

The Best and Worst Cities in the World to Live and Work Abroad in 2020

The annual Expat City Ranking reveals how expats rate life in 82 cities around the world.

- *The Expat City Ranking 2019 names Taipei (1st), Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, Singapore, Montréal, Lisbon, Barcelona, Zug, The Hague, and Basel (10th) as the best cities to move to in 2020.*
- *Kuwait City (82nd), Rome, Milan, Lagos (Nigeria), Paris, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Lima, New York City, and Yangon (73rd) are the world's worst cities.*

Munich, 3 December 2019 — With Taipei, Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, and Singapore at the top, four Asian cities lead the Expat City Ranking 2019 by [InterNations](https://www.internations.org), the world's largest expat community with more than 3.5 million members. They are followed by Montréal, Lisbon, Barcelona, Zug, The Hague, and Basel. While each city is appreciated by expats for different reasons, they have some aspects in common: they typically rank highly in the Urban Work Life, the Quality of Urban Living, and the Local Cost of Living Indices. What is more, expats find it (very) easy to get settled in most of these cities, but not so much in the Swiss cities of Basel and Zug.

On the other hand, expats are unhappiest in Kuwait City (82nd out of 82) as well as in both Italian cities surveyed, Rome (81st) and Milan (80th). Lagos (Nigeria), Paris, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Lima, New York City, and Yangon (Myanmar) also join the bottom 10 cities worldwide. In contrast to the best cities, all of them rank among the bottom 30 in the Urban Work Life Index and, aside from Paris, also in the bottom 25 of the Quality of Urban Living Index. While all European and US American cities also rank in the bottom 20 for finance and housing, the others are in the midfield here. Expats' opinions on how easy it is to get settled vary, but Paris and Kuwait City are named the worst in the world in this regard.



The [Expat City Ranking](#) is based on the annual *Expat Insider* survey by InterNations, which is with more than 20,000 respondents in 2019 one of the most extensive surveys about living and working abroad. In 2019, 82 cities around the globe are analyzed in the survey, offering in-depth information about five areas of expat life: Quality of Urban Living, Getting Settled, Urban Work Life, Finance & Housing, and Local Cost of Living. Taken together, the first four areas make up the Expat City Ranking, which reveals the best and worst cities to move to in 2020.

The Best Cities to Move To in 2020

1. Taipei

For the second year in a row, Taiwan's capital claims the top position as the best city to live in as an expat. Expats are particularly happy with Taipei's high quality of life, ranking the city third worldwide, preceded only by Tokyo, Japan (2nd) and Zug, Switzerland (1st). Almost all expats (98%) are satisfied with the local transportation (vs. 70% globally), and a vast majority (94%) is happy with the availability of healthcare in the city (vs. 73% globally). Taiwan's capital is also one of the leading cities regarding finance and housing as well as the local cost of living, ranking fourth worldwide for both indices. Around seven in ten expats appreciate the local cost of living (71% vs. 43% globally) and are satisfied with their financial situation (69% vs. 57% globally). *"The cost of living in Taiwan is cheaper compared to Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong, for example,"* says an expat from India. *"And Taiwan's health insurance and safety are what make it attractive to me."* In fact, 96% of expats say they feel safe in Taipei, compared to 81% globally.

Taipei performs just slightly worse in terms of work life (20th) and getting settled (18th). The latter is mainly due to expats struggling with the local language (50th), since the city is still voted among the top 10 for local friendliness (4th) and friends and socializing (9th). Four in five respondents (80%) find the local residents generally friendly (vs. 64% globally), and two in three (67%) are happy with their social life (vs. 55% globally).

