

# Airbnb unveils its 20 trending destinations for 2020

Online marketplace Airbnb has unveiled its list of 20 trending destinations, based on year-over-year growth in bookings, for 2020.

## **Milwaukee, WI, US – 729% YoY increase**

The host of next year's Democratic National Convention, Milwaukee makes it to the top of our trending list. This historic gem on the shores of Lake Michigan often slips under the radar but has a terrific bar and restaurant scene and fascinating cultural attractions that include a Calatrava-designed art museum.

## **Bilbao, Spain – 402% YoY increase**

Bilbao's transformation from rust belt city to flourishing culture hub is truly remarkable. The city's Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Museum put Bilbao on the map when it opened back in 1997. Since then the Basque capital has been on an ever-upward ascent, winning the European City of the Year in 2018.



Visitors to the area are rewarded with a lively dining scene, breathtaking architecture and an unforgettable cityscape. Next year, Bilbao will also become a top destination for sports fans: it's one of the host cities of Europe's most beloved soccer competition.

#### **Buriram, Thailand – 383% YoY increase**

The rural province of Buriram is home to some of Thailand's most treasured Khmer relics. Its best-known monument is the incredible Phnom Rung complex which is comparable in grandeur to its much more famous Cambodian neighbour, Angkor Wat.

In addition to ancient ruins, the province has also become a sporting hotspot: 2018 saw the inaugural MotoGP motor racing event at the Chang International Circuit which also plays host to the Buriram Marathon each year. MotoGP is scheduled to return in March next year.

#### **Sunbury, Victoria, Australia – 356% YoY increase**

A short drive northwest of Melbourne, the suburb of Sunbury is a popular spot with savvy locals thanks to its wildlife, wineries and Victorian-era architecture. Its biggest claim to fame is as the birthplace of cricket's most sought-after trophy – The Ashes. In 2020, Sunbury looks to attract cricket fans from near and far as Melbourne will be hosting the ICC T20 World Cup.



#### **Romania – 298% YoY increase**

Romania, with its pristine hills and ancient rural villages, is the perfect destination for anyone looking for something off-the-beaten-track. The country has some of the best-preserved virgin forests in Europe and, according to the 2018 Environmental Performance Index, ranks 15th globally when it comes to ecosystem vitality.

#### **Xi'an, China – 255% YoY increase**

Often cited as one of the birthplaces of Chinese civilization, Xi'an is best known as the home of the terracotta warriors – a vast collection of prehistoric clay soldiers discovered by local farmers in 1974.

Today, the capital of China's western Shaanxi province is a major culinary melting pot while its numerous historical monuments have earned it the nickname "China's outdoor museum". The ancient city plans a new offering in 2020: a tourism program that will introduce 30 nighttime tour routes throughout Xi'an with highlights including nighttime markets and performances.



#### **Eugene, OR, US – 213% YoY increase**

This medium-sized city in the Pacific Northwest punches above its weight: many multinational businesses were launched in Eugene and the city has made a name for itself as a culinary hub in Oregon. Thanks to the surrounding natural beauty, Eugene has long attracted eco-conscious newcomers many of whom have helped make the city a hub for the organic food industry.

Eugene's eco-credentials are also apparent in its commitment to going carbon neutral next year. This green city is also a track and field destination and will welcome athletes and spectators when it hosts national qualifying trials in summer 2020.

#### **Luxembourg – 167% YoY increase**

This diminutive European country packs a lot into its small landmass – the city of Luxembourg was declared a Unesco World Heritage Site in 1994 thanks to its enchanting historic core, dramatically perched on a clifftop. Beyond the city itself, the country's forested hills are home to medieval castles, rocky gorges, charming villages and superb vineyards.





### **Guadalajara, Mexico – 158% YoY increase**

Often overlooked, Mexico's second city is steadily gaining the recognition it deserves. Guadalajara operates at a less frantic pace than Mexico City yet it has a wealth of attractions to reward visitors – from its colonial architecture in the hipster Chapultepec neighbourhood to an impressive selection of festivals and museums.

Guadalajara's green credentials are also worth noting: The local government has embarked on an initiative that encourages cyclists and pedestrians to reclaim public spaces normally dominated by cars.

### **Vanuatu – 140% YoY increase**

Almost 2,000 miles west of Australia, this picturesque archipelago nation is home to rugged islands, deserted beaches and stunning Pacific wildlife. Vanuatu comprises over 80 islands and has the highest density of languages per capita in the world – over 100 native languages are spoken throughout the archipelago. The range of activities on offer is also diverse – from hiking up a volcano to world-class scuba diving.



