

Think Europe is expensive? Paris, Amsterdam and London cost less than many major U.S. cities

- New bunq Working Abroad Index finds London costs less per month than New York, San Francisco and Boston
- Amsterdam comes in below Los Angeles, Miami and Seattle
- A Seattle professional moving to Paris could see the costs measured by the index fall by about \$12,000 a year
- Austin now costs about as much as Paris, while Nashville and Atlanta rival Copenhagen

NEW YORK, September 1, 2026 — Americans dreaming of working from Europe may find the move costs less than they think.

New research from bunq's 2026 Working Abroad Index finds that several European cities with reputations for being expensive are actually less expensive to live in than major U.S. cities. bunq, Europe's second-largest neobank, surveyed the US's most notoriously pricey markets as well as many of the country's fastest-growing metro areas.

Europe may be cheaper than you think

London, the most expensive European city in the index at \$3,754 a month, still costs less than New York (\$4,645), San Francisco (\$4,292) and Boston (\$4,010). Amsterdam (\$3,168) comes in below Los Angeles (\$3,429), Miami (\$3,406) and Seattle (\$3,303).

The same pattern shows up outside the biggest coastal markets. Living in Austin (\$2,411) now costs about the same as Paris (\$2,297), while Nashville (\$2,563) and Atlanta (\$2,641) are roughly on par with Copenhagen (\$2,655), long considered one of Europe's pricier capitals.

The Working Abroad Index compares monthly costs including rent, groceries, utilities, mobile and home internet and public transportation across 75 cities around the world.

New York takes the global top spot

Within the U.S., New York tops the 11 American cities included in the index and takes the No. 1 spot globally, ahead of all 75 cities surveyed. San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles and Miami round out the five most expensive U.S. cities in the study .

Most expensive U.S. cities in the Working Abroad Index

1. New York - \$4,645
2. San Francisco - \$4,292
3. Boston - \$4,010
4. Los Angeles - \$3,429
5. Miami - \$3,406

What your U.S. budget buys across the Atlantic

- New York (\$4,645) - European comparison: London (\$3,754)
- San Francisco (\$4,292) - European comparison: Amsterdam (\$3,168)
- Washington, D.C. (\$3,387) - European comparison: Paris (\$2,297)

For Americans with the flexibility to work from somewhere else, the savings can be substantial. A Seattle professional moving to Paris could see the costs measured by the index fall by about \$1,000 a month, or \$12,000 a year. The gap between Washington, D.C. and Paris is even wider at nearly \$1,100 a month.

“Working abroad isn’t only about where you can take your laptop. It’s also about what kind of life you can buy once you get there,” said Joe Wilson, Chief Evangelist at bunq. “For Americans who have the flexibility to live and work somewhere else, these numbers are worth a look. Some European cities we think of as expensive may actually cost less than where they live now.”

Cost is only one consideration when deciding where to live and work. The index does not account for salaries, taxes, visas or individual circumstances. But for professionals who can

work from more than one place, the findings offer a useful comparison of what everyday life costs in different cities.

The 2026 Working Abroad Index is available at <https://www.bunq.com/resources/working-abroad-index>

About bunq

bunq, Europe's second-largest neobank, has built the first user-centric bank. By developing a product rooted in its users' wants and needs, bunq makes life easy for location-independent people and businesses, starting from the way they manage money: how they spend, save, budget and invest. As the world's first GenAI-powered bank, bunq offers its users safe, secure and simple 24/7 financial support—user-centricity at scale.

Pioneering many things considered impossible, bunq was the first bank to get a greenfield European banking permit in over 35 years, raised the largest series A round ever secured by a European fintech (€193 million), and was the first EU neobank to achieve structural profitability. As part of its mission to build the first global neobank, bunq has also received its US broker-dealer license and applied for its Mexican banking license, with more global expansion to follow. Learn more: www.bunq.com

About the Study

The Working Abroad Index 2026 compares monthly living costs across 75 cities worldwide. Average costs for rent, groceries and utilities are based on figures from the Numbeo database.

Monthly housing costs are based on the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment, both in and outside the city center.

Utilities are based on an 85-square-meter apartment. Public transportation costs come from the official websites of local transit agencies, with discounts and special fares excluded.

The index also measures mobile and home internet costs and the cost of coworking space. Coworking costs are not included in the monthly living-cost figures cited above.

Figures were compiled in euros and converted to U.S. dollars using the average EUR/USD exchange rate for July 2026 (€1 = \$1.1418).

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