

How Expats Rate Their Life in 4 Dutch Cities












The Expat City Ranking 2021 reveals the best and worst cities for expats around the world, including The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Maastricht.

- Out of 57 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2021, The Hague ranks 19th, followed by Rotterdam (28th), Amsterdam (31st), and Maastricht (50th).
- Kuala Lumpur (1st), Málaga, Dubai, Sydney, Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City, Prague, Mexico City, Basel, and Madrid (10th) are the top 10 cities for expats to live in 2021.
- On the other hand, expats consider Rome (57th), Milan, Johannesburg, Istanbul, Tokyo, Cairo, Paris, Maastricht, Moscow, and New York (48th) the world's worst cities to live in.

Munich, 1 December 2021 — Four Dutch cities are featured in the Expat City Ranking 2021 by [InterNations](#), the world's largest expat community with over 4 million members: The Hague ranks 19th, followed by Rotterdam (28th), Amsterdam (31st), and Maastricht (50th). They land among the global top 20 in the Urban Work Life Index, except for Maastricht (41st). What is more, all of them have a mediocre to poor performance in terms of quality of life and the ease of getting settled. However, The Hague seems to be generally more affordable, outperforming the other three cities in the Finance & Housing Index.

Expat City Ranking 2021

Expat Life in 4 Dutch Cities

	 Amsterdam	 Maastricht	 Rotterdam	 The Hague
 Overall Ranking	31st	50th	28th	19th
 Quality of Urban Living	34th	39th	24th	30th
 Getting Settled	30th	42nd	33rd	23rd
 Urban Work Life	9th	41st	17th	14th
 Finance & Housing	44th	41st	34th	27th
 Local Cost of Living	41st	34th	29th	26th
 Happiness Level	82%	68%	74%	79%

The Expat City Ranking 2021 covers 57 cities in total.

The [Expat City Ranking](#) is based on the annual *Expat Insider* survey by InterNations, which is one of the most extensive surveys about living and working abroad, with 12,420 respondents in 2021. This year, 57 cities around the globe are analyzed in the survey, which offers 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. Together, the first four topics make up the Expat City Ranking, which reveals the best and worst cities for expats to live in.

What Expats Think about Life in 4 Dutch Cities

19 | The Hague: The Best Dutch City for Expats

The Hague comes 19th out of 57 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2021, the highest rank among the Dutch cities included in this report. The city places 14th in the **Urban Work Life Index**, narrowly missing out on the top 10 in both the Job & Career (12th) and the Job Security (11th) Subcategories. Expats are happy with the local career opportunities (55% vs. 45% globally), the state of the local economy (84% vs. 62% globally), and their work-life balance (75% vs. 66% globally). *"I like the balance between work and your private life, as well as the flexibility of working hours,"* says a female expat from Italy.

Compared to the other Dutch cities, The Hague seems to be more affordable, placing 26th in the **Local Cost of Living Index** and 27th in the **Finance & Housing Index**. In fact, 71% are happy with their financial situation (vs. 64% globally), and 85% say that their disposable household income is enough or even more than enough to cover their expenses (vs. 77% globally). The Hague ranks 23rd in the **Getting Settled Index**, easily beating Amsterdam (30th), Rotterdam (33rd), and Maastricht (42nd). It even places 5th for the ease of living there without speaking the local language, something that 91% of expats in The Hague agree with (vs. 54% globally).

Lastly, the city lands in a mediocre 30th place in the **Quality of Urban Living Index** but performs very well in the Transportation Subcategory (9th). An Italian expat says that *"the transportation system is excellent — you do not even need a car!"*. However, similar to other Dutch cities, the local climate and weather drag down The Hague's results, leading to a place among the bottom 10 for this factor (51st): 42% rate this factor negatively (vs. 17% globally).

28 | Rotterdam: Great Public Transportation and High Job Security

Rotterdam ranks 28th out of 57 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2021, with rather mixed results in the **Getting Settled Index** (33rd). The majority of expats (84%) finds it easy to live in Rotterdam without speaking the local language (vs. 54% globally). However, 46% find it hard to make new friends (vs. 32% globally), and 38% are unhappy with their social life (vs. 25% globally). *"Everyone speaks English, which makes it easy to adjust,"* says a Belgian expat, while a US American expat shares that she is *"struggling to make new friends and have a healthy social life"*. Therefore, the city ends up in the bottom 10 of the Friends & Socializing Subcategory (51st).

While the results in the **Quality of Urban Living Index** (24th) are also mixed, Rotterdam is the best ranking out of the Dutch cities here. On the one hand, it comes 6th in the Transportation Subcategory since nearly all expats (98%) are happy with the public transportation system (vs. 69% globally). On the other hand, the local climate and weather are particular lowlights for expats in Rotterdam, just like in the other Dutch cities: only 32% of expats are satisfied with this factor, compared to 66% globally.

