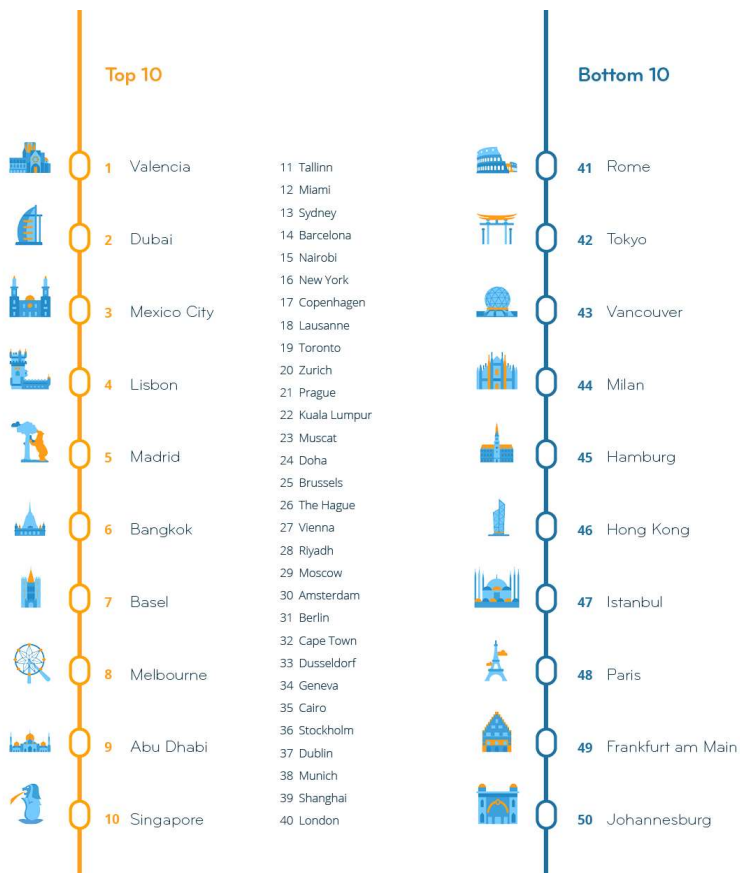


The Expat City Ranking 2022 Reveals the Best & Worst Cities for Expats around the World

- Valencia (1st), Dubai, Mexico City, Lisbon, Madrid, Bangkok, Basel, Melbourne, Abu Dhabi, and Singapore (10th) are the top 10 cities for expat life in 2022.
- On the other hand, expats consider Johannesburg (50th), Frankfurt am Main, Paris, Istanbul, Hong Kong, Hamburg, Milan, Vancouver, Tokyo, and Rome (41st) the world's worst cities to live in.

Munich, 29 November 2022 — **Valencia (1st), Dubai (2nd), and Mexico City (3rd)** are the top 3 destinations in the Expat City Ranking 2022 by [InterNations](https://www.internations.org/), the world's largest expat community with over 4.5 million members. They all do very well in the Ease of Settling In Index but also have their particular highlights: Valencia and Mexico City are great for personal finances, and expats in Valencia and Dubai enjoy a high quality of life. Dubai is a top choice when it comes to working abroad, and expats find it easy to navigate life there. On the other hand, **Johannesburg (50th), Frankfurt am Main (49th), and Paris (48th)** are the worst destinations in 2022. Expats in Johannesburg are particularly disappointed with the low quality of life and their working life, while Frankfurt and Paris do poorly in the Ease of Settling In and Expat Essentials Indices. Additionally, expats in all three cities struggle financially.

The Best & Worst Cities for Expats



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 11,970 respondents in 2022. This year, 50 cities around the globe are analyzed in the survey, which offers in-depth information about five areas of expat life: Quality of Life, Ease of Settling In, Working Abroad, Personal Finance, and Expat Essentials Index, which covers digital life, admin topics, housing, and language.

The Top 10 Cities for Expats in 2022

1 | Valencia: Livable, Friendly & Affordable

Valencia places 1st out of 50 in the Expat City Ranking 2022, as well as 1st in the Quality of Life Index. Expats describe public transportation as affordable (85% happy vs. 70% globally) and love the great opportunities for recreational sports (92% vs. 75% globally). And 92% of expats feel safe in Valencia (vs. 81% globally). When it comes to the Ease of Settling In Index (3rd), expats feel at home there (74% vs. 62% worldwide) and are happy with their social life (72% vs. 56% globally). The city also ranks third in the Personal Finance Index, even placing first for cost of living: 83% of expats rate it positively (vs. 45% globally). While Valencia performs well in the Expat Essentials Index (13th), the Working Abroad Index (41st) is by far its weakest point. It places last for Career Prospects (50th): 50% of expats rate the local job market negatively (vs. 27% globally), and 30% judge their own career opportunities unfavorably (vs. 22% globally).

