

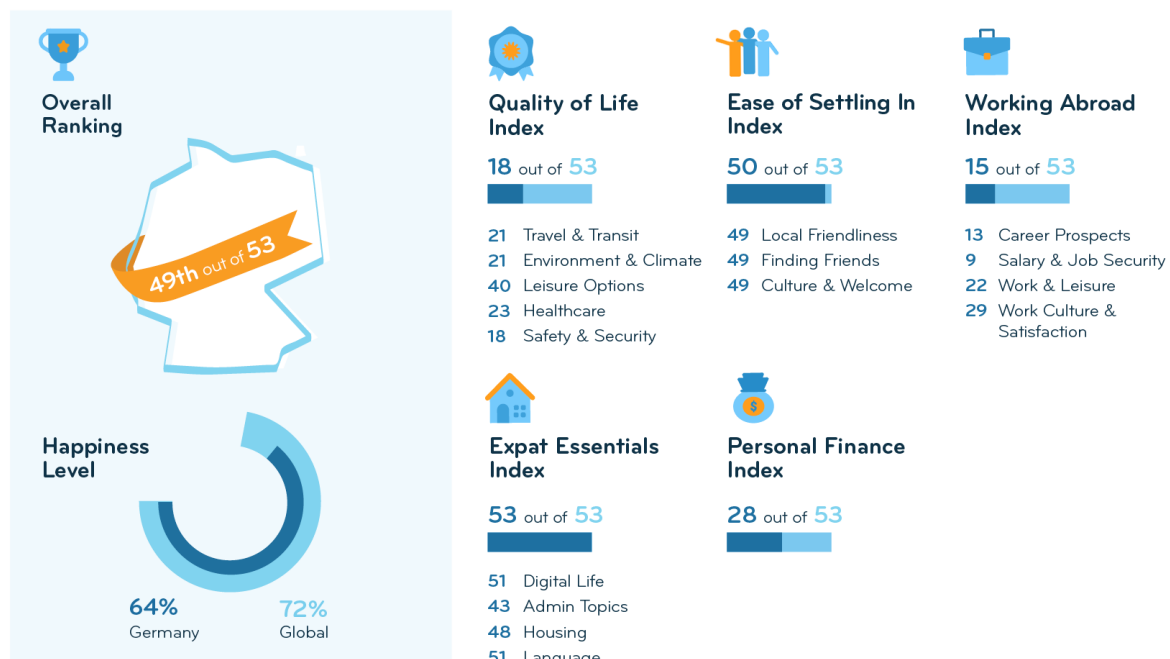
Expats in Germany Are among the Unhappiest & Loneliest Worldwide

The *Expat Insider 2023* survey by InterNations reveals the best and worst destinations for living and working abroad.

- Germany ranks **49th out of 53 countries**: expats have a very hard time making friends, finding housing, and dealing with Germany's lack of a digital infrastructure.
- **Mexico (1st), Spain, Panama, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Costa Rica, the Philippines, Bahrain, and Portugal (10th)** are the best destinations for expats in 2023.
- The worst destinations for expats are **Kuwait (53rd), Norway, Türkiye, South Korea, Germany, South Africa, Italy, Malta, New Zealand, and Japan (44th)**.
- This year also marks the **10th anniversary of the Expat Insider survey**. In the past decade, it has become one of the most cited studies on life abroad.

Munich, 11 July 2023 — [InterNations](https://www.internations.org), the **world's largest expat community** with more than 4.8 million members, has published the latest results of its annual *Expat Insider* survey. This year also marks the survey's 10th anniversary: With more than 12,000 respondents, *Expat Insider* is one of the **most extensive surveys about living and working abroad**. It provides insights into expat life in 53 destinations, offering in-depth information on the respondents' satisfaction with their respective countries in these five indices: **Quality of Life, Ease of Settling In, Working Abroad, Personal Finance, and the Expat Essentials Index**, which covers housing, administration, language, and digital life.

| How Expats Rate Life in Germany



Germany in the *Expat Insider 2023* Survey

Germany comes 49th out of 53 in the *Expat Insider 2023* survey — ranking among the **least attractive expat destinations**. When starting life in Germany, expats face big challenges due to the country's lack of digitalization, the inflexible bureaucracy, and the tense situation in the housing market. On top of that, Germans rank among the **bottom 5 least friendly local populations (50th)**. This might explain why expats are unhappy with their social life and have difficulties making friends. It is therefore hardly surprising that expats in Germany are **among the unhappiest worldwide (50th)**. Overall, **64% of expats are happy with their life in Germany**, compared to 72% globally.

A Less than Welcoming Culture

The **Ease of Settling In Index** (50th) is one of the main pain points for expats in Germany. In fact, the country performs very poorly in all three subcategories of this index: **Local Friendliness** (50th), **Finding Friends** (49th), and **Culture & Welcome** (49th).

Three in ten expats (30%) say that people in Germany are not friendly towards foreign residents (vs. 18% globally), and 55% find it difficult to make local friends (vs. 36% globally). Since 32% also have no personal support network (vs. 24% globally), it does not come as a surprise that about one in three (32%) **do not feel at home in Germany** (vs. 20% globally). Unfortunately, this has been a trend: in the last decade of the *Expat Insider* survey, Germany has **always ranked among the bottom 10 countries** for Finding Friends and the friendliness of the locals.

"I can't meet people here and no one seems to want to actually hang out." – US expat

The Hardest Place to Get Started

Expats in Germany also have the hardest time finding their footing. Germany **ranks last** in the **Expat Essentials Index** (53rd), which covers the topics of Digital Life, Admin Topics, Housing, and Language. The **lacking digital infrastructure** (51st) and the **language barrier** (51st) frustrate expats immensely.

