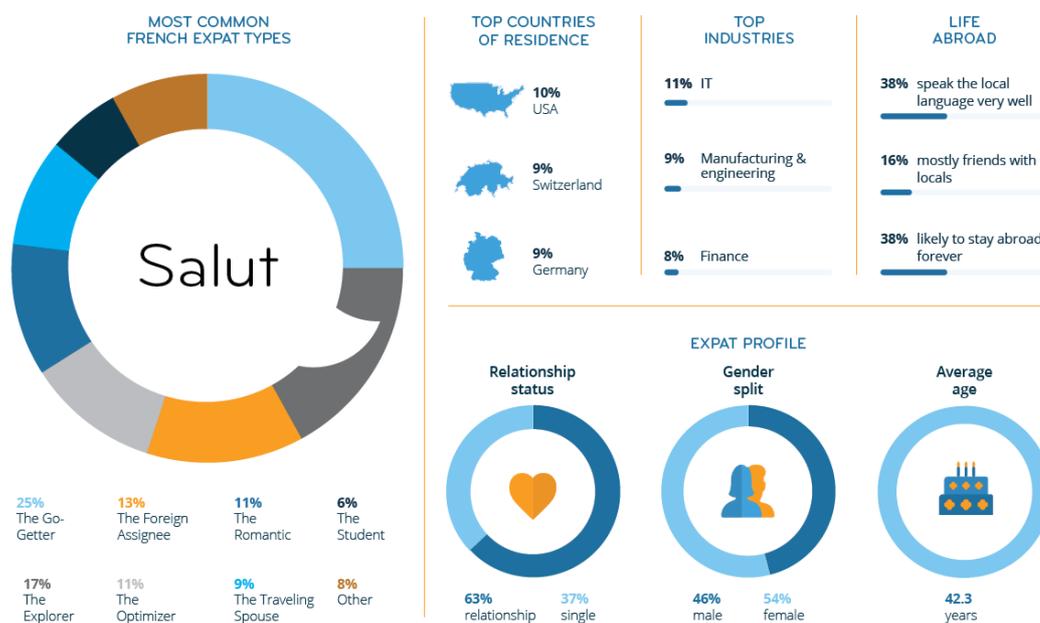


The 7 Most Common French Expat Types and Why They Move Abroad

- Based on the latest *Expat Insider 2018* research, InterNations presents the first comprehensive French 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 French expat types are the Go-Getter (25%), the Explorer (17%), the Foreign Assignee (13%), the Romantic (11%), the Optimizer (11%), the Traveling Spouse (9%), and the Student (6%).

Munich, 10 July 2018 — Although each expat journey is unique, there are certain 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 French expat types.

| French Abroad



The research shows that expats from France are different from their international counterparts in many ways: French Romantics, for example, who move abroad to be with their partner, are much more likely to speak the local language fairly or even very well than Romantics in general (78% vs. 57%). While they also find it easier to make new friends abroad, other French expat types, such as the Go-Getters, who move abroad for their career, are struggling slightly: close to half of them (46%) find it hard to make local friends, compared to 41 percent globally. This is also true for the French Foreign Assignees, sent abroad by their employer. The latter additionally stand out with their desire to move back home: close to three in ten (28%) believe that they will never feel at home abroad, compared to 17 percent of all Foreign Assignees across the globe.

1. The French Go-Getter (25%)

Reasons for moving abroad

- found a job abroad on their own: 56%
- recruited by a local company: 35%
- start a business abroad: 9%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 34%
- mostly friends with locals: 18%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 31%

French Go-Getters are highly educated expats who move abroad to boost their career: twelve percent hold a PhD, compared to ten percent of Go-Getters globally. In addition to that, 70 percent of French Go-Getters finished a master's degree or similar (vs. 45% Go-Getters globally). In their new country of residence, they mainly work in IT (14%), manufacturing & engineering (12%), finance (7%), and advertising, marketing & communications (7%).

Spending an average of 44.3 hours per week at work, French Go-Getters are slightly less busy than the global average (44.7h). Close to three-quarters of the French Go-Getters (72%) are satisfied with their working hours, eight percentage points more than the average among all Go-Getters worldwide (64%). In addition to that, they are more satisfied with their career prospects (68%) than Go-Getters globally (59%). A French Go-Getter living in Ireland is happy that *"there are many job opportunities for multilingual people"*. And it seems like their careers are successful as more than three in five (63%) believe that they make more abroad than they would in a similar job back home, which is again slightly more than the global average of Go-Getters (59%). A French Go-Getter living in the USA is satisfied with the *"career opportunities and salary in their industry"*.