2. Kuala Lumpur

While Kuala Lumpur ranks second in the Expat City Ranking 2019 overall, it is voted the world's easiest city to get settled as an expat. Three in four expats (75%) feel at home in Kuala Lumpur (vs. 64% globally), and 69% are happy with their social life (vs. 55% globally). Language also does not seem to be a problem, as 92% find it easy to live in the city without speaking the local language (vs. 47% globally). *"It is easy to blend in with the culture, the food, and the people,"* explains an expat from India, *"and the language is not a problem if one can speak English."* When it comes to the Local Cost of Living (2nd) and Finance & Housing (2nd) Indices, expats do not complain either: close to four in five (78%) are satisfied with the local cost of living (vs. 43% globally), and 75% find housing affordable (vs. 36% globally). A British expat states that Kuala Lumpur is *"easy on the wallet, easy to travel to/from"* and names the *"availability of nice places to live at reasonable cost"* as a bonus as well.

Expats' satisfaction with the work life is mixed, ranking Kuala Lumpur 26th worldwide in the respective index. *"The work prospects for foreigners, especially the ones educated in Malaysia, are getting smaller within these borders,"* explains a Bangladeshi expat. While expats are satisfied with their jobs in general (5th), they are not happy with the local career opportunities (50th). Just 47% of respondents rate the latter positively, which is slightly below the global average (51%).

3. Ho Chi Minh City

Coming in third worldwide, Ho Chi Minh City ranks well in all areas of the Expat City Ranking besides the Quality of Urban Living Index (63rd). With close to nine in ten expats (87%) saying that it is easy to find housing (vs. 50% globally), and 77% being happy with their financial situation (vs. 57% globally), the city tops the ranking in the Finance & Housing Index for the second year running. The same is true for the Local Cost of Living Index (1st), with 81% rating this factor positively (vs. 43% globally). Ho Chi Minh City is also popular for its thriving work life (3rd), only beaten by Prague, Czechia (2nd) and Aachen, Germany (1st) in the respective index. Expats are particularly happy with their jobs in general (79% vs. 64% globally), the local career opportunities (68% vs. 51% globally), and their working hours (75% vs. 62% globally). What is more, Ho Chi Minh City comes in third worldwide for both the Local Friendliness and Friends & Socializing subcategories. When asked what they like about Ho Chi Minh City, a Philippine respondent replies: *"It is easy to deal and work with the people here, and the cost of living is good."* In addition, 88% of expats find the locals friendly towards foreign residents (vs. 64% globally).

The only blind spot seems to be the quality of life in the city (63rd), particularly when it comes to the quality of the environment (73rd). Almost half the survey participants (47%) rate the latter negatively (vs. 17% globally). *"I do not like the dirty streets, the bad environment management, the missing awareness about plastic, but also the very bad garbage management. Everyone throws their waste on the streets,"* a German expat complains. Lastly, expats are also unhappy with the local leisure activities (68th) and transportation options (64th).

4. Singapore

Not only compared to all Asian cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019, but also worldwide, Singapore stands out in terms of safety. In fact, every respondent in Singapore (100%) rates their personal safety positively (vs. 81% globally), and the vast majority (88%) is also satisfied with the political stability (vs. 61% globally). What is more, almost all (99%) are happy with the transportation infrastructure (vs. 70% globally), landing Singapore in the top 10 cities for the Quality of Urban Living Index overall (9th). The same is true for the Getting Settled Index (7th): expats find it easy to get used to the local culture (77% vs. 62% globally), to make new friends (58% vs. 45% globally), and are happy with their social life (67% vs. 55% globally).

While Singapore also ranks well in the Finance & Housing Index (15th), the local cost of living (54th) seems to be a disadvantage. More than half the survey participants (52%) are unhappy with this factor (vs. 38% globally), and a South African expat explains: *"The high costs of basic needs such as healthcare makes it difficult, as well as the high transport costs when traveling by car or taxi."* Within the Urban Work Life Index (40th), work-life balance (61th) is Singapore's weakest area: close to a quarter of expats (23%) are unhappy with their working hours (vs. 19% globally). *"I feel strong pressure at work, and everything is planned and pre-shaped,"* a Swiss expatriate complains. This may also be why 24% of expats worry about their job security, compared to 21% globally. Expats, however, are very content with the state of Singapore's economy (90% vs. 66% globally).

