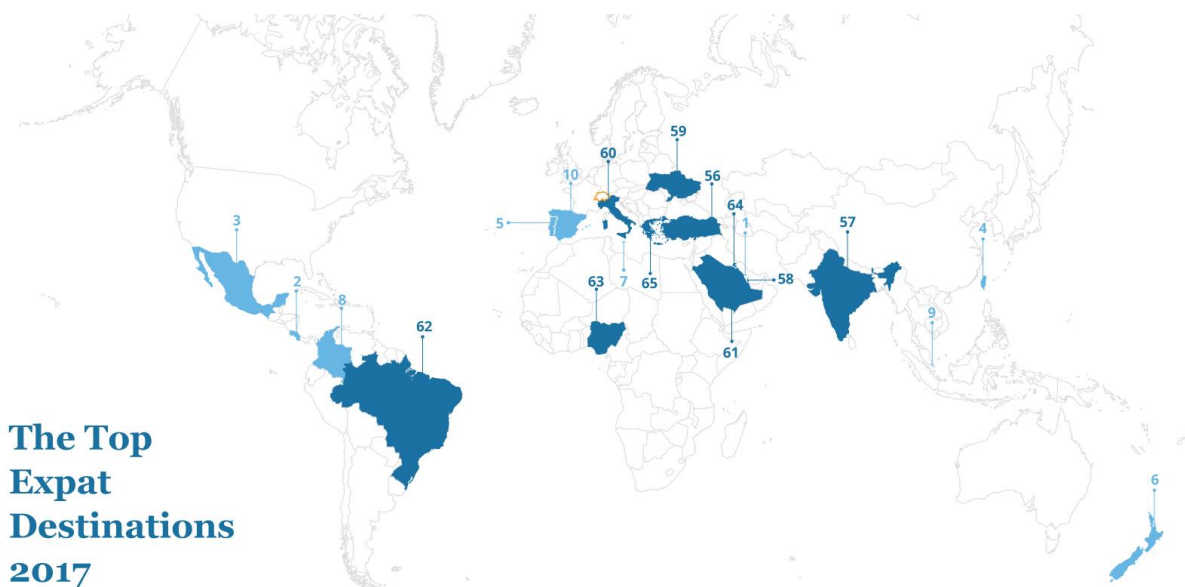


Expatriate Insider 2017 Survey Reveals: Expats in Switzerland Lead a Safe but Isolated Life

Some of the highest expat incomes and a safe environment do not make up for the unwelcoming local residents.

- Switzerland is among the least welcoming countries for foreigners in the world and ranks behind Germany, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Hungary, and Finland for its ease of settling in.
- The majority of expats (57%) has an annual household income of 100,000 USD (approx. 97,000 CHF) or more at their disposal. But every sixth foreign resident (17%) is still unhappy with their financial situation, most probably due to the high costs of living.
- Switzerland has one of the highest ratios of foreigners in Europe. At the same time, expats rate it the world's best country for safety and security.

Munich, 06 September 2017 — The most important reasons why people relocate to Switzerland are all job-related: they find a job on their own (17%), move for their partner's job or education (16%), or are recruited by a Swiss company (15%). When moving to Switzerland, they are particularly looking forward to a higher quality of life (74%), a safe home (69%), and a flourishing economy (65%); and they are not disappointed. However, paradise comes at a price: not only are expenses considered the second-highest in the world, but one quarter of expats in Switzerland also think that the local population is unfriendly. Three in ten expats even regard the Swiss as specifically unfriendly towards foreign residents, as the [Expatriate 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 Switzerland achieves a rather mediocre 27th place behind Cambodia, Ecuador, and the UAE, this year's top 10 destinations for expats are Bahrain, Costa Rica, Mexico, Taiwan, Portugal, New Zealand, Malta, Colombia, Singapore, and Spain.



