



RESEARCH ARTICLE

STUDY TO EVALUATE THEBEST COUNTRIES TO TRAVEL AND LIVE IN ASIA 2026

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 15th December, 2025
Received in revised form
25th January, 2026
Accepted 18th February, 2026
Published online 29th March, 2026

Keywords:

Visitor, Travelers, Diversity, Living
Cost, Safety.

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ABSTRACT

Many of us dream of moving abroad or visiting foreign lands. Therefore, useful information, experiences, ideas, reports, and data on the best countries worldwide especially in Asia can greatly assist those interested in travel or relocation. This paper aims to support travelers and potential residents in selecting the best destinations, helping them make informed decisions. Asia is known for its lively climate, spiritual depth, nature, rich culture, history, vibrant lifestyle, and incredible biodiversity, making it a top choice for many travelers. From pristine beaches and lively cultures to UNESCO World Heritage-listed cultural capitals, the region offers adventure, relaxation, peace, happiness, diversity, activities, delicious cuisine, comfortable living, and warm hospitality. Asia is truly a land of the exotic, where elephants' cross riverbeds, pagodas tower over terraced rice fields, and famous sites include the Great Wall of China, Malaysia's atolls, India's royal palaces, and Nepal's Himalayan ranges. Its landscape features diversity, safety, remarkable history, and beauty, especially in Japan. However, since Asia is so vast, we can't visit all the countries at once. To make planning easier and prioritize our travels or life choices, this investigative paper will serve as a helpful guide for interested people for decision making.

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Citation: Dr. Hossain, K.A. 2026. "Study to Evaluate theBest Countries to Travel and Live in Asia 2026". *International Journal of Current Research*, 18, (03), 36644-36651.

INTRODUCTION

Planning a move can be exciting but also cause some concerns. Whether relocating abroad for a holiday or to settle down, important factors like safety, affordability, healthcare, green spaces, and education come into focus. Healthcare is especially crucial in relocation plans. Expats want assurance that their healthcare needs are fully met, taking into account costs, quality, accessibility, and international support. Currently, Taiwan ranks first, with South Korea, Japan, and Thailand also among the top 10 Asian countries. The cost of living remains a major consideration when selecting a new location to live.¹ There are two main measures: one for local purchasing power and another for the cost of living. The cost-of-living index doesn't account for wages, taxes, or social security, so it isn't fully representative of income relative to expenses. The Local Purchasing Power Index is particularly useful for expats, as it indicates how far an average salary can stretch. Property prices also serve as a key indicator of a country's livability; if a large portion of income goes toward rent or mortgages, there's less disposable cash for enjoying life abroad. Currently, Oman has the best property prices relative to income, with South Africa and the USA ranking in the top three. Pollution is a major concern for many, with well-documented health risks. When considering a move abroad, the effects of pollution can be significant, especially for those with young children, elderly relatives, or health issues.

Unsurprisingly, many Nordic countries are among the top nations for managing and preventing pollution exposure countries.² Asia continues to be one of the most diverse and rewarding regions for travelers, with safety remaining a top concern when planning trips. Recent traveler surveys, tourism data, and reports from major Asian cities highlight several destinations known for low crime, strong infrastructure, and positive visitor experiences. Today, China surprises many first-time visitors with its blend of safety, order, and cultural richness. Despite its size, both urban and rural areas feel secure, clean, and well-organized, making it ideal for solo travelers, families, and groups. Japan is famed worldwide for its safety, efficiency, and exceptional public courtesy. South Korea combines modern infrastructure with robust safety measures, offering a comfortable experience for all travelers. Singapore exemplifies urban safety and efficiency, with strict law enforcement and a welcoming atmosphere, ensuring a secure environment for families, solo travelers, and couples. The UAE, especially Dubai and Abu Dhabi, ranks among Asia's safest and most modern destinations, thanks to strict laws, advanced infrastructure, and high-tech security, making it a worry-free trip. Japan remains a pillar of stability in Asia. While residents face higher property costs and longer commutes compared to Gulf countries, they benefit from world-class healthcare, unmatched safety, and a very favorable climate. Its excellent urban planning and public services help maintain its status as a top global destination. The Kingdom is driven by strong purchasing power and a notably low cost of

