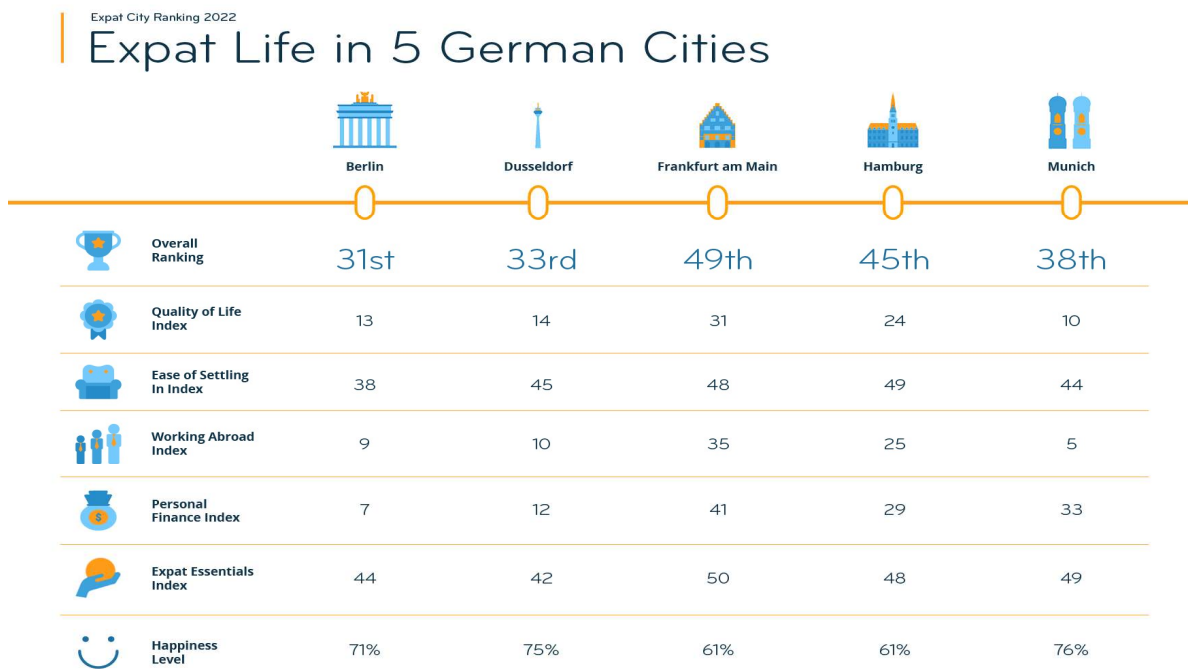


German Cities Offer Highs & Lows for Expats but Overall, They Are Average at Best

The Expat City Ranking 2022 reveals the best and worst cities for expats around the world, including Berlin, Dusseldorf, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Munich.

- *Mixed results for Germany: out of 50 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2022, Berlin ranks 31st, followed by Dusseldorf (33rd), Munich (38th), Hamburg (45th), and Frankfurt (48th).*
- *In 2022, Valencia (1st), Dubai, Mexico City, Lisbon, Madrid, Bangkok, Basel, Melbourne, Abu Dhabi, and Singapore (10th) are the top 10 cities for expats to live in.*
- *On the other hand, expats consider Johannesburg (50th), Frankfurt, Paris, Istanbul, Hong Kong, Hamburg, Milan, Vancouver, Tokyo, and Rome (41st) the world's worst cities to live in.*

Munich, 29 November 2022 — Expat life in Germany has its ups and downs — that is the general verdict for the five German cities featured in the Expat City Ranking 2022 by InterNations, the world's largest expat community with over 4.5 million members. Berlin ranks 31st out of 50 cities worldwide, followed by Dusseldorf (33rd), Munich (38th), Hamburg (45th), and Frankfurt am Main (48th). What all five cities have in common are clearly below-average rankings in the Expat Essentials (42nd to 50th) and the Ease of Settling In (38th to 49th) Indices. While Berlin, Dusseldorf, and Munich at least do well for Quality of Life and Working Abroad, Hamburg and Frankfurt receive poor results across the board, even ranking among the bottom 10 cities worldwide. When it comes to Personal Finance, expats appreciate life in Berlin (7th) and Dusseldorf (12th). Overall, expats in Germany are happiest with their life in Dusseldorf (22nd) — and unhappiest in Frankfurt (46th) and Hamburg (47th).



The Expat City Ranking 2022 covers 50 cities in total.

The [Expat City Ranking](#) is based on the annual *Expat Insider* survey by InterNations. It is one of the most extensive surveys about living and working abroad, with 11,970 respondents in 2022. A total of 50 cities around the globe are featured this year, offering in-depth information about five areas of expat life: Quality of Life, Ease of Settling In, Working Abroad, Personal Finance, and the new Expat Essentials Index, which covers digital life, admin topics, housing, and language.

