Islands	\$65	\$96	-32%
7. Charlevoix, Michigan, U.S.A	\$103	\$153	-32%
8. Corfu, Greece	\$139	\$199	-30%
9. Sant Just Desvern, Spain & Canary Islands	\$70	\$99	-30%
10. San Remo, Italy	\$159	\$225	-29%

## Price Rises

Over half of the destinations on The World's Greatest Price Increases list are from the United States indicating that the [U.S. hotel industry continues to grow](#) and expand as the economy strengthens and consumer confidence rebounds. [Colts Neck](#) (minutes from the Jersey Shore), [Oahu](#) (home to the North Shore and Honolulu) and [Nevada City](#) (last stop before Yosemite National Park), saw prices increase over 50%.

Welcoming over [four million arrivals in 2012](#), the [Philippines](#) continue to grow as an up-and-coming destination for many travelers. [Puerto Princesa](#), home to two [UNESCO World Heritage Sites](#) and renowned for exceptional diving and snorkeling, saw an unprecedented 92% increase in hotel prices in 2012. Other Filipino hotspots such as [Boracay](#) have seen prices increase as travelers learn of the archipelago's untouched beauty and relatively affordable prices.



Surf's up in Oahu

After a few unstable years, travel to [Tunisia](#) is rebounding as adventurous vacationers head back to the North African nation to explore the land's rich archaeological, cultural and religious history. Tunisia saw [tourist arrivals increase by 25%](#) in 2012. [Gammarth](#), an affluent ocean front suburb in the capital [Tunis](#), is benefiting from the influx of inbound tourists. Hotel prices rose 59% (the fourth greatest price increase worldwide) to \$463 in 2012. Relax at one of the town's many resorts including the [El Mouradi Gammarth](#). One guest review said the resort offers a "big, beautiful swimming pool and great breakfast buffet in large restaurant. It's good there is a private beach."



<b>The World's Greatest Price Increases</b>			
<b>City</b>	<b>2012 ADR</b>	<b>2011 ADR</b>	<b>YoY ADR</b>
1. Puerto Princesa, Phillipines	\$91	\$48	92%
2. Colts Neck, New Jersey, U.S.A	\$236	\$128	84%
3. Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A	\$358	\$212	68%
4. Gammarth, Tunisia	\$125	\$79	59%
5. Nevada City, California, U.S.A	\$107	\$69	56%
6. Pinebluff, North Carolina, U.S.A	\$74	\$49	51%
7. Dover, Ohio, U.S.A	\$108	\$72	49%
8. Santa Fe, Argentina	118	\$80	48%
9. Niles, Michigan, U.S.A	\$132	\$89	48%
10. Lautoka, Fiji	\$90	\$61	48%

### Industry Trends

#### What's Shaping Your Travel Decisions?

As the travel industry continues to rebound in 2013, the ever-changing economic landscape will create a new set of challenges and opportunities for both consumers and businesses alike. To help our guests best navigate the road ahead, the experts at Hotels.com keep their fingers on the pulse of major trends and factors that are impacting the industry and will affect the travel decisions of all our customers. We utilize expert insight, along with insights from [Hotels.com travelers](#), to develop the tools and resources that travelers need to find their perfect place, every time. Below, Hotels.com has identified the top travel trends of 2013 to help travelers make the most of their year.

#### Mobile

The over 15 million downloads of the Hotels.com mobile booking app in 2012 is evidence that mobile devices have truly become an integral part of the travel experience. [Billions of people](#) are adapting to the mobile way of life and are utilizing a variety of [travel apps](#) to help them do everything from trip planning and gaining local insights to ordering a meal straight to their hotel room.

Helping to fuel the frenzy for all things mobile is the continued diversification of mobile devices being released into the market. Mobile no longer revolves around just the smart phone. In fact, within the few short months after its launch in September 2012, the [Hotels.com iPad app](#) has generated the highest conversion rate within the company's mobile category. In 2012, we saw the introduction of "laplets," an innovative hybrid device that combines touch-screen computing with full laptop capability. These new devices appear to be the next progression of mobile technology and show enormous potential in continuing to shape the way travelers capture and share their experiences while on-the-go.

And how are travelers enabled to stay connected via all these handy mobile devices? Wi-Fi, of course! With the continued rise in the use of mobile devices, there is also expected to be an incline in the availability of [Wi-Fi amenities](#). More and more hoteliers are making Wi-Fi available at no cost throughout the hotel, or at least in the public areas of the property as they are beginning to realize that it is a [number one priority among](#) customers. Travelers can even anticipate the ability to log-on while en route to their destinations as select [limos](#) and [airlines](#) are also jumping on the Wi-Fi bandwagon.

#### Loyalty

The rise of mobile and social tools have made it easier than ever for travelers to comparison shop and inevitably find the best value or deal for whatever circumstance may arise – even if it means staying at a variety of different hotel brands.

Recent research conducted by [Deloitte](#) at the end of 2012 found that only 8% of travelers are loyal to a single hotel brand. As hotel-goers continue to seek the best possible value anywhere they can find it, loyalty programs that will help them to achieve their goal will rise to the top.

Rather than joining the loyalty program of each individual hotel, we will begin to see more travelers opting for all-encompassing rewards systems like [Welcome Rewards](#)® from Hotels.com. Programs such as these are simple, user-friendly, and provide more accessible rewards that can easily be attained within a few trips.

## Experiential Travel

This year, there is a renewed belief in quality experiences as consumers start to rediscover the [physical and emotional benefits](#) of taking a real vacation. As a result, we will see growing trends in meaningful and one-of-a-kind travel experiences.

For really exotic locales or destinations that are only worth visiting during a certain time of year, [pop-up hotels](#) will be the next big thing to accommodate travelers. Hotel brands and independent companies alike are investing heavily in temporary hotel accommodations from tents to shipping containers and other small pod-like structures.

Not only will the hotel rooms be unique, but the activities that travelers choose to partake in will also be extraordinary. One of the fastest growing examples of such is the current River Cruising trend. Many travelers looking for a more memorable experience for their money are opting to leave the superfluous cruise ships of the seas behind and hop aboard a smaller river boat option that will tour off-the-beaten trails like the Mekong River in Cambodia and Vietnam or the Danube River between Prague and Istanbul.

What's more, there are plenty of on-land experiences cropping up at hotels all over the world striving to give travelers the time of their life while on vacation. One great example is [The Imagination Initiative](#) from Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, a program that offers extra nights, hotel credits and special experiential add-ons to really tap consumers' emotions when booking a trip. Standout offers include tailored experiences from an elephant ride through the jungle and mountain trails of [Thailand](#), to a VIP on-field meet-and-greet with the International Polo Club at Palm Beach.

As travelers look to reconnect with themselves, loved ones, and even nature while on a trip, some hoteliers are becoming sensitive to vacationers' need to disconnect from everything else. This is why terms like "[Braincation](#)" and "[digital detox](#)" will become common phrases in 2013.

