

How to become a

# Digital Nomad



# Table of Contents

## **1. Is a Digital Nomad Lifestyle Right for You?**

What is a digital nomad?

Digital nomad pros and cons

5 digital nomad skills and traits

## **2. Work Anywhere With These Digital Nomad Jobs**

Online businesses you can operate remotely

Freelance digital nomad jobs

How to choose the right job

## **3. How to Become a Digital Nomad: 4 Tips to Prepare**

1. Make your job preparations

2. Sort through (and let go of) your stuff

3. Prepare to go international

4. Check your mindset

## **4. How to Choose Your First Destination**

How to research the best and most affordable places to live

8 top digital nomad cities around the world

## **5. Travel Budget Tips for the Aspiring Digital Nomad**

Map out your current cash flow

Calculate your projected expenses

Shift into savings mode

Take advantage of these travel budget tips

## **6. Tapping Into the Digital Nomad Community**

Digital nomad websites and blogs

Digital nomad groups and apps

Coworking and co-living spaces

Plug in and branch out

1

# Is a Digital Nomad Lifestyle Right for You?



I like to think of travelers on a spectrum from ‘homebody’ to ‘digital nomad.’ I’ve only met a small handful of complete homebodies who don’t enjoy exploring past their backyard.

Out of those who do enjoy it, most really look forward to vacations that punctuate their careers and their cozy, reliable lifestyles. This is the common midzone.

And then there’s the smaller subset of travel lovers.

We’re the ones who just can’t get enough. Who giggle when others suggest that maybe our last trip ‘finally got the travel bug out of your system.’ Who start planning our next trip on the return flight home from our current trip.

For us, travel is more like a way of being. We don’t prefer our personal spaces and steadfast daily routines to keep us grounded. (Though there’s nothing wrong with that!)

We’re explorers who actually *enjoy* being out of our comfort zone. We’re not satisfied with taking a vacation a couple of times a year – it should be an ongoing affair.

**If you feel this on a soul level, you just might be a digital nomad in the making.**



**Amanda Gaid**, having lunch with Thai colleagues

But before we get into the good stuff, let me introduce myself.

I'm Amanda. I've been living the nomad life for the past five years, with about three months as the longest period I've managed to sit still in between flights.

When the little travel light first turned on in my head, I was in New York City, living in what might equate to a \$1,000 shoebox. I escaped to a Costa Rican beach just in time to give winter the middle finger, and life never went back to 'normal.'

More than 40 countries later, I've road tripped around Kyrgyzstan, gotten food poisoning in the Philippines, made best friends in Turkey, and jumped off a cliff in Colombia.

And I'm typing this sentence from Mexico.

I believe that becoming a digital nomad can be tough, but it's way more attainable than it might feel to you right now. That's why this ebook maps it all out to help you on your way.

In this ebook, we're going to take a closer look at:

- A definition of digital nomad and whether you're really cut out for it
- An overview of four tips to help you make the lifestyle happen
- How to choose your first destinations as a shiny new digital nomad
- An overview of how digital nomads make money, and some ideas you can pursue
- Budgeting and financial tips to make your new lifestyle affordable
- How to get involved with global and local nomad communities

Let's do this.

# What is a digital nomad?

While there's no explicit definition of digital nomad, they all generally share two main qualities. You can categorize these qualities by splitting up the term.

1. **[Digital]** They have location-independent jobs. They earn most or all of their income online, so they're not tied to a specific location in order to work.
2. **[Nomad]** Because they don't have to stay in any single place, many are constantly on-the-move – to anywhere with a wifi connection and a place to plug in their laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

Some digital nomads take these work and travel benefits to the extreme, hopping to a new location every few weeks or even days. Others like to stay in one spot for longer periods of time so they can get to know the city and the local culture.

It's common to see a digital nomad who rents an apartment for a few months or a year, but still takes several short trips to nearby destinations. For example, say your first destination is Prague for six months. From there, you can easily take week-long trips to cities like London, Paris, Berlin, and Amsterdam.

## PRO TIP

**Choosing an affordable 'home base' like this is a great technique for beginners. It gives you some time to figure out your personal preferences and processes without diving head first into the deep end of the location-independent lifestyle.**

## Digital nomad vs. expat

Throughout this ebook, and as you're doing research and making preparations for your journey, you'll come across the term 'expat.'

This is short for 'expatriate,' and it refers to people who live outside of their home country.

### ex·pa·tri·ate

*noun*

/,eks'pātrēət/ 

1. a person who lives outside their native country.  
"American expatriates in London"

*adjective*

/,eks'pātrēət/ 

1. denoting or relating to a person living outside their native country.  
"expatriate writers and artists"  
*synonyms:* emigrant, living abroad, working abroad, nonnative, émigré; [More](#)

*verb*

/eks'pātrē,āt/ 

1. settle oneself abroad.  
"candidates should be willing to expatriate"  
*synonyms:* settle abroad, live abroad, relocate abroad  
"he never visited Europe—still less was he tempted to **expatriate himself**"

Generally speaking, the main difference between an expat and a digital nomad is that a digital nomad is constantly moving, while an expat stays in one place for a while – often years, or even the rest of their lives.

I bring this up because articles, blogs, videos, and other resources about expat life can be just as helpful as similar resources labeled for digital nomads.

**So as you're researching, don't rule out any resources just because they say 'expat' instead of 'digital nomad.'**

Plus, you'll probably make some expat friends as you work and travel!

Now, let's take a look at some of the biggest pros and cons of the digital nomad lifestyle.

## Digital nomad pros and cons

### PROS

#### Travel, travel, travel

How long is your bucket list? Do you ever feel like it's getting so long that it's becoming unattainable? Gone are the days where your desk job and home responsibilities hold you back from taking the trips you've been dreaming of.

With the right planning and discipline, there are very few places that are truly off-limits. And when you land in the right places, your next adventure is right at your doorstep.

## Work on your own terms

While you might still have a 9-to-5 on the road, many digital nomads have the opportunity to make their own schedules and be their own boss, making it easier to work and travel simultaneously. This is especially true for those who take the freelancing or entrepreneurship route of starting their own business.

Want to start work at noon? Want to put in a couple of hours at a seaside cafe? Want to take Wednesday off and make up for it on Sunday? No one's stopping you.

## Greater freedom and independence

It's incredible how your perspective about life can shift once you have a location-independent lifestyle. Have you ever felt trapped or at a dead-end with work or life in general?

**You'll find that being a digital nomad comes with so much freedom, like structuring your ideal days and choosing your most comfortable living environment.**

## Massive self-growth

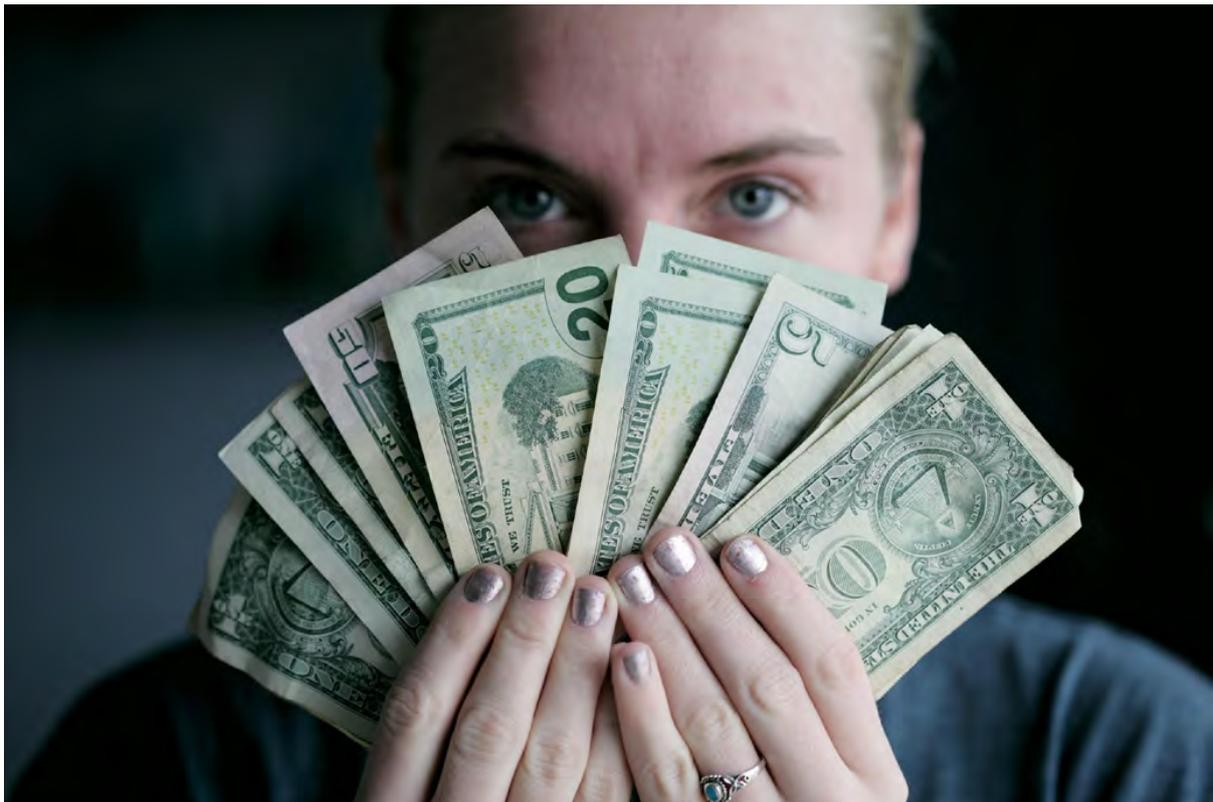
There are few opportunities to learn so much about yourself and others in such a small amount of time. The digital nomad experience often pushes all your boundaries, challenges your ideas and beliefs, and thrusts you into the unknown.

You'll discover many of your own hidden needs, wants, and preferences while learning more about the people and lifestyles of faraway lands. To say it's humbling is an understatement.

## More bang for your buck

There are several regions of the world where your money will take you much farther than it does back home. For example, your monthly living costs might be [\\$2,000 in the U.S.](#), but they're only about \$1,000 in Canggu, Bali – which, by the way, is one of the top digital nomad cities in the world.

**Choosing places with lower costs can be a great way to give yourself some financial leeway, especially if you're on a budget.**



## CONS

### Sedentary lifestyle

Unless you've mastered the art of residual income, you probably won't be able to make money without physically sitting at your laptop for hours on end. This can be a difficult adjustment if you're used to a job that keeps you on your feet all day, and some new digital nomads get stir crazy.

**Try to combat this by taking regular breaks to stretch, take a walk, or exercise. You can also occasionally stand while you work.**

### Loneliness

Digital nomad loneliness is a very real struggle. This generally worsens based on how often you move from place to place. The shorter the time you spend in a location, the fewer opportunities you'll have to build meaningful connections with other people.

You can combat this by going to events hosted by co-working spaces and other groups, and taking time to nurture budding relationships.

### Need for strict discipline

It's imperative that digital nomads keep themselves accountable on a daily basis.

It can be painfully tempting to ditch your workday for a spontaneous day trip to the beach or the mountains with your new friends, but it's simply not sustainable for most people – this is especially true for those on a budget. Those little trips and missed work days will add up quick.

## Potential for burnout

If you're not careful, location-independent living can swiftly exhaust you. This can happen for a variety of reasons, like moving from place to place too quickly, trying to be a full-time traveler and a full-time worker at the same time, or neglecting your own self-care in the frenzy of constant movement and distractions.

**Avoid this by keeping a steady pace and taking care of yourself daily.**



## Lack of work-life balance

It's common for digital nomads to become tightly entwined with their work, especially when they're freelancing or running their own businesses. This type-A work mentality can hinder your opportunities and your ability to really enjoy all the new experiences you're having.

Remember to set times where you can completely unplug and detach from work.

## Long-term feelings of isolation

The truth is: most people can't keep up with the digital nomad lifestyle forever. Many will end up settling down in a single spot for longer periods of time so they can have somewhere that feels like home.

After all, it's human nature to need security, safety (in the direct and indirect sense), and the feeling that you 'belong' somewhere. After years of traveling, these lines can become blurred.