Germany **places last (53rd) for cashless payment options** and **second to last (52nd) for easy access to high-speed internet**. Half of the expats (50%) find it difficult to live in Germany without speaking the local language (vs. 32% globally). This is a problem, as **60% find German difficult to learn** (vs. 38% globally).

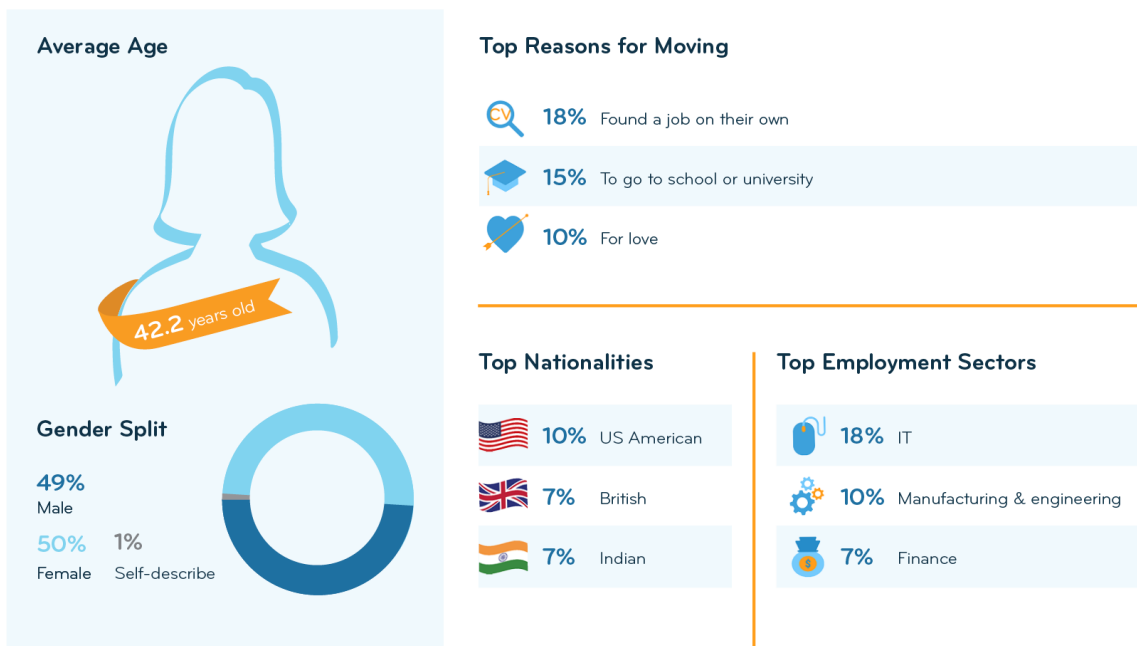
*"It is often impossible to pay by card. Digitalization 'made in Germany' is a joke."
– French expat*

Cumbersome public administration and a tense housing market create further obstacles, as more than half (56%) find it **hard to deal with the local bureaucracy** (vs. 38% globally). On top of that, **58% struggle to find housing**, 27 percentage points more than the global average (31%).

Excellent Job Market & Job Security

On the positive side, Germany does quite well in the **Working Abroad Index** (15th). **Germany's job market (4th) and job security (5th) make it into the top 5 worldwide.** The country only shows a mediocre performance for **Personal Finances** (28th), though. In terms of **Quality of Life** (18th), expats appreciate both the infrastructure for cars and the easy availability of green goods and services (7th for each). A Nigerian expat says: *"I like that I have an opportunity here to grow in my career and to have a sustainable life overall."*

Typical Expats in Germany



The Best and Worst Destinations for Living and Working Abroad in 2023

According to the *Expats Insider 2023* survey results, **Mexico (1st), Spain, Panama**, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Costa Rica, the Philippines, Bahrain, and Portugal (10th) are the best destinations for expats in 2023. The top 5 destinations stand out with good to **great results in the Personal Finance Index**. All top 10 destinations perform better than the global average in the Ease of Settling In Index, but except for Taiwan (9th), none of them manage to rank highly in the Working Abroad Index. The top performers also differ greatly when it comes to the Quality of Life Index: Spain (1st) and Taiwan (2nd) excel here, while the Philippines (48th) ends up among the bottom 10.

The worst destinations for expats are **Kuwait (53rd), Norway, Türkiye**, South Korea, Germany, South Africa, Italy, Malta, New Zealand, and Japan (44th). All bottom 5 countries have average to **very poor rankings in the Ease of Settling In Index**. The Working Abroad Index, on the other hand, reveals a wide range of results among the bottom 5 destinations: Germany and Norway perform above average, while Türkiye, Kuwait, and South Korea show very poor results.

You can find out more about the best and worst destinations for expats in 2023 in the respective press release (available under “Downloads” in the email).

About the InterNations *Expat Insider* 2023 Survey

InterNations has been conducting its annual [Expat Insider](#) survey since 2014. The tenth edition of one of the world’s largest expat surveys is based on data from 12,065 expats representing 171 nationalities and living in 172 countries or territories. They provided information on various aspects of expat life, as well as their gender, age, and nationality. Participants were asked to rate up to 56 different aspects of 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 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 indices were further averaged together with expats’ general happiness with their life abroad in order to rank 53 expat destinations around the world.

To be featured in the indices and consequently in the overall ranking, a sample size of at least 50 survey participants per destination was necessary.

About InterNations

With more than 4.8 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 4,000 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](#), in our [magazine](#), or on our [LinkedIn page](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#) for updates and data insights on expat life.

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