## Amenities

In 2013, the hotel industry will see consumers move away from the penny-pinching and staycationing tendencies they've adopted over the last few years of recession. Vacationers are expected to become increasingly more open to booking pricier travel experiences, so long as they are worth the investment.

As demand grows, we predict that many hoteliers will be putting their best foot forward to attract new guests by stripping away unnecessary frills and replacing them with new amenities that genuinely appeal to travelers' top priorities, such as comfort, convenience and value.

One such amenity is free Wi-Fi, identified by this year's [Global Hotel Amenities Survey](#) from Hotels.com as the number one most desired amenity among both leisure and business travelers from 28 countries worldwide. In fact, 60% of North American respondents expressed that free Wi-Fi is the amenity they most wish would become standard at all hotels in 2013 – nearly double the percentage of [the prior year](#).

In addition to accommodating our increasingly mobile lifestyles, we will begin to see more hotels going the extra mile to make fitness on-the-go and proper nutrition more convenient for the progressively health conscious American traveler. Amenities such as in-room yoga mats and fitness videos and local, healthy items in mini bars are soon to become the norm, bringing the utmost convenience to the busy traveler's tight schedule.

As part of hotelier's efforts to provide more necessities and less "nice to haves" in 2013, we anticipate the rise of more simplistic amenities that will help guests achieve a home-away-from-home experience. Basic features like complimentary bottled water, free reign over the in-room mini fridge, and more international breakfast options all ranked high among American's [most appreciated simple amenities](#) in this year's Global Hotel Amenities Survey. Brands like Hyatt Hotels & Resorts are already rolling out helpful services aimed at maximizing guest comfort and minimizing stress and unnecessary travel costs. The hotel brand's ["Hyatt Has It" program](#) allows guests to borrow a variety of must-haves such as chargers, curling irons, flatirons, steamers, makeup remover wipes, razors and yoga mats.

While some travelers are enthusiastic about wellness options and creature comforts, others seek hotels offering the best amenities to help them enjoy a change of pace or discover something new. Whether it's cozying up alongside the well-stocked shelves of a [library lounge](#), picking up a new skill from an [on-site class](#), or taking advantage of the trending wine-tasting and comfort hours in the evening (dubbed ["favorite newly offered hotel amenity"](#) by 42% of global travelers), hotels will be offering experiential amenities that will appeal to all kinds of travelers.

Location is another major deciding factor for consumers when choosing a hotel, according to a [recent survey from Deloitte](#). Hotel brands are catering to consumers by offering more [convenient locations](#) that put them at a stone's throw away from many of the activities that they'd like to pursue. For example, [shopping hotels](#) and hotels attached to megamalls will continue to be a growing trend in the coming years, especially as more and more foreign travelers arrive for the [sole purpose of shopping](#) until they drop – luckily their rooms won't be too far!

Established hotels looking to compete with the convenient location of newly-built properties are predicted to increase their ground transportation offerings. This way, they can provide a more personalized touch to their services, while enabling visitors to get where they need to go quickly and easily.



Some Texas cities are not only rising in popularity, but in price

### Most Expensive U.S. Cities

Familiar favorites such as [New York](#), [Honolulu](#), [Boston](#), and [Miami](#) top the chart once again for cities with the highest price tag. However, in 2012, several Texas and California cities began making their way up the ranks, stealing some spotlight from the more consistently pricey locales.

[Odessa-Midland](#) makes its debut, jumping from 46<sup>th</sup> most expensive U.S. city in 2011 to 12<sup>th</sup> in 2012, a result of what is being called "[Oil Boom 2.0.](#)" Ranked first ([Odessa](#))

and second ([Midland](#)) best small towns for jobs by [Forbes Magazine](#), so many people have rushed to this West Texas region that housing options are limited, and thus, hotels have become a temporary alternative. [Victoria, TX](#) also made a notable jump to 14<sup>th</sup> most expensive in 2012, compared to 31<sup>st</sup> most expensive the year prior.

[San Francisco](#) broke into the top five most expensive cities in 2012, swapping places with the picturesque, coastal city of [Santa Barbara](#), now in 7<sup>th</sup>. What's more, the prices in [San Diego](#) seem to be congruent with its popularity, which the last few HPIs have indicated has been steadily on the rise. The sunny, southern city enters the Top 20 Most Expensive U.S. Cities list for the first time at number 19 with an ADR of \$135.

Most Expensive US Cities (USD)				
Rank	City DMA	2012 ADR	2011 ADR	YoY ADR
1.	New York, NY	\$217	\$208	5%
2.	Honolulu, HI	\$209	\$175	19%
3.	Boston, MA	\$175	\$166	5%
4.	Miami, FL	\$159	\$150	6%
5.	San Francisco, CA	\$159	\$144	10%
6.	New Orleans, LA	\$156	\$146	7%
7.	Santa Barbara, CA	\$155	\$147	6%
8.	Panama City, FL	\$150	\$138	9%
9.	Chicago, IL	\$148	\$139	6%
10.	Monterey, CA	\$148	\$137	8%
11.	Idaho Falls, ID	\$146	\$137	6%
12.	Midland-Odessa, TX	\$144	\$112	29%
13.	Washington, D.C.	\$144	\$143	1%
14.	Victoria, TX	\$142	\$121	17%
15.	Anchorage, AK	\$141	\$138	2%
16.	Providence, RI	\$140	\$136	3%
17.	Burlington, VT	\$138	\$131	5%
18.	Charleston, SC	\$138	\$120	15%
19.	San Diego, CA	\$135	\$128	6%
20.	Portland, ME	\$135	\$130	4%

### Least Expensive U.S. Cities

In the quest for your perfect place, shelling out more money per night won't necessarily get you closer to your ideal outcome. In fact, what could be more perfect than just the opposite: paying less than you planned for and getting more than you expected?

There are plenty of hidden gems on the Top 20 Least Expensive U.S. Cities list that are sure to deliver no matter what your budget or your passion. For example, [Jackson, TN](#) – which jumped up 10 spots in 2012 to 2<sup>nd</sup> least expensive city – is located halfway between [Memphis' Beale Street](#) and [Nashville's Music Row](#), making it the perfect pit stop on any music lover's ultimate rock-and-roll road trip.

[Tulsa, OK](#) became notably more affordable in 2012 over 2011, putting the Sooner State on the map as a great value. Tulsa would make an excellent, affordable golf retreat destination as it is home to one of the nation's top rated golf courses, [Southern Hills Country Club](#), which has hosted seven major championships for men, including the U.S. Open three times.

[Dayton, OH](#), hometown of the [Wright Brothers](#) rounds out the list and serves as the perfect destination recommendation for any lover of aviation or history in general.

