

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

The Best Cities in the U.S.: 2021 Readers' Choice Awards

The places inspiring your return to travel.

BY VALERIE MARINO
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Each year, readers weigh in on their favorite American cities, big and small, and it's always exciting to witness which trending locales can rise to the top and compete with the old stalwarts. As the world has begun to reopen, the results of our 34th annual [Readers' Choice Awards](#) survey reflect the kinds of places you longed to visit when you couldn't travel and the ones you returned to first once you could. Over 800,000 of you filled out our survey, and while we're always curious about where you've been and where you're going, we're especially excited to learn about the truly memorable cities that sparked your imagination and stayed with you when your next trip seemed out of reach. Here are the cities you loved most this year.

Good things come in small packages, and nowhere is that more evident than in these 10 dynamic, reader-favorite cities. Whether you're on the lookout for a cutting-edge arts scene, inventive new restaurants, or eye-catching architecture, you're bound to find what you're after.



2. Charleston, South Carolina

[Charleston](#) may be a small town, but this city punches well above its weight. When you consider everything it has to offer—history, culture, food, charm—it's no wonder the so-called Holy City has made our list of the best small cities in the U.S. for ten years running. While its robust [F&B scene](#), which includes a steady annual circuit of nationally recognized food and culture festivals, continues to be a draw, visitors are rarely prepared for the city's good looks. Stately homes, cobblestone streets, waterfront views, and an abundance of flowering window boxes only add to its welcoming vibe. Find a seat among its many outdoor terraces for a drink and some fresh oysters (we recommend hitting [the Ordinary](#)), and try to resist the urge to up and move here.



5. Greenville, South Carolina

Want to get in on a secret? Plan a trip to Greenville now and you might see it just on the cusp of stardom. The food lover's town has a [farm-to-table scene](#) that continues to rise in the ranks (try Jianna for Italian and freshly shucked oysters, and Vault & Vator, the city's first speakeasy, for a strong, well-crafted cocktail), and its craft beer scene is seeing a similar explosion. Paired with its dynamic urban spaces are abundant natural resources, including 32-acre Falls Park, which runs through the middle of town, and the Swamp Rabbit bike trail—now at a whopping 22 miles and counting.



8. Savannah, Georgia

Mossy, moody [Savannah](#) has no shortage of 'grammable views. Start with a walk along its cobblestoned historic district past horse-drawn carriages, ornate architecture, and supposedly haunted buildings, or find shade under live oak trees drooping with Spanish moss. Book in advance to nab a room at [the Gastonian](#), a historic bed and breakfast just two blocks from 30-acre [Forsyth Park](#). And for a fantastic dining experience, go to [The Grey](#), an elegantly reborn former Greyhound Bus depot, where James Beard Award-winning chef Mashama Bailey serves elevated takes on Southern classics, like foie gras and grits and tempura-fried catfish.

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Top 20 Resorts in The South: Readers' Choice Awards 2021

Condé Nast Traveler readers rate their top resorts in The American South, from Appalachia to the Low Country.

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Ranking Score

#1 97.86

Montage Palmetto Bluff

Bluffton, United States



Ranking Score

#6 95.27

The Sanctuary Hotel at Kiawah Island

Kiawah Island, United States

INSPIRATION

Top Islands: Readers' Choice Awards 2021

Condé Nast Traveler readers rank the top islands in the world, from Indonesia to the United States.

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United States

1. **Hilton Head Island, S.C.** 94.26
2. **Kiawah Island, S.C.** 94.04
3. **Lanai, Hawaii** 93.44
4. **Maui, Hawaii** 92.42
5. **Oahu, Hawaii** 91.85
6. **Mackinac Island, Mich.** 91.69
7. **Kauai, Hawaii** 91.67
8. **Big Island, Hawaii** 91.58
9. **Marco Island, Fla.** 91.28
10. **Key West, Fla.** 89.98
11. **Sanibel Island & Captiva Island, Fla.** 89.65
12. **Nantucket, Mass.** 89.28
13. **Block Island, R.I.** 87.31
14. **Florida Keys, Fla.** 85.33
15. **San Juan Islands, Wash.** 82.8