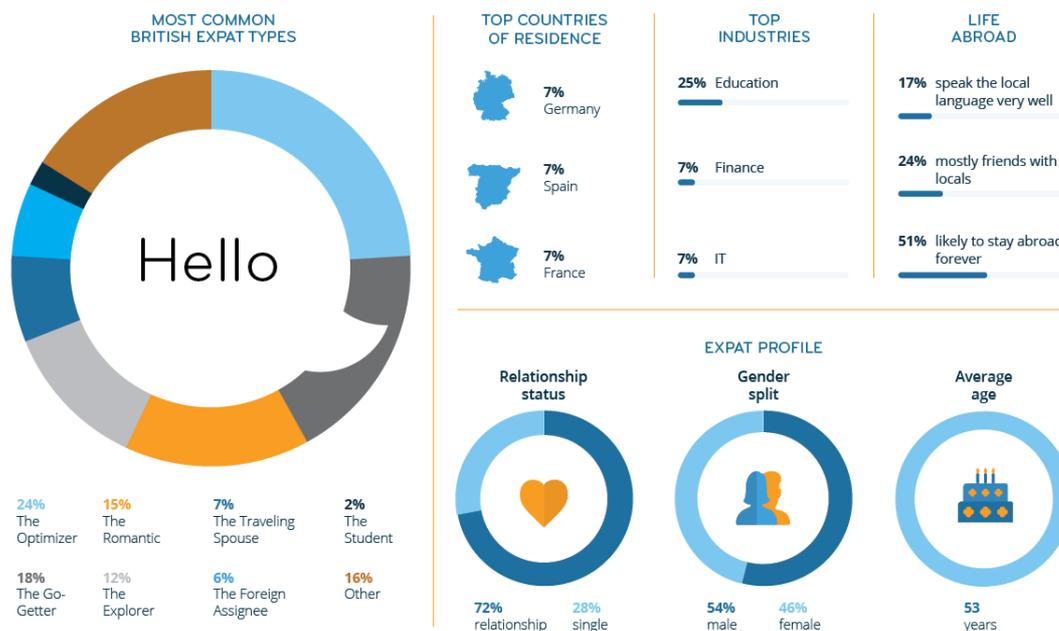


The 7 Most Common British Expat Types and Why They Move Abroad

- Based on the latest *Expat Insider 2018* research, InterNations presents the first comprehensive British expat typology.
- The typology is based on expats' primary motivation for moving abroad and identifies job opportunities and the search for a better life as the most important reasons for expatriation.
- The 7 most common British expat types are the Optimizer (24%), the Go-Getter (18%), the Romantic (15%), the Explorer (12%), the Traveling Spouse (7%), the Foreign Assignee (6%), and the Student (2%).

Munich, 10 July 2018 — Although every expat journey is unique, there are similarities when it comes to the motivation for moving and the lifestyle abroad. Based on the insights of more than 18,000 expats living in 187 countries and territories in the annual *Expat Insider* survey, [InterNations](#), the world's largest community for people who live and work abroad, [presents the first comprehensive expat typology](#) including the 7 most common British expat types.

| British Abroad



The research shows that expats from the UK are different from their international counterparts in many ways: while globally, Go-Getters, who move abroad for their career, are the most common expat type, British expats are most likely to be Optimizers. The latter move abroad in search of a better quality of life and are more than satisfied with the weather abroad than Optimizers worldwide (90% vs. 74%). In addition to that, British Foreign Assignees sent abroad by their employer really seem to benefit financially from their move. Exactly two in five (40%) report having an annual gross household income of more than 150,000 USD, which is an impressive 14 percentage points more than the share of Foreign Assignees globally (26%). British Romantics, on the other hand, who moved abroad to be with their partner, mostly stand out with below-average language skills: only 43 percent of them speak the local language fairly or even very well, compared to 57 percent of Romantics globally. Lastly, the typology shows that British Students are more than ten years older than the global average of Students living abroad (43.2 years vs. 32.4 years)!

1. The British Optimizer (24%)

Reasons for moving abroad

- better quality of life: 77%
- financial reasons: 21%
- political, religious, or safety reasons: 2%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 9%
- mostly friends with locals: 19%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 60%

Out of all expat types, British Optimizers saw the most potential benefits in moving abroad, especially when it comes to the weather: over four in five British Optimizers (84%) considered the weather to be a potential benefit prior to moving, and with 90 percent being satisfied with this factor abroad, it seems they were not disappointed (vs. 74% Optimizers globally). *"I love the fresh air and sunshine. The country is so green and picturesque,"* says a British expat living New Zealand. Additionally, close to nine in ten British Optimizers (89%) feel safe abroad, and 77 percent are satisfied with their financial situation. A British Optimizer in Bulgaria appreciates *"being able to afford the general cost of living without struggling financially"*.