Lastly, Rotterdam has an average performance in the **Local Cost of Living** (29th) and **Finance & Housing** (34th) **Indices** but gets good results in the **Urban Work Life Index** (17th). The city ranks 9th

in the Job Security Subcategory: 93% of expats are content with the state of the local economy (vs. 62% globally), and 67% are satisfied with their job security (vs. 61% globally).

31 | Amsterdam: A Great Place for Work — but Not for Healthcare

Ranking 31st out of 57 destinations in the overall Expat City Ranking 2021, Amsterdam is the best-rated Dutch city in the **Urban Work Life Index** (9th). Expats are particularly satisfied with their work-life balance (80% vs. 66% globally), their working hours (81% vs. 66% globally), and the local career opportunities (66% vs. 45% globally). An Indian expat highlights the *“healthy work environment”* as one of the things he enjoys most about life abroad in Amsterdam.

The city has a fairly average performance in the **Getting Settled** (30th) and the **Quality of Urban Living** (34th) **Indices**. Regarding the latter, it even ranks among the bottom 10 of the Leisure & Climate Subcategory (50th): while expats are satisfied with the local leisure options (81% vs. 72% globally), they are unhappy with the climate and weather (52% vs. 17% globally). A similar contrast can be found in the Health & Environment Subcategory (40th): expats appreciate the urban environment (88% vs. 71% globally) but rate the quality of medical care negatively (34% vs. 14% globally). A Lithuanian expat living in Amsterdam says: *“The quality of healthcare scares me. Most of the time I prefer to do my health check-ups in my home country instead.”*

Lastly, Amsterdam performs poorly in the **Finance & Housing Index** (44th). It even ranks 50th in the Housing Subcategory: only 11% of expats are satisfied with the affordability of housing options, 31 percentage points less than the global average (42%). Moreover, the city ranks 41st in the **Local Cost of Living Index** since 62% are dissatisfied with the general cost of living in Amsterdam (vs. 34% globally).

50 | Maastricht: The Worst Dutch City for Career-Driven Expats

Ranking the lowest among the Dutch cities included in the report, Maastricht (50th out of 57) ends up in the bottom 10 worldwide. It performs worst in the **Getting Settled Index** (42nd), where it places in the bottom 10 of the Friends & Socializing Subcategory (50th). Expats find it hard to make new friends (45% vs. 32% globally) and are unhappy with their social life (36% vs. 25% globally). *“It is almost impossible to meet and befriend locals. They are not looking to make friends with you as they already have their own groups,”* explains a US American expat. It probably does not help that close to three in ten expats (28%) perceive the locals as generally unfriendly (vs. 16% globally).

In the **Urban Work Life Index**, Maastricht (41st) shows a much poorer performance than Amsterdam (9th), The Hague (14th), and Rotterdam (17th). It even ranks 50th for local career opportunities: 45% of expats are not satisfied with this factor (vs. 33% globally). Exactly one in five (20%) is unhappy with their job in general (vs. 16% globally). The city also ranks 41st in the **Finance & Housing Index**, mainly due to the housing situation: half the expats (50%) say it is hard to find housing (vs. 23% globally), and 57% find it unaffordable (vs. 39% globally).

The results in the **Quality of Urban Living Index** (39th) are not much better. Maastricht ranks among the worst cities worldwide in the Health & Environment Subcategory (49th). In fact, it ends up in the bottom 10 for every healthcare-related factor: availability of healthcare (51st), affordable healthcare (48th), and quality of medical care (54th). Moreover, it does rather poorly in the Leisure & Climate Subcategory (54th): 32% are unhappy with the local leisure options in Maastricht (vs. 14% globally).

About the Expat City Ranking 2021

The [Expat City Ranking](#) is based on the annual *Expat Insider* survey by InterNations. For the survey, InterNations asked 12,420 expats representing 174 nationalities and living in 186 countries or territories to provide information on various aspects of expat life, as well as their gender, age, and nationality. 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, considering both emotional topics and 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 all cities worldwide that had the required number of participants for the minimum sample size. (The survey also includes a Local Cost of Living Index, which does, however, not factor into the overall ranking to avoid overrepresenting financial aspects.) In 2021, the top 10 cities for expats are Kuala Lumpur (1st), Málaga, Dubai, Sydney, Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City, Prague, Mexico City, Basel, and Madrid (10th).

For a city to be featured in the Expat City Ranking 2021, a sample size of at least 50 survey participants per city was required. In total, 57 cities met this requirement.

About InterNations

With more than 4 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.

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