What Expats Think about Life in 5 German Cities

31 | Berlin: Cheap, Great for Work & a High Quality of Life

Berlin ranks 31st out of 50 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2022 and is the only German city to make it into the top 10 of the **Personal Finance Index** (7th). Expats find life in Germany's capital affordable. Only 17% rate the general cost of living negatively, less than half the global average (35%).

It might help that 93% also view the state of the economy favorably (vs. 64% globally). In fact, Berlin features among the top 10 of the **Working Abroad Index** (9th), the second-best result for Germany after Munich (5th). Seven in ten (70%) appreciate the local job market (vs. 47% globally), and the German capital ranks tenth for Career Prospects. *"Berlin offers nice job opportunities and a good standard of living including good healthcare,"* says an Indian expat.

Working life aside, expats also enjoy a high **Quality of Life** (13th), with Berlin doing second best among the German cities after Munich (10th). Expats love the Leisure Options (10th), for example, the culture and nightlife (92% happy vs. 67% globally). More than nine in ten (91%) also appreciate the political stability (vs. 64% globally). *"I love Berlin's stability, culture, nature, and international environment,"* says a Mexican expat. In fact, 89% are happy with the urban environment, such as green spaces, noise levels, and eco-friendly architecture, compared to 67% globally. Expats also agree that the government supports policies to protect the environment (86% happy vs. 61% globally) and that green goods and services are widely available (91% vs. 64% globally). Berlin even ranks first in the world for the latter factor.

On the downside, Berlin receives a below-average ranking in the **Ease of Settling In Index** (38th), even though it is the only German city that does not land in the bottom 10 worldwide. Nonetheless, only 55% feel at home in Germany's capital (vs. 62% globally), and 31% find the local residents unfriendly (vs. 17% globally).

When it comes to the **Expat Essentials Index** (44th), the situation is even worse. Expats in Berlin struggle with Germany's lack of digitalization, as 32% find it hard to get high-speed internet access at home (vs. 11% globally), and 35% struggle to pay without cash (vs. 8% globally). What is more, close to three in five expats describe housing in Berlin as unaffordable (59% unhappy vs. 43% globally) and hard to find in the first place (58% vs. 27% globally).

33 | Dusseldorf: Where Expats in Germany Are Happiest but Still Feel Unwelcome

Ranking 33rd out of 50 cities in the Expat City Ranking and 2nd among the German cities featured in the survey, Dusseldorf is the place where expats in Germany feel happiest overall (22nd). They are particularly pleased with their working life, ranking Dusseldorf tenth in the **Working Abroad Index**. The city comes in eighth for personal career opportunities (69% happy vs. 58% globally), the best result among the five German expat hubs in the ranking. What is more, 80% consider their jobs to be secure (vs. 64% globally), and 70% are satisfied with their jobs in general (vs. 64% globally).

In terms of **Personal Finance** (12th), Dusseldorf has the second-best performance among the five German cities, topped only by Berlin (7th). More than three in four respondents (78%) are satisfied with their financial situation (vs. 60% globally). Dusseldorf is also the only German city among the top 10 where expats find their household income is enough to lead a comfortable life (8th). *"It is easy to find a job in my field and work on my career without having financial problems,"* says a Lithuanian expat.

Expats in Dusseldorf also enjoy a high **Quality of Life** (14th) with exceptional ratings in the Health & Well-Being Subcategory (5th). The city ranks first worldwide for the affordability of healthcare and third for its quality: close to nine in ten (88%) appreciate how affordable medical care is (vs. 61% globally). Besides that, the large majority of expats in Dusseldorf is happy with their travel opportunities (98% vs. 82% globally), their opportunities for recreational sports (93% vs. 75% globally), and their personal safety (96% vs. 81% globally).

However, 25% of expats do not feel welcome in Dusseldorf (vs. 16% globally), and 42% find it difficult to get used to the local culture (vs. 19% globally). This places the city among the bottom 10 in the **Ease of Settling In Index** (45th), and it even comes last in the Culture & Welcome Subcategory (50th). *"People here can be obsessed with rules and scold others who do not adhere to them. They do not socialize much, and they are not open to new friendships,"* says an Italian expat. It is no surprise then that expats find it hard to make local friends (59% unhappy vs. 37% globally) and are unhappy with their social life (38% vs. 26% globally).

Although it performs best out of the German cities in the ranking, Dusseldorf is still among the bottom 10 in the **Expats Essentials Index** (42nd). Expats struggle the most with Language and Digital Life (43rd for both). For example, they find it hard to pay without cash (27% unhappy vs. 8% globally), and 34% are not satisfied with the availability of administrative/government services online (vs. 21% globally). Another 55% find it difficult to deal with local bureaucracy (vs. 39% globally).

