



WATERFRONT CITIES OF THE WORLD

In this documentary series, we discover the beauty and complexity of port cities around the globe. Each episode is an in-depth look at the essence of these vibrant cities, capturing their spirit and soul.



WATERFRONT CITIES OF THE WORLD

In a world where planes make traveling to the farthest destination a matter of hours, and rail-ways spiderweb the continents, what place do ports cities still have? They were once the centers of civilization, the gateway to commerce and adventure, but what is a port city in the modern world?

Our greatest cities have always been built close to water. There are over 500 000 port cities across the globe. Hubs of military activity, commercial trade, population migrations and cultural trends, these bustling centers seemed as much part of the global community as part of their own countries.

In our changing world, these cities, enriched by their history of cultural exchange, continue to

have a powerful impact on human civilization. What makes these cities so different than others? How has their access to the rest of the world made them so distinct? Why do we find them so attractive?

Port cities are where a nation meets the rest of the world, where the familiar meets the exotic, where the known meets the unknown. Helsinki, Cape Town, Havana, Lisbon, Tel Aviv, Bangkok, London, Buenos Aires, Salvador de Bahia, Melbourne, Singapour, Reykjavik, San Francisco, Marseille, Vancouver, Moscow, Naples, Lima and many more... Sophie Furon takes us into the heart of each of these incredible cities to discover how their past affects their present, and how their present is shaping their future.



SEASON

1



HELSINKI

Helsinki is a city unlike any other: a leader in social policy, an innovator in telecommunications, nearly obsessive in its pursuit of civil organization... and the sauna capital of the world. 150 islands constitute this northern port city, whose air and water are among the purest in Europe. The city center is rife with green space. If that isn't enough, its free healthcare and education systems are considered the best in the world.



CAPE TOWN

Feet in the water, head in the clouds. A little paradise on earth is blossoming here, slowly eclipsing the pain of recent history. With over 50% of its population under the age of 24, change is being ushered in by Cape Town's youth. Optimism, hope and resilience pit themselves against the lingering wounds of Apartheid. The lessons of the past and the spirit of the present promise a bright future for this stunning city.



HAVANA

Frozen in time, this city of mystery reveals some of its secrets. Our host meets the photographers of the Cuban revolution and learns about the reality and role of socialism, baseball and salsa dancing. She discovers that uniquely Cuban way of life, innovation in the face of scarcity, and visits the rooftop gardens that feed 90% of the local population.



LISBON

Having completely transformed itself over the last 20 years, Lisbon has become Europe's most cosmopolitan city. A recent arrival into the European Union, this vibrant metropolis continues to welcome waves of immigrants. Our host delves into the city's unique night life, and investigates the remnants of its recovery from history's largest earthquake.

SEASON

1



TEL AVIV

How does this city continue to side step the tensions that divide this unstable region? The white city, international capital of Bauhaus architecture, is one of our world's best examples of tolerant co-existence. This is a here and now city, whose residents are filled with the urgency of living life to its full potential.



BANGKOK

A city in motion rising from a landscape riddled with klongs. These tiny canals teem with local boats. It's ironic then that Bangkok is a street oriented city. Traffic is impossibly dense: cars, boats, overcrowded streets... Here, life seems like an endless race, but beneath the culture of chaos, this Buddhist city possess a deep and permanent respect for well-being.



BUENOS AIRES

The Portenos have seen it all. The glamour of wealth and opulence, the chokehold of dictatorship, the uneasiness of economic instability. Perhaps that explains their wit and their wisdom. In the Paris of the Americas, the people are masters at living life to the fullest.



MELBOURNE

More than 80 languages can be heard in the streets of Melbourne. In this young melting pot, the Vietnamese, Greeks and Italians are the most populous outside of their own countries. It is the cultural and sports capital of Australia, and it was voted best place on Earth to live for three years in a row by the Economist.

SEASON

1



HOUSTON

Oil and spaceships! Houston has been defined by NASA and petroleum, and has a reputation for its cowboy ways. But this is a surprisingly liberal city; a cultural hub with 60% of its population originating from Mexico, Asia and Africa. And what better than a day with astronaut Chris Hadfield to fully grasp the riches of Houston.