**When you tie all these pros and cons together, you'll discover that digital nomads share certain skills and personality traits.**

# 5 digital nomad skills and traits

## 1. An open mind and risk-taking attitude

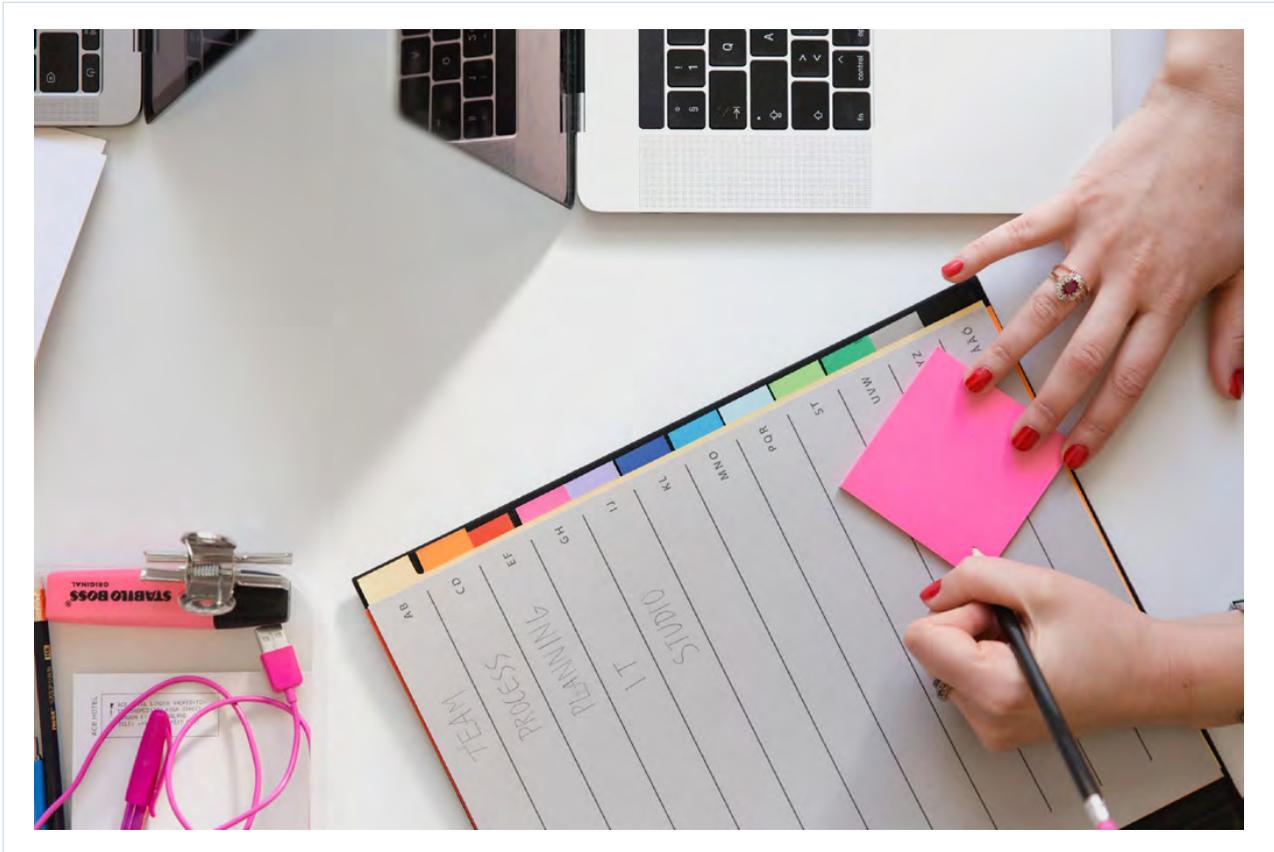
If you're not open to the thought of stepping outside of your comfort zone, I hate to break it to you, but the digital nomad lifestyle just isn't for you. This is a million times truer if you decide to travel to other countries with radically different lifestyles, cultures, and attitudes than the ones you grew up around.

**The truth is, it's a risk in itself to venture into unknown places on your own. But that's where all the fun is!**

## 2. Planning and decision-making skills

When you're in your hometown with a 9-to-5 job, things can get really routine. Eventually, most of your daily decisions are made for you. But when you're living the digital nomad lifestyle, you're practically bombarded with the constant need to make plans and decisions.

Where will you go next? Did you buy your flights, get a rental, figure out where you can work, which sites you'd like to visit, and where you'll do your shopping and get your meals? These few questions just scratch the surface of what it means to lead a location-independent lifestyle.



### 3. Ability to ‘roll with the punches’ when things go wrong

On the flip side of being able to make plans, I can personally guarantee that some things – if not many things – won’t go according to those plans. On a small scale, you’ll probably have internet problems, miss an important flight, or find that you hate one of the apartments or hostels you booked. On a bigger scale, disaster could strike, leaving you in a bind financially or otherwise.

**This is why work and travel experts are some of the most resilient people you’ll ever meet. Things will go wrong – it’s all about how you bounce back that really matters.**

## 4. General tech savvy

You don't need to be an IT expert, but you'll definitely need a solid understanding of technology and the internet. For example, what will you do if your rental has poor wifi, or you start having computer problems? (Sure, you can have someone else help you fix those issues, but the stronger your understanding, the easier it all will be.)

Outside of hardware issues, you'll likely find yourself doing 'digital detective work' to research and solve problems you encounter. And you'll benefit from knowing how to use basic tools and apps like maps, booking sites, and transportation apps.

## 5. Problem-solving skills

This is something of a mix between #3 and #4. Some things won't go according to plan, so you'll need to have the resourcefulness to rework your plans smoothly and cleverly, both online and offline.

Say that you book an Airbnb rental for [Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany](#), six months in advance, because you know that all the good accommodations will be booked solid. But two days before your trip, your host cancels unexpectedly.

**What do you do? There are many potential solutions, all of which involve some resourceful problem-solving skills.**

Now, you have an introduction to the location-independent lifestyle and an answer to the question, 'What is a digital nomad?' You also have a general idea of what the lifestyle is like, as well as what kinds of people thrive in this environment.

Next, we'll explore all the different ways you can fund your travels.



2

# Work Anywhere With These Digital Nomad Jobs



**One of the most pressing questions from non-nomads is:  
*what do these globetrotting wanderers do for work?***

There are a number of digital nomad jobs out there, especially since the internet means you can work from anywhere in the world online. Essentially, digital nomads can – and will – do pretty much anything that doesn't involve physical contact with items or other people.

Often, they're web-savvy entrepreneurs.

They launch websites and run Facebook ads. They live and breathe to make their online business successful. You'll also find them **constantly expanding and growing their skill set** to bolster their professional reputation.

But for some digital nomads, running an online business is out of the equation.

This tribe is made up of **digital nomads who have remote freelancing jobs**. They often Skype or email with their employers from their favorite destinations, co-working spaces, coffee shops, or even recreational vehicles.

However it works for different people, working online has become something of a global cultural trend. Justin Raymond understands this trend, which is why he founded [Flexday](#), a pay-as-you-go workspace company that turns restaurant downtime into a network of workspaces for remote workers.



**Justin Raymond,**  
Founder of Flexday

“How and where people work is undergoing a **massive shift across the world.**”

This sea change is fuelled by individuals choosing to play the game by their rules; **defining their lifestyle first and source of income second.**

As a result, freelancing and remote work will continue to grow and replace fixed employment arrangements.

When HR departments realize that more than 99% of the available talent pool doesn't live in their city, remote work and freelancing will explode.

And, **this is just around the corner.**”

You can get one step closer to becoming a nomad by finding digital nomad jobs online or learning how to start an online business.

In this chapter, we'll highlight the best:

- Online businesses you can operate remotely, like affiliate marketing, dropshipping, and service-based businesses
- Remote freelancing opportunities, like writing, web design, and PPC marketing

Let's jump in, shall we?

# Online businesses you can operate remotely

Having the freedom to live and work anywhere you see fit, and still run a lucrative business, is useful if you want to become a digital nomad.

Fortunately, in this modern era where the internet has changed the way we do pretty much everything, **there are an infinite number of possibilities**. You might be surprised at just how many amazing businesses you can launch without necessarily needing a 'home base.'

**Whether you're looking to create an online empire or earn just enough to support your daily lifestyle, there's probably a business model on this list that will allow you to achieve your goals.**

## Affiliate marketing

The affiliate marketing business involves endorsing someone else's products in return for a commission (usually money).

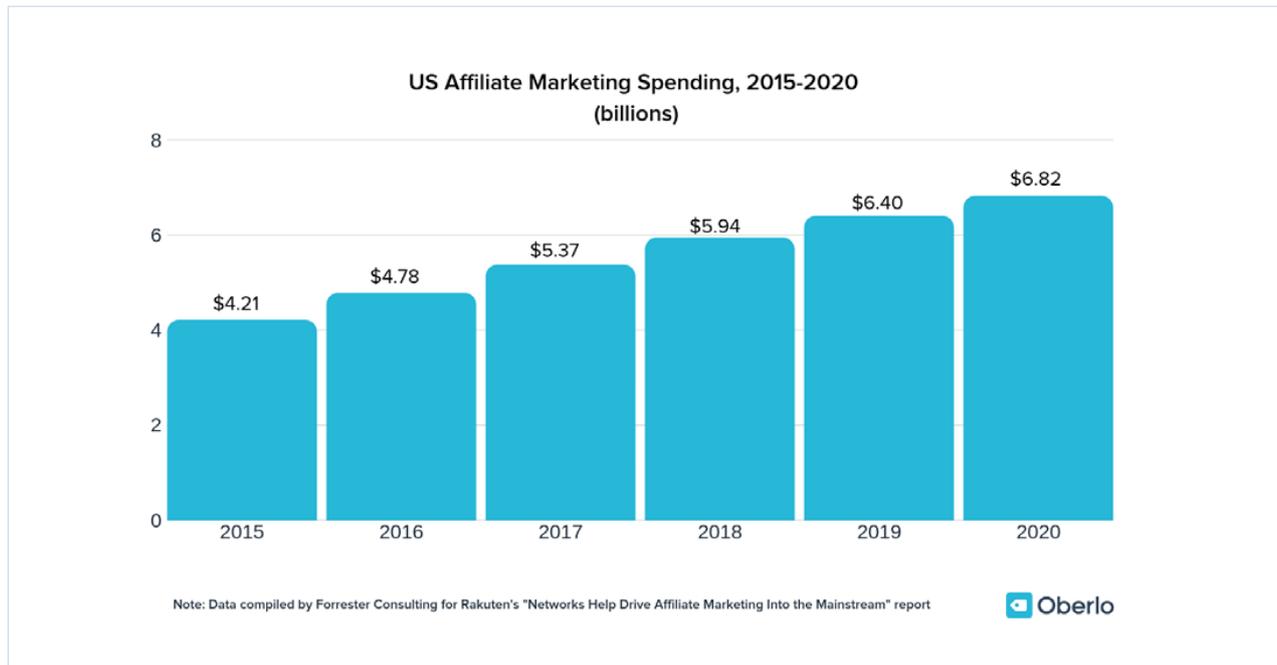
Many of us are currently practicing the tactic without even realizing it. For example, have you ever shared a discount code with a friend, where their registration or purchase gets you a discount too? That's affiliate marketing.



**When you sign up to become an affiliate, you get a special link that contains a unique tracking code.**

Every time you recommend a product on the internet, you can use that link to direct a person to the affiliate company's website. When the individual makes a purchase, the sale is attributed to you, and **you get a benefit in the form of a commission.**

The affiliate marketing industry has witnessed exponential growth rates, and that trend is expected to continue. Based on [a study by Rakuten](#), U.S. spending on affiliate marketing is projected to reach \$6.8 billion by 2020.



Many people get started by launching their own website and promoting affiliates on there, but you don't necessarily have to do it this way. You can make money without a site by sharing affiliate links on social media, promoting your links through digital ads, using email marketing, and more.

Because the best affiliate programs tend to revolve around digital products, **this business model lets you work anywhere**. There are many websites, like [ShareASale](#), [ClickBank](#) and [Commission Junction](#), where you can find courses, software, and many other digital programs to sell.

**When it comes to travel, insurance can have the highest affiliate payouts. You can give programs like [World Nomads](#) a go.**

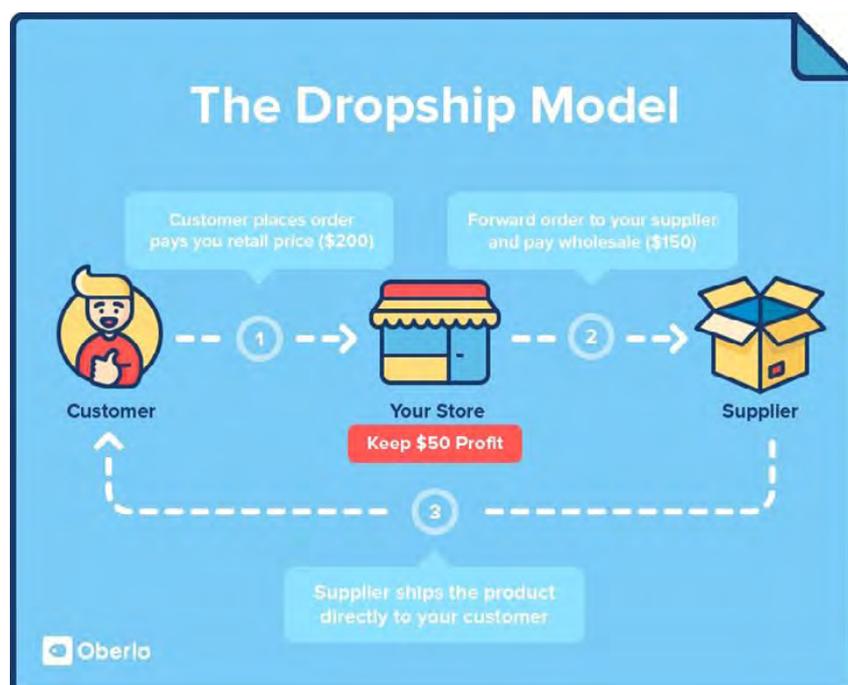
## RESOURCES TO HELP GET YOU STARTED

- [The Definitive Guide to Affiliate Marketing](#)
- [71+ Travel Affiliate Programs for Nomad and Travel Bloggers](#)
- [Affiliate Marketing Tips from the Experts for More Commissions](#)

## Dropshipping

Dropshipping is another lucrative online business that you can set up and run from anywhere. This is where you sell items through an online store. When a customer makes a purchase, your supplier or manufacturer sends the items straight to the customer from their warehouse or fulfilment center.

