



Copenhagen, Denmark

PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS RABSCH, LAIF/REDUX

| TRAVEL |

Top 10 cities for cycling

Discover the best cities around the world to see on two wheels.

BY BLAKE SNOW

4 MINUTE READ



SIGHTSEEING ON FOOT is enlightening, albeit slow. Meanwhile, cars let you cover a lot of ground, but also come with a sensory sacrifice. Unlike other modes of transportation, biking allows riders to see, smell, hear, and feel a city, while still giving passengers a leg up on pedestrians.

When judged by their infrastructure (designated bike lanes, roadside rentals, international airport access), biker friendliness (from both drivers and pedestrians), and visual appeal (easy to look at and get around), these are the best cycling cities in the world.

Amsterdam

In terms of city biking, no other place comes close to the lasting legacy, ideal conditions, and ubiquity of [Amsterdam](#). For decades, it's been the ideal model for city planners around the world. While nearby [Utrecht](#) might rate slightly better for its biking lanes, it doesn't have the total package that Amsterdam does. The latter is flat, architecturally interesting, and teeming with cycling parking lots that go on forever.



Amsterdam, Netherlands

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STONE, NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION

Copenhagen

Like the [Netherlands](#), Scandinavia is known for excellent cycling. And while you're sure to enjoy top-notch biking in many of the region's metropolitan areas, there's no better example of this than in [Copenhagen](#). As of 2016, bikes actually outnumber cars here, and more than 62 percent of residents bike to work. To keep things safe, serene, and innovative, there are designated superhighways and bridges for cyclists.

Berlin

The capital of [Germany](#) might not be as well known as the above in terms of cycling, but it's arguably just as good. With over 500 miles of bike paths (about the same as [Amsterdam](#)), there's plenty to see in this stunning and historic city. [Berlin's](#) streets prioritize cyclists, and motorists and pedestrians are equally accommodating. As a bonus, there are no steep hills to take away from the surrounding architecture.

Montreal

Canada's second-largest city is one of the most European cities in North America, with French building design and language. With over 1,000 miles of bike paths and 5,000 total rentals, it's easy to get around the mostly flat city. Montreal is sure to delight while riding along the Lachine Canal for an excellent view of the skyline.

Tokyo

Like the Americas, Asia isn't known for being a particularly friendly (much less accessible) continent to urban cyclists. But the largest metropolis in the world is the glaring exception and easily one of the best on the planet. In addition to an impressive number of designated bike lanes, Tokyo even features divided sidewalks for both bikers and pedestrians. It's orderly, hyper-clean, and welcoming—for riders as much as visitors.



Buenos Aires, Argentina

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL S. LEWIS, NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION

Buenos Aires

Thanks to several recent upgrades, the capital of Argentina (and most-visited city in South America) is fast approaching nearly 200 miles of bike paths. But despite its sprawling size, Buenos Aires feels a lot more like Boston than it does New York when exploring its colorful energy on bike. Better yet, this botanical port city offers free bike rentals and the streets are soothingly lined with palm trees throughout the heart of the city.

Ljubljana

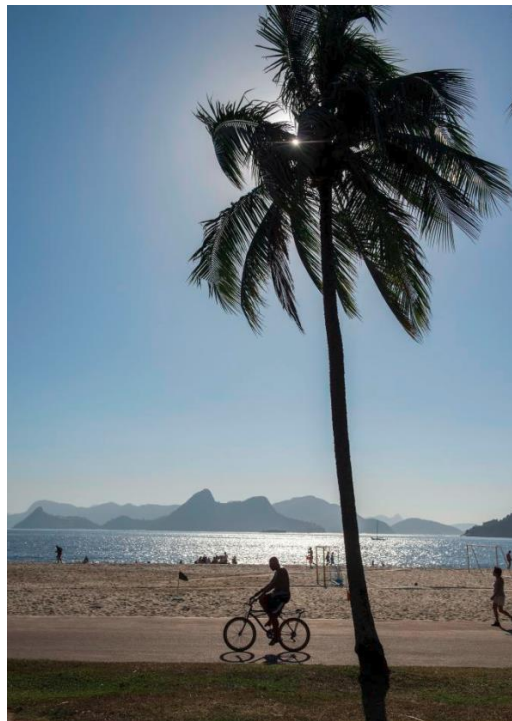
Ljubljana is the wonderfully flat, compact, and Renaissance-rich capital of Slovenia. It's also one of the best cities to see on bike. Not only does it offer more than 150 miles of bike lanes, the charming city center does not allow cars—it's only open to pedestrians, cyclists, and a few electric taxis. Additionally, there are more than 20 bike rental stations and the first 30 minutes are free.

San Francisco

Although both Portland and Seattle are known for being excellent commuter cities for bikers, neither can compare to San Francisco in terms of iconic views, history, culture, and the famously difficult (but worth the effort) hills. Over the last decade, the city has invested more than 100 million dollars in cycling infrastructure, going from zero protected bike lanes in 2010 to more than 200 miles worth today. And with mild temperatures year round, there's rarely a bad time to take in the cable cars, winding streets, and magnificent harbor views on two wheels.

Paris

Although both Bordeaux and Strasbourg rate slightly better than Paris in terms of pure cycling, neither are close to major international airports. Although primarily known for being a remarkable walking city, Parisian infrastructure make it an equally compelling cycling city. When on two wheels, there's even more to see than before.



Rio de Janeiro

Thanks to its breathtaking landscape, [Rio de Janeiro](#) is easily one of the most beautiful cities on the planet. And with more than 275 miles of well-maintained bike paths, it's also excellent place to explore by bicycle. For little more than a dollar per day, you can rent one of 4,000 bicycles from [Bike Rio](#) at more than 400 stations throughout the city.

Honorable Mention: [Tucson, Arizona](#). Here in this desert oasis, you can ride on 700 miles of designated bikeways near the largest cacti on earth. 📍