5. Montréal

Ranking 5th out of 82 in the Expat City Ranking 2019 survey, Montréal outranks the other Canadian cities in several areas: it is the best Canadian city in the Urban Work Life (10th worldwide), Local Cost of Living (11th), and Finance & Housing (8th) Indices. In the latter, it even ranks fifth worldwide in the Housing subcategory: more than three in five expats (62%) rate the affordability of housing positively (vs. 36% globally), and almost four in five (79%) say it is easy for expats to find housing (vs. 50%

globally). When asked about their favorite aspect of living in Montréal, one Dutch expat mentions the *“living accommodation”*, while another from the USA states *“affordability”*. In fact, Montréal ranks 33rd for expats’ satisfaction with their financial situation (61% happy vs. 57% globally), while Toronto (79th) and Vancouver (80th) land in the bottom 5 worldwide.

In terms of work life, almost two-thirds of expats (65%) rate the local career opportunities positively (vs. 51% globally). Montréal also ranks third in the Work-Life Balance subcategory — only beaten by. Beyond working life, expats enjoy the local leisure options available in Montréal (9th), and a Mexican expat shares that there are *“lots of activities all year long.”* In spite of this, Montréal only ranks 41st in the Quality of Urban Living Index, as, for example, 22% are not content with the availability of healthcare in the city (vs. 13% globally) and 48% of expats are unhappy with the local climate and weather (vs. 23% globally). *“The weather is a hassle”*, says an expat from Brazil, and *“winter is too long and cold”*, according to a Venezuelan expat.

6. Lisbon

Ranking 6th out of 82 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019, Lisbon has been voted among the top 10 cities worldwide for getting settled (6th) and the quality of life (10th). Expats feel very welcome in Lisbon (3rd) as almost four in five (79%) think it is easy to get used to the local culture (vs. 62% globally). It may help that 88% of expats are satisfied with their socializing and leisure activities (vs. 65% globally), and another 90% find the Portuguese people generally friendly (vs. 68% globally). One expat mentions *“the quality of the social relationships,”* when asked what they like best about life in Lisbon. In fact, 69% of expats in Lisbon are happy with their social life (vs. 55% globally). In the Quality of Urban Living Index, expats are not only happy with Lisbon’s local leisure options (10th) but also with the local climate and weather (3rd) — only Miami (2nd) and Barcelona (1st) do better in this regard. Lastly, more than nine in ten expats (92%) rate the quality of the environment positively (vs. 71% globally), and one Canadian respondent emphasizes *“the geographical beauty”* of Lisbon.

On the downside, Lisbon ranks low in the Urban Work Life Index (50th). In terms of local career opportunities, it even ends up among the bottom 10 cities worldwide (73rd). An expat from Ukraine states that *“career prospects are slow, and the level of income is lower in comparison to other EU countries”*, while another expat from Russia dislikes the local *“job opportunities and salary”*. The city also ranks below average for job security (57th) and the state of the local economy (55th), but expats are happy with their work-life balance (13th): 74% rate this factor positively, compared to 60% worldwide.

7. Barcelona

Ranking 7th out of 82 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019, Barcelona is even voted the world’s best city in the Leisure & Climate subcategory: Nearly every expat is happy with the local climate (98% vs. 59% globally) and the local leisure options in the city (95% vs. 74% globally). There are *“lots of social activities, cultural activities, and art”*, sums up a US American expat. Barcelona also ranks among the top 10 in the Health & Environment subcategory (9th), as, for example, 88% of expats are satisfied with the availability of healthcare in the city (vs. 73% globally). What is more, Barcelona ranks 13th in the Getting Settled Index. Over three in four expats (77%) feel at home in the city (vs. 64% globally), and 73% are happy with their social life (vs. 55% globally). Not only do expats find it easy to get used to the local culture (77% vs. 62% globally), but three in five (60%) also find it easy to make friends in Barcelona (vs. 45% globally).

However, expats in Barcelona are less happy with the work life (42nd) and with finance and housing (42nd): more than half (55%) find housing unaffordable (vs. 44% globally), and one in three (33%) says

that it is hard for expats to find housing, which is just around the global average (32%).