living.³ While manageable traffic and affordability are significant benefits, the country's overall ranking is constrained by its climate and pollution levels, despite healthcare being rated mid-range. Taiwan stands out with top healthcare scores in Asia and impressive safety and climate indicators. However, housing affordability issues, as reflected in its high property price-to-income ratio, hinder its potential to improve further in the rankings. Today Qatar is powered by immense financial strength and high safety ratings. While the country boasts short commute times and relatively affordable housing, its overall score is slightly tempered by environmental factors, specifically higher pollution levels and a challenging desert climate. Malaysia offers an ideal mix of safety, diversity, and affordability. From vibrant Kuala Lumpur streets to quiet island escapes like Langkawi, travelers feel secure navigating the country. Its multicultural environment ensures both rich experiences and easy communication for first-time visitors.⁴ The Philippines is a tropical paradise where safety and warmth often go hand in hand. While some regions require caution, main tourist destinations like Palawan, Cebu, and Bohol are safe and well-organized. Travelers frequently praise the friendliness and hospitality of locals as key reasons for feeling secure. Bhutan, known as the "Land of Happiness," provides a uniquely peaceful and safe travel experience. Its emphasis on sustainable tourism and cultural preservation allows visitors to enjoy mountains, monasteries, and valleys without worries about crowds or petty crime. Thailand offers a vibrant culture, affordable travel, and high safety standards for tourists. Popular cities and islands are closely monitored, and locals are generally helpful and welcoming. From urban markets to remote beaches, visitors often feel safe. Vietnam is an energetic destination featuring adventure, culture, and safety. Despite heavy traffic and lively cities, travelers feel secure and supported by local communities. Its developed tourist infrastructure ensures comfort for solo travelers and families alike. Kuwait stands out with its high purchasing power, the highest among this list. However, economic strength alone isn't sufficient to rank higher, as lower healthcare scores, notable pollution, and average safety ratings position Kuwait at seventh place.

The 2025 International Expat Insider Survey, which surveyed over 10,000 expats from 172 countries about their expatriate experiences, revealed that personal finance was closely linked to overall happiness. This emphasis on financial well-being contributed to a significant boost for certain regions, with five of the top 10 expat destinations located in Asia – Thailand, Vietnam, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia. China notably gained one of the largest improvements in the index this year, rising from 19th in 2024 to sixth place, driven by high scores in working conditions and quality of life. Malaysia entered the top 10 for the first time, while Vietnam secured fifth place with excellent results in personal finance. Shenzhen, situated in southeastern China, is known as the country's rapidly expanding "tech capital," praised for its modern infrastructure and clean streets. Mayeur highlights abundant job opportunities and an efficient transportation system that simplifies getting around. "If you prefer to commute solo, you can use an e-bike, as most major roads have dedicated lanes for riding," he explains on.⁵ Several nations offer some of the best opportunities globally, considering factors like career advancement, work possibilities, living standards, nature, history, tradition, diversity, family life, sustainability, safety, enjoyment, and natural beauty. This list is compiled based on

reader votes, current trends, and evaluations of sights, cultures, scenic beauty, food options, and more, highlighting the world's top destinations visit.⁶ People choose to relocate for various reasons, depending on their priorities such as job opportunities, cost of living, quality of life, healthcare, education, culture, environment, happiness, community, peace, safety, and security etc.⁷ When thinking about relocating, it's important to focus on what matters most to us. Conducting thorough research and possibly visiting the target country before making a final decision can also be helpful. To simplify this process, I have collected, analyzed, and prepared relevant and useful information, including the current status, data, observations, personal experiences, and discussions with focused groups about the top countries for travel, relocation, and the best places to live, with special emphasis on Asia. With this backdrop there are few questions need to be answered.

- What are the best countries in Asia for traveler?
- What is the best destination to travel and to live around the world?
- What is Asia is the best destination to travel and to live?

Asian Countries Offer Better Destination to travel and to Live: Asia offers an exceptional variety of destinations where safety, culture, and adventure come together in a few select countries. Visitors frequently mention how easy it is to navigate cities like Beijing and Shanghai, while historic towns such as Lijiang and Wangxian Valley offer peaceful, secure environments for exploration. Along with diverse culinary and cultural experiences, China is an ideal destination for first-time travelers. Travelers often feel safer in Japan than in their home countries, whether walking the neon-lit streets of Tokyo at midnight or taking early-morning trains in Osaka. The blend of modern infrastructure and traditional cultural norms fosters a sense of calm and dependability, enriching the Japanese travel experience. In Japan, visitors can comfortably explore neighborhoods, gardens, and cultural sites without concern for petty crime or disorder. Singapore's safety not only pertains to security but also to the efficient functioning of daily life.⁸ Visitors describe smooth navigation throughout the city, whether by MRT or while exploring famous districts like Marina Bay.⁹ In busy urban areas across South Korea, visitors still feel safe and well-organized. From lively streets to cultural sites, Korea offers excitement along with peace of mind. Travelers often explore Seoul, Busan, or Jeju Island late into the night without worries.

