

Expat Insider 2021 Survey: The Future of Working Abroad

Spanish expats talk about their career abroad and how they envision their future working life.

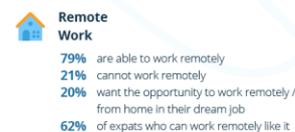
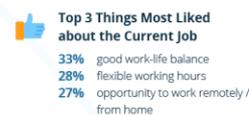
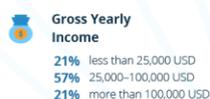
- *Manufacturing & engineering, education, and IT are the most common fields of work for Spanish expats.*
- *Working abroad pays off for Spanish expats: they are highly satisfied with their job and well paid, too.*
- *A good work-life balance is everything for Spanish expats — it is even more important than a good compensation.*

Munich, 14 September 2021 — Why do Spaniards move abroad? According to the *Expat Insider 2021* survey by InterNations, 52% of Spanish expats working abroad name their career as the most important reason for relocating to another country. Globally, just 47% of working expats moved abroad for job-related reasons. An equal share of Spanish expats found a job on their own, were sent by their employer, or were recruited internationally (17% each). However, just 1% moved abroad to start their own business. Aside from work-related reasons, an above-average share of Spaniards working abroad (9%) originally relocated because they were looking for an adventure / a personal challenge (vs. 6% globally).

The key focus of this year's *Expat Insider* survey, conducted by [InterNations](https://www.internations.org), the world's largest expat community with more than 4 million members, is the future of working abroad. Expats all around the world shared what it is really like to work abroad and described their working conditions. They also provided insights into how new working arrangements (e.g., remote work) are changing their working life and what they would like to see in the future.

Spanish Expats

The Future of Working Abroad



* Respondents also had the option to self describe — so the total may not always add up to 100%
** 17% found a job on their own, 17% were sent by their employer, 17% were recruited internationally, 1% to start their own business
*** Note: This includes working expats and expats looking for a job.

The Typical Spanish Expat Working Abroad

The average Spanish expat working abroad is slightly younger than the average worldwide (41.3 years old vs. 43.1 years old globally), as well as slightly more likely to be female (50%) than the global average (46%). Close to half (49%) are men, while 1% of respondents from Spain prefer to self-describe their gender identity.

The share of Spanish expats working full-time (89%) is seven percentage points higher than the global average (82%). Manufacturing & engineering (13%) is the most common field that Spanish expats work in, at nearly double the global average (7%). Another 9% each work in IT or in education.

Highly Educated and Well Paid

Overall, Spaniards working abroad are very highly educated: close to three in five hold a postgraduate / master's degree (57%), which is ten percentage points more than the global average (47%). Another 10% have a PhD (vs. 8% globally), while just 27% cite a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education (vs. 33% globally).

They are not only well educated, but they are also well paid: more than half the Spanish expats working abroad (53%) have a gross yearly household income ranging from 50,000 to 150,000 USD, which is eight percentage points more than the global average (45%). More than one in ten (11%) even make 150,000 USD or more per year, which is on par with the global average (11%), while just 36% make 50,000 USD or less (vs. 44% globally).

Spanish Expats Are Extremely Happy with the Local Career Opportunities...

Nearly four in five Spanish expats (79%) are satisfied with their job in general, which is six percentage points more than the global average (73%). They are also happier than average with their job security (72% vs. 67% globally) and the state of the local economy in their host countries (71% vs. 65% globally). However, the difference is the biggest when it comes to the local career opportunities: close to two-thirds of Spanish expats (64%) rate this aspect positively, while just 49% of expats worldwide feel the same.

This can be easily explained by looking at the most common destinations for Spanish expats working abroad: Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the USA, and Switzerland. For expats, they rank among the top 10 countries for either local career opportunities (UK, USA) or the state of the local economy (Netherlands, Switzerland). A Spanish expat working in Amsterdam mentions the *"career opportunities and economic stability"* as her favorite aspect of life in the Netherlands. Germany, the most common destination for Spaniards working abroad, even makes it into the top 10 for local career opportunities (8th), the state of the local economy (7th), and job security (6th).

...but a Good Work-Life Balance Is Everything for Them

When Spanish expats are asked what they like best about their current job, a good work-life balance is the aspect they mention most frequently (33%). Just as well, since more than three in five Spanish expats (63%) also name a good work-life balance as an important aspect when imagining their dream job — globally just 49% of expats find this relevant for their future career.

In fact, as of now, Spanish expats express just an average level of satisfaction with their work-life balance (69% vs. 68% globally) and even rate their working hours worse than the global average (65% vs. 70% globally).

A good compensation and/or benefits, the second-most frequently cited aspect among Spanish expats, is important to 54% of them — a difference of nine percentage points compared to a good work-life balance. Globally, expats consider a good compensation (54%) more important than a good work-life balance (49%) when imagining their ideal work environment.

Remote Work Is Nice but Not Necessary in the Future

Other aspects Spanish expats enjoy about their current job are flexible working hours (28%) and the opportunity to work remotely / from home (27%). Close to four in five (79%) are able to work remotely: while 59% simply say that they can work remotely (vs. 62% globally), one in five Spanish expats (20%) is able to work remotely but usually prefers *not to* (vs. 16% globally).

