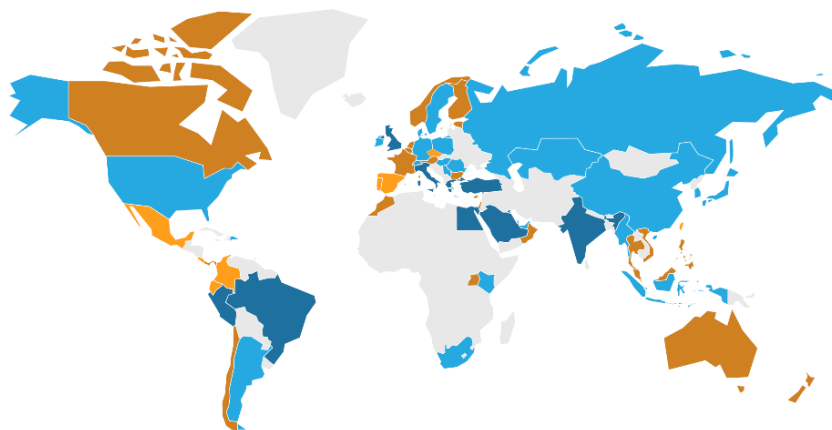


## Expatriate Insider 2018 Survey Reveals: Saudi Arabia Is the Second-Worst Destination for Expats in the World

A poor working life and unfriendly local population make for an unpleasant stay in Saudi Arabia.

- Bahrain leads the list of the best destinations for expats, followed by Taiwan, Ecuador, Mexico, Singapore, Portugal, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Czechia.
- Kuwait (68th) and Saudi Arabia (67th) are rated the worst expat destinations worldwide, together with India, Brazil, Turkey, Egypt, Peru, Italy, Greece, and the United Kingdom.
- While Qatar (from 58th to 38th) has gained in popularity among expats, Oman (from 17th to 31st) and the UAE (from 26th to 40th) are losing ground.
- While Bahrain (12th) ranks fairly high for its digital infrastructure, all other Gulf States lag behind: the restricted access to online services such as social media is an issue throughout the region.

Munich, 6 September 2018 — The Gulf States are home to the best expat destination in the world, but also to some of the worst-rated ones: Bahrain ranks at the very top of the *Expatriate Insider* survey for the second year, thanks to great results for working abroad and the ease of settling in. It is followed — at a considerable distance — by Oman (31st), which has lost 14 ranks since last year (17th). Qatar (38th), which has moved up 20 ranks since 2017 (58th), as well as the UAE (40th), which has dropped 14 positions (26th), rank in the middle of the league table. At the bottom of the list, Saudi Arabia (67th) and Kuwait (68th) keep disappointing expats year after year, as the [Expatriate Insider 2018 survey](#) reveals. With more than 18,000 respondents living and working abroad, it is one of the most extensive expat studies, conducted annually by [InterNations](#), the largest expat community worldwide. Apart from offering an in-depth analysis of life abroad, the survey ranks 68 countries by a variety of factors such as quality of life, working abroad, and settling in. While results across the Gulf States vary strongly, Bahrain is this year's winner, followed by Taiwan, Ecuador, Mexico, Singapore, Portugal, Costa Rica, Spain, Colombia, and Czechia.



### The Best Destinations for Expats in 2018

1 Bahrain	9 Colombia	16 Netherlands	24 Austria	32 Morocco	39 Poland	47 USA	55 China	62 Peru
2 Taiwan	10 Czechia	17 Malaysia	25 Norway	33 Chile	40 UAE	48 Dominican Rep.	56 Hong Kong	63 Egypt
3 Ecuador	11 New Zealand	18 Thailand	26 Uganda	34 France	41 South Korea	49 Kazakhstan	57 Serbia	64 Turkey
4 Mexico	12 Australia	19 Canada	27 Estonia	35 Denmark	42 Japan	50 Indonesia	58 Argentina	65 Brazil
5 Singapore	13 Panama	20 Malta	28 Philippines	36 Germany	43 Ireland	51 Kenya	59 United Kingdom	66 India
6 Portugal	14 Vietnam	21 Israel	29 Belgium	37 Romania	44 Switzerland	52 South Africa	60 Greece	67 Saudi Arabia
7 Costa Rica	15 Luxembourg	22 Finland	30 Cyprus	38 Qatar	45 Hungary	53 Myanmar	61 Italy	68 Kuwait
8 Spain			31 Oman		46 Sweden	54 Russia		

Best Destinations Worst Destinations

Click on the map for a video and more information about the *Expatriate Insider 2018* survey

## Saudi Arabia Reaches a New Low in the Eyes of Expats

Saudi Arabia has performed poorly ever since the *Expatriate Insider* survey was first conducted in 2014, ranking in the bottom 10. However, it reaches a new low in 2018: coming in 67th place out of 68 destinations worldwide, Saudi Arabia does only better than its fellow Gulf State Kuwait. Saudi Arabia receives poor ratings across the board, ranking second to last for quality of life and ease of settling in — again only ahead of Kuwait — and 66th for working abroad, just before Italy and Greece.

LIFE IN THE GCC STATES						
	Bahrain	KSA	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	UAE
Overall Rank*	1	67	68	31	38	40
Quality of Life*	20	67	68	37	42	25
Ease of Settling In*	1	67	68	16	41	26
Working Abroad*	1	66	64	39	35	46
Family Life (out of 50 countries)	7	49	48	42	27	31
Personal Finance*	22	31	50	24	30	59
Cost of Living*	25	39	59	35	62	55

Among the factors contributing to expats' low satisfaction with the local quality of life, the poor digital infrastructure and the lack of leisure options have a huge impact. Over half the expats in Saudi Arabia (56%) are unsatisfied with the available socializing options and leisure activities, which is 37 percentage points more than the global average (19%). A Pakistani expat living in Saudi Arabia thinks that the *"leisure and entertainment opportunities are scarce, especially if you live alone"*. While many people tend to turn to the internet in the absence of suitable socializing options and leisure activities, this does not seem to be possible for expats in Saudi Arabia. Over four in ten (46%) are unhappy with the restricted access to online services such as social media, which is 36 percentage points more than the global average (10%). *"There is a lack of freedom in all respects,"* an expat from Sweden says. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why 40 percent of expats are not satisfied with their life in Saudi Arabia, compared to just 13 percent of expats globally.