Its mix of cultural richness, nightlife, and security makes Korea a great destination for both first-time and return visitors. People enjoy viewing futuristic architecture, desert adventures, and shopping, all without concern. Respect for local customs and cultural practices enhances safety and allows for immersive experiences. Oman has become the top choice for quality of life in Asia. Its key strength lies in a combination of strong purchasing power and the most affordable housing among top nations. With low pollution and stress-free commutes, Oman provides daily comfort that balances its moderate healthcare quality scores.¹⁰ The UAE remains attractive for those seeking advanced infrastructure and high purchasing power. It is among the safest places with excellent healthcare, but the high cost of living and luxury real estate in key areas like Dubai and Abu Dhabi place it fourth. Malaysia offers a welcoming environment, especially in terms of food, transportation, and daily interactions. Visitors report feeling safe and supported while exploring Penang's street art or

cruising the Kinabatangan River. Bhutan's slow pace offers a relaxing contrast to busier destinations. From Thimphu's welcoming capital to Paro's Tiger's Nest Monastery, every trip feels safe and enriching, though it comes at a higher cost due to sustainable tourism fees. Its tranquil atmosphere makes Bhutan perfect for travelers seeking mindfulness and adventure. The Philippines offers both natural beauty and cultural experiences, from Boracay's beaches to the Chocolate Hills of Bohol, effectively combining adventure and safety. Thailand's vibrant markets in Bangkok, temples in Chiang Mai, and beaches in Phuket allow tourists to enjoy their visits with peace of mind; just a bit of vigilance in crowded places is enough. Vietnam's historic streets in Hanoi and limestone formations in Ha Long Bay provide engaging experiences without sacrificing safety. Visitors can enjoy delicious cuisine and stunning scenery while feeling secure throughout their trips. From Bhutan's peaceful monasteries to Dubai's futuristic streets, travelers can enjoy unique experiences free from constant worry and security concerns.¹¹ Choosing destinations carefully and respecting local customs can lead to a more peaceful and enriching travel experience. Singapore stands out as a major financial hub in Asia, known for its safety, low pollution, and outstanding healthcare. Despite these advantages, the city-state's success brings challenges, notably its extremely high cost of living and record-breaking property prices, which greatly affect the daily lives of ordinary residents.



Figure 1. Wildlife and Rainforests¹²

Best Destination to Travel and to Live around the World:

When discussing quality of life, we mean how happy and comfortable people feel on a daily basis. It involves more than just wealth; it includes health, supportive friends and family, and enjoying daily activities. Everyone has their own idea of what makes life great, whether it's playing in the park, having a cozy home, or feeling safe walking down the street. Imagine pinpointing the best spots in Asia where people are thriving. By 2026, the highest quality of life will mostly be found in small, well-governed European countries, along with a few notable non-European nations. We're not alone in searching for the best places to live.

A new International Living survey shows that 66% of Americans are more likely to move abroad soon due to current conditions in the U.S. Jennifer Stevens, the executive editor at International Living, said, "The main motivators are rising living costs, political fatigue, and a desire for a simpler, healthier, more connected daily life." She also mentioned, "Many also seek greater control over their future through second residencies or Plan B." Although called the Global Retirement Index, it has become equally relevant to younger Americans seeking a different pace of life, especially remote workers, flexible corporate employees, and other families.¹³

Table 1. The top 10 countries and bottom 10 countries in the world¹⁴

The Top 10 Countries in The World	The Bottom 10 Countries in the World
1. Switzerland	76. Myanmar
2. Germany	77. Zambia
3. Canada	78. Oman
4. United States	79. Lebanon
5. Sweden	80. Algeria
6. Japan	81. Serbia
7. Australia	82. Kazakhstan
8. United Kingdom	83. Iran
9. France	84. Uzbekistan
10. Denmark	85. Belarus

