

The Best and Worst Cities for Expats in Canada

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

- *Montréal (5th) ranks far ahead of Calgary (19th), Toronto (39th), and Vancouver (55th) in the Expat City Ranking 2019.*
- *Based on the ranking, Taipei, Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, Singapore, Montréal, Lisbon, Barcelona, Zug, The Hague, and Basel are 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 — Four Canadian cities are featured in the Expat City Ranking 2019 by [InterNations](#), the world's largest expat community with more than 3.5 million members. While Montréal makes it into the top 10, Calgary, Toronto, and Vancouver rank midfield. Expats find it comparatively easy to get settled in all Canadian cities featured in the ranking, but opinions vary when it comes to work life and the quality of life. In the Finance & Housing Index, they even rank among both the top 10 (Montréal) and the bottom 10 cities (Vancouver) in the world.

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.

Expat City Ranking 2019

Expat Life in 4 Canadian Cities

	 Quality of Urban Living Index	 Getting Settled Index	 Urban Work Life Index	 Finance & Housing Index	 Local Cost of Living Index	 Happiness Level
Calgary  19th	24th	10th	66th	34th	35th	83%
Montréal  5th	41st	29th	10th	8th	11th	79%
Toronto 39th	40th	24th	24th	70th	65th	70%
Vancouver 55th	22nd	23rd	57th	80th	80th	76%

The Expat City Ranking 2019 covers 82 cities in total.

What Expats Think about Life in 4 Canadian Cities

5. Montréal

Ranking 5th out of 82 in the Expat City Ranking 2019 survey, Montréal outranks 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 one 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.

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 Aachen, Germany (1st) and Panama City (2nd). Beyond working life, expats enjoy the local leisure options available in Montréal (9th), and a Mexican expat shares there are *"lots of activities all year long."* Despite that, 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.

19. Calgary

Coming 19th out of 82 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019, Calgary ranks first worldwide in the Health & Environment subcategory. Almost nine in ten expats (88%) rate the availability of healthcare positively (vs. 73% globally). The city ranks in the top 10 for this factor (9th), far ahead of Toronto (18th), Vancouver (52nd), and Montréal (69th). Expats also rate the quality of the environment highly (4th) — Calgary is only beaten by the Swiss cities of Zug (1st), Zurich (2nd), and Bern (3rd) — and more than nine in ten (93%) are happy with this factor (vs. 71% globally). *"I love the vast spaces and beautiful scenery,"* confirms an expat from Australia.

Moreover, Calgary ranks tenth in the Getting Settled Index, and expats consider the local residents to be the friendliest (9th worldwide) out of all Canadian cities. One German expat comments that *"the people are so friendly"*, and one British expat says, *"I value how everyone is respected regardless of ethnicity"*. Calgary is also the easiest city in the world to get used to the local culture: 69% say that this is easy (vs. 62% globally) and 70% feel at home (vs. 64% globally).

Expats' opinions are mixed when it comes to the Finance & Housing Index (34th): while Calgary ranks well for housing (16th), it only comes in 68th place for finance. In fact, 35% state that their disposable household income is not enough to cover all their living expenses (vs. 23% globally). What is more, Calgary is the worst-rated Canadian city in the Urban Work Life Index (66th worldwide), only ranking 71st in the Job & Career subcategory and even landing among the bottom 10 in the Job Security subcategory (75th). In regard to the latter, 51% are unhappy with the state of Calgary's local economy (vs. 15% globally), and an expat from Nigeria shares that *"the economy is in a terrible state, making it difficult to find professional jobs in my field."*

39. Toronto

Coming in 39th place out of 82 cities, Toronto achieves its best ranking in the Health & Environment subcategory (8th). More than five in six expats (84%) rate the availability of healthcare positively (vs. 73% globally), and a US American expat mentions *“accessible healthcare”* as their favorite feature of Toronto. Nonetheless, Toronto still ranks 40th in the Quality of Urban Living Index. This is mainly due to expats being generally unsatisfied with the local climate and weather (38% negative responses vs. 23% globally); they also consider Toronto’s local transportation (53rd) the worst in Canada. A Dutch expat thinks that the *“transportation infrastructure is a nightmare,”* and one from Iran describes the *“terrible transportation system”* as Toronto’s worst feature. When it comes to the Urban Work Life Index (24th), Toronto is the best Canadian city for local career opportunities (16th), and 66% of expats rate this factor positively (vs. 51% globally).

However, Toronto ranks worst among the Canadian cities in the Finance & Housing Index (70th). It is even one of the worst cities in the world in the Finance subcategory (78th), and only 42% of expats are generally satisfied with their financial situation (vs. 57% globally). One expat thinks the *“cost of living is brutal!”* and another respondent names the *“excessive tax burden”* as their most disliked feature of Toronto. In terms of housing, more than seven in ten (71%) find it unaffordable (vs. 44% globally), and more than two in five (42%) describe housing for expats as hard to find (vs. 32% globally).

55. Vancouver

Coming in 55th place out of 82 cities in the Expat City Ranking 2019, Vancouver performs best in the Quality of Urban Living Index (22nd) — the highest ranking among all Canadian cities, closely followed by Calgary (24th). Vancouver ranks in the top 10 worldwide for local leisure options (7th), alongside Montreal (9th), and 87% are happy with this factor (vs. 74% globally). *“It is very easy to find lots of fun hobbies and activities,”* states an expat from Kenya, and one from Australia comments that *“the access to social activities and the outdoors is great.”* Expats also find it easy to get used to the local culture (9th), and almost three-quarters of expats (72%) say they feel at home there (vs. 64% globally). Vancouver ranks 11th in the Feeling Welcome subcategory, and an Indian expat thinks that Canada is *“a very accepting country with welcoming people.”*

On the downside, Vancouver is the most expensive Canadian city and does worst in the Finance & Housing Index (80th) — only San Francisco (81st) and Dublin (82nd) perform worse on a global scale. In fact, 46% of expats in Vancouver are unsatisfied with their financial situation (vs. 26% globally), and 81% find local housing unaffordable (vs. 44% globally). A Serbian expat describes *“extremely expensive housing”* as what they dislike most about Vancouver.

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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