

Expats in Switzerland Trade a High Quality of Life for an Unsatisfying Social 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).
- Switzerland ranks 19th out of 52: it offers expats a high standard of living, but they need to brace themselves for a hard time settling 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.

Switzerland ranks 19th out of 52 destinations in the *Expat Insider 2022* survey. It does best in the Quality of Life Index (6th) and also gets above-average results in the Working Abroad (16th) and Expats Essentials (20th) Indices. While it lands in a rather mediocre 31st place for Personal Finance, Switzerland actually ends up among the bottom 10 in the Ease of Settling In Index (43rd). Still, 76% of expats are happy with their life in Switzerland, 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.

Switzerland in the *Expats Insider 2022 Survey*

Safe & Orderly, with a High Standard of Living

Expats rate Switzerland best in the Quality of Life Index (6th). It does even better in two subcategories, placing second for both Environment & Climate and Safety & Security. *"Switzerland offers a high standard of living. It is very safe and orderly,"* a Brazilian expat comments. The respondents regard it as the world's politically most stable destination: 93% rate this factor positively (vs. 64% globally) and another 94% are satisfied with their personal safety (vs. 81% globally).

Moreover, 98% are happy with the natural environment (vs. 83% globally), ranking the country first worldwide. It also makes it into the top 10 for similar factors, such as air quality (4th) and the availability of green goods and services (4th). Close to nine in ten expats (86%) rate the urban environment positively (vs. 67% globally), and 83% agree that the government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 61% globally).

High Standards Meet High Costs

Switzerland also receives great results in the Travel & Transit Subcategory (6th). It gets another first place for the travel opportunities (95% happy vs. 82% globally). Expats both love the infrastructure for cars (93% happy vs. 75% globally) and find it easy and safe to get around on foot or by bicycle (94% happy vs. 77% globally). The only downside is the affordability of public transportation (38th). While 92% rate its availability positively (vs. 73% globally), 20% also find it unaffordable (vs. 15% globally).

Affordability is an issue with regard to healthcare, too. Expats consider its quality very good (86% happy vs. 72% globally), and 79% have access to all the healthcare services they need (vs. 67% globally). However, 41% consider them unaffordable, compared to 21% globally.

Lastly, Switzerland places 41st in the Leisure Options Subcategory: 88% appreciate the opportunities for recreational sports (vs. 75% globally). *"Anyone interested in outdoor activities has endless opportunities here,"* says a German expat. But 26% are unhappy with the culture and nightlife (vs. 16% worldwide), and 21% miss culinary variety and dining options (vs. 12% globally).

Great Economy & Good Career Prospects

Switzerland places 16th in the Working Abroad Index — even first in the Salary & Job Security Subcategory. This is mostly due to the state of the economy: 94% are happy with it (vs. 64% globally). Moreover, 70% feel paid fairly for their job (vs. 62% globally), and another 65% agree that moving to Switzerland has improved their career prospects (vs. 60% globally).

However, Switzerland does not do that well in the Work & Leisure Subcategory (39th). More than one in five (21%) are dissatisfied with their working hours (vs. 17% globally). On the somewhat brighter side, according to 66% of expats, the local business culture supports policies such as remote work and flexible working hours (vs. 60% globally). And the overall job satisfaction is fairly high (71% happy vs. 64% globally).

A Comfortable Life on Generous Salaries

Expats not only feel paid fairly, 69% are also satisfied with their financial situation in general (vs. 60% globally). Another 80% describe their household income as enough or more than enough for a comfortable life (vs. 72% globally). And indeed, a high 56% do have an annual gross income of at least 100,000 USD (vs. 21% globally). Despite that, Switzerland places slightly below average in the Personal Finance Index (31st), which is mostly due to the living expenses. Over three in five (62%) describe them as too high (vs. 35% globally).

Easy Bureaucracy, Tough Housing Market

In the Expat Essentials Index (20th), Switzerland lands in an above-average position. On the one hand, it performs very well for Digital Life and Admin Topics (7th for both). Expats are happy with the unrestricted access to online services (92% vs. 82% globally) and high-speed internet at home (89% vs. 79% globally). Three in five (60%) also consider it easy to deal with the local authorities (vs. 40% globally). Among those who needed a visa to relocate, 62% describe getting it as easy, too (vs. 56% globally).

However, the Housing Subcategory (44th) impacts the index ranking: 42% say that housing is hard to find for expats (vs. 27% globally). Another 58% consider it hard to afford (vs. 43% globally). *"Buying a flat is almost impossible, and renting is very expensive,"* a French expat reports.

Among the Toughest Destinations for Settling In

In the Ease of Settling In Index (43rd), Switzerland features among the bottom 10. Expats rate the country particularly poorly in the Finding Friends (43rd) and Local Friendliness (44th) Subcategories. One in four (25%) describes the local population as unfriendly (vs. 17% globally), and 52% have difficulties in making local friends (vs. 37% globally).

Unsurprisingly, 32% are not happy with their social life (vs. 26% globally), and 45% are mainly friends with other expats (vs. 33% globally). Just 7% are mainly friends with local residents (vs. 17% globally). *"It can take years to get into Swiss social life. Most of my contacts were with other expats at first,"* another French respondent explains.

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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Press Contact

Jane Masumy
Media Spokesperson

InterNations GmbH
Schwanthalerstrasse 39
80336 Munich, Germany

Email: press@internations.org

Home page: <https://www.internations.org/press>