According to Numbeo's 2025 Quality of Life Index (mid-year data), the highest-ranked countries are Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Oman, Switzerland, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Austria, and Germany. These nations consistently receive high scores for safety, healthcare, purchasing power, environmental standards, and social infrastructure. They lead in governance, public services, and overall quality of life, making them popular choices for expats, professionals, retirees, and families. In 2026, several countries across this dynamic continent have stood out as prime destinations for those seeking to relocate. From bustling cities known for exceptional cuisine and culture to serene areas with stunning nature, these locations offer unique attractions that have captured the interest of many worldwide.¹⁵ Top 10 Countries for Quality of Life in 2026. High purchasing power enables residents to afford housing, food, healthcare, and leisure comfortably. Luxembourg, Switzerland, and Denmark rank highly thanks to strong economies and wages that compensate for higher living costs. Iceland, Norway, and Finland also score well, not just for wealth but for secure, clean, and healthy living conditions. The Global Peace Index affirms Iceland's status as one of the safest countries globally, emphasizing the vital connection between safety and quality of life. These nations combine safety, social systems, income, and environmental quality, serving as key factors influencing the perceived quality of life globally.¹⁶

- **Luxembourg:** Highest purchasing power, excellent public services
- **Netherlands:** Superior healthcare, safety, and work-life balance
- **Denmark:** Strong social welfare system and equality
- **Oman:** Very safe, affordable cost of living, and friendly taxation for expats
- **Switzerland:** Stable politics, top healthcare, high salaries
- **Finland:** Clean environment, leading education system, high social trust
- **Norway:** Generous welfare, income equality, access to nature
- **Iceland:** Extremely safe, renewable energy sources, outdoor lifestyle
- **Austria:** Comprehensive healthcare, rich cultural scene, high quality of living
- **Germany:** Economic power, reliable infrastructure, accessible public services



Figure 2. List of top 10 best countries in the world¹⁷

Analysis of the Best Destination for Asian Countries to Travel and to Live: With numerous captivating travel destinations worldwide, selecting the ideal vacation spot can be challenging. China leads Asia in the number of billionaires, with 495, driven by a large, diverse economy fueled by innovation and fast industrial growth. The wealthiest Chinese is Zhang Yiming, worth \$65.52 billion. India ranks second with 271 billionaires, bolstered by its rapidly expanding economy and entrepreneurial spirit. Mukesh Ambani is India's wealthiest, with a net worth of \$96.65 billion. Hong Kong holds third place with 65 billionaires, thanks to its strategic role in global trade; its richest is Li Ka-shing, valued at \$37.3 billion. Singapore is fourth, home to 43 billionaires, benefiting from its status as a global financial hub. Eduardo Saverin, co-founder of Facebook, is Singapore's wealthiest at \$31.2 billion. South Korea ranks fifth with 31 billionaires, mainly from its tech and manufacturing sectors. Jay Y. Lee is the wealthiest in Korea, with a net worth of \$17.3 billion. According to a 2024 Forbes survey, Japan and Indonesia added over 50 billionaires each, bringing Asia's total to over 1,150. Currently, economic influence is shifting from East to South and Southeast Asia. In China, billionaires are shifting focus toward manufacturing and energy, often staying low-profile. Conversely, wealth in India and Southeast Asia is rapidly increasing, driven by tech, infrastructure, and young consumer markets. Indonesia and Vietnam are experiencing fast growth, offering affordable, culturally rich options popular among digital nomads and retirees. Taiwan and South Korea are known for advanced tech infrastructure, safety, and, in Taiwan's case, excellent healthcare.



Figure 3. Activities and enjoyment in free time¹⁸

In Asia, Japan is regarded as one of the safest countries with a high standard of living, excellent public transportation, and a rich cultural heritage. Meanwhile, Singapore stands out as a top country in Asia for overall quality of life, safety, and education, providing a modern, multicultural environment. Malaysia is another popular choice, known for its affordability, quality infrastructure, and English proficiency, making it suitable for long-term residence and retirement. Additionally, Thailand is a leading destination for retirees and expats, offering a low cost of living, delicious food, and a relaxed

lifestyle.¹⁹ UAE and Qatar rank highest for safety and security, offering a luxurious, modern, and tax-efficient lifestyle. Professor Richard D. Wolff, a renowned economist and expert on global economic systems, emphasizes a key difference in the financial structures of China and the United States. In the U.S., most businesses are privately owned and operated, reflecting a predominantly capitalist system. In contrast, China employs a mixed economic model. Wolff explains that approximately 50% of Chinese enterprises are private, with the remainder being publicly owned and managed by the government. This dual structure is overseen by a strong central government that coordinates and supervises both sectors. Wolff notes that this governance approach has been more effective in mobilizing national resources. He suggests China's centralized oversight of both public and private sectors has significantly contributed to its rapid economic growth and expanding global influence.²⁰



