

# A Guide to Finding Work Abroad

Do you have a dream of moving, working and living abroad just once in this lifetime? Do you question if can you find work abroad? Stumped about where to start looking?

Maybe we can rephrase the question, how much would you really like to make it happen?

The reality is that anything is possible. Where there is a will, there is always a way. Today I'm going to cover what you need to think about, as well as how and where to start finding work abroad.

The good news is that it is never too late to start living and following your dreams.

## Before we start: A Quick Reality Check:

It would be naïve to think that moving to a new country doesn't bring a host of challenges. There can be as many [epic failures](#) as there are success stories.

Finding the right job in the right place, like anywhere can be a challenge. While there are countries like [Argentina where it can be harder to find work](#). Companies themselves often prefer to hire locals as it can be a costly and time-consuming process to get a residency for foreigners with little assurance that it will all work out.

Yet, that's not to say it's impossible, yes there are obstacles, however, there are also many loopholes and ways around them.



# What is possible, realistic and viable

If you have a particularly remote or exotic location in mind, it may be harder unless you are able to work remotely. Which is ideal and the answer for many digital nomads.

As this subject is so well covered online, this post isn't a guide on becoming a digital nomad.

This is a simple-to-use, practical guide for those that want to find employment abroad. To make it happen you'll need a bit of energy, effort and willpower. On top of a healthy dose of reality.

**First, you need to decide if you want to move to a specific country or job.**

For instance, countries such as Australia offer a [working holiday visa](#). Which is available to anyone between 18-30 years old. This visa allows you to travel and work through Australia for a year. During this time you'll have the right to work

anywhere you like, some find office jobs and others work as backpackers picking fruit or bartending in hostels.

This type of visa is much more of a travel experience than a career move.

### **Working abroad to improve your career options.**

There are a lot of careers that value some time spent abroad, architects go to Holland, and a creative designer may spend a year in London at a top advertising agency. This time spent abroad adds credibility and valuable international work experience to your resume.

So have a think about the type of experience and work you'd be looking for. Once you've got a clear direction of what you would prefer, you can start preparing to make it a reality.

## **Preparing before you apply for work**

Any planning you do before you go, from studying the language, getting to know the customs, and putting money into a savings account – is going to be useful.

All of it helps you to prepare, and get the ball rolling. An application letter sounds stronger if you can mention that you are learning the language, and are knowledgeable about the culture, reasons for going and expectations while there.



## Things to know before you go:

1. **What are the criteria for working in that country and your visa options?** Best place to find this is on the government website of the country in their immigration and visas section. Or google working visa for [*country of choice*].
2. **What type of job opportunities are there?** Thankfully again, the internet is a big help here. There are websites that cater to gap year travellers, expat websites and forums. Government and local city websites can be helpful. Research local job sites, and keep in mind they may be in the local language. If you don't yet speak the local language type the job title or English (or your language) in the search field to see what jobs come up.

International job sites like [Monsterboard](#), [experteer](#) and [LinkedIn](#) are also worth researching at this preparation stage.

*Note: This is a good time to set up a LinkedIn profile if you don't already have one.*

3. **What is the cost of living?** This can be tricky to uncover as the information might be dated. There are



websites that specialize in the [cost of living comparisons like Numbeo](#). Other sites like [Expatica a site dedicated to expats](#), and [International Living](#) also have useful guides and information. Again, searching on the internet is an invaluable tool: Cost of living in [*country of choice*].

**4. What salary do you need to be able to live?** Now that you have an idea of the cost of living, it's advisable to understand what the local salaries are, and what you would need to earn. Countries in the South of Europe are notorious for the high costs of living and low salaries. If you are planning to backpack around Australia and work as you go the cost of living will be less of a concern as you'll likely get free accommodation – depending on the job.

**5. What is life like for foreigners there?** This investigation can be hit and miss. On expat blogs, the whingers are the ones that complain the loudest. If you look hard and read between the lines, you'll also find some valuable feedback.

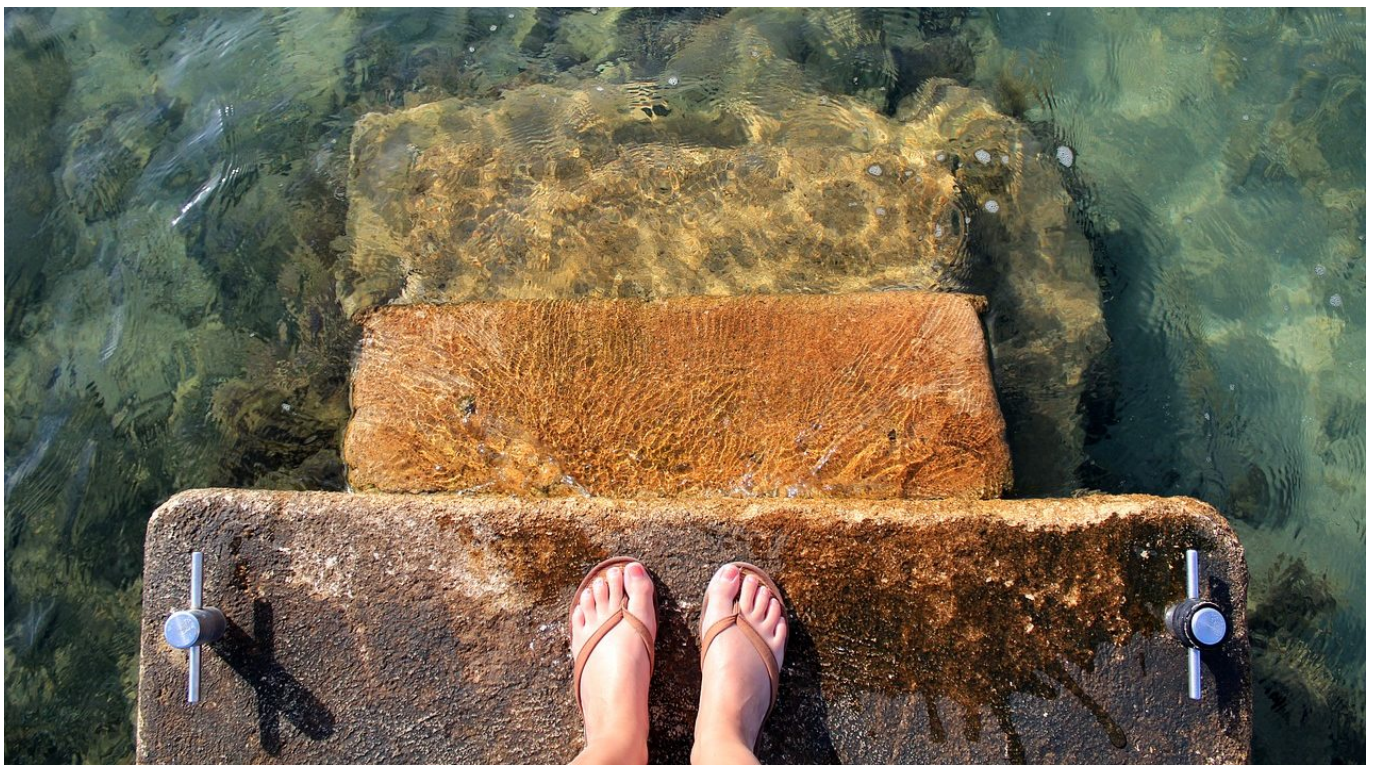
You can review local expat blogs, forums, and meetups or ask your own social circles via-via. It can be good to reach to out someone or get an introduction.

Drop blog writers/ friends of friends that are living in that country an email, most people are happy to help. The more precise questions you ask, the more precise answers you'll get. It's always good to get the perspective of someone living there to see what it's really like.