2 | Dubai: Great for Both Work & Leisure

Dubai comes first worldwide in the Expat Essentials Index and its Admin Topics Subcategory. Expats report that it is easy to deal with the local authorities (66% vs. 40% globally), and 88% are happy with the availability of government services online (vs. 61% globally). However, 18% are unhappy with the access they have to online services (vs. 7% globally). The Ease of Settling In Index (8th) — expats are happy with their social life (68% happy vs. 56% globally) and feel welcome in Dubai (81% vs. 66% globally) — and the Quality of Life Index (6th) are two more highlights. Nearly all expats (95%) are satisfied with the infrastructure for cars (vs. 75% globally), and they rank both the culture and nightlife (5th) and the culinary variety and dining options (3rd) highly. Dubai comes sixth in the Working Abroad Index. Expats are happy with their job (70% happy vs. 64% globally) and report that the local business culture encourages creativity (78% vs. 51% globally).

3 | Mexico City: Friendly & Affordable but Unsafe

Mexico City ranks first worldwide in the Ease of Settling In Index. Expats feel at home (82% happy vs. 62% globally) and welcome (89% vs. 66% globally) there, and 87% describe the local residents as generally friendly (vs. 66% globally). The city performs equally well in the Personal Finance Index (1st). Expats there are the most satisfied with their financial situation (73% happy vs. 60% globally). Despite its average performance in the Working Abroad Index (24th), expats are happy with both their personal career opportunities (71% vs. 58% globally) and their jobs overall (73% vs. 64% globally). In the Expat Essentials Index (30th), Admin Topics (44th) are an issue, but housing is both easy to find (9th) and to afford (6th). Lastly, Mexico City ends up in the bottom 10 of the Quality of Life Index (44th). Expats are especially disappointed with the Environment & Climate (41st) and the Safety & Security (47th) Subcategories. Over one in three (35%) are unhappy with their personal safety (vs. 9% globally).

4 | Lisbon: Amazing Climate & Quality of Life, but Mediocre Work Options

Lisbon is one of the best-rated cities in the Quality of Life Index (5th). Among other things, expats appreciate the climate and weather (98% happy vs. 62% globally), the culture and nightlife (87% vs. 67% globally), and feel safe there (94% vs. 81% globally). Lisbon also ranks fifth in the Ease of Settling In Index — expats find it easy to get used to the local culture (81% vs. 62% globally) and are happy with their social life (69% vs. 59% globally) — and the Personal Finance Index. This is mainly due to expats' high satisfaction with the cost of living (69% happy vs. 45% globally). However, just 71% say that their disposable household income is enough or more than enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 72% globally). This might be related to the fact that 27% do *not* feel paid fairly for their work (vs. 20% globally). Since they also find that moving to Lisbon has *not* improved their career prospects (28% vs. 18% globally), Lisbon only places 36th in the Working Abroad Index overall.

5 | Madrid: Great Leisure Activities & a Welcoming Culture

Madrid performs best in the Quality of Life Index (4th). Expats love the climate and weather (88% happy vs. 62% globally), their travel opportunities (95% vs. 82% globally), and the available culture and nightlife (90% vs. 67% globally). In the Ease of Settling In Index (7th), Madrid also shines, particularly in the Culture & Welcome Subcategory (4th). Expats find it easy to get used to the local culture (77% happy vs. 62% globally) and feel welcome in Madrid (77% vs. 66% globally). The Personal Finance Index (10th) is another highlight, which is mainly due to the cost of living (7th), rated positively by 69% (vs. 45% globally). Madrid comes in an above-average 20th place in the Expat Essentials Index and performs worst in the Working Abroad Index (38th). Among other things, expats do not believe that the local business culture promotes flat hierarchies (36% unhappy vs. 28% globally) and are worried about their job security (27% vs. 20% globally).