Figure 4. Places to visit close to nature and land terrain (Vietnam)^{21, 22}

Deciding where to move abroad can feel like choosing a new planet—overwhelmed by too many options, opinions, and no clear “best” choice. Everyone has different priorities: some seek safety, others adventure, and a few just want affordable beach cocktails. The key is to narrow down the list to manageable options and compare countries based on what truly matters to you. In Southeast Asia, costs are generally lower than in North America—except for Singapore, which seems priced in a different universe. However, cheap doesn't always mean happy. The cost of living is just part of the picture; the quality of life determines whether your budget leads to comfort or mere survival. Cambodia is extremely cheap, but it comes with infrastructure and service issues typical of a “third-world” country. Phnom Penh has some luxury expat communities, but overall, life in the Kingdom of Wonder is quite “meh.” The Philippines is slightly cheaper than Thailand, but housing and healthy food options are less developed. Larger cities feature fancy expat areas, yet their overall standard of living can't match more developed neighbors. Thailand surpasses many ASEAN countries with its diverse housing options and lifestyles suitable for any budget. Infrastructure and services meet first-world standards and are constantly being enhanced. Whether in a skyscraper penthouse in vibrant Bangkok or a charming beach bungalow on one of its 1,430 islands, expats in Thailand are well taken care of choice.²³



Figure 5. Great barrier reef and beach/lagoon²⁴

The Global Peace Index (GPI), published annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace, is a comprehensive metric that measures peace and safety across 163 independent countries and territories, covering about 99.7% of the world's total population.²⁵ The GPI evaluates 23 indicators across categories such as militarization, safety and security, and domestic and international conflict, then combines them into one Peace Index Score for each country.²⁶ The 2024 GPI ranks Iceland, Ireland, Austria, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, Portugal, Denmark, Slovenia, Malaysia, and Canada as the most peaceful countries. Conversely, Yemen, Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Congo, Russia, Syria, Israel, and Mali are identified as the least peaceful.²⁷

Indonesia, one of the seven most populous countries, which together account for over half of the world's population and roughly half of global GDP, ranks 48th on the Global Peace Index. China is 88th, India is 116th, Brazil is 131st, the United States is 132nd, and Pakistan is 140th, and Nigeria is 147th.²⁸ Ten indicators generally evaluate societal safety and security. They suggest that low crime rates, few terrorist acts and violent protests, friendly relations with neighboring countries, political stability, and a small percentage of internally displaced persons or refugees indicate a peaceful society. The eight pillars of positive peace include effective governance, a healthy business environment, respect for others' rights, good neighborly relations, open information flow, high human capital, low corruption, and fair resource distribution resources.



Figure 6. Culture and nature (Bali's and Great Wall)²⁹

Effective government, low corruption, respect for others' rights, and positive neighborly relations are more crucial in countries with high levels of corruption violence.³⁰ For example, Singapore's crime rate is not only the lowest in Asia but also among the lowest in the world for several reasons.³¹ Singapore's culture emphasizes self-discipline and respect for the law, with citizens trusting the police to handle crimes effectively. This trust encourages prompt reporting and cooperation. Additionally, fair wages and strict punishments for offenses serve as deterrents, reducing the appeal of committing crimes. Similarly, Vietnam presents surprising affordability; I stayed in a beachside condo in Da Nang for three months, spending about 30% less than in Thailand. Although the lifestyle isn't as luxurious, the value for money is clear.

Moreover, most large cities and popular tourist spots provide affordable options for the middle-class lifestyles.³² Malaysia, meanwhile, is like getting champagne at beer prices: it offers modern infrastructure, first-world comforts, and rent that is half of what you'd pay in the U.S.—and about 15% less than in Thailand. Both Malaysia and Vietnam earn a high five pineapples for overall value. Here, we highlight 10 of the best countries to live in Asia, listed from highest to lowest.

China: First, let's talk about China, the scene changes dramatically from India's vibrant chaos to the structured majesty of Chinese cities. Known for rapid growth and technological progress, China offers a unique mix of ancient traditions and modern innovations. Safety is a priority—many immigrants find China safer than many Western cities. Streets are well-lit at night, and petty crimes like pickpocketing are uncommon. This security appeals to families and solo female travelers considering relocation. The cost of living is another attractive aspect—though slightly higher than in India, it remains lower than in many Western nations. Housing, food, and transportation are affordable, allowing your salary to support exploring the country's many experiences. China's diverse landscapes rival travel brochures, from Jilin's karst mountains to Shanghai's skyline. Rural areas offer tranquility for nature lovers, while urban centers feature futuristic environments. Culturally, China is rich—tea-making, calligraphy, martial arts, and festivals like Chinese New Year reveal its deep heritage. The cuisine is exceptional, from spicy Sichuan dishes to hearty northern dumplings—each meal an adventure. Professionally, China is a global hub for manufacturing and technology sectors. Its dynamic business climate emphasizes innovation and sustainability, making it an exciting place to develop a career.