REYKJAVIK

Reykjavik, *the bay of smoke*, got its name from the countless hot water geysers that dominate its landscape. The only large city of Iceland, its 200 000 inhabitants make up two thirds of the country's population. Far from the prickliness of their Viking ancestors, locals are so friendly that they're on a first name basis with everyone... even their president!



SAN FRANCISCO

Originator of the trend and the counter-trend, home of the beat generation and gay rights, San Francisco's current fascination is with living a greener, simpler life. It was here, in the city of sloped streets, that Twitter, Wikipedia and Craigslist were founded. Today, this one-of-a-kind city is still changing the world, but this time through the magic of social media.



MARSEILLE

Lively, dirty, bright, vibrant. A city of contradictions, laid back but demanding, warm but rude, it provokes those who visit and protects those who live it. In the oldest city in France everything and its opposite co-exist.

SEASON

1



MOSCOW

Mysterious and romantic, brutal and beautiful, Moscow is definitely the global capital of the outrageous. Located between five rivers and seven seas, this water city in a class of its own was the home of our host for ten years. Through her eyes, we deliver a unique perspective on this continental hub.

SEASON

2



PANAMA

Panama City is positively breathtaking. It is the fifth most popular retirement destination in the world. Its notorious canal was one of the world's biggest engineering projects and it transformed international navigation.



TOKYO

With 34 million inhabitants, Tokyo is the world's largest agglomeration. But behind its imposing facade, the city is composed of a number of small and charming villages.



VANCOUVER

Nestled between ocean and mountains, Vancouver is a city surrounded by water and anchored in the great outdoors. Original spins on the use of space have blossomed here, but housing remains a challenge.



VALENCIA

Valencia evolved discreetly in the shadow of Madrid and Barcelona. Nerve centre of one of the most fertile agricultural regions of Europe, it harvests a joie de vivre that sways from the table to the beach...

SEASON

2



SALVADOR DE BAHIA

First capital of Brazil, Bahia remains at the heart of the rich fusion behind Afro-Brazilian culture. It may seem somewhat chaotic at times, but the population's notorious charm quickly diverts attention from its few shortcomings...



ST. PETERSBURG

The Russian Empire's capital until 1918 was built to impress everyone in the world! Its rich past fuels its people's pride, even though many of the illustrious mansions of its glory days are rundown and uninhabitable today.



SINGAPORE

The city-state of Singapore, an archipelago abounding with tropical forest, has the most important port in the world. Known for its strict laws, but having a modern and eccentric character, it had the most rapid growth in Asia.



VALETTA

The capital of Malta is a little-known archipelago of 400,000 inhabitants located in the heart the Mediterranean, Valletta has always been sought-after, but having been sovereign for only 50 years, the Maltese are still defining their identity.

SEASON

2



ISTANBUL

Having always served as a bridge between two worlds, Istanbul's ongoing exponential growth sets the stage for numerous problems. But its liveliness also has the merit of rendering its economic, social and cultural spheres remarkably dynamic.



HONG KONG

With 8,000 skyscrapers, Hong Kong is the most vertical city in the world, even though 70% of its territory is wildlife. Despite its current transition period, Hong Kong is a major cultural and economic link between the West and continental China.



BOSTON

At the heart of American culture, Boston holds a unique standing in the United States. With more than 80 colleges and universities, the city is a harbour to knowledge and culture, while knowing no limits in supporting its sports teams.



COPENHAGEN

Everything in Copenhagen is as audacious as it is chic and hyper functional. The importance attributed to family policies and infrastructures developed for cyclists, is part of the logic behind the Danish's quest for comfort and wellbeing, or Hygge.

SEASON

2



VENICE

Mythical city with a glorious past and exceptional allure, Venice is also fragile; assailed by high tides and hordes of tourists. But the absence of cars offers Venetians an incomparable quality of life.

SEASON

3



STOCKHOLM

Water is ubiquitous in the Swedish capital, which is spread out over 14 islands. Its 57 bridges allow a cyclist to go from urban to rural backdrops in as little as a few minutes. Stockholm, the green city, is a true leader in the fight against growing environmental problems on the planet.