The answers you get from your research may or may not be what you want to hear. But the reason for doing the research is to 1) manage your expectations. 2) help you to prepare i.e. if there are no English-speaking jobs other than being an English teacher, you'll know to get your TEFL certification before you go.

**What can happen if you are unprepared:** many moons ago, I tried to move to China. I didn't speak the language, there were limited work opportunities and the cultural differences were so big that I knew I'd never adjust. I ran out of money and bailed. [It was an epic moving abroad failure.](#) Yet, I also learnt a lot, which is why I now research potential countries and do a dry run before any life-changing moves.

We live and learn, but the better we prepare the more likely we'll make a success of it. You'll also find that it helps to inspire and motivate you into taking the plunge.



## Thinking out of the box & brainstorming options

The research may have given you some ideas, however, there are moments when that might not be enough. Perhaps you have a country in mind and need a few more options. If so, here is a list of ideas to help you brainstorm the endless possibilities:

- Apply for a study visa. One where you can work part-time, or also do an internship?
- If you are between 18-30 you may be able to get a working holiday visa.
- Skilled worker options: I.e. [Australia often has a shortage of Hairdressers and electricians](#). So, if a country has a shortage of your skills, and you have the qualifications, you can apply.
- Do you work for an international company that can expatriate you? If so, start the conversation with your HR department to understand your options and the process.
- International NGOs and Non-profits. Local or International Organisations often accept applications and offer training for foreign assignments.
- Volunteer abroad. There are companies that charge you to participate – but there are those that are free, or pay a small salary to cover living costs.
- [Workaway](#), [Helpx](#) has a range of options if you would like to work 5 hours a day, 5 days a week in exchange for food and accommodation. Some may even pay a small wage – depending on the work. You can do almost any type of work from babysitting to farming.
- [Woofing](#) (work on organic farms), similar to [workaway](#) but offers work on organic farms in exchange for food and a place to stay.
- Check the website of your own country's embassy, as they often also have jobs and internships available in their offices abroad.
- [Cruise ships](#), airlines or jobs [in Hotels](#)
- Local Recruitment agencies – use those that specialise in your industry
- [Work in the Tourism sector](#), travel companies are often looking for people that speak different languages – depending on the job, it may also include live-in accommodation
- Local job sites

- If you are already in the country, ask around, and join networking groups, industry associations and [meet-ups](#).
- If you have a university degree you can often get a teaching job, [Teaching your language](#) or working as a translator

So, get the sticky notes out, and cover the wall with them. What do you like to do, and what skills do you have? What wouldn't you do? What is possible in the country your looking to move to?

## Where to look for work

Once you've narrowed down your options it's time to actually start finding jobs to apply for. A few of my favourite sites when looking for work abroad that are global are:

- [LinkedIn: Professional work network and recruitment site](#)
- [Monsterboard: International job boards](#)
- [Jooble: Jobs sites worldwide](#)
- [Indeed: Job board](#)
- [Experteer Professional Job Market](#)
- [Glassdoor: Job website](#)
- [Caterer for Jobs in Tourism, hotel and Restaurant industry, including live-in Roles](#)
- [Expatica: Has job listings for Europe](#)
- [The Undutchables: English-speaking jobs in The Netherlands](#)
- [Top Language Jobs: Jobs in foreign languages](#) or for bilingual speakers
- [Working couples: offers jobs mainly in hospitality](#) for couples
- [Jobs abroad Bulletin](#)

There are always local sites, so research what they are, as most local employers will advertise there. You can also make a list of the key international companies in that country and apply via their website directly.



If you are already in the country ask local businesses, check the local papers or recruitment companies: wherever or however locals are looking and finding work.



## Applying and getting the job you want

Applying for and getting the job is much more than a numbers game. You are applying and vying against locals who are equally skilled, and easy to interview and employ.

You'll need to make sure your cover letter stands out as much as your resume does. If you can't wow them with your experience, make sure you make up for it in enthusiasm.

The best way to make a cover letter stand out is to be authentic and personalise it so that it addresses the job in question and isn't a copy and paste of another job. Whoever is reading it will know the difference.

Research the company you are applying to. If you are applying for a job as a content specialist but notice they haven't updated their social media, mention how you could change it. *[it goes without saying, do so in a positive way]*

Also be aware of their values, mission and how you might be able to make a difference and how you fit into that. What experience do you bring that makes you stand out, and how can you add value?

It's also a good idea to know what the challenges might be and address them. For instance, if they want someone bi-lingual, mention that you studying are at an intermediate level and are confident it will improve.

If it is a country where you have or a country where you need a working visa – be honest. Otherwise many employees won't even look at your application. Make it as easy as possible for them to take it through to the next step.



## **Covering the basics in your cover letter:**

- Why do you want the job
- What you can bring to the table – experience, skills, examples of your successes
- Finish strong, and state you will call in the next two

weeks to follow up. Request an interview for when you'll be in the country via skype.

Keep it simple, short, and concise but enthusiastic in a professional manner.

The most important thing once you send off your application is to follow up on it. Most people miss this step, yet the fact that most people don't call gives you an opportunity to stand out and show that you are serious about the application.

Call if possible, everyone sends emails and they quickly disappear down the queue in someone's inbox. Calling is nerve-racking, especially if in a foreign language. Be confident, list out your questions beforehand and have them in front of you.

Ask what the timing is, what the process is and when you can expect an answer. If they are friendly, ask if they have everything they need, and if there is anything else they would like to know. Again, it's an opportunity to stand out, build rapport, and be curious and friendly.

## **Be tenacious without being a stalker**

There can be a fine line between having tenacity and stalking people by calling every day. However, showing enthusiasm and wanting the job is never a bad thing.

I've found if you are applying and are visiting the country in a few weeks most potential employers may be open to interviewing you during that time – so it never hurts to ask. It's also a good excuse to follow up and to call to see what's possible.

Be sure to keep applying and for suitable jobs, you'll get a

lot of rejections but tweak your applications, get feedback and keep at it.

## Going through the interview process



While the first rounds of interviews might be over skype, companies may want the last interview to be in person. So make sure to be flexible on your ability to travel and when you can do so.

Some international companies depending on the size will cover some basic travel costs, smaller companies are less likely to if you are applying for a local contract. So, don't expect it unless you work in a fairly skilled high-paying niche and it's an international company.

If you do go for an interview, don't put all your eggs in one



basket. Line up as many interviews as you can before you go and brush up on any local customs, norms and dress codes.

Inform them of how long you'll be in the country, this gives them the opportunity to plan any further interviews within that time frame.

The interview process goes both ways, envision yourself working there, and ask the questions you are curious about. If you make it to the final stages of the process ask if you can meet the team.

Be sure to be clear on what the job entails, the benefits, salary and time off, as they vary greatly between countries and companies. Also, be aware of what you might need to work there, certificates, references, working visa etc. before starting. Again larger companies may arrange this for you, but smaller local companies depending on the type of work may not.

## Looking for a job locally

If you are visiting a country for an interview or a test run before contemplating the move, use most of your time there. Make appointments register with recruitment agencies – request in-person interviews with them. A bit of face time can make all the difference.

Go to expat groups and meet-ups, and network at the chamber of commerce, and industry events that may be on at the same time, or plan your trip to coincide with any that are taking place so you can meet expats and locals working in the country.

Meeting people and companies face to face can help to make a difference, it will also give you an idea on the jobs, work and culture.

Finally, once you have found the right opportunity and are

ready to fly.



## Getting the job and starting work

This is where your earlier preparation comes in handy. Before you go make sure all the required paperwork is in order.

If the job doesn't offer live-in accommodation, you can get short-term temporary accommodation while you look for something more permanent. Airbnb is great for this.

If you plan or are undecided on whether to [ship your goods overseas](#), my last post covers this topic in further detail.

Working overseas is an incredible experience and worth doing at least once in life. The experiences that you gain, and the people that you meet. It changes your whole perspective and creates memories that last a lifetime.