COVID-19 has had an impact on the remote work policies for more than half the Spanish expats (53%): 28% say that remote work was newly introduced and is here to stay, and 25% are now able to work remotely more often than before. Only 20% report that their employer's remote work policy has not changed in the long run, which is below the global average (26%).

Overall, 62% of Spanish expats who can work remotely also enjoying doing so, which is just below the global average (65%). The opportunity to work remotely / from home is not that important to them in their ideal work environment, though: only 20% name this aspect when imagining their dream job. Aside from the above-mentioned good work-life balance (63%) and good compensation (54%), they find creative/interesting tasks (29%), flexible working hours (28%), and room for personal development / growth (22%) more important.

Country Ranking: The Importance of New Work in the Local Business Culture

1 USA	20 Greece	39 Brazil
2 UAE	21 Czechia	40 Philippines
3 Finland	22 Poland	41 Indonesia
4 Estonia	23 Switzerland	42 Chile
5 Netherlands	24 Luxembourg	43 Romania
6 Bahrain	25 Malta	44 Thailand
7 Australia	26 Kenya	45 Cyprus
8 Canada	27 Taiwan	46 China
9 New Zealand	28 Portugal	47 France
10 Sweden	29 Hungary	48 Spain
11 Ireland	30 Colombia	49 Italy
12 Norway	31 Russia	50 Kuwait
13 Denmark	32 South Africa	51 India
14 Singapore	33 Mexico	52 Turkey
15 United Kingdom	34 Austria	53 South Korea
16 Malaysia	35 Germany	54 Egypt
17 Oman	36 Vietnam	55 Japan
18 Qatar	37 Hong Kong	
19 Saudi Arabia	38 Belgium	

Spaniards Are Far More Likely to Find Modern Work Concepts Abroad

"Spaniards working abroad have quite a modern view of their working life," says Malte Zeeck, InterNations Founder and Co-CEO. "Above all, they value a good work-life balance, but they also attach great importance to factors such as creative tasks and room for personal development. These aspects are closely related to the concept of New Work, which describes the new way of working in the global and digital age. Factors like autonomy, freedom, creativity, personal development, and self-fulfillment are especially important."

Spanish expats are far more likely to find such modern approaches to work abroad than at home. When it comes to expats comparing the importance of New Work in the local business culture, Spain ranks 48th out of 55 countries worldwide. All top 5 destinations that Spanish expats frequently work in perform better than that: The USA (1st) and the Netherlands (5th) even land among the top 10, followed by the UK (15th), Switzerland (23rd), and Germany (35th).

In fact, 55% of Spanish expats working abroad say that New Work plays a more important role in the business culture of their host country than in Spain. On a global scale, just 49% of expats say the same about their host country compared to their home country. And while 74% of expats in the USA, for example, find that New Work is important in the local business culture, just 49% of expats in Spain agree with this statement. This is nine percentage points below the global average (58%).

About the Future of Working Abroad Report

This report is based on data from the *Expat Insider 2021* survey by InterNations. In total, 12,420 expats participated; the general *Expat Insider* report and an overall country ranking were published in May 2021. However, the report "The Future of Working Abroad" uses mainly data sets from expats currently doing any kind of paid work: 8,313 survey respondents — living in 175 destinations and representing 166 nationalities — match this definition of working expats.

In the *Expat Insider 2021* questionnaire, all respondents, regardless of employment status, were asked to provide information about themselves and to rate various aspects of life abroad on a scale of one to seven. The rating process emphasized their personal satisfaction with these factors; the average ratings of six such factors were bundled into three subcategories, and their mean values were used to draw up a topical index for working abroad. The Working Abroad Index is not only part of the overall country ranking, but it also gets referenced in this report. In 2021, the top 5 destinations for working abroad — out of 59 countries in this index — are Taiwan, New Zealand, Czechia, China, and Denmark.

Moreover, working expats answered some additional questions to describe their working life. Some of these questions explore how COVID-19 has been transforming the workplace and how expats envision their ideal work environment. Lastly, the survey included two more rating questions for working expats. They cover the topic of New Work, the new way of working in the global and digital age. Participants were asked to rate how important this concept is in the business culture of their host country and how the latter compares to their home country. The country averages from the first question were used to compare the importance of New Work in various expat destinations.

For a country to be featured in the New Work ranking, a sample size of at least 50 respondents was necessary. This requirement was met by 55 destinations. New Work is extremely important in the business culture of the USA, the UAE, Finland, Estonia, and the Netherlands.

About InterNations

With around 4.2 million members in 420 cities around the world, [InterNations](#) is the largest global community and a source of information for people who live and work abroad. InterNations offers global and local networking and socializing, both online and face to face. At around 6,000 events and activities per month, expatriates have the opportunity to meet other global minds. Online services include discussion forums and helpful articles with personal expat experiences, tips, and information about life abroad. Membership is by approval only to ensure we remain a community of trust. InterNations is part of the NEW WORK SE, a group of brands that offer products and services for a better working life.

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

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