38 | Munich: Among the Top 10 Worldwide for Work & Quality of Life

Munich ranks 38th out of 50 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2022 and 5th in the **Working Abroad Index**. In the latter, it performs best among the five German cities featured in the survey. Munich ranks first for job security (81% happy vs. 59% globally) and third for its local job market (76% vs. 47% globally). Out of all the German cities, Munich offers the best career prospects (6th): close to three-quarters (73%) say moving to Munich has improved their careers (vs. 60% globally), and 95% rate the state of the local economy positively (vs. 64% globally). One in four expats in Munich (25%) earns 75,000–100,000 USD per year (vs. 11% globally), and 66% feel paid fairly for their work (vs. 62% globally). Munich also does best among the five cities in the Work & Leisure Subcategory (5th): expats work 40.7 hours full time per week, over two hours fewer than the global average (43.3 hours).

Munich also has the best result in Germany for its **Quality of Life** (10th). Expats appreciate the urban environment (90% happy vs. 67% globally), the natural environment (95% vs. 83% globally), and the high air quality (83% vs. 65% globally). They are also satisfied with the availability of green goods and services (80% happy vs. 64% globally). Munich is also Germany's best-rated city in the Safety & Security Subcategory (6th). More than nine in ten appreciate both the political stability (91% happy vs. 64% globally) and their personal safety (96% vs. 81% globally). They also find it easy and safe to get around Munich by foot and/or bike (95% happy vs. 77% globally), and 92% rate the infrastructure for cars positively (vs. 75% globally). *"I live in a clean, safe city with excellent public transport, historic buildings, large parks and scenic countryside nearby. There is also a lot of art and culture,"* explains a British expat.

The only real lowlight in the Quality of Life Index is the affordability of public transportation (44th). In fact, Munich comes in 41st place for the general cost of living, a significantly worse result than in the other German cities (Frankfurt 35th, Hamburg 26th, Dusseldorf 23rd, Berlin 8th). Still, 51% of expats in Munich find their disposable household income is *more* than enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 45% globally), which might have to do with their above-average incomes. In the end, Munich lands in an average 33rd place for **Personal Finance**.

Similar to the other German cities, Munich does poorly in the **Expat Essentials Index** (49th) and even ranks last worldwide in the Housing Subcategory (50th). Expats really struggle to find an apartment or house in Munich (75% unhappy vs. 27% globally) and to afford it (83% vs. 43% globally). On top of that, 41% find it hard to live in Munich without speaking the local language (vs. 32% globally), and 52% struggle with the local bureaucracy (vs. 39% globally).

Another negative aspect of expat life in Munich is the struggle with settling in and making friends. Close to three in five (59%) say it is difficult to make local friends (vs. 37% globally). Munich also ranks worst out of all German cities in the Local Friendliness Subcategory (47th). Expats find the people in Munich unfriendly in general (30% unhappy vs. 17% globally) and unfriendly towards foreign residents in particular (25% vs. 18% globally). All this is reflected in the city's 44th place in the **Ease of Settling In Index**.

45 | Hamburg: Where Expats Are Unhappiest & Have the Hardest Time Making Friends

Hamburg ranks 45th out of 50 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2022 and 47th for overall happiness, making it the city where expats are least satisfied with their life in Germany. More than one in four (26%) say they are unhappy with their life abroad, which is twice the global average (13%).

This might be due to the lack of a social life: Hamburg holds the next-to-last spot in the **Ease of Settling In Index** (49th), which is the worst result among all German cities. Only expats in Vienna (50th) find it even harder to get settled. Hamburg places last worldwide in the Finding Friends Subcategory (50th). Only 19% find it easy to make local friends, compared to 42% globally. Unsurprisingly, Hamburg also finishes last in terms of expats' satisfaction with their social life (50th), and 39% do not feel at home there (vs. 21% globally). *"It takes very long to be accepted as a 'friend' of any order,"* says an Australian expat.

Together with Munich (49th) and Frankfurt (50th), Hamburg (48th) also ends up in the bottom 3 of the **Expat Essentials Index**. After Tokyo (50th), it ranks second to last in the Language Subcategory (49th). Almost one in two (49%) say it is difficult to live in the North German metropolis without speaking the local language (vs. 32% globally). The Housing Subcategory (42nd) is another lowlight for expats, as 66% have a hard time finding accommodation in Hamburg (vs. 27% globally).

