

# Expat Insider 2021 Survey Reveals: The Best and Worst Destinations for Living and Working Abroad

Expats in Chile are particularly concerned about safety and security.

- Taiwan, Mexico, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Portugal, New Zealand, Australia, Ecuador, Canada, and Vietnam are the best destinations for expats in 2021.
- The worst countries for expats are Kuwait (59th), Italy, South Africa, Russia, Egypt, Japan, Cyprus, Turkey, India, and Malta (50th).
- Chile comes 44th out of 59 destinations in the Expat Insider 2021 survey. It ranks especially low for the quality of life (45th), with a large share of expats not feeling safe in Chile.

Munich, 18 May 2021 — For the seventh time, [InterNations](https://www.internations.org), the world's largest expat community with around 4 million members, has published its *Expat Insider* survey. With more than 12,000 respondents, it is one of the most extensive surveys about living and working abroad, sharing insights into expat life in 59 destinations. The survey offers in-depth information on expats' satisfaction with the quality of life, ease of settling in, working life, personal finance, and the cost of living in their respective country of residence. Additionally, the respondents share **how they have been experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic** and how it has impacted their life.

Chile comes 44th out of 59 destinations in the *Expat Insider 2021* survey. Despite a low 46th place in the Cost of Living Index, the country performs quite well for personal finance (21st). However, expats are unhappy with the quality of life (45th), the ease of settling in (40th), and working abroad in Chile (41st). Overall, Taiwan, Mexico, and Costa Rica are the best expat destinations worldwide: all of them attract expats with their ease of settling in and good personal finances. On the other hand, the bottom three countries, Kuwait, Italy, and South Africa, all perform poorly in the Working Abroad Index. Additionally, Kuwait is the hardest country for expats to feel at home in, Italy is the worst for personal finances, and expats in South Africa do not feel safe.



## Chile in the *Expat Insider 2021* Survey

### Unhappy with Personal Safety and Peacefulness

Chile places 44th out of 59 countries in the *Expat Insider 2021* survey, with both good and poor results in the Quality of Life Index (45th). The country ranks among the bottom 10 in the Safety & Security subcategory (55th), with 11% of expats not feeling safe in Chile (vs. 8% globally) and 22% rating its peacefulness negatively (vs. 9% globally). Additionally, 40% of respondents do not find healthcare affordable, which is 19 percentage points above the global average (21%). A British expat specifically lists the “*cost of healthcare and the air pollution in Santiago*” as downsides of living in Chile. In fact, 44% of expats in Chile also rate the air quality negatively (vs. 20% globally), placing the country in the bottom 10 for this factor as well (51st).

### Relationships and Overall Job Satisfaction as Highlights

On the upside, however, Chile performs much better in the Personal Happiness subcategory of the Quality of Life Index (24th). This is mainly due to 90% of expats who are happy with their romantic relationship (vs. 87% globally). In Chile, 56% of expats with a partner or spouse are in a relationship with a local resident (vs. 38% globally), while 20% are with someone from the same home country as themselves (vs. 38% globally) and 24% have a partner or spouse from yet another country (vs. 24% globally). In terms of individual happiness, 73% of expats are satisfied with their life in general, which is just slightly below the global average (75%).

Chile ranks low in the Working Abroad Index (41st), with especially poor results for working hours (52nd): 30% of expats rate this factor negatively (vs. 16% globally). Still, most expats (72%) are satisfied with their job in general (vs. 68% globally), placing the country in the top 10 for this factor (8th). Interestingly, a quarter of all expats working in Chile (25%) have a job in the field of education, compared to just 12% globally.

### Happy with Disposable Income despite Expenses

Chile performs above the global average in the Personal Finance Index (21st): 79% of expats say their disposable household income is enough or more than enough to cover their expenses abroad (vs. 77% globally). An Argentinian expat says “*the good professional salaries*” are among their favorite things about living in Chile. Close to two-thirds (64%) are also satisfied with their financial situation, the same share as the global average (64%). However, the country ranks lower than average in the Cost of Living Index (46th), with more than half the expats (51%) unsatisfied with the cost of living, compared to just 34% globally.

Lastly, Chile comes in 40th place in the Ease of Settling In Index: 34% of expats say finding new friends is difficult (vs. 32% globally). What is more, over half the respondents (52%) find it hard to get by without speaking the local language (vs. 29% globally). On the other hand, 55% agree that learning the local language is easy (vs. 39% globally).