6 | Bangkok: Expats Feel at Home despite Safety Concerns

Bangkok ranks second worldwide in the Personal Finance Index. Expats are not only happy with the general cost of living (69% vs. 45% globally), but affordability is also a highlight in the Expat Essentials Index (22nd). Housing is both affordable (70% happy vs. 39% globally) and easy to find (85% vs. 54% globally). On the other hand, expats rank the city 42nd in both the Digital Life and the Admin Topics Subcategories. The Working Abroad Index (39th) is another lowlight, with Bangkok landing among the bottom 10 in the Salary & Job Security (41st), Career Prospects (41st), and Work Culture & Satisfaction (46th) Subcategories. In fact, 35% are unhappy with the local job market (vs. 27% globally). Lastly, Bangkok comes 39th in the Quality of Life Index, ranking among the worst destinations worldwide for Safety & Security (45th) and Environment & Climate (48th). Expats are unhappy with the air quality (67% unhappy vs. 19% globally) and the political stability (36% vs. 15% globally).

7 | Basel: Expats Are Satisfied with Their Finances, Jobs & the Quality of Life

Basel does best in the Personal Finance Index (8th), ranking second worldwide for both expats' satisfaction with their financial situation and them feeling that their disposable household income is enough to lead a comfortable life abroad. The Swiss city also lands in a good 14th place in the Expat Essentials Index, mainly due to its strong performance for Admin Topics (7th) and Digital Life (12th), and it does well in the Quality of Life Index (12th), too. Expats rate the natural environment positively (98% happy vs. 83% globally) and feel safe in Basel (98% vs. 81% globally). In the Working Abroad Index (14th), Basel ranks first in the Salary & Job Security Subcategory. About four in five feel paid fairly for their work (79% vs. 62% globally) and agree that moving there has improved their career prospects (81% vs. 60% globally). However, in the Ease of Settling In Index (42nd), expats describe the local residents as unfriendly (30% vs. 17% globally) and find it hard to make friends (58% vs. 37% globally).

8 | Melbourne: An Easy City to Get Used To

Melbourne performs best in the Working Abroad Index (4th). Expats are happy with their work-life balance (72% happy vs. 62% globally), their career opportunities (68% vs. 58% globally), and feel paid fairly for their work (70% vs. 62% globally). In the Expat Essentials Index (16th), expats find it easy to deal with the local authorities (53% vs. 40% globally), but 30% consider housing difficult to find (vs. 27% globally), while 59% say it is hard to afford (vs. 43% globally). The Personal Finance Index in general is the one where Melbourne does worst (27th). Luckily, the city performs better in the Ease of Settling In Index (17th) — expats consider the local residents generally friendly (72% happy vs. 66% globally) and find it easy to get used to the local culture (74% vs. 62% globally) — and the Quality of Life Index (19th). Expats benefit from the opportunities for recreational sports (86% happy vs. 75% globally), the urban environment (79% vs. 67% globally), and top air quality (83% vs. 65% globally).

9 | Abu Dhabi: Excellent Healthcare & Worry-Free Bureaucracy

Abu Dhabi performs best in the Expat Essentials Index (2nd), placing just behind Dubai. Like in Dubai, expats are especially happy with the Admin Topics Subcategory (4th). Expats find it easy to open a local bank account (74% happy vs. 64% globally) and deal with local bureaucracy (53% vs. 40% globally). In the Working Abroad Index, Abu Dhabi only ranks midfield (27th). While 75% of expats feel that moving has improved their career prospects (vs. 60% globally), 31% feel paid unfairly for their work (vs. 20% globally). This perceived low pay could also be a reason for the city's bottom 10 ranking for expats' satisfaction with their financial situation (43rd). The result: A below-average spot in the Personal Finance Index (34th) overall. However, expats are quite pleased when it comes to the Ease of Settling In Index (12th) and enjoy a great Quality of Life (8th). The city claims first place for both the availability and the quality of medical care in the Health & Well-Being Subcategory (1st).

10 | Singapore: The Place to Be for Easy Administration, Satisfying Finances & Improved Career Prospects

Singapore ranks third in the Expat Essentials Index and is one of the best-rated destinations for Language (1st), Digital Life (3rd), and Admin Topics (9th). Expats find it very easy to get high-speed internet access at home (97% happy vs. 79% globally) and to pay without cash (97% vs. 84% globally). However, housing is considered unaffordable (71% unhappy vs. 43% globally) and the general cost of living too high (56% vs. 35% globally). Still, 75% are satisfied with their financial situation (vs. 60% globally), ranking Singapore 16th in the Personal Finance Index. It might help that 74% feel paid fairly for their work (vs. 62% globally). But since the Work & Leisure (33rd) and Work Culture & Satisfaction (37th) Subcategories leave a lot to be desired, Singapore only ranks 28th in the Working Abroad Index. The city-state performs better in the Quality of Life Index (20th). For example, it is among the top 5 for both the affordability (3rd) and the availability (4th) of public transportation.

