

Prices and earnings 2015

Do I earn enough for the life I want?



Prices and earnings 2015

Do I earn enough for the life I want?

Africa

Cairo (Egypt)
Johannesburg (South Africa)
Nairobi (Kenya)

Asia

Bangkok (Thailand)
Beijing (China)
Hong Kong (China)
Jakarta (Indonesia)
Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)
Manila (Philippines)
Mumbai (India)
New Delhi (India)
Seoul (South Korea)
Shanghai (China)
Taipei (Taiwan)
Tokyo (Japan)

Eastern Europe

Bratislava (Slovakia)
Bucharest (Romania)
Budapest (Hungary)
Kiev (Ukraine)
Ljubljana (Slovenia)
Moscow (Russia)
Prague (Czech Republic)
Riga (Latvia)
Sofia (Bulgaria)
Tallinn (Estonia)
Vilnius (Lithuania)
Warsaw (Poland)

Middle East

Doha (Qatar)
Dubai (United Arab Emirates)
Istanbul (Turkey)
Manama (Bahrain)
Nicosia (Cyprus)
Tel Aviv (Israel)

North America

Chicago (United States)
Los Angeles (United States)
Mexico City (Mexico)
Miami (United States)
Montreal (Canada)
New York City (United States)
Toronto (Canada)

Oceania

Auckland (New Zealand)
Sydney (Australia)

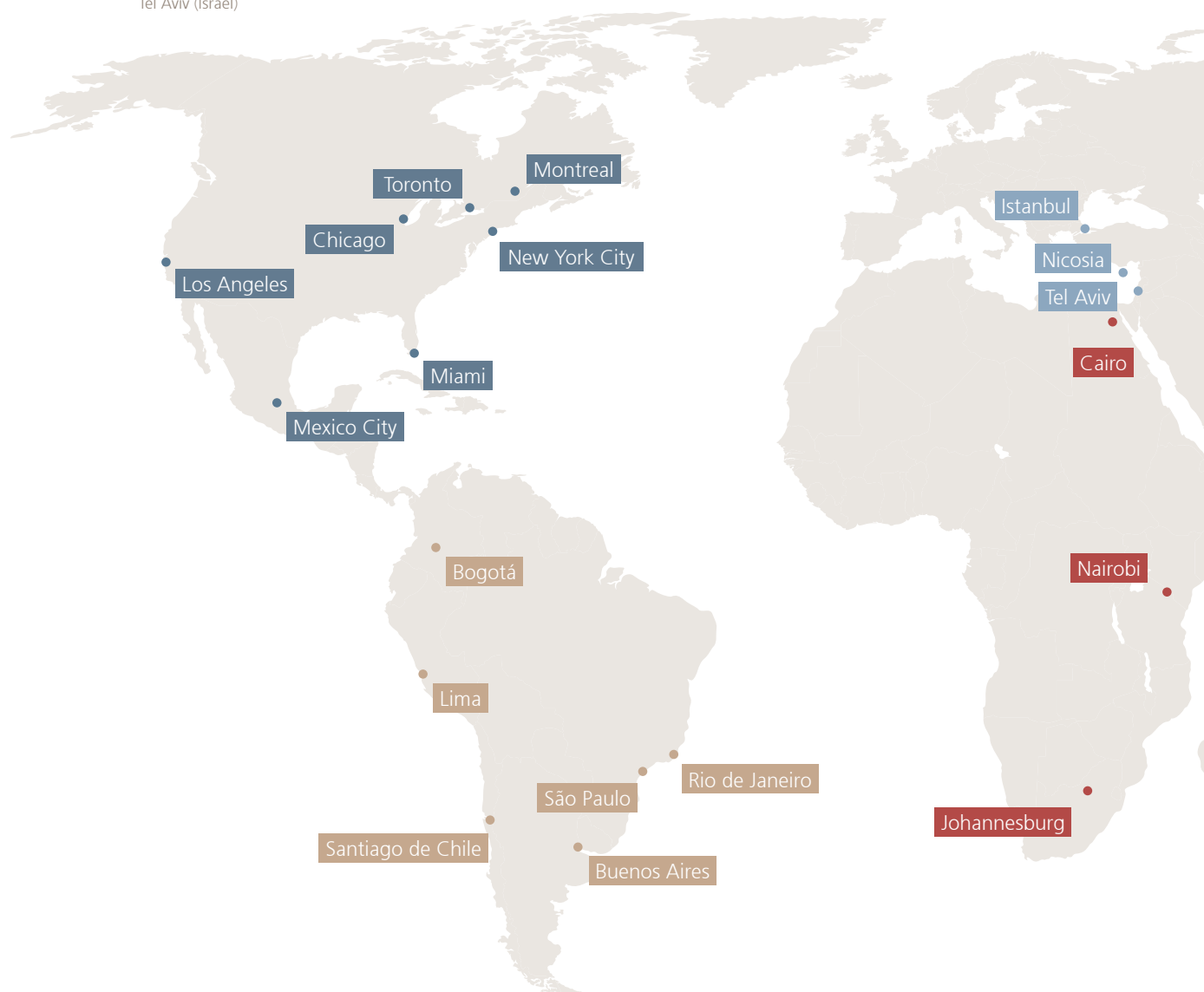
South America

Bogotá (Colombia)
Buenos Aires (Argentina)
Lima (Peru)
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)
Santiago de Chile (Chile)
São Paulo (Brazil)

Western Europe

Amsterdam (Netherlands)
Athens (Greece)
Barcelona (Spain)
Berlin (Germany)
Brussels (Belgium)
Copenhagen (Denmark)

Dublin (Ireland)
Frankfurt (Germany)
Geneva (Switzerland)
Helsinki (Finland)
Lisbon (Portugal)
London (Great Britain)
Luxembourg (Luxembourg)
Lyon (France)
Madrid (Spain)
Milan (Italy)
Munich (Germany)
Oslo (Norway)
Paris (France)
Rome (Italy)
Stockholm (Sweden)
Vienna (Austria)
Zurich (Switzerland)





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Dear reader

Global exchange rates moved sufficiently of late to prompt talk of a “currency war”. States and currency zones are hoping for a weak currency to generate momentum in their economies, especially in the export sector. The measures of various central banks aimed at staving off deflation are also affecting exchange rates. These circumstances make it more difficult to compare purchasing power in different currency zones.

Against this backdrop, we are particularly pleased to present you with the 16th edition of our *Prices and earnings* study, in which we compare purchasing power in 71 cities across the globe. Our analysis of more than 68,000 datapoints highlights the effects of political and economic events on prices and earnings, and reveals significant changes compared with the previous study three years ago.

The cities of Zurich and Geneva, for instance, have become markedly more expensive since the last study – mainly due to the Swiss National Bank’s decision to abandon the EURCHF minimum exchange rate early this year.

Three years ago, the minimum exchange rate was set at CHF 1.20. Life in cities within the eurozone and in Tokyo, on the other hand, has become less expensive as the euro and yen have depreciated against the US dollar. And with the currencies of certain emerging markets falling significantly, price drops have been even more pronounced in those parts of the world.

Prices and earnings is now available at www.ubs.com/pricesandearnings, from the UBS Newsstand and in the iOS app. We are also launching new open data options, so you can download all raw data from the first report in 1971 to the most recent 2015 figures for free.

We would like to thank all the participants in our survey, including students, UBS employees and various people around the world who tirelessly collected first-rate data for this report. We would also like to thank our colleagues at Communications & Branding and WM Innovation for their cooperation in producing this report.

We hope you find it interesting and informative reading.

Comparison of prices and earnings

Between the end of March and end of April 2015, we completed a standardized survey on prices of 122 goods and services, and earnings for 15 professions in 71 cities worldwide. The survey was conducted locally by mutually independent observers. More than 68,000 data points were collected and included in our calculations of the indicators in this report.

To effectively compare cities, we converted all prices and earnings in local currencies to a common currency, the US dollar (USD). Average exchange rates from the data collection period were used to minimize the effect of daily price fluctuations. The exchange rates are listed on pages 14–15.

While we originally started the survey with 72 cities, we needed to remove Caracas, Venezuela. Due to the current complex political and economic situation in the country, with large fluctuations in inflation and exchange rates, we decided that the results for it would not represent current circumstances.

Reference basket of goods

To make an effective comparison of purchasing power worldwide, a standardized basket of goods and services is required, even though consumer habits and preferences vary greatly. Our reference basket of 122 goods and services is based on the monthly consumption habits of a European three-person family. If products were not available in some cities, or deviated too far from our parameters, local representative substitutes were sometimes used. To make up for the missing coverage, individual items were weighted differently as a correction. We attained a coverage level of almost 70% of the EU's harmonized index of consumer prices (HCIP) this year.

Changes in consumer habits stemming from technological developments were accounted for by updated specifications for electronic products. The iPhone 4S from 2012, for instance, was replaced with an iPhone 6. We also expanded data collection possibilities for our housing section to get a more accurate picture of local accommodation worldwide. Also, the furnished four-room apartment was changed to a furnished two-room apartment.

Reference profile of working populations

As with our prices section, we created a reference profile of 15 professions, representing the structure of the working population in Europe. We included profiles of workers of varying ages, family status, work experience and education levels. To offer a fuller picture, we introduced the profession of a hospital nurse to replace the financial analyst. This change affected our weighting of the other professions, a fact to consider when comparing this version of the report to those of previous years. We also expanded our social security contributions section considerably to encapsulate both employee and employer contributions, providing a more realistic cost of the global workforce.

Note

Individual cities by geographical region are found on the map on pages 2–3.

Price, earnings, index, time, and percentage figures are rounded off in most cases to improve readability. The index values are calculated on data collected in the survey, relative to a reference city.

The sample size per city may not be statistically representative for single data points.

Our weightings are based on Eurostat data for EU countries.

Overview

Price levels

The price level rankings reveal the relative cost of goods and services worldwide. Zurich, Geneva, and New York City have the highest prices, over 2.5 times higher than those in Bucharest, Sofia, and Kiev, with the lowest. Istanbul, Doha, and Lyon are middle-ranking cities; prices there are somewhat closer to those of high-ranking cities than to those of lower ranked ones.

Do I live in an expensive city?

When rents are included in the price level index, almost all city indices decrease in relation to New York City, with an average decrease of 17%. Hong Kong is the only exception, gaining over 5% due to high rents, and moving up 13 spots in our ranking. Rents also make New York City the most expensive city, and Sofia the least expensive. Price levels including rents show how large an impact rents have on monthly spending. Assuming similar incomes, residents of Hong Kong must allocate almost 8% more of their income to housing than those in New York City. By comparison, residents in Zurich spend almost 8% less on rent than New York City residents.

Methodology

The composition of our reference basket of goods and services represents the spending habits of a three-person European family. The prices of the 122 goods and services are weighted by monthly consumption. For example, we assume that a family in Europe consumes almost 15 kilos (33 pounds) of vegetables every month, but only buys a new personal computer every 2.5 years. Price level calculations are based on the cost of a basket of 122 goods and services including rent. For our index, these reference basket prices are shown as relative to our reference city, New York City. Rent values were calculated by weighting the prices of our three types of housing equally (see page 25 for more details).

¹ Listed according to value of indexed (price level excluding rent)

* New York City = Index 100

Price levels

Cities ¹	Excl. rent	Incl. rent
Zurich	108.7	92.6
Geneva	106.1	91.8
New York City	100.0	100.0
Oslo	92.9	79.9
Copenhagen	88.0	74.3
London	84.7	79.5
Chicago	83.5	76.7
Tokyo	83.1	70.6
Auckland	82.8	67.6
Sydney	80.5	72.5
Seoul	79.2	64.2
Toronto	78.1	63.7
Milan	77.9	64.5
Stockholm	76.9	62.8
Montreal	76.2	58.9
Miami	76.1	67.7
Los Angeles	76.0	67.4
Helsinki	74.3	63.2
Hong Kong	72.9	76.8
Paris	72.6	63.8
Luxembourg	72.3	66.1
Tel Aviv	72.0	61.4
Dubai	71.1	66.1
Buenos Aires	70.4	56.1
Dublin	70.3	63.1
Taipei	67.3	62.7
Brussels	67.2	57.3
Rome	67.1	57.1
Manama	66.6	55.4
Frankfurt	65.8	55.1
Munich	65.5	56.1
Vienna	65.4	53.4
Amsterdam	65.3	55.5
Shanghai	64.9	54.3
Istanbul	64.8	53.0
Doha	64.8	61.4
Lyon	64.8	51.2
Berlin	63.3	51.3
Barcelona	63.2	50.5
Beijing	61.4	53.2
Madrid	60.6	50.4
Nicosia	60.3	48.4
Sao Paulo	59.4	49.5
Athens	58.9	47.5
Rio de Janeiro	57.9	49.2
Bangkok	57.5	46.4
Lisbon	55.5	45.3
Mexico City	54.7	46.2
Tallinn	54.4	44.0
Ljubljana	54.0	44.0
Bogotá	53.6	43.7
Jakarta	53.3	41.6
Bratislava	53.3	42.6
Santiago de Chile	52.8	44.0
Lima	52.2	42.8
Kuala Lumpur	52.0	41.2
Moscow	51.9	45.2
Manila	51.3	41.1
Vilnius	50.9	40.9
Nairobi	50.3	40.5
Warsaw	48.8	39.6
Cairo	48.1	38.7
Budapest	47.6	38.6
Johannesburg	46.6	40.5
Riga	45.8	37.1
Prague	45.6	36.4
New Delhi	45.5	36.9
Mumbai	44.9	37.2
Bucharest	43.8	34.5
Sofia	39.0	30.0
Kiev	38.1	30.3

Wage levels

Wage levels indicate earnings worldwide. Workers in cities with high relative gross salaries (Zurich, Geneva and Luxembourg) receive pay that is on average 19 times those in Nairobi, Jakarta and Kiev. Cities such as Tel Aviv, Barcelona and Seoul ended up in the middle of our rankings. Their workers receive nominal gross salaries a little under one-half of those living in the highest-ranking cities, but seven times those from the lowest-ranking cities.

Would I earn more in another city?

Net wages take into account deductions, and will usually shift all cities down in rankings compared to New York City. Relatively high deductions, stemming from significant social security contributions and taxes, are seen in Copenhagen, Brussels and Milan. If one considers net instead of gross wages, wage-level ranking drops an average of 22%. Then there are cities, such as Manama, Doha and Dubai, whose net-wage index rises by an average of 16% due to comparatively lower deductions. Net wages are a good indication of expendable income: a worker in Zurich will have almost 23 times the amount of money to spend than a similar worker in Kiev.

Methodology

Gross hourly wages are calculated from the survey's gross annual earnings data divided by the annual number of working hours. Net hourly earnings are calculated by removing taxes, social security and other special deductions from gross annual income for each city, and dividing it by annual working hours. Hourly wages are weighted according to the distribution of our 15 professions.

