

## [Eureka hot, San Diego not, says TripAdvisor](#)

- Ed Perkins

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Interested in beating the crowds to the next "hot" destination?

TripAdvisor says you should be thinking about Pamukkale, Turkey, a historic village and spa southeast of Istanbul. If you want to stay in the United States, take a look at Anna Maria, a key off Bradenton on Florida's Gulf Coast.

TripAdvisor recently released a list of the top 10 up-and-coming destinations in and outside the United States, as well as the top 10 U.S. spots that are in a decline. Whether or not you let other travelers' views influence your planning, the lists make an interesting read.

TripAdvisor ([www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)) identifies itself as the "world's largest travel community," and I suspect that's accurate. It features thousands of reviews submitted by ordinary travelers -- mainly about hotel accommodations but with some destination information, too. Given its huge database and widespread use as a trip-planning resource, it was an easy stretch for the folks at TripAdvisor to develop a proprietary TravelCast algorithm that mines in-house data to arrive at various lists. As I'm writing this, TravelCast and its results are not shown as part of TripAdvisor's Web site, but you may soon see some of the data there. At any rate, TripAdvisor has provided some intriguing samples of its information.

Beyond Anna Maria, the nine other up-and-coming areas in the United States are Kailua, Hawaii; Siesta Key, Fla.; Macon, Ga.; Breckenridge and Vail, Colo.; Millinocket, Maine; Bishop (Inyo County) and Eureka; and Franklin, Tenn. Some are pretty well known; others obscure. Siesta Key, off Sarasota, is similar to Anna Maria. (I remember, as a young kid, spending some winter breaks on what was then a remote and relatively undeveloped outpost of Sarasota.) Millinocket is in central Maine, just outside Baxter State Park, the site of Maine's tallest mountain. Bishop is at the top of California's Owens Valley, "behind" the Sierra range, and the center of some great mountain scenery. (I once flew into Bishop when it was an air gateway to Mammoth Mountain; sadly, the nearest flights are now at Fresno.) Franklin, just outside Nashville, boasts of some outstanding Civil War sites. Eureka, a one-time lumber-and-fishing center, now turning more to tourism, is on California's north coast, near some fabulous redwood groves.

The rest-of-the-world list continues with Ayr, Scotland; Campeche, Mexico; Marrakech and Fez, Morocco; Parga and Naxos, Greece; Puno, Peru; Soller, Spain; and Salvador de Bahia, Brazil. Among the more obscure choices, Puno, described as the "folkloric center of Peru," is on Lake Titicaca. Parga is a beautiful village on the Ionian Sea. Soller, on Majorca, is a historic town a few miles outside of the popular Palma.

U.S. destinations on the decline, says TripAdvisor, are (in alphabetic order): Chicago, Honolulu, Kansas City, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, Orlando, San Diego and Washington, D.C. My take: Those places may be generating less interest at TripAdvisor than in former days, but I won't hold my breath until tourism figures drop off in any of them (except for the temporary problems at New Orleans). TripAdvisor didn't release the downers outside the United States.

Are these lists useful for planning vacations? Presumably, the up-and-coming list includes some intriguing spots to visit -- places where you can find less crowding than at today's blockbuster spots, and where accommodations, restaurants and shops haven't yet raised prices to blockbuster levels. Certainly those suggestions warrant at least a bit of consideration.

As far as those "hottest" destination lists, I say, "ignore 'em." For one thing, those places are usually pricey -- especially if they've been on one of the slick magazines' "hot" list for a few years. And the idea of going somewhere just because Brad and Angelina were seen there strikes me as absurd. Still, if that's what you want, you'll find plenty of lists.

TripAdvisor's TravelCast lists should be just one of many contributions to your travel planning. What's really important is where you want to go and what you want to do, not what other people have chosen.

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