

Japan tops 2020 list of world's most powerful passports: Henley Index

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The Henley Passport Index, which periodically measures the world's most travel-friendly passports, has released its first report of the new decade. Japan is now top of the leaderboard, offering visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to an incredible 191 destinations around the world.

Asia dominates the top of the list, with Singapore in second place (with a score of 190) and South Korea tying with Germany in third place (with a score of 189). European countries have a strong showing in the rest of the top ten, with Finland and Spain at No.4, Spain, Luxembourg and Denmark coming fifth, and Sweden and France sitting at No. 6.

The US and the UK, meanwhile, continue to slide down the rankings. As we step into the 2020s, they hold joint eighth place — a far cry from the number one spot they jointly held five years ago, in 2015. The ongoing certainty in the UK over what travel mobility in a post-Brexit Britain and Northern Ireland will look like means that this downward trend might not be reversed anytime soon.

The report notes, however, that there is a growing divide when it comes to travel freedom and this mobility gap is now the widest it's ever been since the index's inception in 2006. A Japanese passport holder can access 165 more destinations than a holder of the world's weakest passport, that of Afghanistan, which offers visa-free/visa-on-arrival access to just 26 destinations.

About the Index

The Henley Passport Index is based on data provided by the International Air Transport Authority (IATA) and covers 199 passports and 227 travel destinations. It is updated in real time throughout the year, as and when visa policy changes come into effect. The HPI consists of a ranking of passports according to how many other territories can be reached 'visa-free'. All distinct destination countries and territories in the IATA database are considered. However, since not all territories issue passports, there are far fewer passports to be ranked than destinations against which queries are made.

SOURCE: *CNN News, Business Standard*