Wage levels

Cities ¹	Gross	Net
Zurich	131.3	141.8
Geneva	130.1	135.2
Luxembourg	106.4	97.1
New York City	100.0	100.0
Miami	92.4	92.9
Copenhagen	92.2	56.8
Sydney	89.8	83.9
Oslo	87.7	80.4
Los Angeles	87.5	88.2
Chicago	85.2	84.5
Montreal	77.4	78.2
Stockholm	76.0	63.7
London	75.5	72.3
Brussels	72.8	61.1
Toronto	71.4	69.5
Tokyo	70.1	66.5
Auckland	70.0	68.6
Dublin	68.8	64.3
Vienna	68.5	69.7
Helsinki	67.8	62.8
Munich	67.7	68.2
Frankfurt	66.6	67.1
Amsterdam	65.3	53.3
Berlin	64.0	64.5
Paris	62.8	67.1
Rome	60.0	54.2
Nicosia	59.1	64.4
Milan	58.7	53.1
Lyon	58.6	62.8
Barcelona	51.7	46.8
Madrid	50.9	46.2
Hong Kong	49.4	51.3
Tel Aviv	46.5	47.3
Seoul	45.9	50.2
Manama	45.7	53.1
Dubai	40.4	46.9
Taipei	35.1	38.8
Sao Paulo	34.7	38.8
Ljubljana	33.6	32.7
Johannesburg	32.8	30.7
Doha	32.2	37.4
Lisbon	31.9	32.0
Athens	29.8	28.2
Bratislava	28.4	27.6
Rio de Janeiro	26.8	30.3
Istanbul	26.5	26.0
Tallinn	26.1	24.2
Warsaw	23.2	22.4
Santiago de Chile	23.1	25.1
Buenos Aires	22.6	26.3
Vilnius	21.5	21.2
Moscow	21.3	21.5
Prague	20.0	20.3
Riga	18.1	17.1
Shanghai	18.1	19.2
Kuala Lumpur	17.8	20.2
Bogotá	17.5	20.3
Bangkok	16.8	18.9
Lima	16.3	18.9
Budapest	15.8	16.0
Bucharest	14.1	14.2
Beijing	13.4	14.5
Mexico City	12.2	13.0
Sofia	11.4	12.1
Manila	9.4	9.2
Mumbai	8.3	9.1
Cairo	8.2	8.8
New Delhi	7.6	8.5
Nairobi	6.5	6.5
Jakarta	6.2	6.8
Kiev	6.1	6.1

¹ Listed according to gross value of the index

* New York City = Index 100

Domestic purchasing power

Taken separately, price and earnings data has proven interesting to interpret, but, when compared, such data enables us to reach conclusions about worldwide purchasing power. If one takes net hourly pay as the benchmark, earners in Luxembourg have the highest purchasing power, more than 10 times greater than for earners in Jakarta, the city exhibiting the lowest purchasing power of all surveyed cities in 2015.

What are my wages actually worth?

Our basket of goods represents the monthly consumption of a three-person family in Europe. The residents of major cities in Switzerland and the USA can afford 20 and 18 baskets per year respectively, while those of Western European cities such as London, Lyon and Oslo can buy a basket every month. Our basket becomes a challenge for the inhabitants of cities in Asia and Africa (who can afford only a basket every four months, on average). This can be partly explained by differing consumption habits, but it also indicates that families in some cities need supplementary incomes to support a European standard of life.

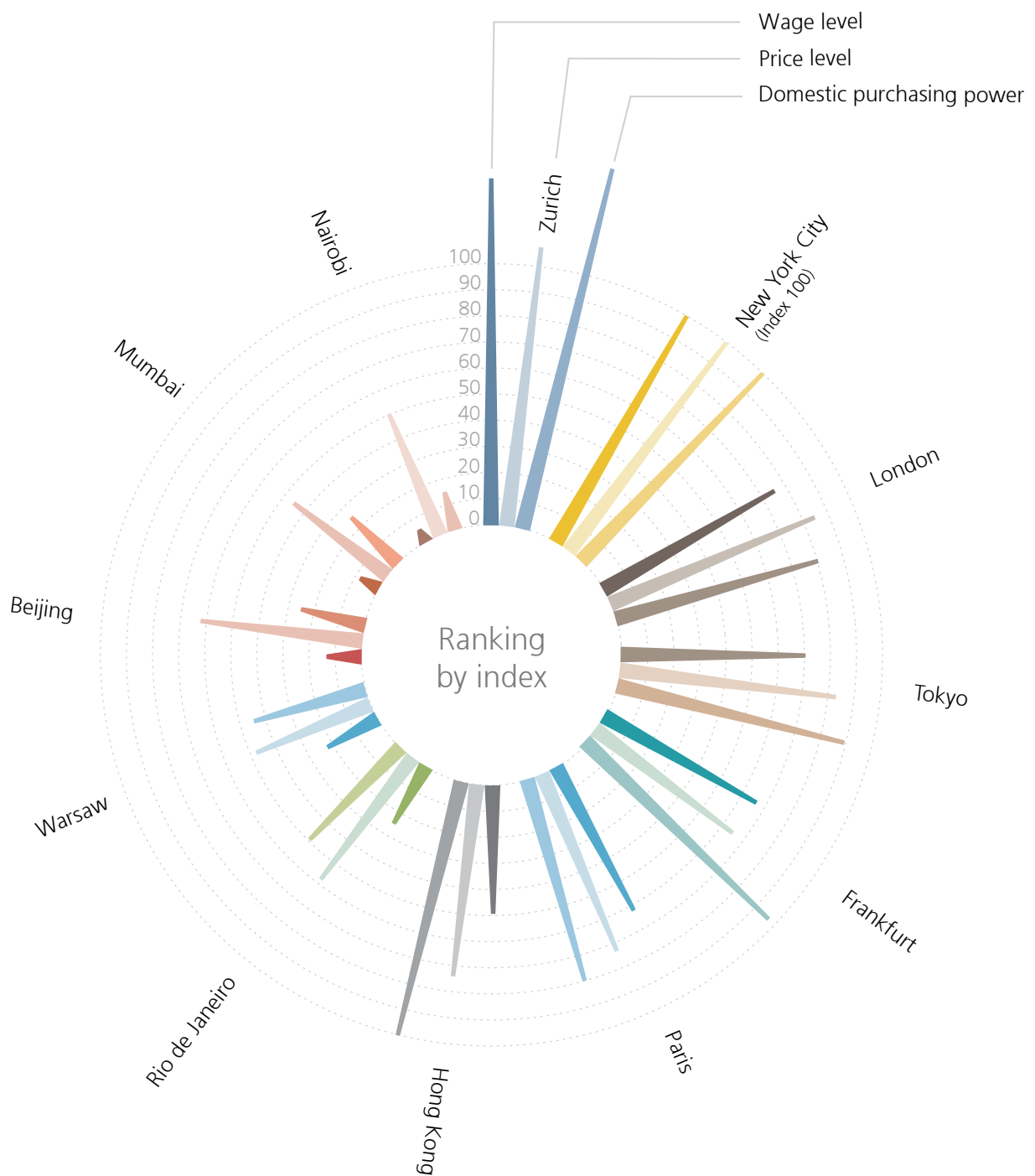
Methodology

To calculate the first two parts of the purchasing power indicator, we divided gross and net *hourly* wages for each city by the respective cost of our basket of goods, excluding rent, and indexed relative to New York City. The third part is calculated as an indexed ranking based on how many baskets a worker can purchase annually. We divided net *annual* income for each city by the cost of the basket (excluding rent). This indicator is sorted by the indexed purchasing power of net *hourly* wages. Rent prices were excluded, as their variability among the housing choices presented in our survey may lead to different rankings of cities in combined price and earnings indicators.

Domestic purchasing power subject to...

Cities	Gross hourly pay	Net hourly pay	Net annual income
Luxembourg	147.1	134.3	123.8
Zurich	120.8	130.5	135.1
Geneva	122.6	127.5	128.3
Miami	121.5	122.1	122.6
Los Angeles	115.1	116.0	121.1
Nicosia	98.0	106.7	107.2
Vienna	104.7	106.5	96.8
Sydney	111.5	104.2	103.2
Munich	103.3	104.2	97.1
Montreal	101.4	102.6	99.1
Frankfurt	101.2	102.0	97.0
Berlin	101.0	101.9	97.6
Chicago	102.0	101.1	111.2
New York City	100.0	100.0	100.0
Lyon	90.4	96.9	85.5
Paris	86.5	92.4	80.2
Dublin	97.8	91.4	87.6
Brussels	108.4	90.9	84.5
Toronto	91.5	89.1	95.7
Oslo	94.4	86.6	81.7
London	89.2	85.3	80.4
Helsinki	91.2	84.5	75.9
Stockholm	98.9	82.9	79.4
Auckland	84.6	82.9	89.4
Amsterdam	100.0	81.7	76.3
Rome	89.5	80.8	76.0
Tokyo	84.4	80.0	89.0
Manama	68.6	79.6	89.5
Madrid	84.0	76.2	71.4
Barcelona	81.8	74.1	69.4
Hong Kong	67.8	70.4	99.3
Milan	75.3	68.1	62.4
Johannesburg	70.5	66.0	66.0
Dubai	56.8	65.9	78.0
Tel Aviv	64.6	65.8	72.6
Sao Paulo	58.4	65.4	64.4
Copenhagen	104.8	64.5	59.3
Seoul	57.9	63.4	66.4
Ljubljana	62.2	60.6	60.8
Doha	49.7	57.8	65.1
Taipei	52.2	57.6	66.7
Lisbon	57.4	57.6	54.5
Rio de Janeiro	46.3	52.3	49.4
Bratislava	53.3	51.7	51.7
Athens	50.6	47.8	46.6
Santiago de Chile	43.7	47.6	53.6
Warsaw	47.5	45.9	43.7
Prague	43.9	44.6	42.3
Tallinn	47.9	44.5	41.8
Vilnius	42.3	41.7	38.7
Moscow	41.0	41.4	36.9
Istanbul	40.9	40.1	44.3
Kuala Lumpur	34.2	38.8	40.7
Bogotá	32.6	37.8	42.9
Buenos Aires	32.2	37.4	38.4
Riga	39.6	37.3	36.8
Lima	31.2	36.3	38.4
Budapest	33.2	33.5	34.7
Bangkok	29.1	32.9	39.0
Bucharest	32.1	32.3	31.6
Sofia	29.2	31.0	30.5
Shanghai	27.9	29.6	32.9
Mexico City	22.4	23.8	29.1
Beijing	21.8	23.6	25.0
Mumbai	18.4	20.3	25.0
New Delhi	16.7	18.6	22.3
Cairo	17.1	18.4	20.7
Manila	18.4	17.9	18.9
Kiev	16.1	16.0	15.8
Nairobi	13.0	12.8	15.2
Jakarta	11.7	12.8	14.6

* New York City = Index 100



Wage level	Price level	Domestic purchasing power
Highest	Highest	Highest
Zurich	Zurich	Zurich
131.3	108.7	135.1
Lowest	Lowest	Lowest
Kiev	Kiev	Jakarta
6.1	38.1	14.6

Working time required to buy...

Some consumer goods are available all over the globe. We decided to feature four in our section that calculates how much time an average worker in each city must work to earn enough to purchase each one. As staple consumer goods, the McDonald's Big Mac and the Apple iPhone will be the same quality and nature whether bought in Doha or Rio de Janeiro. This makes their worldwide prices and affordability comparable. Workers in Hong Kong only have to work on average nine minutes to be able to buy a Big Mac, while workers in Nairobi have to work almost three hours.

Who works harder to buy a Big Mac?

The distribution of city rankings changes according to the reference goods being bought. Oslo, in the lower half of the table for buying bread, jumps to the top for rice. Workers there can afford it in one-eighteenth of the time that their counterparts in New Delhi require. For the iPhone, workers in cities such as Zurich and New York City require on average less than three days on the job to be able to grab one. In contrast, workers in Kiev must labor, on average, over 13 weeks to earn enough for the same phone. Workers in Buenos Aires cannot access official markets to purchase the iPhone 6 locally.

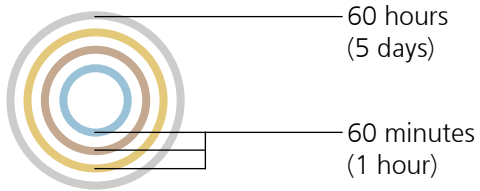
Methodology

Prices of each product were an average from all survey participants and, where possible, were compared to the manufacturers' official local retail price. The price of each product was then divided by the net hourly wage for our 15 professions and converted to either minutes or hours.

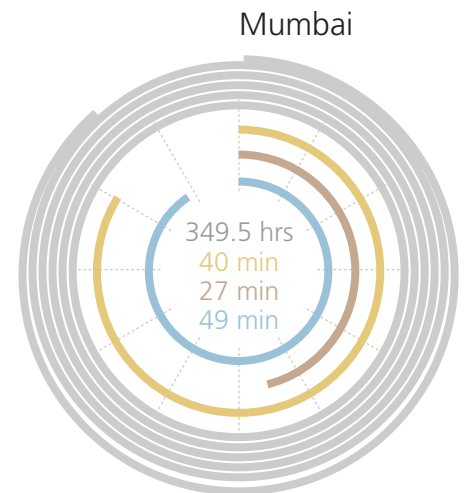
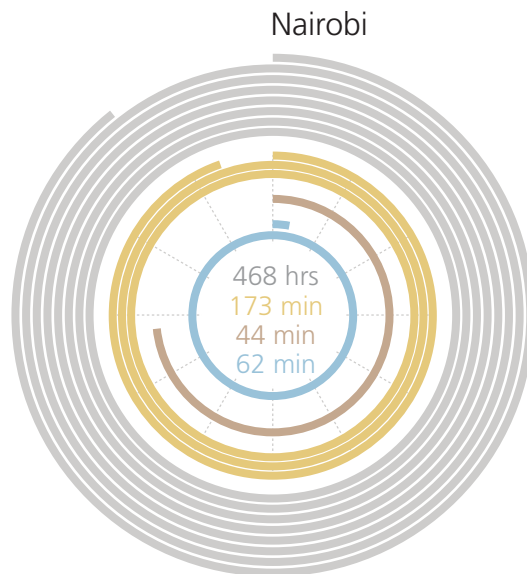
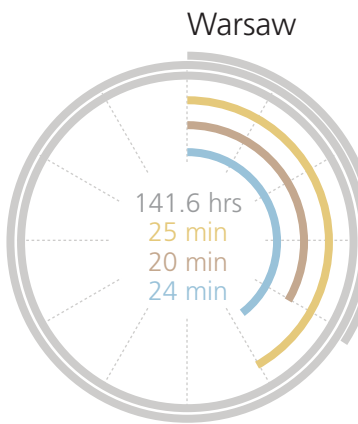
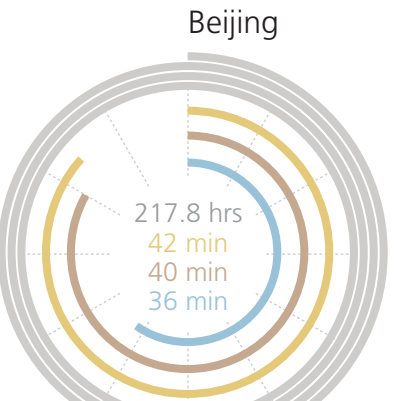
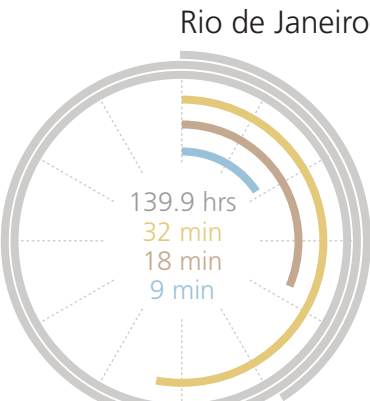
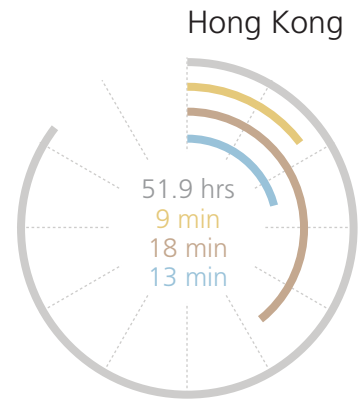
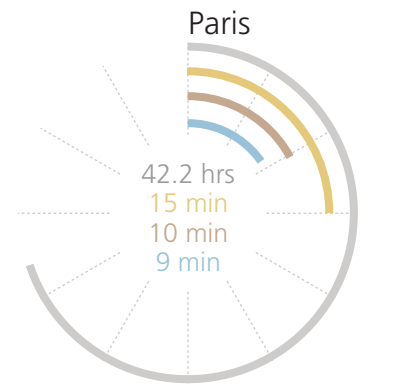
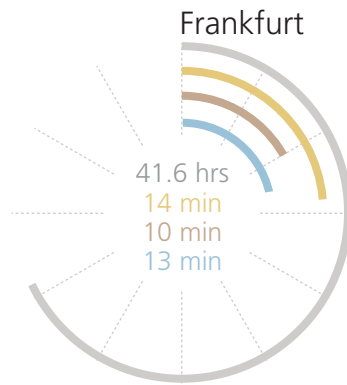
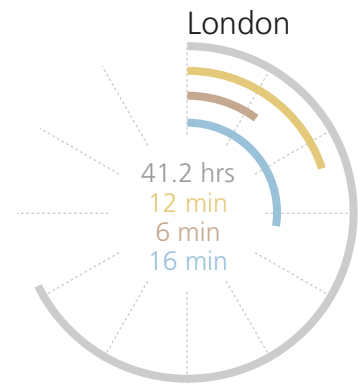
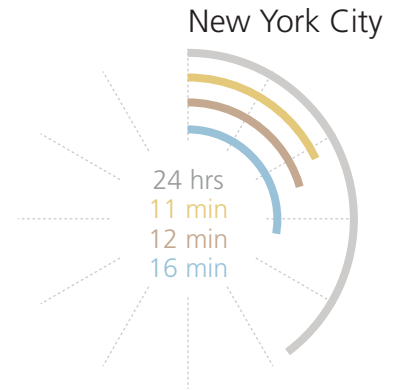
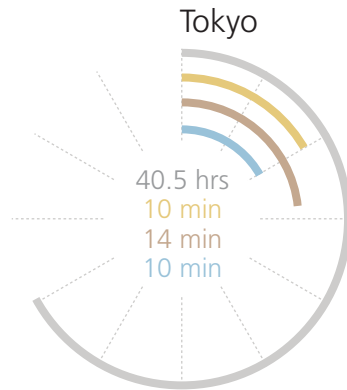
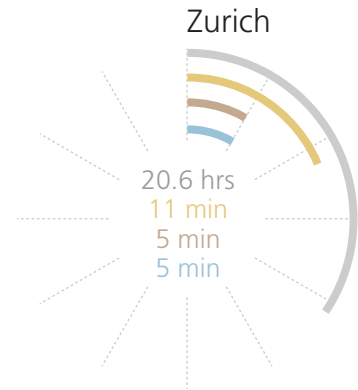
Working time required to buy

