



We love travelling the world by bicycle and, as such, cities are usually rest stops in between the long days of cycling. We've been through many cities during our travels, from Malaysia to England, and so we have compiled a shortlist of our top 5 cities along our journey. So, let's get started.

## We assessed the cities out of a score of 5 based on:

1. **Accessibility:** We considered how easy the city was to travel through not only by bicycle but public transport and distances between the sites.
2. **Safety:** The safety of you and your belongings is paramount when travelling. We based this assessment upon the feel of the city and reports from other travellers.
3. **Atmosphere:** This represents our attitudes towards the rhythms and buzz of a city. It encompasses the general liveliness and individuality of the city.
4. **Cuisine:** Well if you've cycled for as long as we have then cities are an oasis after eating oats and pasta for weeks on end. So, it's important for us to know that the city has a great selection of quality and unique food.
5. **History and attractions:** Sightseeing is the first thing tourists want to know and, therefore, the best cities must have important cultural or historical sites to visit.

We know that we haven't travelled everywhere in the world. Nonetheless, we have travelled through a large selection of Asian, Persian, Old Soviet and European cities and, as such, the following cities are worth putting on your bucket list.



*Cycling in Vienna.*

## 1. Vienna, Austria

### **Accessibility: 5**

Voted by The Economist as the best city to live in 2019, Vienna was easily our favourite city. The city is a cyclist haven and, we believe, a "must-see" city for any traveller. Vienna is easily accessible by bicycle or public transport. We could ride from one side of the city to the other in about 30 minutes on the thousands of bicycle paths, making Vienna the best city for cycling we encountered.

### **Safety: 4**

We don't expect the common traveller to encounter any problems with safety but our friends in Vienna did warn us about the culture of bicycle theft. So be wary!

### **Atmosphere: 5**

Positioned in the centre of Europe, Vienna has been a cultural hub for centuries. It has a unique artistic culture with an interesting mix between the classical renaissance styles, and emerging young musicians and artists. There is always something happening in Vienna.



*A selection of cheese on offer in Vienna.*

### **Cuisine: 5**

Austrian food is incredible and has a perfect blend of foods from the neighbouring countries

like Germany, Italy and Switzerland including some of the best bread, cheese and meats in Europe. If you visit Vienna, then it is essential to try a Wiener schnitzel!

### **History and sites: 5**

Vienna wasn't damaged significantly during the world wars and, therefore, has retained much of its medieval/renaissance architecture. The city is an architectural nirvana with famous buildings such as St Stephen's Cathedral, the Imperial Palace or the Karlskirche.

*Renaissance architecture is one of the things that stand out about Vienna.*

## **2. Tbilisi, Georgia**

### **Accessibility: 5**

During the period of the Soviet Union, a large underground subway system was constructed in Tbilisi and most major points of interest are possible to reach by subway. However, there are many other cheap options such as taxis, buses, trams and marshrutkas (mini-buses).

### **Safety: 4**

In general, Tbilisi is considered a safe city. However, two of our friends did have their bicycles stolen during their stay. Eventually, they were safely returned by the police.

*The Holy Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi.*

### **Atmosphere: 5**

The youth of Tbilisi are generating an underground artist culture, some say like that of Berlin after the fall of the Berlin wall. Due to its cheap living costs, the city has a large ex-pat community and there is a buzz of excitement in the city. If you are into music then Tbilisi has a great range from traditional caucasian musicians to a massive techno scene, buskers in each underground tunnel or weekly jam sessions with a 10+ piece band.

*We spent some time exploring the countryside of Georgia.*

### **Cuisine: 4**

Many people rave about the Georgian food and it is very different from much of the countries we travelled with a clash of European, Central Asian, Turkish and Persian cuisine. You will be able to easily find a vast array of traditional foods/drinks in Tbilisi for a very reasonable price, such as Khinkali, Khachapuri, traditional Georgian wines, and lobiani.

### **History and sites: 5**

Tbilisi has been through hard years during and after the fall of the Soviet Empire. This has left the capital in a slightly dilapidated state. However, this doesn't ruin the appeal of the city but add to its character and feel. The city has passed through many rulers and has inherited architecture from all of them, including the famous Turkish baths, the Narikala castle, mother Tbilisi, Holy Trinity Church and much more.

