

The UAE Is a Safe & Modern Destination for Expats

The *Expatriate 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).
- The UAE ranks 6th out of 52: expats love the quality of living and their working life, but struggle with their finances.

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

The UAE comes 6th out of 52 destinations in the *Expatriate Insider 2022* survey. Expats are particularly pleased with the Expatriate Essentials Index (2nd). They also rank the Quality of Life (5th) and Working Abroad (5th) very highly. The Ease of Settling In Index (13th) has mostly positive results, while expats struggle a bit with the Personal Finance Index (34th). Overall, 71% of expats are happy with their life in the UAE, the same as the global average (71%).



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 destination worldwide for all factors, expats in New Zealand struggle with their career and those in Hong Kong are unhappy with the local environment.

The UAE in the *Expats Insider 2022* Survey

No Trouble with the Basics

The UAE performs especially well in the Expat Essentials Index (2nd), ranking right behind Bahrain (1st). Expats are particularly happy with the ease of handling Admin Topics (3rd) in the UAE. First of all, 83% found it easy to get a visa to move there, compared to only 56% globally, ranking the UAE first worldwide for this factor. Once they arrive, over three in five expats (61%) have no problem dealing with the local bureaucracy/authorities, 21 percentage points more than the global average (40%). It might help that administrative/government services are widely available online (86% happy vs. 61% globally) and that it is easy to live in the UAE without speaking the local language (85% agree vs. 51% globally). *"The government system is the best,"* an Indian expat shares.

Ups & Downs for Digital Life

Online government services are just one highlight of the Digital Life Subcategory (14th). Expats also find it easy to get high-speed internet access at home (87% happy vs. 79% globally) and to pay without cash (90% vs. 84% globally). However, about one in five (19%) are unhappy with their access to online services, such as social media (vs. 7% globally). A US American expat notes that the *"blocked social media"* is something he dislikes most about life in the UAE, while an Australian expat says that the *"restrictions on communications make it difficult to stay in touch with home"*.

Getting Around to Great Activities

The UAE scores another top 10 ranking in the Quality of Life Index (5th). Expats are particularly happy with the Leisure Options (3rd): most expats appreciate the culinary variety and dining options (86% vs. 77% globally), as well as the culture and nightlife (81% vs. 67% globally).

Expats also love their ability to get around easily, ranking the country fifth for Travel & Transit. Nine in ten (90%) are happy with their travel opportunities (vs. 82% globally), and 95% rate the infrastructure for cars positively (vs. 75% globally). The UAE ranks first worldwide for the latter.

Great Health Services in a Safe Environment

The Safety & Security (7th) and Health & Well-Being (9th) Subcategories are another two areas where expats are especially pleased. They vote the country third for personal safety, as nearly all expats (94%) are happy with this factor (vs. 81% globally). *"I feel safe as a woman to go out walking on dark evenings. In the day I do not fear any theft,"* reports a British expat. Expats are also very satisfied with the political stability in the UAE (86% happy vs. 64% globally). However, less than half (47%) agree that they can openly express themselves and their opinions, compared to 64% globally.

In terms of Health & Well-Being (9th), 78% of expats find it easy to access all the kinds of healthcare services they need (vs. 67% globally). Expats also rank the quality of medical care (6th) and availability of healthcare (6th) very highly. However, only 56% find healthcare affordable, which is slightly below the global average (61%).

Mixed Views on the Environment

With the UAE ranking 14th in the Environment & Climate Subcategory, this is the country's weakest area in the Quality of Life Index. It is mainly due to the natural environment (44th), with 14% of expats unhappy with this factor (vs. 8% globally). The climate and weather (31st) and the air quality (22nd) also get mediocre ratings. However, nearly three in four expats (72%) are pleased with the availability of green goods and services (vs. 64% globally). *"Sustainability is practiced by all, nothing is wasted,"* a Pakistani expat shares. More than four in five (83%) agree that the government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 61% globally).

A Welcoming Place to Settle In

The UAE ranks quite well when it comes to the Ease of Settling In Index (13th). It performs best in the Culture & Welcome Subcategory (10th), with 77% saying that they feel welcome there (vs. 66% globally). About two in three (65%) also report that they are happy with their social life (vs. 56% globally). Overall, 69% describe the local population as friendly (vs. 66% globally), and 74% consider them particularly friendly towards foreign residents (vs. 65% globally).

Excellent Working Conditions

Expats seem to love Working Abroad in the UAE, voting the country fifth in this index. It even places third in the Career Prospects Subcategory: about four in five expats (79%) feel that moving there has improved their career prospects (vs. 60% globally), ranking the country first worldwide for this factor. It is hardly a surprise that they are also happy with their personal career opportunities (65% vs. 58% globally) and the local job market (55% vs. 47% globally).

The Work Culture & Satisfaction Subcategory (5th) is another highlight. Expats feel that the local business culture encourages creativity / thinking outside the box (2nd) and promotes independent work and/or flat hierarchies (8th). *"The country encourages ambition, innovation, and pursuing opportunities,"* says an expat from Australia.

Financial Struggles

In the Salary & Job Security Subcategory (17th), the UAE lands among both the top and the bottom 10 destinations worldwide. It ranks sixth for the state of the economy, and 87% of expats are happy with this factor (vs. 64% globally). However, only 55% feel that they are paid fairly for their work, based on industry, qualifications, and their role (vs. 62% globally). This lands the UAE in the bottom 10 for this factor (44th). *"The government should set a minimum wage,"* shares a South African expat. *"So many expats are underpaid."* In fact, about one in three expats (33%) earn less than 12,000 USD per year, compared to only 18% globally.

This may be a reason why the country's worst performance is in the Personal Finance Index (34th). Over one in three expats (36%) feel that their disposable household income is *not* enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 28% globally), placing the country in the bottom 10 for this factor (46th). *"The UAE is quite expensive in all aspects,"* an Indian expat explains.

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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