Cities	1 Big Mac in min.	1 kilo of bread in min.	1 kilo of rice in min.	1 iPhone 6 16GB, in hrs.
Amsterdam	16	7	7	49.8
Athens	26	20	34	98.2
Auckland	13	13	5	44.6
Bangkok	37	47	17	149.6
Barcelona	21	14	7	59.1
Beijing	42	40	36	217.8
Berlin	13	9	13	43.3
Bogotá	35	18	18	143.7
Bratislava	24	13	15	100.8
Brussels	16	14	9	46.1
Bucharest	44	11	28	219.1
Budapest	44	14	20	183.7
Buenos Aires	29	57	21	n.a.
Cairo	62	32	66	353.4
Chicago	11	10	6	28.4
Copenhagen	20	13	11	54.6
Doha	18	19	12	69.9
Dubai	17	9	13	55.8
Dublin	15	6	8	43.4
Frankfurt	13	10	14	41.6
Geneva	11	5	4	21.6
Helsinki	16	10	10	44.4
Hong Kong	9	18	13	51.9
Istanbul	34	22	23	132.2
Jakarta	67	70	58	468.0
Johannesburg	17	10	13	86.9
Kiev	55	26	44	627.2
Kuala Lumpur	23	17	13	136.3
Lima	38	45	15	192.2
Lisbon	22	16	8	88.6
Ljubljana	15	11	25	85.4
London	12	6	16	41.2
Los Angeles	11	10	5	27.2
Luxembourg	10	12	7	28.2
Lyon	16	10	12	47.2
Madrid	19	13	7	60.5
Manama	20	5	11	62.7
Manila	87	83	34	334.2
Mexico City	78	46	22	217.6
Miami	11	11	7	27.0
Milan	18	16	14	53.4
Montreal	13	12	5	32.1
Moscow	20	12	24	158.3
Mumbai	40	27	49	349.4
Munich	13	7	5	40.9
Nairobi	173	44	62	468.0
New Delhi	50	23	73	360.3
New York City	11	12	16	24.0
Nicosia	11	5	9	44.9
Oslo	19	20	4	37.6
Paris	15	10	9	42.2
Prague	30	11	15	143.2
Riga	34	20	26	172.5
Rio de Janeiro	32	18	9	139.9
Rome	18	10	14	53.7
Santiago de Chile	32	15	13	130.8
Sao Paulo	25	16	5	109.2
Seoul	18	22	19	57.2
Shanghai	35	37	25	163.8
Sofia	40	14	28	231.3
Stockholm	17	18	11	46.9
Sydney	11	10	5	34.0
Taipei	13	10	14	69.2
Tallinn	29	15	12	115.5
Tel Aviv	21	12	12	75.3
Tokyo	10	14	10	40.5
Toronto	15	12	7	37.2
Vienna	12	10	6	40.0
Vilnius	29	19	17	131.6
Warsaw	25	20	24	141.6
Zurich	11	5	5	20.6

n.a. = not available



- 1 iPhone 6 16GB
- 1 Big Mac
- 1 kilo of bread
- 1 kilo of rice



Exchange rates used and inflation

Changing exchange rates should – in theory and in the long run – compensate for differences in inflation across countries and cities. If US inflation is 2% higher than the Eurozone's for an extended time, the US dollar should depreciate 2% per year against the euro. However, exchange rates tend to fluctuate more than inflation differences across currency areas, due to political events, economic developments, and/or monetary policy decisions by central banks. This helps to explain the relative movements of cities in our rankings.

The Swiss National Bank dropped the 1.20 EURCHF floor on January 15, 2015. The impact of this decision was still being reflected in exchange rates a few months later, when we were collecting data. The Swiss franc appreciated 5% against the US dollar between the beginning of the year and April. This greatly affected our indicators, as Zurich and Geneva both rose to the top in price and wage levels. Similarly, the euro had lost almost one-quarter of its value against the US dollar from mid-2014 until the end of the first quarter of 2015, which caused Eurozone cities to plunge in our price and wage-level rankings.

How stable is my currency?

The trade and financial sanctions imposed on Russia by Western Europe and the USA since the Ukraine conflict in mid-2014 has had a sizeable impact on the Russian ruble, which has lost almost 42% of its value in US dollar terms since 2012. The Ukrainian hryvnia also experienced an over 64% drop relative to the US dollar after the Ukrainian central bank stopped supporting its reserves in early 2014. This also led to 12% local inflation that year. Both Russia and Ukraine plummeted in our rankings, with Kiev now at the bottom of our price and wage-level charts.

Economic and political instability in South America greatly affected exchange rates, placing certain countries in unfavorable positions. The Brazilian real has depreciated almost 35% against the US dollar since 2012 due to continuously declining foreign trade. This resulted in official inflation figures of over 6% in 2013 and 2014. Countries like Argentina and Colombia faced similar fates.

The Asian scene is mixed. The Japanese yen lost value but the South Korean won appreciated versus the US dollar. Japan has yet to experience the growth promised by Abenomics, introduced in 2013, though inflation has risen from 0.0% in 2012 to 2.7% in 2014. The South Korean won has gained over 6% against the US dollar since 2012, with inflation falling from 2.2% in 2012 to 1.3% in 2014.

Exchange rates

Cities	Local currency (LC)	Comparison Exchange Value	USD/LC 2015 ¹	USD/LC Δ% 2015/2012 ²	EUR/LC 2015 ¹	EUR/LC Δ% 2015/2012 ²
Amsterdam	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Athens	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Auckland	NZD	1	0.759	-3.31	0.702	15.66
Bangkok	THB	1	0.031	-4.40	0.028	14.53
Barcelona	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Beijing	CNY	1	0.161	1.90	0.149	21.97
Berlin	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Bogotá	COP	100	0.040	-28.82	0.037	-14.57
Bratislava	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Brussels	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Bucharest	RON	1	0.245	-16.32	0.227	0.25
Budapest	HUF	100	0.361	-19.19	0.334	-3.25
Buenos Aires	ARS	1	0.113	-49.98	0.104	-40.04
Cairo	EGP	1	0.131	-20.83	0.121	-5.19
Chicago	USD	1	1.000	-	0.925	19.81
Copenhagen	DKK	1	0.145	-16.89	0.134	-0.45
Doha	QAR	1	0.275	0.01	0.254	19.82
Dubai	AED	1	0.272	-0.03	0.252	19.79
Dublin	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Frankfurt	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Geneva	CHF	1	1.041	-3.47	0.963	15.64
Helsinki	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Hong Kong	HKD	1	0.129	0.15	0.119	19.98
Istanbul	TRY	1	0.377	-32.50	0.349	-19.17
Jakarta	IDR	1000	0.077	-28.92	0.071	-14.85
Johannesburg	ZAR	1	0.083	-33.19	0.077	-19.94
Kiev	UAH	1	0.044	-64.39	0.041	-57.32
Kuala Lumpur	MYR	1	0.276	-15.41	0.255	1.33
Lima	PEN	1	0.321	-14.92	0.297	2.04
Lisbon	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Ljubljana	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
London	GBP	1	1.496	-6.92	1.383	11.47
Los Angeles	USD	1	1.000	-	0.925	19.81
Luxembourg	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Lyon	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Madrid	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Manama	BHD	1	2.652	-0.01	2.453	19.47
Manila	PHP	1	0.023	-4.25	0.021	14.52
Mexico City	MXN	1	0.066	-11.77	0.061	5.70
Miami	USD	1	1.000	-	0.925	19.81
Milan	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Montreal	CAD	1	0.810	-18.92	0.749	-2.89
Moscow	RUB	1	0.019	-42.86	0.018	-31.50
Mumbai	INR	1	0.016	-14.67	0.015	1.94
Munich	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Nairobi	KES	100	1.070	-10.57	0.990	7.43
New Delhi	INR	1	0.016	-14.67	0.015	1.94
New York City	USD	1	1.000	-	0.925	19.81
Nicosia	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Oslo	NOK	1	0.127	-25.75	0.117	-11.12
Paris	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Prague	CZK	1	0.039	-23.38	0.036	-8.29
Riga	EUR	1	1.081	n.a. ³	1.000	n.a. ³
Rio de Janeiro	BRL	1	0.328	-35.64	0.303	-22.94
Rome	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Santiago de Chile	CLP	100	0.163	-20.07	0.151	-4.33
Sao Paulo	BRL	1	0.328	-35.64	0.303	-22.94
Seoul	KRW	100	0.092	5.49	0.085	26.32
Shanghai	CNY	1	0.161	1.90	0.149	21.97
Sofia	BGN	1	0.553	-16.53	0.511	-0.01
Stockholm	SEK	1	0.116	-19.64	0.107	-3.76
Sydney	AUD	1	0.773	-23.35	0.715	-8.25
Taipei	TWD	1	0.032	-5.25	0.030	13.50
Tallinn	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Tel Aviv	ILS	1	0.254	-3.30	0.235	15.90
Tokyo	JPY	1	0.008	-33.23	0.008	-20.01
Toronto	CAD	1	0.810	-18.92	0.749	-2.89
Vienna	EUR	1	1.081	-16.50	1.000	-
Vilnius	EUR	1	1.081	n.a. ⁴	1.000	n.a. ⁴
Warsaw	PLN	1	0.269	-11.86	0.248	5.62
Zurich	CHF	1	1.041	-3.47	0.963	15.64

Source: Bloomberg

¹ Average exchange rates for survey period (March – April 2015)² Movement in exchange rate from 2012 to 2015: appreciation of local currency (LC) +; depreciation of local currency (LC) –³ Eurozone member since Jan. 2014⁴ Eurozone member since Jan. 2015

n.a. = not available

Inflation 2012–2014¹

Cities	2012	2013	2014
Amsterdam	2.5	2.5	1.0
Athens	1.5	-0.9	-1.3
Auckland	0.9	1.3	0.8
Bangkok	3.0	2.2	1.9
Barcelona	2.4	1.4	-0.1
Beijing	2.7	2.6	2.0
Berlin	2.0	1.5	0.9
Bogotá	3.2	2.0	2.9
Bratislava	3.6	1.4	-0.1
Brussels	2.8	1.1	0.3
Bucharest	3.3	4.0	1.1
Budapest	5.7	1.7	-0.2
Buenos Aires ²	10.8	10.9	23.9
Cairo	7.1	9.4	10.1
Chicago	2.1	1.5	1.6
Copenhagen	2.4	0.8	0.6
Doha	1.9	3.1	3.1
Dubai	0.7	1.1	2.3
Dublin	1.7	0.5	0.2
Frankfurt	2.0	1.5	0.9
Geneva	-0.7	-0.2	0.0
Helsinki	2.8	1.5	1.0
Hong Kong	4.1	4.4	4.4
Istanbul	8.9	7.5	8.9
Jakarta	4.3	6.4	6.4
Johannesburg	5.7	5.4	6.4
Kiev	0.6	-0.3	12.2
Kuala Lumpur	1.7	2.1	3.1
Lima	3.7	2.8	3.2
Lisbon	2.8	0.3	-0.3
Ljubljana	2.6	1.8	0.2
London	2.8	2.6	1.5
Los Angeles	2.1	1.5	1.6
Luxembourg	2.7	1.7	0.6
Lyon	2.0	0.9	0.5
Madrid	2.4	1.4	-0.1
Manama	2.8	3.2	2.8
Manila	3.2	3.0	4.1
Mexico City	4.1	3.8	4.0
Miami	2.1	1.5	1.6
Milan	3.0	1.2	0.2
Montreal	1.5	0.9	1.9
Moscow	5.1	6.8	7.8
Mumbai	9.3	10.9	6.4
Munich	2.0	1.5	0.9
Nairobi	9.4	5.7	6.9
New Delhi	9.3	10.9	6.4
New York City	2.1	1.5	1.6
Nicosia	2.4	-0.4	-1.4
Oslo	0.7	2.1	2.0
Paris	2.0	0.9	0.5
Prague	3.3	1.4	0.3
Riga	2.2	0.0	0.6
Rio de Janeiro	5.4	6.2	6.3
Rome	3.0	1.2	0.2
Santiago de Chile	3.0	1.8	4.4
Sao Paulo	5.4	6.2	6.3
Seoul	2.2	1.3	1.3
Shanghai	2.7	2.6	2.0
Sofia	3.0	0.9	-1.4
Stockholm	0.9	0.0	-0.2
Sydney	1.8	2.4	2.5
Taipei ²	1.9	0.8	1.2
Tallinn	3.9	2.8	-0.1
Tel Aviv	1.7	1.5	0.5
Tokyo	0.0	0.4	2.7
Toronto	1.5	0.9	1.9
Vienna	2.5	2.0	1.6
Vilnius	3.1	1.1	0.1
Warsaw	3.6	1.0	0.1
Zurich	-0.7	-0.2	0.0

Source: World Bank,
International Monetary Fund

¹ Annual change of average
consumer prices (in percent)

² Source: National statistical
office

Price comparison

Total expenditure on goods and services

Total expenditure on goods and services aims to measure the average cost of living in each of the surveyed cities, and the results are astounding. Zurich, the most expensive city in our survey, has a cost of living 185% higher than that of Kiev, our least expensive city. Expenditure in middle-ranking cities such as Shanghai, Berlin, and São Paulo is on average 75% less than that in Zurich, and 60% more than in Kiev.

What is the cost of living?

The differences in prices between goods and services are significant. Non-tradable items, or items whose quality differs greatly with geographic location, such as haircuts, schooling and hotel rooms, have the greatest range in prices among cities. For example, the price of a haircut in Oslo (most expensive) is twenty times higher than in Jakarta (least expensive). Among tradable goods, such as rice, an iPhone, or a women's dress suit, the price difference is much less – rice is only seven times more expensive in New York City than in São Paulo, where prices are the highest and lowest, respectively.

Methodology

Total expenditure calculations are based on the cost of a basket of 122 goods and services, and weighted according to the monthly spending habits of a three-person European family. The weighted price levels are then indexed to our reference city, New York City. Prices for goods and services were converted to USD by exchange rates found on pages 14–15.