In the words of Kate Douglas Wiggin:

*"There is a kind of magicness about going far away and then coming back all changed." Kate Douglas Wiggin*

*Photos and images are gratefully supplied by:*

[Mabel Amber, still incognito...](#) from [Pixabay](#)

[Maike und Björn Bröskamp](#) from [Pixabay](#)

[Ali Yahya](#) on [Unsplash](#)

[Yannis H](#) on [Unsplash](#)

[Priscilla Du Preez](#) on [Unsplash](#)

---

# What My Epic Expat Failure Taught me

## Lessons disguised as hard knocks

When planning to move abroad we never know how it will turn out. There are moments in life when it is a far cry from what we expected or planned. Yet, does it mean we are an expat failure?

In a world where anything is possible. Where happiness, success and riches are the name of the game – and is what most people strive for.

What do we do when reality throws us more than a curve ball? When reality walks up and slaps us in the face with a slimy dead fish before it kicks the feet out from under us.

Not all moves abroad and adventures end in big success stories. Some grind us through painful lessons in the international school of hard knocks.

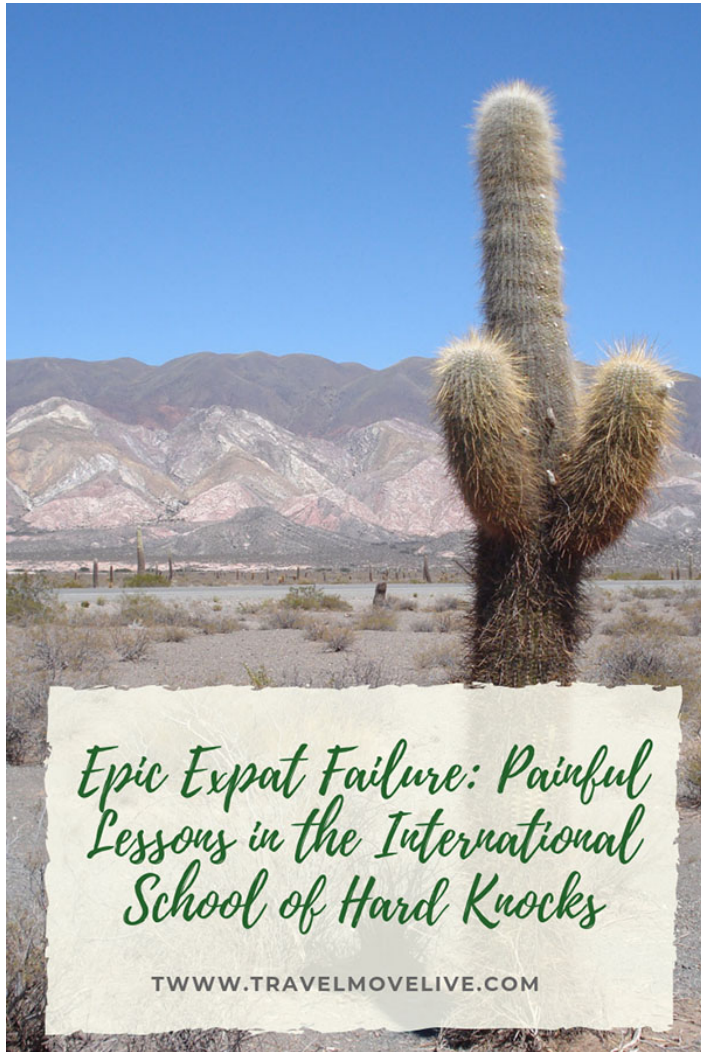
In a world where anything is possible, failure is possible too. Rather than deem it a failure, I'd rather file these under "big fat lessons" I learned along the way.

The icing on these lessons is that these are learnt in exotic places. In foreign strange languages, all while eating excessive amounts of ice cream. So in theory, these lessons earn buckets more kudos than lessons learned at home on the sofa.

Here are is one of my misadventures, and painful lessons I learned the hard way. Lessons in accepting on of my short lived attempts to acclimatize and settle in abroad:

## **The Big Farewell**





One fated evening many moons ago – I found myself in a deep discussion with a friend. I was in the middle of celebrating my final nights in London. New adventures on foreign shores were calling my name...

I was moving to China, and high on the possibilities. The big wide sea of possibilities that lay before me, like a blank page awaiting a scribbling pen.

**Anything as always is possible.**

In this conversation with 'Miss Wise' (alias used to protect the innocent), I found doubts streaming uncensored from my mouth. Could I do it, what if I failed? What if it didn't work out? What if I had to face all these friends again after such a big going away party.

Her oh so – wise words – echo still in the recesses of my mind. They come up to join me on the odd occasion when doubt threatens to overwhelm me.

*"Michelle, not one of the people here would be sorry to see*

*you again – they'd welcome you back in a second".*

She then went on to tell me a story. A sad story of a friend that had moved out to the Greek Islands with a big send off. When he got ill, he was too embarrassed to come home. And thanks to that pride and unwillingness to admit defeat he died there, alone. She made me promise if it wasn't working out, if I got sick, broke or unhappy to come back. Come back to where I would always be welcome.

## **Yet Timing is Everything**

Later, as I recalled that fatal moment and the promises I made to her. It didn't make admitting my defeat and return any easier.

In retrospect, I should have heeded her words earlier. I hesitated, and as in love in war, those that hesitate are lost. Hence, I returned to London with no money. I spent the first day and night at the airport. Too broke, ashamed and devastated to even let anyone know I had returned. Too proud to ask for help.

Living in China wasn't the dream I had imagined. I found the language impossible to learn. People stared at me in the street. It was an alien world, and I was the alien.

A world that I could never integrate into. I would never feel at home in. Relegated to forever being an outsider.

The work promised to me was not at all what I thought it to be, my money ran out and the rest is history. The dream dissolved and turned into a nightmare. I couldn't make any of it work, nor could I leave the country.

I was stuck.



## Time to Put your ego aside

I am even more ashamed at the lengths I had to go to, to leave the country. Which I am not going to recount for fear that it will give people ideas. But let's say, a human angel lent a hand. They spoke to the airline, who then with great ado, repented and changed my ticket.

There are angels out there. It didn't change the fact that life was tough for a while. So tough it would bend steel.

But hey, let's get real, everyone somewhere at sometime has had moments like these. It is these moments that define us. We don't wallow, we recognize it, suck it up, and get on with it.

You can deal with the fall out later.

At what we'll call the end of the saga, my friend in all her wisdom was right. My friends were happy to see me and after a few initial setbacks, surrounded by my friends, life went on.

I've gone on to live through many more sagas. I have lived in many countries, and failed many more times. I still find myself onboard the roller coaster of an adventure we call life.



And while this self-inflicted disaster was what I would deem an epic FAIL (yes in capitals), I also learnt a lot:



## Lesson 1: Research the Country you are Moving to

Just because you know your way around a Chinese menu, and you excel at the use of chopsticks doesn't mean your going to be an expert in all things Chinese. It would have been useful if I had attempted to learn the language before going.

Investigated what city would have been more suitable. Looked into the quality of life, how to they see and relate to foreigners. There is so much you can look into and do, there are expat sites and forums, and so much you can find online.

In all honesty I was in China so long ago the internet... yes friends, it was that long ago. How the world has changed – and how much more I research now before I go!

## Lesson 2: Getting the Timing right

This is an uber important lesson in life in general. Timing is everything and yet it is one of the toughest things to



guesstimate.

Plan your finances. Calculate how much everything actually costs vs. how much you expected it would cost.

Moving to a new city, or country has a lot of upfront costs. From hotels, flats, and general living costs before you find or start a job. If you rent a flat, you'll need a deposit, a month up front, utility bills. These things can all add up and can be more than you planned for.