HONOLULU

With an area of more than 5500 km², of which 72% is water, Honolulu, the “sheltered bay”, is the largest city in the world. Sitting on a volcanic zone, its area is constantly growing. Isolated in the middle of the Pacific, the city behind Pearl Harbour is located 6000 km from California, and 8000 km from Japan. Oddly enough, it has the most advanced telecommunication system in the world.



DOHA

Richest city in the world, it was a small pearl fishermen village just a few decades ago. Today, with seemingly endless gas resources, the capital of Qatar seems to have the means to buy everything and anything it wants. Its GDP per capita is now the highest in the world. No doubt Doha is definitely moving forward !



NAPLES

With more than 3000 years of history, Naples is one of the oldest cities of the Western world. Caught between volcanoes and the Mediterranean Sea, it is clearly a city of contrasts. The local culture has a rich past, which has a great influence on life today, especially when it comes to food!

SEASON

3



MIAMI

City of pleasures, renowned beach hangout, Miami is the world's most important cruise ship port, with one third of the global fleet. Close to Cuba, the "Gateway to the Americas" is a culturally rich city, influenced by its large Hispanic population. Despite the nostalgia of its Art Deco treasures, the city is in the midst of a true urban renewal.



LIMA

Capital and largest city of Peru, Lima is home to a population of 9 million people, one third of the country's population. It is also the fifth largest city in Latin America. Cradle of a very mixed culture, it has ethnic roots in the four corners of the globe.



HO CHI MINH CITY

Founded by the Khmer from Cambodia and converted into the capital of French Indochina during the French colonization, the largest city in Vietnam is still called Saigon by its residents. Its hot and humid climate shapes everyday life, pushing its citizens to invade the streets, restaurants and public places late in the evening to enjoy the rare but pleasant cool air.



HAMBURG

Largest port in Germany, Hamburg is host to a hundred consulates, and cherishes its international character. Major economic hub, it also carefully maintains a pleasurable environment in which to live. Highly cultural city, it is also the symbol of the Franco-German friendship.



NEW-ORLEANS

Unique city in the North American landscape, New Orleans has a rich cultural heritage, with its French and Caribbean roots. But the incomparable Louisiana party town has had its setbacks. Although the Big Easy was hit by hurricanes and floods, it is once again blooming, relying on its soul and its legendary strength of character.



RIGA

Nestled in an exceptional natural bay, Riga was a gateway to the continent for nearly 3000 years, especially during the Soviet era. Germans, Swedes, Poles and Russians competed for the control of the small country until its independence in 1991. Today, the city of a million inhabitants remains the cradle of Latvian identity.



LONDON

East London is in a way what Brooklyn is to New York: the perfect example of how, in a dense and complex city, we can still lead a human and friendly neighborhood life. The multiple “villages” that make up London teem with activity and are constantly renewed. We may think we know London, but the city that was once the world’s largest port deserves a new analysis.



BARCELONA

Flagship city of Spain, Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia, a region which has its own, unique identity. Some say it has lost its essence, but it still has all the ingredients necessary for an alternative lifestyle. Tourists are abundant, true, but they also help the local economy.

SEASON

3



NEW YORK CITY

New York is constantly changing. Harlem and 125th Street have been redefined, Brooklyn, the working-class suburb, has become a destination in its own right, and the High Line Park, now stretching above 16 city blocks of the West Village, continues to grow. Everything here is original. Everything here is possible. But it is now said that residents of Manhattan who aren't millionaires are an exception. You think you really know New York?

SEASON

4



CHICAGO

Known as the windy city, Chi-town – or just Chill, Chicago, Illinois, is without a doubt, a multi-layered city, both architecturally and socially. Once ravaged by raging flames, it has always found a way to renew itself in order to remain the Queen of the Midwest. Although division is a reality to this day, community action runs strong and art is effectively taking over the streets.



TANGIER

At the crossroads of the Atlantic and Mediterranean, this rich historical meeting ground of cultures and artists is also known as The Dream City. History fuses with the present in Tangier and its future is already palpable, as his majesty King Mohammed VI is in the midst of ridding the city of its drug and debauchery-tainted reputation to give way to an elegant and inviting hub of tourism and commerce.



AMSTERDAM

Bicycles and Amsterdam are so inseparable that bikes are said to outnumber people here. Also known as the Venice of the North, the city is home to 165 canals and over 1300 bridges. Famous for its tradition of tolerance and diversity, open mindedness is actually what's paving the way to Amsterdam's future, as it lacks the space to house its inhabitants. Although its classical architecture is closely protected, cutting-edge architecture is rising on man-made islands.



