



News release

06 December 2019

## *InterContinental® Hotels & Resorts launches InterContinental ICons, inviting travellers to rediscover what makes a city truly fascinating*

- *Independent survey across seven major cities reveals that most locals (59%) feel visitors are missing out on the true spirit of the place, while 75% of luxury travellers want to experience cities as a well-informed local*
- *Social media analysis exposes ‘sea of sameness’ with three-quarters (77%) of travellers feeling obliged to walk down the same traditional tourist trail*
- *InterContinental looks to go beyond well-worn itineraries and highlight the unexpected by inviting travellers and residents to vote for the most iconic city experiences*

**InterContinental® Hotels & Resorts, the world’s largest luxury hotel brand, launches [InterContinental ICons](#), offering travellers a fresh look at some of the world’s most exhilarating cities and inviting the public to take part in a global conversation on what makes them truly iconic.**

### **WADING THROUGH A SEA OF SAMENESS**

The brand’s independent study<sup>1</sup>, carried out in Paris, London, New York, Shanghai, Dubai, Sydney and Mexico City, revealed travellers often feel they only scratch the surface of a city. More than three-quarters (77%) say they feel obliged to see the most popular tourist sites, despite 75% expressing a desire to see more of what the city has to offer and to explore like a well-informed local.

Additional analysis of Instagram posts revealed that the Eiffel Tower in Paris is the most posted tourist site, representing 10% of all posts worldwide. Buckingham Palace is the most-tagged site in London (21%) and Central Park is the most-tagged in New York City (20%), highlighting that tourists are often focused on visiting the same “must-see” sites.

These findings were confirmed by locals in each of the seven cities, with more

than half (59%) feeling that tourists miss out on the best their city has to offer.

## **DISCOVERING THE TRUE CITY**

InterContinental's new campaign aims to inspire by rediscovering what makes each city truly fascinating. An [online vote](#), launching today, asks the public to select the most symbolic sights, sounds, tastes, smells and feelings in these cities, that will connect travellers more deeply when they visit.

### **Some of the multi-sensorial experiences identified by luxury travellers around the world include:**

- **Paris** - The scent of oven-fresh bread on the boulangeries of Oberkampf, Paris
- **London** - The warmth from a roaring fire in an old London pub on a chilly day
- **New York** - Smell of roasting chestnuts from a vendor cart on Broadway
- **Shanghai** - The warm aroma of Xiaolongbao at the Temple of the City Gods
- **Dubai** - Sound of water lapping an abra (traditional wooden boat) as it glides along Dubai Creek
- **Sydney** - The feel of the cool breeze on your face on the Manly to Circular Quay ferry
- **Mexico City** – The sounds of Mariachi music in Garibaldi plaza

### **Ginger Taggart, Vice President, Global Marketing, IHG Luxury Portfolio**

**comments:** “As a pioneer in luxury travel, InterContinental Hotels & Resorts has always been the gateway to fascinating places and local cultural wisdom, so we understand that travellers are craving a deeper connection to the places they visit. With our latest campaign, InterContinental ICons, we've set out to discover and celebrate authentic places and moments that might be overlooked by visitors but are truly part of what makes a city special. Whether it's the feel of salt air while riding New York's Hudson River ferry, the melodious bells of the clock tower on the Bund in Shanghai, or the feel of cobblestones underfoot on old Parisian streets, these ICons might include under-the-radar experiences, or well-known tourist hotspots viewed in new and unexpected ways. We want to reignite a sense of fascination for these much-visited cities and encourage discussion around what makes them truly iconic.”

## **INTERCONTINENTAL ICONS OVERVIEW**

InterContinental Hotels & Resorts has pioneered luxury travel for more than 70 years and now has 208 hotels in 66 countries worldwide. With this heritage and

insight, the brand understands that modern luxury travellers are looking for a deeper connection with the iconic places they travel to.

Through social media analysis, the insights of key opinion leaders and independent research, InterContinental has established a long-list of multi-sensory experiences that are representative of each city. Beginning today, InterContinental invites the public to select the experiences they truly feel demonstrate the city or cities they know best at [life.intercontinental.com/icons](https://life.intercontinental.com/icons) and engage in a conversation across social media using the hashtag #intercontinentalicons

Voting closes on 31 December 2019. A global panel of judges, featuring acclaimed National Geographic Photographer Charlie Hamilton James and well-travelled members of the InterContinental Ambassador loyalty programme will lend their expertise to curating the top five InterContinental ICons in each city, with the final reveal and celebration in early 2020.

*1 A global Toluna survey was fielded to 7,000+ participants between Wed. Nov. 6 – Tuesday, Nov. 19. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.*

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**Ends**

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## Contacts

**Caroline O'Grady**

[Caroline.ogrady@ihg.com](mailto:Caroline.ogrady@ihg.com)

+44 7500 977 013

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