8. Zug

Zug is not only the highest-rated city in Switzerland, but it also offers the world's best quality of life. In fact, not one respondent in Zug is dissatisfied with the local transportation (vs. 19% negative answers globally), the quality of the environment (vs. 17% globally), or their personal safety (vs. 9% globally). The majority of expats in Zug is also satisfied with the availability (87% vs. 73% globally) and quality (82% vs. 65% globally) of healthcare in the city.

What is more, Zug is the only Swiss city that places among the top 10 in the Urban Work Life Index (5th). Close to seven in ten are satisfied with their work-life balance (67% vs. 60% globally) and working hours (69% vs. 62% globally). Expats even rank Zug first in the world for the state of the local economy (91% happy vs. 66% globally). However, the city ranks a mediocre 44th out of 82 for job security. In fact, almost a quarter of expats (24%) do not feel secure in their employment (vs. 21% globally).

While Zug manages to rank ahead of other Swiss cities, expats still struggle to feel settled in. The city places 58th in the Getting Settled Index, with 35% of respondents saying that they find it hard to get used to the local culture (vs. 20% globally), making it Zug's worst-rated area. *"I find that making friends is extremely difficult, and I am a very social person,"* shares a Canadian expat. In fact, 31% of expats feel that people in Zug are unfriendly towards foreign residents (vs. 19% globally).

9. The Hague

Coming in 9th place out of 82 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019, The Hague performs particularly well in the Urban Work Life Index (13th). Expats even vote The Hague among the top 10 worldwide in the Job Security subcategory (5th): nearly seven in ten (69%) are specifically satisfied with their job security (vs. 59% globally), and 88% rate the state of the local economy positively (vs. 66% globally). While the city also ranks well for work-life balance (20th), it comes in only 55th place for local career opportunities. When asked to share what they dislike most about life in The Hague, a British expat mentions *"limited career opportunities in my specialized career,"* and a Bulgarian expat shares: *"I cannot find a better and higher paid job."* In fact, 29% are unhappy with their career opportunities (vs. 27% globally), which is the highest share out of the three Dutch cities surveyed. On the other hand, The Hague is by far the best Dutch city in the Finance & Housing Index (24th). In the Finance subcategory, it comes 11th, compared to Rotterdam in 42nd and Amsterdam in 46th place. In fact, seven in ten expats (70%) are generally satisfied with their financial situation (vs. 57% globally).

Overall, The Hague also ranks a good 27th in the Quality of Urban Living Index, but lands in the bottom 10 worldwide for the local climate and weather (78th) alongside Amsterdam (76th). Close to three in five expats (56%) rate this factor negatively (vs. 23% globally), and one Turkish expat lists the *"weather conditions"* as one of the worst features of living in The Hague. The city also ranks the highest out of the three Dutch cities in the Health & Environment subcategory (37th), with 81% of expats enjoying the quality of the environment (vs. 71% globally).

10. Basel

Basel ranks 10th out of 82 cities in the Expat City Ranking, with expats rating the quality of life very highly (6th). They are particularly happy with their personal safety (93% vs. 81% globally), the local transportation system (98% vs. 70% globally), and the quality of the environment (93% vs. 71% globally). A Belgian expat particularly enjoys the city's *"central location, the good transportation systems, and the mountains"*.

However, following the trend across all Swiss cities, expats find it difficult to get settled (62nd). Exactly three in ten (30%) struggle to get used to the local culture (vs. 20% globally), and 28% do not feel at home (vs. 21% globally). This leaves Basel with a low 71st place in the Feeling Welcome subcategory. Additionally, the city ranks 63rd in both the Local Friendliness and Friends & Socializing subcategories. *"The locals are not really open to making friends,"* states an expat from Venezuela. *"This makes integration more difficult."* She seems to be not alone with her views, as 28% of expats describe the attitude towards foreign residents as generally unfriendly (vs. 19% globally), and 35% are unhappy with their social life in Basel (vs. 27% globally).

