

## Expats in China Struggle with the Local Business Culture

The *Expat Insider 2022* survey by InterNations reveals the best and worst destinations for living and working abroad.

- Mexico, Indonesia, Taiwan, Portugal, Spain, the UAE, Vietnam, Thailand, Australia, and Singapore are the best destinations for expats in 2022.
- The worst destinations for expats are Kuwait (52nd), New Zealand, Hong Kong, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Japan, South Africa, Turkey, Italy, and Malta (43rd).
- China ranks 33rd out of 52: expats are happy with their personal finances but dissatisfied with the digital life and business culture.

Munich, 12 July 2022 — For the ninth time, [InterNations](https://www.internations.org), the world's largest expat community with more than 4 million members, has published the results of its *Expat Insider* survey. With nearly 12,000 respondents, it is one of the most extensive surveys about living and working abroad, providing insights into expat life in 52 destinations. The survey offers in-depth information on expats' satisfaction with the **Quality of Life**, **Ease of Settling In**, **Working Abroad**, and **Personal Finance** in their respective country of residence. For the first time, the ranking also includes the new **Expat Essentials Index**, which covers digital life, admin topics, housing, and language.

China comes 33rd out of 52 destinations in the *Expat Insider 2022* survey, landing among the best in the Personal Finance Index (9th). While it ranks midfield in the Working Abroad (26th), Ease of Settling In (30th), and Quality of Life (33rd) Indices, the country ends up among the bottom 3 in the Expats Essentials Index (50th). Overall, 64% of expats are happy with their life in China, compared to 71% globally.



**Mexico** (1st), **Indonesia** (2nd), and **Taiwan** (3rd) make up the top 3 destinations, and they all rank very well in the Ease of Settling In and Personal Finance Indices. On the other hand, the bottom 3 destinations, **Kuwait** (52nd), **New Zealand**, and **Hong Kong**, all perform poorly in terms of personal finances for expats. While Kuwait ranks among the worst destinations worldwide for all factors, expats in New Zealand struggle with their career and those in Hong Kong are unhappy with the local environment.

## China in the *Expatriate Insider 2022* Survey

### Good Financial Security

Ranking 33rd in the *Expatriate Insider 2022* survey overall, China performs best in the Personal Finance Index (9th). Expats are happy with their financial situation (70% satisfied vs. 60% globally), and 86% report that their disposable household income is enough or more than enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 72% globally). This places China second for this factor, just behind Vietnam (1st). Moreover, 53% of expats are satisfied with the general cost of living in China, compared to a global average of 45%. *"Everything is extremely affordable and easily accessible in China,"* says an expat from Zimbabwe.

### Easy to Get Around

China also ranks well in the Travel & Transit Subcategory (16th). It is one of the countries where expats find public transportation the most affordable (3rd), only beaten by Luxembourg (1st) and Estonia (2nd). Almost all expats are happy with both the affordability (95% vs. 70% globally) and the availability (93% vs. 73% globally). They also feel safe when getting around by foot and/or by bicycle (92% vs. 77% globally). However, 28% of expats are unhappy with their travel opportunities, more than triple the global average (8%).

### The Natural Environment Is Lacking

In the end, China only ranks 33rd in the Quality of Life Index, which is partly due to its bottom 10 spot in the Environment & Climate Subcategory (45th). More than one in four expats (26%) rate the country's natural environment negatively, compared to only 8% globally. Expats also struggle with the availability of green goods in China (45th) — about one in three (34%) are unhappy with this factor (vs. 17% globally). The air quality (43rd) is another topic that China places in the bottom 10 for. *"I know we will not have a clear sky, and I worry about how this will affect my health,"* says a Belgian expat.

### Good Salaries & Job Security

In terms of Working Abroad (26th), China's performance is mixed. The country ranks very well in the Salary & Job Security Subcategory (10th): three in four expats working in China (75%) feel that they are paid fairly in accordance with their industry or field of work (vs. 62% globally). Expats are also happy with the state of the economy in China (78% vs. 64% globally) and their job security (64% vs. 59% globally).

