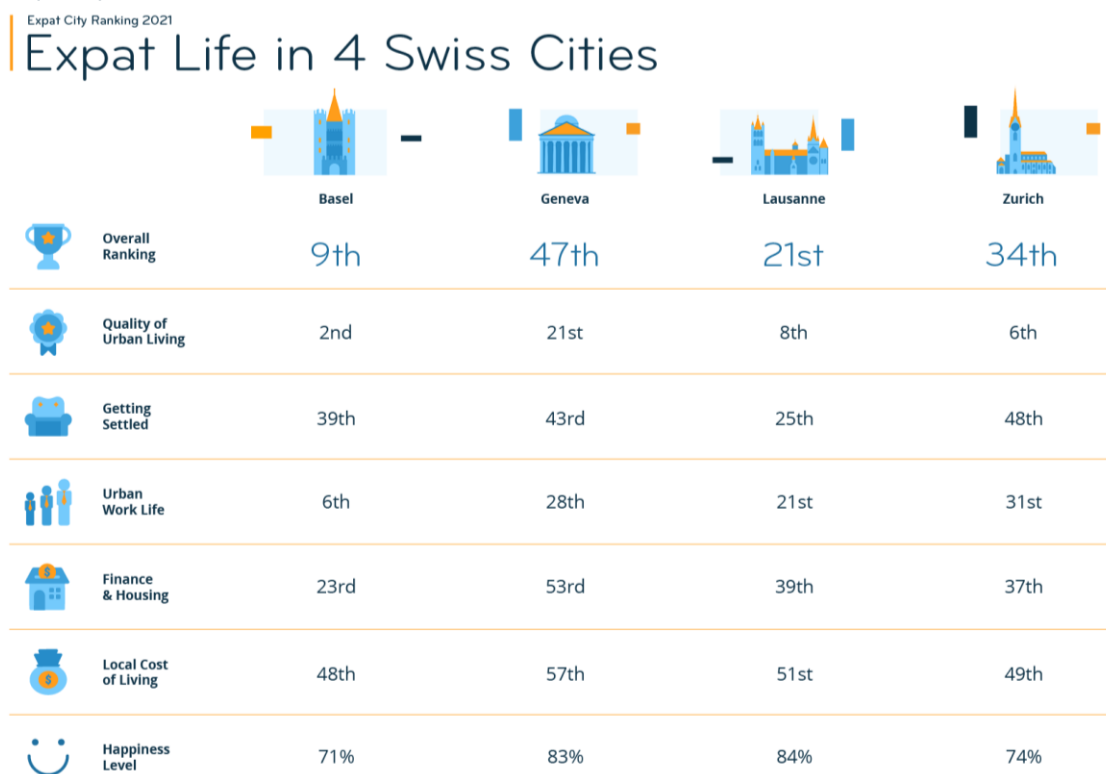


How Expats Rate Their Life in 4 Swiss Cities

The Expat City Ranking 2021 reveals the best and worst cities for expats around the world, including Basel, Geneva, Lausanne, and Zurich.

- Out of 57 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2021, Basel ranks 9th, followed by Lausanne (21st), Zurich (34th), and Geneva (47th).
- 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 Swiss cities are featured in the Expat City Ranking 2021 by [InterNations](#), the world's largest expat community with over 4 million members: Basel ranks 9th out of 57, followed by Lausanne (21st), Zurich (34th), and Geneva (47th). All of them rank among the bottom 10 worldwide for the local cost living but among the top 10 for the local quality of life— except for Geneva, which lands in 21st place. Moreover, Basel stands out for its excellent rank in the Urban Work Life Index (6th), while Geneva is the only Swiss city in the bottom 10 of the Finance & Housing Index (53rd).



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 Swiss Cities

9 | Basel: The Best Working Life for Expats in Switzerland

Making it into the top 10 in the Expat City Ranking 2021, Basel (9th out of 57) places the highest among the Swiss cities in the report. It even ranks 2nd in the **Quality of Urban Living Index**, including a 1st place in the Transportation Subcategory and a 3rd rank in the Safety & Politics Subcategory. All expats in Basel (100%) are satisfied with the public transportation system (vs. 69% globally) — 85% *very much* so (vs. 37% globally). An Australian expat notes: *"The public transportation system is excellent — there is no need to own a car."* Nearly all expats (97%) also feel safe in Basel (vs. 84% globally), and 90% are happy with the political stability (vs. 64% globally).

The city also performs very well in the **Urban Work Life Index** (6th), particularly for the state of the local economy (1st) and the working hours (8th). No expat (0%) rates the state of Basel's local economy negatively (vs. 19% globally), and 75% are happy with their working hours (vs. 66% globally).

Coming 23rd in the **Finance & Housing Index**, Basel ranks ahead of Zurich (37th), Lausanne (39th), and Geneva (53rd). It even places 5th in the Finance Subcategory. More than four in five expats (84%) find their disposable household income enough or more than enough to cover their expenses (vs. 77% globally), and 77% are satisfied with their financial situation (vs. 64% globally). Nevertheless, the city ranks 48th in the **Local Cost of Living Index**: 69% of expats in Basel are dissatisfied with the cost of living, more than double the global average (34%).

The **Getting Settled Index** (39th) is another of Basel's weak points. Expats especially struggle with getting used to the local culture: more than one in four respondents (26%) state that they find this difficult (vs. 18% globally).