It's basically **an ecommerce business minus the inventory management headaches.**



## Actually, it's almost too simple to start a dropshipping business.

All you need to do is create an online store on [Shopify](#), install [Oberlo](#), select a few products, and start selling. The success of your business, however, depends on how you promote the business, and whether the products you're selling have a good demand.

Maybe you're lucky enough and your sales will go through the roof. But chances are you will have to **experiment with different suppliers, products, and marketing strategies** before you can escape your 9-to-5, or sell your dropshipping business for a profit like [this digital nomad](#) did.

Overall, dropshipping offers an incredible opportunity to work anywhere in the world. It'll likely take some practice, but you can overcome the learning curve to launch a profitable online business.



## RESOURCES TO HELP GET YOU STARTED

- [The Ultimate Shopify Dropshipping Guide](#)
- [How to Find the Perfect Dropshipping Products](#)
- [21 Days to Your First Dropshipping Sale](#)

## Service-based business

A service-based business is **one of the easiest paths to becoming a digital nomad**. For one thing, you won't require as many tools as with a product-based business. Simply put, you can take the startup budget and put it all into marketing instead of inventory, promoting the business far and wide and bringing money in.

**The best way to choose a service is to focus on your strengths, skills, and interests.**

Are you a passionate guitarist? You can teach guitar students via Skype. Do you have experience in career counseling? Start taking personal clients. Are you obsessed with social media? Learn the marketing side and offer social media marketing for businesses.

Other examples include, but certainly aren't limited to:

- [SEO](#) consultant
- [SEM](#) consultant
- Life coach
- Business coach
- App developer
- Nutrition coach
- Sales trainer
- Web designer

## RESOURCES TO HELP GET YOU STARTED

- [How to Start a Service Business](#)
- [105 Service Businesses to Start Today](#)
- [20 Tips for How to Make Money with a Service Business](#)

## Information products

These refer to digitally-available, education-focused products, including webinars, online courses, audio books, and more.

**Many digital nomads earn a full-time income by selling information products on their blogs, social media profiles, apps, and other digital retailing channels. The business model generates income every time someone purchases an information product.**

The most attractive part about information products is that they can be published (or recorded) once and sold passively. You just need to spend time on production and marketing, and the rest will take care of itself. It's a great opportunity to create a **passive income stream that makes money while you sleep.**

Also, the cost to create an information product is minimal (if you build it yourself) or a one-time expense of hiring a freelancer. Because of this, the net proceeds from an information product can be sizable, even with a handful of product sales.

Katelyn Smith, founder of [The Remote Nomad](#), is a great example of a digital nomad who has built her traveling lifestyle by selling business services and information products.



## Work Online & Travel The World

### Remote Work Accelerator

An online program teaching you **step-by-step** how to **successfully earn an income remotely using your existing skills** so you can have the **freedom** to work from anywhere in the world.

[Enroll Now](#)

You do not need to be a developer/coder or overly tech savvy  
Remote work experience is not required!

[Source](#)

On her website, Katelyn offers an online course that teaches you step-by-step how to successfully earn income online using your existing skills so you can gain the freedom to work anywhere in the world.

Which, when you think about it, is brilliant. She makes her online income teaching others how to make online income. You nailed it, Katelyn!

## RESOURCES TO HELP GET YOU STARTED

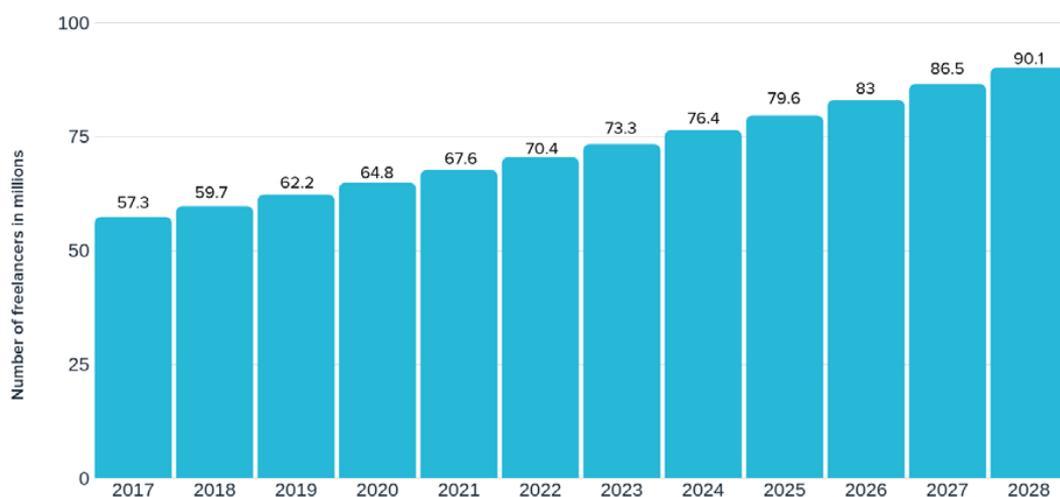
- [A beginner's guide to information product ideas](#)
- [9 Ways To Create an Information Product With ZERO Expertise](#)
- [33 Information Product Ideas That Can Really Make Money](#)

## Freelance digital nomad jobs

While many prefer to build a self-sustainable business while traveling, **this requires a lot of time and effort** – and possibly a lot of false starts before the business matures and makes good money.

Fortunately, there are other options when it comes to digital nomad jobs. You may prefer remote freelance jobs so that you can have some level of certainty around how much you make each month. This is becoming easier since the recent explosion of the [‘gig economy’](#), where freelancers and independent contractors work on flexible, short-term projects.

**According to Statista, it’s projected that 90 million people – nearly 51% of the U.S. workforce – will be freelancers in the gig economy by 2028.**



Note: Data compiled by Statista to show the number of freelancers in the United States 2017 to 2028

 Oberlo

[Source](#)

Here are some different types of remote opportunities and digital nomad jobs, as well as some resources that might help you get started.

**Use this list as a guide to find one that best fits your personality and skill level.**

## SEO specialist

If you have what it takes to make a website or blog post rank well on Google, consider working as an SEO specialist. Companies worldwide are ready to pay big to get their brands and content noticed by a large audience. You can find remote SEO jobs on sites like [Upwork](#), [RemoteOK](#), and [Working Nomads](#).

## App developer

If you have experience in React Native, Swift/Obj-C, native iOS and/or Android, you can find high-paying remote IT jobs in the app development field. It's common for digital nomads to work as app developers – if you take a quick look at the [RemoteOK job board](#), you'll find the largest category of jobs in the 'dev' section.



## ESL teacher

You can earn a decent income while living in a digital nomad destination of your choice by teaching English as a second language. Companies like [Berlitz](#) and [VIPKID](#) hire English tutors to deliver lessons to non-native students all over the world. You might get an online classroom software or conduct lessons over Skype.

## Virtual assistant

If you're good at communicating and keeping things organized, you may find it worthwhile to work as a virtual assistant. Common duties include answering emails, managing social accounts, and maintaining calendars. Several companies hire virtual assistants through freelancing platforms like [Freelancer](#), [PeoplePerHour](#), and [Upwork](#).

## PPC marketer

The role of a PPC (pay-per-click) marketer is to promote a brand's product or service using digital ads. These might be what you see on a website, in your social media feed, or at the top of Google's search results. PPC marketers create, strategize, and test online ads for maximum impact. If you're good at it, the earning potential is high. Take a look at the listings over at [Working Nomads](#) to find suitable roles.

## Copywriter

Do you have a knack for writing and an understanding of marketing and sales psychology? If so, you might be able to secure copywriting jobs. These jobs involve writing copy for a company's website or other promotional assets, like brochures and emails. You can find several remote writing jobs on [Indeed](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Glassdoor](#).



## Social media marketer

It's one of the most popular digital nomad jobs in the marketing category. Social media marketers create and manage the social presence of different businesses. Typical duties include scheduling posts, answering comments, and running contests. You can find freelance social media marketing jobs on [FlexJobs](#), [ZipRecruiter](#), and [Indeed](#).

## Web designer

If you've got skills in programs like Photoshop and Dreamweaver, you can put your talents to use with web-design related digital nomad jobs. There's a huge requirement for web design professionals, from small companies to major corporations to digital nomads trying to launch businesses while traveling. You can find remote web design jobs on [WPhired](#), [WeWorkRemotely](#), and [Indeed](#).

## How to choose the right job

Often the **hardest step in getting started with a digital nomad job is choosing what you'll do**. Quite simply, if you don't know your skillset or which remote freelance positions will be most fulfilling, you might end up with a classic case of job mismatch.

**The best way to avoid all this is to analyze what you're good and how closely a certain job aligns with your skillset.**

This seems simple enough, but sometimes **it's a challenge for us to identify our strengths and weaknesses**. That being said, there are a few ways to get a better perspective of your best job skills.

Think about the jobs you've worked in, full-time or otherwise, and consider instances where you got positive feedback. Are there any themes across your best performances? Those themes might be your skills.

If you're new to the professional world and don't have past experience to conduct an analysis, try [taking a few quizzes](#) that are specifically designed to help you find your professional skills. Don't be afraid to learn new skills, but it's always a good start to know which ones are your bread and butter.

You can also check out this resource on [how to identify your entrepreneurial skills](#), or ask your friends and family what they think you're good at. The answers might surprise you!

You can also enhance your current skills or learn new skills through **dozens of free and paid online education resources**, like:

- [Udemy](#)
- [Coursera](#)
- [Khan Academy](#)
- [Open Culture](#)
- [Lynda](#)
- [edX](#)

**Don't hold yourself back with feelings of being unqualified or unskilled.**

Hopefully by now, you have a basic idea of how to start an online business. We've also covered the basics of finding remote freelance jobs and discussed which digital nomad jobs would allow you to work remotely.

Now, let's look at an overview of four tips to help you smoothly transition into digital nomad life.

3

# How to Become a Digital Nomad: 4 Tips To Prepare



Every person reading this ebook will be in a different position. For someone who already works online or has already taken dozens of vacations around the world, learning how to prepare to be a digital nomad might be pretty simple.

On the other hand, many digital nomad dreamers are starting from scratch, with no remote work or travel experience.

If you're more in the latter category, it'll take some extra hustle to get to a comfortable flow.

**But the good news is that with a little – or a lot – of research, strategy, and elbow grease, the lifestyle is waiting for you if you really want it.**

Take it from Christopher Mitchell of [Traveling Mitch](#). He's lived on four continents and visited more than 80 countries, and he believes that **it's more possible than ever** to build a life on your own terms.



**Christopher Mitchell**

Founder of Traveling Mitch

“While I’m admittedly biased, I feel strongly that **within each of us there is a great desire to move and explore for exploration’s sake.**

What impeded this exploration in the past was the notion that we could only travel when we weren’t working, and buried under mounds of paperwork.

That’s all changed, **and now you can ditch the 9-to-5** and be more productive than ever.

To thrive in this space takes **discipline, creativity, and hard work**, but if you continue to grow, learn, and hustle each day, you’ll find that you’ve created **a life that suits you perfectly** – which makes sense since *you* created it.”

But before you kiss your current lifestyle goodbye, there are some key considerations that you should start planning for as soon as possible. Apart from establishing your nomadic income stream, you’ll need to handle some logistics to help you cruise smoothly from country to country.

You’ll also need to **make arrangements in your current lifestyle**, like optimizing your banking and selling, storing, or ditching all the stuff you can’t fit into your backpack or suitcase.

**And perhaps one of the most important items for the longevity of your nomad life is to make sure you're in the right place mentally.**

In this chapter, we'll talk about how to become a digital nomad and go over four tips to add to your moving abroad checklist:

1. Make your job preparations
2. Sort through (and let go of) your stuff
3. Prepare to go international
4. Check your mindset

Let's go.

# 1. Make your job preparations

Unfortunately, most of us don't have a trust fund that allows us to quit our jobs to travel - which means that you'll need to figure out how to generate your own income.