### Personal Life and Working Life Is Tough in Saudi Arabia

Expats in Saudi Arabia also find it hard to settle in, and nearly half of them (47%) do not feel at home in the local culture, compared to a global average of 24 percent. What is more, they do not even feel welcome in the country as 40 percent of expats describe the attitude of the local population towards foreign residents as unfriendly, which is 21 percentage points higher than the global average (19%).

Working life in Saudi Arabia cannot make up for these negative aspects: the country ranks last worldwide for overall job satisfaction. In fact, 35 percent of expats are not happy with their job in general, compared to 18 percent of expats globally. A US American expat in Saudi Arabia notes that *"the working environment is poorly run."* The Gulf State ranks second to last for work-life balance, only ahead of neighboring Kuwait, which does not make expat life in Saudi Arabia any more bearable: 37 percent are unhappy with their work-life balance, which is 17 percentage points more than the global average (20%).

However, at least it seems like expat life in Saudi Arabia pays off: three in five expats (60%) state that their disposable household income is more than enough to cover everything they need in daily life (vs. 51% globally). Close to one in five expats (19%) even think that it is *a lot more than enough*, compared to eleven percent globally. Thanks to this result, the country ranks 31st out of 68 countries for personal finance, which is its best rating.

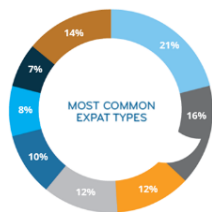
### Top 3 Countries for Expats Are Great for Working Abroad and Easy to Settle In

2017's surprise winner **Bahrain** defends its first place, thanks to excellent results for working abroad and ease of settling in (1st for both). Seven in ten expats in Bahrain (70%) are happy with their career prospects (vs. 55% globally), and 81 percent find it easy to settle down in this country (vs. 59% globally). *"I do not feel like an expat in Bahrain,"* says an Indian respondent. *"I feel at home here"*. More than three-quarters of the expats living in runner-up **Taiwan** (76%) are satisfied with their job security (vs. 59% globally), with the destination ranking first in the world for this factor. Taiwan also offers the world's highest quality of life, and 77 percent of expats feel at home there (vs. 64% globally). Coming in third place, **Ecuador** is one the biggest winners of the *Expats Insider 2018* survey, moving up 22 ranks since 2017 (25th out of 65). While less than half the expats in Ecuador (46%) were satisfied with their career prospects in 2017, 69 percent are happy now. Moreover, 76 percent find it easy to settle down in this Latin American country (vs. 59% globally).

### Bottom 3 Countries for Expats Rank Low for Quality of Life

India (66th), Saudi Arabia (67th), and Kuwait (68th) do not only rank at the bottom of the overall league table, but they are also among the worst destinations in terms quality of life. Expats in **India** are dealing with the world's lowest quality of the environment: more than four in five (82%) are unhappy with this factor (vs. 19% globally). Over two in five (41%) even give it the worst possible rating, which is more than ten times the global average (4%). *"I do not like the quality of the air, all the trash, and the pollution,"* an expat from the USA says. *"It is very dirty all over the country"*. Around half the expats in **Kuwait** (52%) and **Saudi Arabia** (47%) are also unhappy with this factor. Moreover, the two Gulf States rank last and second to last for the ease of settling in. About half the expats in Kuwait (47%) and Saudi Arabia (51%) find it hard to get used to the local culture, compared to 21 percent globally.

### Read More about *Expats Insider* and the InterNations Community



#### The 7 Most Common Expat Types and Why They Move Abroad

Although every expat journey is unique, there are similarities when it comes to their motivation for moving and their lifestyle abroad. Based on the insights of more than 18,000 expats, InterNations presents the first comprehensive expat typology with the 7 most common expat types that roam the world.

Country-specific versions are available in different languages in the download section at the end of the press release.



#### InterNations Country and City Guides

In more than 200 destination guides InterNations offers valuable tips and information about expats' destinations, including helpful advice from other members.

If you would like to access the complete guides, please get in touch via [press@internations.org](mailto:press@internations.org).



#### InterNations Surpasses 3 Million Members

In April 2018 the world's largest expat community reached 3 million members, which equals a growth of 20 percent within the last twelve months. InterNations also expanded its international range to 420 cities around the world with 30 new communities.



### **Ten Moments That Made InterNations**

Growing from a start-up to a global network has been an incredible journey. Here are the stand-out moments that got us to a decade of connecting global minds.

### **About the InterNations *Expat Insider* 2018 Survey**

For its annual [Expat Insider survey](#), InterNations asked more than 18,000 expatriates representing 178 nationalities and living in 187 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 up to 48 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 17 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 68 expatriate destinations around the world. In 2018, the top 10 are Bahrain, Taiwan, Ecuador, Mexico, Singapore, Portugal, Costa Rica, Spain, Colombia, and Czechia.

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 at least 40 respondents raising children abroad was required. In 2018, 68 and 50 countries respectively met these requirements. However, in most countries the sample size exceeded 100 participants.

### **About InterNations**

With 3.2 million members in 420 cities around the world, InterNations ([www.internations.org](http://www.internations.org)) is the largest global community 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 official events and activities per month, 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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