

Thailand Is an Affordable, Friendly Destination for Expats

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).
- Thailand ranks 8th out of 52: finance and leisure options are no trouble for expats, but they struggle with their working life.

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

Thailand



Thailand comes 8th out of 52 destinations in the *Expat Insider 2022* survey. The country excels in the Personal Finance Index (4th) and narrowly misses out on a top 10 spot in the Ease of Settling In Index (11th). While it also performs well in the Expat Essentials Index (18th), Thailand only lands in a mediocre 35th place in the Quality of Life Index. It even ranks among the bottom 10 in the Working Abroad Index (45th). Overall, 77% of expats are happy with their life in Thailand, 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.

Thailand in the *Expat Insider 2022* Survey

No Money Concerns

Personal finances are a breeze for expats in Thailand, and they vote the country fourth in the Personal Finance Index. In fact, most expats (85%) feel that their disposable household income is enough or more than enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 72% globally). *"Your money definitely goes far,"* a British expat reports. Expats vote Thailand third for general cost of living — 71% are happy with this factor, 26 percentage points more than the global average (45%). Thus, it is no surprise that 70% are happy with their financial situation overall (vs. 60% globally). Housing is no trouble either, and Thailand also lands in first place in this subcategory. Expats describe it as both affordable (74% vs. 39% globally) and easy to find (85% vs. 54% globally).

Administrative Barriers

Aside from housing, expats are not too happy with the factors surveyed in the Expat Essentials Index (18th). Thailand ranks in the bottom 10 of the Digital Life Subcategory (43rd), and expats are particularly unhappy with the availability of administrative/government services online (43% unhappy vs. 21% globally). *"It is all paperwork for everything,"* explains an expat from Chile. Overall, more than half (51%) find it hard to deal with the local bureaucracy/authorities, compared to 39% globally.

While 70% find it easy to live in Thailand without speaking the local language (vs. 51% globally), 68% struggle to learn it (vs. 38% globally). *"I just cannot pick up the language,"* says a British expat. In fact, 78% speak the language just a little (54% vs. 25% globally) or not at all (24% vs. 10% globally).

Easy to Make Connections

The Ease of Settling In Index (11th) is a genuine highlight, though, and expats rate Thailand particularly well in the Local Friendliness Subcategory (8th). The majority (86%) finds the residents to be generally friendly (vs. 66% globally), and another 81% describe them as friendly towards foreign residents (vs. 65% globally). *"I have found the Thais to be very friendly and welcoming to me living in their country,"* an expat from the United Kingdom explains. Expats also rank Thailand among the top 10 in the Finding Friends Subcategory (8th). They love their social life (69% satisfied vs. 56% globally), and more than half (52%) say that making local friends is easy, compared to 42% globally.

Excellent Leisure Options & Healthcare

The Quality of Life Index (35th) is a mixed bag: When it comes to Leisure Options (5th), expats are especially happy. They vote the country second worldwide for its culinary variety and dining options, only beaten by Mexico. *"The thing I enjoy most so far is their food variety,"* says a Vietnamese expat. *"I love trying new food whenever I have free time."* Over three in four expats (77%) are satisfied with the culture and nightlife in Thailand, compared to 67% globally.

Expats also love the healthcare in Thailand — the country narrowly misses out on a top 10 spot in the Health & Well-Being Subcategory (11th). More than three-quarters of expats (77%) state that they have access to all the kinds of healthcare services that they need (vs. 67% globally). Most also say that medical care is easily available (84% vs. 73% globally) and of good quality (85% vs. 72% globally).

Environmental & Safety Concerns

On the other hand, the Environment & Climate Subcategory (44th) is a major concern for expats in Thailand. Two in five expats (40%) believe that the government does *not* support policies to protect the environment, more than double the global average (18%). *"People are not aware enough about pollution, and it is sad to see nature spoiled by rubbish,"* a French expat reports. Furthermore, 45% rate the air quality negatively (vs. 19% globally) and 32% are unhappy with the urban environment (elements such as green spaces, noise levels, and eco-friendly architecture), compared to 17% globally. *"There is air pollution and limited parks and green spaces,"* explains a Dutch expat. The only real highlight is the climate and weather, which is rated positively by the majority of expats (82% vs. 62% globally).

The Safety & Security Subcategory (47th) also receives mixed results. In general, 85% of expats feel personally safe in Thailand (vs. 81% globally). But 37% are unhappy with the country's political stability (vs. 15% globally), and 44% think that they cannot openly express themselves and their opinions (vs. 18% globally).

Unhappy Workers

Thailand performs worst in the Working Abroad Index (45th). Expats vote the country into the bottom 10 of the Work Culture & Satisfaction Subcategory (48th). According to them, the local business culture does not encourage creativity (41% vs. 26% globally), nor does it promote independent work (45% vs. 28% globally). Expats are also especially disappointed when it comes to Career Prospects (45th). Nearly two in five (38%) are unhappy with the local job market (vs. 27% globally), and only 41% say that moving to Thailand has improved their career prospects (vs. 60% globally).

Expats also rank Thailand among the bottom 10 for Salary & Job Security (46th). More than three in ten (31%) are unhappy with the state of the local economy, compared to only 17% globally. Additionally, one in four expats (25%) is unsatisfied with their job security (vs. 20% globally). However, 35% of expats do not have to worry about this, as they are already retired, compared to the global average of 10% retirees. In fact, 19% of expats in Thailand moved there specifically to retire, compared to only 3% globally.

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

According to the *Expats 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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