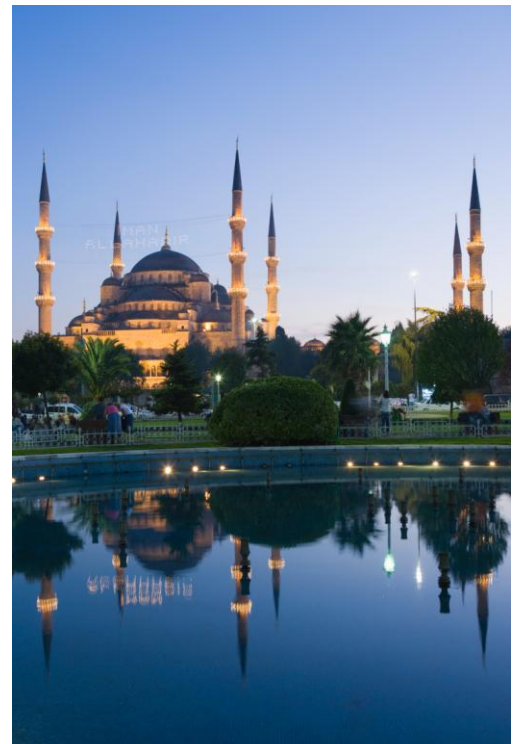
Least Expensive U.S. Cities (USD)				
Rank	City DMA	2012	2011	YoY ADR
1.	Macon, GA	\$75	\$72	4%
2.	Jackson, TN	\$77	\$82	-6%
3.	Yuma, AZ	\$77	\$82	-6%
4.	Albany, GA	\$79	\$76	5%
5.	Dothan, AL	\$80	\$76	5%
6.	Ottumwa, MO	\$80	\$79	1%
7.	Jonesboro, AR	\$80	\$83	-3%
8.	Bakersfield, CA	\$81	\$78	4%
9.	Joplin, MO	\$81	\$82	-1%
10.	Wichita Falls, OK	\$81	\$83	-2%
11.	Montgomery, AL	\$84	\$79	6%
12.	Beaumont, TX	\$84	\$82	3%
13.	Lima, OH	\$85	\$78	9%
14.	Hattiesburg, MS	\$85	\$85	0%
15.	Tulsa, OK	\$85	\$84	1%
16.	Grand Junction, CO	\$85	\$86	-1%
17.	North Platte, NE	\$86	\$89	-3%
18.	Wichita, KS	\$86	\$82	5%
19.	Reno, NV	\$86	\$88	-3%
20.	Dayton, OH	\$87	\$82	5%

### Top Destinations for Americans: Domestic and International

The two most popular domestic destinations – [Las Vegas](#) and [New York City](#) – saw minimal price increases of less than 3% from 2011 to 2012, while two California cities saw the highest average rate increases among the 20 Most Popular Cities. [San Francisco](#), which finished atop [Businessweek.com’s 2012 best cities rankings](#), remained as the seventh most popular domestic destination despite seeing rates increase by 12%. [Anaheim](#), home to Disneyland and the city with the smallest population among the Top 20, fell four spots after being the 16<sup>th</sup> most popular destination in 2011.

Fueled by the return of [Formula 1 racing](#) to the U.S., the [Austin-San Antonio](#) corridor attracted more domestic travelers in 2012. Austin hosted the first U.S. Formula 1 race in five years in November and is also home to a number of major music festivals such as [SXSW](#) and [Austin City Limits](#). The city jumped three spots to the 17<sup>th</sup> most popular domestic destination and saw average rates increase by 9% as a likely result of the major events. San Antonio, located about 80 miles southwest of Austin, moved from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> spot, knocking [Miami](#) out of the Top 10. The city has experienced a burgeoning spring break scene in recent years and its expanded airport recently became the [10<sup>th</sup>-largest U.S. gateway to Mexico](#).

Internationally, the top five destinations for Americans remained the same with [London](#), [Paris](#) and [Rome](#) leading the way. [Tokyo](#)'s travel economy continued to rebound following 2011's tragic tsunami, as the city moved up six spots to become the ninth most popular international destination for Americans. The city to see the biggest jump in U.S. travel was [Istanbul](#), which cracked the top 20 as the 19<sup>th</sup> most popular international destination. Turkey's largest city may indeed be the 'World's Hippest City,' as its ever-growing food and nightlife scene has helped it surpass 14 cities on the list of most popular international destinations for Americans since it was 33<sup>rd</sup> in 2010.



Istanbul saw the biggest jump in U.S. travel



Top Domestic Destinations for Americans		
Rank	City	State
1	Las Vegas	NV
2	New York City	NY
3	Orlando	FL
4	Los Angeles	CA
5	Chicago	IL
6	San Diego	CA
7	San Francisco	CA
8	Washington	DC
9	Houston	TX
10	San Antonio	TX
11	Boston	MA
12	Atlanta	GA
13	Miami	FL
14	New Orleans	LA
15	Dallas	TX
16	Philadelphia	PA
17	Austin	TX
18	Seattle	WA
19	Denver	CO
20	Anaheim	CA

Top International Destinations for Americans		
Rank	City	Country
1	London	United Kingdom
2	Paris	France
3	Rome	Italy
4	Toronto	Canada
5	Vancouver	Canada
6	Barcelona	Spain & Canary Islands
7	Montreal	Canada
8	Hong Kong	Hong Kong
9	Tokyo	Japan
10	Niagara Falls	Canada
11	Amsterdam	Netherlands
12	San Juan	Puerto Rico
13	Madrid	Spain & Canary Islands
14	Bangkok	Thailand
15	Venice	Italy
16	Florence	Italy
17	Dubai	United Arab Emirates
18	Dublin	Ireland
19	Istanbul	Turkey
20	Singapore	Singapore



Williamsburg is one of the hippest neighborhoods outside of New York City

## Neighborhood Spotlight

Just because you're staying in a major city doesn't mean you can't venture off the beaten path when booking your hotel. [Forbes](#) recently profiled some of the hippest neighborhoods in the U.S., many of which offer hotels that have been rated as Excellent or Outstanding by Hotels.com Guest Reviews. If your travels bring you to any of these cities, be sure to check out these trendy neighborhoods.\*

### Williamsburg, [Brooklyn](#)

Just one subway stop away from [Manhattan](#), Williamsburg offers some of New York's best music, food and nightlife options against the backdrop of the Manhattan skyline. In addition to the numerous entertainment options found on Bedford Avenue, Williamsburg is home to [Brooklyn Brewery](#), the [Music Hall of Williamsburg](#) and [McCarren Park](#). The [King and Grove Williamsburg](#) (4.4 guest rating) and [Hotel Le Jolie](#) (4.4 guest rating) both come at a steep discount compared to many of Manhattan's hotels, with rates starting from \$195 and \$159, respectively.

### Mission District, [San Francisco](#)

Signified by the abundance of Mexican cuisine offerings and Latino influenced building murals, the Mission tends to feature some of San Francisco's sunnier and warmer weather due to its geography. The neighborhood also boasts some of the city's most popular festivals, such as the [San Francisco Carnaval Parade](#) and the [San Francisco Street Food Festival](#). Stay at the [Inn San Francisco](#) (4.6 guest rating) from \$175 per night to experience a B&B right in the middle of the action.