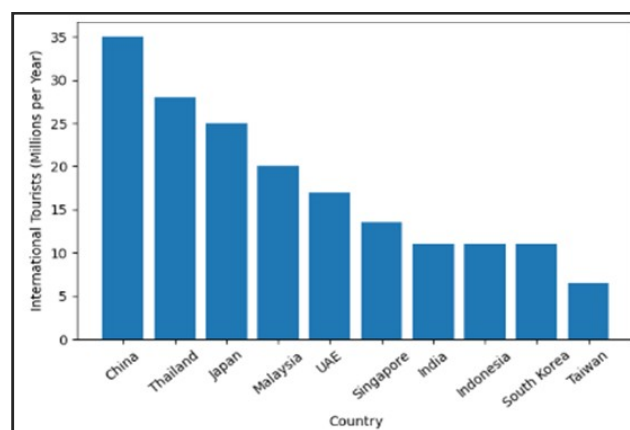


Figure 7. 10 of the best countries to live in Asia, listed from highest to lowest³³

Thailand: Moving on to Thailand, this country offers a rich variety of experiences. Whether strolling through Bangkok or relaxing on Phuket's beaches, there's something for everyone. But what makes it one of the best places to live? In Thailand, you can save more money compared to other cities. Whether renting a high-rise in Bangkok or a beachfront villa in Hua Hin, the cost of living is much lower than in many Western countries. This allows for comfortable living without overspending, which is highly appealing. For example, a meal at an inexpensive restaurant may cost only a few dollars. The climate is tropical, meaning warm weather year-round. From Chiang Mai's lush mountains to the clear waters of the Andaman Sea, natural beauty is always nearby. Thailand is a paradise for outdoor lovers, with diverse wildlife from elephants in the north to colorful coral reefs in the south. Thai cuisine is famous worldwide for its balance of sweet, spicy, sour, bitter, and salty flavors. Living here means enjoying these tastes daily, not just on special occasions. Street vendors serve dishes like pad thai and som tam, while modern Thai restaurants offer vibrant and accessible cuisine. Known as the "land of smiles," Thailand's friendly and welcoming locals help newcomers feel at home quickly. Its rich culture and

history shine through grand palaces, temples, and lively festivals like Songkran and Loi Krathong. The healthcare system is advanced, with top facilities and English-speaking staff in major cities, making it a hub for medical tourism. Routine healthcare is affordable and easily accessible, which is a major advantage for residents.

Japan: Japan ranks first on our list, known as the Land of the Rising Sun. It captivates visitors not only with cherry blossoms but also with a unique mix of ancient traditions and cutting-edge modernity, making it an appealing place to live. Safety is a major advantage, as Japan is famous for its low crime rates, allowing residents to feel secure walking the streets at any time—something many places can't claim. Additionally, the streets are impeccably clean, giving a sense that they are regularly maintained. Japan excels in public amenities. Its transportation network, especially in cities like Tokyo, is impressive—trains operate flawlessly and cover extensive routes, making travel across the city effortless. The healthcare system is also among the world's best, featuring cutting-edge technology and top-tier care. For families, Japan offers a compelling environment.

The education system is demanding but highly effective, preparing children well for the future. Additionally, numerous parks, museums, and cultural activities provide a rich and engaging environment for children to grow up in fun.³⁵ Living in Japan offers a continual sense of discovery. From peaceful tea ceremonies to the lively energy of Akihabara's tech markets, there's always something new to experience. The cuisine? Sushi, ramen, okonomiyaki—Japan's food scene is incredibly diverse. After exploring these 10 countries, remember that your ideal destination depends on what you prioritize in life. Whether you seek the vibrancy of a bustling city or the tranquility of a coastal town, Asia provides a location where anyone can feel at home. So, let's pack your bags, bring your aspirations, and perhaps find your new favorite place among these incredible countries.

