

# Moving Up

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**RIGHT**  
Boston is rising in the Knight Frank Global Cities Index.

Here's how Boston stacks up around the world:

The Global Cities Index (using the criteria of globally interconnected and interrelated cities): 19

The Global Power City Index (issued by the Institute of Urban Strategies, Japan): 20

The Globalization and World Cities Research Network (a research network focused on the external relations of world cities): 32

The Mercer Quality of Living Survey (also factoring safety, hygiene, healthcare, air pollution, traffic congestion, waste removal, and drinking water): 36

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
[www.architectureboston.com](http://www.architectureboston.com)

**What keeps a city moving ahead?** Alexandria. Venice. Baltimore. Detroit. All were once “world-class cities,” bustling places filled with great institutional treasures, global aspirations, and accomplishments. Yet, over time, each lost its prominence. Boston, the 19th-century “Athens of America,” once shared similar renown, and we still rightfully tout our historical firsts: the first subway, the first public park, the first public high school, the first public library. But, as novelist Colin Cotterill wrote, “Nostalgia is always a poor cousin to commerce.”

How does Boston measure up today? Economists and urban planners measure cities’ competitiveness using a variety of criteria: infrastructure, political and economic influence, culture, tourism, commerce, education, and transportation. Many recent rankings (see sidebar) take into account environmental and livability factors, too. Depending on the survey you choose, Boston comes in at number 19, 20, 29, 32, or 36 of all cities in the world.\*

For a small city, these are notable scores. With a fraction of the population, we are on the map with Tokyo, London, Mumbai, Shanghai, and New York. But every city needs to continually adapt in order to retain its competitive edge. If Boston’s future depends on the environment we create for innovation, ideas, and equity, how can we balance economic growth and influence with bold civic ideals and a broadly shared quality of life?

Twenty-first-century Boston shows great promise. Our private colleges and universities are leaders in higher education, our hospitals pioneer medical and scientific breakthroughs, and social entrepreneurial start-ups such as City Year and Year Up began here. In the fights for same-sex marriage and healthcare reform, we led the nation in the struggle for basic human rights.

In Boston’s built environment, recent development on the waterfront, in the theater district, and in Dudley Square demonstrate fresh signs of dynamism. New bicycle lanes and a bike-sharing program bring welcome transportation alternatives. A short ferry ride connects downtown to the Harbor Islands and Cape Cod, while the Harborwalk brings residents to the sea.

Culturally, the city is experiencing a museum renaissance with a spate of new openings. The Institute of Contemporary Art led the way, followed by additions at the Museum of Fine Arts and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Each of these museums balance international presence and influence while contributing to local communities, economies, and future generations.

**Remaining competitive is hard work; remaining livable, equally so.** It requires long-term vision and policies that combine competitiveness with compassion, provide financial support for cultural institutions and artists, invest in education, expand digital and physical access, offer opportunities for immigrants, and cultivate strong leaders who value what Boston’s strengths have long been: innovation, ideas, culture, and community. ■

## 2011 Knight Frank Global Cities Index

2011 Rank / City	Change in Ranking 2010–2011
01 / NEW YORK	0
02 / LONDON	0
03 / PARIS	0
04 / TOKYO	0
05 / BRUSSELS	+1 ▲
06 / LOS ANGELES	-1 ▼
07 / SINGAPORE	0
08 / BEIJING	+1 ▲
09 / TORONTO	+1 ▲
10 / BERLIN	-2 ▼
11 / CHICAGO	0
12 / WASHINGTON, DC	0
13 / SEOUL	0
14 / FRANKFURT	+1 ▲
15 / SYDNEY	+1 ▲
16 / SAN FRANCISCO	+1 ▲
17 / HONG KONG	-3 ▼
18 / SHANGHAI	+1 ▲
19 / MEXICO CITY	+2 ▲
20 / BANGKOK	-2 ▼
21 / MOSCOW	+1 ▲
22 / ZURICH	-2 ▼
23 / MUNICH	+3 ▲
24 / TAIPEI	-1 ▼
25 / SÃO PAULO	-1 ▼
26 / BUENOS AIRES	+1 ▲
27 / ISTANBUL	-2 ▼
28 / MILAN	+2 ▲
29 / BOSTON	+3 ▲
30 / MIAMI	-1 ▼
31 / CAIRO	-3 ▼
32 / DUBAI	-1 ▼
33 / KUALA LUMPUR	+1 ▲
34 / TEL AVIV	-1 ▼
35 / BOGOTÁ	0
36 / RIO DE JANEIRO	+1 ▲
37 / NEW DELHI	-1 ▼
38 / MUMBAI	+1 ▲
39 / JAKARTA	-1 ▼
40 / JOHANNESBURG	0