When it comes to their working life, 75 percent of British Optimizers work full-time, which is six percentage points less than the average of Optimizers globally (81%). They also work shorter hours in full- and part-time jobs (38.7 h vs. 39.4 h Optimizers globally), which might be the reason why a higher share of British Optimizers (73%) is satisfied with their work-life balance than Optimizers globally (68%). *"I have the time and the money to enjoy myself a lot more,"* reports a British Optimizer living in Peru. Despite being happy with their financial situation, only 44 percent of working British Optimizers believe that they make more than they would in a similar job back home, compared to 58 percent globally.

Lastly, British Optimizers do not seem to struggle much with settling in abroad: close to four in five (79%) feel at home in the local culture, compared to 72 percent of Optimizers who feel the same globally. This may be due to the fact that British Optimizers find it particularly easy to get used to the local culture (77%) and to make local friends (65%), which is both higher than the global average of Optimizers (71% and 56%, respectively).

2. The British Go-Getter (18%)

Reasons for moving abroad

- found a job abroad on their own: 63%
- recruited by a local company: 28%
- start a business abroad: 9%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 19%
- mostly friends with locals: 16%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 39%

While on a global scale, Go-Getters are highly educated, British Go-Getters seem to have focused somewhat less on their education: just six percent of British Go-Getters hold a PhD, compared to ten percent of Go-Getters globally. Additionally, 35 percent graduated with a master's degree (vs. 45% globally), and 34 percent have a bachelor's degree (vs. 33% globally). British Go-Getters mainly work in education, including language education, (28%), IT (7%), manufacturing & engineering (7%), and finance (7%) in their new country of residence.

Overall, British Go-Getters tend to be slightly more satisfied with their job in general (74% vs. 69% worldwide) and their work-life balance (64% vs. 61% worldwide) than the global average of Go-Getters.

"The job I have is very exciting in terms of the future, and the salary is very good," reports a British Go-Getter living in Vietnam. In fact, 70 percent of British Go-Getters are happy with their financial situation, which is just above the global average of Go-Getters (68%). This is despite the fact that only 52 percent of British Go-Getters believe their income abroad is higher than what they would make in a similar job back home (vs. 59% Go-Getters globally).

Spending 46.4 hours per week at full-time jobs, British Go-Getters are slightly busier than the average Go-Getter (44.7 h). Yet, it seems like the long working hours do not stand in their way when settling down abroad: close to two-thirds of British Go-Getters (65%) state to feel at home in the local culture (vs. 54% Go-getters globally). A British Go-Getter in China is happy with the *"opportunities to integrate into the culture"*, while another in Germany feels *"very welcome by the local residents"*. In fact, close to half the British Go-Getters (46%) find it easy to make local friends abroad, compared to a global average of 39 percent.

3. The British Romantic (15%)

Reason for moving abroad

- for love / to live in their partner's home country: 100%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 26%
- mostly friends with locals: 42%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 54%

Although the British Romantic initially moved abroad for love, their romantic relationship did not necessarily last: eleven percent of them are currently single. For those Romantics who are (still or again) in a relationship, though, things are going well: close to nine in ten (89%) are satisfied with their relationship, and for 63 percent things could not get any better. *"Being with my amazing girlfriend and exploring Romania's wonderful scenery feels like a dream come true,"* a British Romantic shares.

British Romantics do not seem to have any trouble settling in, as 71 percent state to feel at home, compared to 63 percent of Romantics globally. Despite not speaking the local language as well as the global average of Romantics — 43 percent speak it fairly or even very well versus 57 percent globally — they still find making friends slightly easier (55% vs. 52% globally). Maybe that is the reason why 63 percent have no issues with adapting to the local culture, compared to 59 percent of Romantics around the world. A British Romantic in France likes how she can *"mix with the locals and immerse herself in the local culture"*. In fact, the British Romantic is by far most likely to be mainly friends with local residents (42%) out of all British expat types.

With just two percent of British Romantics currently looking for work, they are far less likely to be unemployed than the global average of Romantics (12%). However, one third of them (33%) is still unsatisfied with their career prospects. *"The career prospects and salaries are much worse than in the UK,"* reports a British Romantic living in Cyprus. In fact, close to half the working British Romantics (49%) believe that they make less abroad than they would in a similar job back home, compared to 41 percent of Romantics globally.