21 | Lausanne: Great Urban Environment but Insanely Expensive

Out of 57 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2021, Lausanne comes in 21st place. It ranks 8th in the **Quality of Urban Living Index**, performing best for political stability (7th) and the urban environment (6th). In fact, 90% of expats are satisfied with the former (vs. 64% globally), and 91% are happy with the latter (vs. 71% globally). *"It is stunningly beautiful and topographically diverse, and every season is interesting in a different way,"* says a US American expat. However, the city only lands in 31st place in the Health & Environment Subcategory. This is mainly due to the affordability of healthcare (54th), which 43% of expats rate negatively (vs. 21% globally).

With an above-average result in the **Urban Work Life Index** (21st), Lausanne scores especially high for the state of its local economy (8th): 88% are satisfied with this factor (vs. 62% globally). Interestingly, it seems to be much easier for expats to get settled in Lausanne than in other Swiss cities: Lausanne ranks 25th in the **Getting Settled Index**, followed by Basel (39th), Geneva (43rd), and Zurich (48th). For example, 47% find it easy to make friends in Lausanne — slightly less than the global average (48%) but a better result than in Basel (42%), Geneva (37%), and Zurich (25%).

Lausanne does a lot worse in the **Local Cost of Living Index** (51st): two-thirds of expats (67%) are dissatisfied with this aspect (vs. 34% globally). An Italian expat shares: *"The food at supermarkets, restaurants, and cafés is insanely expensive."* Still, 72% of expats are happy with their financial situation (vs. 64% globally). But this does not save the city from the bottom 10 in the **Finance & Housing Index** (53rd): while it ranks 26th in the Finance Subcategory, it comes 55th in the Housing Subcategory.

34 | Zurich: Beautiful but Not a Very Friendly Place for Expats

Zurich (34th out of 57) has rather mixed results in the Expat City Ranking 2021. It comes 48th in the **Getting Settled Index**, the lowest ranking out of the four Swiss cities in the report. It ends up in the bottom 10 in the Local Friendliness (51st), Feeling Welcome (51st), and Friends & Socializing (55th) Subcategories. Just 25% of expats in Zurich find it easy to make new friends (vs. 48% globally), while 37% are unhappy with their social life (vs. 25% globally). They describe the locals as unfriendly towards foreign residents (39% vs. 18% globally) and find it hard to get used to the local culture (27% vs. 18% globally).

Like all Swiss cities, Zurich ranks among the bottom 10 in the **Local Cost of Living Index** (49th): 69% of expats rate this aspect negatively (vs. 34% globally). Still, 68% are happy with their financial situation (vs. 64% globally), and 85% say that their disposable household income is enough or more than enough to cover expenses (vs. 77% globally). However, with housing being unaffordable (58% vs. 39% globally) and hard to find (45% vs. 23% globally), Zurich only ranks 37th in the **Finance & Housing Index**.

The city performs best in the **Quality of Urban Living Index** (6th), ranking 5th in both the Safety & Politics and the Transportation Subcategories. The majority of expats is satisfied with the public transportation system (96% vs. 69% globally), political stability (89% vs. 64% globally), and personal safety (94% vs. 84% globally). *"It is very safe for a lone woman,"* notes a female expat from Finland. Another 86% are happy with the urban environment (vs. 71% globally). A Cuban expat says that *"the proximity to forests, as well as the lack of billboards and highways within the city"* are some of the aspects he likes best about Zurich.

47 | Geneva: A High Price for a Comparably Low Quality of Life

Narrowly avoiding the bottom 10, Geneva comes 47th out of 57 in the Expat City Ranking 2021. It has the worst results among the Swiss cities included in the report and is the only one that does not rank in the global top 10 of the **Quality of Urban Living Index** (21st). Similar to the other Swiss cities, Geneva ranks among the top 10 for political stability (1st) and in the bottom 10 for the affordability of healthcare (56th). However, it lags behind for all other factors in this index, with expats particularly unsatisfied with the local leisure options (23% vs. 14% globally).

Interestingly, the comparably low quality of life does not make Geneva any easier to afford: on the contrary, it is the worst-ranking city worldwide in the **Local Cost of Living Index** (57th) and by far the worst-rated Swiss city in the **Finance & Housing Index** (53rd). While Geneva comes 26th in the Finance Subcategory, it ranks 55th in the Housing Subcategory, only ahead of Dublin (56th) and Munich (57th). Expats find housing in Geneva unaffordable (87% vs. 39% globally) and hard to find (63% vs. 23% globally).

Geneva has a fairly average performance in the **Urban Work Life Index** (28th) — actually, 79% are happy with their job in general (vs. 68% globally) — but receives worse results in the **Getting Settled Index** (43rd). It ends up in the bottom 10 of the Feeling Welcome (52nd), Local Friendliness (50th), and Friends & Socializing (48th) Subcategories. *"It is certainly not easy to integrate into the local culture and community,"* says a Malaysian expat. In fact, 35% find the locals generally unfriendly (vs. 16% globally). Maybe this is also why they find it hard to get used to the local culture (32% vs. 18% globally) and do not feel at home (33% vs. 19% 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](#).

Press Contact

Stephanie Anko-Hubik
Media Spokesperson

InterNations GmbH
Schwanthalerstrasse 39
80336 Munich, Germany

Email: press@internations.org
Homepage: <https://www.internations.org/press>