The Top Expat Destinations 2017

Top 10

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

Bottom 10

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| 56 Turkey | 61 Saudi Arabia |
| 57 India | 62 Brazil |
| 58 Qatar | 63 Nigeria |
| 59 Ukraine | 64 Kuwait |
| 60 Italy | 65 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 Luxembourg | 21 Finland | 29 Philippines | 37 Kenya | 45 Ireland | 53 Indonesia |
| 15 Malaysia | 22 Sweden | 30 Denmark | 38 France | 46 Uganda | 54 United Kingdom |
| 16 Canada | 23 Germany | 31 South Korea | 39 Hong Kong | 47 Peru | 55 China |
| 17 Oman | 24 Cambodia | 32 Belgium | 40 Japan | 48 Myanmar | |
| | 25 Ecuador | 33 Cyprus | 41 Hungary | 49 Poland | |

Switzerland Is among the Least Welcoming Countries for Foreigners in the World

Expats living in Switzerland do not have many positive things to say about the local population: they consider them reserved (78%), distant (57%), traditional (64%), and not very dynamic (54%). A US American expat says about the Swiss: *“Sometimes the neutrality is disguising what appears to be a lack of compassion for others, especially those not like me.”* Nearly seven out of ten expats (68%) agree that making local friends is difficult — almost 30 percentage points higher than the global average of 40 percent. As a result, the majority (52%) mainly has other foreigners as friends. When specifically asked about the reasons why, these respondents cite the high number of expat colleagues (53%), cultural issues (50%), the high number of expats living in Switzerland in general (46%), as well as the language barrier (42%) as potential reasons. Even though six out of ten expats (61%) speak the local language(s) at least fairly well, some find themselves struggling due to the local dialects, as another US American explains: *“They speak Swiss German, which is so far from high German that native German speakers cannot understand them.”*

Majority of Expats Has an Annual Household Income of 100,000 USD or More

Most foreigners move to Switzerland for their own or their partner’s career (60%) and over three-quarters of working expats (77%) earn more than they would in their home country. More than half (57%) have an annual gross household income of 100,000 USD (approx. 97,000 CHF) or more, and 14 percent even have 200,000 USD or more at their disposal — nearly three times the global averages (21% and 5%, respectively). Expats admire the Swiss economy, with just 1 percent of respondents having something negative to say about this factor, as opposed to a quarter worldwide. But all that glitters is not gold: about every sixth foreign resident (17%) is still unhappy with their financial situation, most probably due to the high costs of living in Switzerland. In this respect, the country ranks second to last, with close to three-quarters (73%) rating this factor negatively. *“The cost of living is very high, even when considering the high income,”* a Hungarian respondent complains. The majority of expats also gives the affordability of housing (67%), healthcare (50%), and childcare (71% of parents) a negative rating.

Life in Switzerland

	2017*		2016**
Overall Rank	27	▲ 4	31
Quality of Life	8	▲ 2	10
Ease of Settling In	61	▲ 3	64
Working Abroad	13	▲ 3	16
Family Life (out of 45 countries)	27	▲ 3	30
Personal Finance	26	▲ 3	29
Cost of Living	64	▲ 1	65

*out of 65 countries

**out of 67 countries

84% generally satisfied

Expats Rate Switzerland the World’s Best Country for Safety and Security

For those who are looking for more safety and security in this stirred-up world, Switzerland is the place to go. The country has one of the highest ratios of foreigners in entire Europe. At the same time, an astounding 97 percent of respondents feel safe here, 18 percentage points more than the global average (79%). Peacefulness and political stability earn similar praise with 97 percent and 93 percent positive ratings respectively. Ranking third for personal safety, Switzerland is the only European country to make it into the top 5 for this factor this year, accompanied by East Asian countries Singapore, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. As a Kenyan expat living in Switzerland puts it: *“My kids will grow up safe, speaking different languages, which is pretty awesome.”*

Safety & Security

- 1 Switzerland
- 2 Norway
- 3 Singapore
- 4 Japan
- 5 Luxembourg
- 6 UAE
- 7 Canada
- 8 Finland
- 9 Oman
- 10 Denmark

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

For the first time since the *Expats 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](#).

Press Contact

Vera Grossmann
Media Spokesperson

InterNations GmbH
Schwanthalerstrasse 39
80336 Munich, Germany

Tel: +49 (0)89 461 3324 79

Fax: +49 (0)89 461 3324 99

Email: press@internations.org

Homepage: www.internations.org/press