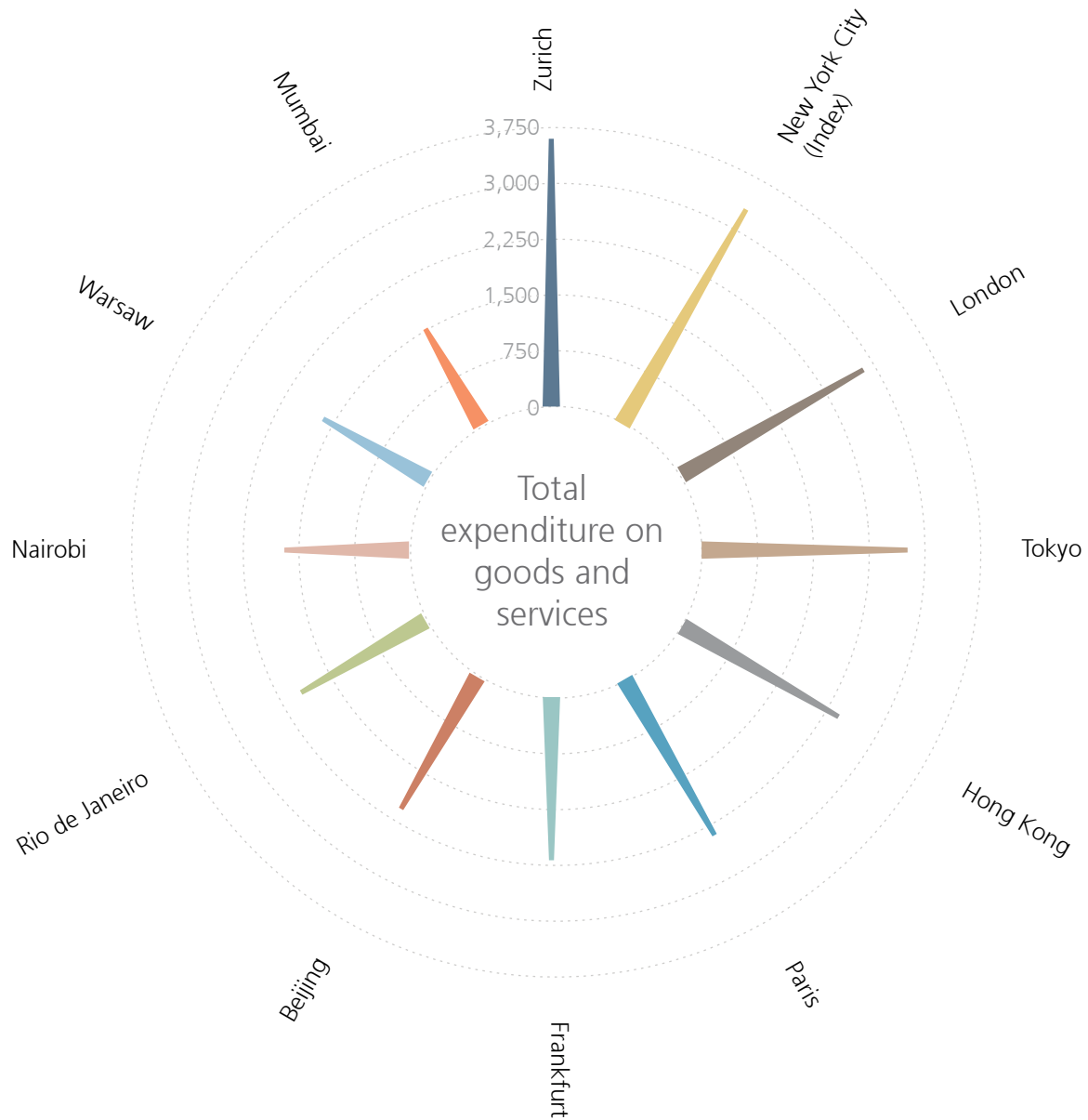
Total expenditure on goods and services

Cities	USD ¹	Index
Amsterdam	2,182	65.3
Athens	1,970	58.9
Auckland	2,766	82.8
Bangkok	1,923	57.5
Barcelona	2,112	63.2
Beijing	2,052	61.4
Berlin	2,117	63.3
Bogotá	1,791	53.6
Bratislava	1,781	53.3
Brussels	2,245	67.2
Bucharest	1,464	43.8
Budapest	1,591	47.6
Buenos Aires	2,352	70.4
Cairo	1,606	48.1
Chicago	2,792	83.5
Copenhagen	2,941	88.0
Doha	2,166	64.8
Dubai	2,375	71.1
Dublin	2,351	70.3
Frankfurt	2,200	65.8
Geneva	3,546	106.1
Helsinki	2,485	74.3
Hong Kong	2,435	72.9
Istanbul	2,166	64.8
Jakarta	1,783	53.3
Johannesburg	1,557	46.6
Kiev	1,273	38.1
Kuala Lumpur	1,736	52.0
Lima	1,743	52.2
Lisbon	1,856	55.5
Ljubljana	1,806	54.0
London	2,832	84.7
Los Angeles	2,540	76.0
Luxembourg	2,418	72.3
Lyon	2,165	64.8
Madrid	2,024	60.6
Manama	2,227	66.6
Manila	1,714	51.3
Mexico City	1,829	54.7
Miami	2,542	76.1
Milan	2,603	77.9
Montreal	2,548	76.2
Moscow	1,735	51.9
Mumbai	1,500	44.9
Munich	2,189	65.5
Nairobi	1,682	50.3
New Delhi	1,520	45.5
New York City*	3,342	100.0
Nicosia	2,016	60.3
Oslo	3,105	92.9
Paris	2,426	72.6
Prague	1,523	45.6
Riga	1,529	45.8
Rio de Janeiro	1,936	57.9
Rome	2,242	67.1
Santiago de Chile	1,765	52.8
Sao Paulo	1,984	59.4
Seoul	2,646	79.2
Shanghai	2,168	64.9
Sofia	1,304	39.0
Stockholm	2,569	76.9
Sydney	2,690	80.5
Taipei	2,249	67.3
Tallinn	1,819	54.4
Tel Aviv	2,405	72.0
Tokyo	2,776	83.1
Toronto	2,609	78.1
Vienna	2,187	65.4
Vilnius	1,702	50.9
Warsaw	1,632	48.8
Zurich	3,632	108.7

¹ Monthly expenditure of an average European family

* New York City = Index 100

Prices in USD



Highest
Zurich
USD 3,632

Lowest
Kiev
USD 1,273

Food

Food prices are especially useful for studies like this one. Although food products vary in quality and type, the products chosen for the survey are similar enough everywhere to be comparable. The worldwide average price for our basket of 39 food items is almost USD 400. People living in Zurich, with the highest cost, have to pay 4.5 times more for the food in their shopping carts than those in Kiev, where costs are the lowest.

Where is the best place to shop for food?

The cost of single goods varies according to the city. Residents of Zurich have to pay USD 3.50 to buy one kilo (two pounds) of bread. In Bucharest, this amount shrinks to 71 cents. Similarly, a kilo of rice costs USD 3.10 in Tokyo, but only USD 1.40 in Manila. In 55 cities, meat is on average more expensive than fish. Meat lovers should flock to Kiev, where the average price for one kilo of meat is around USD 2.60, and steer clear of Zurich and Geneva, where meat is 10 times the price. Those who eat a lot of fish should go to Shanghai or Rio de Janeiro, where one kilo of fish is around USD 2.20, an eighth of the price you would pay for the same fish in Zurich.

Methodology

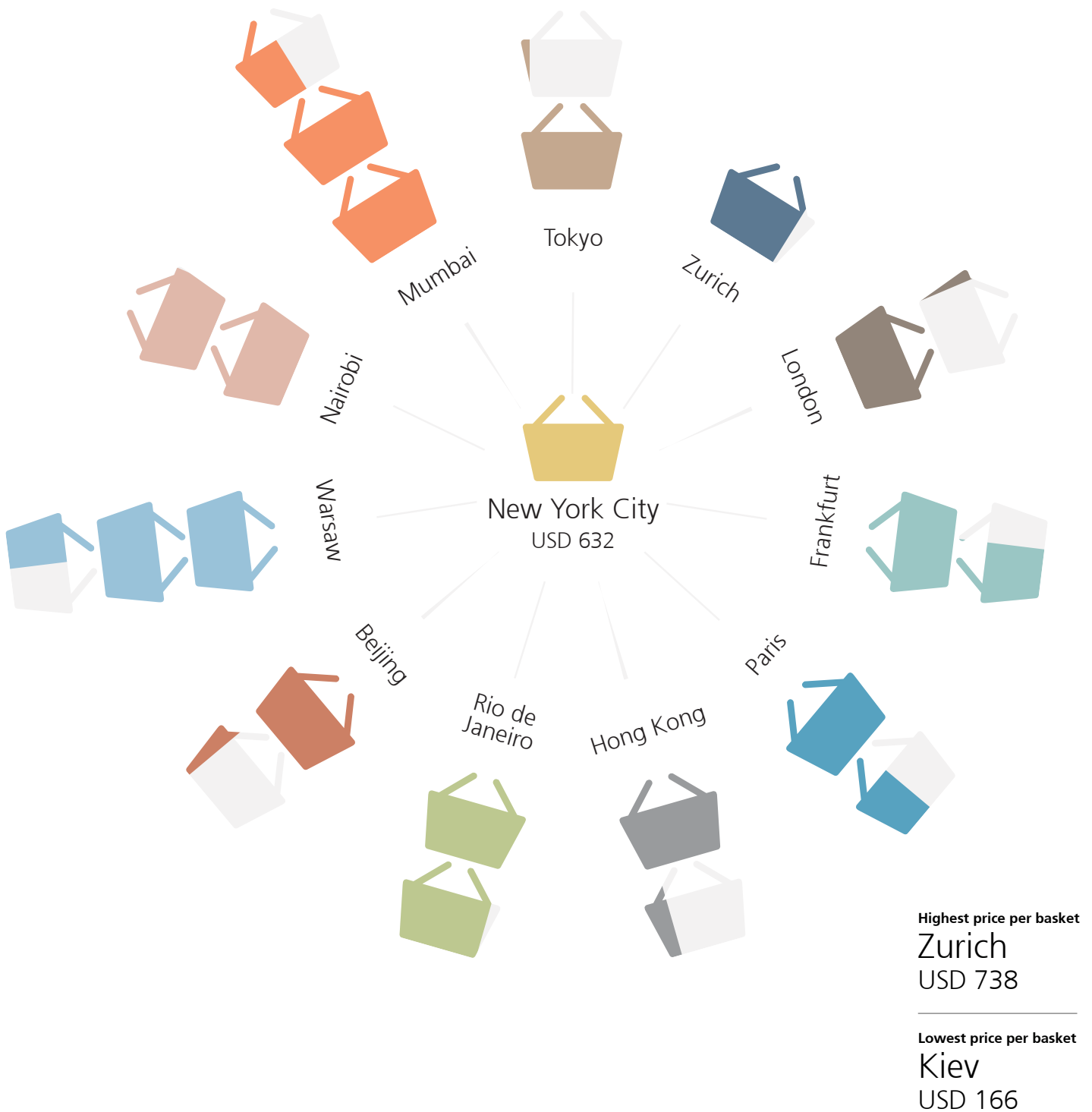
Our basket of food items includes staples such as bread, milk and chicken. They determine the price of our food baskets most because they are frequently consumed. So we give more weight to them in our basket than to other foodstuffs. There is a problem with this logic, though, since it assumes that global preferences will be the same as they are in Europe. A three-person family in Asia, for example, will probably not consume as much dairy and meat as a family in Europe.

Food

Cities	USD	Index
Amsterdam	300	47.5
Athens	343	54.3
Auckland	464	73.4
Bangkok	518	82.0
Barcelona	350	55.4
Beijing	533	84.3
Berlin	419	66.3
Bogotá	289	45.7
Bratislava	302	47.9
Brussels	379	60.0
Bucharest	248	39.3
Budapest	289	45.8
Buenos Aires	462	73.1
Cairo	374	59.2
Chicago	586	92.8
Copenhagen	471	74.6
Doha	426	67.5
Dubai	461	72.9
Dublin	386	61.2
Frankfurt	379	60.0
Geneva	623	98.6
Helsinki	399	63.2
Hong Kong	511	80.9
Istanbul	410	65.0
Jakarta	358	56.6
Johannesburg	273	43.3
Kiev	166	26.3
Kuala Lumpur	292	46.3
Lima	317	50.2
Lisbon	299	47.4
Ljubljana	377	59.8
London	568	89.9
Los Angeles	516	81.6
Luxembourg	444	70.3
Lyon	413	65.3
Madrid	315	49.8
Manama	378	59.8
Manila	333	52.7
Mexico City	249	39.4
Miami	583	92.3
Milan	405	64.2
Montreal	532	84.2
Moscow	336	53.3
Mumbai	253	40.1
Munich	390	61.7
Nairobi	318	50.3
New Delhi	233	36.9
New York City*	632	100.0
Nicosia	303	48.0
Oslo	536	84.8
Paris	425	67.3
Prague	251	39.7
Riga	253	40.0
Rio de Janeiro	330	52.3
Rome	393	62.3
Santiago de Chile	308	48.7
Sao Paulo	303	48.0
Seoul	688	108.9
Shanghai	518	82.1
Sofia	214	33.9
Stockholm	437	69.1
Sydney	541	85.7
Taipei	460	72.9
Tallinn	270	42.8
Tel Aviv	414	65.5
Tokyo	582	92.2
Toronto	397	62.9
Vienna	443	70.1
Vilnius	269	42.6
Warsaw	253	40.1
Zurich	738	116.8

* New York City = Index 100

How many baskets of food can you buy around the world for the price of one in New York City?



Women's and men's clothing

The business attire worn by men and women – usually a suit and dress shoes – is the same almost everywhere. But prices for these items vary widely across the globe. In Manila, a new wardrobe costs USD 230 on average, whereas in Chicago and Milan, both genders would have to spend over USD 1,100 for their new attire. International travelers can also get good deals in cities such as Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Mumbai.

Where should I go to buy my new wardrobe?

Clothing prices vary significantly between genders. On average, men's clothes cost 30% more than women's. Men pay the most in Geneva (more than twice the global average), and the least in Rio de Janeiro (about one-third the global average). For women, Chicago is the most expensive place to shop, at almost three times the average. Auckland is the only city in our sample where the price of our clothing package is cheaper for men than women. In 64 of the surveyed cities, men's business suits were our most expensive item, with an average cost of USD 290. Only in six cities was a woman's individual clothing item more expensive than a man's.

Methodology

The price information gathered is based on purchases of good-quality clothing in large department stores, not in specialized shops or designer boutiques. The wardrobe for women includes a two-piece suit, a blazer, a dress, pantyhose and a pair of outdoor shoes. For men, the items were a business suit, a blazer, a shirt, a pair of blue jeans, socks, and a pair of outdoor shoes.

Women's and men's clothing

Cities	Women's clothing (USD)	Men's clothing (USD)	Index
Amsterdam	660	950	76.7
Athens	590	750	63.8
Auckland	650	580	58.6
Bangkok	220	350	27.1
Barcelona	570	840	67.1
Beijing	400	630	49.0
Berlin	440	620	50.5
Bogotá	280	440	34.3
Bratislava	220	300	24.8
Brussels	440	710	54.8
Bucharest	280	410	32.9
Budapest	290	370	31.4
Buenos Aires	510	760	60.5
Cairo	250	520	36.7
Chicago	1,270	1,300	122.4
Copenhagen	650	790	68.6
Doha	410	720	53.8
Dubai	890	1,250	101.9
Dublin	240	430	31.9
Frankfurt	500	690	56.7
Geneva	1,010	1,680	128.1
Helsinki	550	1,100	78.6
Hong Kong	350	480	39.5
Istanbul	460	850	62.4
Jakarta	170	300	22.4
Johannesburg	220	390	29.0
Kiev	300	370	31.9
Kuala Lumpur	150	260	19.5
Lima	250	300	26.2
Lisbon	280	650	44.3
Ljubljana	360	520	41.9
London	520	680	57.1
Los Angeles	650	1,090	82.9
Luxembourg	640	740	65.7
Lyon	380	510	42.4
Madrid	480	850	63.3
Manama	280	620	42.9
Manila	160	260	20.0
Mexico City	340	540	41.9
Miami	960	1030	94.8
Milan	1160	1220	113.3
Montreal	500	1100	76.2
Moscow	400	630	49.0
Mumbai	260	430	32.9
Munich	720	940	79.0
Nairobi	220	450	31.9
New Delhi	220	450	31.9
New York City*	1,040	1,060	100.0
Nicosia	590	840	68.1
Oslo	350	660	48.1
Paris	480	830	62.4
Prague	270	350	29.5
Riga	290	400	32.9
Rio de Janeiro	160	240	19.0
Rome	410	840	59.5
Santiago de Chile	280	360	30.5
Sao Paulo	350	510	41.0
Seoul	900	1,070	93.8
Shanghai	310	500	38.6
Sofia	360	610	46.2
Stockholm	550	1,280	87.1
Sydney	580	580	55.2
Taipei	720	860	75.2
Tallinn	510	820	63.3
Tel Aviv	550	720	60.5
Tokyo	790	1,140	91.9
Toronto	450	990	68.6
Vienna	560	720	61.0
Vilnius	390	720	52.9
Warsaw	500	670	55.7
Zurich	680	1,110	85.2

* New York City = Index 100

Household appliances

Equipping your kitchen is a costly investment. In Tokyo, you may pay as much as USD 1,580 to buy a brand-new set of household items. Kuala Lumpur offers a good deal, by comparison, where buying our package of household appliances costs almost a fourth of that in our most expensive city.