If you decide to leave earlier than expected and you have rented an apartment. You are also going to have to give notice, cancel utilities which takes time, and can often come at a price.

Be sure to keep track of it all.

Calculate of how long your money will last? Do you have a credit card you can use if needed, and do you have someone to help you out? What is the deadline for finding a job?

There is a certain amount of time that you have to make it work, know what it is and plan for it.

Life abroad in even the cheapest of places can cost more than expected. Keep an eye on where you are at in the journey and be prepared to time it right. Sitting down once and a while and reassessing the current status with a calculator and pen and paper is necessary.

That way, when or if the day comes that you realise it's not working out, and if all of your best laid intentions fail you'll have a plan:

## **Lesson 3. Have a plan B and be**

# Flexible

Or C, or D – flexibility, adaptability are traits that come in handy. If you don't find work, can you do a work exchange. If one city isn't right is there any other one that might be more suitable.

Can you work online? stay with friends? there are always plenty of possibilities, and there are times we need to be more creative with our options and in uncovering what they might be.

If B, C, D fail is there another country nearby or can you move back home, in with friends, get a live in job or to a previous country you lived in?

Again anything is possible. Combinations and choices are infinite, be ready to turn on a dime deal with the situation head on as it arises.



## Lesson 4: Is this the right culture

# for you?

While some Cultures might be Fascinating, it doesn't mean you can live in them. For me, as a shy social recluse the idea of having everyone stare at me in the street is appalling. Which was part of the everyday in China.

The language was a big challenge. At the time it was unusual for Chinese and Westerners to mingle.

One of the things I like most about living in a new country is getting to know the culture. To learn the language and feel like a local. In China, at the time I found this a challenge.

I didn't want to be an expat 'EXPAT', always a foreigner. When I live abroad I need to be able to feel at home.

It was a moment of self awareness when I realised how much I need to be able to settle in and feel at home. At the same time I recognised that would never happen in China the culture while interesting, wasn't me.



# Every End is a new beginning

There isn't really an end to our adventures, after one, another one soon follows. We continue along our path, be it quick, rich or educational.

I am not sure about you, but despite my epic fails. Of which my attempt to move to China was just one of many. It made my life richer, and somehow more lived.

And in the words of a one wise man, when I shared that all I wanted to do was to find a place to call home. He laughed and said:

'You're a wanderer, you travel, you live abroad it's what you do. Get used to it'.

Really, that's life isn't it? Accepting who we are, and where we are at in our journey.

Failure is all about how we define it. My moves are not failures but rich lessons, epic adventures, and all in all, make my life 'a life worth living'.

My message to you – if it's not working out: what lesson are you learning and what new adventure is waiting for you? and a brief reminder, that I mean it when I say:

***“Anything is possible...”***

p.s. If you are undecided about staying or going, check out these earlier posts on [surviving your first year abroad](#), and about [how to meet locals and make a foreign country feel like home](#).

Divine photos here are thanks to these incredible photographers:

Photo by [Yiran Ding](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Photo by [Estée Janssens](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Photo by [Jase Bloor](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Photo by [VanveenJF](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Photo by [Tim Gouw](#) on [Unsplash](#)

---

# Meeting Locals can Make a Foreign Country feel like Home

## The value of feeling at home

Home isn't always a place as much as a state of mind, one of comfort and belonging that can often come to us through the quality of the friends that we have there.

It's a sense of having someone to call and go out with for lunch, a drink or night out to the movies. A friend we can turn to for advice, which can be anything from a good hairdresser to issues with a local utility company.

Home is, knowing that when the brown stuff hits the fan that there is someone around who gives a damn. That's home, it goes beyond a comfortable house, job and furniture.

## Why that feeling is even more



# important abroad



When you're moving abroad as a newbie or veteran expat, there is the initial honeymoon period that wears off. Once the newness of a place wears off you are left with the reality of everyday life.

[Surviving your first year abroad](#) can be a challenge.

Everyday life, even when abroad can become a monotonous humdrum of work and chores. The only difference will be that you will be doing your shopping, washing and working out in a different language. Surrounded by unknown faces.

Once the novelty of a place wears off, we get homesick. But it's not for a place, but for the 'sense of belonging'.

If you've just arrived at a new city and have only been there a few weeks or months, you may not yet have met other people.

## **We know that admitting you want to make friends sounds, naff...**

In reality, most of the population are friends with the people they grew up with.

Which is why if you are not living in a big expat culture the idea of forcing yourself to go and make friends can be difficult. Even if you are in a city with a big expat culture, just meeting other foreigners is not a local experience.

While it's great to meet others having the same experience as you, it is good to meet locals too. They'll give you an honest perspective of living in your new country.



Queensday Amsterdam a mix of Argentine, Swedish, Dutch and Polish friends

## How do we go about meeting new people

Sure, for some people meeting people comes naturally. In your 20s you might just go out to a bar and clubbing and know everyone by the end of the night.

As we get a little older, we might have to force ourselves to go out and make an effort. We may need to put it on our to-do list, and heavens forbid even have an action plan of steps that we need to take.

Be prepared that it may even take longer than expected.

## Let's be really honest and even brutal

It's a perk and the downside of getting older, but honesty comes with that as does wisdom. Fact: you don't have to like everyone you met.

It is ok, after having a coffee with someone you've met, to not meet up with them again.

Let's put in the extra effort and meeting people that we get on with fabulously, and soon skyrocket to the top of people that we want to spend time with.

Even if we have to force ourselves to get up and out to meet these people, on numerous occasions, for weeks or months in a row.

While meeting friends in pubs and bars, can be the easy route, however, these can be here today gone tomorrow type of friends. There are many other opportunities to meet locals in a new city.



# How and where to meet locals

Here are a few ways that we can meet new people abroad with similar interests and find common ground that is a good starting point on the road to friendship.

1. One way is finding work abroad, through an [interesting job assignment](#). Work is always a great way to meet colleagues and clients.
2. Stay somewhere unique and local
  - Homestay e.g. Bed & Breakfasts, [Airbnb](#). Or you can [host fellow travellers via Airbnb and](#) earn some travel money without at the same time.
  - Get Free Accommodation by doing a work exchange via [Workaway](#) or [Helpx](#), [Woofers](#).
  - House-sitting. Recommended sites are [Mindahome](#), and [housesittersuk](#), you may want to look up a local version.
  - [Couchsurfing](#) is more than just finding a couch to sleep on, they also have meetups and is a great place to also meet locals.
3. Attend a language exchange, if you've moved somewhere new where they speak a different language this is a great way for you to practice the language. Then to return the favour by helping someone else learn your language. Find an exchange through [conversation exchange](#) or [language exchange](#).
4. Volunteer, at a smaller local non-for-profit. The more local the organisation the better as it will not only benefit the community more, there is also less likely to be a cost involved. You will also have more opportunity to meet others in the local community.
5. Learn something new. Do a workshop in anything that tickles your fancy or that you're curious about forever. Whether it's [learning local cooking](#) in Thailand, a [natural dying and weaving course in Laos](#).
6. Go to Community events, programs or talks – given by



local libraries or community centres.

7. Join a local walking /bike clubs.
8. Visit local markets and spend some time talking to the stall holders and creatives – they love a conversation and if you take the time you'll find their full of stories, insights, and tips.
9. Share a passion or mutual interest and then find a shop/studio where you can discuss and learn more. Be it Music, Gardening, Art, Books, Sport etc. etc. The list is endless.
10. Find and join a local community garden
11. Sign up and join [Meetup](#), [Internations](#), [Toastmasters](#) who all hold gatherings for people on a particular subject or in a particular city.



Friends all go and visit another friend abroad

## What do we need to do next

Meeting new people can be awkward, in the beginning, it will feel akin to dating. It's rare to just ask someone you've just met for a coffee. Back home we rarely do that, or it's a polite thing to say, but not followed up on.