While thriving in their new work environment, the French Go-Getters seem to find their personal life abroad slightly more difficult: 17 percent are currently not living in the same country as their partner — together with the Foreign Assignee, this is the highest share among all French expat types. Moreover, 46 percent find it hard to make local friends, compared to 41 percent of all Go-Getters worldwide. *"There are no real opportunities to make friends with local people,"* says a French Go-Getter living in the UK. Maybe this is one of the reasons why 24 percent of French Go-Getters believe that they will never feel at home abroad, compared to a global average of 18 percent.

2. The French Explorer (17%)

Reasons for moving abroad

- looking for an adventure: 54%
- want to live in this particular city/country: 25%
- simply enjoy living abroad: 21%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 42%
- mostly friends with locals: 16%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 43%

French Explorers seem to find it easy to settle down in their new country of residence, with close to three-quarters (73%) feeling at home there, the same as the global average among all Explorers. Maybe it helps that 71 percent of French Explorers find it easy to make new friends abroad — the highest share among all French expat types. *"The people I met in Newcastle are among the best things about having moved here,"* says a French Explorer living in Australia.

In addition to that, 80 percent of French Explorers are happy with the available leisure activities abroad (vs. 83% globally). *"The local festivals and summer events are something I like very much,"* a French Explorer living in Germany says, adding: *"I wish they could take place more often."* Perhaps enjoying

their leisure time also makes it easier for the French Explorers to get used to the local culture: more than four in five (82%) find this easy, compared to 70 percent of Explorers worldwide.

When it comes to their professional life, French Explorers with a full-time job spend about 42.5 hours per week at work (vs. 42.4h globally). Consequently, close to seven in ten French Explorers (68%) are happy with their work-life balance, the same as the global average among Explorers. However, 55 percent of French Explorers believe that their income abroad is higher than what they would make in a similar job back home, nine percentage points more than the average worldwide (46%).

3. The French Foreign Assignee (13%)

Reason for moving abroad

- sent abroad by their employer: 100%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 28%
- mostly friends with locals: 9%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 29%

Nearly every French Foreign Assignee (95%) works full time, but with an average of 45.3 working hours per week they spend less time at work than the average Foreign Assignee worldwide (46.1h). However, this slight difference does not seem to influence their finances, since 25 percent have an annual household income of at least 150,000 USD, about the same as the share among all Foreign Assignees globally (26%). In fact, 63 percent of the Foreign Assignees from France believe that they earn more abroad than they would in a similar job back home, which is — along with the Go-Getter — the highest share among all French expat types.

Just 56 percent of all French Foreign Assignees are happy with their career prospects, and 53 percent are satisfied with their job security; both results are below the global average for all Foreign Assignees (61% and 69%, respectively). *“It is difficult for women to work and have a family,”* a French Foreign Assignee living in Switzerland remarks. Despite the slightly shorter working hours, only 53 percent of French Foreign Assignees are happy with their work-life balance, compared to 58 percent of all Foreign Assignees around the globe. A French Foreign Assignee living in Colombia thinks that *“the workload is too heavy and does not allow for a social life”*.

Maybe it is due to their mixed feelings about their situation at work that close to three in five French Foreign Assignees (58%) are likely to return home at some point, by far the highest share among all French expat types. In fact, 18 percent do not feel at home abroad yet, and another 28 percent do not think that they ever will (vs. 17% globally). Maybe their struggles with settling in are partly due to difficulties in finding friends: over one in three (36%) find it hard to make new friends abroad, seven percentage points more than the global average among all Foreign Assignees (29%). *“It is hard to make lasting friendships in Singapore,”* a French Foreign Assignee says.

4. The French Romantic (11%)

Reason for moving abroad

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

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 65%
- mostly friends with locals: 25%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 43%

Although the French Romantics moved abroad for love, their romantic relationship did not necessarily last: 19 percent of them are currently single, seven percentage points more than the global share of single Romantics (12%). Those Romantics who are (still or again) in a relationship could not be any happier, though: nine in ten (90%) are satisfied with their relationship, and for 41 percent things could not get any better. *"The best thing about living in the USA is that I am with my husband,"* a French Romantic explains.

French Romantics really make an effort to adapt to their partner's home country: close to four in five (78%) speak the local language fairly or even very well — this is the highest share among all French expat types and far above the global average among the Romantics (57%). Additionally, half of the French Romantics (50%) find it easy to make local friends in their new country of residence (vs. 44% globally). For instance, one of them points out *"the friendly people and the outdoor activities thanks to the year-round nice weather"* as positive aspects of expat life in Australia. In fact, the large majority of French Romantics (85%) is happy with the available leisure activities abroad — only French Optimizers (91%) are even more satisfied with this factor.

With just three percent of French Romantics currently looking for work, their career looks rosier than that of Romantics in general (12% looking for work). The highest share of French Romantics are employees (28% vs. 20% globally), followed by 15 percent of entrepreneurs or small business owners (vs. 8% worldwide). *"The opportunities for entrepreneurs are great,"* a French Romantic living in Spain thinks, while one in the USA reports that their *"career opportunities are wide and abundant"*. In fact, 58 percent of all French Romantics are happy with their career prospects (vs. 46% of all Romantics worldwide) and 48 percent believe that they make more abroad than they would in a similar job back home (vs. 37% globally).