### Wicker Park, [Chicago](#)

If you want to be in the middle of the best art galleries, beer gardens and music venues that Chicago has to offer, look no further than Wicker Park. The [Wicker Park Inn](#) (4.5 guest rating) has rooms starting at \$99 and the [Ruby Room](#) (3.8 guest rating) offers rates starting at \$186.

### Pearl District, [Portland](#)

Formerly populated with warehouses, the Pearl District is now known for its art galleries and coffee shops and a brewery that was redeveloped into a five-block shopping and business district called [Brewery Blocks](#). The area also features Portland landmarks such as [Jamison Square](#) and [Powell's City of Books](#), the largest independent new and used bookstore in the world. Stay at the [Mark Spencer Hotel](#) (4.2 guest rating) with rates starting at \$99 or the [Ace Hotel Portland](#) (4.0 guest rating) with rates from \$125.

### Warehouse District, [New Orleans](#)

For those looking to stay away from the Bourbon Street scene, this neighborhood offers a different vibe within walking distance of the French Quarter's attractions. Also known as the Arts District, the area features a number of art galleries and, much like the rest of New Orleans, there's no shortage of amazing restaurants. The [Renaissance New Orleans Arts Hotel](#) (4.6 guest rating), with rates from \$199,

and the [Lafayette Hotel](#) (4.0 guest rating), with rates from \$139, are just a couple of nearby hotel options.

**North Loop, [Minneapolis](#)**

Many of the old buildings in the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District have been turned into restaurants, bars, art galleries and boutique shops. Visitors can also check out the [James I. Rice Park's](#) bike trails and take the short walk over to [Target Field](#). The [TownePlace Suites by Marriott - Minneapolis Downtown](#) (4.5 guest rating) offers rooms from \$79.

\*Hotel prices listed are based on average rates for the specific property as of March 1, 2013, not the Hotel Price Index average daily rate in 2012 for the market as a whole.

## Chapter 5 - Wanderlust

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### **Introduction:**

Travel is all about exploring different cultures, exotic foods, vast landscapes, ancient history and more. Hotels.com wants to help travelers experience more of the world by not only helping them find the perfect place to rest their head, but by also helping them identify where they should travel based on their interests and passions. Whether traveling for cuisine, sports and adventures, music, art and design, shopping or health and wellness, Hotels.com encourages travelers to follow their passions. Hotels.com has teamed up with leading brands and experts in these fields to share their travel secrets and tips, advise on their favorite places to go, and why.

### **Cuisine:**

It's pretty much a fact that we all love to eat. Trying a new local dish or special type of food is all part of the experience when traveling. The following culinary destinations are bound to get your stomach rumbling.

#### [Montreal, Quebec](#) – USD \$170 / CAD \$154

Montreal is home to many iconic Canadian [dishes](#) such as poutine, smoked meat and, of course, the Montreal bagel. This bilingual city also has a variety of ethnic neighbourhoods including: Greek, Chinese and Italian. Located in the Old Montreal – Old Port area, [Hotel Gault](#) offers easy access to Notre Dame Basilica and Christ Church Cathedral. One Hotels.com travelers remarked in their review, “Truly a perfect hotel for Old Town. It is not often that I provide ‘very satisfied’ reviews but my experience was great.”

#### [New Orleans, Louisiana](#) – USD \$161 / CAD \$175

Cajun or Creole? Visitors to [New Orleans](#) have a [variety of foods](#) to taste and please the palate including a [po'boy](#), gumbo, jambalaya, and crawfish étouffée, just to name a few. Want to experience some of the best New Orleans has to offer? Held annually, The [Louisiana Seafood Festival](#), [Cajun/Zydeco Music Festival](#), and [Creole Tomato Festival](#) are referred to as the “Vieux To Do”. Festivalgoers will find crawfish, crab and shrimp cooked any way imaginable.

#### [Lima, Peru](#) – USD \$118 / CAD \$131

[Peru](#)'s unique history, blended races and cultures, and geographical zones have a huge impact on Peru's cuisine. With world-famous dishes including ceviche, chupe de camarones, cuy chactado (fried guinea pig), pachamanca and pisco, cuisine wanderlust ambassador [Richard Sandoval](#) infuses Peruvian food into many of his signature dishes. Taste and sip all of Peru's various cuisines at [Mistura](#), an annual food festival in Lima, showcasing dishes and ingredients from all over the country.

### **Art & Design:**

Seeing a painting, a sculpture or a beautiful building is a much more rewarding experience in real life. The following cities are a sampling of some of the better art and design destinations worth exploring firsthand. Can't make it to one of these cities? Some [hotels feature collections and exhibits](#) for guests to enjoy while staying at the property.

[Toronto, Ontario](#) – USD \$152 / CAD \$145

If you're inspired by art, visit Toronto and soak in the sights. The [Ontario College of Art & Design](#) (OCAD) is famous for its unique design, which features a giant black and white box held up on various coloured legs, something you'd have to see to believe. The [Royal Ontario Museum](#) is another impressive piece of architecture with a distinctive slanted glass design. You can also check out paintings and more at the [Art Gallery of Ontario](#) (AGO), or one of the many independent galleries around the city.

[St. Petersburg, Florida](#) – USD \$106 / CAD \$110

Ranked number one in 2012 for art by [American Style Magazine](#) readers in the Mid-Size Cities category, St. Petersburg boasts world-famous art institutions and top-ranked galleries. Arts and cultural offerings are expanding rapidly to include the new [Salvador Dali Museum](#), [The Chihuly Collection gallery](#), and a vibrant and growing Warehouse Arts District. The community has a large growing arts section including studios for artists to develop and collaborate on work.

[Berlin, Germany](#) – USD \$130 / CAD \$126

Housing over 170 museums and galleries plus a mix of eclectic architecture, Berlin is an ideal destination for art and design enthusiasts. A few of the notable museums and buildings include [Pergamon Museum](#), [Museum House at Checkpoint Charlie](#), Philharmonie, Reichstag and the Sony Centre.

### **Shopping:**

Want to shop 'til you drop? Below are a few trending destinations that provide shopping for all budgets and tastes from one-of-a-kind boutiques to mega-malls and luxury brand stores. Consider checking out the [Hotels.com Pinterest](#) boards to inspire your vacation outfits and other travel essentials. Need to know how to pack it all in? Watch this [tutorial](#).



Graffiti on a Berlin Wall piece

[Vancouver, British Columbia](#) – USD \$163 / CAD \$144

One of the great things about [Vancouver](#) is that because of its milder climate a lot of the stores are outside, making shopping an entirely different experience. [Robson Street](#) is packed with brand name shops, Gastown is an eclectic mix of independent designer labels and souvenirs and Main Street is the perfect hipster hangout.

