

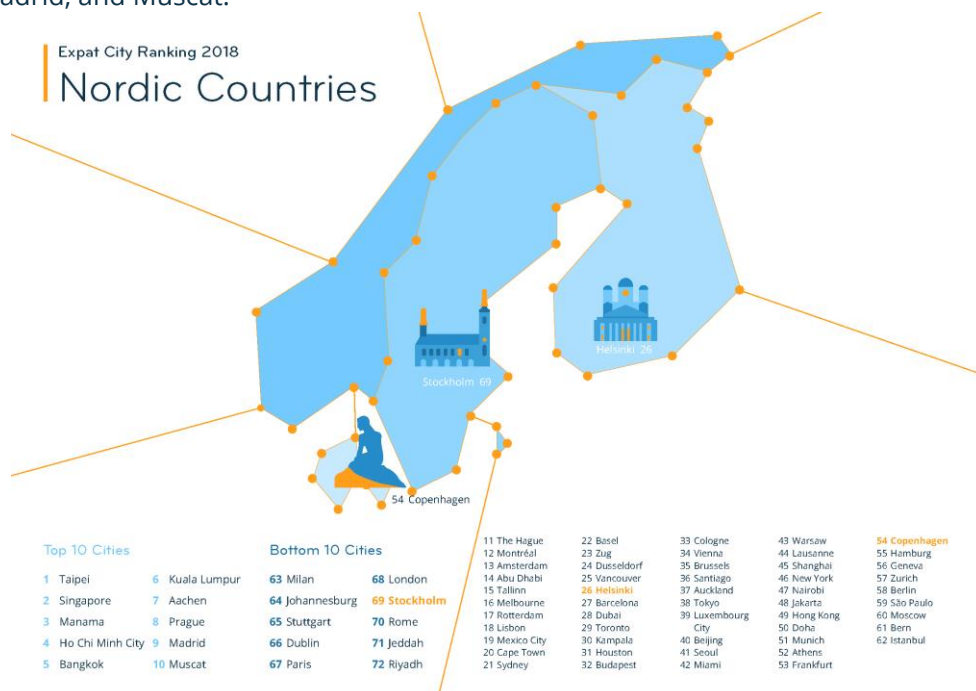
Expatriate City Ranking 2018: Helsinki Ranks Far ahead of Copenhagen and Stockholm among Expats

Distant locals and a difficult housing market cause problems for many expats in the Nordic cities.

- *Helsinki (26th) ranks far ahead of Copenhagen (54th) and Stockholm (69th) in the Expatriate City Ranking 2018 by InterNations. The top 10 cities for expats are Taipei, Singapore, Manama, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Aachen, Prague, Madrid, and Muscat.*
- *Copenhagen and Stockholm rank in the bottom 10 cities for finance & housing, coming in 63rd and 71st place, respectively, out of 72 cities worldwide.*
- *It is hard to get settled as an expat in all the Nordic cities featured in the survey: Helsinki, Copenhagen, and Stockholm rank 46th, 61st, and 69th in this category.*
- *Copenhagen (1st) and Helsinki (10th) make it into the top 10 cities for work-life balance, while Stockholm comes in 24th place.*

Munich, 20 November 2018 — Helsinki comes in 26th place out of 72 cities worldwide in the Expatriate City Ranking 2018, outperforming both Copenhagen (54th) and Stockholm (69th). While expats in all Nordic cities are unhappy with finance & housing and struggle to get settled in, each city also has its benefits: Expats in Helsinki feel safest, Copenhagen offers the best work-life balance, and Stockholm has the best quality of the urban environment.

The so-far unpublished Expatriate City Ranking 2018 is based on this year's [Expatriate Insider survey](#), conducted by [InterNations](#), the largest expat community worldwide. With more than 18,000 respondents living and working abroad, it is one of the most extensive expat studies in the world. Apart from offering an in-depth analysis of expat life in 72 cities, the survey ranks them by a variety of factors such as quality of urban living, getting settled, urban work life, as well as finance & housing. The top 10 cities for expats in 2018 are Taipei, Singapore, Manama, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Aachen, Prague, Madrid, and Muscat.