In terms of **Quality of Life** (24th), expats are a bit more satisfied. While the city ranks second to last for climate and weather (49th), it does very well for the availability of green goods and services (3rd). And while 28% are unhappy with the affordability of public transportation (vs. 15% globally), 95% are happy with its availability (vs. 73% globally). Expats also rate the infrastructure for cars positively (8th), and 94% find it easy and safe to get around Hamburg on foot and by bicycle (vs. 77% globally). *"Things tend to work — healthcare, infrastructure, public transportation. I also appreciate the international aspects of my city,"* says a US American expat.

Hamburg ranks mid-field in the **Working Abroad Index** (25th). Expats in Hamburg highly appreciate their job security and the state of the local economy (10th for both). In terms of working hours (9th), Hamburg does even better (74% happy vs. 63% globally). However, 15% do not see a purpose in their work (vs. 9% globally), and 24% do not feel paid fairly (vs. 20% globally). The latter may also be reflected in the city's mediocre result in the **Personal Finance Index** (29th). Just about two-thirds (66%) say that their disposable household income is enough or more than enough to lead a comfortable life in Hamburg, compared to 72% globally.

49 | Frankfurt: Where Expats Struggle Most with Digitalization, Administration & Language

Frankfurt ranks 49th out of 50 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2022, only ahead of Johannesburg (50th). It even comes in last in the **Expat Essentials Index** (50th). All German cities perform poorly in this index, but Frankfurt is the only one to land among the bottom 10 in all four subcategories: Digital Life (47th), Language (46th), Admin Topics (45th), and Housing (43rd). Close to two in five are unhappy with the administrative services available online (39% vs. 21% globally) and the options to pay without cash (37% vs. 8% globally). What is more, housing in Frankfurt is considered too expensive (70% unhappy vs. 43% globally) and too hard to find for expats (61% vs. 27% globally). *"The lack of clear instructions is insane when it comes to admin topics like taxes, TV license fees, or citizenship,"* says a French expat.

High costs seem to be a general issue in Frankfurt. Although 38% of expats work in a senior/specialist position (vs. 29% globally) and 23% earn 75,000–100,000 USD (vs. 11% globally), Frankfurt is the only German city that lands in the bottom 10 of the **Personal Finance Index** (41st). More than half (51%) find the general cost of living too high (vs. 35% globally).

The **Ease of Settling In Index** (48th) is another one of Frankfurt's weakest points. As in all the German cities featured in the ranking, expats have a hard time making local friends in Frankfurt (55% unhappy vs. 37% globally). Only 36% are happy with their social life (vs. 56% globally), and 30% find it difficult to get used to the local culture (vs. 19% globally). More than three in ten (31%) lack a personal support network in Frankfurt, compared to 24% globally.

Frankfurt performs somewhat better, but still below the global average, in the **Working Abroad** (35th) and **Quality of Life** (31st) **Indices**. For example, it is rated second to last for Leisure Options (49th), and 28% say it is difficult to access all the healthcare services they need (vs. 17% globally). While the city ranks well for its infrastructure for cars (10th), it is rated the worst worldwide for the affordability of public transportation (50th). In terms of working abroad, expats in Frankfurt lack personal career opportunities (44th) and are unsatisfied with their work-life balance (41st). The city also ranks among the worst worldwide in the Work Culture & Satisfaction Subcategory (47th). Expats agree that the local business culture does not encourage creativity (46% unhappy vs. 26% globally) or independent work and/or flat hierarchies (41% vs. 28% globally).

Not surprisingly, overall job satisfaction in Frankfurt is low (48th): 23% rate it negatively (vs. 16% globally). Even worse, expats in Frankfurt are among the unhappiest in general (46th). Only 61% are happy with their life abroad (vs. 71% globally).

You can find out more about the 50 cities featured in the Expat City Ranking in the full report as well as in the press release about the best and worst destinations worldwide (both available under "Downloads" in the email).

About the Expat City Ranking 2022

The [Expat City Ranking](#) is based on the annual *Expat Insider* survey by InterNations. For the survey, InterNations asked 11,970 expats representing 177 nationalities and living in 181 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 up to 56 different aspects of urban life abroad on a scale of one to seven. The rating process emphasized their personal satisfaction with these aspects, considering both emotional topics and more factual aspects with equal weight. The individual factors were then bundled in various combinations for a total of 16 subcategories, and their mean values were used to draw up five topical indices: Quality of Life, Ease of Settling In, Working Abroad, Personal Finance, and Expat Essentials. These were further averaged — together with the responses to the question “All things considered, how happy are you with your life abroad in general?” — to create the Expat City Ranking. In 2022, the top 10 cities for expats are Valencia (1st), Dubai, Mexico City, Lisbon, Madrid, Bangkok, Basel, Melbourne, Abu Dhabi, and Singapore (10th).

For a city to be featured in the Expat City Ranking 2022, a sample size of at least 50 survey participants per destination was required. In total, 50 cities met this requirement.

About InterNations

With more than 4.5 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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