Yet, when we are somewhere new we need to ride out the discomfort and go out for those coffees, lunches or accept invitations to other events that we'll be invited too.

We need to keep in mind that:

*Strangers are just friends that we haven't met yet*

What may sound like a dull night out could potentially be that one night that we click with someone who shares our vibe. There is nothing like meeting kindred spirits, and getting to know new people – once the awkwardness has passed.



Nothing beats a real conversation

## **Feeling at home and becoming a local**

On top of making actionable plans, also dare yourself to attempt small conversations with people everywhere. You'll find that Locals love discussing their country and advising you. Be kind and let them.

You'll learn more from the gentleman on the park bench, or the

lady in the bakery than you'll pick up in a lifetime of books.

It's the people we meet, their stories that touch our lives, they welcome us and help to transform a foreign shore into a place that we can call home.

Resources:

- [www.couchsurfing.com](http://www.couchsurfing.com)
- [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com)
- [www.workaway.info](http://www.workaway.info)
- [www.helpx.net/](http://www.helpx.net/)
- [www.volunteersouthamerica.net/](http://www.volunteersouthamerica.net/)
- [www.true Travellers.org/](http://www.true Travellers.org/)
- [www.freevolunteering.net/](http://www.freevolunteering.net/)
- [www.withlocals.com/](http://www.withlocals.com/)
- [www.toastmasters.org/](http://www.toastmasters.org/)
- [www.internations.org/](http://www.internations.org/)
- [www.meetup.com/](http://www.meetup.com/)
- [www.conversationexchange.com/](http://www.conversationexchange.com/)



Another goodbye – see you soon party...

Big gratitude for the two additional photos by:

Camels by [Kawtar CHERKAOUI](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Girls in the sunset by [Marion Michele](#) on [Unsplash](#)

---

# The Reality of Moving and Living in Argentina

## Why move to Argentina?

Why would you want to move to and live in Argentina? Was the response I got, when I told friends I was moving to Argentina, together with a raised eyebrow and quizzical expression.

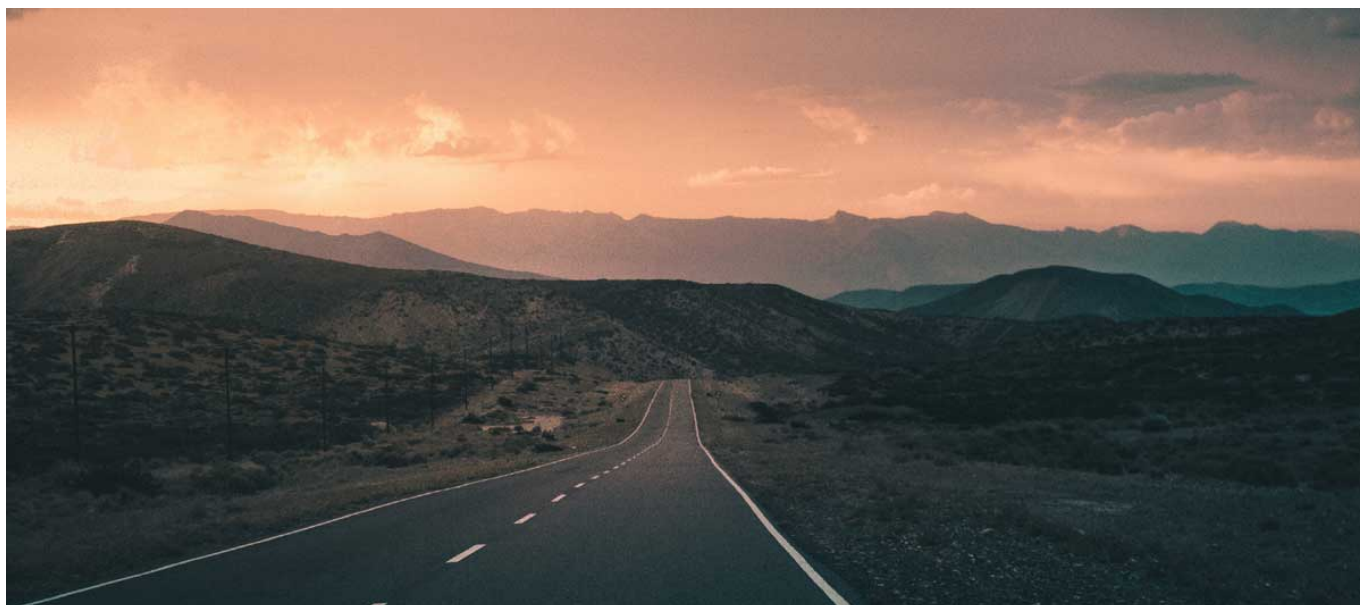
Ironically, I was moving because people kept asking me “Why don’t you move to Argentina? You’d love it.”

At the time I was living in Amsterdam, restless and tired. Tired of the endless rain, excessive tourism and cramped spaces. I wanted to live in a city with flavour. Who doesn’t want a life with flavour?

What can I say, Argentina has flavour. Every body at the time in the Netherlands was talking about it. Two friends own a house there. The future king of the Netherlands just married an Argentine, other four friends had just come back from their trip to this magical wonderland.

All these conversations inspired me [to buy a book on Argentina](#), and I was hooked and enchanted within the first few pages.





## Most Magical Place in the world

What is not to like about the idea of spending time in the 'Paris' of Latin America. A nation of polo playing horse fanatics and real-life gauchos (local cowboys).

A country where soccer is the religion and BBQ is the national cuisine. A country whose history is weaved so densely and dramatically you could carve it with a knife.

The country has the wild expansive plains of La Pampa, the mountains and lakes of Patagonia, the deserts up in Santa Fe [and Salta](#). As well as the uber magical city of Buenos Aires. If it could bring tears to the eyes of Evita and millions that hear the song, it may be worth checking out.

Within weeks a trip and dry run, was booked. Could, would or should I live there.



## Is Argentina worth moving to?

Doing a dry run, whenever you are planning a move abroad is recommended.

When you spend time in a country for a trial run it's definitely not a holiday. It's a working vacation.

You'll spend your time researching the best areas to live. The quality of life versus the costs of living (rent/groceries), salaries, safety and the political climate.

It's a great opportunity to make time to meet with locals as well as expats living there so you get real stories of the everyday challenges from both sides.

Of course, also enjoy what the country offers from polo games, top restaurants and hotel pool, deciding where to live also means checking out the perks.



## Researching the Move to Argentina

Luckily, researching Buenos Aires was easy; it is an exceptionally large city, so sources of information are also available in English, such as [BA times](#) a local online newspaper.

There are also plenty of opportunities to meet locals and expats at places like [Gibraltar the English pub](#) in San Telmo, at embassies, [expat](#) or [internations](#) events.

Argentina has its own active online [expat forum baexpat.com](#) where you can delve deeper into the types of challenges you may encounter. Along with relevant solutions, or meet like-minded individuals.

***TIP:** keep a healthy perspective on forums, ignore the trolls. Take it with a healthy sense of detachment, and it'll become a helpful resource.*

Originally, I planned an 8-week dry run, which I extended 4 times. And ended up there for an incredible 6 months.

While there, I really wanted to get an idea of what it would



be like to work in a city with 3 million inhabitants. So, I spent some of my time volunteering at [BABS](#) (British Aged Care in Buenos Aires).

It was here I had the opportunity to meet people who'd lived in Argentina for over 80 years. And trust me when I say, there is nothing like listening to first-hand stories of a countries history.

On my second day in Buenos Aires, I stumbled upon and fell in love with Puerto Madero. A small island, next to the city and is secured by the naval police. The suburb is a refuge from the hustle and bustle, it is quiet, spacious and safe.