5. The French Optimizer (11%)

Reasons for moving abroad

- better quality of life: 72%
- financial reasons: 27%
- political, religious, or safety reasons: 1%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 25%
- mostly friends with locals: 13%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 55%

Out of all French expat types, Optimizers see the most potential benefits in moving abroad, and it seems like they were right: an above-average share of French Optimizers is satisfied with the weather (88% vs. 74% of all Optimizers) and with the available leisure activities abroad (91% vs. 80% globally). *"I lived in many countries for years, but Barcelona is definitely one of the best cities you can find for a great quality of life,"* a French Optimizer now based in Spain says. Additionally, 81 percent are satisfied with their financial situation, compared to 74 percent of Optimizers worldwide. *"The money is more than enough to enjoy the buzzing country,"* a French Optimizer living in Turkey reports.

When it comes to their working life, 96 percent of French Optimizers work full time, far above the global average for all Optimizers (81%). However, they spend a little less time at work than Optimizers globally (42.6 h vs. 43.4 h). Despite the high share of French Optimizers with full-time jobs, more than one-third (35%) believe that their current income is lower than what they would make in a similar job back home, compared to just 25 percent globally.

Lastly, French Optimizers do not seem to struggle much with settling in abroad: more than seven in ten (73%) feel at home in the local culture, the second-highest share among all French expat types, only beaten by the Explorer (78%). Maybe this is partly due to the fact that a majority of French Optimizers find it easy to make new friends abroad (69%), such as a French Optimizer living in Spain who appreciates *“the very kind and friendly people”* in his new home.

6. The French Traveling Spouse (9%)

Reason for moving abroad

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

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 33%
- mostly friends with locals: 12%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 35%

While most other French expat types have a fairly balanced gender ratio, close to nine in ten French Traveling Spouses (88%) are female. Due to moving for their partner’s sake, Traveling Spouses are more likely than other French expat types to take care of their home and/or children (16%) or to be currently looking for work (12%) — however, both shares are still far lower than the global average among Traveling Spouses in general (27% and 17%, respectively). In fact, close to half of French Traveling Spouses (49%) are happy with their career prospects, compared to just 39 percent of Traveling Spouses worldwide. *“I like the challenges and the opportunities that I am given in my field of work,”* a French Traveling Spouse living in Nigeria says. However, just 41 percent of French Traveling Spouses are satisfied with their job security, compared to more than half of all Traveling Spouses around the world (51%).

Aside from their frequently mixed feelings about their professional life, French Traveling Spouses struggle with settling in abroad: more than one in three (36%) find it hard to make new friends abroad, and an even higher share (57%) has difficulty making local friends in particular. *“It is very difficult to make local friends,”* says a French Travelling Spouse living in Spain, while another living in Romania feels that *“the local people’s attitude is generally aggressive and rude”*. Maybe those difficulties help to explain why 40 percent do not feel at home in the local culture, compared to the global average of 33 percent. Moreover, about one in three French Traveling Spouses (33%) believe that they will never feel at home abroad, far above the global average (20%) and the highest share among French expat types.

7. The French Student (6%)

Reasons for moving abroad

- go to school or university: 74%
- improve their language skills: 26%

Life abroad

- speak the local language very well: 46%
- mostly friends with locals: 10%
- likely to stay abroad forever: 35%

French Students do not seem to have any issues getting used to the local culture in their new country of residence: just 13 percent find this hard, compared to 21 percent among all Students worldwide. It probably helps that close to seven in ten French Students (69%) speak the local language fairly or even very well, compared to just 58 percent globally. *“The people are very friendly, and there is lots of entertainment”*, says a French Student living in the USA. Moreover, an impressive 74 percent of French Students feel at home in their new country of residence, compared to only 59 percent of Students worldwide.

While Students in general are the expat type most likely to hold a PhD (11%), this is not the case for French Students in particular. One in ten (10%) hold a PhD, a smaller share than among the French Go-Getters (12%) and Optimizers (14%). However, this does not seem to stop them when starting their careers: more than three in five French Students (62%) are happy with their career prospects, compared to 58 percent of Students worldwide. *“Foreigners have a good chance to find a job,”* according to a French Student living in Germany. Moreover, 71 percent of French Students are satisfied with their financial situation, which is far above the global average for all Students (56%).

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](#).

Press Contact

Vera Grossmann
Media Spokesperson

InterNations GmbH
Schwanthalerstrasse 39
80336 Munich, Germany

Tel: +49 (0)89 461 3324 79

Fax: +49 (0)89 461 3324 99

Email: press@internations.org

Homepage: <http://www.internations.org/press>