How much to stock my kitchen?

The worldwide average for household appliances is USD 785, around the cost of buying the goods in Lyon. For the price of a refrigerator in Zurich, you could buy four in Doha. Frying pans have a slightly different distribution of prices, with the cost of one in Jakarta being a 10th of that in Helsinki. Frankfurt, Hong Kong, and Sydney follow as cities where consumers pay the highest prices for this common kitchen appliance. For hairdryers, you may want to air-dry in Manila and Geneva, with prices double the global average. In Lyon, however, the price of a hairdryer is only USD 20.

Methodology

Our basket of good-quality home appliances includes a refrigerator, a vacuum cleaner, a frying pan and a hair-dryer. The items were weighted by European monthly consumption.

Household appliances

Cities	USD	Index
Amsterdam	830	93.3
Athens	670	75.3
Auckland	1,150	129.2
Bangkok	530	59.6
Barcelona	820	92.1
Beijing	490	55.1
Berlin	880	98.9
Bogotá	680	76.4
Bratislava	900	101.1
Brussels	980	110.1
Bucharest	420	47.2
Budapest	800	89.9
Buenos Aires	1,060	119.1
Cairo	480	53.9
Chicago	1,120	125.8
Copenhagen	950	106.7
Doha	430	48.3
Dubai	550	61.8
Dublin	540	60.7
Frankfurt	780	87.6
Geneva	1,290	144.9
Helsinki	810	91.0
Hong Kong	1,170	131.5
Istanbul	530	59.6
Jakarta	440	49.4
Johannesburg	480	53.9
Kiev	750	84.3
Kuala Lumpur	410	46.1
Lima	570	64.0
Lisbon	780	87.6
Ljubljana	640	71.9
London	1,060	119.1
Los Angeles	900	101.1
Luxembourg	720	80.9
Lyon	730	82.0
Madrid	830	93.3
Manama	680	76.4
Manila	820	92.1
Mexico City	580	65.2
Miami	580	65.2
Milan	710	79.8
Montreal	1,120	125.8
Moscow	920	103.4
Mumbai	480	53.9
Munich	850	95.5
Nairobi	710	79.8
New Delhi	560	62.9
New York City*	890	100.0
Nicosia	1,150	129.2
Oslo	1,100	123.6
Paris	820	92.1
Prague	550	61.8
Riga	590	66.3
Rio de Janeiro	580	65.2
Rome	1,070	120.2
Santiago de Chile	560	62.9
Sao Paulo	510	57.3
Seoul	800	89.9
Shanghai	430	48.3
Sofia	470	52.8
Stockholm	1,120	125.8
Sydney	1,120	125.8
Taipei	620	69.7
Tallinn	540	60.7
Tel Aviv	1,090	122.5
Tokyo	1,580	177.5
Toronto	1,370	153.9
Vienna	740	83.1
Vilnius	740	83.1
Warsaw	640	71.9
Zurich	1,540	173.0

* New York City = Index 100

Home electronics

Home electronics are essential to everyday life in Europe, but may be considered luxury items in other parts of the world. On average, you would have to spend around USD 3,530 for our basket of electronics, a little more than the price of a basket in Los Angeles.

Who pays the most for an iPhone?

The difference in price for electronics across the cities is quite small compared to other goods; as many of them are homogenous and tradable, their prices are fairly uniform. The most expensive city has prices only 40% higher than the cheapest one. The iPhone is USD 500 more expensive in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro than in Chicago, due to high import prices. The price of a television varies more; you can buy 4.5 TVs in Kiev for the cost of one in Hong Kong. In Santiago de Chile, it is more affordable to spend your money on a notebook instead of a desktop computer – you can save around 60%. In Shanghai, however, you can save almost 50% by buying a desktop computer instead of the pricier notebook.

Methodology

Home electronics in particular follow rapid technological advances. To update our basket of electronics from 2012, we changed the specifications of some products and replaced the iPhone 4S with an iPhone 6. The prices shown include a color television (40-inch color LED), a digital camera, a personal desktop computer, a notebook computer and an unlocked (no contract) iPhone 6 (16GB).

Home electronics

Cities	USD	Index
Amsterdam	4,100	117.8
Athens	3,590	103.2
Auckland	4,130	118.7
Bangkok	3,110	89.4
Barcelona	3,390	97.4
Beijing	2,960	85.1
Berlin	3,420	98.3
Bogotá	2,680	77.0
Bratislava	3,550	102.0
Brussels	3,480	100.0
Bucharest	3,410	98.0
Budapest	3,110	89.4
Buenos Aires	4,330	124.4
Cairo	2,790	80.2
Chicago	3,350	96.3
Copenhagen	3,630	104.3
Doha	3,980	114.4
Dubai	2,900	83.3
Dublin	3,310	95.1
Frankfurt	3,420	98.3
Geneva	3,750	107.8
Helsinki	3,420	98.3
Hong Kong	3,480	100.0
Istanbul	3,550	102.0
Jakarta	2,940	84.5
Johannesburg	2,830	81.3
Kiev	3,560	102.3
Kuala Lumpur	3,440	98.9
Lima	4,270	122.7
Lisbon	2,970	85.3
Ljubljana	3,390	97.4
London	3,150	90.5
Los Angeles	3,500	100.6
Luxembourg	4,250	122.1
Lyon	3,330	95.7
Madrid	3,820	109.8
Manama	3,620	104.0
Manila	4,100	117.8
Mexico City	3,640	104.6
Miami	4,190	120.4
Milan	3,240	93.1
Montreal	3,600	103.4
Moscow	3,340	96.0
Mumbai	3,860	110.9
Munich	3,190	91.7
Nairobi	3,470	99.7
New Delhi	4,100	117.8
New York City*	3,480	100.0
Nicosia	3,180	91.4
Oslo	3,750	107.8
Paris	3,420	98.3
Prague	3,120	89.7
Riga	2,880	82.8
Rio de Janeiro	4,170	119.8
Rome	3,100	89.1
Santiago de Chile	4,180	120.1
Sao Paulo	3,700	106.3
Seoul	4,480	128.7
Shanghai	2,880	82.8
Sofia	3,050	87.6
Stockholm	3,330	95.7
Sydney	3,910	112.4
Taipei	3,810	109.5
Tallinn	3,970	114.1
Tel Aviv	3,760	108.0
Tokyo	4,260	122.4
Toronto	3,120	89.7
Vienna	3,250	93.4
Vilnius	3,470	99.7
Warsaw	3,810	109.5
Zurich	3,610	103.7

* New York City = Index 100

Housing

Housing is a basic need, and its prices depend greatly on regional preferences and demographic trends. For some cities, there is a large difference between the price to rent an apartment built to Western standards versus local ones. In Bogotá, for example, a furnished two-room apartment is 122% more expensive per month than its typical local variant. On average, local rents were 20% less per month than those for Western-style apartments.

Where can I pay less rent?

A furnished two-room apartment in Hong Kong costs around USD 4,410 to rent per month – four times the monthly rent in Johannesburg. That is still not the highest though: rent in New York City costs USD 200 more per month for a similar apartment. For this price, you could rent an apartment for 17 months in Sofia. The general picture is the same for unfurnished three-room apartments. In London, these cost USD 3,350 per month. For that price, you could rent two apartments, one in Amsterdam and one in Beijing.

Methodology

To estimate the worldwide costs of housing, we considered the prices for three different types of apartments. For two of these types, we standardized requirements to Western preferences, with a furnished two-room apartment and an unfurnished three-room apartment. We only looked at newly built apartments which with a bathroom and a kitchen. Prices included utilities (energy and water taxes), but not the use of a garage. To capture local standards, our survey asked for the price of an apartment of typical size, location, and amenities for the respective city. All three housing options were weighted equally.

Housing

Cities	Furnished 2-room apartment	Unfurnished 3-room apartment	Normal local rent ¹
Amsterdam	1,140	1,620	1,220
Athens	740	850	770
Auckland	1,060	1,390	1,250
Bangkok	820	1,040	500
Barcelona	780	820	740
Beijing	1,150	1,630	1,390
Berlin	850	1,140	690
Bogotá	840	1,210	380
Bratislava	670	720	580
Brussels	1,300	1,490	1,340
Bucharest	420	610	370
Budapest	620	760	640
Buenos Aires	810	1,040	710
Cairo	640	780	500
Chicago	2,520	2,960	2,210
Copenhagen	1,420	2,020	1,650
Doha	2,230	2,500	2,050
Dubai	2,320	3,240	1,380
Dublin	1,650	2,360	1,760
Frankfurt	990	1,360	1,220
Geneva	2,810	2,700	1,610
Helsinki	1,460	1,600	1,440
Hong Kong	4,410	4,220	2,590
Istanbul	890	1,080	970
Jakarta	530	750	260
Johannesburg	1,080	1,500	690
Kiev	400	540	390
Kuala Lumpur	570	630	560
Lima	760	890	800
Lisbon	710	1,020	760
Ljubljana	760	1,080	540
London	2,840	3,350	2,360
Los Angeles	1,670	2,210	1,990
Luxembourg	1,940	2,430	2,130
Lyon	640	820	670
Madrid	940	1,340	900
Manama	1,120	1,470	890
Manila	890	900	190
Mexico City	990	1,410	770
Miami	1,840	2,180	1,970
Milan	1,090	1,490	1,340
Montreal	640	670	590
Moscow	1,080	1,540	1,020
Mumbai	770	970	550
Munich	1,210	1,580	1,370
Nairobi	700	790	480
New Delhi	570	720	640
New York City	4,620	4,320	3,890
Nicosia	690	950	690
Oslo	1,940	2,150	1,940
Paris	1,670	2,090	1,610
Prague	510	630	550
Riga	680	910	360
Rio de Janeiro	1,380	1,540	590
Rome	1,220	1,600	1,280
Santiago de Chile	990	1,090	710
Sao Paulo	930	1,330	910
Seoul	970	1,270	1,140
Shanghai	1,120	1,330	1,090
Sofia	270	350	310
Stockholm	1,240	1,350	880
Sydney	2,050	2,940	1,780
Taipei	2,030	2,740	1,840
Tallinn	670	920	690
Tel Aviv	1,520	1,790	1,160
Tokyo	1,370	1,920	1,730
Toronto	1,110	1,250	1,120
Vienna	1,010	1,120	800
Vilnius	590	820	550
Warsaw	590	840	630
Zurich	2,500	2,390	1,770

¹ The figures given are values for average rent prices (monthly gross rents) for local households.

Public transport

Public transport is a big expense for international travelers, since locals usually pay reduced tariffs. Getting around can be pricy – if you are planning a trip to Stockholm or London, where fares are 2.5 times above the worldwide average.

Are taxis expensive everywhere?

Taking a cab in Oslo is expensive. A five-kilometer (three-mile) trip costs USD 32. For the same amount, you could travel more than 66 km (41 miles) in Cairo. Travelling by bus, tram or metro costs on average USD 1.60 worldwide per trip. In Copenhagen the cost is three times higher. In Buenos Aires though, you can travel 10 km (six miles) for less than one-third that amount. For the cost of a ticket in Copenhagen, you could travel the equivalent of 285 km (180 miles) in Kiev, almost the full distance between Luxembourg and Paris.

Sixty-one of our cities had railway infrastructure, where a 200 km journey would cost on average USD 27. Zurich, London, and Munich stand out as the most expensive places to travel by train – with prices being at least two times the global average. For the price of a 200 km (125 mile) train ride in Geneva, you could travel an astounding 15,400 km (9,570 miles) in Manila, or the distance between Montreal and Auckland.

Methodology

Prices of public transport are based on the price of a single ticket on a bus, tram, or subway, for a journey of approximately 10 km or at least 10 stops. Prices for a taxi include a five-kilometer ride during the day within city limits, including a service tip. Prices for a train ticket represent a 2nd class single ticket for a journey of 200 km.

Public transport

Cities	Bus, Tram or Metro (USD)	Taxi (USD)	Train (USD)
Amsterdam	2.71	16.22	27.95
Athens	1.37	5.01	15.14
Auckland	3.16	19.72	40.59
Bangkok	0.74	1.85	3.26
Barcelona	2.32	10.25	25.37
Beijing	0.48	4.42	15.59
Berlin	2.89	14.78	55.14
Bogotá	0.72	1.71	n.a.
Bratislava	0.90	6.31	8.96
Brussels	2.23	12.72	22.81
Bucharest	0.46	3.31	14.26
Budapest	1.26	7.28	15.15
Buenos Aires	0.51	4.75	n.a.
Cairo	0.22	2.40	4.59
Chicago	1.92	12.75	37.00
Copenhagen	4.63	15.45	49.03
Doha	0.92	3.66	n.a.
Dubai	1.09	6.26	n.a.
Dublin	3.15	11.35	30.50
Frankfurt	2.97	14.97	59.47
Geneva	3.12	20.58	77.55
Helsinki	2.88	15.24	33.91
Hong Kong	1.28	3.65	26.23
Istanbul	0.74	5.66	14.08
Jakarta	0.28	2.66	8.49
Johannesburg	0.79	6.34	16.67
Kiev	0.16	1.59	3.28
Kuala Lumpur	0.37	2.79	8.68
Lima	0.74	6.42	n.a.
Lisbon	1.82	8.11	23.25
Ljubljana	1.53	5.51	14.03
London	4.04	10.09	74.02
Los Angeles	1.50	15.65	36.67
Luxembourg	2.16	22.34	31.56
Lyon	1.95	12.04	32.54
Madrid	1.98	11.35	29.08
Manama	0.80	7.96	n.a.
Manila	0.45	3.00	1.01
Mexico City	0.33	3.66	n.a.
Miami	2.25	14.43	33.45
Milan	1.62	17.30	28.58
Montreal	2.63	17.57	52.08
Moscow	0.88	7.88	24.60
Mumbai	0.74	1.81	1.75
Munich	2.92	14.02	59.83
Nairobi	0.64	7.14	10.09
New Delhi	0.37	1.54	10.08
New York City	2.75	11.67	52.50
Nicosia	1.62	8.38	n.a.
Oslo	3.80	32.10	61.77
Paris	1.95	12.43	43.84
Prague	1.18	6.00	8.44
Riga	1.30	6.74	7.78
Rio de Janeiro	1.19	5.07	n.a.
Rome	1.62	14.24	27.03
Santiago de Chile	1.08	7.08	9.11
Sao Paulo	1.12	6.48	n.a.
Seoul	1.06	4.45	23.09
Shanghai	0.38	3.13	12.01
Sofia	0.55	3.04	7.55
Stockholm	4.17	18.56	41.79
Sydney	2.58	11.52	6.80
Taipei	0.54	4.63	11.32
Tallinn	1.73	6.54	11.79
Tel Aviv	1.75	10.98	18.75
Tokyo	1.47	7.31	51.77
Toronto	2.43	15.88	38.46
Vienna	2.34	14.42	43.36
Vilnius	0.90	4.52	10.46
Warsaw	0.91	5.64	13.70
Zurich	3.75	27.59	73.39

n.a. = not available

Restaurants and hotels

The cost of dinner for two varies. The price in Tokyo is enough for six dinners in Mumbai. Buying a three-course evening meal in a good restaurant in Zurich and Taipei can cost as much as USD 150. This is more than 80% higher than the worldwide average of USD 80. In Jakarta and Johannesburg, with prices around USD 40 per meal, you would spend USD 110 less than in the most expensive cities.

