

## The Best and Worst Cities for Expats in Africa

The annual Expat City Ranking reveals how expats rate life in 82 cities around the world, including four cities in Africa.








- *Nairobi (45th), Johannesburg (59th), and Cape Town (65th) rank in the lower half of the Expat City Ranking 2019, and Lagos (79th) even lands in the bottom 10 cities.*
- *Based on the ranking, Taipei, Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, Singapore, Montréal, Lisbon, Barcelona, Zug, The Hague, and Basel are the best cities to move to in 2020.*
- *Kuwait City (82nd), Rome, Milan, Lagos (Nigeria), Paris, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Lima, New York City, and Yangon (73rd) are the world's worst cities.*

Munich, 3 December 2019 — Four African cities are featured in the Expat City Ranking 2019 by [InterNations](#), the world's largest expat community with more than 3.5 million members. They all rank in the lower half of the overall table with Lagos even in the bottom 10 worldwide. When it comes to the Quality of Urban Living and the Urban Work Life Indices, they can all be found among the bottom 20 cities worldwide. The cities perform slightly above average in terms of getting settled, finance and housing, as well as the local cost of living, with two exceptions: Nairobi is the third best city worldwide in the Getting Settled Index, while Lagos rank 67th in the Local Cost of Living Index.

The [Expat City Ranking](#) is based on the annual *Expat Insider* survey by InterNations, which is with more than 20,000 respondents in 2019 one of the most extensive surveys about living and working abroad. In 2019, 82 cities around the globe are analyzed in the survey, offering in-depth information about five areas of expat life: Quality of Urban Living, Getting Settled, Urban Work Life, Finance & Housing, and Local Cost of Living. Taken together, the first four areas make up the Expat City Ranking, which reveals the best and worst cities to move to in 2020.

### Expat City Ranking 2019

## Expat Life in 4 African Cities

	 Quality of Urban Living Index	 Getting Settled Index	 Urban Work Life Index	 Finance & Housing Index	 Local Cost of Living Index	 Happiness Level
<b>Cape Town</b> 65th	69th	21st	76th	35th	25th	61%
<b>Johannesburg</b> 59th	73rd	39th	67th	21st	20th	66%
<b>Lagos</b> 79th	82nd	34th	75th	33rd	67th	60%
 <b>Nairobi</b> 45th	72nd	3rd	65th	28th	39th	83%

The Expat City Ranking 2019 covers 82 cities in total.

## What Expats Think about Life in 4 African Cities

### 45. Nairobi

With a mediocre 45th place in the Expat City Ranking 2019, Nairobi is the best-ranked city out of the ones surveyed in Africa. Respondents highlight how easy it is to get settled in Nairobi, ranking the city third worldwide in the respective index, just behind Kuala Lumpur (1st) and Manama (2nd). In fact, 82% describe the locals as friendly (vs. 64% globally), and 62% find it easy to make friends (vs. 45% globally). The local climate and weather are another highlight of expat life in Nairobi, with 91% of expats rating this factor positively (vs. 59% globally). However, this is the only time that expats are happy in the Quality of Urban Living Index (72th). For example, the city ranks among the bottom 10 worldwide for both local transportation (74th) and personal safety (78th). More than half (53%) rate the local transportation negatively (vs. 19% globally), and 38% are concerned about their personal safety (vs. 9% globally). *"I cannot walk on the street, because it is not safe,"* bemoans a Danish expat. *"I have to drive or be driven everywhere."*

The state of the local economy is also worrisome for 36% of respondents (vs. 15% globally), which might be the reason why 37% are unhappy with their local career prospects (vs. 27% globally). On the upside, expats are happy with their working hours (20th) and their jobs overall (17th). Nairobi also ranks 10th in the world for the ease of finding housing, with 74% of expats finding it easy (vs. 50% globally).

### 59. Johannesburg

On 59th place worldwide, Johannesburg ranks slightly ahead of Cape Town (65th). The Local Cost of Living (20th) and Finance & Housing (21st) Indices are the city's best area, with 50% of expats happy with local costs (vs. 43% globally). Johannesburg even ranks among the top 10 worldwide in the Housing subcategory (9th): more than half the expats (51%) find housing affordable (vs. 36% globally), and 68% say that it is easy to find (vs. 50% globally). The same cannot be said for the Finance subcategory (63rd), though, as only 42% are happy with their financial situation, compared to 57% globally.

