

France offers great education and healthcare, but language barriers pose a challenge in everyday life.

- Munich, 06 September 2017 — For the fourth time in a row, France is not one of the favorite destinations among expats worldwide: foreign residents in France find it hard to settle in as they struggle to make friends and cope with the local language. However, when it comes to expats with families, France is still an attractive option — ranking 15th out of 45 countries. In fact, the costs of childcare and education are among the most affordable in the world, as the [Expat Insider 2017](#) survey reveals. With nearly 13,000 respondents living and working abroad, it is one of the most extensive expat studies, conducted yearly by [InterNations](#), the largest expat community worldwide. Apart from offering an in-depth analysis of life abroad, the survey ranks 65 countries by a variety of factors such as quality of life, working abroad, and settling in. While France ranks a rather mediocre 38th, this year's top 10 destinations for expats are Bahrain, Costa Rica, Mexico, Taiwan, Portugal, New Zealand, Malta, Colombia, Singapore, and Spain.



1	Bahrain	6	New Zealand
2	Costa Rica	7	Malta
3	Mexico	8	Colombia
4	Taiwan	9	Singapore
5	Portugal	10	Spain

<b>56</b>	Turkey	<b>61</b>	Saudi Arabia
<b>57</b>	India	<b>62</b>	Brazil
<b>58</b>	Qatar	<b>63</b>	Nigeria
<b>59</b>	Ukraine	<b>64</b>	Kuwait
<b>60</b>	Italy	<b>65</b>	Greece

11	Czech Republic	18	Thailand	26	UAE	34	Australia	42	South Africa	50	Russia
12	Vietnam	19	Romania	27	Switzerland	35	Kazakhstan	43	USA	51	Chile
13	Netherlands	20	Norway	28	Austria	36	Panama	44	Israel	52	Argentina
14	Belgium	21	Finland	29	Philippines	37	Kenya	45	Peru	53	Indonesia
15	Malaysia	22	Denmark	30	France	38	France	46	Uganda	54	Spain
16	Canada	23	Germany	31	South Korea	39	Hong Kong	47	Ireland		Kingdom
17	Oman	24	Cambodia	32	Belgium	40	Japan	48	Myanmar	55	China
		25	Ecuador	33	Cyprus	41	Hungary	49	Poland		

## En Français S'il Vous Plaît

According to the *Expat Insider 2017* survey, the French are hard to befriend — one in two expats living in France (50%) thinks that making local friends is not easy, more than the average of all expats feeling this way worldwide (40%). The language barrier might be one of the reasons why: more than three-quarters of expats in France (76%) find it hard to live there without speaking French. A Kazakh living in France explains that *“without knowing the local language foreigners are isolated and feel lonely”*. Furthermore, not only does the language barrier cause problems, but the attitude of the local population towards foreign residents is also rated negatively by three out of ten respondents in France (30%). This is almost twice as much as the global average among all expats (16%). In fact, the French are described as being more distant than welcoming by 43 percent of expats. Interestingly enough, however, this is not the case when it comes to families with kids: the French really seem to like children, and four in five respondents (80%) feel positively about the friendliness of locals towards families with kids.

## A Perfect Place for Healthy Families

Apart from a warm welcome, France provides expat parents with affordable education and a good healthcare system. Ranking 15th out of 45 countries for expat families, France stands out for the costs of childcare and education in particular. More than seven in ten expat parents (73%) think that education is easy to afford, as opposed to a global average of only 45 percent. In addition, even despite recent security threats in France, between eight and nine in ten parents are satisfied with their children's safety (83%) and their general well-being (88%). A US American living in France stated: *“It is a family-friendly culture. It is safe, and living in the countryside feels wholesome for our children.”* Apart from a safe environment for children, the French healthcare system is also valuable to expats: Exactly four in five (80%) consider it to be affordable, which is 24 percentage points more than the global average. Additionally, 84 percent of expats rate the quality of medical care in France positively. Therefore, it is probably not surprising that healthcare standards were considered a potential benefit of moving to France by nearly six in ten respondents (59%).