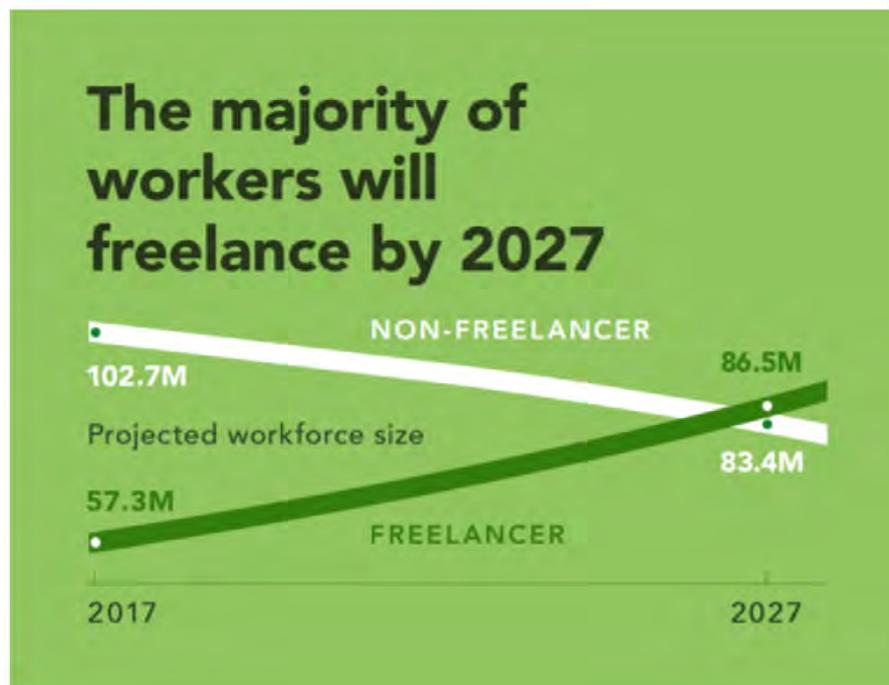
**This is the most intimidating part of the process for most people. And sadly, it's one of the biggest roadblocks that stop dreamers from making the leap.**

While some people already have a job that lets them work from home, or a cool company that helps them make the switch to remote work, many people just don't have that luxury.

If you have a hunch that your current job might be open to facilitating your travels, [try asking your boss](#).

But if this isn't an option and you have to quit your job to travel, you'll just have to create your own revenue stream.

I'm going to be honest: learning how to start a digital nomad career from scratch can get difficult. But the odds of this working for you are growing by the day, as one study estimated that **the majority of U.S. workers are poised to [become freelancers by 2027](#)**. And this number will naturally grow around the rest of the world too.



[Source](#)

**Some aspiring digital nomads choose to start a ‘side hustle’ as they build their own business alongside their current 9-to-5 or part-time job.**

As you recall from Chapter 2’s discussion of digital nomad jobs, this might include things like starting a [dropshipping business](#), becoming a social media marketer, creating online courses, or doing freelance graphic design – just to name a few of the hundreds of ways you could generate income online.

The side hustle approach will guarantee that you keep a consistent income flow while you steadily build your digital nomad salary. This can give you some leeway while you navigate the uncertainty of finding a solid new revenue source and learn how to be a digital nomad.

That's why I strongly recommend this route, especially if your finances are a major concern for making the switch.

But make sure you go into it with a resilient, resourceful, and patient attitude, as it can almost double your workload, and it might take a little while for you to pick up steam.

**As with any new professional venture, you'll benefit big time when you accept that challenges – and occasionally failure – are just part of the deal.**

## 2. Sort through (and let go of) your stuff

Calling all hoarders: you're gonna have to work on that.

When you think about every digital nomad you've ever seen, they all have at least a few things in common. One of those things is a **noticeable lack of belongings**.

Many nomads are backpackers, slinging their entire lives onto their shoulders whenever it's time to hit the next destination.



While some people are blessed with the gift of not being too attached to their stuff, it's an understandably difficult process for many others. After all, we're emotional creatures and our stuff can hold a lot of sentimental value.

In addition to the psychological obstacles, you might also encounter **some logistical ones**.

What will you do with all the stuff you're not taking? There are a few options:

- Sell them in a garage sale or online, like [Craigslist](#), [Facebook Marketplace](#), or even [Amazon](#) or [eBay](#).
- Get a storage unit for maybe six months or a year with the option of extending if you decide to stay out longer.
- Keep them with a close friend or family member who has some extra space and wouldn't mind holding onto them.

Selling your stuff **can actually be a win-win**, as it can double as more cash to pay off some debt or contribute to your emergency fund.

**We'll discuss finances and how to travel on a budget in [Chapter 5](#), so stay tuned.**

At first, you might have no idea what should stay and what should go. Start with the bigger ticket items and the items that are collecting dust. Ask yourself: have I used this in the past month? Do I really need it?

Try easing yourself into the process by doing a 'dry run' right now.

**You can even pack a mock suitcase** and try living off only those items for a while. The act of physically packing the suitcase will give you the opportunity to go through your stuff and critically think about how much you value and use each item.

And it will make you more mindful of **how you actually use them** from day to day.

**If you try this for at least a couple of weeks, you'll have a much better idea of what should stay and what should go.**

Here are some other things to think about:

- If you have a car, you might want to sell it or rent it out to a friend or family member.
- If you have a home or apartment lease, you can try negotiating with your landlord to shorten your terms.
- Alternatively, you can try renting out the space on a website like [Airbnb](#). Keep in mind that you probably need someone to help manage it while you're gone, unless you find a long-term renter.

Generally speaking, it's probably not a good idea to get rid of everything you own before you're certain that nomad life works for you. Try to find a balance that doesn't put you in a pickle down the road.

## 3. Prepare to go international

When you leave your homeland to master how to be a digital nomad, there are a handful of issues that you might not even realize are issues until they bite you in the bum. These include things like making sure you can easily access your money or that you have the right type of phone to use in other countries.

### Optimize your access to money

**Watch out for foreign withdrawal and transaction fees.** Call your bank and ask what their fees are for international withdrawals. Depending on the answer, you might want to consider getting a different bank with smaller or no fees.

**If you find that you'll be paid in a different currency and your bank charges an arm and a leg to convert it, you might also want to get an international bank account.**

Call your credit card companies too to see their foreign transaction transactions. There are plenty of cards with no fees if yours are too steep. And if you need a new card, try something that gives perks like travel points or cash back.

U.S. citizens can check out cards like the [United Mileage Plus Explorer](#), [Capital One Venture](#), and [Schwab High Yield Checking](#).



**Tell them you're traveling.** Before you ship out, it's a good idea to call your bank and credit card companies to let them know where you're traveling. Otherwise, your account or card may get frozen from 'suspicious activity' flagged by their automated fraud detection systems.

**Consider a money transfer service.** Alternatively, a service like [TransferWise](#) is a favorite of many digital nomads. It offers low transfer and conversion fees, catering to people who send and spend money abroad and get paid in different currencies. They also offer a debit Mastercard.

And surely you've heard of [PayPal](#), which also offers a debit Mastercard. While PayPal is massively successful – and a good option in its own right – you'll likely encounter higher fees for converting currency and sending and receiving money.

**Have a backup plan.** Part of learning how to be a successful digital nomad is to always have a backup plan. For example, say that your only debit card gets lost or stolen.

How will you access your cash? Will your bank send you a new card internationally? If it won't, is there a friend or family member back home who you can have it delivered to, then they can mail it to you?

If you're in a bind, there are services like [Western Union](#) and other local options that allow you to send yourself cash that you can pick up from a physical location, like a Western Union office or a local grocery store in certain cities.

**There's no 'right' way to prepare for a situation like this. But in general, you might benefit from having two bank accounts and two credit cards, so that you're not completely stranded if something happens to the first.**

## Sort out your phone situation

Does your current carrier have good international options? For example, [T-Mobile](#) in the U.S. offers free unlimited 2G data and texting in more than 210 countries.

**While a 2G connection won't be as fast as [today's standard 4G connection](#), it does the job well enough in between your wifi connections. And it can be a lifesaver when you touch down in a place you've never been, only to discover that all of the airport's local SIM card stands are closed for the day.**

With many carriers, you can suspend your phone line for up to a few months and pay a small fee like \$10 per month instead of your full service bill. This way, you don't have to lose your phone number by completely cancelling your service.

**Once you suspend or cancel your phone, you can just pop in a local SIM card to have data in between wifi spots in each city you visit. This will keep you connected so you don't have to worry about emergencies.**

If you're interested in learning more, check out this [detailed guide on how to buy local SIM cards](#) around the world.



[Source](#)

To make sure your phone is compatible with a local SIM card, it should cover two bases:

- 1. It's unlocked.** Many phone companies will sell you a locked phone, which means that it's restricted to only give you service from that carrier or in a certain country. If you're buying a new phone, you can buy one that's unlocked. Or you can call your phone carrier and ask them to unlock your current phone, which is usually a fairly simple process.
- 2. It's GSM.** This is mainly an issue with U.S. phones. There are two main radio technologies that smartphones use to connect to the world: CDMA (Code Division Multiple Access) and GSM (Global System for Mobiles). While there are a few U.S. carriers that still use CDMA, namely Sprint and Verizon, other U.S. carriers and most of the world uses GSM. That's why using a GSM phone will minimize potential complications with using international SIM cards.

**If you need to make international calls, you can likely get a SIM card package that includes them. But that can get real pricy real quick.**

Check out cheap internet-based calling services like [Skype](#) or [Google Voice](#). If you need to have frequent conference calls with clients, try a service like [Zoom](#), [Webex](#), and [Join.me](#), that can connect audio via internet or traditional phone line.

## Be proactive with your healthcare

**Consider travel or nomad insurance.** Traditional travel insurance can get a murky for a digital nomad who's constantly on the move. Fortunately, companies like [World Nomads](#) specialize in this kind of situation. They offer flexible plans that cover certain places and activities, and you have the option to extend your coverage to keep traveling.

You can also get coverage for your belongings, like lost or delayed baggage from travel, or if any of your stuff is stolen.

 <p><b>Delayed baggage</b></p> <p>Where did my bags go? Will my insurance cover that?</p>	 <p><b>Emergency Overseas Medical</b></p> <p>I'm sick or injured overseas. How do I get help?</p>	 <p><b>Pregnancy</b></p> <p>I've got a baby on board. Am I covered?</p>	 <p><b>Medical Repatriation</b></p> <p>I'm all banged up overseas. How do I get home?</p>
 <p><b>Terrorism</b></p> <p>How will you help me if I'm caught up in a terror attack?</p>	 <p><b>Overseas Dental</b></p> <p>Ouch my teeth hurt! Will my insurance cover the dentist's bill?</p>	 <p><b>Travel Accidents</b></p> <p>I'm hurt. How do I get help?</p>	 <p><b>Baggage</b></p> <p>My gear has gone. How can you help?</p>

[Source](#)

**Get your checkups.** If you currently have insurance and trusted healthcare providers like a family doctor or dentist, get your regular checkups and cleanings before you leave home. If you have medication prescriptions, see if you can stock up, and research your options for getting refills on the road.

**While travel insurance is great for emergencies, it's more difficult to get coverage for routine services. Plus, the overall quality and availability of healthcare will vary depending on where you're going. Best to cover your bases at home.**

## Go paperless

If you currently get important bills, notices, and other communications via snail mail, contact all of these companies and ask to receive them via email. If you need the paper copies, have the mail forwarded to someone who can safeguard them for you while you're away.

## 4. Check your mindset

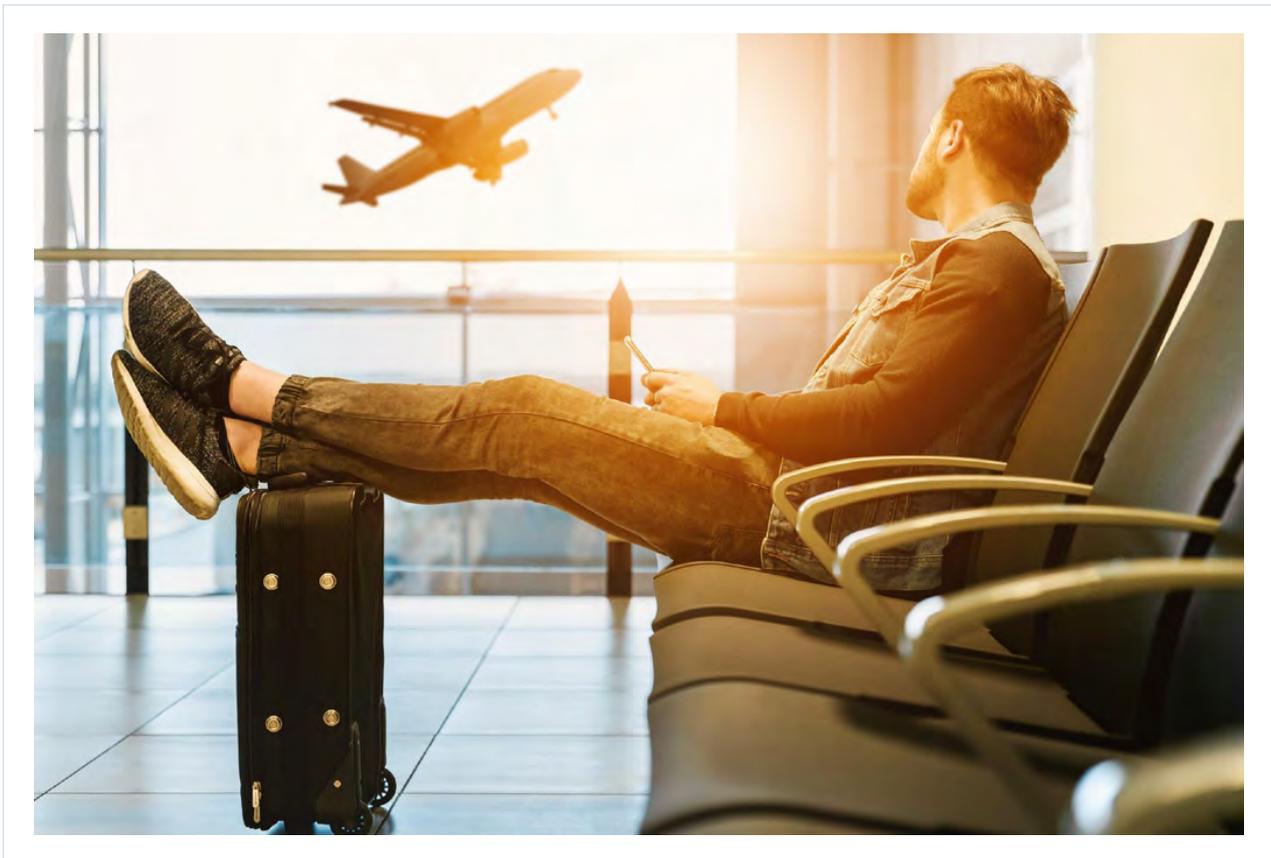
**Embrace uncertainty.** You've probably heard those cheesy, clichéd motivational quotes that try to pep talk you into facing your fears. Like: 'Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear,' or 'Fear is temporary. Regret is forever.'



