

Perceiving Crime in American Cities:
A Study on Concern vs. Actual Crime

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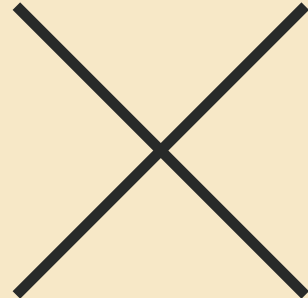
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It has likely been years since citizens of the United States felt truly safe in their home cities. Between discussions about gun safety to the rash of shootings that tend to spur the heated debates, it seems violence has been a staple of mainstream media coverage. In response, panic has set in across the nation, suggesting that there has been an undeniable drastic rise in violent and nonviolent crimes. But do the actual numbers match up to society's perception of just how dangerous their cities have become?

While it's always good for everyone to keep a cautious eye on their surroundings, the numbers tend to show that there is a discrepancy between the expectation of crime and reality.

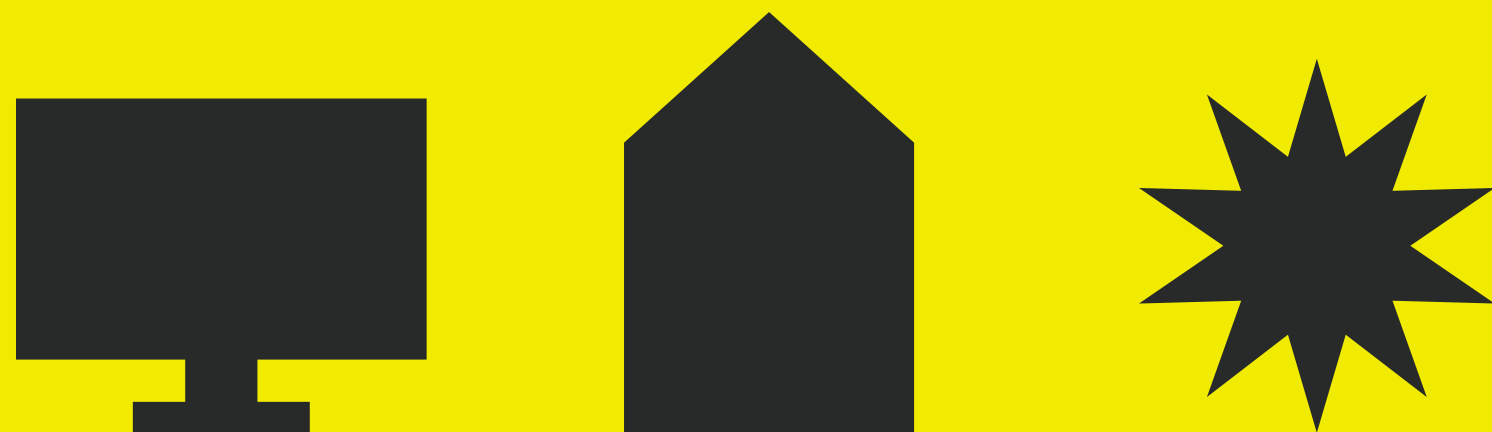
To determine just how overblown crime rates across the United States have been getting, Batten created a "Total Crime Score" that grades the severity of total violent and property crimes in specific cities. That score is then compared to the Concern Rank of citizens within those cities, and the report that follows is a breakdown of what was determined by comparing those numbers.

Methodology

FBI UCR  GOOGLE TRENDS

Batten extracted crime data from the 2019 FBI UCR database by MSA and compiled search information from Google Trends using the most searched keywords based on local crime from the past 12 months. The two data sets were combined together, and Batten analyzed the crime rate and concern rankings to create the composite score. Though the Google Trends data and FBI UCR data were not from the same year, the 2019 data remained relevant enough to give a strong reading on the current crime rates in a city.

The Cities Most Concerned About Crime



Crime may be a universal problem, but some cities do suffer more under the weight of it than others. The question is, are those cities the ones most concerned about violent and property crimes? With just a snapshot of the full report, it's clear to see which cities are putting more focus on crime.

