

# Forbes 2017 Billionaires List: Meet The Richest People On The Planet

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By [Luisa Kroll](#) and [Kerry A. Dolan](#)

It was a record year for the richest people on earth, as the number of billionaires jumped 13% to 2,043 from 1,810 last year, the first time ever that *Forbes* has pinned down more than 2,000 ten-figure-fortunes. Their total net worth rose by 18% to \$7.67 trillion, also a record. The change in the number of billionaires -- up 233 since the 2016 list -- was the biggest in the 31 years that *Forbes* has been tracking billionaires globally. Gainers since last year's list outnumbered losers by more than three to one.

[Read more: The Full List of The World's Billionaires](#)

[Bill Gates](#) is the number one richest for the fourth year in a row, and the richest person in the world for 18 out of the past 23 years. He has a fortune of \$86 billion, up from \$75 billion last year. Amazon's [Jeff Bezos](#) had the best year of any person on the planet, adding \$27.6 billion to his fortune; now worth \$72.8 billion, he moved into the top three in the world for the first time, up from number five a year ago.

[Warren Buffett](#) had the second-best year, and the biggest gain since Donald Trump was elected president in November 2016. His \$14.8 billion jump in 12 months was enough for him to grab back the number two spot from [Amancio Ortega](#), founder of Spanish clothing chain Zara. Ortega's fortune was up \$4.3 billion since last year, but he still fell to fourth in the world, unable to keep up with the outsize gains of others.



Forbes via agencies.

Members of the 2017 Forbes list of billionaires, from top left: Chobani founder Hamdi Ulukaya, VietJet founder Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao, Bill Gates; from bottom left Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Amazon.com's Jeff Bezos, Stripe cofounder John Collison.

Facebook founder [Mark Zuckerberg](#) moved up to number five for the first time, after his fortune rose \$11.4 billion in 12 months. Meanwhile [Carlos Slim Helu](#) of Mexico, once the world's richest man, fell to number six, the first time he's been out of the top five in a dozen years.

There were 195 newcomers. Mainland China had the most new ten-figure fortunes with 76. The U.S. was second with 25. Notable newbies include Patagonia sportswear founder [Yvon Chouinard](#); Viking Cruises founder [Torstein Hagen](#) of Norway; U.S. hedge fund tycoon [Cliff Asness](#) and two of his partners; and John and [Patrick Collison](#), Irish citizens who cofounded San Francisco-based Stripe, which enables online payments. [John Collison](#), age 26, is now the world's youngest self-made billionaire, just two months younger than Snapchat's [Evan Spiegel](#). The Collisons are two of just four self-made billionaires in their 20s (the other two are the Snapchat cofounders). There are 56 billionaires under age 40, down from 66 last year, after some aged out and others dropped below the \$1 billion mark.

New Australian billionaire [Manny Stul](#) may not be a familiar name yet, but his popular Shopkins, grocery-inspired plastic collectibles with names like Kris P. Lettuce and Posh Pear, are a huge hit with American kids.

There are also 15 new self-made women, all but one of whom are from Asia Pacific. That includes 10 from China and the first ever from Vietnam, [Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao](#), who took her budget airline, VietJet Air, public in February 2017. The sole American self-made woman newcomer is [Thai Lee](#), who was born in Thailand but moved to the U.S. as a child and now runs tech reseller SHI, reportedly the nation's largest woman-owned business by sales. Altogether there are 227 women on list, including 10 who cofounded or own businesses with a spouse or a brother and thus

share the fortune.

The U.S. continues to have more billionaires than any other nation, with a record 565, up from 540 a year ago. China is catching up with 319. (Hong Kong has another 67, and Macau 1.) Germany has the third most with 114 and India, with 101, the first time it has had more than 100, is fourth.

Seventy-eight people fell off the list, including 33 from China, 7 Americans and 9 who are still super wealthy but share their wealth among extended family members and therefore are not eligible for these ranks. Additionally, 20 billionaires died in the past year, including Enterprise car rental founder Jack Taylor and Michael Ilitch, who launched Little Caesar's pizza with his wife, Marian.

Go [here](#) for the full list of all the world's billionaires.

## METHODOLOGY

The *Forbes* Billionaires list is a snapshot of wealth taken on **February 17, 2017**; we used stock prices and exchange rates from around the world to calculate net worths. Some fortunes have changed considerably since then.

We list individuals rather than multigenerational families who share large fortunes, though we include wealth belonging to a billionaire's spouse and children if that person is the founder of the fortune. For daily updates of net worths, go to [www.forbes.com/real-time-billionaires](http://www.forbes.com/real-time-billionaires).

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