It was also here that English built the warehouses on the harbour in the early 1900's, while they were building the railroads. These recently renovated warehouses add a timeless charm and are home to some of the cities best restaurants, shops and cafes.

San Telmo markets are still within walking distance, and the rest of the city is also just a hop, skip and a jump away.



# Final conclusion, after 6 months dry run?

Honestly, when I first arrived in Buenos Aires, I was shocked at the populous state of what seemed a dirty city. However, it won me over hour by hour, day by day. By my 3rd week, I was looking into potential job opportunities and any which way that I could stay long-term.

I stayed until my savings ran dry, and I had no options but to go home.

After 6 months, I left Argentina, heartbroken, devastated and determined to return.



## Can you, easily move to Argentina?

How you migrate to a country depends largely on the country. In Argentina, you have a few options to choose from:

1. Get company/ employer to sponsor you

2. Set up a company
3. Marry and Argentine

My plan was to go with the first option. So, I meet with anyone I could via contacts, friends, LinkedIn, peers in my industry.

Including the Ambassador, at my countries embassy, and went to lunches that were put on by the local Dutch and English Chamber of Commerce.

Many countries will have an embassy or a local chamber of commerce who assist with cross-border trade advice and networking.

With a fully booked agenda, there was only one objective and that was to find work. While I didn't get a job, I did meet great people and got a wealth of advice and insight on the business landscape.

## Legally moving to Argentina



Being that my best option would be to find a company to sponsor me, the reality is that this is easier said than done. Despite my meetings, lunches and endless cups of coffee, I didn't manage to find a sponsor in Argentina.

Language can be a real challenge when attempting to move to a country. If you are not fluent; it'll be hard to put you to work or compete with local job seekers.

Like many other countries, for a company to sponsor a foreigner can be a costly process. One that includes fees, lawyers and paperwork. Companies will hire you if you have specific expertise.

Or you can also try to get a job for an international company in your own country and apply to be relocated abroad.

## **Good Luck comes in Many Forms**

Flying back to the Netherlands with a tissue in one hand and hope in the other. Expecting that it would be a near impossible task to find a company in the Netherlands to sponsor me to work in Argentina.

As luck would have it, a company that I knew just happened to be opening shop in Argentina. And within weeks, I had a job and was planning my move, as well as that of the company.

Friends I'd met, helped advise me on an appropriate salary, as the company would be giving me a local contract instead of an international one.

In a country like Argentina, excessive inflation rates need to be taken into account. Eventually, with the contract signed, everything else was put in motion. The real business of moving could begin.



## Finally, Moving to Argentina

It was my 8th international move, so as ever practice makes perfect. My flat in Amsterdam was easily rented out via [expatica.com](https://www.expatica.com).

The bureaucracy in Argentina like most Latin countries is phenomenal; the amount of paperwork and documentation required was second to none.

I am eternally grateful that the company's local lawyers assisted me with my working visa and the importation of my goods. This is one move that I would not have wanted to do on my own.

As with anywhere, signing up for the utilities was not fun at all. This was when a good friend gave me advice that served me throughout my time in Argentina and beyond:

*'When dealing with an issue: don't start a fight or get angry. NEVER back down or accept no for an answer'.*





Great strategy to put into practice everytime I was told no. Whether it was for a bank account or electricity connection. I just planted myself down, and let them know I'd be there until we resolved it.

It is incredible how many miracles happen when you have all parties working on a solution.

After the move and a chaotic dance of organizational mayhem. The paperwork was done and I had a new office, a new apartment and a new life. I could finally start living the 'vida loca'.

## **Living the Dream in Buenos Aires**

Buenos Aires isn't a walk in the park, although there are some great parks to walk in. The government is both crazy and corrupt, inflation is off the scale and life can feel like a bit of a roller coaster. Depending on the day, time and place.

The city is busy, polluted and in the last few years, the economic challenges have resulted in an ever-increasing crime rate. You need to live with both feet on the ground and be aware of how you walk and travel in town.

Despite all of this, it is one of the most incredible cities



to live in. Whatever you feel like doing, you can. Whether it's tango at 2 am or front row seats at the [Polo in November](#), or catching the boat to Colonia for the day.

There is a suburb for every mood, be it shopping in Palermo, dinner in China town, after work cocktails in Recoleta. Bike riding around Puerto Madero or a visit the famous Sunday markets in San Telmo.



In the words of the worlds greatest writer who is Argentine:

[A Guide to Finding Work Abroad Click To Tweet](#)

It was all of this that made me love every minute of my crazy, wild, temperate and magical time there.

Yes, dreams can also end between a crazy government and the need for change, so I did eventually leave Argentina. Yet in retrospect, I wouldn't change a thing.

Just like the song, 'Don't cry for me Argentina', the truth is I never really left. The magic of the country lives on in my heart and lovingly etched in my memory.

# Resources :

## [BA Expats](#)

Online English paper [BA times](#)

Volunteer opportunities via [GoAbroad](#) or local [South American website](#)

[List of foreign Embassies in Argentina](#)

[Walrus books](#) English Bookshop

English Pub: [Gibraltar](#)

Meet locals and practice your Spanish via [Conversation Exchange](#) or [Toastmasters](#)

Further reading, see why November is the ideal time to visit and what to do while [there check out this post.](#)

My top reading list for before, during or instead of [your visit here.](#)



A few photos are my own, the others are shared with much gratitude to these other wonderful photographers:

[Eduardo Sánchez](#) on [Unsplash](#)

[Sasha • Stories](#) on [Unsplash](#)

[Nacho Rochon](#) on [Unsplash](#)

---

# **Trials and Tribulations of Moving to the UK**

*"You can never visit the same place twice. Each time, it's a different story." – Maureen Johnson Click To Tweet*

This famous quote is more than true. When you revisit a place, much of it will have changed. You will have changed, everything evolves or devolves as the case may be. There will be challenges, be they old or new.

Which is the situation I currently find myself in, here in the United Kingdom. It's a very different country that it was 20 years ago.

## **The Current State of Affairs**

I've now been here for awhile and the plan was relatively simple; find work and house sit while I am looking for work. Once I've found a job I like, I'll move into the area and settle down – voila!!

Sounds pretty uncomplicated and like a plan, sounds easy to implement, so I should be rocking and rolling in no time...

## **The Key Challenges of Moving to the UK**

However, there have been a few hiccups, roadblocks and obstacles on the way, as can be expected with any move abroad.

Here were my challenges and solutions, where they exist. It's was hard to put the list together in order of priorities. It's a wee bit of a chicken and egg scenario. You see before you get the one you need the other, or so you will see:

## **1. Proof of Address**

Now if you arrive and immediately rent a property, you won't have this issue. However, for the most part, you will need a proof of address.

Most institutions such as a bank will request to see a utility bill or a letter from the tax office or a bank statement. The bank statement will be especially hard, as you'll read below. You can't open one until you have an official proof of address. Herein lays the catch-22.

Now, this is going to be tricky if you are staying with friends, renting a room or house-sitting, as I have been doing.

I did read advice on one forum that you can register to vote wherever you are staying and you can then use this as a proof of address.

I didn't want to risk trying this, as it could also trigger a local council tax levy in my name. As I am house-sitting this is not something I want to risk. If you are renting it could be a solution.

One bank recommended that I register with a doctor and use that as proof of address. Which I did do, yet they also needed (you guessed it) a proof of address.

## **2. National Insurance number**

To work in the UK you'll need a national insurance number.



Luckily, I already had one – or so I thought... Sadly, it couldn't be found in the system. So after many phone calls, I made an appointment with a local job center to request a new one.

If you are new to the UK it is easy enough to apply, you need to call up the job center and make an appointment. Depending on where you live this can take a few weeks. They will send you a confirmation letter for the appointment. And if you don't have a utility bill you can use this letter as proof of address for the appointment.