Breaking Down the Data

Murder rate

01

Crime news

02

Crime map

03

Google trends

What someone views on the Internet can say a lot about them, and the trends in the most concerned cities came up with a higher relative search of crime-related inquiries. Terms like “murder rate,” “crime news,” and “crime map” were surveyed to determine these concerned cities in the nation, under the notion that, if they’re searching for it, they’re concerned about it.

After looking at Google Trends, Batten was able to determine the following ten cities showed the most concern for crime, listed from most to tenth most concerned.

Cities

- | | |
|--|--|
| 01 Minneapolis-St. Paul MN | 06 Columbia SC |
| 02 New Orleans LA | 07 Fresno-Visalia CA |
| 03 Jacksonville FL | 08 Baltimore MD |
| 04 Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo
Battle Creek MI | 09 Las Vegas NV |
| 05 Richmond-Petersburg VA | 10 Norfolk-Portsmouth
Newport News VA |

The cities may share a concern for crime, but what landed them on that list varied. For example, in Minneapolis-St. Paul, residents searched “crime rate” more than residents of Las Vegas. Meanwhile, Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News residents were more prone to searching for “murder rate” than Minneapolis-St. Paul.

There isn't a correlation between the trending searches, either, and the rates at which each term is searched fluctuate drastically across state lines. On the surface, it all seems to be very randomized. But when Batten looked at the cities with actual high crime rates, the matter only became more muddled as it starts to seem like not one of the top ten most concerned cities should be as worried as they are.

Actual Crime Rates by City

To determine if the most concerned cities were worrying about something that the least-concerned cities maybe should be watching out for, Batten compiled a second series of data. By looking at the violent crime and property crime rates in each city, it paints a better picture of the cities with a potentially ongoing problem with rising crime.

In terms of Total Crime Rate, the following ten cities make up the highest, though their violent and property crime ratings may fluctuate and not show a clear correlation between the two:

St. Louis MO

Albuquerque-Santa Fe NM

01 St. Louis MO

02 Albuquerque-Santa Fe NM

03 Anchorage AK

04 South Bend-Elkhart IN

05 Alexandria LA

06 Greenville-Spartanburg SC
Asheville NC-Anderson SC

07 Memphis TN

08 Fairbanks AK

09 Juneau AK

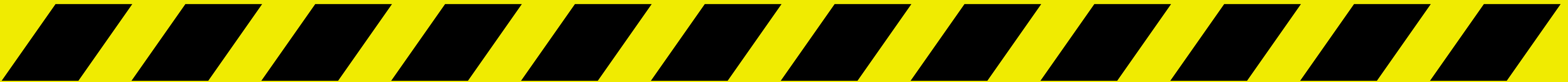
10 Eureka CA

From this list, with the exception of two cities, none of them landed in the top 50 of the cities that showed the most concern by crime.

Violent Crime

According to the National Institute of Justice, a violent crime is defined as one where “a victim is harmed by or threatened with violence.” The most common of these include murder, assault, robbery, and rape.

Of the top ten cities with the highest crime rate, four of them don't actually fall within the top ten cities with the highest violent crime rate. Greenville-Spartanburg, SC; Asheville, NC; Anderson, SC and Eureka, CA didn't even land within the top 20 cities with the highest violent crime rate.



Cities

Factoring in violent crime is a crucial part of determining the Total Crime Rank, but as it turns out, violent crime was only a fraction of the report and what ultimately landed cities in their spot on the ranking. For reference, the ten cities with the highest violent crime rate include:

- 01 St. Louis MO
- 02 Wilkes Barr
Scranton PA
- 03 South Bend-Elkhart IN
- 04 Anchorage AK
- 05 Memphis TN
- 06 Albuquerque
Santa Fe NM
- 07 Detroit MI
- 08 Chicago IL
- 09 Juneau AK
- 10 Harrisburg-Lancaster
Lebanon-York PA

Property Crime

Per the National Institute of Justice, property crime involves the theft or destruction of private property without the use of threat or force. These include vandalism, arson, theft, and burglary. Since a property crime requires no instance of violence, the rates of property and violent crimes won't overlap.