The Bottom 10 Cities for Expats in 2022

50 | Johannesburg: The World's Worst Expat Destination

Johannesburg is the worst city for expats overall and in the Quality of Life Index (50th) in particular. Expats are unhappy with the affordability (25% unhappy vs. 15% globally) and the availability (39% vs. 17% globally) of public transportation, and they feel unsafe, too (62% vs. 9% globally). In the Working Abroad Index (49th), they rate the local job market (38% unhappy vs. 27% globally) and their personal career opportunities (29% vs. 22% globally) negatively. Expats are also dissatisfied with their personal finances (41% unhappy vs. 21% globally), and 44% say that their disposable household income is not enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 28% globally). This puts the city in 47th place in the Personal Finance Index. At least housing is affordable (46% happy vs. 39% globally), which is one reason why Johannesburg still lands in 36th place in the Expat Essentials Index. On the other hand, expats rate the availability of government services online negatively (41% unhappy vs. 21% globally).

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

Frankfurt comes last in the Expat Essentials Index (50th) and ranks among the bottom 10 in all its 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), while housing is considered too expensive (70% unhappy vs. 43% globally). Expats are also unhappy with the general cost of living (51% vs. 35% globally), ranking the city 41st in the Personal Finance Index. In the Ease of Settling In Index (48th), they have a hard time making local friends (55% unhappy vs. 37% globally) and find it difficult to get used to the local culture (30% vs. 19% globally). Frankfurt performs somewhat better, but still below average, in the Working Abroad (35th) and Quality of Life (31st) Indices. For example, while the city ranks well for its infrastructure for cars (10th), it is rated the worst worldwide for the affordability of public transportation (50th).

48 | Paris: A Top Destination for Culture & Cuisine — If You Can Afford It

Paris lands in the bottom 5 of the Expat Essentials Index (47th). Expats find it extremely hard to find housing (47th), and 71% say that housing costs are too high (vs. 43% globally). High expenses also impact the Personal Finance Index (48th): 62% consider the general cost of living too high (vs. 35% globally), and 35% are unhappy with their financial situation (vs. 21% globally). Expats do not feel very welcome in Paris (45th), either, which is one of the reasons for its bottom 5 ranking in the Ease of Settling In Index (46th). They consider the Parisians unfriendly towards foreign residents (35% unhappy vs. 18% globally) and find it hard to make local friends (58% vs. 37% globally). On the positive side, Paris ranks midfield for Quality of Life (30th). Expats appreciate, for example, the culinary variety and dining options (86% vs. 77% globally), as well as the culture and nightlife (78% vs. 67% globally). However, 23% worry about their personal safety (vs. 9% globally).

47 | Istanbul: The Worst City for Working Abroad

Istanbul ranks last worldwide in the Working Abroad Index (50th). Expats are unhappy with their working hours (28% unhappy vs. 17% globally) and their work-life balance (30% vs. 19% globally). Another 52% rate the state of the economy negatively (vs. 17% globally), and 26% feel paid unfairly for their work (vs. 20% globally). This is reflected in the Personal Finance Index (40th), with 38% feeling that their disposable household income is *not* enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 28% globally). Istanbul also ranks 40th in the Quality of Life Index, with particularly poor results in the Safety & Security Subcategory (44th).

Expats rate the political stability negatively (28% unhappy vs. 15% globally), and 30% think they cannot openly express themselves and their opinions (vs. 18% globally). Istanbul also lands in the bottom 10 for its opportunities for recreational sports (46th), infrastructure for cars (43rd), urban environment (41st), and the availability of green goods and services (41st).

46 | Hong Kong: Environmental & Work-Life Factors Frustrate Expats

Hong Kong is the city where expats are overall unhappiest with their life abroad (32% unhappy vs. 13% globally). One reason for this could be its low performance in the Quality of Life Index (46th). Expats are unhappy with the local air quality (56% unhappy vs. 19% globally) and feel that the government does not support policies to protect the environment (42% vs. 18% globally). In the Working Abroad Index (43rd), they are especially disappointed with the Work & Leisure (48th), Salary & Job Security (43rd), and Work Culture & Satisfaction (44th) Subcategories. They find that the business culture does not encourage flexibility (28% unhappy vs. 19% globally) or creativity (46% vs. 26% globally). While the city ranks midfield in the Ease of Settling In Index (25th), it receives mixed results in the Expat Essentials Index (35th). Nearly two in three (66%) consider it easy to find housing in Hong Kong (vs. 54% globally), but 89% find it unaffordable (vs. 43% globally).

