

Expatriate City Ranking 2017: Basel Is the Most Popular Swiss City for Expats ahead of Zurich and Geneva

Thanks to the world's highest quality of urban living and Switzerland's shortest work week, expats enjoy life in Basel best.

- *Basel has the highest quality of urban living in the world, closely followed by Zurich, with more than nine in ten expats expressing their satisfaction with the quality of the local environment.*
- *Geneva is not only considered the most expensive European city, but also one of the most expensive cities in the world; only 13 percent rate the local cost of living positively.*
- *About half the expats struggle to make friends in Zurich (53%), Basel (51%), and Geneva (49%).*

Munich, 14 November 2017 — Basel stands out as the best city for expats in Switzerland in this year's Expatriate City Ranking. The city ranks 9th out of 51 destinations in the world, while Zurich and Geneva come in at a far more average 23rd and 29th position. Basel does not only offer the best career opportunities, but also the lowest cost of living among the Swiss cities. However, what all Swiss cities featured in the survey have in common is their less than friendly attitude towards foreign residents: about half the expats in these cities struggle to make local friends, as the so-far unpublished [Expatriate City Ranking 2017](#) reveals. The ranking is based on data collected in the annual *Expatriate Insider* survey, conducted by [InterNations](#), the largest expat community worldwide. With nearly 13,000 respondents living and working abroad, *Expatriate Insider 2017* is one of the most extensive expat studies worldwide. Apart from offering an in-depth analysis of expat life in 51 cities, the survey ranks them by a variety of factors from the areas quality of urban living, getting settled, urban work life, as well as finance and housing. According to all these rating factors, the top 10 cities for expats are Manama, Prague, Madrid, Kuala Lumpur, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Johannesburg, Bangkok, Basel, and Frankfurt am Main.






Expats Work the Longest Hours in Zurich, but Their Career Opportunities Are Best in Basel

A higher share of expats in Zurich have a yearly household income of more than 250,000 USD than in any other city worldwide (14% vs. 3% globally). However, with expats in Zurich working longer than in any other European city (44.5 hours per week), the money might be hard-earned. Both hard work and a generous income seem to be necessary, though: nearly eight in ten expats in Zurich (76%) rate the cost of living negatively. However, Zurich is not even considered Switzerland's priciest city: Geneva is, in fact, rated the most expensive city in both Switzerland *and* Europe. More than eight in ten expats in Geneva (81%) rate the cost of living negatively, ranking the city 50th out of 51 cities worldwide. Expats looking for a Swiss destination with lower living expenses should therefore consider Basel: about six in ten (58%) of expats rate the cost of living negatively there — however, this percentage is only low in comparison with other Swiss cities as the global average is 39 percent. A Slovenian expat states that Basel offers plenty of *“options to choose from in every area and the possibility to actually live your life without thinking about every cent on a daily basis”*. Basel is also the leading Swiss city for career opportunities, ranking 13th out of 51, while Zurich (21st) and Geneva (45th) trail behind. In fact, fewer than four in ten expats (38%) are satisfied with their local career opportunities in Geneva, compared to 49 percent globally.

Swiss Cities Offer the Best Quality of Environment, but Not the Best Social Life

Switzerland may not be home to the most affordable cities, but it does offer some of the highest standards with regard to the urban environment and quality of urban living. Basel, Geneva, and Zurich are all ranked among the top 10 for the quality of their urban environment, with 89 to 96 percent of expats being satisfied with this factor. Moreover, Basel and Zurich are the two highest-ranking cities regarding the quality of urban living worldwide. Yet, expats struggle to feel at home in these cities. For this factor, neither Zurich (41st) nor Basel (39th) does especially well. An Austrian expat thinks that *“people are rather closed”* in Zurich, and more than half the expats (53%) struggle to find friends there. Expats are also dissatisfied with their social life: Basel and Zurich rank among the bottom ten for this factor (48th and 45th, respectively), even lower than Geneva in 36th place. An Uruguayan expat states that it is *“hard to find new friends and the offer of leisure options is very limited by quantity and also by hours”* in Geneva. In fact, a below-average share of expats rates the leisure options in Geneva positively (69% vs. 73% globally), while more than eight in ten are satisfied in Basel (83%) and Zurich (82%).

| | Basel | Geneva | Zurich |
|---|-------|--------|--------|
|  Overall City Ranking | 9 | 29 | 23 |
|  Quality of Urban Living Index | 1 | 12 | 2 |
|  Getting Settled Index | 40 | 30 | 48 |
|  Urban Work Life Index | 9 | 19 | 14 |
|  Finance & Housing Index | 22 | 45 | 38 |

Top 5 Cities Make It Easy for Expats to Get Settled and Enjoy a Great Work Life

Manama, Prague, Madrid, Kuala Lumpur, and Amsterdam top the list of the best cities for expats: while Prague lags behind on 35th place for getting settled, the other four cities receive good to excellent ratings in this respect. A South African expat living in Kuala Lumpur likes *“the easy-going temperament and friendliness of the local people”* while an expat from the Philippines appreciates the *“very friendly and helpful locals”* in Manama. The majority of expats rates the general friendliness towards foreign residents

positively in Manama (84%), Amsterdam (83%), Kuala Lumpur (78%), and Madrid (74%), compared to a global average of 67 percent. Prague, however, performs below average here: only about half the expats living there (49%) are satisfied with this factor. Nonetheless, the capital of the Czech Republic is one of the top destinations for expats in 2017, particularly due to its outstanding ratings in terms of work: nearly seven in ten expats (68%) are satisfied with local career opportunities in Prague — 19 percentage points more than the global average.

InterNations Communities in Switzerland

Out of 2.8 million members in 390 cities around the world, there are more than 97,000 InterNations members in Switzerland: about 34,000 of them live in Zurich, about 26,000 in Geneva, and around 10,000 in Basel, making these cities some of the largest expat communities in Switzerland, together with Lausanne, Lugano and Bern.

Learn more about the InterNations Communities in [Zurich](#), [Geneva](#), [Basel](#), and [Switzerland](#) online!

Interested in Talking to Expats in Your City?



Visit an InterNations Official Event and personally meet expats from all over the world who will share their stories with you. Find out [here](#) when and where the next official event in your community will take place.

To receive a personal press invitation including free access to the event and interview opportunities with InterNations members, please contact press@internations.org or +49 (0)89 461 3324 79 and let us know which event you would like to attend.

Read More about the Expat City Ranking 2017



[The Best and Worst Cities](#)



[Quality of Urban Living](#)



[Getting Settled](#)



[Urban Work Life](#)



[Finance & Housing](#)

About the Expat City Ranking 2017

For its annual [Expats 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. In 2017, the fourth year the survey was conducted, respondents were also invited to share their opinions on the city they are currently living in.

Participants were asked to rate more than 25 different aspects of urban 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 13 subcategories, and their mean values were used to draw up four topical indices: Quality of Urban Living, Getting Settled,



Urban Work Life, and Finance & Housing. These were further averaged in order to rank 51 cities worldwide. In 2017, the top 10 cities for expats are Manama, Prague, Madrid, Kuala Lumpur, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Johannesburg, Bangkok, Basel, and Frankfurt am Main.

For a city to be featured in the Expat City Ranking 2017, a sample size of at least 45 survey participants per city was required. In total, the responses used for the city ranking represent 7,985 expats living in 40 countries.

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 5,000 monthly events and activities, expatriates have the opportunity to meet 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 the local job or housing search. 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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