Out of all Swiss cities surveyed, Basel ranks best in both the Finance & Housing Index (14th) and the Local Cost of Living Index (43rd). While 42% of expats are unhappy with the local cost of living (vs. 38% globally), 78% are still satisfied with their financial situation (vs. 57% globally). What is more, 46% find housing in Basel affordable (vs. 36% globally), and around half (50%) say it is easy for expats to find housing, which is about the same share as the global average (50%).

The Worst Cities to Move To in 2020

82. Kuwait City

Kuwait City ranks 82nd out of 82 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019, coming in last place both among the GCC cities and in the global ranking. In contrast to the other cities in the GCC States, Kuwait City's worst performing area is the Getting Settled Index (82nd), for which it comes last in all subcategories of the index, aside from the Local Language subcategory. Almost three in five respondents (57%) feel that the local residents are unfriendly towards foreigners (vs. 19% globally), 62% struggle to find new friends (vs. 35% globally), and 57% are unhappy with their social life (vs. 27% globally). *"Local citizens are not friendly,"* remarks an Indian expat. *"There is no respect for expats in this country."* Kuwait City, like most other GCC cities, also does badly in the Quality of Urban Living Index, ranking 81st, ahead of only Lagos, Nigeria (82nd). It is the world's worst-rated city for leisure activities (62% unhappy vs. 12% globally) and for the local climate and weather (67% unhappy vs. 23% globally). More than three in five expats (61%) are also dissatisfied with the local transportation (vs. 19% globally), and Kuwait City has the worst-rated quality of environment, with 58% unhappy with this factor (vs. 17% globally).

Another weakness of Kuwait City is its work life, for which it ranks 79th worldwide, ahead of only Istanbul (80th), Athens (81st), and Rome (82nd). Over a third of expats (34%) is dissatisfied with their job in general (vs. 19% globally), and two in five (40%) are unhappy with the local career opportunities (vs. 27% globally). Kuwait City also has the worst-rated work-life balance worldwide, with 38% of expats rating this factor negatively (vs. 21% globally). A British expat dislikes the *"long working hours and six-day weeks,"* adding that *"the Kuwaiti attitude towards foreign workers, especially low paid workers, is poor"*. One redeeming factor is Kuwait City's ranking in the Finance subcategory, for which it comes seventh worldwide, with 71% of expats satisfied with their financial situation (vs. 57% globally). However, this may not mean much if 55% of respondents are unhappy with the local cost of living (vs. 38% globally).

81. Rome

Rome is again voted the worst European city for expats, placing 81st out of 82 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019, only ahead of Kuwait City on a global scale. Similar to Milan, Rome's biggest weakness is the Urban Work Life Index, in which it ranks last worldwide for the second time running. One out of three expats in Rome (33%) is dissatisfied with their current job (vs. 19% globally), and two-thirds (67%)

are unhappy with the local career opportunities (vs. 27% globally). Over half the expats in Rome (54%) do not judge their job security favorably (vs. 21% globally), and 62% rate the state of the local economy negatively, more than four times the global average (15%). *"It is difficult to find a job here,"* an expat from Turkey explains. In fact, just over a third of expats (36%) feel their disposable income is *more* than what they need to cover their daily expenses (vs. 49% globally), and less than half (44%) are happy with their financial situation (vs. 57% globally). A Spanish expat comments that *"the cost of living is too expensive and salaries in general are low"*.

Also similar to Milan, Rome is criticized by expats for its poor political stability, with less than a quarter (24%) being content with the current situation (vs. 61% globally). Yet where public transportation in Milan does not do too badly, nearly two in three expats in Rome (63%) are dissatisfied with the available services (vs. 19% globally). However, Rome does trump Milan in terms of local weather: 92% of expats enjoy the local climate (vs. 59% globally), with over half (55%) giving it the best possible rating (vs. 23% globally). *"It is a gorgeous country, life is pleasant, the weather is nice, and the food is delicious,"* a Spanish expat thinks.