OSLO

As the richest capital of the world, it is also the most expensive. Once known as a sleepy city Oslo is now a cosmopolitan and cultural hotspot. Although its prosperity derives from the oil industry, nature forms most of its scenery. This is a land where modernity meets simplicity, as life's finest pleasures and the great outdoors are always just a hop and skip away.



DUBLIN

Dublin's reputation as a port of exodus for Dubliners seeking new lives elsewhere is not new. After a decade-long bubble of economic success, the city has fallen back into a dismal recession forcing many of its citizens to leave once again. However life in Dublin continues and, as in the past where literature and music have flourished despite bad times, today's Dublin has seen an incredible resurgence of art and DIY culture. And pub culture still thrives.



SEOUL

A megacity with a centuries-old foreign presence, Seoul is a city coming into its own. Whether it's the stylish high-end Seoul culture of Gangnam or the 24/7 beat of a city that never sleeps, Seoul is a happening world capital. In spite of its intensive industrial past, Seoul has big plans to become the greenest capital in the world by 2030. It's a city determined to prosper even in light of economic and political obstacles, past and present.



LOS ANGELES

The City of Angels is an example of endless urban sprawl. While the city's centre has had a small role in LA's recent urban development, its small surrounding communities have become an integral part of LA's varied multiple identities. Often considered a city of reinvention, people have always flocked to LA to pursue their dreams. Among them are large numbers of immigrants from around the world, making LA one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world.



AUCKLAND

Surrounded by water and volcanos, Auckland is an outdoor lover's paradise. However for a long time Aucklanders were perceived by New Zealanders as pretentious, eccentric and stressed out. Cut to today's Auckland as it morphs into a centre of multicultural cool and where the current mayor is determined to make the city the most liberal city in the world. Where else can one find a 15-floor bordello in the middle of downtown?

SEASON

4



CARTAGENA

In the past, the colonial city of Cartagena has been tainted by its country's long-standing drug violence. But today's Cartagena has shed its sordid image, promoting itself as the tourist destination du jour. With its beautiful downtown beaches, restored old city and a place on the New York Times foodie circuit, Cartagena is slowly reclaiming its title as the Pearl of the Caribbean and the romantic capital of Latin America.



RIO DE JANEIRO

Located between the ocean and the mountains, Rio is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. No other city is home to such an incredible natural setting. However not far from the beaches and Rio's Foresto da Tijuca - the largest urban forest in the world - are the city's favelas where over 20% of the city's population live in poverty and crime. Stay tuned as Rio transforms itself in an attempt to quickly clean up its act in anticipation of the 2016 Olympics Games.



MUMBAI

Mumbai is a city that never stops. Bustling and chaotic, it's a unique mix of India, Hollywood, Art Deco, old wealth and new wealth... and where over half of the population lives in poverty. Mumbai is a city of contradictions. An ever-increasing population is pushing the city to rethink its urban development and how it will house one of the highest middle class populations in the world. In the meantime, Mumbai's street life is one of the liveliest in the world and moving faster than ever.



SHANGHAI (2 incredible episodes!)

At 23 million people, Shanghai is the ultimate Waterfront City. It's a megalopolis and port city that shows no signs of slowing down. Like a small country that plays by its own rules, Shanghai is a city where capitalism flourishes and urban development fuels the growth of this ever-changing city - but where everyday life is still strongly rooted in the traditions and culture that are uniquely Shanghai.

WATERFRONT CITIES OF THE WORLD

SEASON

5

(CURRENTLY IN PRODUCTION)

TV5 + DISCOVERY CANADA

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13 x 46 minutes

**ATHENS
PORTLAND
BUDAPEST
ROME
DAKAR
TAIPEI
SYDNEY
TORONTO
GLASGOW
GDANSK
MONTEVIDEO
GUAYAQUIL
SAN DIEGO**

DIRECTED BY

Nicolas Boucher
Étienne Deslières
Michel D.T. Lam

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Louis-Philippe Blain
François Messier-Rheault

MUSIC BY

Michel Corriveau

PRODUCED BY



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