[Source](#)

These sayings are worn out for a reason. They speak to a fundamental truth about how our fear of the unknown and resistance to change can make us stagnant – and sometimes miserable. Uncertainty can be scary, especially when we grow up in societies that glorify stability and coloring inside the lines.

Learning how to live as a digital nomad really takes courage and boldness – and embracing the uncertainty that comes with every new place. While it's 1,000% normal to feel hesitant about a radical life change, successful nomads are able to take these emotions and turn them into fuel.



**Try not to make comparisons.** [‘Culture shock’](#) is inevitable for those who haven’t done much traveling. If you haven’t been outside of your home country too often, you’ll learn this fast.

One of the reasons that culture shock can be so shocking is our natural tendency to make comparisons. When you’re only used to one way of life, drastically different ones will stick out like a sore thumb, often making you feel alienated and homesick.

But in the long run, making comparisons will put a damper on your experiences. Instead of looking at different cultures and lifestyles through the lens of your homeland, it's better to go straight into it with an open and accepting mind.

The sooner you accept that you're not in Kansas anymore, the easier it will be for you to adapt and assimilate to new cultures. And when you're in their home, you need to play by their rules. You'll also find that this mentality will help you be a more respectful visitor, and an overall better global citizen.

**Nurture your mental health.** When you browse through blogs and websites about how to be a digital nomad, there's a heavy focus on all the glamor of being a nomad. But what they don't tell you is that it can cause significant [strain on your mental health](#).

**You'll get stressed and anxious when things go wrong. You'll get lonely if you're moving around a lot. You'll get burnt out from blurred lines in your work-life balance.**

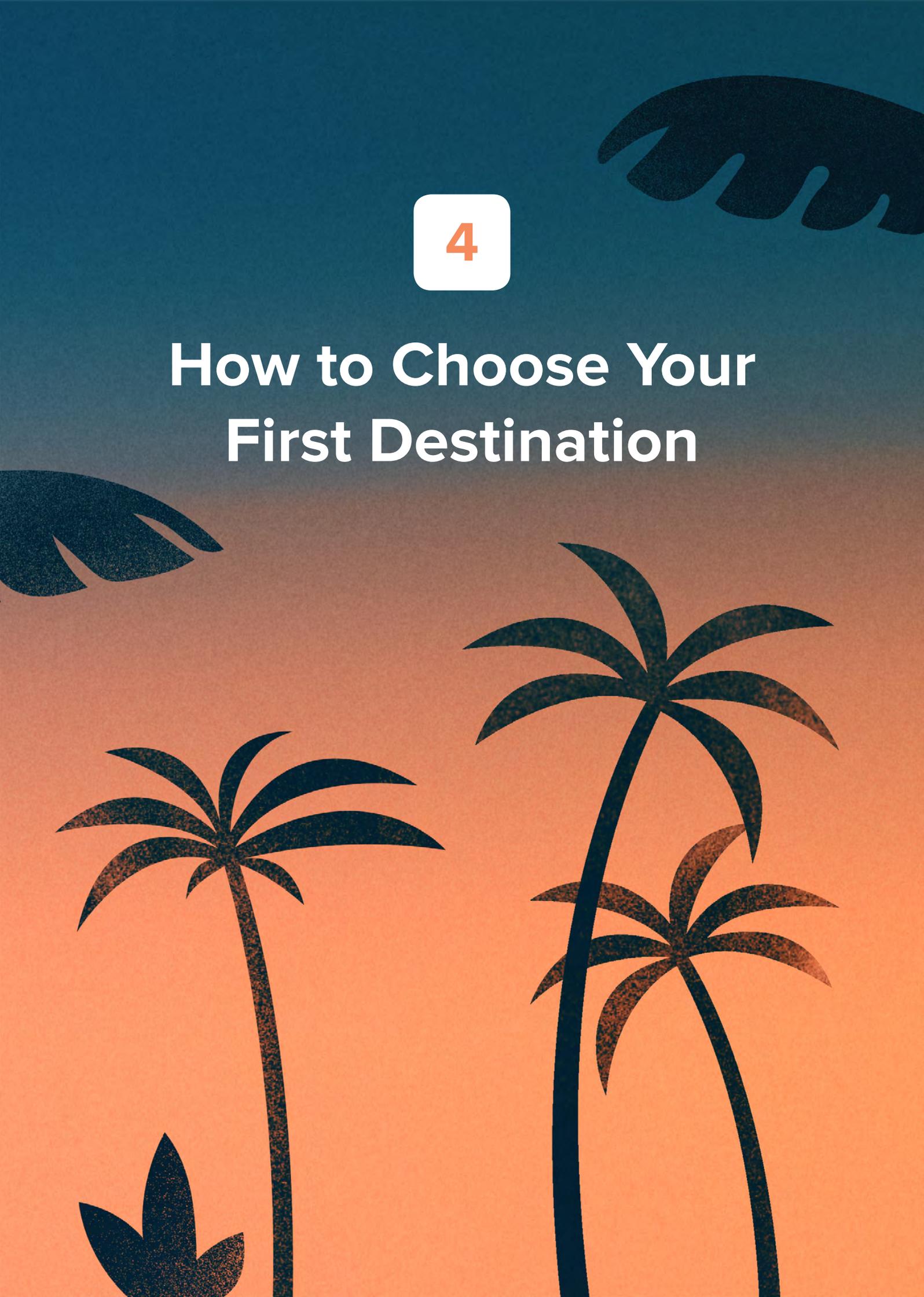
It's critical that you take care of yourself, especially if you already struggle with issues like depression, anxiety, or other conditions that impact your mental health. While a nomadic lifestyle provides a physical reprieve from a lot of the daily stresses you might experience now, it can actually exacerbate some of these conditions if they're left unchecked in the long run.

If you work with a therapist or other mental health professional, ask if they're willing to hold sessions via Skype instead. You can also look into online services like [Better Help](#), [Talkspace](#), or [Breakthrough](#).

Now that you have some tips for how to become a digital nomad, let's get our hands dirty with learning how to research your first destination.

4

# How to Choose Your First Destination



Have you been daydreaming about infinite beach days in Thailand? Soaking up the history and flavors of Italy? Becoming a salsa expert in Colombia?

These dreams might seem far away right now, but they're attainable.

When you're a digital nomad, cities you've only ever dreamed of visiting can become your new temporary home. Of course, it's hard to sift through lists of the cheapest places to live and the best places to work remotely to find your dream digital nomad destination.

### **The first step is to just start.**

And doing research on your most ideal destinations is a perfect way to stoke your internal fire and get yourself pumped.

Let's call this phenomenon 'dreamivation,' where you dream so deeply that it motivates you to take action, and to overcome the fear and intimidation that often creep up when we think about radical change.

To get yourself excited – and to take the first step toward your new nomad life – we're going to examine the art and science of choosing your first destination.

In addition to rolling down your bucket list, you should also pay close attention to digital nomad city rankings and what other travelers are saying about them. You might find that a city you thought was your fantasy will actually require some inconvenient sacrifices.

On the same token, you might discover an incredible city that aligns with a lot of your interests and lifestyle preferences, despite never thinking it was anything special... or never even knowing it existed!

In this chapter, we'll cover:

- **How to research potential digital nomad destinations, including:**
  - Lifestyle and overall quality of life
  - Estimated cost of living
  - Things to do in and around the region
  - Visa requirements and considerations
  - 'Nomad-friendliness'
- **Some of the best digital nomad cities around the world**

Away we go.

# How to research the best and most affordable places to live

**Here's a little secret: research is at least 70% of the formula when it comes to being a successful digital nomad.**

Planning is important – but like we discussed in [Chapter 1](#), things won't always go according to plan. Even so, the more knowledge and awareness you have of your environment, the easier things will be as you navigate the twists and turns of nomad life.

Let's go over some of the most important considerations for your research, and how you can put it all together to figure out which digital nomad cities are the best fit for your preferences and personality.

## Lifestyle and overall quality of life

This is an important 'bigger picture' question that you should be prepared for when you leave the comfort of your home.

For example, say you're from London or New York City. You're probably used to simple and comprehensive public transit, loads of shops and restaurants at your doorstep, and general convenience and reliability in your daily life.

But then you decide to travel somewhere with less infrastructure and a totally different way of life, like Chiang Mai, Thailand. While it's one of the top digital nomad cities in the world (we'll cover it later in this chapter), **there are a lot of differences you should be aware of.**

Like how you'll be riding in tuk-tuks instead of trains. Or seeing fried bugs as you scour street food delicacies. Or the significantly higher level of air pollution in the region.

That's why research is your best friend.

### PRO TIP

You can check the air quality index (AQI) of different cities on [websites like this one](#).



The best way to go about this is by doing a few Google searches and digging into blogs and articles you find. Many of them are written by travel bloggers and fellow digital nomads, so you can **get a first-hand look into what it's really like** in these digital nomad cities.

Try searches like:

- Lifestyle and quality of life in [city name]
- Digital nomad lifestyle in [city name]
- Expat life in [city name]
- What it's like to live in [city name]
- Pros and cons of living in [city name]

digital nomad lifestyle chiang mai

All Images Maps News Videos More Settings Tools

About 429,000 results (0.54 seconds)

### Videos

A DAY IN THE LIFE - CHIANG MAI DIGITAL NOMAD | Thailand Travel ...

Daneger and Stacey  
YouTube - Feb 22, 2018

LIVING IN CHIANG MAI, THAILAND | DIGITAL NOMAD VLOG 13

Chris the Freelancer  
YouTube - Aug 5, 2016

WE QUIT TO TRAVEL FULL TIME AS DIGITAL NOMADS - CHIANG ...

Daneger and Stacey  
YouTube - May 24, 2017

[How to Become a Digital Nomad in Chiang Mai - Thailand Starter Kit](https://www.thailandstarterkit.com/work/digital-nomad-chiang-mai/)  
<https://www.thailandstarterkit.com/work/digital-nomad-chiang-mai/> ▼

May 15, 2018 - My personal life was in the dumper and I was not a happy man. One of my ... And lastly, the digital nomad community in Chiang Mai is strong.

[Why Chiang Mai?](#) · [Challenges](#) · [Flights](#) · [Cost of Living](#)

## Nomad List

[Nomad List](#) is a great resource for checking out the overall quality of life you might have in top digital nomad cities.

It shows a general ‘Nomad Score’ based on factors like **cost, internet quality, fun, and safety** of each city.

The screenshot shows the Nomad List interface with a search bar and navigation links. Below the search bar, there are filters and sorting options. The main content area displays a grid of city cards. Each card includes a rank, internet speed, cost of living, and weather. A detailed breakdown for Buenos Aires is also shown.