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

Hamburg ranks 49th in the Ease of Settling In Index and 50th in the Finding Friends Subcategory. Only 19% find it easy to make local friends (vs. 42% globally), and 39% do not feel at home there (vs. 21% globally). Together with Munich (49th) and Frankfurt (50th), Hamburg (48th) ends up in the bottom 3 of the Expat Essentials Index. For example, 66% have a hard time finding accommodation in Hamburg (vs. 27% globally). In the Quality of Life Index (24th), the city does poorly for climate and weather (49th) but performs 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). Hamburg ranks midfield in the Working Abroad Index (25th) since expats appreciate their job security and the state of the local economy (10th for both), as well as their working hours (9th). However, 15% do not see a purpose in their work (vs. 9% globally).

44 | Milan: Troubling Financial Situation, Difficult Working Life

Milan does worst in the Working Abroad Index (48th), ranking among the bottom 5 for both working hours (48th) and work-life balance (46th). Expats also struggle with the lack of personal career opportunities (31% unhappy vs. 22% globally) and feel that they are not paid fairly for their work (29% vs. 20% globally). In the Quality of Life Index (33rd), 54% are unhappy with the city's air quality (vs. 19% globally), but 73% enjoy the climate and weather (vs. 62% globally). And while the infrastructure for cars (42nd) leaves much to be desired, expats appreciate their opportunities to travel (10th). The Personal Finance Index (45th) is another low point: expats are unhappy with their financial situation (33% vs. 21% globally) and feel that their disposable household income is *not* enough to lead a comfortable life in Milan (34% vs. 28% globally). Lastly, in the Expat Essentials Index (41st), 66% find it hard to deal with the local bureaucracy, compared to 39% globally.

43 | Vancouver: Where Housing Is Unaffordable & the Local Residents Are Not So Friendly

Vancouver places last worldwide in the Personal Finance Index (50th). Expats are extremely dissatisfied with the general cost of living (69% unhappy vs. 35% globally) and their financial situation (43% vs. 21% globally). The affordability of housing (49th) is also the worst-rated factor in the Expat Essentials Index. However, thanks to its excellent performance in the Admin Topics (6th), Digital Life (11th), and Language (12th) Subcategories, Vancouver still comes in a good 21st place in this index. In the Working Abroad Index (31st), expats do not feel paid fairly for their work (31% unhappy vs. 20%

globally) and do not see a purpose in it (18% vs. 9% globally). However, they are happy with their work-life balance (73% happy vs. 62% globally) and rate the local job market positively (60% vs. 47% globally). The Environment & Climate Subcategory (5th) in the Quality of Life Index (23rd) is a real highlight: 100% of expats appreciate the natural environment (vs. 83% globally).

42 | Tokyo: Hard to Navigate, but the Quality of Life Is High

In the Expat Essential Index (45th), Tokyo gets its worst results. Expats are unhappy with the availability of government services online (45% unhappy vs. 21% globally). They also find it hard to pay without cash (21% unhappy vs. 8% globally) and to open a bank account (46% vs. 21% globally). While the city performs better in the Working Abroad Index (40th), it ranks 50th in the Work Culture & Satisfaction Subcategory. Expats think that the local business culture does not encourage creativity (64% unhappy vs. 26% globally) or independent work (61% vs. 28% globally). However, Tokyo ranks among the top 10 for job security (10th) and expats seeing a purpose in their work (8th). In the end, it performs best in the Quality of Life Index (16th). The quality of medical care (5th), the culinary variety and dining options (4th), and the availability of public transportation (2nd) are among the best worldwide, and expats find it easy and safe to get around by foot and/or bicycle (3rd).

41 | Rome: Expats Feel at Home despite Low Quality of Life

Rome lands in the bottom 10 of the Working Abroad Index (45th). Expats are unhappy with the local job market (38% unhappy vs. 27% globally), and 24% feel that moving there has *not* improved their career prospects (vs. 18% globally). The city does not fare much better in the Expat Essentials Index (43rd), where it ranks last worldwide in the Admin Topics Subcategory (50th). Half the respondents (50%) are unhappy with the availability of administrative and government services online (vs. 21% globally). In the Quality of Life Index (41st), expats rate the availability of public transportation (38% unhappy vs. 17% globally) and the infrastructure for cars (36% vs. 13% globally) negatively. They are also dissatisfied with both the quality (43rd) and the availability (48th) of healthcare. On the positive side, the city performs well in the Ease of Settling In Index (13th) and ranks midfield in the Personal Finance Index (25th).

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.

Find more information about InterNations on our [press page](#), in our [company blog](#), or in our [magazine](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#) for updates and data insights on expat life.

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