*This city has a lot of character.*

## **3. Istanbul, Turkey**

### **Accessibility: 4**

Istanbul is a massive city with a huge population of about 15 million people. The city is so



large that getting around can take some time and not to mention that there are hundreds of people in the busy streets. However, it's still possible to travel effortlessly on several forms of public transport such as trains/metro, trams, ferries and taxis.

**Safety: 4**

We believe that Istanbul is a safe city with just the occasional problems of petty crime, such as pickpockets and being overcharged for baklava.



*The ferry is a great way to get around the city.*

**Atmosphere: 4**

The crossroads of Europe and Asia, there is not a city on Earth that could compare to the feel of Istanbul. It is a bustling city caught between the traditions of the old Ottoman Empire, the strict code of Islam and the rise of its technological and industrial hubs. It is a clash of the new and the old with neither outshining the other but working in harmony.



*We still dream of the incredible desserts we ate during our visit.*

**Cuisine: 5**

Turkish food is famous for a reason and you must try to eat as much as you can. We still reminisce on the Turkish desserts such as baklava, Turkish delight and their amazing cakes.

**History and sites: 5**

Well, history doesn't get any more interesting than Istanbul. The capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, the capital of the Byzantine empire, the capital of the Ottoman Empire... there's more history here than any traveller could manage to see in one trip!



*The bustling city streets of Istanbul.*

## 4. London, England

**Accessibility: 4**

London, although expensive, the city can be covered simply by train, taxis, bus, metro or trams as it has a vast and complex public transport system. The city can be a little overwhelming when you first get here but there are helpful staff at most major interchanges. London is not a great city to cycle due to its lack of cycling infrastructure, small streets and aggressive drivers.



*The Tower Bridge in London.*

**Safety: 4**

London is a safe city with some potential for petty crime.

**Atmosphere: 5**

London has its own peculiar craze and bustle with a cross between the businessmen/women, fine aristocrats, the grungy, the immigrants, the unusual and everything in-between. It seems that everything and anything is happening in London.



*Visiting St Paul's Cathedral in London.*

**Cuisine: 5**

London is a hub for food from everywhere in the world! London has every style possible; traditional English pub meals, Indian, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, Polish, Greek, Persian,



Chinese, Thai and many many more. Too bad they drink warm beer.

**History and sites: 5**

London was the richest city of the largest Empire that has ever existed. There is history up and down both sides of the Thames. You can look at the names of streets or buildings, recognising many of them and thinking “isn’t that from Monopoly?”.



The skyline of London.

## 5. Almaty, Kazakhstan

**Accessibility: 3**

Almaty is the old capital of Kazakhstan and it may be the most surprising city we’ve encountered. The city is situated at the base of massive mountains and, without a bicycle, the city might be a little tough to get around due to the changes in elevation. There are buses and taxis, but it is a little difficult to manage if you don’t speak Russian or Kazak.

**Safety: 3**

Almaty is a safe city during the day but at night you might want to walk in a group or infrequently visited areas to avoid muggings.



*The city of Almaty in Kazakhstan.*

**Atmosphere: 4**

Almaty has a foremost influence from Russia and the vibe in the city is a cross between Kazak and Russian. There are many great bars, an emerging artistic youth and ex-pat community not to mention some great cafes and restaurants.

**Cuisine: 3**

Almaty has an interesting clash of influences including traditional Kazak, Turkish/Persian, Russian and Chinese. We enjoyed the food in Almaty because you can get anything including cheesecake, sushi and pizza! The only downfall is that the ingredients tend to be slightly lower quality (compared to Europe) and sometimes you can get a bit of a dud meal.



*The city of Almaty, with mountains in the background.*

**History and sites: 3**

Almaty was heavily influenced by the Soviet Union and much of the buildings bear the unmistakable signature of Russia... huge and ominous. You can walk the main streets in the centre of the city to observe most of these buildings. However, the city is very close to the mountains where you can take a cable car to the Kók Tóbe (Blue Hill) for scenic views.

**What’s been your favourite city to travel to in the world?**