80. Milan

Milan comes third to last, in 80th place out of 82 cities, ranking low across the board in the Expat City Ranking 2019. The city performs particularly poorly in the Urban Work Life Index (77th), ranking among the bottom 10 in all its subcategories. It is even the world's worst-rated city in terms of job satisfaction, with only 47% of expats in Milan being happy with their job in general (vs. 64% globally). What is more, around three in ten are displeased with their job security (29% unhappy vs. 21% globally), their working hours (30% vs. 19% globally), and their work life balance (29% vs. 21% globally). All the hard work does not seem to pay off as nearly two in five expats (39%) are dissatisfied with their financial situation, too (vs. 26% globally). A German expat complains about the *"bad balance between income and cost of living"*, and the majority of expats seems to agree: less than a quarter (23%) are satisfied with the local cost of living (vs. 43% globally).

While the shares of expats satisfied with the local transportation in Milan (74% happy vs. 70% globally) and the local weather (61% vs. 59% globally) are slightly above the global average, the city still ranks only 60th in the Quality of Urban Living Index. One major reason for this is its low ranking for political stability (75th), as only 25% of expats rate this factor positively. This is not only below the global average (61%) but also worse than last year (44%). *"The political situation is changing,"* a Polish expat observes. *"Foreigners now have more problems to register, use healthcare, and buy a house!"* Maybe this is one reason why expats also feel less at home in Milan, with the city ranking in the bottom 10 (75th) for this factor. Just about half the expats in Milan (53%) say they feel at home in the city, compared to 64% globally.

79. Lagos (Nigeria)

Lagos ranks among the worst cities for expats in the world, only better than Milan (80th), Rome (81st), and Kuwait City (82nd) in the Expat City Ranking 2019. The Nigerian city is even voted the worst in the Quality of Urban Living Index. Aside from the local climate and weather (40th), Lagos can be found among the bottom 10 for each factor within this index. Expats are especially unhappy with the local transportation (75% negative ratings vs. 19% globally), the political stability (55% vs. 17% globally), and their personal safety (38% vs. 9% globally). *"There is no safety,"* says a Russian expat, *"and no proper public transport is available."* The availability of healthcare is another weak area (60% unhappy vs. 13% globally), and the same is true for the quality of the environment (55% vs. 17% globally). While not ranking last in the world, Lagos is also still one of the worst cities in the Urban Work Life Index (75th).

More than half the expats (54%) rate the state of the local economy negatively (vs. 15% globally), and 37% are unhappy with the local career prospects (vs. 27% globally).

On the other hand, Lagos is one of the top 5 cities worldwide for making friends (5th). More than three in five respondents (62%) agree that making friends is easy (vs. 45% globally), and an equal share (62%) is also happy with their social life (vs. 55% globally). It might help that the people in Lagos are generally perceived as friendly (70% vs. 64% globally), and that it is easy to live in the city without speaking the local language (81% happy vs. 47% globally).

78. Paris

Placing 78th out of 82 cities, Paris ranks among the bottom 5 cities for expats in the Expat City Ranking 2019. The Getting Settled Index (81st) is Paris's worst area, coming ahead of only Kuwait City (82nd). Close to two in five expats (39%) find the Parisians generally unfriendly (vs. 19% globally), and an Australian expat bemoans the *"lack of good friends"*. In fact, 52% find it hard to make friends (vs. 35% globally), and 34% are unhappy with their social life (vs. 27% globally). Paris is also one of the world's worst cities in the Finance & Housing Index (79th), only better than Vancouver (80th), San Francisco (81st), and Dublin (82nd). Two-thirds of expats (67%) say that it is hard to find housing (vs. 32% globally), and 76% consider it unaffordable (vs. 44% globally). *"Everything is just so expensive,"* says an expat from Portugal, *"from housing to food and basic items"*. In fact, 67% are unhappy with the local cost of living in general (vs. 38% globally).