### Life in France

	2017*		2016**
Overall Rank	38	▲ 3	41
Quality of Life	21	▼ 6	15
Ease of Settling In	53		53
Working Abroad	40	▲ 2	42
Family Life (out of 45 countries)	15	▼ 4	11
Personal Finance	52	▲ 8	60
Cost of Living	35	▲ 5	40

\*out of 65 countries

\*\*out of 67 countries

80% generally satisfied

## The Adventurous French Conquer the World

The French seem to enjoy living abroad: over one-third of French expats (36%) have lived in three other destinations than their current country of residence for longer than three months. About one in seven (14%) have even lived in five or more other countries, nearly double the global average of all expats (8%). Moreover, 46 percent of the French respondents say that it is unlikely they will return to France. Apparently, the French want to expand their horizons — one-third of French respondents (33%) say that, among other reasons, they moved abroad for adventure, six percentage points more than the global average. Despite their fondness for the French language, languages also appear to be an influential motivation for French nationals moving abroad: nearly one in five (19%) claims that improving their language skills was one of their reasons for relocating. This may be a bit of a surprise, considering that a majority of expats in France have difficulties in communicating with the local residents, who mainly speak French. While searching for adventure, the French seem to find love along the way: more than three in five French respondents (63%) are in a relationship with a foreign national, and 82 percent are happy with their relationship.

### Satisfaction



### Expat Profile

Average age



Gender split



Relationship status



### **A Heartwarming Welcome Leads Bahrain, Costa Rica, and Mexico to the Top**

For the first time since the *Expat Insider* survey was introduced, none of the previous year's top 3 destinations lead the ranking: Surprise winner Bahrain even leaps from 19th position to 1st place, winning the overall ranking. The Gulf State makes it easy for expats to feel at home due to its friendly local residents — nearly nine out of ten expats (86%) rate the friendly attitude of Bahrainis towards expats positively. In addition, about three-quarters of expats in Bahrain (73%) are satisfied with their jobs, compared to a global average of 64 percent. Runner-up Costa Rica and Mexico on third place also rank among the top 20 in terms of working abroad, but are even more valued for their extremely friendly local population. In fact, nearly nine in ten expats (87%) rate the friendly attitude of locals towards foreign residents positively in both countries, compared to a global average of only 67 percent of expats feeling this way about their destination.

### **Greece, Kuwait, and Nigeria Are the Worst Destinations for Expats Again**

The countries featured in the bottom 3, on the other hand, have remained the same for the third year in a row: Greece has now hit rock bottom, ranking last overall, as well as in terms of working abroad, personal finance, and family life. Half of the respondents in Greece say that their household income is not enough to cover their daily expenses, which is more than twice the global average (23%). The main issue in Nigeria and Kuwait, 63rd and 64th out of 65 countries, remains the constant struggle with the quality of life: more than two in ten expats in Kuwait (23%) are unhappy with their life in general, compared to only 10 percent of expats worldwide. In Nigeria, safety and security cause additional problems, with nearly seven out of ten (68%) rating their personal safety negatively.

### **About the InterNations *Expat Insider* 2017 Survey**

For its annual [Expat Insider survey](#), InterNations asked about 13,000 expatriates representing 166 nationalities and living in 188 countries or territories to provide information on various aspects of expat life, as well as their gender, age, and nationality. Participants were asked to rate 43 different aspects of life abroad on a scale of one to seven. The rating process emphasized the respondents' personal satisfaction with these aspects and considered both emotional topics as well as more factual aspects with equal weight. The respondents' ratings of the individual factors were then bundled in various combinations for a total of 16 subcategories, and their mean values were used to draw up six topical indices: Quality of Life, Ease of Settling In, Working Abroad, Family Life, Personal Finance, and Cost of Living Index. Except for the latter, all indices were further averaged in order to rank 65 expatriate destinations around the world. In 2017 the top 10 were Bahrain, Costa Rica, Mexico, Taiwan, Portugal, New Zealand, Malta, Colombia, Singapore, and Spain.

For a country to be featured in the indices and consequently in the overall ranking, a sample size of at least 75 survey participants per country was necessary. The only exception to this is the Family Life Index, where a sample size of more than 40 respondents raising children abroad was required. In 2017, 65 and 45 countries respectively met these requirements. However, in most countries the sample size exceeded 100 participants.

### **About InterNations**

With 2.8 million members in 390 cities around the world, InterNations (<http://www.internations.org>) is the largest global network and information site for people who live and work abroad. InterNations offers global and local networking both online and face-to-face. At around 6,000 monthly events and activities, expatriates have the opportunity to meet with other global minds. Online services include country and city guides created by a team of professional writers, guest contributions about life abroad, and discussion forums to help members with topics such as local housing and job searching. InterNations membership is by approval only to ensure we remain a community of trust.



The InterNations app is available for Android and iOS and can be downloaded for free on [Google Play](#) and the [App Store](#).

Find more information about InterNations on our [press pages](#), [company website](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), or in our [Expat Magazine](#).

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