

World Database of Happiness, Happiness in Nations, Ranks Equality

## Equality of Happiness in 59 nations in the 1990s

How much citizens differ in their enjoyment of life<sup>1,3</sup>. Difference expressed in the standard deviation<sup>2</sup>

<a href="#">Top/bottom</a>	<a href="#">Full list</a>	<a href="#">Technical details</a>	<a href="#">Cite as</a>
----------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------------------

Top/bottom 5

<i>Top most equal SD &lt; 1,75</i>		<i>Middle range SD ± 2,2</i>		<i>Bottom<sup>6</sup> Least equal SD &gt; 2,5</i>	
Finland	1,55	Argentina	2,15	Georgia	2,58
Netherlands	1,58	Mexico	2,17	Turkey	2,65
Canada	1,73	Belarus	2,22	Brazil	2,68
Switzerland	1,74	Bangladesh	2,25	South-Africa	2,75
Japan	1,75	Estonia	2,27	Venezuela	3,0

### Full list, alphabetic

<i>Nation</i>	<i>Inequality in happiness Standard-deviation<sup>2</sup> of 0-10 lifesatisfaction<sup>3</sup></i>
Argentina	2,15
Armenia	2,37
Australia	1,81
Austria <sup>6</sup>	3,37
Azerbaijan	2,29
Bangladesh	2,25
Belarus	2,22
Belgium	1,89
Bosnia	2,21
Brazil	2,68
Britain	1,94

Bulgaria	2,35
Canada	1,73
Chile	2,18
China	2,42
Colombia <sup>5</sup>	1,99
Croatia	2,19
Czechoslovakia	2,15
Denmark	1,89
Dominican Republic	2,46
Estonia	2,27
Finland	1,55
France	1,98
Georgia	2,58
Germany	1,93
Ghana <sup>5</sup>	2,12
Hungary	2,45
Iceland	1,60
India	2,46
Ireland	1,80
Italy	2,07
Japan	1,75
Latvia	2,33
Lithuania	2,48
Macedonia	2,19
Mexico	2,17
Moldavia	2,39
Montenegro	2,18
Netherlands	1,58
Nigeria <sup>5</sup>	2,62
Norway	1,87
Peru	2,43
Philippines	2,34
Poland	2,42
Portugal	2,13
Romania	2,33
Russia	2,43
South-Africa	2,75
South-Korea	2,38
Serbia	2,45
Slovenia	2,13
Spain	1,93
Sweden	1,81
Switzerland	1,74
Turkey	2,65
Ukraine	2,28
Uruguay	2,30
USA	1,94
Venezuela	3,00

## Technical details

1. Happiness assessed by means of surveys in general public samples. This list is based on responses to a question on life-satisfaction.
2. 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.
  - This method is explained in more detail in R. Veenhoven, [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 (Hrsgs), 'Socialer Wandel und Gesellschaftliche Dauerbeobachtung. Festschrift für Wolfgang Zapf', Leske + Bundrich, 2002 Opladen, Deutschland, ISBN 3-8100-3368-5, pp.273-29.
3. For this purpose the commonly used 4 step rating scales are not ideal. The dispersion is better visible in scales that provide more answer options. The following question meets that demand and is the most used question of that kind. That question reads: "All things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your life-as-a-whole now?"
  - Responses were rated on a numerical scale ranging from: 1 dissatisfied ..... 10 satisfied".
  - Since all scores in this database are expressed in range 0-10, the standard deviations were transformed linearly from range 1-10 to range 0-10.
  - This question is categorized as query type 122C, sub type O-SLW/c/sq/n/10/aa. This classification is explained in section 4/3 of the introductory text.
  - This question has been used in 57 nations during this era.
4. On this list the following cases are left out: Puerto Rico (2,46), East Germany (2,17) West Germany (2,12) and Northern Ireland (1,86). These cases are included in the World Database of Happiness (Distributional findings in nations), but are no real 'nations'.
5. Standard deviations of life-satisfaction scores may be inflated in some countries, due to under sampling of rural population (China, Ghana and Nigeria). The score on life-satisfaction in Columbia is dubious since it does not correspond with the responses on a question about happiness in the same sample.
6. The score of Austria (3,4) is exceptionally high and does not correspond with dispersion of responses on other questions on life-satisfaction. The (transformed) standard deviation on the repeatedly used 4-step item on life-satisfaction (query type 121B) is 1,87. Therefore Austria is not included in the bottom 5.

### Cite as:

Veenhoven, R., *Equality of Happiness in 59 nations in the 1990s*, World Database of Happiness, Rank Report 2002-3, Internet: [www.eur.nl/fsw/research/happiness](http://www.eur.nl/fsw/research/happiness)