

Safety & Security Are Main Concerns for Expats in South Africa

The *Expats 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).
- South Africa ranks 46th out of 52: expats are particularly unhappy with the Quality of Life (43rd) and Working Abroad (46th).

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 *Expats 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 **Expats Essentials Index**, which covers digital life, admin topics, housing, and language.

Destination Report

South Africa



South Africa comes 46th out of 52 destinations in the *Expat Insider 2022* survey, landing among the worst-rated worldwide in the Working Abroad (46th) and Quality of Life (43rd) Indices. While the country does not perform much better for Personal Finance (42nd), it ranks midfield in the Expat Essentials (28th) and Ease of Settling In (26th) Indices. Overall, 61% of expats are happy with their life in South Africa, 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.

South Africa in the *Expat Insider 2022* Survey

Unsafe & Hard to Get Around

South Africa lands in 46th place out of 52 destinations in the *Expat Insider 2022* survey. It ranks particularly low in the Quality of Life Index (43rd), which is mainly due to its poor performance in the Travel & Transit (49th) and Safety & Security (51st) Subcategories. It is even rated the worst destination worldwide for personal safety. Almost half the expats in South Africa (48%) feel unsafe, compared to just 9% globally.

The country also lands in the bottom 3 for political stability (51st), with 43% of expats rating this factor negatively, compared to just 15% globally. Only expats in Hong Kong (52nd) are less satisfied with the political stability there. Multiple expats express their fear of crime and the lack of political stability in South Africa. *"Safety is the biggest problem,"* says an expat from Iran, and an Irish expat shares that *"crime, safety, inequality, and poverty"* are his biggest concerns.

Close to half of expats (48%) also find it hard to get around on foot and/or by bicycle (vs. 13% globally), ranking South Africa last worldwide for this factor (52nd). It probably does not help that they are also unhappy with the affordability (25% vs. 15% globally) and the availability (42% vs. 17% globally) of public transportation.

A Fantastic Natural Environment

However, South Africa performs well in the Environment & Climate (15th) and Leisure Options (11th) Subcategories, providing a variety of culinary choices (8th) and plenty of opportunities for recreational sports (16th). More than four out of five expats (84%) are happy with the culinary variety and dining options, compared to 77% globally. What is more, more than nine in ten expats (91%) rate the natural environment positively (vs. 83% globally), and 78% are happy with the climate and weather (vs. 62% globally). *"Great climate, great natural environment, and very good food,"* summarizes an Italian expat.

A Worrying Job Market

The Working Abroad Index (46th) is another lowlight about expat life in South Africa. The country ranks among the bottom 3 in the Salary & Job Security (51st) and Career Prospects (49th) Subcategories. It is even ranked last for job security, with 36% of expats unhappy with this factor (vs. 20% globally). *"The job situation is difficult. I am not working in my profession and the monthly income is not enough, but we are surviving,"* says a German expat. In fact, close to half the expats (47%) are unhappy with the local job market (vs. 27% globally), and 28% find that they are not paid fairly for their work (vs. 20% globally).

On the bright side, South Africa ranks a lot better in the Work Culture & Satisfaction Subcategory (21st). The majority of expats (80%) sees a purpose in their work (vs. 78% globally), and 59% agree that the local business culture encourages creativity (vs. 51% globally). However, this is not enough to make them happy: one in four expats (25%) is generally unhappy with their job, compared to 16% globally.

Affordable Housing, but Tough Bureaucracy

In the Expat Essentials Index, South Africa ranks midfield (28th). It lands in 15th place in the Housing Subcategory: 46% of expats are happy with its affordability (vs. 39% globally), and 66% describe it as easy to find housing (vs. 52% globally). However, the country ranks 45th in the Admin Topics Subcategory. Expats found it hard to acquire a visa when moving to South Africa (45% unhappy vs. 24% globally), and more than half (54%) struggle when dealing with the bureaucracy/authorities in the country (vs. 39% globally).

Expats Enjoy Their Social Life

Lastly, South Africa performs best in the Ease of Settling In Index (26th). Expats are happy with their social life (59% vs. 56% globally) and find it easy to make local friends (46% vs. 42% globally). More than a quarter of expats (26%) are mainly friends with local residents (vs. 17% globally), and 56% describe their social circle as a fairly mixed group (vs. 49% globally). However, it seems like this is not the case for all of them: close to three in ten expats (29%) describe the local residents as unfriendly towards foreign residents (vs. 18% 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 *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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