[Minneapolis, Minnesota](#) – USD \$129 / CAD \$118

Home to the largest shopping complex in the U.S., the [Mall of America](#), Minneapolis offers shopping fiends more than just a gargantuan mall. The city is home to ambitious young designers, funky neighborhood boutiques, upscale stores and more. Another plus? There is no sales tax on apparel or shoes. Want to stay walking distance from America's largest mall? Look no further than the [Homewood Suites – Mall of America](#). One Hotels.com guest review declared, "Very nice room! Enjoyed complimentary dinner and buffet breakfast, too. Convenient to Mall of America - right across the street."

[Copenhagen, Denmark](#) – USD \$183 / CAD \$184

[Copenhagen Fashion Week](#), held twice a year, has put the city on the map for fashionistas. Whether seeking luxury designers like Prada or Chanel on the pedestrian shopping zone on Stroget and Kobmagergade (the longest shopping streets in Copenhagen) or looking for unique goods and antiques at one of the seasonal flea markets, Copenhagen has shops and designs for all tastes and budget.

### **Health & Wellness:**

From open space to yoga to organic food, the following destinations are hotspots for travelers seeking a healthy and balanced escape. Also, check out [these tips](#) for staying healthy during a trip.

[Victoria, British Columbia](#) – USD \$151 / CAD \$129

Speaking of milder climates, Victoria's is one of the mildest in Canada. Thanks to the accommodating weather, this city is perfect for outdoor activities all year round and provides residents and visitors with many reasons to get outdoors. This scenic city has everything you need to lead a healthy lifestyle and features walking and cycling trails on land, and kayaking and surfing in the surrounding ocean. Foodies will want to check out the [Moss Street Market](#), open from April to November, where they can enjoy local cuisine such as fresh seafood and organic produce.

[San Francisco, California](#) - USD \$185 / CAD \$203

Two recent studies, the [Healthiest Habitats](#) and the [American Fitness Index](#), ranked [San Francisco](#) as one of the healthiest cities in the U.S. Between numerous restaurants offering organic and farm-to-table ingredients and the city's extensive recreation and park system (over 220 parks), San Francisco provides wonderful land and aquatic activities and facilities for active visitors to enjoy while in the City by the Bay. The city's oldest neighborhood, [The Mission District](#), is home to a large Latino community. Surrounded by delicious comfort [foods](#) derived from all over Latin America, it is a [home](#) away from home.

[Tel Aviv, Israel](#) –USD \$186 / CAD \$215

Nestled on the Mediterranean coast, [Tel Aviv](#), Israel is the epitome of healthy dieting and exercise. Tel Aviv's public beaches and parks offer complimentary outdoor [exercise equipment](#). For those who prefer a more private workout, many Tel Aviv hotels provide spas and that use natural local ingredients. Healthy eating couldn't be simpler in [Tel Aviv](#) with wholesome options around every corner. Visitors can seek out staples of the Mediterranean diet such as fresh fruits and vegetables, hummus, olive oil, yogurt and cheese.

### **Adventure:**

If the running of the bulls or skydiving is a little too extreme for you, take a look at these adventurous destinations that are bound to get your adrenaline pumping and blood flowing.

[Banff, Alberta](#) – USD \$190 / CAD \$167

Head to [Banff](#) where you can enjoy mountain biking, hiking, rock climbing, canoeing or kayaking. The options are endless, and you can even enjoy the scenic wilderness in the winter months when the mountains are perfect for skiing and ice climbing. Stay just minutes from local ski areas, hot springs and downtown Banff at [The Rimrock Resort Hotel](#). Rated by Hotels.com guests as a 4.4 out of 5, one guest declared, "The Rimrock is gorgeous. It is partially built into the mountain and has stunning views from

the rooms as well as from the lobby, restaurants, and the indoor pool/gym/sauna area. Lots of amenities including a skating rink and bonfire right outside.”

\*Note: Banff is considered a town, not a city



Jackson Hole has more than 2,500 acres of skiable terrain

[Jackson Hole, Wyoming](#) - USD \$181 / CAD \$181

Jackson Hole offers countless outdoor adventure opportunities including mountaineering, skiing, rock climbing, backpacking, rafting and more. The area boasts several destinations like [Jackson Hole Mountain Resort](#), [Snow King Resort](#), [Grand Targhee Resort](#), [Yellowstone National Park](#), [Grand Teton National Park](#) and the [National Elk Refuge](#) providing travelers with abundant options.

[Cape Town, South Africa](#) - USD \$157 / \$170

Home to the world’s largest bungee-jump, [South Africa](#) is a haven for adventure seekers. Travelers can try their hand at various activities including surfing, hang gliding, sand boarding, rock climbing and canyoning. Explore South Africa’s wildlife at [Kruger National Park](#). Want a more up-close encounter with wildlife? Skip the safari and try one of South Africa’s most well-known and thrilling experiences – shark diving.

### **Music:**

From intimate concert settings to large music festivals, the following cities thrive on providing [unique concert experiences](#) for travelers no matter what music is on their iPod. Have your trip planned but not sure what to pack? [StubHub](#) has provided inside knowledge on the ins and outs of [outdoor concerts](#) to help travelers have the best experience.

[Halifax, Canada](#) – USD \$168 / \$157

The East Coast of Canada is well known for its friendly residents and charm, but did you know it has a thriving music scene as well? Halifax is the perfect destination to experience music of all genres. From the traditional folk music that Nova Scotia is known for, to pop, rap or rock - this city caters to music lovers. It’s also the hometown of many popular Canadian acts including the rapper, Classified, alternative-rock band, Sloan, and singer-songwriter, Joel Plaskett. Plan a visit in July to check out the Halifax Jazz Festival, or in October for Halifax Pop Explosion.

[Austin, Texas](#) – USD \$139 / CAD \$164

Many travelers consider [Austin](#) the live music capital of the world as it is said to boast more live music venues per capita than anywhere else in the nation. Listen to bands perform anything from indie rock to swing to country at more intimate venues such as Antone’s, Emo’s or the Continental Club. Only have a short amount of time to spend in Austin but want to listen to the most music? Consider attending festivals such as [Austin City Limits](#) and [SXSW](#), which are hosted annually in Austin. Stay in the heart of

Austin at [The Driskill](#) and enjoy great service and access to the surrounding area. One Hotels.com guest said, “Such an elegant, historic hotel! The bar with nightly entertainment, a delightful, delicious afternoon tea in the lobby, a wonderful place to have breakfast in the hotel, close to the State Capital, O. Henry [Museum], theaters, historical homes!”

[Kingston, Jamaica](#) – USD \$177 / CAD \$130

Before Bob Marley put [Kingston](#) and Jamaica on the map through reggae music, Kingston was, and continues to be, a thriving metropolis for music such as Ska and Dancehall music styles. Annually [Jamaica](#) hosts island-wide music events showcasing past and present music stylings like [Reggae Sumfest](#) and Stir it Up Film & Music Festival in [Montego Bay](#) and Live Music Nation in Kingston.





