

Expats in Sweden Love the Work Life but Struggle to Find Friends

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).
- Sweden ranks 39th out of 52: expats are very satisfied with their working experience but find it quite hard to get settled in.

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

Sweden



Overall Ranking
39th out of 52

Happiness Level



64% Sweden
71% Global

Expats in Sweden



Average Age & Gender Split

43.7
Years old

46% Male
53% Female

0.7%
Prefer to self-describe



Top Reasons for Moving

20%
To go to school or university

19%
For love

14%
Found a job on their own



Top Income Groups

22%
25,000–50,000 USD

21%
50,000–75,000 USD

19%
Less than 12,000 USD



Working Hours

39.2 h
Per week

12%
Part time

88%
Full time



Top Sectors

24%
IT

14%
Manufacturing & engineering

9%
Education



Quality of Life Index

20 out of 52

21 Travel & Transit
4 Environment & Climate
45 Leisure Options
37 Health & Well-Being
12 Safety & Security



Ease of Settling In Index

51 out of 52

49 Local Friendliness
51 Finding Friends
49 Culture & Welcome



Working Abroad Index

8 out of 52

35 Career Prospects
3 Salary & Job Security
3 Work & Leisure
8 Work Culture & Satisfaction



Personal Finance Index

38 out of 52



Expat Essentials Index

26 out of 52

6 Digital Life
22 Admin Topics
48 Housing
17 Language



Sweden comes 39th out of 52 destinations in the *Expat Insider 2022* survey. The country ranks best in the Working Abroad Index (8th), followed by the Quality of Life (20th) and Expat Essentials (26th) Indices. While its performance in the Personal Finance Index (38th) is still mediocre, it is one of the world's worst-rated destinations in the Ease of Settling In Index (51st). Overall, 64% of expats are happy with their life in Sweden, 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.

Sweden in the *Expat Insider 2022* Survey

An Excellent Experience at Work

Sweden performs best in the Working Abroad Index (8th), where it ranks third in the Salary & Job Security Subcategory, only behind Switzerland (1st) and Denmark (2nd). In fact, 89% of expats are satisfied with the state of the economy in Sweden (vs. 64% globally), and 73% rate their job security positively (vs. 59% globally).

In addition, expats vote Sweden third in the Work & Leisure Subcategory. They are not only pleased with their work-life balance (75% vs. 62% globally) but also with their working hours (77% vs. 63% globally). Interestingly, they only work slightly fewer hours per week than the average survey respondent (39.2 hours vs. 40.2 hours globally). When it comes to Work Culture & Satisfaction (8th), expats feel that the work culture supports flexibility (85% happy vs. 60% globally), promotes independent work (66% happy vs. 45% globally), and encourages creativity (63% happy vs. 51% globally).

Great Environment with Unsatisfactory Weather

While Sweden only ranks 20th in the Quality of Life Index overall, it features among the best-rated countries in the Environment & Climate Subcategory (4th). The vast majority of expats in Sweden is pleased with the air quality (93% vs. 65% globally) and the urban environment (91% vs. 67% globally). *"The natural beauty of Sweden is inspiring, I feel completely unaffected by any form of pollution,"* shares a South African expat.

What is more, 88% agree that the Swedish government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 61% globally), and 82% are happy with the availability of green goods and services (vs. 64% globally). The only lowlight in this subcategory is the climate and weather (44th), which is rated negatively by 37% of expats — nearly twice the global average (19%).

Safe & Sound in Sweden

Sweden ranks twelfth in the Safety & Security Subcategory. The majority of expats (82%) rates the country's political stability positively (vs. 64% globally), and 78% report that they can openly express themselves and their opinions (vs. 64% globally).

When it comes to Travel & Transit (21st), expats are particularly happy with Sweden's infrastructure for cars (90% satisfied vs. 75% globally). Additionally, almost all expats (94%) find it safe to get around by foot and/or by bicycle (vs. 77% globally). *"I like the security here. I can freely walk or commute anywhere in the city without any fear. That is the biggest thing for me,"* explains an expat from Pakistan. While most expats (91%) are happy with the availability of public transportation (vs. 73% globally), 21% say that it is not affordable (vs. 15% globally).

Healthcare Is Hard to Access

Sweden is listed among both the best- and the worst-rated destinations in the Health & Well-Being Subcategory (37th). It ranks tenth for the affordability of healthcare (76% happy vs. 61% globally), but 24% of expats are unhappy with its availability (vs. 13% globally). Additionally, 30% say it is difficult to access all the healthcare services that they need (vs. 17% globally), ranking the country second to last for this factor (51st). Just Ireland (52nd) ranks worse. A Canadian expat mentions the *"lack of access to healthcare"* as one of the things she dislikes most about life in Sweden. *"I've been waiting three months for an important doctor's appointment."*

A High Degree of Digitization but Expensive Housing

Sweden's major highlight in the Expat Essentials Index (26th) is its great Digital Life (6th). Close to all expats (96%) are delighted with the unrestricted access to online services (vs. 82% globally). They also find it very easy to get high-speed internet access at home (90% happy vs. 79% globally).

The lowlight for Sweden in this index is the Housing Subcategory (48th). Nearly three in five respondents (58%) report that it is difficult for expats to find housing, more than double the global average (27%). As a result, Sweden ranks second to last for this factor (51st), only ahead of Ireland (52nd). Additionally, 57% describe housing as expensive, compared to 43% globally.

Expats Struggle to Settle In

Sweden performs worst in the Ease of Settling In Index (51st), where it only ranks ahead of Kuwait (52nd). When it comes to the Local Friendliness Subcategory (49th), 36% of expats describe the local population as generally unfriendly (vs. 17% globally). Another 26% consider them unfriendly towards foreign residents in particular (vs. 18% globally). *"It is difficult to get real friendships with the locals,"* shares a German expat. On top of that, Sweden ranks in the bottom 5 of the Culture & Welcome Subcategory (49th). In fact, expats feel neither welcome (25% unhappy vs. 16% globally) nor at home in Sweden (28% unhappy vs. 21% globally). *"The culture can be quite cold sometimes,"* a Swiss expat shares.

It might be no surprise then that expats find it hard to make friends in Sweden — they rank the country second to last in the Finding Friends Subcategory (51st). More than three in five (63%) find it hard to make local friends (vs. 37% globally), and 38% are unhappy with their social life in Sweden (vs. 26% globally). One in three (33%) does not have a personal support network either (vs. 24% 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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