

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Singapore, Japan hold world's most powerful passports: Henley & Partners

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Political and social uncertainty is hampering other high-ranking nations. Image credit: Henley & Partners

By ZACH JAMES FOR LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Those taking up residence in major Southeast Asian markets have a slight advantage over their regional counterparts, according to London-based investment migration consultancy Henley & Partners' latest [2025 Global Mobility Report](#).

This year's release shows that the value of passports granted in the United States and United Kingdom have largely gone stagnant; meanwhile, Singapore and Japan sit atop the annual ranking. Analysts point to the unpredictable domestic cultural and political landscape behind the West's dips, with high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) increasingly considering international migration as a means of mitigating potential blowback.

"Faced with unprecedented volatility, investors and wealthy families are adopting a strategy of geopolitical arbitrage to acquire additional residence and/or citizenship options to hedge against jurisdictional risk and leverage the differences in legal, economic, political and social conditions across countries to optimize their personal, financial, and lifestyle outcomes," said Juerg Steffen, CEO of Henley & Partners, in a statement.

"This represents the most significant wealth migration wave ever documented and reflects fundamental changes in how affluent individuals are mitigating risks and creating opportunities in an increasingly unstable and polarized world."

The 2025 Global Mobility Report is based upon data sourced from the Henley Passport Index and Henley Openness Index, which cover 199 total passports and 227 destinations that allow visa-free travel using research provided by the International Air Transport Authority, open-source online data and in-house findings.

Political strife

Between 2015 and 2025, the U.S. has exhibited the second-biggest fall of Henley Passport Index listees, narrowly beating Venezuela, which ranks 45th overall.

Meanwhile, America places ninth in total points, a steep decline from its peak of second place in the early 2010s; the nation tallied a Henley & Partners Passport Index score of 186, sharing the placement with Estonia.

Ever-present geopolitical and macroeconomic turmoil ([see story](#)) are cited for the decreased value. Experts fear these trends will continue following the presidential inauguration on Jan. 20.

Americans also top the rankings of those seeking secondary citizenship

“Even before the advent of a second Trump presidency, American political trends had become notably inward-looking and isolationist,” said Annie Pforzheimer, senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in a statement.

“Even though U.S. economic health relies heavily on immigration, tourism and trade, voters during the 2024 presidential campaign were fed a narrative that America can (and should) stand alone,” Ms. Pforzheimer said. “Ultimately, if tariffs and deportations are the Trump administration’s default policy tools, not only will the U.S. continue to decline on the mobility index on a comparative basis, but it will probably do so in absolute terms as well.

“This trend in tandem with China’s greater openness will likely give rise to Asia’s greater soft power dominance worldwide.”

Britain is in a similar spot to the U.S., having seen the fourth-largest decline among all observed passports, going from the top spot in 2015 to a current seeding in fifth place. This phenomenon compounds the trend of HNWIs relocating from the U.K. at record rates ([see story](#)).

Rising sun

Metropolitan areas such as Singapore, Japan and South Korea continue to attract high-net-worthers.

The Asia Pacific market overall has benefitted greatly from increased accessibility. In the past few years, mainstream and luxury travel trends have brought many visitors into the region, with the number of travelers expected to grow in the coming years, especially within the culinary tourism industry ([see story](#)).



France, Germany and Italy are tied for third on the index. Image credit: Henley & Partners

High-end wellness is also bolstering interest in the region, as many retreats take vacationers to exotic locations throughout the continent. Interest in the luxury niche is set to reach an all-time high in 2025, with Singapore and South Korea, among others, poised to see a massive influx of investment from HNWIs ([see story](#)).

Conversely, Afghanistan sits at the bottom of the Henley Passport Index alongside several African countries, with the firm attributing this inequality to “visa racism” and fears of internal conflicts. Analysts within the consultancy point to the concept of Free Global Cities, which admit migrants regardless of circumstance, as a potential remedy to this institutional behavior.

“The very notion of citizenship and its birthright lottery needs a fundamental rethink as temperatures rise, natural disasters become more frequent and severe, displacing communities and rendering their environments uninhabitable,” said Christian H. Kaelin, chairman of Henley & Partners, in a statement.

“Simultaneously, political instability and armed conflicts in various regions force countless people to flee their homes in search of safety and refuge,” Mr. Kaelin said. “The need to introduce Free Global Cities to harness the untapped potential of displaced people and other migrants, transforming them from victims of circumstance into architects of their own futures has never been more pressing or apparent.”