

Thessaloniki in the world's top 10 party towns

Looking to tread terrain still untouched by foreign stag expeditions? Want to unwind in luxury or drink up the sun? Lonely Planet lists the world's top 10 party cities in its new guide, the 1000 Ultimate Experiences.

1. BELGRADE, SERBIA

The long years of bad press that kept Serbia off the map have now passed, and foreigners are now realizing what locals always knew - that Belgrade really rocks. With an exuberant population and its legacy as an intellectual hangout, Belgrade offers varied nightlife, ranging from eclectic watering holes for those in the know, to the busy restaurants and bars of the Skadarlija district and the summer clubs in barges on the Sava and Danube Rivers.

2. MONTREAL, CANADA

Easygoing Montreal is increasingly popular with foreign travellers, who enjoy the joie de vivre of a place with bilingual ambience, good local beer and even skiing at nearby Mt Royal. Montreal's irrepressible student population and atmospheric old quarter give the city a light-hearted, Bohemian air. There are Old World cafes, cool jazz clubs, packed discos and late bars to choose from, plus each July.

3. BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

With its unique mix of European and South American cultures, and a native passion for dance, the Argentine capital provides fertile ground for lively nightlife. There's an emphasis on fashion and a diverse range of entertainment offerings in Buenos Aires' barrios. Relax at a swinging jazz club or dance all night by the waterfront; some clubs and cultural centres offer classes so you can learn to tango or salsa like a local. There's everything from Irish pubs and local folk to house parties.

4. DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

For those who can afford it, the world capital of conspicuous consumption is unbeatable. Dubai's extravagance is way over the top, with ultra luxury hotels on artificial islands, slick modern malls and tonnes of precious metals glittering in shops. Yet Dubai is also a cosmopolitan place, so if you're not invited to party on board the private yacht of a celebrity, you can always mingle with people from around the world in the swank bars and clubs of the Middle East's most decadent desert getaway.



THESSALONIKI, GREECE. Greece's second city has style, with plenty of fashionable shops and salons. Thessaloniki boasts great nightlife during those long months when more famous Greek destinations are deep in hibernation. Photo: George Tsafos/Lonely Planet

5. THESSALONIKI, GREECE

Greece's second city has style, with plenty of fashionable shops and salons. Thessaloniki boasts great nightlife during those long months when more famous Greek destinations are deep in hibernation, from arty cafes to Latin bars to discos pumping out house music to salacious bouzoukia (clubs featuring twangy, Eastern-flavored Greek folk-pop). That's plenty to keep you occupied after you've

hot and sweaty in one of many slick nightclubs, which cater to chic locals and the foreign contingent. The natives are friendly and, with a steady stream of travellers, it's a town of many tongues. World-class bars, swank cafes and restaurants serenading with traditional music round out the offerings. Buy traditional Aymara herbs at the Witches' Market (Mercado de Brujas) to ward off hangovers and bothersome spirits.



traversed the sublime Byzantine churches, museums and ruins. It's not cheap, but no Greek city save Athens compares.

6. LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

Don't forget that liquor goes to the head quickly in the Bolivian capital, well over 3000 m above sea level. Get



7. CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

With the 2010 World Cup bringing a global audience to South Africa, the partying will only get harder as travellers converge on a city already well known for nightlife. Luxuriate on some of the world's best beaches by day and kick back under the moonlight at suave cocktail bars by night. Two hours east, in the Indian Ocean, lies the elegant beach village of Mossel Bay, with more great beaches and chic flair. Visitors must try some of the wines crafted by South Africa's world-renowned vintners, either at a Cape Town bar or at one of several wineries nearby.

8. BAKU, AZERBAIJAN

Since the 1990s, when it started taking off as a hub for Caspian Sea oil and gas, Baku has been transformed and this newfound economic stimulation hasn't failed to influence urban nightlife. The cash injection from energy projects, enhanced by the presence of thousands of international oil workers and wealthy consultants, has turned Baku into an oasis of excess in an otherwise fairly traditional Muslim country.

9. AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Myriad cafes, bars and dinner clubs cater to a hip young clientele. Try the glittering waterfront for smart bars, and hit the happening clubs (some stay open 24 hours). There are plenty of live shows on offer too, from folk in Devonport to louder sounds at Mt Eden. And you can always walk off the Sky Tower - the southern hemisphere's tallest structure - a 328m cable-controlled drop in which jumpers reach a speed of 85kph.

10. TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

Like elsewhere in the Mediterranean, Israel's second largest city gets going late. The endless bars, pubs and cocktail venues start to fill up by midnight, from which point the nightclubs get revved up with dancing till dawn. Nowadays an international crowd joins Israelis for a mixed bag of funk, pop, house and techno at the city's dozens of entertainment hotspots. Tel Aviv has a relaxed air, and prides itself on being gay-friendly and outgoing.