World Database of Happiness, Happiness in Nations, Rank Report 2004/3b
Equality of happiness in 90 nations 1990-2000
How much citizens differ in enjoyment of their life-as-a-whole

Top/bottom	Full list	Technical details	Cite as

Top/bottom

Top SD > 2		Middle range SD ± 2,5		Bottom SD <3	
Netherlands	1,6	Israel	2,4	Romania	3,1
Iceland	1,8	Chile	2,4	Venezuela	3,1
Malta	1,8	Argentina	2,5	Zimbabwe	3,1
Finland	1,9	China	2,6	Tanzania	3,6
Switzerland	1,9	India	2,7	Egypt	3,7

Full list, alphabetic

nation [1,2]	Inequality in happiness Standard deviation[3] of life satisfaction on scale 0-10 [4,5]
Albania	2,5
Algeria	3,2
Angola [4]	2,5
Argentina	2,5
Armenia	2,6
Australia	2,1
Austria [6]	2,1
Azerbaijan	2,6
Bangladesh	2,5
Belarus	2,5
Belgium	2,2
Bolivia [4]	2,6
Bosnia	2,6
Brazil	2,8
Britain	2,2
Bulgaria	2,7
Canada	2,0
Chile[1]	2,4
China[1]	2,6
Colombia[1]	2,2
Croatia	2,5
Czechia	2,2
Denmark	2,1

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

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

Uzbekistan [4]	2,6
USA	2,1
Venezuela	3,1
Vietnam	2,3
Zimbabwe	3,1

Technical details

1. Life-satisfaction assessed by means of surveys in samples of the general population. Scores may be too low in some countries, due to under sampling of rural and illiterate population. There are indications of such sampling bias in at least some of the surveys in 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 fron 1990 upto and including 2000. If the same question on life-satisfaction (see below under 4) had been used more than once in this era, the average score is used.

3. In this ranking the focus is not on the *level* of happiness in the country, but on *inequality* in happiness among citizens.Inequality in happiness can be measured by the dispersion of responses to survey-questions.

   The degree of dispersion can be expressed statistically in the standard deviation and surveys items rated on a 10 step numerical scale are particularly usefull for that purpose. This method is explained in more detail in W. Kalmijn & R. Veenhoven, 'Measuring inequality in happiness in nations, in search for proper statistics (paper underreview) An earlier application of this method is reported in Veenhoven, R. Return of inequality in modern society? Trends in dispersion of life satisfaction in EU-nations 1973-2001. An earlier version of this paper was published in German in: Wolfgang Glatzer, Roland Habich, Karl Ulrich Maier (Hrgs), 'Socialer Wandel und Gesellschaftliche Dauerbeobachtung. Festschrift für Wolfgang Zapf', Leske + Bundrich, 2002 Opladen, Deutschland, ISBN 3-8100-3368-5, pp.273-29.

4. 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 to10 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 in explained in the introductory text, chapter 7.3.

5. 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 standard deviation on this item 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 standard deviations on the two items appears to be strongly correlated; $r = +.70$ (after omitting three outliers). We computed the regression equation and used these to estimate the score on 0-10 life-satisfaction. The formula is: estimated standard deviation of 0-10 life satisfaction = 0,703 + 0,793 x observed standard deviation on the Best-Worst item. These estimates are reported in this table. The 95% confidence interval around these estimated values is about 1 point, which means that these estimates are quite rough. The original means on the Best Worst item were: Angola, 1,98; Bolivia, 2,11; Guatemala, 1,91; Honduras, 2,12; Ivory Coast, 1,94; Kenya, 1,90; Libanon,2,01; Mali, 1,50; Senegal, 1,85 and Uzbekistan 2,10.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'.

6. Some scores are not beyond doubt and can better be left out in analyses with these data.

   ❍ The standard deviation in the 1990 World Value Survey in Austria is disregarded. The score is quite deviant (3,8) and does not fit the relative score of Austria in other cross national surveys in the same era.

   ❍ The value reported here is based on the 1999 survey only.The score of 1,6 in Pakistan in 2001 seems unrealistic and does not fit the score of 2,3 on the Best-Worst item in the PEW survey in 2002.|

   Our policy is to report doubtfull data unless we are fairly sure that they are wrong. This is to avoid that we delete data that do not fit our expectations.

7. On this list the following cases are left out: Puerto Rico (2,3), East Germany (2,2) West Germany (2,1) and Northern Ireland (2,0). These cases are included in the database but are no real 'nations'.

8. The use for these data for estimating inequality in nations is discussed in the Introductory Text to this section on 'Distributional Findings in Nations', chapter 8: Uses of

this data set, section 8/5 'Comparing inequality in nations'.

9. This list is included in the datafile 'States of Nations' as variable eqls_90s.

Cite as:

Veenhoven, R., *Average happiness in 90 nations 1990-2000*, World Database of Happiness, RankReport 2004/3b, Internet: www2.eur.nl/fsw/research/happiness