Paris's best-ranked index is the Quality of Urban Living Index, where it still only comes in 43rd place. Expats are happy with the availability of healthcare (84% positive ratings vs. 73% globally) but not so much with the quality of environment (26% unhappy vs. 17% globally). While the city also ranks well for local leisure options (24th), the same cannot be said for personal safety (66th). In fact, 17% of expats say they feel unsafe in Paris, compared to 9% globally.

77. San Francisco

San Francisco is not only the worst US American city in the eyes of expats, at 77th place out of 82 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019, but it is also the world's worst city when it comes to the local cost of living (82nd) and the affordability of housing (82nd). It may therefore be unsurprising that 38% of expats in San Francisco are generally unsatisfied with their financial situation (vs. 26% globally), and one Peruvian expat explicitly points out that *"prices in San Francisco are very high"*.

On a more positive note, San Francisco comes second in the world for local career opportunities, only beaten by Boston. One Canadian expat praises the city's *"unmatched career opportunities"*. But these opportunities seem to come at a price: San Francisco is ranked low for job security (78th), work-life balance (78th), and working hours (80th). In fact, 35% of expats are unhappy with the latter (vs. 19% globally), and only those living in Seoul (81st) and Istanbul (82nd) are less satisfied. On the other hand, local residents in San Francisco are said to be the friendliest towards expats within the USA (10th worldwide), though this does not seem to help when it comes to finding new friends (44th). One Peruvian expat shares the difficulties with *"finding true friends"* as their main dislike of living in San Francisco, and a Brazilian expat explains that *"people are friendly towards foreigners, but that is about it, they do not become your close friends"*. In fact, 31% of expats find it hard to make new friends in the city (vs. 35% globally).

76. Los Angeles

Los Angeles ranks in the bottom 10 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019 (76th), and expats do not have many positives to share. However, the city is definitely loved for its local climate and weather (4th) — only beaten by Lisbon (3rd), Miami (2nd), and Barcelona (1st). *“Weather in LA is the best!”*, says an expat from Brazil.

On the downside, Los Angeles is voted one of the worst cities for local transportation (80th), alongside Houston (81st) and Lagos, Nigeria (82nd). The over-reliance on cars and the *“heavy traffic”* are often mentioned by expats as some of the city’s downsides. Exactly two-thirds (66%) rate the local transportation negatively (vs. 19% globally). Also, Los Angeles is ranked as one of the world’s most expensive cities in general (73rd) as well as for housing specifically (75th). More than three-quarters of expats (76%) find it difficult to afford housing (vs. 44% globally), and 39% are unhappy with their financial situation (vs. 26% globally). It does not get any better in terms of work life (68th): in the respective index, expats are the least satisfied with their job security (76th) and working hours (75th). Maybe the latter also contributes to the fact that 35% are unhappy with their social life (vs. 27% globally). Los Angeles even ranks worst for this aspect among all US American cities featured (62nd). One British expat finds that there is a *“lack of a real community”*, while another from Russia points out that *“it is very difficult to make friends”*.

75. Lima

Coming in 75th out of 82 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019, Lima is the only Central and South American city in the bottom 10. The city ranks worst in the Quality of Urban Living Index (79th), only ahead of Yangon (80th), Kuwait City (81st), and Lagos, Nigeria (82nd). Almost three in five respondents (57%) are unhappy with local transportation (vs. 19% globally), and close to three in ten (29%) worry about their personal safety (vs. 9% globally). A Belgian expat complains about *“general insecurity, poor public transport, and expensive healthcare”*. In fact, around a fifth of expats (19%) is unhappy with the availability of healthcare (vs. 13% globally), and 40% rate the quality of the environment negatively (vs. 17% globally).