Malaysia: Malaysia is renowned for its rich cultural diversity and breathtaking landscapes. But why is it regarded as one of the top places to live? The answer lies in its affordability and high quality of life. Whether renting a skyscraper apartment in Kuala Lumpur or a beachfront villa in Penang, residents make the most of their money here. The cost of living is surprisingly low compared to other tropical destinations, yet it doesn't compromise on quality. Malaysia boasts a sophisticated healthcare system with well-equipped hospitals and widespread English use, easing communication barriers. Education is highly regarded with several internationally accredited universities and numerous international schools, making it attractive for expat families. Additionally, the widespread use of English facilitates daily communication and community integration. For nature lovers and city dwellers alike, Malaysia offers an exciting blend—vibrant markets and modern skyscrapers by day, tranquil rainforests and picturesque islands nearby next.

UAE: This location isn't solely characterized by its glitzy skyscrapers and shopping malls, although those are abundant. It also serves as a center for innovation and cultural acceptance, attracting people worldwide. In 2021, the UAE was ranked the fourth-best place globally to live and work by HSBC's Expat Explorer Survey. So, why do many love it here? First, the UAE offers an exceptionally safe environment with

one of the lowest crime rates globally. This isn't just reassuring; it's a green light for families seeking a secure home. Additionally, the police are proactive and present, maintaining order. But safety isn't everything. The UAE is renowned for its world-class infrastructure—sleek roads, dependable public transit, and airports that resemble luxury hotels. Healthcare? Outstanding, with hospitals equipped with cutting-edge technology and specialists worldwide. Education also shines: from diverse international schools to esteemed universities, making it ideal for families or those pursuing higher education. And let's not forget the lifestyle—vibrant dining, entertainment options, and iconic shopping venues. Whether you're into concerts, sports, or relaxing spas, there's something for everyone.



Figure 8. List of the best Asian countries to live (for aged people) in respect of quality of life³⁶

Singapore: This small but mighty city-state offers a high quality of life and a strong economy. While its impressive skyline grabs attention, there's much more beneath the surface that makes Singapore a preferred destination. It is well-known for its political stability and low crime rates, making it an attractive and safe place to reside. However, there's more to it than just feeling secure.³⁷ The city-state also has an efficient public service system. In Singapore, you can easily apply online for legal documents or government services and receive them quickly. Its bureaucracy is manageable. Economically, Singapore is a powerhouse, recognized as the world's most competitive economy with a score of 84.8 out of 100 by the World Economic Forum.

This figure reflects a dynamic environment full of opportunities for professionals and entrepreneurs. Additionally, with a AAA credit rating from Moody's and Fitch, Singapore's financial stability is top-tier. On the everyday front, Singapore also excels. Its public transport system is excellent—clean, punctual, and highly connected. Healthcare is equally impressive, ranked among the best globally, ensuring comprehensive care for routine check-ups or more serious needs serious.³⁸ And to top it off, Singapore is a melting pot of cultures. You can explore a lively blend of cuisines, festivals, and traditions from across the globe, all living together in harmony. It's like globetrotting without leaving the city.

India: First, let's talk about India. If you imagine only the busy streets of Mumbai or the historic charm of Delhi, think again—there's so much more to explore. India is like an endless celebration of vibrant colors, diverse flavors, and lively sounds. It perfectly blends tradition with modernity. One of the biggest attractions for foreigners living in India is the

affordable cost of living. It's significantly cheaper compared to many Western countries. For example, renting a comfortable apartment in a decent area of a major city like Bangalore or Pune costs only a fraction of what you would pay in places like New York London.³⁹ And we aren't just discussing housing. From groceries to transportation, you get good value for your money. It's not solely about saving; India's rich culture enhances the quality of life. You can enjoy lively local festivals every other week, filled with music, dance, and delicious food. Speaking of cuisine, Indian food is a major advantage.

Whether you crave spicy street snacks or elegant fine dining, India has a wide variety of dishes. Regarding services, low labor costs mean you can afford things like a housekeeper or a cook without overspending. This isn't only about convenience, but also about experiencing local culture, as these interactions often become meaningful connections friendships.⁴⁰ Education is another notable aspect. India hosts several world-renowned universities and research institutions that draw international scholars and students. Tech hubs like Hyderabad and Bangalore are vibrant centers of innovation and opportunity, making them popular destinations for those seeking to advance in fields such as IT engineering.

