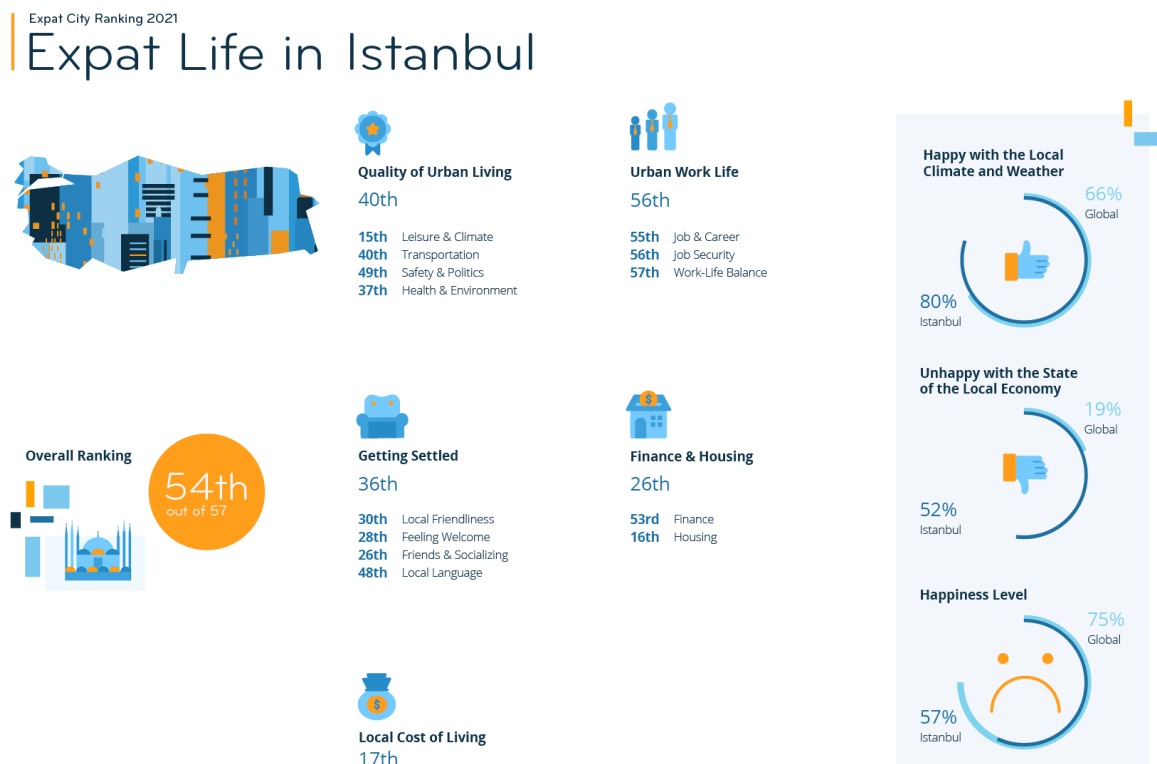


Istanbul: Expats Are Unhappy with Their Working Life

The Expat City Ranking 2021 reveals the best and worst cities for expats around the world, including Istanbul.

- Out of 57 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2021, Istanbul ranks 54th.
- 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 — Istanbul ranks 54th out of 57 in the Expat City Ranking 2021 by [InterNations](#), the world's largest expat community with over 4 million members. Expats are extremely unhappy with their working life, rating the city the second-worst worldwide in this index (56th). What is more, the quality of life (40th) and the ease of getting settled (36th) are also perceived as poor. While the city's above-average rank in the Finance & Housing Index (26th) is mainly due to the housing situation, expats agree that the cost of living is generally good (17th).



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 Istanbul

Istanbul (54th out of 57) lands in the bottom 10 of the Expat City Ranking 2021. It even comes in second to last in the **Urban Work Life Index** (56th), where only Rome performs worse. Istanbul ranks among the bottom 10 of every factor in this index, even placing last worldwide for the state of the local economy (52% unhappy vs. 19% globally), working hours (33% vs. 16% globally), and work-life balance (33% vs. 17% globally). What is more, expats are unhappy with their job security (38% vs. 20% globally) and local career opportunities (44% vs. 33% globally).

Istanbul performs somewhat better in the **Quality of Urban Living Index** (40th), despite particularly poor results for political stability (52nd) and the urban environment (50th). Three in ten expats (30%) rate the latter negatively, compared to 16% globally. When it comes to the **Getting Settled Index** (36th), 51% find it hard to live in Istanbul without speaking the local language (vs. 29% globally). An Italian expat explains that *“if you do not speak the Turkish language, it is difficult to navigate life here”*, while a Spanish expat says that *“the language is very difficult, and no one speaks English”*.

On the bright side, Istanbul has an above-average performance in the **Local Cost of Living Index** (17th). *“The cost of living is low,”* says a British expat. *“Good-quality food does not cost much.”* However, this is not reflected in the Finance Subcategory (53rd), which is part of the **Finance & Housing Index** (26th). More than three in ten each are dissatisfied with their financial situation (32% vs. 19% globally) and feel that their disposable household income is not enough to cover expenses (31% vs. 23% globally). However, housing is considered affordable (50% vs. 42% 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.

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

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