Japan was the biggest spender in the U.S. in 2012

### What the World Paid for a U.S. Hotel Room

International visitors [spent record amounts](#) of cash in the U.S. in 2012. Who are these big spenders helping support our grand ol' economy?

First off, [Japan](#) is the top-spending nation of 2012. The Japanese spent an average of \$209 per night on a hotel accommodations in the U.S. [South Africa](#) was a close second, spending only \$3 less per hotel room. Travelers from both of these nations spent almost 5% more per room than they spent last year.

[Paraguayans](#), although 11<sup>th</sup> on the list, increased their spending 12%—the largest increase of the bunch. Travelers from [Portugal](#), on the other hand, decreased their spending by 18%.

In fact, it seems that many European countries are [decreasing spending](#) at U.S. hotels. Visitors to the U.S. from [Greece](#), [Italy](#), [Switzerland](#) and [Denmark](#) decreased their average spending on hotel room nights. This is to be expected as the economy of some European nations saw crises in 2012.

It seems that [Brazil's](#) 11% increase in hotel room spending could be a direct result of the [visa changes](#) implemented by the U.S. government in 2012. With easier access to the U.S. for Brazilians, there is less stopping them from visiting these 50 states.

Top International Spenders in U.S. Hotel Rooms in USD				
Rank	Point of Sale Country	2012 ADR	2011 ADR	YoY ADR
1	Japan	\$209	\$200	5%
2	South Africa	\$206	\$197	5%
3	Norway	\$203	\$200	2%
4	Australia	\$198	\$193	3%
5	Greece	\$193	\$200	-4%
6	Sweden	\$190	\$188	1%
7	Ireland	\$187	\$187	0%
8	Switzerland	\$185	\$192	-3%
9	Russia	\$183	\$181	1%
10	Chile	\$182	\$172	6%
11	Paraguay	\$182	\$163	12%
12	Finland	\$180	\$179	0%
13	United Kingdom	\$179	\$174	3%
14	Latvia	\$178	\$169	5%
15	Turkey	\$175	\$173	1%
16	Arabic	\$175	\$159	10%
17	Israel	\$172	\$164	5%
18	Argentina	\$170	\$154	11%
19	Portugal	\$170	\$209	-18%
20	Italy	\$169	\$177	-5%
21	Philippines	\$169	\$161	5%
22	Singapore	\$169	\$160	6%
23	Brazil	\$169	\$152	11%
24	New Zealand	\$169	\$156	8%
25	Ukraine	\$167	\$193	-13%

### Prices Paid at Home and Away

U.S. citizens spent on average \$45 less per night on hotel rooms when traveling domestically versus internationally. That isn't the case for some countries, however. Take a look at how much other nations spent while traveling in their home country and away to help gauge what your globetrotting adventures may [cost](#) you in the future.

While the [Japanese](#) spend \$141 domestically, they spent the most out of any other nation while traveling internationally—\$186. Travelers from [Norway](#) and [Singapore](#) spent \$185 and \$187 respectively, and that steep price is for domestic travel. But not to fret, these travelers actually get a better deal on international hotel stays.

[Indians](#) were the thriftiest travelers in 2012, spending \$88 per hotel room night domestically, while those from [Spain](#) and the Canary Islands stayed the most frugal when traveling internationally. Maybe consulting someone from Spain for hotel recommendations would be wise for your next travel adventure.

Price Paid at Home & Away		
Country	Home	Away
Japan	\$141	\$186
Australia	\$178	\$174
United States of America	\$126	\$171
Switzerland	\$193	\$170
China	\$104	\$169
Norway	\$185	\$167
Brazil	\$133	\$164
Russia	\$148	\$161
Argentina	\$106	\$160
New Zealand	\$107	\$158
United Kingdom	\$130	\$158
Sweden	\$162	\$157
Canada	\$144	\$150
Austria	\$122	\$149
Colombia	\$132	\$149
Ireland	\$109	\$147
Denmark	\$149	\$144
Hong Kong	\$155	\$144
Singapore	\$187	\$144
South Korea	\$155	\$143
India	\$88	\$141
Italy	\$113	\$138
Finland	\$141	\$136
France	\$105	\$135
Germany	\$114	\$135
Portugal	\$91	\$135
Mexico	\$116	\$134
Netherlands	\$120	\$133
Spain & Canary Islands	\$94	\$131

## Top U.S. Cities for Foreign Travelers

Changes in rank were sparse this year. The States are maintaining ranks and drawing consistent amounts of visitors year after year. In fact, spots 1 through 7 have been taken by the same cities as last year. [New York City](#), [Las Vegas](#) and [Orlando](#) are still the three most popular cities for foreign travelers.

Travelers will perpetually visit New York City because of its tremendously famous attractions, shops, eateries and nightlife. New TV shows *Girls*, *The Carrie Diaries* and *Elementary* showcased the [Big Apple](#) for its legendary backdrop and charming personalities. Although NYC and the surrounding area saw some harsh times late in the year due to Hurricane Sandy, the progress this great city has made shows its enormous spirit.



New York City's skyline alone draws travelers

On to warmer climates, Las Vegas and Orlando prevailed at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Consequently, the international airports at these destinations made the list of [10 most favored airport hotels](#) based on guest reviews.

According to foreign travelers, these top U.S. cities are still highly coveted places to travel since 2011. This could be due to the fact that these places are truly all-encompassing and accommodating places for travelers. Take [Miami](#) for example: adults, children, music lovers, foodies, history buffs, sun-bathers and adventure-seekers alike can find something to (wander)lust over in this sunny city. Hotels in the area will play a part in helping you enjoy your Miami adventure. A guest who stayed at the [EPIC, A Kimpton Hotel](#), gave the hotel five stars and wrote: "Wonderful experience. I will definitely recommend this hotel to anyone looking to stay in Miami. I went with my friend to celebrate both our birthdays and both the hotel and the restaurant (area 31) went above and beyond to help us celebrate."

[San Diego](#) is maintaining its position by offering [kid-friendly attractions](#) and by featuring a "Happiness is Calling" advertising campaign that launched at the end of 2011. [New Orleans](#) and [Boston](#) are two cities that have made their marks on the list as well.