Rank	City	Country	Internet Speed (Mbps)	Cost of Living (\$/mo)	Weather (Temp)
1	Canggu Bali	Indonesia	20	\$1,004	31°
2	Bangkok	Thailand	24	\$1,444	34°
3	Seoul	South Korea	21	\$2,450	9°
4	Prague	Czechia	26	\$2,041	11°
6	Medellín	Colombia	7	\$1,200	25°

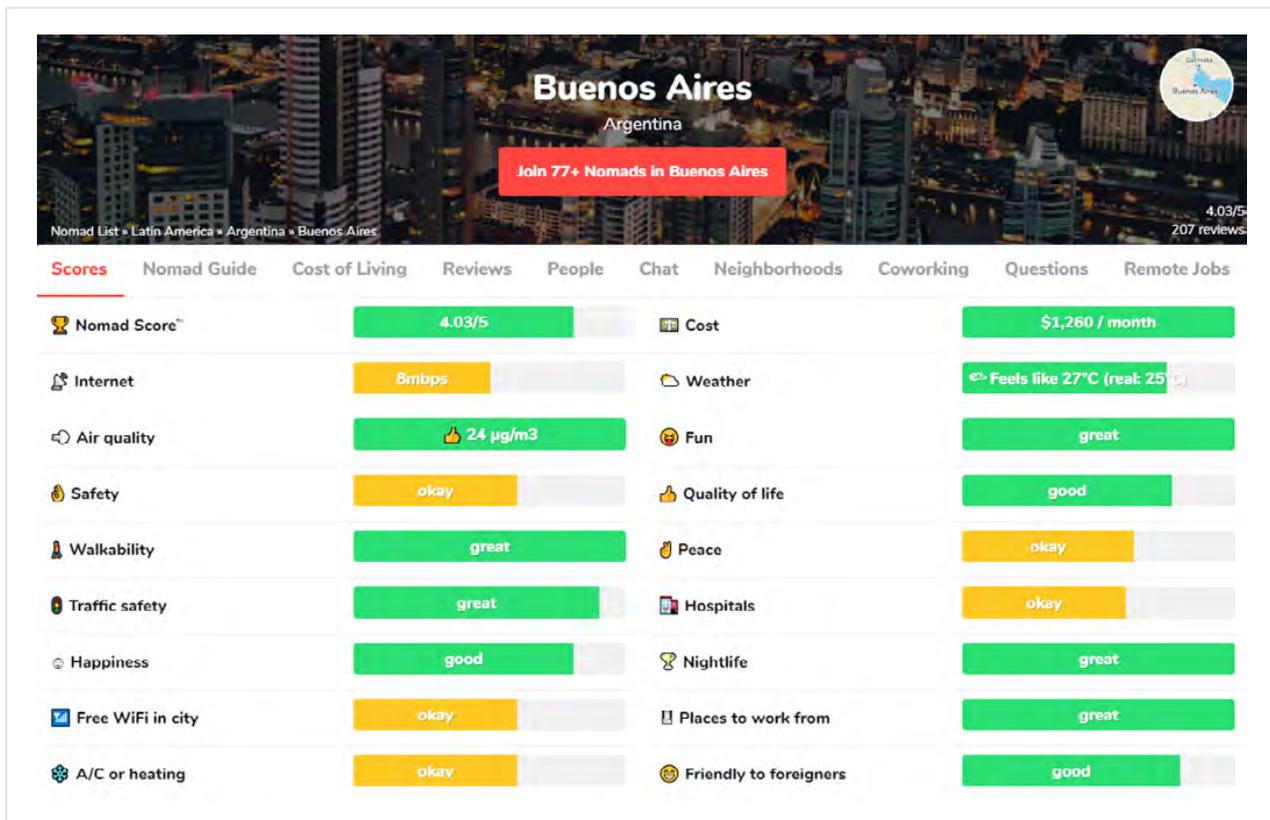
Detailed breakdown for Buenos Aires (ranked 5th):

- Nomad Score: High (Green bar)
- Cost: High (Green bar)
- Internet: Low (Red bar)
- Fun: High (Green bar)
- Safety: Medium (Yellow bar)

Other scoring criteria include, but aren't limited to:

- Walkability
- Traffic safety
- A/C and heating
- Weather
- Free city wifi
- Hospitals
- Friendliness to foreigners
- LGBT friendliness
- Female friendliness
- Freedom of speech

You can browse through reviews from other nomads, see which Nomad Members are currently in that city or plan to visit, and get a feel for different neighborhoods to help choose where you might want to stay.



There's even a 'Remote Jobs' section if you're looking for work.



The screenshot shows the Nomad List website for Buenos Aires, Argentina. The header includes the city name "Buenos Aires" and "Argentina", a red button that says "Join 77+ Nomads in Buenos Aires", and a rating of "4.03/5" with "207 reviews". A navigation menu below the header lists: Scores, Nomad Guide, Cost of Living, Reviews, People, Chat, Neighborhoods, Coworking, Questions, and Remote Jobs (which is underlined in red). Below the navigation menu, a text block reads: "Based on Buenos Aires's cost of living, here's selected remote jobs that would cover your costs:". Below this text, there are five job listings, each with a company logo and job title:

-  **Part Time User Experience Designer @ Better.**
-  **UI UX Designer, No Coding Required @ Soflyy**
-  **Product Designer @ Jilt**
-  **VP Product @ Aula Education**
-  **UI Designer @ IVPN**

You might even find it valuable enough to become a member.

## Cost of living

Use different resources when looking for more granular information, like the estimated costs of living. If you're looking for the cheapest places to live in the world, you'll get quite cozy with this search topic.

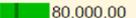
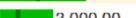
Look for average costs of things like:

- Rent and utilities for a studio or one-bedroom apartment (in the city center as well as cheaper options outside the center, if available)
- Hostels, hotel rooms, Airbnb rentals, and other more temporary housing options
- Meals and drinks at a cheap local restaurant, as well as a fancy big-kid restaurant
- Staple grocery items, like produce and meat
- Local transportation, like trains, buses, taxis or Ubers, as well as renting your own vehicles like a bicycle, motorbike, or car, depending on the infrastructure
- Sightseeing, excursions, and other recreational activities
- Visas, residency permits, and other bureaucratic stuff that can be a big, crappy surprise if you don't pay attention

There are a few websites that specialize in this, like [Numbeo](#) and [Expatistan](#).

You can look up living costs for items down to a pound of potatoes or a pair of jeans.

Here are some costs for Medellín, Colombia, shown in Colombian pesos.

<b>Restaurants</b>	[ Edit ]	Range
Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant	12,000.00 Col\$	10,000.00  17,000.00
Meal for 2 People, Mid-range Restaurant, Three-course	60,000.00 Col\$	50,000.00  80,000.00
McMeal at McDonalds (or Equivalent Combo Meal)	15,000.00 Col\$	13,000.00  20,000.00
Domestic Beer (1 pint draught)	3,000.00 Col\$	2,500.00  5,000.00
Imported Beer (12 oz small bottle)	6,250.00 Col\$	4,000.00  8,000.00
Cappuccino (regular)	3,353.75 Col\$	2,000.00  5,000.00
Coke/Pepsi (12 oz small bottle)	2,213.04 Col\$	1,800.00  3,000.00
Water (12 oz small bottle)	2,072.00 Col\$	1,200.00  3,000.00
<b>Markets</b>	[ Edit ]	
Milk (regular), (1 gallon)	8,405.72 Col\$	6,813.74  9,463.53
Loaf of Fresh White Bread (1 lb)	2,557.59 Col\$	1,814.37  3,628.74
Rice (white), (1 lb)	1,462.22 Col\$	1,133.98  2,267.96
Eggs (regular) (12)	5,016.57 Col\$	3,648.00  8,000.00
Local Cheese (1 lb)	3,881.46 Col\$	1,360.78  5,443.11
Chicken Breasts (Boneless, Skinless), (1 lb)	5,737.50 Col\$	3,628.74  7,257.49
Beef Round (1 lb) (or Equivalent Back Leg Red Meat)	6,148.30 Col\$	4,535.93  8,164.67
Apples (1 lb)	2,443.12 Col\$	2,000.00  3,030.00
Banana (1 lb)	1,087.29 Col\$	680.39  1,814.37
Oranges (1 lb)	1,648.93 Col\$	907.19  2,500.00
Tomato (1 lb)	1,212.10 Col\$	907.19  1,587.58
Potato (1 lb)	1,209.58 Col\$	680.39  1,814.37
Onion (1 lb)	1,114.83 Col\$	861.83  1,360.78

Another handy function of Numbeo is the ability to compare living costs of two different cities, like Medellín and London. As you can see, **you only need to spend about 1,200 GBP in Medellín** to maintain a similar quality of life that would cost you about 4,700 GBP in London.

Not too shabby.

## Cost of Living Comparison Between London and Medellin



You would need around 1,203.90£ (5,007,981.77Col\$) in **Medellin** to maintain the same standard of life that you can have with 4,700.00£ in **London** (assuming you rent in both cities). This calculation uses our Cost of Living Plus Rent Index to compare cost of living. This assumes net earnings (after income tax). You can [change the amount in this calculation](#).

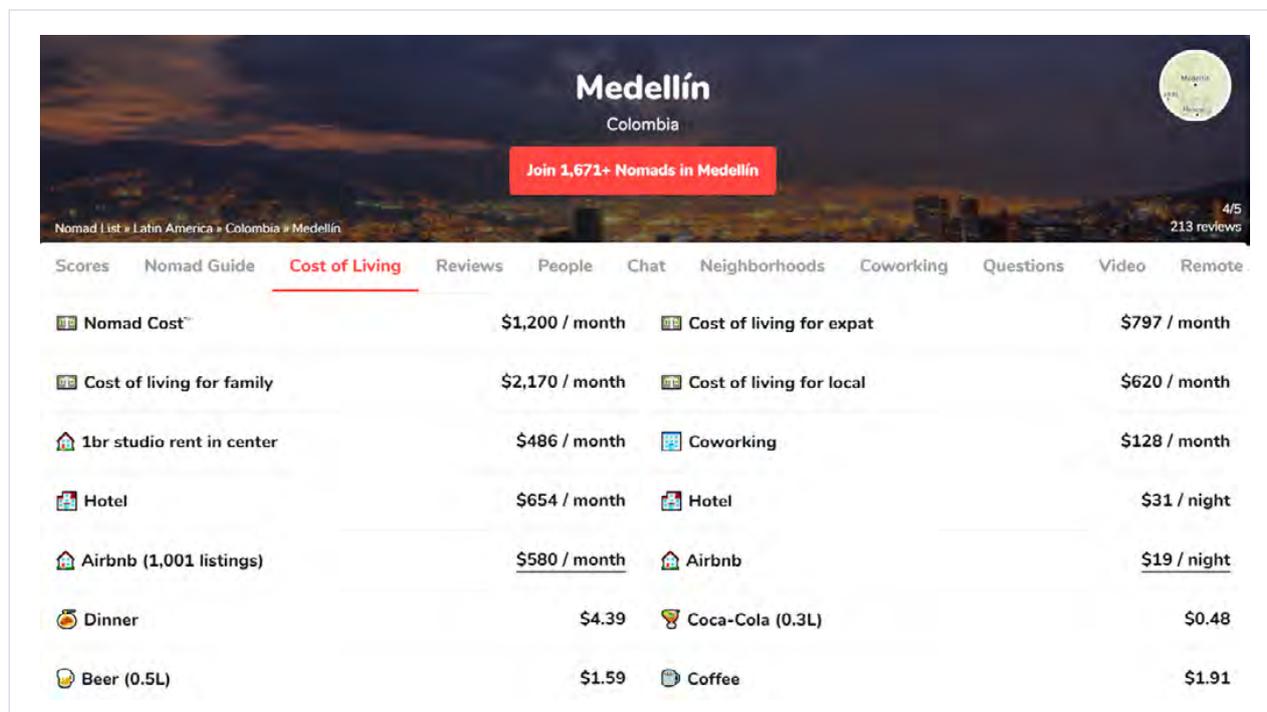
### Indices Difference

Consumer Prices in **Medellin** are 63.86% **lower** than in **London**  
 Consumer Prices Including Rent in **Medellin** are 74.39% **lower** than in **London**  
 Rent Prices in **Medellin** are 87.58% **lower** than in **London**  
 Restaurant Prices in **Medellin** are 73.34% **lower** than in **London**  
 Groceries Prices in **Medellin** are 57.97% **lower** than in **London**  
 Local Purchasing Power in **Medellin** is 50.27% **lower** than in **London**

It will also provide the same breakdowns in comparison form. Good news if you love beer... it's around 65–85% cheaper!

	[ Edit ]	[ Edit ]	
<b>Restaurants</b>			
Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant	15.00 £ (62,397.16 Col\$)	2.88 £ (12,000.00 Col\$)	-80.77 %
Meal for 2 People, Mid-range Restaurant, Three-course	50.00 £ (207,990.55 Col\$)	14.42 £ (60,000.00 Col\$)	-71.15 %
McMeal at McDonalds (or Equivalent Combo Meal)	6.00 £ (24,958.87 Col\$)	3.61 £ (15,000.00 Col\$)	-39.90 %
Domestic Beer (1 pint draught)	5.00 £ (20,799.05 Col\$)	0.72 £ (3,000.00 Col\$)	-85.58 %
Imported Beer (12 oz small bottle)	4.50 £ (18,719.15 Col\$)	1.50 £ (6,250.00 Col\$)	-66.61 %
Cappuccino (regular)	2.74 £ (11,406.20 Col\$)	0.81 £ (3,353.75 Col\$)	-70.60 %
Coke/Pepsi (12 oz small bottle)	1.32 £ (5,482.31 Col\$)	0.53 £ (2,213.04 Col\$)	-59.63 %
Water (12 oz small bottle)	1.00 £ (4,153.45 Col\$)	0.50 £ (2,072.00 Col\$)	-50.11 %
<b>Markets</b>			
Milk (regular), (1 gallon)	3.55 £ (14,762.34 Col\$)	2.02 £ (8,405.72 Col\$)	-43.06 %
Loaf of Fresh White Bread (1 lb)	0.98 £ (4,094.27 Col\$)	0.61 £ (2,557.59 Col\$)	-37.53 %
Rice (white), (1 lb)	0.67 £ (2,772.54 Col\$)	0.35 £ (1,462.22 Col\$)	-47.26 %
Eggs (regular) (12)	2.04 £ (8,505.15 Col\$)	1.21 £ (5,016.57 Col\$)	-41.02 %
Local Cheese (1 lb)	3.00 £ (12,463.75 Col\$)	0.93 £ (3,881.46 Col\$)	-68.86 %

[Nomad List](#) also provides a great breakdown of costs.



Remember that it's impossible to know exactly how much things will cost, even in the cheapest places to live in the world. To be safe and well-rounded, you should browse several different sources and take an average of all the numbers you see.

