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Average happiness in 90 nations 1990-2000

How much people enjoy their life-as-a-whole on scale 0 to 10

Top/bottom	Full list	Technical details	Cite as
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Top/bottom

<i>Top</i> > 7,7		<i>Middle range</i> ± 6,0		<i>Bottom</i> <4	
Denmark	8,0	China	6,5	Armenia	3,7
Malta	8,0	Greece	6,3	Ukraine	3,6
Switzerland	8,0	Iran	6,0	Modova	3,5
Iceland	7,8	India	5,7	Zimbabwe	3,3
Ireland	7,8	Turkey	5,6	Tanzania	3,2

Full list, alphabetic

<i>nation</i> ¹	<i>Satisfaction with life</i> ^{2, 3} (scale 0 - 10)
Albania	4,6
Algeria	5,2
Angola ⁴	4,3
Argentina	6,8
Armenia	3,7
Australia	7,3
Austria ⁶	7,0
Azerbaijan	4,9
Bangladesh	5,7
Belarus	4,3
Belgium	7,3
Bolivia ⁴	5,8
Bosnia	5,1
Brazil	7,0
Britain	7,2
Bulgaria	4,5
Canada	7,6
Chile ¹	6,9
China ¹	6,5
Colombia ¹⁻⁵	8,1
Croatia	5,9
Czechia	6,7
Denmark	8,0

Dominican Republic	6,8
Egypt	4,8
El Salvador	7,2
Estonia	5,2
Finland	7,5
France	6,6
Georgia	4,1
Germany	7,1
Ghana ^{1,5}	7,7
Greece ¹	6,3
Guatemala ⁴	7,6
Honduras ⁴	7,2
Hungary	5,5
Iceland	7,8
India ¹	5,7
Indonesia	6,6
Iran	6,0
Ireland	7,8
Israel	6,7
Italy	6,9
Ivory Coast ⁴	5,7
Japan	6,2
Jordan	5,1
Kenya ⁴	5,2
Latvia	4,8
Lebanon ⁴	5,3
Lithuania	4,9
Luxembourg	7,6
Macedonia	4,9
Mali ⁴	4,9
Malta	8,0

Mexico ⁵	7,5
Moldova	3,5
Montenegro	5,5
Morocco	5,6
Netherlands	7,6
New Zealand	7,4
Nigeria ¹	6,5
Norway	7,4
Pakistan	4,3
Peru	6,0
Philippines	6,4
Poland	5,9
Portugal	6,7
Romania	4,7
Russia	4,4
Senegal ⁴	5,7
Serbia	5,1
Singapore	6,9
Slovakia	5,6
Slovenia	6,3
South-Africa	5,6
South-Korea	5,8
Spain	6,6
Sweden	7,5
Switzerland	8,0
Taiwan	6,6
Tanzania	3,2
Turkey	5,6
Uganda	5,2
Ukraine	3,6
Uruguay	6,7

Uzbekistan ⁴	6,2
USA	7,4
Venezuela	6,8
Vietnam	6,1
Zimbabwe	3,3

Technical details

1. Life-satisfaction is assessed by means of surveys in general population samples. Mean scores may be inflated in some countries, due to under sampling of rural and illiterate population. There are indications of such sampling bias in at least some surveys in the following countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Chile, China, Ghana, Colombia, India and Nigeria. This distortion is partly corrected by weighting afterwards, but may still affect the scores. This means that the real differences in life-satisfaction are probably somewhat greater than appears in these data.
2. Data from 1990 up to and including 2000. If the below mentioned questions had been used more than once in this era, the average score is used.
3. Most scores are based on responses to the following question: "All things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your life-as-a-whole now? 1 dissatisfied to 10 satisfied" (item code O-SLW/c/sq/n/10/a). This classification is explained in section 4/3 of the introductory text. Scores on this 1-10 scale were transformed linearly to range 0-10. This transformation is explained in the introductory text, chapter 7.3.
4. Scores of ten nations are based on responses to a somewhat different question: "Suppose the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder the worst possible life. Where on this ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time?" The response was rated on a ladder scale ranging from 0 to 10 (item code O-BW/c/sq/l/11/c). We transformed the scores using the information of nations in which both this item and the above question on life-satisfaction had been used in about the same years. There are 33 such cases and the scores on the two items appears to be highly correlated; $r = +.79$. We computed the regression equation and used these to estimate the score on 0-10 life-satisfaction. The formula is: Estimated 0-10 life satisfaction = $0,242 + 1,014 \times$ observed score on the Best-Worst item. These estimates are reported in this table. The 95% confidence interval around these estimated values is about 3 points, which means that these estimates are quite rough. The original means on the Best Worst item were: Angola, 4,04; Bolivia, 5,47; Guatemala, 7,33; Honduras, 6,83; Ivory Coast, 5,42; Kenya, 4,86; Libanon,

4,99; Mali, 4,55; Senegal, 5,34 and Uzbekistan 5,91. This estimation technique is described in more detail in the Introductory Text, chapter 7 '[Comparability of the data](#)' in section 7/3.1 'Converting scores on measures of different happiness variants'.

5. Some scores on this 10-step life satisfaction item are not beyond doubt and can better not be included in analyses with these data.
 - In Colombia in 1997 the World Value Survey reports an average score of 8.3 (8.1 when transformed to range 0-10). This value does not correspond with the score on a 4-step happiness item in the same survey. The score on a 4-step lifesatisfaction item in the 1997 and 2000 Latinobarometro surveys was also lower. A score of about 7.5 would seem more realistic.
 - In Ghana in 1997 the World Value Survey reports an average of 7,9 (7,7 when transformed to range 0-10). This value does not fit the score on the 4-step happiness item in the same survey either. The average score on the 0-10 Best Worst item in the 2002 PEW survey was 4,5. A score of about 6 would seem more realistic
 - In Mexixo in 2000 the World Value Survey reports an average of 8,1 (7,9 when transformed to range 0-10). This value does fit with a similar high score on the 4-step happiness item in the samen survey. Yet it does not fit scores in earlier World value Surveys in 1990 and 1996 and neither with the score of 6.8 on the 0-10 Best Worst item in the 2002 PEW Survey. The value reported in this table is an average of the scores on this item in the World value Surveys in 1990, 1996 and 2000.

Our policy is to report doubtfull data, unless we can be pretty sure that they are wrong. Thus we avoid deleting data that do not fit our expectations.

6. The score on the 10-step life-satisfaction item in World Value Survey 1 in Austria in 1990 is disregarded. The score is rather deviant (6.1) and does not fit the relative score of Austria in other cross national surveys in the same era.

7. On this list the following cases are left out: Puerto Rico (8,1), East Germany (6.3) West Germany (6,9) and Northern Ireland (7.7). These cases are included in the Catalog of Happiness in Nations but are no real 'nations'.

8. The use for these data for estimating livability of nations is discussed in the Introductory Text to this section on 'Distributional Findings in Nations', chapter 5: [Validity of happiness as an indicator of livability](#)

9. This list is included in the datafile '[States of nations](#)' as variable lsbw_90s.

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