

World's greenest cities

The scourge of global warming has become the bane of modern man. Increasing pollution, utter disregard for or indifference to the ecosystem, and manic industrialisation are compounding an already out-of-hand problem. While environmentalists and governments around the globe are at work to counter the calamity, people in general too have started taking conscious decisions to bring down the pollution level to bare minimum. At this juncture, top-10-list.org has conducted a survey to check out which are the 'greenest' cities of the world. The main criterion of selection being the carbon dioxide emission levels. The city with the least CO2 emission has been named the greenest city. Unfortunately, however, no Indian city makes it to the list. So find out which are the world's 10 greenest cities.



1. Calgary

Calgary, the largest city in the Province of Alberta, Canada, has been named the greenest city in the world. It is a popular winter destination possessing a number of major mountain resorts near the city and metropolitan area.

Economic activity in Calgary is mostly centred on the petroleum industry though agriculture, tourism, and high-tech industries also contribute to the city's financial growth. The city has an excellent transportation system, consisting of rail as also a well-planned grid system to deal with traffic congestion. Even though it has many industries, the climate and efficient administrative measures have kept the pollution levels very low.



2. Honolulu

Honolulu is the capital and the most populous census-designated place in the US state of Hawaii. It is the world's second greenest city.

Honolulu has a warm semi-arid climate according to Kppen classification, and enjoys warm weather and plenty of sunshine throughout the year. Despite its location in the tropics, the climate (temperature, precipitation and humidity) is moderated by Hawaii's mid-ocean location.

The industries located in this region are very light and non-polluting. An excellent bus transit system, has decreased the exhaust and traffic fume levels. The proximity to the ocean also helps keep the city clean.



3. Helsinki

A fairly large city, Helsinki the capital of Finland, is the least polluted city in Europe. The population of the city is 579,016 (as on June 30, 2009), making it the most populous municipality in Finland. The foreign-born population stands at around 10 percent. Helsinki has been ranked 3rd among the world's greenest cities. The citizens take pride in keeping the city clean and pollution free. Their light rail commuter system is very popular, and the use of cars and other vehicles is kept to the minimum.



4. Ottawa

The second city from Canada to make it to the list of the Top 10, Ottawa, at rank four, has one of the best volunteer programmes to keep the city green and clean. Ottawa has a humid continental climate (Koppen Dfb) with a range of temperatures from a record high of 37.8 C (100 F), recorded on July 4, 1913, to a record low of -38.9 C (-38 F) recorded on December 29, 1933, the fourth coldest temperature recorded in a capital city (after Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; Astana, Kazakhstan and Moscow, Russia).

This extreme range in temperature allows Ottawa to boast a variety of annual activities, most notable being the Winterlude Festival on the Rideau Canal in the winter and the National Canada Day celebrations on Parliament Hill in July.

During their Spring Cleaning the Capital month between April 15 and May 15, over 60,000 volunteers are present to clean the parks, roads and sidewalks etc of the city. Like other green cities, Ottawa residents rely on a good light rail transport system to commute, thereby reducing the fumes in the city. A Northwest Airlines jet lands at the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport. Image: A woman walks past a bed of tulips planted in front of Parliament Hill in Ottawa.



5. Minneapolis

Minneapolis is the largest city in the US state of Minnesota. The twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul have made cleanliness and environmental friendly policies the hallmark of their administration. Minneapolis has a continental climate typical of the Upper Midwest. Winters can be cold and dry, while summer is comfortably warm although at times it can be hot and humid. Along with the good rail systems, the administration emphasises on bike riding, which keeps the city green and pollution-free.



6. Oslo

Oslo is the cultural, scientific, economic and administrative centre of Norway. The city is also a hub of Norwegian trade, banking, industry and shipping. It is also the sixth greenest city in the world. City developers have made the environment one of their primary concerns. From 2010, they are planning to start buses which run on fuel generated from human waste.



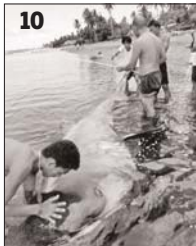
7. Stockholm

Stockholm is the capital and largest city of Sweden. As of 2008, the Stockholm metropolitan area was home to approximately 21 percent of Sweden's population and contributed to 35 percent of Sweden's gross domestic product. Stockholm is also the most populous city in Sweden. The Swedes have been in the forefront in the conversion from fuel guzzling cars to hybrids. About 5 percent of the cars present in Stockholm are hybrid versions. The city also has very little heavy industry in or around it. Like in all other green cities, the public-transportation systems are clean and efficient.

To be continued

Top 10 discoveries of 2009

National Geographic News's most popular coverage of 2009 scientific finds is swarming with megamouth sharks, giant snakes, a transparent-headed fish, and rare species rescued from obscurity, then eaten.



10. Ultra-Rare megamouth shark found, eaten

In March, the 41st megamouth shark ever found went from swimming in Philippine waters to simmering in coconut milk. Photograph by Elson Q. Aca/WWF-Philippines



8. Alien giant snakes threaten to invade up to 1/3 of US

Nine giant snakes could be on the verge of causing ecological catastrophe if they establish themselves in the US wild, at least two have already set up shop in Florida, according to an October report. Photograph courtesy Lori Oberhofer, National Park Service

7. Biggest snake discovered - Was longer than a bus

The 60-million-year-old reptile was also heavier than a car, scientists said in February, adding that the fossil could shed light on climate change. Picture by Jason Bourque



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9. Ancient gem-studded teeth show skill of early dentists

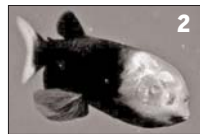
The glittering 'grills' of some hip-hop stars aren't exactly unprecedented. Sophisticated dentistry allowed Native Americans to add bling to their teeth as far back as 2,500 years ago, a May study said. Photograph courtesy José C. Jiménez López



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6. Gold rush-era 'Ghost Ship' wreck found

With boots thrown hastily on deck and cooking utensils scattered, the last moments of the crew aboard the gold rush-era paddleboat A.J. Goddard are preserved in the ship's recently found wreck, archaeologists announced in November. Photograph courtesy Donnie Reid



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2. Fish with transparent head seen alive for first time

Perhaps the most bizarre nature discovery of the year, though Stephen Colbert put it a bit less delicately, a Pacific barreleye fish shows off its transparent head and barrel-like eyes in pictures released on February of the first specimen ever found alive. Photograph courtesy Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute



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4. 'Extinct' bird seen - eaten

Long believed to be extinct, a rare quail from the Philippines was photographed for the first time ever, then sold at a poultry market, experts said in February. Photograph courtesy Arnel B. Telesforo



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3. New cloud type discovered?

Nicknamed 'Jacques Cousteau' clouds, these 'turbulent' seas in the sky could be examples of the first official new cloud type since 1951, experts said in June. Photograph courtesy Merrick Davies



1. 'Missing Link' found - Fossil connects humans, Lemurs?

The 47-million-year-old, exceptionally preserved primate fossil *Ida*, unveiled on May 20, was hailed by some as a major discovery in human evolution. Photographs courtesy PLOS ONE



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5. Oldest skeleton of human ancestor found

There was never a chimp-like missing link between humans and today's apes, according to an October fossil-skeleton study that could rewrite human evolutionary history. "It changes everything", said one scientist. Picture courtesy J. H. Matfomes via Science/AAAS