You do need to take your International ID/ Passport. Keeping in mind right now, depending on where you come from you need a visa for permission to work in the UK.

If you are European and have an EU Passport, at this moment in time you can still apply and have the right to live and work in the UK. After Brexit, if and when that all goes ahead, the situation may change.

I've [written about it here](#).

Once you have your appointment the National insurance number will be sent to you, this can take anywhere from 5 – 21 days.

Please note that your National Insurance number can not be used as proof of address. Which leads me to the next obstacle:

### **3. Opening a Bank Account**



This so far has been the most frustrating experience. So much so, that I've decided NOT to open a bank account.

I don't have any proof of address I can use. So, I've simply given up. But not without finding a suitable solution.

Thankfully, there are modern digital options that you can choose from instead.

To meet my nomadic needs, I'm using two financial companies:

**Reolut:**\* They are ideal if you still have an account overseas in a different currency and/or you travel regularly. You can upload money from your bank account abroad and then exchange that currency as needed. They give better rates than you would get via your own bank.

They will send you a card, which is a prepaid card. So it doesn't work in all online shops, but it works well enough in the local ATM's, stores and for most online purchases.

The only downside is that they don't give me a local account, with which to receive payments. There is a handy request payment link that people can pay into with a credit card.

But a company who is hiring you will want to pay into a real account. Which is why I opened:

**Monese:** This online, mobile account was simple to set up. It

gives me a local account that I can use here to accept payments. You can access it via your mobile, you can request a debit card. And in no time you are off and running.

It is a whole new world of banking, which is much more consumer focused, easy to use, with fewer costs and paperwork.

There are other companies that I looked into, but these two are trustworthy and meet my needs. With that done, I am good to go.

**Side note:** If you would like to [open a Monese Account](#), and get a £10 welcome gift, when you open and top up the account, just use my code: [HUZEYS9F](#)

My last challenge remains to be seen in how and when it'll affect me:

## 4. The Dreaded Brexit

I wrote a [post earlier about Brexit](#). While it doesn't yet affect me directly. One feels a gist of the overall unrest that exists in all levels of government, business, and society on the whole.

Ferries are complaining they have fewer bookings for next year,



pharmacies are concerned about running out of medicine. The general public doesn't know what to expect.

The mainstream media doesn't help the situation, as it milks every roundabout fear that they can scour up out of whatever garbage can their digging in. Only time will tell what is and isn't justified.

For now, put your seatbelt on, and hang tight – like any of life's roller-coasters I am sure we'll come out the other side laughing or crying. And either way, we'll brush ourselves off, soldier on. Heading right into the next challenge that life offers us.

So here I am, back in the UK for now, not as settled as I would like to be yet. However, already much more settled that I was.

Hope you find some of this advice useful to help you to prepare and tackle any future move you may have planned to the UK.

The photos are thankfully provided by Unsplash:

Feature photo by [Bruno Martins](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Night photo by [Robert Almonte](#) on [Unsplash](#)



---

# **Save on Banks Fees and Exchange Rates**

## **Do you like Giving your money to Banks?**

Have you saved up your hard-earned pennies to go travelling? Put money aside, gone without a few luxuries to make sure you have a nice bit of savings in your bank. You trust it will last the whole trip and you've counted out and guesstimated a rough daily budget that you'll need for the time you are abroad?

Then you may be annoyed to see that your bank is devouring bits of your budget in hidden fees and unfavourable exchange rates.

## **The Dreaded Exchange Rate**

Have you ever checked the exchange rate online, and then look at your bank statement in surprise to see that your calculations were way off?

It is the same if you exchange cash. The currency exchange

office will often charge you a fee and depending on the location give you a rate that can vary greatly from what you saw online.

Now, I do understand that there is a buy and sell rate. However, no matter how you twist it, someone is pocketing the difference, and it's not you or me!

I would prefer my hard-earned cash to be mine for as long as possible – and to take me as far as it can when I am travelling.

## Opening a local Bank Account Abroad

Whether you are a digital nomad, expat, flexpat or long-term traveller to compensate for these costs you may want to open a bank account abroad.

Now, this isn't as easy as it sounds. I've been in England now for 2 months and I still don't have all the required documentation I need to open an account. As I've been house-sitting and living with friends so I don't have proof of a permanent address. Without proof of address, I simply can't open an account.

One day, as I struggled to pay for a train ticket online – I had a mini-meltdown. Ok, ok, will be honest it was a HUGE meltdown.

I was unable to pay with my Australian credit card, and the website wouldn't accept PayPal. I couldn't pay in person as I had no money in my credit account either at the time.

While I was frustrated, annoyed and reasonably pissed off – I went searching for a solution. Surely in this day and digital age, there has got to be a solution.

I scoured the internet for advice, researching prepaid cards and then stumbled upon [‘Revolut’](#).

# Revolut, a Financial Revolution

I signed up, and they sent a card to me within a few days. The card is linked to my Australian Bank account, from where I can transfer money back and forth. I do this via my mobile, you do need to be able to download the app on your phone.

You can have different accounts in different currencies depending on where you are travelling to. So, I have an Australian \$ account and one in £ British pounds. I upload money to my \$AUD account and then exchange it over to £GBP.

The exchange rate is a huge improvement over what my bank or currency exchange shop offers. Last week I exchanged money at the post office and at the same time via revolut. On \$100 there was a £7 difference, this equals a cup of coffee with a brownie, and a day passes on the bus. There are a lot of things I would rather spend my £7 on.

## The costs of Revolut

There is a standard account available for free. However, since I am travelling and using it a lot, I’ve found it more viable to get a premium account. This costs £6.99 per month, and there is a small % cost for transferring money into the account.

However, I am still saving a significant amount if I compare it to the unfavourable currency exchange rates, and international and ATM fees that my Australian bank charges me.

I can use the card for online purchases and withdraw cash at

an ATM. Thus avoiding the international transaction fees that I would otherwise also incur from my bank (ever get the idea my bank is ripping me off? I do). If you have an Australian bank account you will pay an international transaction charge on an overseas purchase.

The only downside thus far, is that it really is linked to your phone. So when I broke my phone I initially had issues accessing the app. To compensate for this I suggest if you do get a card, download the app on your iPad or any device you can so that you can still access it easily. I now have it on my iPad, so the problem is solved.

To me, it's made a world of difference. I've been doing freelance work, and I can send a link which helps clients pay straight into my [Revolut account](#). I can pay for my groceries, get cash out and know that I am not paying excessive rates to access my own money.

Perhaps this is one of the main reasons I haven't made too much of an effort to open a bank account here. Why should I pay extra costs for a service I don't need when I have everything covered? Especially as my Revolut account and card are a more viable, affordable and money-saving solution.

## Get Wise, with Wise Transfers

I'd also recommend Wise transfers, the ideal solution when I needed a local bank account number so that I could accept a foreign payment. As I'd left Australia, the government finally agreed to payout my pension fund but only into an Australian bank account, and my own accounts were long closed and it's almost impossible to open a new account from abroad. I set up a wise account and used that as an account for them to pay into, as they also do currency conversion, I could then transfer the AUD into GBP and transfer it into my actual account.



There are always a lot of hoops to jump through when moving and living abroad when it comes to international transactions, how and where you can open a bank account and what you need to do so. While we all understand there are some people who do it to launder money, most of us flexpats/ or digital nomads just want to be able to earn money, get paid and access it in whatever currency we need at the time with the minimum amount of costs.

With a bit of pre-planning and thought we can, and there are some great companies and services that can help like Revolut, and Wise.

[Wise Transfers sign up Link.](#)

If you are interested, you can sign up or find out more here [www.Revolut.com](http://www.Revolut.com)\*

---

# Moving to the UK During Brexit

## What impact does Brexit have on your move to the UK?

After many years abroad, I've finally decided to move back to the United Kingdom where I lived many moons ago.

