

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

Expats in Hungary enjoy the low cost of living but struggle with feeling at home.

- 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).
- Hungary comes 48th out of 59 destinations in the Expatriate Insider 2021 survey. Although it ranks very well for both the cost of living (8th) and personal finance (24th), it gets below-average results in all other indices.

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 *Expatriate 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.

Hungary comes 48th out of 59 destinations in the *Expatriate Insider 2021* survey. The country does particularly well for the cost of living (8th), its performance in all other indices is average to poor: it lands in 24th place in the Personal Finance Index, ranks 39th for both the Quality of Life and Working Abroad Indices, and even ends up in 47th place for the ease of settling in. 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.



## Hungary in the *Expat Insider 2021* Survey

### Expats in Hungary Could Be Happier

Hungary lands in a low 48th place out of 59 destinations in the *Expat Insider 2021* survey. Coming 39th in the Quality of Life Index, the country performs especially poorly in the Personal Happiness subcategory (57th). Although 74% of expats say they are happy with their life in general, this is slightly below the global average of 75% and a lot further below the results of top-ranking countries in this subcategory, such as Mexico (89% happy), Costa Rica (88%), and Portugal (84%). Overall, only Saudi Arabia (58th) and Kuwait (59th) do worse in the Personal Happiness subcategory.

### Great Transportation Infrastructure but Terrible Medical Care

On the upside, the majority of expats is happy with the transportation infrastructure (90% vs. 76% globally), their travel opportunities (88% vs. 84% globally), and the climate and weather (77% vs. 66% globally). Additionally, 76% rate the local leisure options positively (vs. 72% globally). However, one out of four expats (25%) is not satisfied with their socializing and leisure activities in Hungary (vs. 18% globally).

Hungary comes in 49th place in the Health & Well-Being subcategory, with almost one-third of expats (31%) rating the quality of medical care negatively (vs. 14% globally). A Canadian expat's least favorite thing about living in Hungary is the *"difference between public and private healthcare"*. And a British expat shares: *"The general healthcare services are weak, and emergency healthcare is poor."*

### A Good Place to Live for Expats on a Budget

Hungary lands among the top 10 of the Cost of Living Index (8th), ranking behind Vietnam (1st), Malaysia (2nd), Ukraine (3rd), Mexico (4th), Colombia (5th), Taiwan (6th), and Ecuador (7th). In fact, 73% of expats rate the local cost of living positively (vs. 48% globally). *"I like how cheap things are here,"* says an Irish expat. In financial terms, Hungary also performs slightly better than average in the Personal Finance Index (24th). Most expats (82%) consider their disposable household income to be enough or more than enough to cover their expenses (vs. 77% globally). This is a fairly solid result, considering that 38% of expats have an income that does not exceed 25,000 USD per year (vs. 30% globally) — and 19% of them even have an annual income of less than 12,000 USD (vs. 15% globally).

### Hungarian Is the Most Challenging Language for Expats

Ranking 47th in the Ease of Settling In Index, Hungary receives its worst results in the Language subcategory (57th), where it comes last worldwide for the ease of learning the local language (59th): 88% of expats describe this as difficult (vs. 42% globally). This is probably the reason why 24% of expats do not speak Hungarian at all (vs. 13% globally). However, 46% speak it a little, which is a fairly large share compared to the global average (30%). A Venezuelan expat shares: *"If there is a difficult language to learn in the world, it is Hungarian. It takes years to be able to speak it just at an elementary level."*

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

The pandemic has mostly affected expats in Hungary when it comes to their social life (34% vs. 24% globally) and personal travel (27% vs. 28% globally). *"My social life has been killed by COVID-19 at the worst moment possible: my arrival in Hungary,"* says a French expat. And a British expat in Hungary explains: *"The pandemic has impacted my opportunities to socialize and develop networks tremendously."* Just over half the expats in Hungary (55%) are satisfied with the official communication regarding the pandemic (vs. 66% globally). The most frequently used sources of information regarding COVID-19

and related regulations are expat news and international media (54% vs. 32% globally), followed by social media (43% vs. 40% 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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