

It won't be easy to pick the top ten, but I can name some you shouldn't Tehran, Baghdad, Newark, Detroit, Tijuana, Kabul ... nah, that's enough of the negatives. Here are my positive favorites:

1. Paris: Ah, the traditional city for romantics. Prices are sky-high, natives are rude, accommodations aren't the most modern, and if you're a lonely guy, you'll have to pay for romance. But the food, wine, historic sites and ambiance are still there. The sidewalk cafes are charming if you love sipping your cafe au lait in a cloud of cheap cigarette smoke. Seriously, despite all the gripes, Paris is still the magic destination worth a visit by lovers of all ages.



2. New York NY: If you can make it there, you'll make it anywhere. The city that never sleeps offers overpriced sleeping quarters, endless entertainment, dining and shopping. Note: In Las Vegas, New York or Paris, don't take taxis unless absolutely necessary. And even then, it's better to walk.

3. London: This old town is a nostalgic haven for those looking for history, charm and entertainment. I admit, the food ain't so good, but the friendly cabbies, wonderful sights, great parades and classic theater almost make up for boiled beef pie.

4. Las Vegas NV: Once in Sin City, you don't really need to go anywhere else. All within a few blocks of each other are replicas of the world's most popular spots. For a Big Apple experience, check into the New York New York Hotel. For the ambiance of France, visit the Paris Resort, where you can pose in front of an almost-full-sized fake Eiffel Tower. For the flavors of Italy, go for Bellagio and The Venetian. For the Caribbean, go to Mandalay Bay. To feel you're wandering in phony old Rome, try Caesars Palace. For almost ancient Egypt, try the Luxor. For losing all your money, just go into any casino. Seriously, some of the best entertainment and dining in the world can be found all on the famous Las Vegas Strip.

5. Helsinki: A mixture of historic past and contemporary pizzazz. The seafood in restaurants and at the harbor shops is the freshest and best in Europe. The people are friendly, the prices are still relatively moderate, but don't go there in the wintertime unless you enjoy shussing and shivering.

6. Venice: Also a city of infinite charm and history, with romantic gondolas plying the canals as added tourist enticements. If you can find the wonderful little restaurants where tourists never venture, the dining experience is one of the best in the world. Venetians are a great and proud people, but be aware of their tendency to relieve tourists of as much money as possible. Shopping is great, but if you're venturing through Italy, Rome and the less touristy cities have somewhat better bargains.

7. Amsterdam: Beautiful old city, with cobblestone streets, comfy little hotels, excellent cafes, great museums, lovely canals and legal drugs. The famed red light district boasts the best bordellos in Europe, but there are also many interesting streets and shops for families to roam.

8. Los Angeles: All right, it is mostly a spread of bedroom communities that are connected only by impassably crowded freeways. But Hollywood, Malibu and Beverly Hills are there, with all their glamor and glitz. Climate and beaches are attractive, and restaurants are varied and plentiful.

9. San Francisco: You won't find Tony Bennett's heart there, unless served sauteed in some exotic oriental restaurant. This is a beautiful town, but don't expect to be able to hike it up and down its steep hills on foot. Riding on and off cable cars makes for an inexpensive and most enjoyable day. Dining at Fisherman's Wharf can be fun for the entire family. The ethnic Chinese and Italian neighborhoods also boast great restaurants.

10. Shanghai: Although Hong Kong and Singapore are still wonderful cities to visit, Shanghai, with its super-modern buildings, restaurants, shops and busy streets. has surpassed them as a clean, safe tourist destination.