

Expatriate City Ranking 2018: Expats Have Higher Incomes in London than Back Home, but Feel More Welcome in Dublin

Though Dublin and London perform poorly overall, expats are satisfied with their career opportunities in both cities.

- Both Dublin (66th) and London (68th) feature in the bottom 10 of the Expatriate City Ranking 2018. The top 10 cities for expats are Taipei, Singapore, Manama, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Aachen, Prague, Madrid, and Muscat.
- Dublin (72nd) and London (67th) are amongst the worst cities for finance & housing in the world.
- While almost four-fifths of expats (78%) rate the general friendliness of locals in Dublin positively, only about half in London (53%) say the same.
- Dublin (3rd out of 72) and London (9th out of 72) rank in the top 10 for local career opportunities worldwide.

Munich, 20 November 2018 — Placing 66th and 68th, respectively, out of 72 cities worldwide, both Dublin and London perform poorly in the Expatriate City Ranking 2018. The capitals fail to win over expats in terms of affordability and cost of living, but the similarities stop there: expats in London believe that they earn more than in a similar position back home, while those in Dublin find it easy to make new friends, as the so-far unpublished Expatriate City Ranking 2018 reveals. It is based on the [Expatriate Insider 2018 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 these destinations 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.



Expats in Dublin (66th) Have Great Career Prospects but Struggle with the High Cost of Living

Coming in 66th place out of 72 destinations worldwide in the Expat City Ranking 2018, Dublin ranks particularly low for quality of urban living (63rd), local cost of living (68th), as well as finance & housing (72nd). In fact, nine in ten expats living in Dublin (90%) say that local housing is not affordable, compared to 44 percent globally — three in five (60%) even give this factor the worst possible rating (vs. 15% globally). A Portuguese expat explains that *“there are simply not enough houses for everyone and the ones that exist have skyrocketing prices”*. Aside from housing, 70 percent of expats in Dublin are also unhappy with the local cost of living, compared to 37 percent of expats across all cities featured in the ranking. It is hardly a surprise that just 36 percent say their disposable household income is more than enough to cover their daily expenses, compared to more than half of all expats globally (51%).

The local population in Dublin seems to succeed at making expats feel welcome as almost two-thirds (65%) feel at home in the city (vs. 62% globally and 59% in the London). Expats appreciate the general friendliness of the local residents as 78 percent rate this favorably, compared to just 62 percent globally. A Ukrainian expat singles out the *“very positive and friendly people.”* Perhaps this is why more than half the respondents (51%) find making local friends in Dublin easy, compared to 45 percent globally.

Over seven in ten expats (71%) rate the local career opportunities in Dublin favourably, which is eight percentage points more than the share of expats rating their career prospects positively across all of Ireland (63%). Dublin even ranks third worldwide for this factor, only beaten by Prague and Houston. A Hungarian expat enjoys the *“good economy and job opportunities”* in the Irish capital. Dublin also does quite well for working hours as more than seven in ten (71%) rate this factor positively, compared to just about three in five (62%) globally. Ranking 28th for work-life balance, Dublin beats London (61st out of 72) in this subcategory.

London (68th) Has an Abundance of Leisure Options — But Expats Lack Time and Money to Enjoy Them

London ranks amongst the five worst cities for expats in the world (68th out of 72), only ahead of Stockholm, Rome, Jeddah, and Riyadh. Similar to Dublin, London receives its worst ratings with regard to finance & housing (67th) as well as the local cost of living (70th). London's local cost of living is rated just slightly better than the affordability of housing, while the opposite is true in Dublin. A Spanish expat living in London explains that there is an *“extremely high cost of living compared to local salaries”*. Nearly nine in ten respondents (86%) find housing in London unaffordable, which is almost double the global average (44%) — 45 percent even give this factor the worst possible rating, compared to just 15 percent globally. Moreover, more than three-quarters (77%) rate the local cost of living negatively, compared to less than two in five (37%) globally. Despite the fact that 57 percent of expats think they earn more in London than they would in a similar position back home (vs. 53% globally), only two out of three (67%) say their disposable household income is more enough to cover their daily expenses (vs. 78% globally). A Spanish expat explains that there are *“so many things to do but the price of things is really hard”*.

In fact, over four in five expats living in London (83%) are satisfied with the local leisure options. This is nine percentage points more than the global average (74%) and seven percentage points more than the share of expats who are satisfied with this factor across the entire UK (76%). However, expats do not seem to have many opportunities to enjoy London's leisure activities as just over half (55%) rate

their work-life balance positively, while 61 percent of expats say the same worldwide. Over one in four (27%) are unhappy with their working hours in London, compared to just 19 percent globally. While expats may have to work long hours, London does provide favourable career opportunities (9th worldwide): more than two-thirds of respondents (68%) rate these positively, compared to about half (51%) globally and to 61 percent of expats across the UK who are happy with their career prospects.

Almost half of respondents (46%) say it is not easy to make local friends in London, compared to more than one-third (36%) globally. A French expat mentions that there are *"no real opportunities to make friends with local people"*. What is more, a mere 53 percent of expats in London rate the general friendliness of the local residents positively, compared to almost over six in ten (62%) globally. Perhaps this is why barely half the respondents (53%) are satisfied with their social life in London, versus 57 percent both in Dublin and globally.

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 emphasised 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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