Top U.S. Cities for Foreign Travelers					
2012 Rank	City	State	2011 Rank	City	State
1	New York City	NY	1	New York City	NY
2	Las Vegas	NV	2	Las Vegas	NV
3	Orlando	FL	3	Orlando	FL
4	Miami	FL	4	Miami	FL
5	Los Angeles	CA	5	Los Angeles	CA
6	San Francisco	CA	6	San Francisco	CA
8	San Diego	CA	8	Chicago	IL
9	Chicago	IL	9	San Diego	CA
10	Boston	MA	10	Washington	D.C.
11	Washington	D.C.	11	Boston	MA
12	Fort Lauderdale	FL	12	Fort Lauderdale	FL
13	Seattle	WA	13	Seattle	WA
14	Anaheim	CA	14	Newark	NJ
15	Newark	NJ	15	Anaheim	CA
16	San Antonio	TX	16	Lake Buena Vista	FL
17	Lake Buena Vista	FL	17	San Antonio	TX
18	Houston	TX	18	Key West	FL
19	New Orleans	LA	19	Houston	TX
20	Key West	FL	20	New Orleans	LA

## Chapter 7 - Affordable Luxury

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### Best Five-Star Values

For those looking to finally find that much needed rest and relaxation, have authentic experiences in new destinations, gain personal enrichment, or reconnect with loved ones, you are not alone in your quest. According to the [2013 Luxe Report](#) by luxury travel network, Virtuoso, all of these are among the top motivations behind high-end travel for 2013. At the top of these motivations for luxury travel is multi-generational family travel. As baby boomers continue to drive travel sales, and the desire to spend time with loved ones continues to be prominently factored into decisions, travel with family in mind has been the top and recurring trend over the years.

The [2012 Four Seasons Luxury Trend Report](#) states that the modern luxury consumer is continuously in search of customization, true distinctiveness, and constant exceeding of expectations. In terms of travel, this requires services and products to be tailored to each individual's needs and desires, hoteliers to be innovative and different from others in the market, and experiences to be truly once-in-a-lifetime.

Below is a list of the Top 10 Cities with the Best Five-Star Room Rates that can help deliver that unique experience for which travelers are searching. [Warsaw, Poland](#) topped off the list once again, providing the best value for a five-star hotel. Both luxury-seeking and value-focused travelers can experience all the extravagance of a five-star hotel here, at properties such as the highly-rated [InterContinental Warsaw](#) (rated "Outstanding" after almost 300 guest reviews) or the elegant [Hotel Bristol](#), while paying low and affordable rates.

In this often overlooked destination, visitors can stroll through the magnificent [Lazienki Park](#), considered a must-see in the city, and be transported to a world of charming gardens, canals, ponds, and palaces. The masterfully reconstructed [Old Town](#), after suffering years of destruction from World War II, now houses colorful homes, market squares, cobblestone streets and baroque palaces for all vacationers to enjoy.

Jetsetters of all types can find the five-star luxury they are looking for at a fraction of the price in the below cities ranging between only \$125 and \$206 a night.

Best Five-Star Values			
Rank	City	Country	2012 ADR
1.	Warsaw	Poland	\$125
2.	Marrakech	Morocco	\$162
3.	Budapest	Hungary	\$177
4.	Lisbon	Portugal	\$180
5.	Pisa	Italy	\$183
6.	Brussels	Belgium	\$186
7.	Cairo	Egypt	\$191
8.	Bangkok	Thailand	\$199
9.	Tallinn	Estonia	\$201
10.	Berlin	Germany	\$206



Visit the beautiful Castle Square in Warsaw

### Best Value for \$125

To help you get the most “bang for your buck”, Hotels.com has compiled a list of the Top 10 Cities with Highest Star Rating Under \$125. At the top of the list are [Warsaw, Poland](#), [Marrakech, Morocco](#), and [Bangkok, Thailand](#), which also have some of the best five-star room rates. Each of these 10 cities is fantastically distinct and offers many attractions for everyone to enjoy. Travelers can take advantage of the great luxury rates in Bangkok and [Madrid](#) to finally check off getting a famous Thai massage or visiting the stunning Prado Museum from their bucket lists. Foodies who are looking to follow their stomachs can

indulge in the popular street delicacies of Marrakech or treat themselves to delicious dim sum in [Shanghai](#). Whenever you are looking to cure your wanderlust, this list is the perfect place to start.

Best Value for \$125			
City	Country	Star Rating	2012 ADR
Warsaw	Poland	5	\$125
Marrakech	Morocco	4	\$104
Bangkok	Thailand	4	\$104
Budapest	Hungary	4	\$107
Lisbon	Portugal	4	\$118
Tallinn	Estonia	4	\$122
Shanghai	China	4	\$123
Prague	Czech Republic	4	\$124
Las Vegas	United States Of America	4	\$124
Madrid	Spain & Canary Islands	4	\$125

## New York never sleeps – to the joy of global travelers



Whether suffering from insomnia or just needing a big night out: New York is *the* city to visit for nightlife, according to a recent survey by the hotels expert Hotels.com. The survey, which questioned 27,000 travelers from around the world, shows that the Big Apple is globally the most favored city when it comes to night-time entertainment.

While gamblers’ paradise Las Vegas is the globetrotters’ second favorite choice while London comes in at number three.

The survey also reveals that, although the gold and silver medals go to the U.S., six out of the Top Ten cities are in Europe. As well as London, [Paris](#), [Barcelona](#), [Berlin](#), [Amsterdam](#) and [Madrid](#) all make it into the world’s favorite list while [Los Angeles](#) and [Bangkok](#), as the only Asian city, complete the Top Ten.

“New York always provides an incredible travel adventure especially at this time of year with holiday decorations and New Year’s celebrations,” said Taylor L. Cole, APR, travel expert for Hotels.com. “Not only is Las Vegas non-stop fun, but it also offers a peak at European culture with all of its diverse hotels and clubs for those that want to stay closer to home.”

Wondering where to go when you venture to one of these top ranked cities? [PartyEarth.com](#) ranks nightlife hotspots by your interests. According to the [party experts](#) you can have a great time right at your hotel in New York City by staying at the [Empire Hotel](#), [Hotel le Bristol](#) in Paris and [Sunset Tower Hotel](#) in Los Angeles.

### **The world’s Top Ten for a big night out:**

Position	City
1	New York
2	Las Vegas
3	London
4	Paris
5	Barcelona
6	Berlin
7	Amsterdam
8	Madrid
9	Los Angeles
10	Bangkok



## Beep! Beep! Hotels.com Uncovers Top Cities Around the World to Hail a Taxi



London cabs were voted the best taxis in the world for the fifth year in a row in 2012, according to the annual global taxi survey from Hotels.com. London claimed 11% of the votes, followed by New York with 6.4% and Tokyo with 5.6%.

Travelers voted in seven categories, of which London's iconic black cabs, that have been around in some form since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, led in five. These included friendliness, knowledge of the area, cleanliness, safety and quality of driving. However, the classic black taxis were also voted worst for value. Bangkok topped the list for best value while New York beat out London as the best city for availability with its famous yellow cabs.

Taxis in Asian countries rose in popularity, with Tokyo, Shanghai and Bangkok all qualifying for coveted spots in the Top Five.

The Hotels.com taxi survey also revealed some of the unconventional activities that travelers from around the world get up to on their taxi journeys, including falling asleep (56%), kissing in the backseat (26%) and touching up hair/makeup (19%).

### The world's best taxis:

Rank	City	% of votes
1	London	11
2	New York	6.4
3	Tokyo	5.6
4	Shanghai	4.8
5	Bangkok	4.3

## Home-Away-From-Home

Global travelers are looking for a home-away-from-home experience when they stay in a hotel according to the latest research from leading online accommodation booking service, Hotels.com. Topping the list of must-have hotel amenities are free Wi-Fi and free food and beverages, with caffeine being a must. All the rest is just, well... extra.