**Cali, Colombia – 137% YoY increase**

The world's salsa capital not only offers energising local music and dance, but its rich Afro-Colombian heritage has also infused the city with a distinctive caleño culture. Cali has a real zest and an unmistakably electrifying atmosphere.

This melting pot of indigenous, European and African cultures has a tropical party vibe and energising nightlife – and at around 1,000 meters above sea level it enjoys a warm and breezy temperature during the day and a refreshingly cool one at night.

**Cape Canaveral, FL, US – 136% YoY increase**

This Floridian cape is best known around the world as the site of the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station but it also offers an incredible 72 miles of beachfront and three significant protected areas – Canaveral National Seashore, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and Sebastian Inlet State Park.

In July 2020, Cape Canaveral will be poised once again for the international stage – this time as the launch site of Nasa's Mars 2020 Exploration Program.



**Aberdeen, Scotland** – 119% YoY increase

Aberdeen, located in northeast Scotland, is known as the Granite City thanks to the gleaming white stone that much of the city has been built with. Scotland's third-largest city has much to offer besides a striking cityscape: From fine dining, galleries and museums in the city itself, to rugged coastal scenery and romantic ruins in the surrounding countryside.

And like many other destinations on the list, Aberdeen has major sustainability plans in place with the aim of drastically reducing carbon emissions.

**Courtenay, BC, Canada** – 114% YoY increase

Courtenay, set in the charming Comox Valley on Vancouver Island, is the perfect starting point for outdoor adventurers. Surrounded by rolling mountains, alpine meadows and bohemian villages, this charming small city is another favourite with the eco-conscious traveller: the local authority has embarked on a number of initiatives to reduce its environmental impact including the adoption of targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

**Ubatuba, Brazil** – 108% YoY increase

With over 100 beaches, the city of Ubatuba is the undisputed surfing capital of São Paulo state and hosts numerous surf championships throughout the year. Ubatuba and its surroundings have become popular with Paulistanos, who are attracted by a stunning coastline and pristine nature; the area also has scores of hiking trails that weave their way through lush Atlantic rainforest.





**Les Contamines-Montjoie, France – 108% YoY increase**

The village of Les Contamines is a jewel at the heart of the Mont Blanc region. Nestled between the well-known resorts of Chamonix and Megève, it's the ideal base for mountain climbing in summer or for skiing in winter. The village is picture-postcard-pretty and features many old farm buildings that have been faithfully restored in the local Savoy architectural style.

**Tokyo, Japan – 103% YoY increase**

While Tokyo might not be off-the-beaten-track, it has deservedly secured a place in the top trending list thanks in part to the upcoming Summer Olympics. In July and August next year, Japan will play host to the world's best athletes for the fourth time.

The world's largest metropolitan area has put in place a comprehensive strategy to ensure the Games are an environmentally-friendly event: reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions and using renewable energy, public transport and low-energy vehicles.

**Kerala, India – 95% YoY increase**

For many travellers, Kerala is South India's most enchanting state. With its palm-lined coast, rolling coffee plantations and stunning Arabian Sea views, Kerala is an oasis of calm in a country that moves at a busy pace.



And with an impressive array of beaches, lakes, mountains and waterfalls, Kerala is home to some of the best eco-friendly destinations on the subcontinent. The state runs a Responsible Tourism programme – encouraging residents and visitors alike to enjoy the culture of the place while also conserving it.

#### **Malindi, Kenya – 88% YoY increase**

This bustling coastal village is home to a multicultural melting pot of African, Arab and European residents, and stunning natural beauty. Dotted with brawny palms, this historical Kenyan port town introduces travellers to the country's diverse aquatic wildlife in Malindi Marine National Park, making it an idyllic spot for divers.

Known for its Swahili architecture, fresh-caught seafood and natural wonders like the Marafa Depression – also known as Hell's Kitchen – this pristine beach town is much more than a laid-back sunny retreat.

The country at large is also making sizeable strides in preserving our planet: At the recent UN Climate Action Summit, Kenya pledged to plant two billion trees by 2021 and committed to accelerating energy efficiency by 3% each year.

#### **Maastricht, Netherlands – 55% YoY increase**

In 20th position is Maastricht, a Dutch city with a wealth of historic buildings – more than any Dutch city outside Amsterdam. With its Roman history and a warren of narrow streets, Maastricht is also home to numerous museums and in March 2020 will play host to one of the world's largest art fairs — Tefaf Maastricht.

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