You'll find that lots of travelers, digital nomads, and expats will weigh in on this discussion on their own blogs, giving you a more personal look - [like this blogger](#), who made a handy chart of all of his personal expenses over the course of living in Medellín for a month.

DATE	ITEM	CATEGORY	PESOS	DOLLARS
7/20	Arepas	Food	3600	\$1.88
7/20	Dinner At Frisby	Food	10200	\$5.31
7/20	Brownie Postre	Food	2000	\$1.04
7/21	Breakfast	Food	2200	\$1.15
7/21	Coca Cola	Food	2600	\$1.35
7/21	Sandwich And Drink	Food	10400	\$5.42

[Source](#)

## Things to do in and around the region

Look up local venues and events, tourist attractions, major historical and geographical landmarks, and day or weekend trips you can easily take to surrounding regions.

Try Google searches like:

- Things to do in [city name]
- Nightlife in [city name]
- Landmarks to see in [city name]
- Tours in [city name]
- Day trips from [city name]
- Weekend trips from [city name]

[All](#) [Images](#) [Maps](#) [Shopping](#) [Videos](#) [More](#) [Settings](#) [Tools](#)

About 36,900,000 results (0.79 seconds)

### Best Day Trips from Barcelona

- Girona. The ancient town of Girona is a beautiful place to visit to escape the bustle of **Barcelona**. ...
- Figueres. Figueres is well known for its stunning architecture, which includes the 18th century Castell de Sant Ferran. ...
- Montserrat. ...
- Sitges. ...
- Collserola. ...
- Montblanc. ...
- Vic.

Mar 1, 2018

[Best Day Trips from Barcelona | Eurail Blog](https://blog.eurail.com/best-day-trips-barcelona/)  
<https://blog.eurail.com/best-day-trips-barcelona/>



Also look at details like the closest airport or bus station to the city's center and what those trips typically entail.

For example, you might find that a certain city is in the middle of nowhere, taking you a long time to get to the airport as you shell out steep costs to fly to surrounding areas.

**Places like these aren't particularly nomad-friendly, but could certainly be worth it if your heart is set on having the experience. It's just something to keep in mind.**

Try a Google search like 'cheap flights from [city name]' to see if your city of choice is easily accessible to and from other cities.

I tried this approach from Barcelona. The search brought me to Fare Compare, which shows a few popular options I might want to add to the digital nomad destinations on my list.

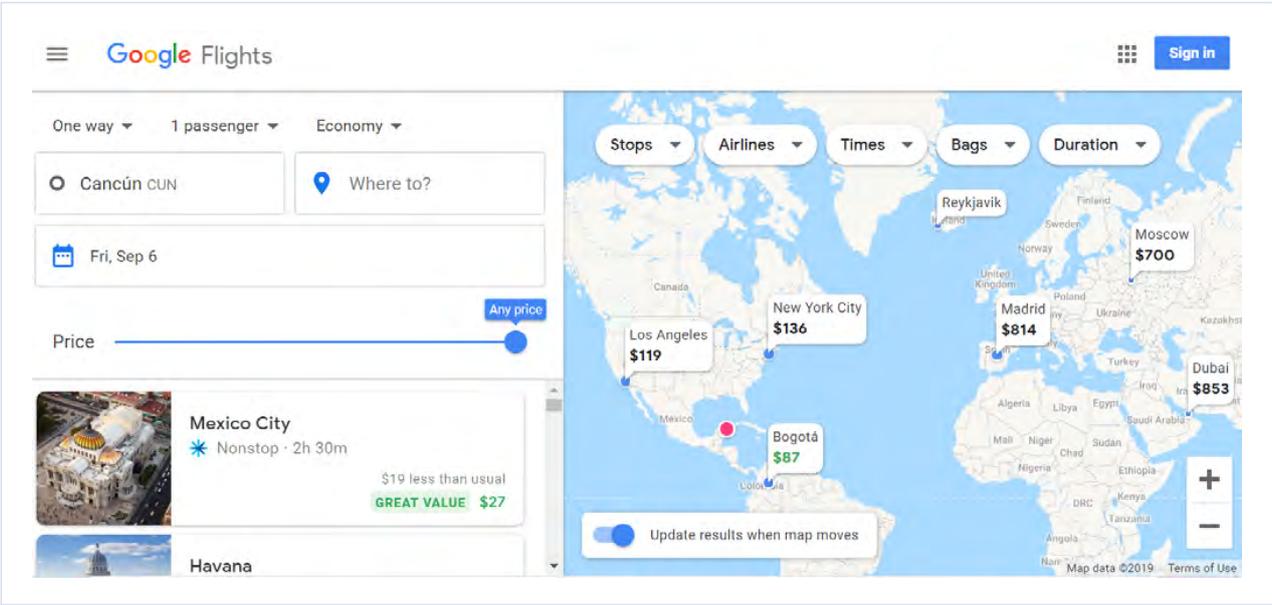
### Cheap Last Minute Flights from Barcelona, Spain to Europe

Looking for cheap last minute flights or a weekend getaway? We've got you covered with weekend flight deals from Barcelona, Spain to Europe. The chart below shows the best last minute deals and cheap flights this weekend we could find.

DESTINATION	DEPARTING	RETURNING	PRICE
Palma, Spain	3/29/19	3/31/19	\$47
Rome, Italy	4/4/19	4/9/19	\$102
Porto	4/4/19	4/9/19	\$104
Lisbon	4/4/19	4/9/19	\$106
Paris, France	4/5/19	4/7/19	\$110

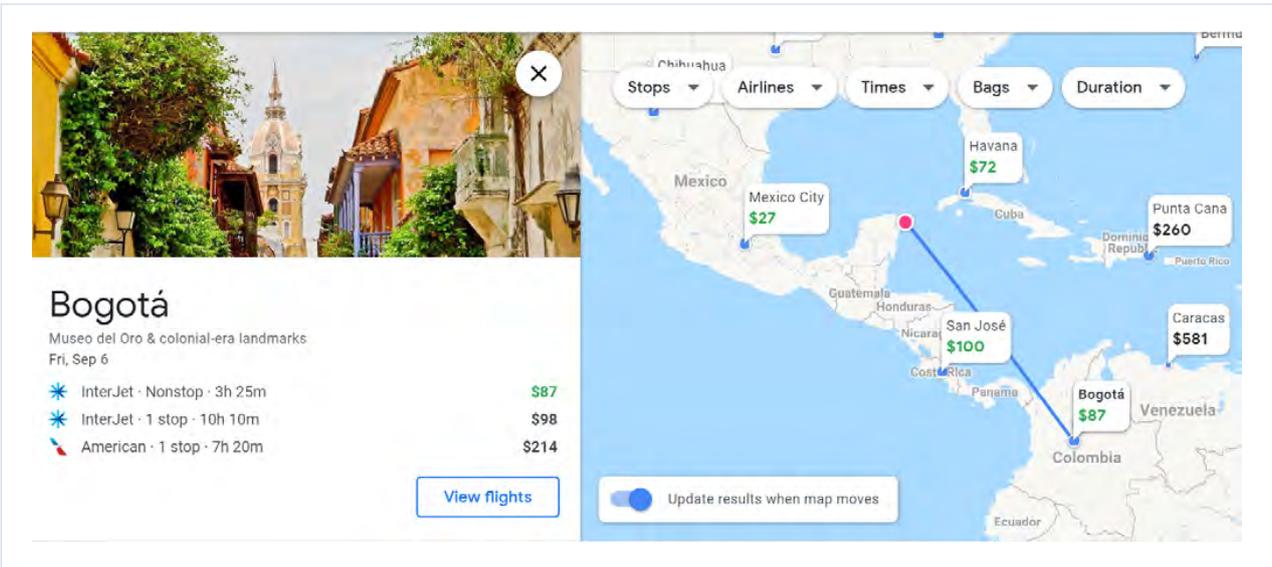
One of my personal favorites for travel planning is [Google Flights](#), which lets you view **a map with real-time flight prices for a selected date range**.

Here, I chose one-way flights from Cancún, Mexico, on September 6. Then, all I need to do is poke around on the map, and it shows the cost to fly to any city I choose.



The screenshot shows the Google Flights interface. On the left, the search parameters are set to "One way", "1 passenger", and "Economy". The origin is "Cancún CUN" and the destination is "Where to?". The date is "Fri, Sep 6". A price slider is set to "Any price". Below the search bar, a list of flight options is shown, with "Mexico City" selected. The flight to Mexico City is a nonstop flight taking 2h 30m, priced at \$27, which is \$19 less than usual, labeled as "GREAT VALUE". Other cities visible on the map include Los Angeles (\$119), New York City (\$136), Bogotá (\$87), Madrid (\$814), Moscow (\$700), and Dubai (\$853). The interface also includes filters for "Stops", "Airlines", "Times", "Bags", and "Duration", and a "Sign in" button.

Zoom in to see more options in a particular area. Click on a city to get more flight options and details.



The screenshot shows the Google Flights interface zoomed in on Bogotá, Colombia. The flight to Bogotá is a nonstop flight taking 3h 25m, priced at \$87. Other cities visible on the map include Mexico City (\$27), Havana (\$72), San José (\$100), Punta Cana (\$260), and Caracas (\$581). The interface includes filters for "Stops", "Airlines", "Times", "Bags", and "Duration", and a "View flights" button.

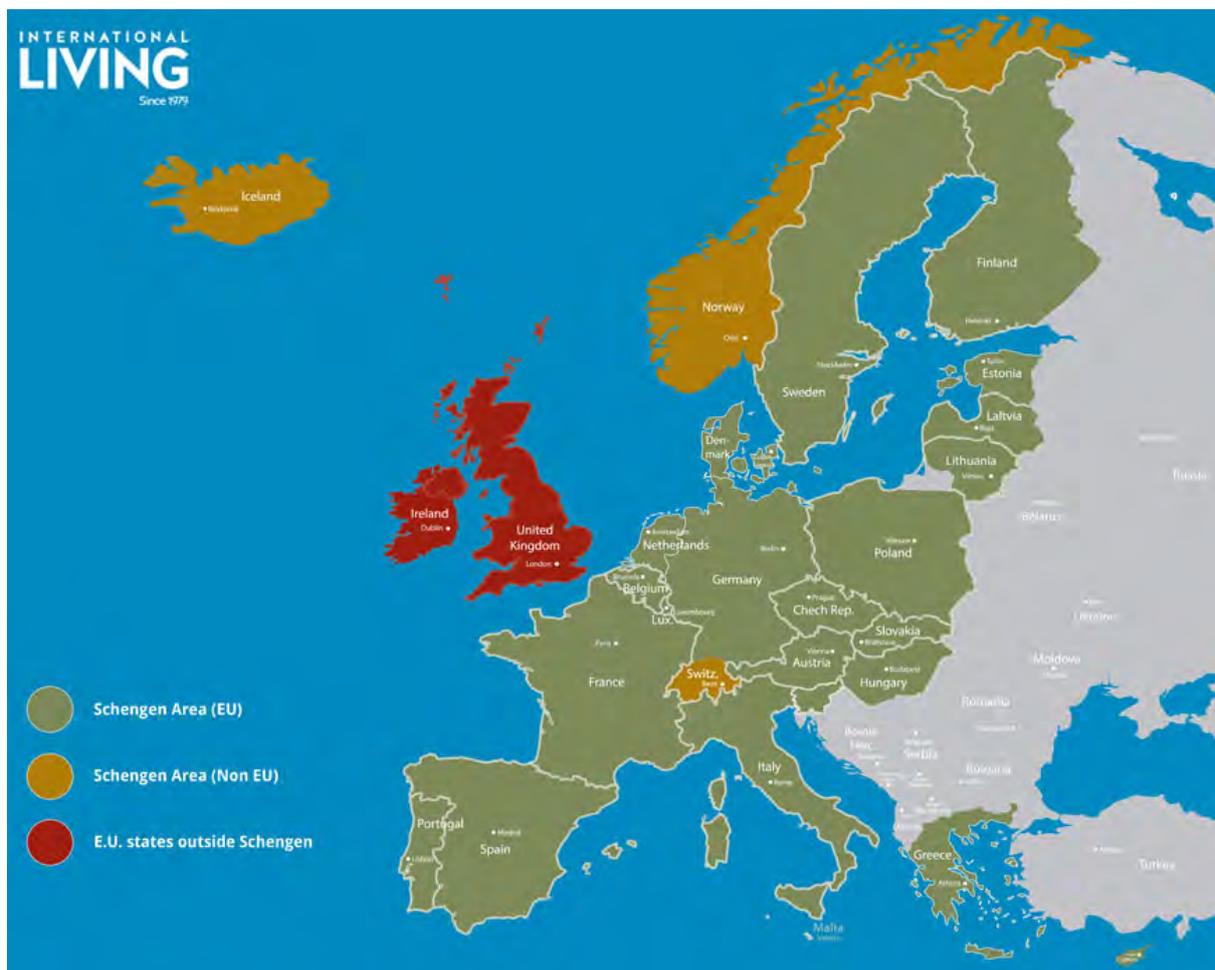
It's nothing short of a magical tool when you're not quite sure where you want to fly next.

## Visa requirements

You know the old saying: “Hell hath no fury like a traveler scorned.”