### Staying Connected...for Free

- 34% say free Wi-Fi is the number one factor in choosing a hotel, even on leisure stays.
- 56% of respondents said free Wi-Fi was their number one must-have when traveling for business.
- 66% indicated free Wi-Fi is the amenity they most wish would become standard at all hotels in 2013.

Free Wi-Fi trumps both free parking and complimentary breakfast when it comes to choosing a hotel for both leisure and business travel, showing that access to the online world is a necessity for modern-day travelers with over a third still looking to stay connected while on vacation. In fact just 11% of global travelers said they would be willing to pay for Wi-Fi when staying in a hotel.

### The Perk of New Technology – Favorite “Modern” In-Room Amenity

- Creature comforts of home are also high on the priority list for travelers with 23% choosing high-end coffee makers as their top modern in hotel room amenity.

Totally wired rooms which are completely controlled by one remote for any need took 20% of the vote. Guests also indicated they would like to enjoy that much-wanted free Wi-Fi on hotel-provided tablets for guest information, room service and local guides.



### It's the Little Things that Count – Most Appreciated Simple Amenity

- Keeping hydrated when traveling is important to hotel guests with 43% choosing complimentary bottled water as the most appreciated simple amenity.

Only respondents from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Brazil rated free power adaptors above bottled water.

### The Way to Hotel Guests' Hearts – Through Their Stomachs!

- Free breakfast ranked as the favorite (31%) non-tech item global travelers want to see become standard at all hotels in 2013.

- Happy hours, wine tastings or any other time with free food and drinks is 42% of global travelers' favorite newly offered hotel service amenity, with international breakfast options coming in second (19%).
- Travelers cite unlimited free food and beverages as their most (23%) missed comfort from home when traveling. Another 14% said they miss access to cooking in their kitchen the most.

**Five-Star Life – *The Highs and Lows of Luxury Perks***

- 26% say their favorite amenity while staying at a luxury hotel is the high end fitness center and/or spa, while designer toiletries also rank highly (21 %).
- While travelers enjoy their time living the highlife, the promotion of bath menus/bath butlers (26%) and turn down service (24%) as amenities simply aren't of interest according to survey respondents.
- More than half of respondents (54%) chose the complimentary use of a Rolls Royce Phantom as the "outrageous" luxury hotel amenity they'd most like to experience. No real surprise there!

The surreal car ride beat out access to a tea sommelier (9%), in-room mixologist (9%) and fragrance butler (5%) among other lesser desired extreme amenities.

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## Hotels.com Highlights of 2012

2012 was a significant year for Hotels.com with the company passing several important milestones and achieving noteworthy results.

- In February, we unveiled our new global branding with a new colorful and bold logo, straplines and advertising. Over the past twenty years, Hotels.com has evolved from a phone-based sales company, to a primarily web-based enterprise and now to a global, fully integrated web, phone, social and mobile-booking business. It was therefore felt that our branding should reflect our position as a global industry leader.
- Welcome Rewards®, the loyalty rewards program for Hotels.com guests, launched two new levels in major markets, bringing added benefits, with Silver membership reached by booking 10 nights in a year and Gold with 30 nights.
- We launched apps for the Windows 7 and 8 platforms to join our portfolio of mobile apps for iPhone, Android and tablet. Collectively, Hotels.com apps have been downloaded around the world 15 million times since their launch in 2011.
- During the year, we launched two new websites: a Spanish version in the U.S. for our Hispanic customers and a site in Hebrew to complement our existing English one in Israel, demonstrating our commitment to bringing the Hotels.com experience closer to our customers by providing more sites with localized and highly relevant and compelling content.
- Our UK site reached its tenth anniversary during the year. It was the first international Hotels.com website launched in 2002 and continues to be one of our most important.
- Hotels.com has won numerous awards over the years and 2012 brought a bumper crop.
  - ByteLevel recognized Hotels.com as a Top 5 Best Global Website for 2012. The ByteLevel report card evaluated websites on global reach, global navigation, global/mobile architecture and localization and social efforts.
  - Hotels.com was once again named Best Overall Customer Experience, according to a study by Keynote Competitive Research, in the U.S. and also won Best Brand Impact in the UK, in addition to ranking second for Best Overall Customer Experience, Conversion Impact and Customer Satisfaction.
  - Also in the UK, Hotels.com was officially named a CoolBrand in an influential annual survey to identify the country's coolest brands.
  - In Russia, Hotels.com won the Best Booking Engine category in the inaugural Moya Planeta awards and was shortlisted in the Best Mobile App section.
  - At year end, we also learned that Hotels.com in the UK, as part of the wider Expedia.com Ltd family, was amongst the Top 100 Best Places to Work with the highest possible 3-star accreditation status, according to the annual Sunday Times survey.

## Hotels.com in numbers:

15 million	Hotels.com mobile apps downloaded
7 million	Customer reviews from guests who have actually stayed in the hotels
6 million	Welcome Rewards members
200,000	Bookable properties available on the site
85+	Localized Hotels.com websites around the world
35	Languages

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## About [Hotels.com](#)<sup>®</sup>

[Hotels.com](#) is a leading online accommodation booking brand. Through the Expedia, Inc. global network of websites, Hotels.com, LP connects travelers with almost 200,000 properties around the world, ranging from international chains and all-inclusive resorts to local favorites and bed & breakfasts, together with all the information needed to book the perfect stay. Hotels.com, LP benefits from one of the largest hotel contracting teams in the industry, obtaining the best rates for its customers, and offers frequent sales, special deals and promotions. There are more than 7 million [Guest Reviews](#) on the websites from users who have actually stayed in the hotels to ensure customers can make an informed choice when booking. Through Hotels.com, LP's industry-leading loyalty program [Welcome Rewards](#)<sup>®</sup>, customers can earn a free night for every 10 nights stayed at more than 85,000 hotels. Under its [Price Match Guarantee](#), if a customer can find the same deal for less on a prepaid hotel, Hotels.com, LP will refund the difference. Travelers can book online or by contacting one of the multilingual call centers. Special apps for mobile phones and tablets can also be downloaded at [www.hotels.com/deals/mobile\\_app/](#) enabling customers to book on the go with access to 20,000 last minute deals. Hotels.com publishes an award-winning twice-yearly review of international hotel room price trends called the Hotels.com Hotel Price Index™, which is now produced in 31 individual country editions, with North American data available at [www.hotel-price-index.com](#). Follow Hotels.com on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Hotels.comUS](#), on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/hotelsdotcom](#) and on YouTube at [http://www.youtube.com/user/hotelsdotcom](#). Hotels.com, LP is part of Expedia, Inc., the largest online travel company in the world with an extensive portfolio that includes some of the world's best-known brands.

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