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2009 Top 25 Arts Destinations



New York's iconic Brooklyn Bridge connects Brooklyn to Manhattan. Credit: ©NYC & COMPANY/BAMI ADEDOYIN

Interpreting the results of AmericanStyle's 2009 Top 25 Arts Destinations poll was a little like reading tea leaves. Were readers looking for security in making their selections this year? Reassurance? Bargains? Sure bets?

Or did the majority of this year's voters just really, truly, wildly love New York, Buffalo and Santa Fe? We think it's an exuberantly mixed-up combination of all the above.

Aside from one Midwestern city that came out of nowhere to ruffle up the rankings in the Mid-Size category, all three top destinations in both the Big and Small Cities groups, plus the first and third place holders in the Mid-Size Cities category, have stayed exactly the same as last year.

New York City, which was the No. 1 Big Cities arts destination in 2008, came in at No. 1 again with almost double the number of votes over second-place winner Chicago, which also held the No. 2 spot last year. And Washington, D.C., which placed third on the Big Cities list in 2008, is third again this year.

Dark horse Chattanooga, Tenn., which didn't place anywhere at all in the Mid-Size Cities rankings last year, muscled its way into the No. 2 spot for 2009, forcing former second-place holder Scottsdale, Ariz., down two notches to No. 4. Buffalo, N.Y., held on to its top spot in the Mid-Size ranks for 2009 by a tight margin (fewer than 100 votes), while Pittsburgh, Pa., came in solidly again this year at No. 3.

Santa Fe, N.M. (No. 1), Asheville, N.C. (No. 2), and Sedona, Ariz. (No. 3) all held on to their top rankings in the Small Cities & Towns category again this year, although some interesting shuffling has taken place within the list for places like Saugatuck, Mich. (5th place this year, up from 24th in 2008), Laguna Beach, Calif. (17th on this year's list, up two spots from last year) and Tubac, Ariz. (ranked 23rd in 2008 but failed to make the cut in 2009).

What follows are complete lists of all 25 winning cities in each category, plus budget-minded tips and information for making your money go further in some of the most exciting arts destinations in the United States.

BIG CITIES

1. [New York, N.Y.](#)
2. [Chicago, Ill.](#)
3. [Washington, D.C.](#)
4. San Francisco, Calif.
5. Albuquerque, N.M.
6. Boston, Mass.

MID-SIZE CITIES

1. [Buffalo, N.Y.](#)
2. [Chattanooga, Tenn.](#)
3. [Pittsburgh, Pa.](#)
4. Scottsdale, Ariz.
5. New Orleans, La.
6. Charleston, S.C.

SMALL CITIES

1. [Santa Fe, N.M.](#)
2. [Asheville, N.C.](#)
3. [Sedona, Ariz.](#)
4. Taos, N.M.
5. Saugatuck, Mich.
6. Key West, Fla.

7. Seattle, Wash.
 8. Atlanta, Ga.
 9. Philadelphia, Pa.
 10. Los Angeles, Calif.
 11. Portland, Ore.
 12. Baltimore, Md.
 13. Denver, Colo.
 14. Phoenix, Ariz.
 15. Austin, Texas
 16. Charlotte, N.C.
 17. Columbus, Ohio
 18. Nashville, Tenn.
 19. San Diego, Calif.
 20. Tucson, Ariz.
 21. San Antonio, Texas
 22. Las Vegas, Nev.
 23. Milwaukee, Wis.
 24. Dallas, Texas
 25. Houston, Texas
7. Savannah, Ga.
 8. Cleveland, Ohio
 9. Ann Arbor, Mich.
 10. Minneapolis, Minn.
 11. Alexandria, Va.
 12. Miami, Fla.
 13. Tacoma, Wash.
 14. St. Louis, Mo.
 15. Athens, Ga.
 16. Kansas City, Mo.
 17. Colorado Springs, Colo.
 18. Providence, R.I.
 19. Salt Lake City, Utah
 20. Honolulu, Hawaii
 21. Rochester, N.Y.
 22. St. Petersburg, Fla.
 23. Cincinnati, Ohio
 24. Raleigh, N.C.
 25. Tampa, Fla.
7. Berkeley Springs, W.V.
 8. Boulder, Colo.
 9. Carmel, Calif.
 10. Corning, N.Y.
 11. Sarasota, Fla.
 12. Beaufort, S.C.
 13. Chapel Hill, N.C.
 14. Burlington, Vt.
 15. Annapolis, Md.
 16. Aspen, Colo.
 17. Laguna Beach, Calif.
 18. Northampton, Mass.
 19. Eureka Springs, Ark.
 20. Brattleboro, Vt.
 21. New Hope, Pa.
 22. Naples, Fla.
 23. Cumberland, Md.
 24. Berea, Ky.
 25. Portsmouth, N.H.