*The first question on anyone and everyone's lips is 'But what*

*about Brexit?'*.

While I know that Brexit is a hot topic, and widely entertaining. To give you a small taste, just last week the local paper was voicing its concern about the 'sperm'. It seems that the Nordic countries have been the largest distributors, and now the English men are going to have to step up. I kid you not, here is the article:



Yes, it's funny, silly, and serious and has most Brits with their knickers in a twist... Brexit is providing mainstream media with an endless amount of juicy material. Yet, they like the masses that are read the papers, are pretty clueless as to what is going on.

Why would they be clear on it, even the politicians don't seem to know or agree on the facts. Right now, they are preparing for a worst-case scenario, what happens if there is no trade deal, they've termed it the 'No Deal' Scenario – this could change again next week... Stay tuned people.

To simplify the governments' terminology: The no deal scenario doesn't mean they are not working on a deal. So there *might* still be a deal. Just in case though, they've spent hours in creating a no deal worst case scenario. – although they don't think that by creating it, they are likely to *perhaps maybe* need it.

I think by the time they have come to a verdict (let's be honest, 2 years on and they're still talking rather than doing). Personally, by then I'll be living elsewhere.

## So can or can't I, you, we move to the UK?



Right now, this answer is the same as it was before Brexit was the spark of an idea. It depends on where you are from; many of the same rules apply as they did before Brexit.

As an EU citizen, I have the right – at this time – to live and work in the United Kingdom. If they do go ahead with the Brexit, they won't throw me out.

The pre-exit date is March 2019, if you arrive before this date, you have right to pre-settlement. If you arrive after this date, as an EU citizen you'll need to register yourself. The date of Britain's exit from European Union is December 2020, after which different rules may apply depending on our situation, which isn't fully clear yet – may depend on the deal, no deal scenario.

I was right to think that now is the perfect time for me to come back and spend some time in the UK. If you move here pre-exit – then you're as good as gold as they say in Australia.

At this point, I think there are more people jumping up and down, because people love drama, to complain and jump up and down. The reality is that other than the sperm, there isn't much to jump up and down about.

The ideas of stockpiling food, have years worth of medicine on hand and having to create your own sperm are a wee bit exaggerated.

Of course, I would like to take the opportunity to point out for the first time in recent history the Brits have finally focused on something other than the weather. And the weather has been brilliant, the best summer on recorded history. So maybe less worrying, more enjoying

**For more information (can't guarantee clarity):**

For anyone looking for up-to-date information, please check the [government website](#) on the subject.

Or this pretty [clear blog by the home office](#), or if you'd prefer the EU's take on what you can and can't do, then you can find that over on their [website here](#).

For those that are already living and working in the UK, you can apply for pre-settlement status, which you can find [more information on here](#).

For those of you looking for the facts the media won't share with you, and the stats they don't print. Perhaps you're looking for a bit of giggle, here is a great article on [Global Citizen](#). As they rightly point out, even the Queen is actually German. Maybe she can be the first to go?

If you are not an EU citizen, different rules will apply, the same rules as before the Brexit scenario. Visa and Immigration

information can [be found here](#).



If you are moving abroad and not sure where to start, [download my free checklist](#) here, making your move that little bit easier.

Big thanks for Photo. By [Robert Tudor](#) on [Unsplash](#)

---

# Surviving your first year Abroad

You don't want to just be surviving your first year abroad, you want to fulfill your dreams and create memories that last a lifetime!

A move abroad is a serious life change, a huge upheaval. Endless planning, packing, organizing, shipping all to take your life from one location to the next. Yes it is as exhilarating, and challenging.

To make it happen, you put any nagging doubts and doomsday friends aside to get on with all you need to do, one step at a time.

Now it's over, you're in your new country, living the dream. Or are you?



# There will be times when it's not all rosy



With the big move behind us – we may think the worst is over. We get lost in the excitement of living the dream. In the first phase of the move you are likely to see nothing but a world of endless possibilities.

Don't get me wrong, it still can be.

But, I also need to break it to you, that this lovely honeymoon phase wears off.

Which can leave you with a brutal reality, that the routine of life isn't that much different abroad then it was at home. One day, you'll realize that you still get up to go to work, you shop and you have a routine. It looks and feels exactly like our old life. Only worse as someone has removed the age old comforts, favorite haunts, and friends. They may have also changed the channel are all now speaking a new language – that you are not learning as fast enough for conversations past 'hello how are you?'.

It can also be at this vulnerable moment that those nagging

doubts we parked before the move come back to haunt us....

Did you make the right decision?

Will this ever feel like home?

And the biggest fear, did you fail your dream or did your dream fail you...

All you may need a coffee and friendly ear, someone to share your doubts and challenges with. A friend to go to the movies with. Or a savvy local to ask for a dentist recommendation.

Whatever you do, don't start tottering on the brink either of moving forward – or going back. See it as an opportunity.

## Time to take control and make it 'Home'



If you have lived abroad you may recognize the moment.

It's a wake up call and realization that living abroad is not

all cocktails with mini umbrellas on a beach. It's part of the move, and part of being a nomad. When the old life starts to fade away, it's time to replace it with a fulfilling new life.

Up until this point, all your focus has been on work, a place to live, setting up the internet and a hundred other mind-numbing tasks. So much so that you haven't had the chance to establish a social life.

What you need is a plan of action.

## Planning and creating a new home abroad:

To help to motivate yourself make a list on why you moved, and what you love about living where you do. Stick this list some prominent like the fridge. Then make the effort to do those things you enjoy that attracted you to this adventure in the first place.

If you moved for nature, go out and spend time in it. If you are in Argentina and love the tango, then learn it. Whatever it is – put it on your list and into your agenda!

In all honesty, every place has its pros and cons. What we need to do is recognise them and make sure we are balancing them out. We can do this by focusing on the positives, rather than the negatives.

The very best thing that you can do to get you through these moments of doubt is to make '**friends**'. Someone you can grab a coffee with, who can share or add to your perspective. It's always the people you meet, that'll make a foreign country feel like home.

# Now Let's get out there and meet people



We all know finding good friends isn't easy, we all know they are valuable and rare. Yet, the world is a pretty big and there are a lot of great places to meet people, with a bit of EFFORT.

The best way to meet like-minded people is through something that you love, common interests. What are your hobbies, are there courses and workshops that you can attend?

A [language exchange](#), is helpful in that it helps to improve your language skills and meet new people. Your exchange partner will also speak your language and is likely to have or plan to travel. A word of caution: be selective of who you choose to meet up with. [Remember the objective – meeting like-minded others', there are those that use the language exchange for an inroad to dating foreigners... and hence may have other objectives....]

It's handy to meet a few established foreigners and locals, which is where international groups such as [internations](#), or [Expatica](#) (Europe) or [Expat](#) work a treat as most have local gatherings. You can also find local events through [meetups](#) or a local version of the site.

Getting onto the mailing list of your own embassy in your new country is also worth while, they'll invite you to holiday celebrations and they may also have a chapter of commerce, who will get together for meetings or lunches. Which is a great place for business networking.

If you are shy, force yourself to event – you are not likely to be the only shy person there. It's going to take Effort – you are going to need to go beyond comfort zones. I assure you it will be worth it.

*There are no strangers here, only friends you haven't met yet. Walter Butler Yeats*

You'll meet a valuable people at each outing, and a few of these will grow into valuable friendships.

You will find before you know it, you'll have a social life, new hobbies and language skills. You will be going to the movies or hanging out with friends.

Someone will have recommended the perfect doctor, dentist and hairdresser after all word of mouth among peers are the best recommendations.

Now, instead of feeling homesick and full of doubt, you'll feel settled and at home.

The dream you had of living in a new country has become a reality. You can kick back and enjoy the experience and dare we say it, start planning the next move....



