

PART 1: TOP 28 DESTINATIONS FOR 2017 URBAN DESTINATIONS

TERRI MARSHALL • DESTINATIONS

We just announced our picks for the most intriguing destinations for the upcoming year in travel. The list, which will be divided into 4 segments, includes every continent and something for every travel style. You'll find the complete list [here](#).

First, we focus on seven thriving urban destinations: Chicago, Hamburg, Honolulu, Madrid, Manchester, Montreal and Tokyo. Here's why these destinations are our top picks for 2017.



*Chicago on the shores of Lake Michigan
Photo by Terri Marshall*

Chicago, Illinois

Long the architectural icon of the Midwest, Chicago recently took center stage with the Cubs' capture of the World Series. Chicagoans are in fine spirits these days and it's an ideal time to marvel at the city's significantly pumped-up skyline and world class museums or maybe just spend an afternoon at Wrigley Field. Condé Nast Traveler's Readers' Choice Awards listed Chicago as the #2 city to visit in the US and rated 20 of the city's hotels as the nation's best with the Virgin Hotel Chicago and The Thompson claiming the #1 and #2 spots.



*Elbphilharmonie
Photo Courtesy of Jörg Modrow*

Hamburg, Germany

Previously not on the radar for many travelers to Germany, Hamburg has emerged as a must-visit Northern European destination. Named one of the top ten most livable cities in the world by The Economist's Global Livability Ranking 2016, Germany's second largest city is eagerly anticipating the landmark opening of its architecturally and acoustically acclaimed new Elbphilharmonie Concert Hall. Its new standing as a center for culture, relaxed sophistication and first class experiences is unique for a former Hanseatic League city.



*Honolulu Panorama
Photo by Edmund Garman*

Honolulu, Hawaii

Honolulu is the vibrant epicenter of the Hawaiian Islands with a flourishing arts and culture scene, an abundance of nightlife and numerous historic landmarks. Home to the world's largest open-air shopping center, the Ala Moana Center, with 2.4 million square feet of retail space and over 340 stores, it's a shopper's paradise with an annual Fashion Week every November. A recent \$330 million dollar facelift has transformed Waikiki into a dazzling jewel in the midst of this tropical metropolis. As for the arts, Honolulu will host its first Biennial in 2017 showcasing contemporary works from both local and international artists.

Foodies out there will be happy to learn that a food revolution of late has given Honolulu an increasingly vibrant culinary scene. Whether it's fine dining, food trucks, farmers' market stands, plate lunch diners, guerrilla pop-ups, surfers' haunts or barbecue pits, delicious things are happening in this Pacific Ocean paradise.



*Plaza Mayor in Madrid
Photo by Rick Lighthelm*

Madrid, Spain

If you want to celebrate life, the electrifying Spanish capital of Madrid should be in your travel plans. A modern urban center that deeply treasures its historic cultural traditions, Madrid is a city of passion: for art, music, culinary delights and life in general. This is a place where medieval mansions, stunning palaces and contemporary architecture blend effortlessly to create a spectacular hybrid. It's also a city with a strong connection to art and one of the greatest places for nightlife.

As 2017 marks the 40th anniversary of the first LGBTB Pride demonstration in Spain, it's fitting that this progressive city will host the world's largest celebration of acceptance and diversity at World Pride Madrid 2017. An extensive program of cultural activities will flood the city offering music, art, literature, sports competitions, conferences, children's activities and, of course, the central event, the Pride Parade.



*Manchester Town Hall
Photo by David Stanley*

Manchester, England

Did you know Manchester was the first industrialized city in the world? In fact, Manchester lays claim to many firsts including the first passenger railway station, the first programmable computer and the world's first professional football team—English football, of course. Mr. Rolls met Mr. Royce in Manchester and this is where the first atom was split.

The city's Northern Quarter is its creative heart filled with independent bars, trendy restaurants, galleries, boutiques and record stores located in repurposed warehouses. There's also a thriving street art scene along the cobbled streets. Other city highlights include the National Football Museum, the very impressive Imperial War Museum North, and The Lowry where you'll find the best in drama, ballet, opera, comedy, music and family shows.



*Montreal's Old Town
Photo by Pedro Szekely*

Montreal, Quebec

Montreal is celebrating its 375th birthday in 2017 and has landed on our top 28 list for the second straight year. This city loves to celebrate so count on a big birthday bash celebrating history, art, music and culture to express Montreal's rich diversity. Neighborhoods across the city will host free activities, tastings, guided tours and more. A highlight is the unveiling of an urban boardwalk connecting Mont-Royal to the St. Lawrence River—Promenade Fleuve-Montagne.



*View from Tokyo Tower
Photo by Takashi Hososhima*

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo is a vast and vibrant city and a mecca for nightlife, shopping, history and culture. With 204 museums to choose from you can explore everything from fine art to Sumo wrestling. And the 277 parks and gardens throughout the city embrace nature in the midst of the towering skyscrapers.

Tokyo has over 3,600 hotels providing a total of 84,000 rooms. The newly opened Train Hostel HOKUTOSEI with guestrooms laid out like sleeping cabins embraces the theme of a "hostel that adds to the joy of the journey" giving guests the feel of boarding the real Hokutosei.

The city of Tokyo has an unsurpassed culinary scene with the most Michelin starred restaurants in the world: more than Paris and New York combined.

Stay tuned for our next twenty-one hot spots for the coming year!