4. The British Explorer (12%)

Reasons for moving abroad

- looking for an adventure: 38%
- want to live in this particular city/country: 33%
- simply enjoy living abroad: 29%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 20%
- mostly friends with locals: 26%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 52%

British Explorers seem to find it easy to settle down in their new country of residence: almost four in five respondents (77%) feel at home there (vs. 73% Explorers globally). Maybe this is due to the fact that the majority of Explorers (68%) finds it easy to make new friends abroad. A British Explorer in Myanmar, for example, appreciates *“the friendliness and general hospitality of the local population”*.

Additionally, British Explorers are satisfied with the leisure activities available abroad: more than four in five (82%) rate this factor positively, which is nearly the same as the global average of Explorers (83%). *“I just love Vienna. It is a beautiful city, relaxed, and with more than enough to do and see,”* says a British expat who moved abroad looking for an adventure. That might be one of the reasons why 84 percent of British Explorers are generally satisfied with their life abroad — out of all British expat types, only the British Optimizer is slightly more satisfied (85%).

Aside from making friends and enjoying leisure activities, a good work-life balance seems important to the British Explorer. Those with a full-time job spend just about 41.7 h per week at work (vs. 42.4 h Explorers globally). Over two-thirds (68%) are happy with their work-life balance, which equals the global average of Explorers. However, their satisfaction with career prospects (53%) and job security (62%) is slightly below the share of Explorers being happy with these factors worldwide (59% and 64%, respectively).

5. The British Traveling Spouse (7%)

Reason for moving abroad

- for their partner's job or education: 100%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 13%
- mostly friends with locals: 15%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 36%

While most other expat types have a fairly balanced gender ratio, close to nine in ten British Traveling Spouses (87%) are female. Due to them moving for their partner's sake, British Traveling Spouses are more likely than other expat types to take care of their home and/or children rather than work (24% vs. 5% British expats globally). Interestingly, the share of British Traveling Spouses looking for work (8%) is substantially lower than the global average of Traveling Spouses (17%). Nonetheless, 37 percent of British Spouses are unsatisfied with their career prospects, which is just slightly below the global average of Traveling Spouses (41%). *“It is difficult for highly qualified expat wives to find work and contribute to the local economy,”* a British Traveling Spouse in Bahrain points out. Close to four in five British Traveling Spouses who do work (37%) believe that they earn less abroad than they would in a similar position back home, compared to 30 percent of Traveling Spouses globally — close to one quarter (24%) even think that their income is *a lot lower*, compared to just 14 percent of Traveling Spouses worldwide.

Aside from frequently unsatisfying careers, British Traveling Spouses struggle somewhat less with settling in abroad than the global average of Traveling Spouses: just 18 percent do not feel at home abroad yet, compared to 26 percent of Traveling Spouses around the world. However, another 19 percent of Traveling Spouses do not think that they ever will feel at home, which is close to the global average (20%) and the highest share among the seven British expat types.

Additionally, British Traveling Spouses find it easier to make local friends than the global average of Travel Spouses: while 37 percent of British Traveling Spouses have difficulties, on a global level close to half the Traveling Spouses (48%) are struggling with it. This might be largely due to the fact that 21 percent of British Traveling Spouses live in a country where the local language is the same as their mother tongue, while on a global scale only 11 percent of Traveling Spouses can say the same.

6. The British Foreign Assignee (6%)

Reason for moving abroad

- sent abroad by their employer: 100%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 10%
- mostly friends with locals: 14%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 37%

Nearly every British Foreign Assignee (96%) works full time and, with an average of 47.5 working hours per week, they spend by far the most time at work out of all British expat types — and 1.4 hours more than the global average of Foreign Assignees in full-time positions (46.1 h). However, it seems to pay off, as 40 percent have an annual gross household income of more than 150,000 USD, compared to 26 percent of Foreign Assignees globally. A British Foreign Assignee living in Singapore says: *“This is an easy place for expats as salaries are high and taxes are low.”* Their generous household income might also be related to the fields they frequently work in: finance (16%), manufacturing & engineering (10%), commerce & trade, as well as energy & utilities (both 8%).

About six out of ten British Foreign Assignees (58%) are satisfied with their career prospects, which is slightly below the global average of Foreign Assignees (61%). The same applies to their job security, with three in five British Foreign Assignees (60%) are happy with, compared to 69 percent globally. Therefore, it is no surprise that also the share of British Foreign Assignees being satisfied with their job overall (71%) is just below the global average of Foreign Assignees (73%).