Shall we upgrade to the five-star hotel?

Checking in to an international five-star hotel in New York City can be quite expensive, with a price tag of USD 590 per night. For the price of an average night in New York City, you can afford over five nights in Bucharest. The same level of luxury in Barcelona costs you only USD 250, closer to the global average of USD 300. Even if you decide to settle for something more affordable, prices for a mid-range hotel can vary widely. In Riga you would pay on average USD 70, whereas in Miami this would cost you USD 240. For the cost of the room in Miami, you could actually book a first-class hotel in Riga.

Methodology

The price of an evening meal includes a three-course menu in a good restaurant, with an entrée, main course, and dessert, excluding beverages but including a service tip. The price for a hotel room factors in a one-night stay in a double room with an ensuite bathroom, including breakfast for two people, in a first-class international hotel, and in a good mid-range hotel.

Restaurant and hotel			
Cities	Restaurant (USD)	Hotel***** (USD)	Hotel*** (USD)
Amsterdam	90	250	170
Athens	80	290	100
Auckland	110	210	140
Bangkok	50	180	110
Barcelona	110	250	160
Beijing	50	200	100
Berlin	70	240	120
Bogotá	90	280	150
Bratislava	80	190	90
Brussels	120	190	140
Bucharest	40	110	70
Budapest	60	220	70
Buenos Aires	60	440	150
Cairo	60	260	80
Chicago	100	390	180
Copenhagen	110	300	190
Doha	100	400	170
Dubai	90	430	130
Dublin	110	320	160
Frankfurt	80	290	120
Geneva	140	410	200
Helsinki	80	380	120
Hong Kong	90	250	170
Istanbul	90	200	130
Jakarta	40	340	210
Johannesburg	40	290	150
Kiev	50	380	90
Kuala Lumpur	110	240	70
Lima	80	290	110
Lisbon	60	250	110
Ljubljana	60	240	90
London	60	400	180
Los Angeles	100	290	150
Luxembourg	120	240	150
Lyon	70	240	130
Madrid	110	350	130
Manama	110	390	230
Manila	60	230	100
Mexico City	70	280	100
Miami	110	420	240
Milan	110	300	200
Montreal	90	210	120
Moscow	110	350	140
Mumbai	40	170	100
Munich	90	380	110
Nairobi	40	230	120
New Delhi	40	220	110
New York City	100	590	380
Nicosia	50	250	90
Oslo	150	280	170
Paris	60	410	130
Prague	40	200	90
Riga	70	230	70
Rio de Janeiro	50	290	110
Rome	100	380	160
Santiago de Chile	70	250	120
Sao Paulo	80	240	100
Seoul	90	400	140
Shanghai	70	470	140
Sofia	50	160	60
Stockholm	100	230	150
Sydney	70	470	170
Taipei	150	390	120
Tallinn	60	300	100
Tel Aviv	80	430	190
Tokyo	220	500	280
Toronto	60	390	200
Vienna	90	240	90
Vilnius	40	200	80
Warsaw	60	190	90
Zurich	150	440	320

Services

Services are a part of our daily lives – we read the newspaper, pick up our dry cleaning, get our hair cut, and meet someone for coffee, possibly all in one morning. For this section, we collected prices for a basket of 27 different services. Worldwide, this basket costs an average of USD 490, but this varies widely across cities.

Where should I get my hair cut?

The quality of services, unlike that of food, is hard to capture uniformly. Services are not exportable or tradable goods. There is a strong correlation between local wages and the prices for services, which results in extreme price differences for our basket. Zurich and Geneva, which lead our wage-level rankings, also come out on top for the prices of services. In these two cities our basket costs USD 990 and USD 955, respectively. In Kiev, Mumbai, and New Delhi on the other hand, the same basket can be bought for less than half of the global average price.

Haircuts, and especially the price difference for them between men and women, are an interesting example. In Jakarta and Hong Kong, women pay on average almost the same as men, whereas in Dublin and Cairo, the price for women is almost three times higher than for men. This imbalance is seen across the globe, with women's haircuts costing on average 40% more than men's. For the price of one women's haircut in Oslo, men could afford to get their hair cut around 18 times in Nairobi.

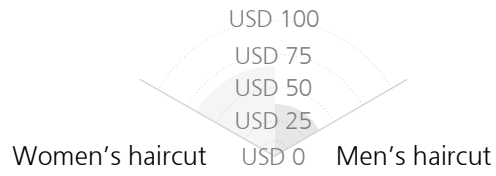
Methodology

Our basket covers a variety of services, such as a haircut, an hour of household help, dry cleaning, TV and internet fees, a language course and a ticket to a sports event. The basket is weighted according to the monthly consumption of a European family.

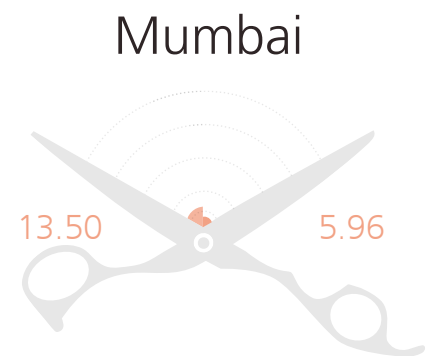
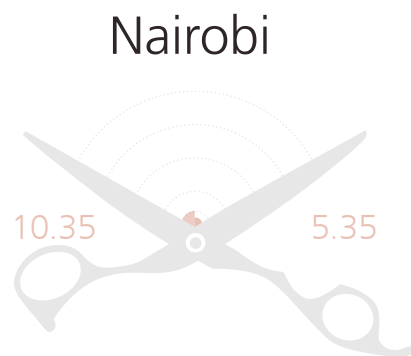
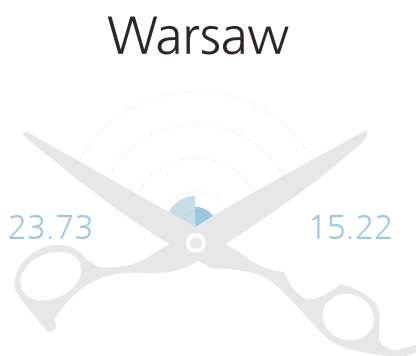
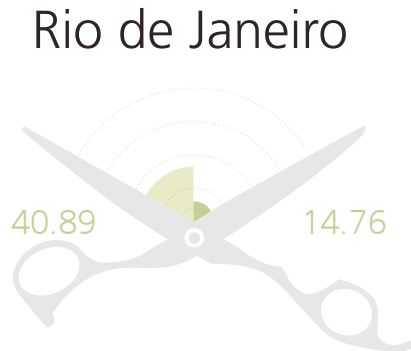
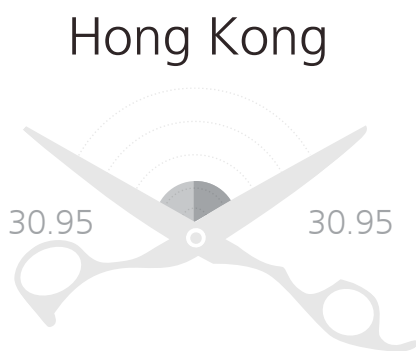
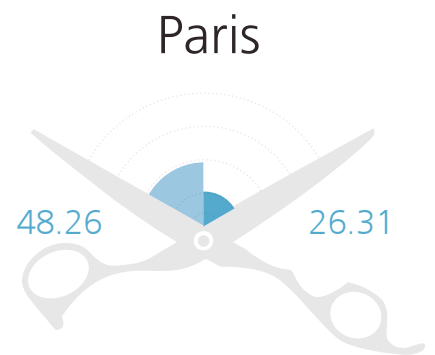
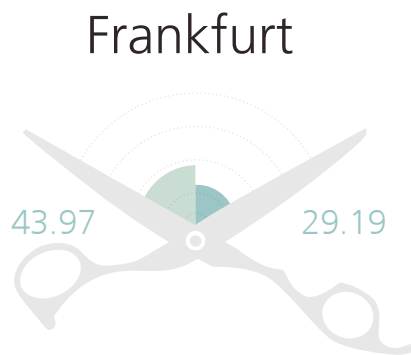
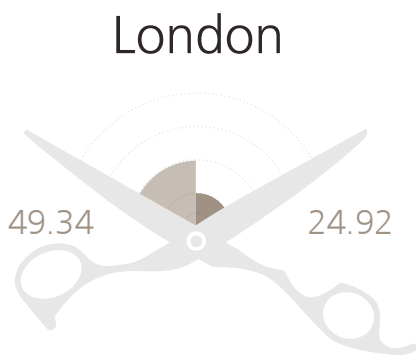
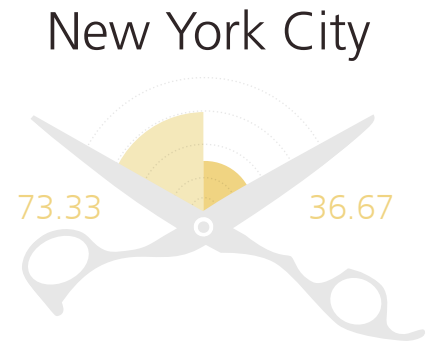
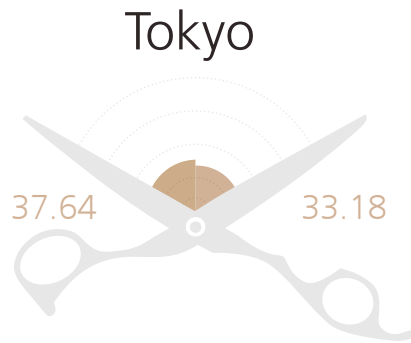
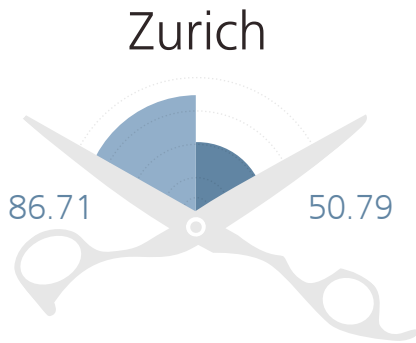
Services

Cities ¹	USD	Index	Haircut women	Haircut men
Amsterdam	555	74.7	49.37	36.76
Athens	461	62.1	20.36	14.78
Auckland	695	93.7	63.98	36.42
Bangkok	323	43.6	12.81	9.53
Barcelona	530	71.4	36.04	19.79
Beijing	351	47.3	9.27	5.24
Berlin	447	60.3	31.63	16.49
Bogotá	425	57.2	14.03	8.28
Bratislava	371	49.9	23.43	12.79
Brussels	578	77.9	43.97	25.95
Bucharest	305	41.1	13.05	8.02
Budapest	311	41.8	22.85	12.63
Buenos Aires	536	72.3	23.37	20.92
Cairo	340	45.9	21.84	6.12
Chicago	645	86.9	54.00	32.33
Copenhagen	760	102.4	67.99	52.55
Doha	545	73.4	32.05	13.28
Dubai	538	72.6	43.11	16.79
Dublin	615	82.8	43.25	13.24
Frankfurt	514	69.3	43.97	29.19
Geneva	954	128.6	83.97	44.07
Helsinki	523	70.5	43.97	36.04
Hong Kong	410	55.3	30.96	30.96
Istanbul	464	62.5	21.37	12.57
Jakarta	311	42.0	4.63	4.50
Johannesburg	390	52.5	11.81	8.20
Kiev	208	28.0	9.90	7.24
Kuala Lumpur	378	50.9	15.16	10.84
Lima	414	55.8	14.97	8.55
Lisbon	394	53.1	27.03	10.63
Ljubljana	346	46.6	33.88	17.30
London	703	94.8	49.34	24.92
Los Angeles	562	75.7	57.00	34.33
Luxembourg	586	79.0	67.76	27.93
Lyon	546	73.6	42.53	22.71
Madrid	569	76.6	27.03	19.50
Manama	583	78.5	23.87	13.26
Manila	361	48.6	6.18	5.40
Mexico City	455	61.3	15.34	11.50
Miami	533	71.9	26.33	15.67
Milan	566	76.2	38.11	24.06
Montreal	560	75.4	35.28	23.14
Moscow	395	53.2	41.00	28.70
Mumbai	194	26.2	13.50	5.96
Munich	529	71.3	51.18	32.80
Nairobi	355	47.8	10.35	5.35
New Delhi	215	29.0	11.91	5.29
New York City*	742	100.0	73.33	36.67
Nicosia	433	58.3	38.38	16.76
Oslo	817	110.2	95.04	77.72
Paris	605	81.5	48.26	26.31
Prague	302	40.7	25.58	12.89
Riga	309	41.7	24.87	13.70
Rio de Janeiro	455	61.4	40.89	14.76
Rome	512	69.0	48.65	17.30
Santiago de Chile	444	59.8	21.97	12.48
Sao Paulo	515	69.4	22.96	14.21
Seoul	410	55.3	15.64	9.43
Shanghai	447	60.3	16.93	10.10
Sofia	316	42.6	15.89	11.33
Stockholm	557	75.0	54.80	48.82
Sydney	667	89.9	38.64	21.64
Taipei	517	69.7	29.04	26.89
Tallinn	330	44.5	28.83	14.78
Tel Aviv	548	73.8	55.92	21.61
Tokyo	663	89.4	37.64	33.18
Toronto	584	78.7	26.31	14.84
Vienna	446	60.2	48.65	18.74
Vilnius	306	41.3	27.03	16.22
Warsaw	309	41.6	23.73	15.22
Zurich	996	134.3	86.71	50.79

* New York City = Index 100



Prices in USD



Women's haircut

Highest

Oslo
USD 95.04

Lowest

Jakarta
USD 4.63

Men's haircut

Highest

Oslo
USD 77.72

Lowest

Jakarta
USD 4.50

City breaks

Avid international travelers may be interested in the cost of a trip to one of our cities. For example, rental cars vary greatly in price. In Rio de Janeiro, a rental car can cost you around USD 25, a tenth of the cost of a rental in Oslo. Over half of our cities offer rental cars for under USD 110 per day, less than half of the price of one in Paris, our second-most expensive city for rental cars. Postage had one of the greatest price variances; the price of sending a letter was 58 times more expensive in Bogotá than in Kiev. Fifty-nine cities have postage prices under USD 0.95.

Riga or Zurich for a night away?

An average city break costs USD 615. Zurich and Geneva are the most expensive cities to visit, costing 70% and 65% more, respectively, than the average. Other pricy destinations include Tokyo, New York City and Oslo, where the cost of our package is well above USD 950. For that amount, an entire three-night round-trip from Bucharest (USD 260) to Sofia (USD 300) to Vilnius (USD 380) could be organized.

Methodology

The cost of a city break was for two people, with an overnight stay in a first-class hotel, two dinners at a restaurant including a bottle of wine, a taxi ride, two tickets for public transportation, a rental car (100 km), a paperback book, a phone call and postage for a letter. The prices listed do not include travel to and from the destination.