### A Poor Working Culture

When it comes to Work Culture & Satisfaction (45th), the country has its downsides. More than half the expats in China (52%) believe that the work culture does not encourage creativity (vs. 26% globally), and 44% find that it does not support flexibility (vs. 19% globally). In addition, 50% say that the business culture does not promote independent work / flat hierarchies, either, compared to only 28% globally. Interestingly, China still performs well in terms of expats seeing a purpose in their work (10th) and expressing overall job satisfaction (9th) — 71% of expats in China are happy with their job in general, compared to 64% globally.

### **Expats Struggle to Feel at Home**

Expats have mixed views of China when it comes to the Ease of Settling In Index (30th). Nearly three in four expats (73%) have a personal support network (vs. 59% globally), ranking the country third for this factor. On the other hand, expats vote China among the bottom 10 in the Culture & Welcome Subcategory (43rd). About one in five expats (19%) do not feel welcome in China (vs. 16% globally), and 26% do not feel at home there (vs. 21% globally). Additionally, 31% find it difficult to get used to the local culture, compared to 18% globally.

### **The Worst-Rated Destination for Digital Life**

In the Expat Essentials Index, China features among the bottom three countries (50th), with only Germany (52nd) and Japan (51st) ranking even worse. Although nine out of ten expats (91%) are happy with the cashless payment options (vs. 84% globally), China places last worldwide in the Digital Life Subcategory (52nd), due to its highly restricted access to online services (such as social media). In fact, 69% of expats are unhappy with this factor, compared to only 7% globally. Additionally, 28% of expats have trouble getting high-speed internet access at home (vs. 11% globally). *"I am having a hard time getting in touch with family and friends. It is hard to navigate the internet situation,"* says a Jamaican expat. This goes together with China's 51st rank for the ability of expats to openly express themselves and their opinions, only ahead of Kuwait (52nd). *"There is no individual freedom,"* shares an expat from France. *"Everything is top-down regulation."*

### **Tough Daily Life**

What is more, China also ranks poorly in the Admin Topics (48th) and Language (46th) Subcategories. While 68% find it hard to learn the local language(s) (vs. 38% globally), 47% at least say that it is easy to live there without speaking them (vs. 51% globally). In terms of Admin Topics, expats find it hard to open a local bank account (41% vs. 21% globally) and say that it was difficult to get a visa when they moved there (42% vs. 24% globally). Lastly, 51% find it hard to deal with the local bureaucracy/authorities, compared to 39% globally.

## **The Best and Worst Destinations for Living and Working Abroad in 2022**

According to the *Expat Insider 2022* survey results, Mexico (1st), Indonesia, Taiwan, Portugal, Spain, the UAE, Vietnam, Thailand, Australia, and Singapore (10th) are the best destinations for expats. The top 5 destinations stand out with regard to the Ease of Settling In and Personal Finance. They also tend to perform well in the Expat Essentials Index. While they all land just midfield in the Working Abroad Index, their results in the Quality of Life Index are somewhat mixed. Spain (1st), Taiwan, and Portugal make up the top 3 worldwide, but expats in Mexico (24th) and Indonesia (41st) are not satisfied with the local quality of life.

The worst destinations for expats are Kuwait (52nd), New Zealand, Hong Kong, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Japan, South Africa, Turkey, Italy, and Malta (43rd). Kuwait is among the world's worst destinations in each individual index as well as in the overall ranking. Moreover, all bottom 5 destinations have an average to poor performance in the Working Abroad and Personal Finance Indices. While Italy is an exception regarding Personal Finance (33rd), it only ranks 48th in the Expat Essentials Index.

**You can find out more about the best and worst destinations for expats in 2022 in the respective press release (available under "Downloads" in the email).**

### **About the InterNations *Expatriate Insider* 2022 Survey**

For its annual [Expatriate Insider survey](#), InterNations asked 11,970 expats representing 177 nationalities and living in 181 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 56 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 16 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 Expatriate Essentials. These indices were further averaged together with expats' general happiness with their life abroad in order to rank 52 expat destinations around the world. In 2022, the top 10 are Mexico, Indonesia, Taiwan, Portugal, Spain, the UAE, Vietnam, Thailand, Australia, and Singapore.

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 more than 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.

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