Despite their somewhat lower career satisfaction, just 44 percent of British Foreign Assignees think it is likely that they will return home at some point, compared to 58 percent of Foreign Assignees globally. However, there is still a notable share of British Foreign Assignees who do not feel at home abroad yet (13% vs. 23% globally), and another 17 percent believe that they never will. They might struggle with settling in because 22 percent of British Foreign Assignees find it hard to make friends abroad (vs. 29% Foreign Assignees globally). *“There are not many people my age to socialize with,”* says a British Foreign Assignee living in Malaysia, *“therefore I only have a small group of friends.”* Additionally, an even higher share (40%) finds it hard to make local friends, which is just about the same as the global average of Foreign Assignees (41%).

7. The British Student (2%)

Reasons for moving abroad

- go to school or university: 46%
- improve their language skills: 54%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 46%
- mostly friends with locals: 29%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 51%

British Students do not seem troubled with making local friends abroad: just 29 percent find this hard, compared to 41 percent of Students globally. One of the reasons for this might be that they are able to communicate easily: the share of Students speaking the local language very well is with 46 percent by far the highest among all British expat types. A British Student living in France specifically appreciates *“the opportunity to learn a new language”*. Maybe this contributes to the fact that 61 percent of British Students feel at home in the local culture, compared to 54 percent of Students worldwide.

In addition to making friends easily, close to three in five British Students (59%) are in a committed relationship. This is notably higher than the global average of Students (46%) — however, with an average age of 43.2 years, they are also much older than the global average of Students (32.4 years), which might be the reason for the higher relationship rate.

While on a global scale, eleven percent of Students hold a PhD, this is just the case for two percent of British Students. However, this does not seem to stop them when starting their career: 56 percent of British Students are satisfied with their career prospects, such as a British Student who particularly points out job opportunities as a positive factor about life in China. Additionally, British Students seem to be better off financially than the global average: while worldwide, only 56 percent are satisfied with their financial situation, 63 percent of British Students are happy with that factor.

Read More about Expat Types



The Go-Getter

Go-Getters are highly educated expats who move abroad for job-related reasons. While they are happy with their career prospects, their personal life often suffers a bit.



The Optimizer

Optimizers see many potential benefits in their move abroad, and usually they are not disappointed. They value a good work-life balance and do not have trouble settling in abroad.



The Romantic

Romantics move abroad to be with their partner and do their best to fit in (e.g. by learning the local language). While they find it easy to make local friends, their job situation is often unfavorable.



The Explorer

Explorers move abroad for a personal challenge and seem to master it very well. While they find it easy to make friends and appreciate the options for socializing abroad, they are not always happy with their career prospects.



The Foreign Assignee

Being sent abroad by their employers, most Foreign Assignees are extremely satisfied with their job and career. However, they struggle to feel at home abroad, and most of them already have plans to return home.



The Traveling Spouse

Moving abroad for their partner's job, Traveling Spouses often face an unsatisfying life abroad. They struggle with low career prospects, find it hard to make friends, and many want to return home at some point.



The Student

Students move abroad for their education and are very eager to learn the local language. While they are highly educated and satisfied with their career prospects, their financial situation does not seem too bright.

About the Expat Typology 2018

For the Expat Typology 2018, InterNations identified the 7 most common expat types across the world as well as among British, French, Germans, Italians, and US Americans abroad. The typology is based on the expats' primary motivation for moving abroad. More than 18,000 survey respondents representing 178 nationalities and living in 187 countries or territories revealed their reasons by choosing one out of 19 possible answer options, including one open-text field.

The data was obtained from the *Expat Insider 2018* survey. The complete results will be published in detail in September 2018. For a nationality to be featured in the Expat Typology, a sample size of at least 31 survey participants per type and nationality was necessary. However, for most of the featured nationalities, the sample size per type exceeded 100 participants.

About InterNations

With 3.1 million members in 420 cities around the world, InterNations (www.internations.org) is the largest global community and information site for people who live and work abroad. InterNations offers global and local networking both online and face-to-face. At around 6,000 official events and activities per month, expatriates have the opportunity to meet other global minds. Online services include country and city guides created by a team of professional writers, guest contributions about life abroad, and discussion forums to help members with topics such as the local job or housing search. InterNations membership is by approval only to ensure we remain a community of trust.

The InterNations app is available for Android and iOS and can be downloaded for free on [Google Play](#) and the [App Store](#).

Find more information about InterNations on our [press pages](#), [company website](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), or in our [Expat Magazine](#).

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