Indonesia: Made up of over 17,000 islands, each one of the islands in Indonesia offers a unique living experience. From the volcanic peaks of Bali to the vibrant metropolises like Jakarta, Indonesia offers a range of environments to suit any preference. The climate varies significantly across the archipelago, which means you can choose a region that suits your weather preferences, be it tropical Bali or the more temperate highlands of Bandung. Similar to Thailand, Indonesia offers a low cost of living. Housing, groceries, transport, and leisure activities cost a fraction of what they do in Western standards.

For example, renting a seaside villa in Bali might be cheaper than a small apartment in a U.S. city. Indonesian culture is a thrilling mix of indigenous traditions and influences from its history of trade and colonialism. This is reflected in its arts, music, and festivals. Each island has its own traditions and customs, offering a never-ending journey of discovery for residents. Particularly in places like Bali and Jakarta, strong immigrant communities exist. These communities are welcoming and can make the transition to a new country much smoother. They organize regular meetups, cultural exchange sessions, and business networking events, which are great for newcomers. Indonesia's natural landscape is breathtakingly diverse. You have beaches, jungles, mountains, and even volcanic areas all within relatively close proximity. This diversity not only offers incredible views but also a host of recreational activities, from diving and surfing to hiking and birdwatching.

South Korea: Turning to South Korea, a nation where ancient customs seamlessly coexist with advanced technology. Why is it regarded as one of the top places to live? Safety and healthcare—two core pillars that South Korea consistently upholds. Recognized as one of the safest countries worldwide, it provides a level of peace of mind rarely matched elsewhere. The streets remain secure at all hours, and the crime rates are notably low.⁴¹ South Korea boasts an exemplary healthcare system, renowned for its efficiency and cutting-edge medical technology. This ensures access to top-quality medical services

without long waits or subpar care. Technologically, South Korea is a global leader, famous for fast internet, innovative gadgets, and the worldwide popularity of K-pop. Its tech scene is remarkable, with breakthroughs in robotics and biotech often pioneered here before spreading globally. Despite its reputation for a demanding work culture, South Korea also offers vibrant entertainment options. Cities like Seoul have endless nightlife, catering to all tastes—from quiet jazz bars to lively nightclubs everyone.⁴² Additionally, the local cuisine is outstanding, offering flavors that span from the fiery spiciness of kimchi to the savory richness of Korean dishes BBQ.

Taiwan: This island is a hub of culture, safety, and innovation, ranking it among the top places to live in Asia. Taiwan, officially known as the Republic of China (ROC), is a highly developed and democratic nation in East Asia, situated in the northwestern Pacific Ocean. It boasts an advanced, high-income economy and is a global leader in high-tech manufacturing, especially semiconductors.⁴³ Why might someone consider relocating or spending an extended period in Taiwan? Let me explain. Safety is a top priority, and Taiwan ranks highly in global safety rankings.

Whether you're walking late at night in Taipei or exploring the island's quieter regions, the sense of security is obvious. This isn't just anecdotal; it's supported by many testimonials and international surveys that consistently rate Taiwan highly for safety. But Taiwan offers more than just safety; the quality of life here is exceptional. Its healthcare system is strong, equipped with modern facilities and highly skilled medical professionals. This allows residents to focus less on health worries and more on enjoying all that Taiwan has to offer.⁴⁴ Additionally, Taiwan's focus on public health is evident in how it addresses various global health issues.

CONCLUSION

The best countries reckoning avoids collecting a huge volume of substantiating data. It does not need a statistic that proves a country is nimble or thrill-seeking or good for business and explore. However, it depends on insights and perceptions. In Asia, today Japan is the best country for older people to live, according to the Global Watch Index report. Japan reports high satisfaction with social connectedness, safety and civic freedom, according to the index which measures the quality of life and using income security, health, personal capability and enabling environment for people aged 60 and older which has been shown in figure 8 above. On the other hand moving abroad, whether for travel or residence, involves more than just choosing a beautiful location on a map.

The ideal country to move to varies for each person and depends on factors like cost of living, safety, language, healthcare, activities, happiness, security, diversity, visa options, and ease of integration into daily life. Some countries are particularly attractive because they are easy to settle into and preferable for living, while others offer lower costs, better job opportunities, or a slower lifestyle. Deciding where to live and work is a crucial choice. As 2026 approaches, several key factors will influence this decision: a stable and growing job market, personal well-being, nature, history, diversity, access to quality healthcare, work-life balance, economic stability, environment, peaceful living, overall happiness, and life satisfaction. Countries that effectively combine economic

prospects, good living standards, safety, diversity, leisure activities, and social support tend to stand out. Especially in Asia, some nations provide an ideal mix of personal fulfillment and professional opportunities.

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