### The Impact of COVID-19 on Expat Life in Chile

The pandemic has changed the plans of many expats. Worldwide, 18% of expats have decided *not* to move back home any time soon — this is only the case for 11% of expats in Chile. And while another 11% of expats in Chile will move back home earlier than anticipated due to the pandemic, this applies to just 5% of respondents globally. The most important sources of information regarding COVID-19 and related regulations for expats in Chile are local news (59% vs. 47% globally), followed by social media (44% vs. 40% globally) and official government channels (42% vs. 48% globally). Two out of

three expats (67%) are satisfied with the official communication regarding the pandemic (vs. 66% globally).

## The Best and Worst Destinations for Living and Working Abroad in 2021

According to the *Expats Insider 2021* survey, the top 10 destinations for expats are Taiwan (1st), Mexico, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Portugal, New Zealand, Australia, Ecuador, Canada, and Vietnam (10th). All these countries stand out with above-average results in the Ease of Settling In Index, with Mexico ranking first, followed by Malaysia (2nd) and Costa Rica (3rd). Moreover, half of these countries also rank among the top 10 in the Personal Finance Index. Taiwan (11th) and Portugal (14th) narrowly miss out on a top 10 spot in this index, while New Zealand (28th), Australia (39th), and Canada (50th) have a weaker performance in this regard.

The worst countries for expats are Kuwait (59th), Italy, South Africa, Russia, Egypt, Japan, Cyprus, Turkey, India, and Malta (50th). Besides Japan (21st), all these countries rank far below the global average in the Quality of Life Index. What is more, eight out of the ten worst-rated destinations are also among the bottom 10 in the Working Abroad Index — the only two exceptions being India (46th) and Malta (31st), which, however, also receive mediocre results at best. Lastly, India is the only country in the overall bottom 10 that performs very well in the Personal Finance Index (4th), while the others — such as Italy (59th), Kuwait (58th), and Cyprus (57th) — rank below the global average or even land among the bottom 10.

## Expats Life during the COVID-19 Pandemic

On a global scale, 45% of survey respondents say that COVID-19 had an impact on their current stay abroad or their relocation plans: the **share of expats** who say so (**37%**) either decided to *not* move back home in the near future (18%), planned to move to another country but had to change these plans (8%), will move to another country due to the pandemic (6%), or will move back home sooner than originally planned (5%).

The **share of local respondents whose relocation plans were affected by COVID-19 (61%)** is a lot higher: some of them were living abroad but moved home sooner than planned (18%), others were planning to move abroad but had to change their plans (35%), and about one in ten have now decided to move abroad because of the pandemic (9%).

### The Pandemic's Impact on Everyday Life

Of course, COVID-19 has not only disrupted the relocation plans of expats worldwide. When asked where they see the biggest impact of the pandemic on their personal life *right now*, the survey respondents point out its effects on personal travel (25%), social life (23%), and their work or business (16%) in particular. In the *long run*, respondents are still concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on their social life (17% of all respondents), and there are also considerable worries regarding personal travel (22%).

### How Expats Stay Informed on COVID-19

Expats across the world mostly rely on official government channels (48%), local news (47%), and social media (40%) for news on the COVID-19 situation and the related regulations in their country of residence. Considering the importance of government channels, just **how satisfied are expats with the official communication regarding COVID-19 and related regulations?** Worldwide, not quite two-thirds (66%) rate this factor positively, with close to a quarter (24%) saying they are completely satisfied. The main complaint among expats who are *not* satisfied with the official communication on the pandemic is that the information is unclear, confusing, and/or contradictory (67%).

**For further information on the global impact of COVID-19 on expat life, please take a look at the full press release in the download center of our e-mail.**

### About the InterNations *Expat Insider 2021* Survey

For its annual [Expat Insider survey](#), InterNations asked 12,420 expats representing 174 nationalities and living in 186 countries or territories to provide information on various aspects of expat life, as well as their gender, age, and nationality. Participants were asked to rate up to 37 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 13 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 Cost of Living. The first four of these indices were further averaged together with expats' general satisfaction with their life in order to rank 59 expat destinations around the world. In 2021, the top 10 are Taiwan, Mexico, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Portugal, New Zealand, Australia, Ecuador, Canada, and Vietnam. Moreover, expats were asked about how COVID-19 has impacted their life abroad; however, these responses did not influence the overall ranking.

For a country 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 around 4 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 6,000 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](#), or in our [magazine](#).

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