Helsinki (26th) Is a Safe Haven with a Great Work-life Balance

Helsinki is rated the best city among the Nordic destinations in the Expat City Ranking 2018, coming in 26th place out of 72 cities worldwide. It receives its best rating for the quality of urban living (13th), ahead of Copenhagen (26th) and Stockholm (30th). More than nine in ten expats living in Helsinki (93%) are happy with the quality of the urban environment (vs. 70% globally), with three in five (61%) even giving it the top rating (vs. 32% globally). Helsinki performs even better when it comes to local transportation, as nearly all expats in the city (96%) consider it good, compared to just seven in ten globally (70%). What is more, 95 percent think that Helsinki is peaceful (vs. 78% globally) and 93 percent rate their personal safety positively (vs. 80% globally). *"It is extremely safe here,"* says an expat from the US. *"I never worry about the safety of my family."*

Helsinki may provide a safe environment for expats, but not a welcoming one, ranking 46th out of 72 cities worldwide for getting settled, though still beating Copenhagen (61st) and Stockholm (69th). In fact, just 30 percent of respondents find it easy to make local friends in Helsinki, compared to 45 percent of expats worldwide. *"It is difficult to find good friends,"* says an expat from Russia. *"I often feel like an outsider."* This might be due to the distant locals, as less than half of the expats (48%) find them generally friendly, compared to over three in five globally (62%). While this might influence the respondents' dissatisfaction with their social life in Helsinki (39% negative ratings vs. 26% globally), they at least seem to have plenty of leisure options: four in five (80%) rate them favorably (vs. 74% globally).

Expats in Helsinki also have the time to make use of the local leisure options as more than seven in ten (71%) say they have a good work-life balance (vs. 61% globally). Overall, 68 percent of respondents in Helsinki are satisfied with their job — but their remuneration does not seem to be enough. One-third (33%) thinks that their disposable income is not enough to cover all their expenses, compared to 22 percent of expats globally. In fact, half of all the respondents in Helsinki (50%) rate the local cost of living negatively (vs. 37% globally).

Expats in Copenhagen (54th) Earn More Than at Home but Struggle with High Cost of Living

Copenhagen comes in 54th place out of 72 cities worldwide in the Expat City Ranking 2018, landing in both the top 10 for urban work life and the bottom 10 for finance & housing. One Indian comment states that *"the quality of life and the work-life balance are good."* In fact, Copenhagen ranks first worldwide in terms of work-life balance, with more than four in five respondents (84%) being satisfied with this aspect of life abroad (vs. 61% globally). Almost half (47%) even say it could not be any better (vs. 20% globally). The same is true for working hours, with Copenhagen placing second worldwide: it is beaten only by the German city of Aachen. More than four in five expats in the Danish capital (83%) rate their working hours positively, compared to just 62 percent worldwide. An Italian expat particularly enjoys that *"working hours are very short"*. Lastly, Copenhagen boasts the highest job security out of the Nordic cities: 67 percent of expats are happy with this factor, followed by Stockholm (62%) and Helsinki (61%).

Copenhagen is the best Nordic city for income in relation to living expenses — however, it still ranks only 43rd out of 72 cities worldwide for this factor. In fact, more than three in five expats (62%) are unhappy with the local cost of living, compared to a global average of 37 percent. What is more, almost seven in ten (69%) say that housing in Copenhagen is not affordable, compared to just 44 percent worldwide. An Iranian expat mentions that *"it is really hard to find a place to live in Copenhagen and it is very expensive."* In fact, not a single respondent says that it is very easy for expats to find housing in Copenhagen (vs. 18% globally), while more than two in five (41%) consider it extremely hard (vs. 11% globally). Copenhagen ranks 68th worldwide for housing, only ahead of Geneva, Munich, Stockholm,

and Dublin.

