

Germany Is the Toughest Country to Handle the Basics of Expat Life

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).*
- *Germany ranks only 42nd out of 52: the country does well for working abroad, but expats struggle with settling in and disappointing digital services.*

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.

Destination Report

Germany



Germany ranks 42nd out of 52 destinations in the *Expatriate Insider 2022* survey. It ranks best in the Working Abroad Index (12th) and receives decent results in the Quality of Life Index (15th). However, its result in the Personal Finance Index is rather mediocre (24th). Even worse, Germany ends up among the bottom 5 in the Ease of Settling In Index (48th) and is the worst in the world in the Expatriate Essentials Index (52nd). Overall, just 66% of expats are happy with their life in Germany, 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.

Germany in the *Expatriate Insider 2022* Survey

The Barest of Essentials for Expats in Germany

Overall, Germany lands in a below-average 42nd place out of 52 in the *Expatriate Insider 2022* survey and even ranks last in the Expatriate Essentials Index (52nd). This crushing verdict is due to its bottom 10 results in three out of four subcategories: Housing (47th), Digital Life (48th), and Language (49th).

Expats find it very hard to find housing in Germany: 56% rate this factor negatively, more than twice the global average of 27%. They also have a hard time living in Germany without local language skills (46% unhappy vs. 32% globally). Since 55% describe German as difficult to learn (vs. 38% globally), this is a major obstacle. Lastly, Germany does very badly regarding digital life, such as cashless payment options (51st) and easy access to high-speed internet (49th). Close to three in ten (27%) are unhappy with the options to pay without cash, compared to 8% globally.

Hard to Deal with the *Ämter*

The lack of digitalization continues when it comes to the availability of government services online (43rd): about one in three expats (33%) rate this factor negatively (vs. 21% globally). The country fares a bit better regarding administrative topics in general (36th), but not by much. For instance, 52% of expats find it difficult to deal with the local authorities (vs. 39% globally). *"I really hate German bureaucracy,"* an expat from the UK says. *"Especially the fact that nothing is digitized! It takes forever to get in touch with any of the local Ämter to discuss residence permits and the like."*

An Impressive Degree of Job Security

On the plus side, though, Germany nearly makes it into the top 10 in the Working Abroad Index (12th) and even features among the top 5 in the Salary & Job Security Subcategory (4th). Expats give their job security the second-best rating worldwide (73% happy vs. 59% globally), and 34% could not be any happier with this factor (vs. 25% globally). Only Ireland (1st) does better. Nine out of ten expats (90%) also rate the German economy favorably (vs. 64% globally). This might have contributed to their rosy view of the local job market: 58% give it a positive rating, compared to 47% worldwide. *"I love the stability of life in Germany,"* says a Polish expat. *"Of work, too. The work-life balance is great, and so is the respect given to employees."*

Creativity Is Not Encouraged

However, this is not the case for all aspects of working in Germany. In the Work Culture & Job Satisfaction Subcategory, it places only 24th. Survey respondents are especially dissatisfied with the local business culture in one respect: 34% say that it does *not* encourage creativity or thinking out of the box (vs. 26% globally). The most common field of work for expats in Germany is IT (19%), followed by manufacturing and engineering (13%) and healthcare (9%).

Safe & Green

In the Quality of Life Index, Germany lands in a decent 15th place. It performs particularly well in the Safety & Security (9th) and the Environment & Climate (13th) Subcategories. The respondents commend Germany for being a politically stable country (87% happy vs. 64% globally), where they feel safe (90% happy vs. 81% globally). *"I feel really safe here,"* an expat from the US stresses. *"There is little to no violence."* They also agree that green goods and services are easily available (78% happy vs. 64% globally) and that the German government supports environmentally friendly policies (81% vs. 61% globally).

Good Infrastructure, Subpar Leisure Options

Germany's results in the Travel & Transit Subcategory (20th) are somewhat mixed. For example, 91% of expats rate the infrastructure for cars positively (vs. 75% globally). Another 90% say it is easy and safe to get around on foot or by bicycle (vs. 77% globally). But 23% do not consider public transportation affordable (vs. 15% globally).

The Quality of Life Index is also impacted by the below-average results in the Leisure Options Subcategory (38th). Only 63% are happy with the culture and nightlife, slightly less than the global average of 67%. And 17% are not satisfied with the local dining options (vs. 12% globally).

One of the World's Worst Destinations for Settling In

One of Germany's weakest spots is the Ease of Settling In Index, though. Ranking 48th, it ends up among the global bottom 5. In fact, it places among the ten worst-rated destinations for every single factor. Among other things, 37% of expats are not happy with their social life (vs. 26% globally), 28% describe the population as unfriendly towards foreign residents (vs. 18% globally), and 31% struggle with getting used to the local culture (vs. 19% globally). It is hardly a surprise that nearly one in four expats (23%) do not feel welcome in Germany (vs. 16% globally).

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

According to the *Expatriate 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 *Expat Insider 2022* Survey

For its annual [Expat 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 Expat 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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