City breaks

Cities	USD	Index
Amsterdam	570	55.3
Athens	530	51.5
Auckland	580	56.3
Bangkok	320	31.1
Barcelona	600	58.3
Beijing	350	34.0
Berlin	620	60.2
Bogotá	590	57.3
Bratislava	450	43.7
Brussels	580	56.3
Bucharest	260	25.2
Budapest	430	41.7
Buenos Aires	700	68.0
Cairo	480	46.6
Chicago	700	68.0
Copenhagen	780	75.7
Doha	740	71.8
Dubai	790	76.7
Dublin	660	64.1
Frankfurt	700	68.0
Geneva	1,020	99.0
Helsinki	800	77.7
Hong Kong	640	62.1
Istanbul	440	42.7
Jakarta	690	67.0
Johannesburg	450	43.7
Kiev	550	53.4
Kuala Lumpur	550	53.4
Lima	560	54.4
Lisbon	460	44.7
Ljubljana	490	47.6
London	750	72.8
Los Angeles	620	60.2
Luxembourg	720	69.9
Lyon	650	63.1
Madrid	650	63.1
Manama	720	69.9
Manila	450	43.7
Mexico City	540	52.4
Miami	780	75.7
Milan	670	65.0
Montreal	570	55.3
Moscow	710	68.9
Mumbai	300	29.1
Munich	830	80.6
Nairobi	380	36.9
New Delhi	340	33.0
New York City*	1,030	100.0
Nicosia	550	53.4
Oslo	980	95.1
Paris	890	86.4
Prague	500	48.5
Riga	460	44.7
Rio de Janeiro	470	45.6
Rome	710	68.9
Santiago de Chile	570	55.3
Sao Paulo	500	48.5
Seoul	670	65.0
Shanghai	670	65.0
Sofia	300	29.1
Stockholm	610	59.2
Sydney	690	67.0
Taipei	820	79.6
Tallinn	540	52.4
Tel Aviv	650	63.1
Tokyo	1,000	97.1
Toronto	710	68.9
Vienna	630	61.2
Vilnius	380	36.9
Warsaw	490	47.6
Zurich	1,050	101.9

* New York City = Index 100

Wage comparison

International wage comparison

Wages differ greatly across geographic regions and professions, making them vital for determining purchasing power. Zurich and Geneva have the highest gross wages by far, over USD 10/hour greater than Luxembourg (third-highest gross salary), and over 20 times greater than Jakarta's gross wages.

More often than not, how much you get paid for work is not how much you take home, although for workers in Dubai, Doha and Buenos Aires, with 0% tax rates and low employee social security contribution rates, this is the case. Workers in Copenhagen, on the other hand, surrender almost 45% of their wage to taxes. Net wages in Zurich and Geneva are the highest, even with all deductions, and are, on average, almost 23 times higher than those in Kiev, with the lowest.

How does my salary compare to others?

New York City had the greatest variance across gross wages, signaling a different salary level for different levels of education; an educated department manager makes on average almost USD 120,000 more than a female factory worker. Kiev has the most uniform gross wages, with an average difference between these two professions of around USD 6,000.

The employment sector also makes a difference regarding compensation. Average industrial sector employees made 8% more than average service sector workers, when considering unweighted gross salaries (see pages 39 – 41) across all cities. In some places this difference can be significant, such as in São Paulo, with a difference of almost 75%. For others, it was minimal, such as in Paris, with almost no sector difference.

Methodology

Our wage comparison covers 15 different occupations in administrative, business, communication, construction, educational, finance, healthcare, hospitality, manufacturing, retail, and transportation sectors. Worker profiles vary in age, family status, work experience and education. Job descriptions can be found on page 38. All professions are weighted to reflect the European workforce, where industrial sector workers comprise 27% of the workforce, and service sector employees nearly 73%.

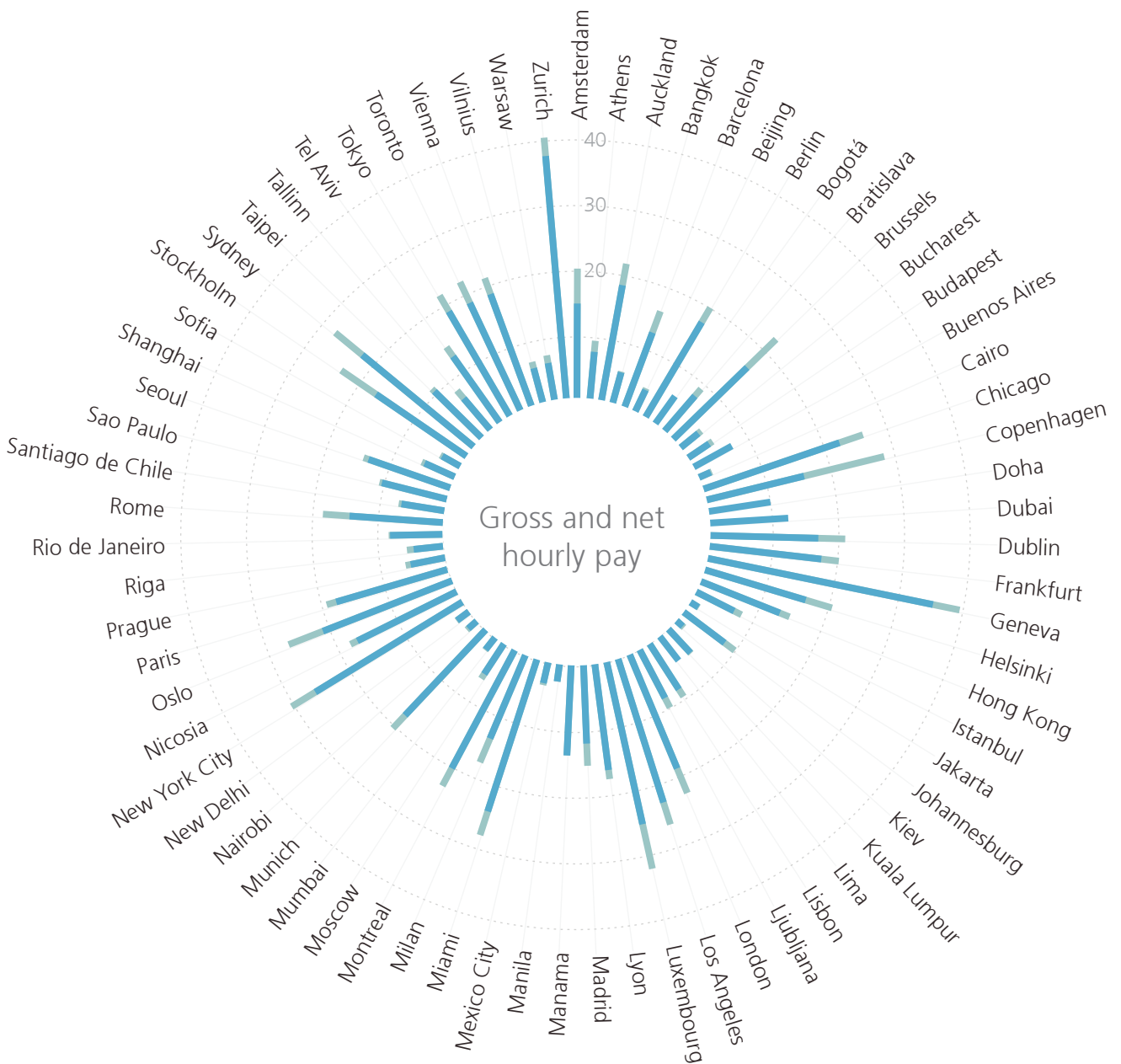
To ensure that wage information for local workers is presented accurately, incomes from cross-border commuters were excluded. We compared job profiles for full-time (100%) workers to ensure comparability, and scaled up any information on part-time workers on the assumption that wage was a linear function of percentage of work. Since the sample size of our wage data is smaller than that used by local governments for their calculations, the results are not statistically comparable.

Gross wages may include possible supplementary benefits, such as bonuses, vacation pay, meal or housing allowances, or family assistance. Net wages take into account taxes and social security contributions. Hourly wages are calculated by taking into account annual working hours, found on page 36.

Note

Professions were weighted according to Eurostat statistics for the working population composition of EU countries.

- Gross hourly pay in USD
- Net hourly pay in USD



Gross hourly pay

Highest

Zurich
USD 41.29

Lowest

Kiev
USD 1.93

Net hourly pay

Highest

Zurich
USD 38.40

Lowest

Kiev
USD 1.65

Taxes and social security contributions

Most countries rely on taxes, social security payments and other deductions to finance their national budgets and social security systems. Countries such as Bahrain, the UAE and Qatar finance themselves by selling local raw materials, and do not have an income tax system. Argentina, Peru and Colombia only impose tax on high earners and foreign citizens. Hence, six of our cities have no recorded income tax.

Who pays the most tax?

Income taxes hurt most in Copenhagen, where the average tax for our professions was around 45%. Average tax worldwide was almost 13%, but varies among cities, as income tax rates are calculated by each country and/or city to ensure its own finances. Some countries have very high income tax and social security contribution rates, but provide a full array of social services to their residents. Stockholm has an average tax rate of nearly 28%, but residents have largely free access to education and childcare.

Social security contributions average 10% of gross wages for the employee and 19% for the employer. Workers in Moscow, Hong Kong and Copenhagen make no contributions to social security. In France, however, employers contribute over 49%, more than twice employees' contribution. 27% of all governments shift the burden of social security to the employee. Workers in Auckland, for example, carry full responsibility for social security.

Methodology

We collected tax and social security information using PwC's "Worldwide Tax Summaries," and corroborated our results with survey participants and other sources. Taxes were averaged for each profession, weighted and then calculated as a percentage. Social security burden information for employees and employers was gathered from PwC and KPMG sources.

Our net wages (see pages 32–33) are calculated by deducting social security contributions from gross wages, and then subtracting taxes. Hourly wages in individual cities were calculated by dividing average annual gross or net wages by the average number of hours worked per year.

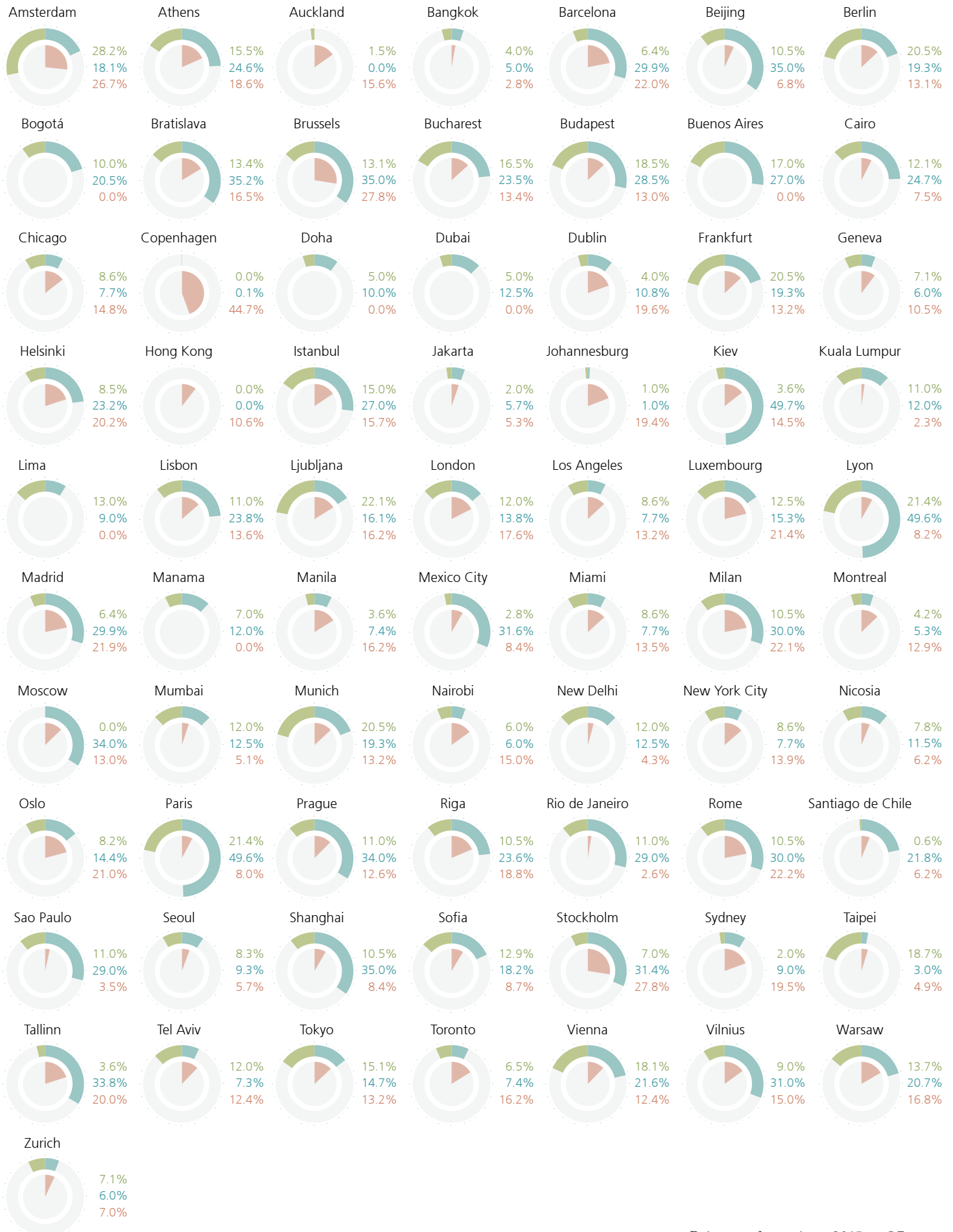
Public sector spending and social security systems in individual countries (and in individual cities) vary greatly, so the percentage of deductions ranges widely.

Note

Capital gains, VAT, property and indirect income deductions were excluded from tax and social security contribution calculations.

Cities such as Zurich, Geneva and Hong Kong have basic private medical insurance that is obligatory, regardless of income level. It is not a part of the social security system and the price of it is not deducted from salaries. So social security contributions only reflect public social contributions, not necessarily all social contributions made by employees. This also limits comparability of these cities with others.

- Income tax in %
- Social security contribution (employee) in %
- Social security contribution (employer) in %



Working hours and vacation days

Annual working hours have a great impact on purchasing power and quality of life – a high hourly income and a low number of working hours indicates a higher quality of life than the reverse. All workaholics should move to Hong Kong, where working hours average over 50 per week, with only 17 days of holiday annually. Those who like time off should consider finding a job in Paris, where people work only around 35 hours per week (in line with new government regulations) and have 29 days of paid vacation. They are on the job annually 1,000-plus fewer hours than their counterparts in Hong Kong.

Do I spend too much time at work?

On average, workers worldwide spend over 40 hours per week at their workplace, and receive over 4.5 weeks of paid vacation. That said, employees in Shanghai must live with only seven days off, almost a fifth of the vacation days of those in Manama. But legal holidays help make workers' lives manageable. Bangkok averages only nine days of paid vacation but 16 days of legal holidays, giving a total holiday time of 25 days, or around five weeks. São Paulo has the highest combined amount of time off, with an average of 50 days, or around 10 weeks. Lisbon has the lowest number of legal holidays, with only five days, which is one work week in the city.

Methodology

Annual vacations are those considered as paid vacation days (legal holidays not included). They were calculated through survey responses, and averaged over all professions. Annual working hours were calculated through the number of hours worked per day, the number of days worked per week, with the vacation and legal holiday time deducted. Working hour information was not weighted to the profession's representation in the European workforce.