The low satisfaction with finances might be connected to the fact that Johannesburg ranks among the bottom 10 worldwide for the state of the local economy (74th). In fact, 42% are unhappy with this factor (vs. 15% globally). While expats' satisfaction with their job security (22% unhappy vs. 21% globally) and the local career opportunities (31% vs. 27% globally) is also slightly below average, they at least enjoy their working hours (10th worldwide). Johannesburg still just ranks a low 42nd for work-life balance, though. This might be connected to the quality of urban living, which is one of the worst in the world (73rd). Expats are unhappy with the local transportation (55% vs. 19% globally) and worry about their personal safety (61% vs. 9% globally) in particular. The only real highlight seems to be the local climate and weather (89% happy vs. vs. 59% globally). A British expat points out *"the weather, housing, and social life"* as her favorite things about this city. In fact, 62% of respondents are happy with their social life in Johannesburg (vs. 55% globally).

### 65. Cape Town

Coming in 65th out of 82 cities, Cape Town ranks slightly behind Johannesburg (59th), the only other South African city featured in the Expat City Ranking 2019. Cape Town receives its best marks in the Getting Settled Index (21st). More than seven in ten expats (72%) state to feel at home in Cape Town (vs. 64% globally), and an expat from the Netherlands points out the *"social life and cultural diversity"* as one of the things she likes most. Most expats seem to agree, as 65% are happy with their social life,

compared to 55% globally. What is more, they are also satisfied with the local leisure options (4th) and the local climate and weather (9th). *"I like the great climate and outdoor life,"* says a British expat and adds that Cape Town offers *"great food, products, restaurants, and entertainment"*.

Despite that, Cape Town still only ranks 69th in the Quality of Urban Living Index, which is mainly due to expats' unhappiness with the local transportation (54% unhappy vs. 19% globally) and their personal safety. Close to half (49%) feel unsafe in Cape Town, which is more than five times the global average (9%). Therefore, Cape Town lands on 81st place worldwide for this factor, only ahead of Johannesburg. Expats are also not satisfied with the work life (76th). The worst subcategories within this index are Job Security (79th) and Job & Career (74th), with 40% rating their career prospects negatively (vs. 27% globally), and 51% being unhappy with the state of the local economy (vs. 15% globally).

## 79. Lagos

Lagos ranks among the worst cities for expats in the world, only better than Milan (80th), Rome (81st), and Kuwait City (82nd). The Nigerian city is even voted the worst in the Quality of Urban Living Index. Aside from the local climate and weather (40th), Lagos can be found among the bottom 10 for each factor of this index. Expats are especially unhappy with the local transportation (75% negative ratings vs. 19% globally), the political stability (55% vs. 17% globally), and their personal safety (38% vs. 9% globally). *"There is no safety,"* says a Russian expat, *"and no proper public transport is available"*. The availability of healthcare is another weak area (60% unhappy vs. 13% globally), and the same is true for the quality of the environment (55% vs. 17% globally). While not ranking last in the world, Lagos is also still one of the worst cities in the Urban Work Life Index (75th). More than half the expats (54%) rate the state of the local economy negatively (vs. 15% globally), and 37% are unhappy with the local career prospects (vs. 27% globally).

On the other hand, Lagos is one of the top 5 cities worldwide for making friends (5th). More than three in five respondents (62%) agree that making friends is easy (vs. 45% globally), and 62% are happy with their social life (vs. 55% globally). It might help that the people in Lagos are generally perceived as friendly (70% vs. 64% globally), and that it is easy to live in the city without speaking the local language (81% happy vs. 47% globally).

## About the Expat City Ranking 2019

The [Expat City Ranking](#) is based on the annual [Expat Insider survey](#) by InterNations. For the survey, more than 20,000 expatriates representing 178 nationalities and living in 187 countries or territories provided information on various aspects of expat life. In addition to their satisfaction with life in their host country, 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 82 cities worldwide. In 2019, the top 10 cities for expats are Taipei, Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, Singapore, Montréal, Lisbon, Barcelona, Zug, The Hague, and Basel. The survey also includes a

Local Cost of Living Index, which does, however, not factor into the overall ranking to avoid overrepresenting financial aspects.

For a city to be featured in the Expat City Ranking 2019, a sample size of at least 50 survey participants per city was required.

### **About InterNations**

With more than 3.5 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.

Find more information about InterNations on our [press page](#), in our [company blog](#), or in our [magazine](#).

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