Revisiting the cities with the highest crime rates, it's likely expected that violent crime would be the driving factor in the overall ranking. However, for as much violent crime as there is, there happens to be quite a bit more property crime, sometimes as much six times the amount of violent crime.



Cities

Even in St. Louis, which had the highest violent crime rate, the property crime rate skyrocketed. But there is one constant, and that's the considerable difference between property crime and violent crime rates, with the latter showing, in cases like Bangor, ME, a drastically lower number.

For reference, the ten cities with the highest property crime rate include:

01 Greenville-Spartanburg SC
Asheville NC-Anderson SC

02 St. Louis MO

03 Great Falls MT

04 Eureka CA

05 Albuquerque
Santa Fe NM

06 Alexandria LA

07 Wheeling WV
Steubenville OH

08 Seattle-Tacoma WA

09 Hattiesburg-Laurel MS

10 Fairbanks AK

Batten's Crime vs. Concern Ranking

What is it?

The data helps show a disparity between how residents of a city view themselves and how their communities actually are. While the score is not a definitive source for determining the most dangerous cities in the United States, it's a glimpse at how crime trends across the nation, both in terms of the actual act and the perception of it amongst citizens.

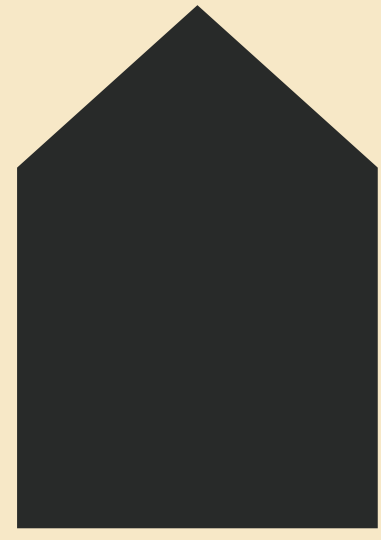
Crime vs. Concern Ranking by City

City	Total Crime Rank	Total Concern Rank	Crime vs Concern Rank
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville) NC	10.5	37	47.5
Richmond-Petersburg VA	44	5	49
Washington DC (Hagerstown MD)	42	12	54
Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo Battle Creek MI	53.5	4	57.5
Minneapolis-St. Paul MN	57	1	58
Green Bay-Appleton WI	14.5	50	64.5
Boston MA-Manchester NH	21.5	47	68.5
Tampa-St. Petersburg (Sarasota) FL	40.5	30	70.5
Pittsburgh PA	27	44	71
Boise ID	19.5	55	74.5

Panicking About Your Safety? Security is the Answer



Cyber
security



Home
security



Emergency
prep.

Regardless of where one's city may have landed in the crime or concern ranking, safety is always a concern. Even in the safest cities, individuals aren't going to forego security methods to amplify their safety. In fact, it's possible that they are so safe because they have a security system in place.


For those citizens rushing to Google to search "Murder Rates," panicking about the relative safety of the neighborhood isn't as proactive as it may seem. Instead, it's best to take action, and Batten has a few options that can help regain a sense of security.

Batten offers protection through
expert-curated products and
personalized recommendations

Mission

There was once a time when locking the front door was enough to feel secure. Today, houses are lined with cameras, and doors are bolted closed with automated locks. Batten became part of the push for more safety with its curation of security products, from DIY home security systems to doorbell cams, Safehouse Systems and Smart Security Systems, and extensive guides on how to keep safe and amplify security.

The company's mission is to help people make confident choices to protect the ones they love, knowing they're secure in their homes, safe online and prepared for emergencies. Today, family security is more complicated than ever. In a world that feels increasingly less secure, with more risks to consider, and so many products to compare, it's no wonder most families aren't prepared or don't know where to start. Batten aims to simplify the overwhelming amount of information and products on the market to be a one-stop-shop to provide personalized recommendations for customers and their families, regardless of their situation or phase of life.



Sometimes, feeling secure is just a matter of having the right gear, and having the right gear could be the difference between feeling secure and landing on a list of most concerned cities.

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