Working hours and vacation days

Cities	Working hours per year	Paid vacation days per year
Amsterdam	1,726	27
Athens	1,800	23
Auckland	1,992	16
Bangkok	2,191	9
Barcelona	1,731	28
Beijing	1,963	10
Berlin	1,769	29
Bogotá	2,096	15
Bratislava	1,845	26
Brussels	1,717	18
Bucharest	1,807	23
Budapest	1,910	26
Buenos Aires	1,899	16
Cairo	2,082	25
Chicago	2,030	14
Copenhagen	1,697	25
Doha	2,082	24
Dubai	2,186	30
Dublin	1,770	31
Frankfurt	1,757	28
Geneva	1,859	27
Helsinki	1,659	29
Hong Kong	2,606	17
Istanbul	2,043	18
Jakarta	2,102	12
Johannesburg	1,847	19
Kiev	1,817	26
Kuala Lumpur	1,935	15
Lima	1,957	31
Lisbon	1,748	23
Ljubljana	1,853	25
London	1,740	25
Los Angeles	1,928	14
Luxembourg	1,703	32
Lyon	1,631	29
Madrid	1,731	26
Manama	2,076	34
Manila	1,951	21
Mexico City	2,261	17
Miami	1,854	19
Milan	1,691	26
Montreal	1,783	18
Moscow	1,647	31
Mumbai	2,277	21
Munich	1,721	29
Nairobi	2,184	22
New Delhi	2,214	26
New York City	1,847	27
Nicosia	1,855	22
Oslo	1,744	25
Paris	1,604	29
Prague	1,753	28
Riga	1,823	20
Rio de Janeiro	1,745	30
Rome	1,736	32
Santiago de Chile	2,082	17
Sao Paulo	1,818	31
Seoul	1,934	15
Shanghai	2,051	7
Sofia	1,821	22
Stockholm	1,770	25
Sydney	1,829	24
Taipei	2,141	13
Tallinn	1,738	30
Tel Aviv	2,038	17
Tokyo	2,055	17
Toronto	1,985	19
Vienna	1,678	27
Vilnius	1,716	30
Warsaw	1,757	26
Zurich	1,912	24

Appendix

Job descriptions

Industrial sector

Construction worker

Unskilled or semi-skilled laborer without technical training, approximate age and status: 25, single

Department manager

Head of production department with more than 100 employees in a sizable company in the metal processing, machinery, or tool-making industry; full vocational training and considerable professional experience, approximate age and status: 40, married, two children

Electrical engineer

Employed by an industrial firm in the electrical equipment, electric power, or similar industry; completed studies at a university or institute of higher technical education; at least five years of practical experience, approximate age and status: 35, married, two children

Female industrial worker

Unskilled or semi-skilled operator in a medium-sized plant in the textile industry, approximate age and status: 25, single

Industrial technician

Skilled mechanic with vocational training and considerable experience with a large company in the metal-working and tool industry, approximate age and status: 35, married, two children

Services sector

Automobile mechanic

Completed training or apprenticeship, at least five years of experience, approximate age and status: 25, single

Bank credit clerk

Completed apprenticeship, at least 10 years of experience, approximate age and status: 35, single

Bus driver

Employed by a municipal transport system, at least 10 years of driving experience, approximate age and status: 35, married, two children

Call center agent

Trained agent at an inbound call/service center in the telecommunications or technology sector, approximate age and status: 25, single

Cook (chef de partie)

Cook in a kitchen with a fairly large staff in a respected restaurant or hotel, deputy of the head chef or chef de partie, supervises two to three cooks, completed vocational training as cook, about 10 years of experience, approximate age and status: 30, single

Female sales assistant

Sales in the ladies' apparel department of a large department store, specialized training in sales, several years of experience, approximate age and status: 25, single

Hospital nurse

Completed apprenticeship or studies, at least 10 years of experience, approximate age and status: 35, married, two children

Primary public school teacher

Teaching for about 10 years in government-operated schools, approximate age and status: 35, married, two children

Product manager

Manager in pharmaceutical, chemical or food industry, about five years of experience, tertiary educational degree, middle management, approximate age and status: 35, married

Secretary/personal assistant

Secretary of a department manager in an industrial firm, at least five years of experience; knowledge of PCs and one foreign language, approximate age and status: 25, single

Gross annual incomes (in USD) in the industrial sector

Cities	Department manager	Female industrial worker	Construction worker	Industrial technician	Electrical engineer
Amsterdam	51,379	25,796	26,135	42,374	42,587
Athens	54,176	10,324	10,073	22,581	17,222
Auckland	78,286	34,809	37,950	58,739	63,351
Bangkok	29,611	5,080	5,055	11,719	12,730
Barcelona	44,698	16,365	20,655	24,440	41,382
Beijing	19,107	5,358	4,712	6,197	14,621
Berlin	76,888	23,894	25,466	38,689	61,813
Bogotá	20,494	3,235	4,364	9,245	15,556
Bratislava	58,396	16,978	22,358	19,465	25,125
Brussels	70,864	32,068	32,137	42,974	52,944
Bucharest	14,466	4,372	4,783	7,074	12,020
Budapest	22,437	5,459	5,159	8,672	19,781
Buenos Aires	18,728	10,277	9,921	12,489	16,929
Cairo	26,570	1,993	1,888	8,609	11,318
Chicago	107,820	38,965	42,000	43,500	94,299
Copenhagen	72,099	42,012	36,684	45,202	79,845
Doha	56,039	8,241	5,824	22,251	54,940
Dubai	73,494	6,533	5,299	25,315	65,328
Dublin	59,837	23,013	29,955	46,456	48,143
Frankfurt	56,305	26,993	27,182	42,705	63,594
Geneva	130,704	57,094	58,302	84,079	109,649
Helsinki	47,383	27,736	30,643	43,079	50,419
Hong Kong	64,505	29,414	29,930	37,671	55,474
Istanbul	41,052	7,086	9,583	18,652	34,609
Jakarta	10,190	2,023	3,011	3,844	10,885
Johannesburg	40,648	9,453	5,420	34,799	58,426
Kiev	8,005	2,384	3,225	2,822	4,208
Kuala Lumpur	44,868	6,173	7,066	8,562	18,616
Lima	20,438	6,576	7,220	12,586	18,663
Lisbon	21,231	14,938	11,539	19,545	20,684
Ljubljana	33,532	20,224	12,815	24,993	27,647
London	57,910	33,583	31,966	54,121	61,296
Los Angeles	85,500	30,667	38,000	55,000	82,333
Luxembourg	115,857	32,442	30,279	61,787	67,194
Lyon	52,306	23,485	23,320	28,865	52,698
Madrid	44,525	17,335	21,992	31,314	31,631
Manama	58,353	13,527	9,549	35,542	56,231
Manila	12,870	2,190	2,208	3,303	10,842
Mexico City	14,581	3,019	2,063	8,856	7,521
Miami	116,393	33,160	28,887	72,777	96,657
Milan	55,332	21,988	22,243	34,771	52,736
Montreal	105,607	45,452	39,804	50,252	54,224
Moscow	13,835	6,653	7,144	10,962	18,749
Mumbai	16,200	2,791	2,087	5,045	11,847
Munich	87,211	29,281	23,634	36,234	66,500
Nairobi	14,846	2,324	1,958	2,719	4,911
New Delhi	14,705	2,952	1,688	4,396	8,069
New York City	142,500	19,055	29,415	47,000	100,055
Nicosia	64,660	47,582	22,872	30,893	48,426
Oslo	76,080	42,267	41,210	52,411	54,947
Paris	52,696	21,304	24,383	28,501	51,937
Prague	17,073	8,939	8,205	12,910	15,067
Riga	16,770	7,437	11,627	11,442	14,342
Rio de Janeiro	36,872	4,479	7,658	22,986	36,006
Rome	63,803	30,482	27,179	36,549	46,320
Santiago de Chile	20,375	7,935	10,062	15,656	33,944
Sao Paulo	58,271	5,450	6,228	44,746	31,750
Seoul	32,026	17,486	28,161	26,965	35,892
Shanghai	31,759	5,229	7,730	9,741	18,368
Sofia	18,002	5,131	5,142	5,905	7,464
Stockholm	80,042	33,665	40,208	42,291	54,172
Sydney	92,460	48,957	62,355	59,493	70,195
Taipei	79,811	11,048	20,435	24,205	27,852
Tallinn	45,851	8,742	12,755	17,302	22,277
Tel Aviv	43,208	21,451	15,899	31,482	45,805
Tokyo	74,239	31,578	41,825	63,407	53,536
Toronto	63,164	40,445	36,992	55,165	70,083
Vienna	65,262	26,360	31,532	39,182	57,146
Vilnius	24,844	4,947	10,414	18,319	14,655
Warsaw	33,829	7,444	8,695	19,021	16,275
Zurich	159,705	47,934	62,276	75,691	123,676

Gross annual incomes (in USD) in the services sector

Cities	Bus driver	Automobile mechanic	Call center agent	Cook (chef de partie)	Hospital nurse
Amsterdam	35,340	28,328	27,960	32,251	41,006
Athens	17,708	9,786	10,527	19,832	14,638
Auckland	35,659	39,760	29,969	35,909	50,794
Bangkok	8,234	11,033	5,025	14,143	19,854
Barcelona	29,153	22,926	22,759	34,064	29,463
Beijing	8,090	6,649	3,679	7,294	9,789
Berlin	28,227	31,189	19,320	44,208	34,269
Bogotá	6,254	6,678	5,078	8,831	9,006
Bratislava	12,779	11,420	22,922	22,385	8,795
Brussels	38,251	34,800	32,739	36,879	41,870
Bucharest	11,601	7,868	6,965	11,010	6,385
Budapest	9,023	7,349	9,117	14,567	7,672
Buenos Aires	17,246	12,991	10,212	14,526	11,655
Cairo	2,202	4,283	2,884	10,095	4,195
Chicago	31,714	55,679	36,804	43,879	67,950
Copenhagen	45,819	43,295	42,413	49,296	52,402
Doha	9,312	11,171	14,284	16,482	17,306
Dubai	18,237	14,880	13,283	64,784	27,583
Dublin	39,016	27,920	25,610	32,273	45,084
Frankfurt	32,993	31,594	22,846	39,424	31,805
Geneva	64,590	66,145	51,014	75,875	79,665
Helsinki	34,743	33,623	24,630	29,527	33,415
Hong Kong	27,608	25,289	24,512	51,573	58,313
Istanbul	11,611	11,347	6,649	75,239	13,437
Jakarta	3,103	3,103	2,548	8,801	2,200
Johannesburg	10,339	12,111	6,791	51,307	14,664
Kiev	2,944	5,789	2,983	9,576	1,946
Kuala Lumpur	6,184	9,132	8,617	18,810	12,806
Lima	6,383	8,409	6,998	9,768	9,206
Lisbon	28,100	16,149	10,562	25,773	15,752
Ljubljana	14,748	19,511	20,646	20,159	17,142
London	37,402	32,718	25,986	41,107	41,359
Los Angeles	39,783	40,733	33,733	53,567	75,000
Luxembourg	85,578	40,228	32,442	41,093	88,822
Lyon	27,791	20,579	28,474	29,780	25,676
Madrid	33,170	23,492	15,922	31,339	26,783
Manama	17,665	36,232	12,732	68,962	33,770
Manila	3,083	2,897	4,330	3,367	4,783
Mexico City	1,813	3,083	3,342	17,109	12,286
Miami	38,317	38,025	28,076	60,122	69,484
Milan	29,270	22,068	18,438	42,319	38,534
Montreal	46,218	37,114	27,790	40,532	45,286
Moscow	13,381	11,945	8,694	11,491	7,787
Mumbai	3,185	2,017	3,239	12,741	5,216
Munich	34,427	32,330	24,470	35,540	33,454
Nairobi	2,741	3,094	3,884	4,494	3,865
New Delhi	4,204	4,619	3,249	6,689	6,583
New York City	63,800	47,678	29,560	63,725	91,600
Nicosia	31,290	27,049	26,657	37,159	29,881
Oslo	48,184	48,184	44,380	49,452	50,297
Paris	26,959	22,890	24,001	34,625	34,759
Prague	11,285	9,400	9,674	12,869	10,378
Riga	10,570	11,876	8,736	8,632	8,127
Rio de Janeiro	7,680	7,479	3,597	20,260	19,970
Rome	32,035	29,843	19,934	54,888	32,983
Santiago de Chile	11,348	13,365	8,058	14,222	23,529
Sao Paulo	9,001	7,857	4,942	22,257	18,411
Seoul	40,475	27,839	18,406	23,008	31,290
Shanghai	7,983	8,521	5,519	13,556	14,524
Sofia	7,110	7,369	8,714	10,914	4,169
Stockholm	37,915	36,681	37,086	37,714	42,963
Sydney	45,040	47,668	32,646	39,062	48,404
Taipei	22,668	16,634	15,330	48,840	20,144
Tallinn	12,068	14,058	10,572	19,033	14,274
Tel Aviv	29,448	25,176	24,230	38,423	31,421
Tokyo	39,106	38,437	33,460	46,008	47,179
Toronto	44,613	31,987	23,652	38,870	52,919
Vienna	36,031	35,637	31,429	29,493	32,789
Vilnius	12,761	12,626	6,505	22,038	8,140
Warsaw	10,372	10,818	7,798	17,513	9,781
Zurich	77,028	68,886	54,967	81,224	76,581

Gross annual incomes (in USD) in the services sector

Cities	Bank credit clerk	Product manager	Secretary/personal assistant	Female sales assistant	Primary public school teacher
Amsterdam	37,748	49,641	31,019	27,624	43,487
Athens	20,219	33,848	12,135	14,004	18,546
Auckland	34,468	62,593	46,660	27,426	47,182
Bangkok	22,815	17,951	11,286	7,053	7,425
Barcelona	32,427	64,163	22,163	18,636	31,301
Beijing	4,583	28,403	4,648	6,197	8,650
Berlin	48,938	56,631	28,433	23,577	53,938
Bogotá	10,331	67,629	10,970	4,508	8,682
Bratislava	23,935	34,305	12,869	10,652	12,247
Brussels	44,632	50,943	36,060	35,114	41,293
Bucharest	8,711	20,236	5,778	7,146	5,431
Budapest	11,472	21,736	9,364	6,337	9,149
Buenos Aires	16,431	22,410	14,253	14,508	10,191
Cairo	10,838	10,270	4,326	3,671	1,398
Chicago	47,040	109,207	44,929	42,088	69,074
Copenhagen	66,462	82,992	50,736	32,819	52,860
Doha	40,656	49,080	23,624	17,471	29,668
Dubai	24,171	89,826	18,691	15,243	30,759
Dublin	37,840	82,186	28,837	27,035	44,835
Frankfurt	48,490	58,020	32,586	25,769	52,100
Geneva	121,684	119,595	75,417	46,683	88,922
Helsinki	32,888	53,785	32,706	30,777	39,787
Hong Kong	61,151	52,378	30,446	26,318	56,764
Istanbul	15,823	24,156	12,265	9,515	12,725
Jakarta	2,432	11,580	5,906	2,200	2,501
Johannesburg	12,773	47,117	15,581	6,570	13,173
Kiev	3,923	6,567	3,452	3,009	1,714
Kuala Lumpur	7,569	19,182	9,591	7,166	12,218
Lima	13,432	23,273	10,154	6,217	8,837
Lisbon	26,494	16,149	15,291	12,479	26,848
Ljubljana	24,967	28,990	19,180	12,620	22,755
London	29,587	106,077	28,606	26,984	38,197
Los Angeles	68,633	94,000	42,267	38,067	54,667
Luxembourg	75,698	50,826	38,930	29,847	94,229
Lyon	49,744	59,469	27,724	23,358	30,096
Madrid	38,541	44,878	21,448	20,855	33,019
Manama	36,285	49,759	19,734	19,150	31,829
Manila	5,783	35,295	3,474	2,389	5,192
Mexico City	6,240	30,327	12,815	3,707	6,782
Miami	51,157	111,037	38,002	29,065	63,870
Milan	44,085	47,582	26,253	21,260	30,441
Montreal	49,752	75,663	36,729	17,533	48,534
Moscow	13,986	19,505	11,189	9,148	11,378
Mumbai	4,966	22,859	5,447	4,149	3,446
Munich	45,253	62,627	34,947	27,406	45,598
Nairobi	6,741	15,756	6,741	3,480	2,300
New Delhi	5,394	6,848	7,167	3,631	8,011
New York City	53,695	119,000	39,080	26,500	80,500
Nicosia	40,553	56,181	27,997	31,063	41,748
Oslo	50,720	67,627	43,957	38,885	46,493
Paris	55,260	54,421	26,661	26,538	32,024
Prague	13,881	18,472	10,581	9,442	10,427
Riga	11,696	27,109	9,735	5,509	6,666
Rio de Janeiro	13,962	33,690	13,080	4,218	9,690
Rome	36,317	57,008	16,978	25,380	27,756
Santiago de Chile	17,594	32,731	10,015	8,692	13,307
Sao Paulo	12,613	51,575	14,007	11,299	14,010
Seoul	58,408	33,131	17,118	14,633	37,180
Shanghai	16,945	30,017	10,457	7,356	10,651
Sofia	6,889	12,748	6,630	4,666	4,476
Stockholm	46,278	80,878	35,707	34,969	39,205
Sydney	41,227	86,318	37,001	39,938	60,294
Taipei	20,074	56,768	14,480	12,350	24,911
Tallinn	14,491	18,816	12,025	11,376	12,371
Tel Aviv	30,753	70,942	24,736	21,361	25,220
Tokyo	52,281	55,418	36,806	27,312	62,917
Toronto	33,198	65,723	33,607	28,748	62,363
Vienna	42,770	54,483	40,791	26,570	34,125
Vilnius	18,771	19,516	7,408	5,688	9,660
Warsaw	11,393	28,966	10,470	8,749	12,887
Zurich	107,124	127,031	69,684	54,462	110,815

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