The situation does not look a lot better in the Urban Work Life Index (70th): expats are particularly unhappy with their working hours (30% negative responses vs. 19% globally), the state of the local economy (19% vs. 15% globally), and the local career prospects (34% vs. 27% globally). However, Lima ranks among the top 25 cities worldwide in the Local Cost of Living (18th) and the Finance & Housing Indices (25th). In fact, more than half the respondents (52%) are happy with the cost of living (vs. 43% globally), and 45% find housing affordable (vs. 36% globally). An expat from the USA likes how the *“every day expenses are much more affordable,”* though only a below-average 44% state that their disposable household income is more than enough to cover daily costs (vs. 49% globally). Housing at least seems to not only be cheap but also easy to find, as 68% of expats rate its availability positively (vs. 50% globally).

74. New York City

New York City finds itself in the bottom 10 cities of the Expat City Ranking 2019 (74th). It performs poorly in most subcategories and is even placed in the bottom 10 for finance (73rd), health & environment (75th), work-life balance (76th), and local cost of living (81st). For the latter, New York only ranks ahead of one other US American city, San Francisco. Around six in seven expats (86%) rate the local cost of living in New York negatively (vs. 38% globally), and over three in ten (31%) even describe it as *very bad* (vs. 8% globally).

The Getting Settled Index (42nd) is New York's best ranking index — although it still receives the worst result among all US American cities featured in the Expat City Ranking here. Exactly two-thirds of expats (66%) find it easy to get used to the local culture (vs. 62% globally), and 68% describe the people in New York as friendly towards expats (vs. 64% globally). Additionally, 86% of expats enjoy the local leisure options in the city (vs. 74% globally), ranking New York 13th worldwide but behind Miami (11th) in the USA. *"There is always something going on in New York,"* says an expat from Austria, *"the options for social and entertainment are unparalleled."*

73. Yangon

In 73rd place, Yangon is the only Asian city that ranks among the bottom 10 in the world. On the upside, Yangon's locals seem to be one of the expat-friendliest worldwide: six in seven survey participants (86%) report that people are friendly towards foreign residents (vs. 64% globally), and an even higher share (88%) find them generally friendly (vs. 64% globally), positioning the city second worldwide in the Local Friendliness subcategory, just after Muscat. *"Myanmar people are good and very easy to work with,"* says an expat from Sri Lanka. While this seems to help with making new friends (25th), expats still struggle to feel at home (53rd) and to adapt to the local culture (55th). Only 54% of expats find it easy to get used to Yangon's culture (vs. 62% globally). Expats are happier with the local cost of living (19th): 54% rate this factor positively (vs. 43% globally), and 70% are happy with their financial situation (vs. 57% globally).

While Yangon also ranks low in the Urban Work Life Index (62nd), it is the Quality of Urban Living Index (80th) that puts it far behind other cities. *"I do not like the poor healthcare system,"* says a South Korean expat. In fact, more than half of the survey participants are not satisfied with the available healthcare (54% vs. 13% globally) or the local transportation in Yangon (52% vs. 19% globally), and 31% rate the local leisure options negatively (vs. 12% globally).

About the Expat City Ranking 2019

The [Expat City Ranking](#) is based on the annual [Expat Insider survey](#) by InterNations. For the survey, more than 20,000 expatriates representing 178 nationalities and living in 187 countries or territories provided information on various aspects of expat life. 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 more than 25 different aspects of urban life abroad on a scale of one to seven. The rating process emphasized the respondents' personal satisfaction with these aspects and considered both emotional topics as well as more factual aspects with equal weight. The respondents' ratings of the individual factors were then bundled in various combinations for a total of 13 subcategories, and their mean values were used to draw up four topical indices: Quality of Urban Living, Getting Settled, Urban Work Life, and Finance & Housing. These were further averaged in order to rank 82 cities worldwide. In 2019, the top 10 cities for expats are Taipei, Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, Singapore, Montréal, Lisbon, Barcelona, Zug, The Hague, and Basel. The survey also includes a Local Cost of Living Index, which does, however, not factor into the overall ranking to avoid overrepresenting financial aspects.

For a city to be featured in the Expat City Ranking 2019, a sample size of at least 50 survey participants per city was required.

About InterNations

With more than 3.5 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.

Find more information about InterNations on our [press page](#), in our [company blog](#), or in our [magazine](#).

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