

Cities Where Business Trips Feel Like Vacations

Methodology

Overview

This study ranks European cities where business trips feel most like vacations, combining both professional convenience and leisure appeal. The analysis is based on three composite indices - Business-Friendliness, Leisure, and Tourism Appeal - which are then combined into a final ranking (40% Business-Friendliness, 50% Leisure, 10% Tourism Appeal).

All data sources were reputable and publicly accessible, including Eurostat, Numbeo, Wikidata, TripAdvisor, Amadeus API, and others (see detailed source list below). Only officially recognized main city areas (as defined by Eurostat's Urban Audit) were included.

Data Collection

Data were collected for a representative set of major European cities across the following metrics:

Index	Metric	Description	Source
Business-Friendliness Index	Average mid-range hotel price (3–4★)	Average price for 2 nights on a weekday	Amadeus API
	Number of direct flight routes	Total direct connections from the main or nearest airport	FlightsFrom.com
	Coworking spaces per 100 sq. km	Total coworking spaces listed	Coworker.com
	Conference venues per 100 sq. km	Total venues with conference facilities	Cvent.com
Leisure Index	Annual sunshine hours	Average yearly sunshine duration	Weather-and-Climate.com, Wikipedia
	Bars & cafés per 100 sq. km	Total bars, pubs, and cafés listed on TripAdvisor	TripAdvisor
	Tourist attractions per 100 sq. km	Count of museums, art galleries, castles, palaces, cathedrals, and parks	Wikidata SPARQL

	Safety Index	Safety score based on Numbeo's current ranking	Numbeo
Tourism Appeal Index	Global search volume	Search volume for "visit [city]"	Ahrefs
	Tourist overnight stays (2024)	Total nights spent by domestic and foreign tourists	Eurostat
City Area (for per-area normalization)	City area (km ²)	Eurostat-defined main city area	Eurostat Urban Audit

Index Construction

Each city was evaluated using three sub-indices, which were later combined into a final composite score.

Business-Friendliness Index

This index evaluates the professional convenience of a city. It was calculated as the average of four equally weighted, normalized metrics:

$$\text{Business-Friendliness Index} = 0.25 \times (Z_{\text{Hotel Price}} + Z_{\text{Direct Flights}} + Z_{\text{Coworkings}} + Z_{\text{Conference Venues}})$$

- Metrics were standardized (Z-scores) to account for differing scales.
- Lower hotel prices increase business-friendliness (values were inverted before normalization).

Leisure Index

This index measures how enjoyable a city is for downtime during business trips. The weighting reflects the relative importance of weather and leisure options:

$$\text{Leisure Index} = 0.5 \times Z_{\text{Sunshine}} + 0.3 \times Z_{\text{Bars \& Cafes}} + 0.1 \times Z_{\text{Attractions}} + 0.1 \times Z_{\text{Safety}}$$

- All variables were normalized using Z-scores and adjusted to ensure higher values represent better leisure conditions.

Tourism Appeal Index

This captures global interest and visitation intensity. Both factors were equally weighted:

$$\text{Tourism Appeal Index} = 0.5 \times Z_{\text{Search Volume}} + 0.5 \times Z_{\text{Tourist Nights}}$$

Final Index Calculation

The three indices were combined into a Final “Business Trip Vacation” Index to highlight cities balancing work and leisure opportunities:

$$\text{Final Index} = 0.4 \times \text{Business-Friendliness Index} + 0.5 \times \text{Leisure Index} + 0.1 \times \text{Tourism Appeal Index}$$

Data Normalization & Treatment

- All per-area metrics (coworkings, attractions, cafés, etc.) were standardized per 100 sq. km using Eurostat-defined city boundaries.
- Missing values (where a metric was not available) were imputed with the mean of the dataset to avoid bias.
- Outliers were capped at the 95th percentile to prevent extreme values from skewing the index.

Validation & Cross-Checking

- Data consistency was verified by cross-referencing multiple sources (e.g., TripAdvisor vs. Wikidata counts for cultural sites).
- Random spot checks were performed on city-level data to ensure accuracy of geographic and category filters.
- All search volume data were taken from the same month to ensure comparability.

Limitations

While the methodology ensures comparability, it does not capture subjective aspects such as traveler satisfaction or cost of living beyond hotel prices. Additionally, data availability varies across cities, and some smaller destinations may be underrepresented due to limited listings in public databases.

Reproducibility

All data were collected between September and October 2025. Full methodology, including source queries and normalization scripts, is available upon request for verification or replication.