

## Expatriate Insider 2018 Survey Reveals: The United Arab Emirates Are No Longer Attractive for Expats

Expats are less satisfied with working abroad, personal finance, and the quality of life in the UAE.

- 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.



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

## Expats Life in the UAE Worsens Drastically

The United Arab Emirates has dropped in the *Expats Insider 2018* ranking, from 26th out of 65 countries in 2017 to 40th out of 68 countries in 2018. The country has lost ground across all topics featured in the survey, but particularly in terms of working abroad and personal finance.

Working life in the UAE is no longer an attractive pull factor for expats, with the destination coming in 46th place out of 68 countries in 2018 (vs. 38th in 2017). It seems like the lower ratings for the state of the economy (from 12th place to 21st) goes hand in hand with lower career prospects (from 20th to 30th); in fact, just one-fifth of expats (20%) was unhappy with their career options in 2017, compared to 26 percent in 2018. *"It is not easy to find a job,"* says an expat from Germany. Just 34 percent of newly arrived expats find it easy to apply for a job in the UAE, compared to 41 percent globally. In addition to this, expats are unsatisfied with their job security in the UAE (62nd out of 68); close to three in ten (29%) rate this factor negatively, which is eight percentage points more than the global average (21%).

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

Moreover, expats in the UAE also seem to be doing less well financially, with the country ranking 59th out of 68 for personal finance (vs. 46th in 2017). In fact, more than three in five respondents (61%) were satisfied with their financial situation in 2017, compared to 57 percent in 2017. *"The salary is not really enough to sustain the daily living expenses as an expat,"* says an expat from the Philippines. Just 42 percent of expats think that their household income is more than what they need for their daily expenses, which is nine percentage points less than the global average (51%).

## Expats are Satisfied with Their Personal Safety and Leisure Options

The UAE has also lost seven ranks in terms of quality of life since last year (from 18th to 25th); however, expats are still quite satisfied with this aspect of life abroad. More than four in five expats (82%) are completely satisfied with their personal safety, which is 34 percentage points more than the global average (48%). An expat from the Philippines describes the UAE as a *"safe place to live"*. Moreover, close to three-quarters (72%) are happy with the available socializing options and leisure activities in the UAE, compared to 66 percent globally. *"There is always something new to do and somewhere new to go,"* an expat from Argentina says about life in the UAE. Just the digital infrastructure in the UAE leaves expats unsatisfied: 40 percent are unhappy with the restricted access to online services such as social media, compared to 10 percent globally.

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

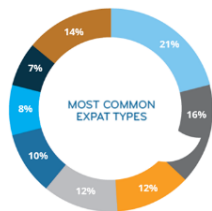
2017's surprise winner **Bahrain** defends its first place, thanks to excellent results for working abroad and ease of settling in (1st for both). Seven in ten expats in Bahrain (70%) are happy with their career prospects (vs. 55% globally), and 81 percent find it easy to settle down in this country (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 of the biggest winners of the *Expat 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 of 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 *Expat 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.

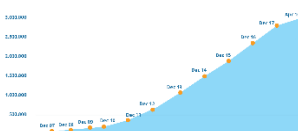
*Country-specific versions are available in different languages in the download section at the end of the press release.*



### 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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