Stockholm's (69th) Exceptional Urban Environment Does Not Make Up for Cold Locals

The worst-rated Nordic city in the Expat City Ranking 2018, Stockholm (69th) only beats Rome, Jeddah, and Riyadh out of 72 cities worldwide. Stockholm shows a particularly poor performance for getting settled (69th) and finance & housing (71st), just ahead of Dublin for the latter. In fact, more than four in five expats (81%) say that housing is not affordable in Stockholm, compared to 44 percent globally. Moreover, 79 percent say it is not easy to find housing (vs. 30% globally). One Danish expat shares their *"difficulties in finding affordable housing"*. The majority of expats in Stockholm (65%) also rates the local cost of living negatively (vs. 37% globally).

When it comes to urban work life, respondents in Stockholm are happy with their working hours: seven in ten (70%) rate them positively, compared to 62 percent globally. However, Stockholm is still the worst-rated Nordic city for this factor (15th), ranking behind Copenhagen (2nd) and Finland (5th). While expats are happy with their working hours, they report a lack of socializing and leisure activities to pursue in their free time: more than two in five (41%) rate them negatively, compared to less than one in five globally (19%). In fact, just 32 percent of expats in Stockholm are happy with their social life, compared to 57 percent globally. This might be due to the locals' lack of friendliness — Stockholm ranks 71st for this aspect of life abroad, outperforming only Riyadh. *"The Swedes are not as social as in most other countries,"* an expat from the UK thinks, and a respondent from Macedonia agrees that *"socializing with the locals is quite difficult"*. In fact, just 15 percent think it is easy to make local friends in Stockholm (vs. 45% globally).

When it comes to the quality of urban living, expats are not only dissatisfied with the leisure options but also with the weather in Stockholm: less than one-quarter (24%) rate the local climate and weather positively, compared to more than half the expats globally (55%). On the bright side, Stockholm comes in second place for the quality of its urban environment, losing out only to the Swiss city of Zug. Nearly all expats in Stockholm (96%) rate this factor positively (vs. 70% globally), with 68 percent even saying it is very good (vs. 32% worldwide). One Canadian expat's favorite thing about life in Stockholm is *"the clean environment and landscape"*.

The Best and Worst Cities for Expats

Taipei (1st), Singapore (2nd), and Manama (3rd) top the list of the Expat City Ranking 2018. This is largely due to how easy expats find it to settle in to life in these cities. This might be related to the friendliness of the local population and the personal safety in the cities. In fact, Taipei is rated the world's friendliest city by expats, with 94 percent finding the local residents friendly. *"People here are so friendly and always want to help,"* shares an expat from the Netherlands. The majority of expats in Manama (87%) also agrees that there is a friendly attitude toward foreign residents in the city, compared to 62 percent globally. Personal safety is one of the biggest perks of expat life in Singapore: 88 percent state to feel completely safe in the city (vs. 48% globally). *"It is easy for everyone to enjoy life here without worrying about safety,"* shares an expat from India.

On the other hand, Riyadh (72nd), Jeddah (71st), and Rome (70th) rank at the bottom of the list. While all three cities receive low ratings across the board, they seem to be particularly disappointing in terms of urban work life: close to three in five expats in Rome (58%) are dissatisfied with the local career opportunities (vs. 27% globally). An Albanian expat states that *"career opportunities are non-existent"*. Meanwhile, Jeddah and Riyadh are rated the two worst cities in the world for work-life balance: 34 and 38 percent, respectively, are unsatisfied with this factor (vs. 20% globally).

Read More about the Best and Worst Cities for Expats



Best & Worst
Cities for Expats



Quality of Urban
Living Index



Getting Settled
Index



Urban Work Life
Index



Finance &
Housing Index

About the Expat City Ranking 2018

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. In 2018, the fifth 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 72 cities worldwide. In 2018, the top 10 cities for expats are Taipei, Singapore, Manama, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Aachen, Prague, Madrid, and Muscat.

In total, the responses used for the city ranking represent 11,966 expats living in 55 countries. For a city to be featured in the Expat City Ranking 2018, a sample size of at least 45 survey participants per city was required; 72 cities in 47 different countries made this threshold in 2018.

About InterNations

With 3.3 million members in 420 cities around the world, InterNations (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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