**Okay, that’s not the actual line, but trust me... you don’t want to get turned down at the border of a country because you didn’t know the visa requirements in advance.**

For example, U.S. citizens can stay in the Schengen Area for **up to 90 consecutive days without a special visa**, then they have to leave the area for 90 days before they can come back. The Schengen Area consists of 26 European countries.



[Source](#)

In other places, like Vietnam for example, U.S. residents are required to get a visa through an agency before they arrive.

And in some countries, you're even required to show a return ticket before you're allowed in, to prove that you have plans to leave the country.

If you want to stay longer than the allotted visa period in any given country, **you'll need to look at things like residency permits**, which can get a whole lot more complicated and demanding.

**This is why many digital nomads tend to hop around without applying for special permits.**

To figure out your needs, Google things like:

- Visa requirements for a [your country] citizen in [destination country]
- Does a [your country] citizen need a visa for [destination country]

## ‘Nomad-friendliness’

When I say ‘nomad-friendliness,’ the main thing I’m talking about is the **quality and availability of wifi** in the city.

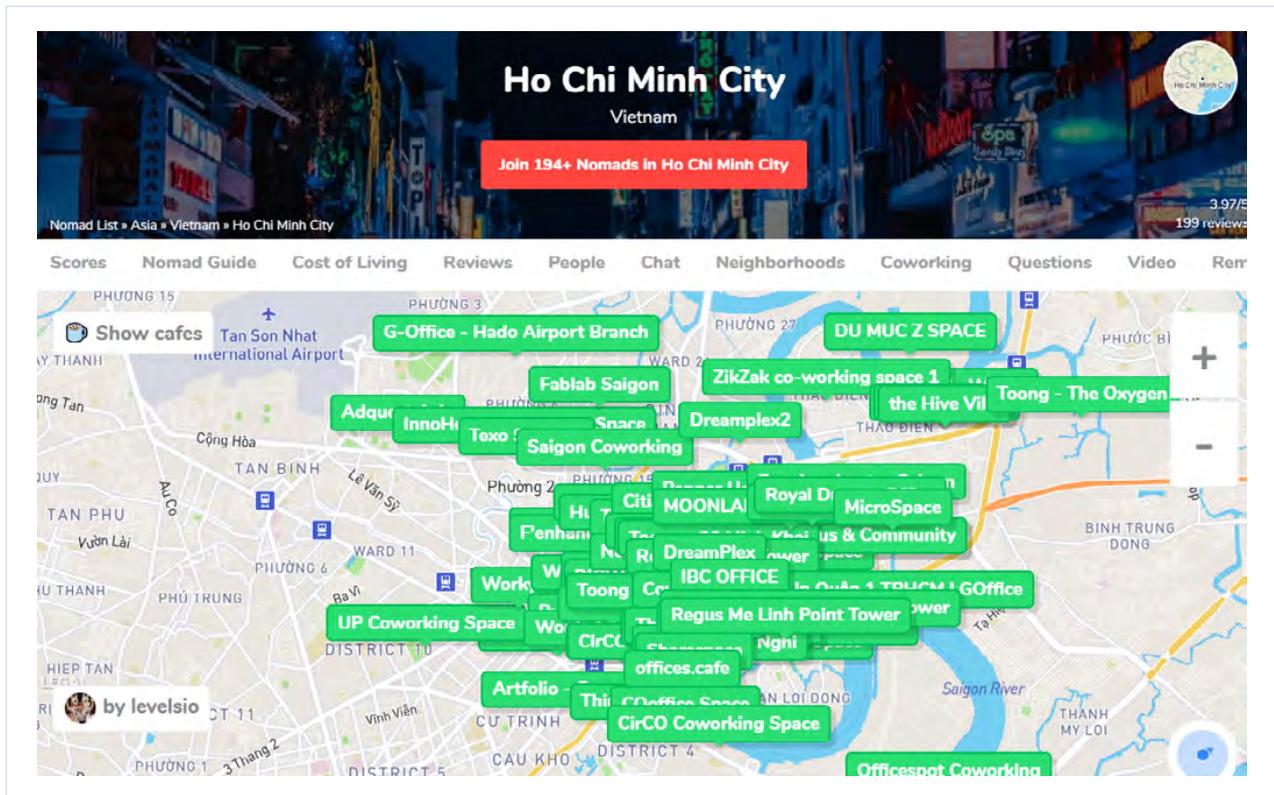
Since wifi is the fuel for your engine, you’re going to be in a tough spot if you spend too much time in a place with unexpectedly poor connectivity.

Another thing to look for in your potential digital nomad destinations is coworking spaces. These are establishments made for remote workers or people who just need a steady and reliable wifi connection.

You can stroll in and pay for a few hours or a day, or get a membership that usually goes in monthly increments. Many co-working spaces are even open 24 hours to accommodate different schedules.

**Apart from a reliable connection, coworking spaces can also be a great way to meet fellow nomads and young entrepreneurs.**

Nomad List has a cool function where you can see a map of coworking spaces in the city.



Now that you know some of the key things to look for, let's take a look at some of the best digital nomad cities that have been tried and tested by other digital nomads.

## 8 top digital nomad cities around the world

In general, certain regions of the world have similar costs of living.

As you work down this list, you'll understand why there are so many digital nomads in Southeast Asia. On top of the amazing adventures, experiences, and like-minded travelers, it's home to some of the cheapest places to live in the world.

This is also true for many Eastern European and Central or South American countries.

**In many of these regions, you can live luxuriously on a budget that might be rather modest in your hometown.**

## 1. Canggu, Bali



Canggu is something of a legend in the global digital nomad community. It's got thousands of digital nomads at all times, tons of coworking spaces littered around the city, incredible lush green landscapes, and an easy-going and laid-back summer beach town vibe. This makes it one of the best places to work remotely.

**COST OF LIVING:** \$1,000 per month

**INTERNET SPEED:** 20 mbps

**PROS:** Super friendly to foreigners; a lot of places to work from

**CONS:** Poor healthcare; it gets quite hot and humid

## 2. Chiang Mai, Thailand



Chiang Mai is another one of the best digital nomad cities in Asia. The largest city in northern Thailand, it's also a [UNESCO World Heritage](#) site. You can expect to find gorgeous ancient temples, jungle landscapes, bustling city life, and loads of other digital nomads to keep you company.

**COST OF LIVING:** \$1,005 per month

**INTERNET SPEED:** 20 mbps

**PROS:** Walkable; many places to work from

**CONS:** Poor traffic safety; low racial tolerance; heavy air pollution

### 3. Buenos Aires, Argentina



Buenos Aires is a bustling cultural hub in Latin America. If you're into nature, hiking, and outdoor sports, you'll find plenty to do outside of your office hours. The city also has welcoming regulations when it comes to business owners, and an overall friendly vibe toward foreigners.

**COST OF LIVING:** \$1,260 per month

**INTERNET SPEED:** 8 mbps

**PROS:** Very walkable; great day and night activities; LGBT friendly

**CONS:** Not the safest or female-friendliest on the list

## 4. Prague, Czech Republic



One of the best digital nomad cities in Europe, Prague is a beautiful and romantic old town with breathtaking architecture and charming cobbled streets. While it's nearly double the cost of the cheapest destinations on our list, it makes up for it in coziness and convenience.

**COST OF LIVING:** \$2,040 per month

**INTERNET SPEED:** 26 mbps

**PROS:** Very female friendly, walkable, and safe

**CONS:** Poor racial tolerance; sub-par hospitals

## 5. Medellín, Colombia



Nestled into the mountains, this gorgeous place offers plenty of hikes and treks to bring you into nature when you're tired of the city life. With recent investments in infrastructure and tech, many digital nomads are making their way here as it climbs the list of best digital nomad cities in South America. As a result, there's an influx in coworking spaces and nomad-friendly working spots.

**COST OF LIVING:** \$1,200 per month

**INTERNET SPEED:** 7 mbps

**PROS:** Very walkable; many places to work

**CONS:** Poor safety and racial tolerance

## 6. Lisbon, Portugal



Lisbon has wide open arms for digital nomads, with a broad range of workspaces from bohemian cafes to upscale offices. The city also features several ‘Creative Artistic Hubs’ located in places like art galleries, pubs, and museums. You can expand your creativity to balance out all the wine and beer you’ll enjoy.

**COST OF LIVING:** \$2,075 per month

**INTERNET SPEED:** 21 mbps

**PROS:** Very walkable and safe; many fun things to do

**CONS:** Poor hospitals; sub-par air quality

## 7. Budapest, Hungary



This captivating city is split into two parts: Buda and Pest, separated by the Danube River. Buda is more hilly and historical, while Pest is flatter and more modern. You can get lost in the history and culture while you gawk at the city's beauty after the sun sets.

**COST OF LIVING:** \$1,600 per month

**INTERNET SPEED:** 34 mbps

**PROS:** Very safe and walkable; plenty to do

**CONS:** Poor racial tolerance and LGBT friendliness

## 8. Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



Another one of the best digital nomad cities in Asia, Ho Chi Minh City (or Saigon, as the locals still call it) is known for being a great destination for travelers on a budget, as it's one of the cheapest places to live in the world. You'll find lots of things to do during the day and through the night. Traffic can get intense, but it's much more convenient if you're up for renting your own motorbike to zip through the crowded streets.

**COST OF LIVING:** \$1,010 per month

**INTERNET SPEED:** 9 mbps

**PROS:** Great food (if you're into Vietnamese); walkable

**CONS:** Poor hospitals; noisy and chaotic; heavy air pollution

**Now, you have a good idea of some of the best digital nomad cities around the world, as well as how to research cities that are a good fit for your style.**

In the next chapter, we'll take a look at how to create a travel budget, so you can keep a manageable lifestyle that balances your income with your expenses.

5

# Travel Budget Tips for the Aspiring Digital Nomad



Even for those who aren't considering dramatic life changes, personal finances are a big friggin' deal. According to a [survey by Northwestern Mutual](#), **44% of participants** said that money was **their biggest form of stress**.

This is especially true for those who face obstacles like rising healthcare costs and massive student loan debts. It's no wonder that money is one of the main reasons that people feel 'held back' from crossing items off their bucket list.

**But this doesn't have to stop you.**

For some, making the transition to digital nomad life will be a piece of proverbial cake. But for others, it might take a lot of discipline and sacrifice.

**Regardless of the process, the end goal is waiting for you if you want it badly enough.**

This chapter will cover a few travel budget tips every digital nomad should know. We're going to walk through the steps and considerations for the transition to digital nomadism, as well as cover some strategies for how to travel on a budget.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to:

- Map out your current cash flow
- Calculate your projected travel and living expenses
- Create your travel budget based on our travel budget template
- Shift into savings mode and become more nomad budget-friendly

Here we go.

## Map out your current cash flow

First things first: understand your financial situation **right now**.

You'll need to have a firm grip on 'money in versus money out,' or your income versus expenses. This can help you to **make more targeted changes** to achieve particular goals and contribute more money to your travel budget.

**It's a huge advantage to track this on a physical spreadsheet so you can see the hard numbers.**

If you don't already have something like this, we created a spreadsheet template that you can use.

Just pop in the monthly numbers for whatever applies to you.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		<b>Item</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>
2		<b>TOTAL CASH FLOW</b>	<b>\$819.00</b>	<b>-\$252.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
3						
4		<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$3,736.00</b>	<b>\$3,736.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
5		Salary	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00		
6		Commission + bonuses				
7		Loans				
8		Other capital				
9		Other income	\$236.00	\$236.00		
10		<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,917.00</b>	<b>\$3,988.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
11		Living expenses				
12		Rent/mortgage	\$870.00	\$870.00		
13		Home/renters insurance	\$150.00	\$150.00		
14		Water + utilities	\$50.00	\$45.00		
15		Phone payment	\$95.00	\$95.00		

As you add your values, three rows of cells will calculate your totals automatically:

- **Row 2: Total cash flow** – Will show if you lost or earned money in any given month. It works by subtracting your Row 10 expenses from your Row 4 income. This will display as a negative or positive sum.
- **Row 4: Total income** – Will calculate your total earnings for the given month
- **Row 10: Total expenses** – Will calculate your total spend for the given month

**You can [access this cash flow template here](#). Please note that you won't be able to fill it in directly – follow the directions for downloading your own copy to use.**

Ideally, you should go through your bank and credit card statements to fill this out at least a few months back. This way, you can identify broader patterns and trends, which will help you predict how things will continue more accurately.

Then ask yourself some questions:

- Am I saving any money, or am I consistently spending more than I earn?
- Do I have an emergency fund just in case something happens on the road?
- Am I in debt? If so, how can I be more aggressive in trying to get rid of it?
- Are there any non-essential expenses that I can cut down?

We'll dive deeper into these questions later in the chapter. For now, let's look at projected costs for your top choices so we can personalize your travel budget.

# Calculate your projected expenses

There's a reason we looked at your current financial situation before getting into how to make a travel budget.

That's because one of the keys to being a savvy and successful digital nomad is to **travel within your means**. At least at the beginning of your travels, your finances should define your destinations and lifestyle.

For example, making a travel budget for the Philippines will be a lot different than one for the USA. You can easily spend at least \$1,000 USD extra per month.

**So your next step is to evaluate which destinations are most feasible for you. To do this, pick three to five top cities on your wishlist.**

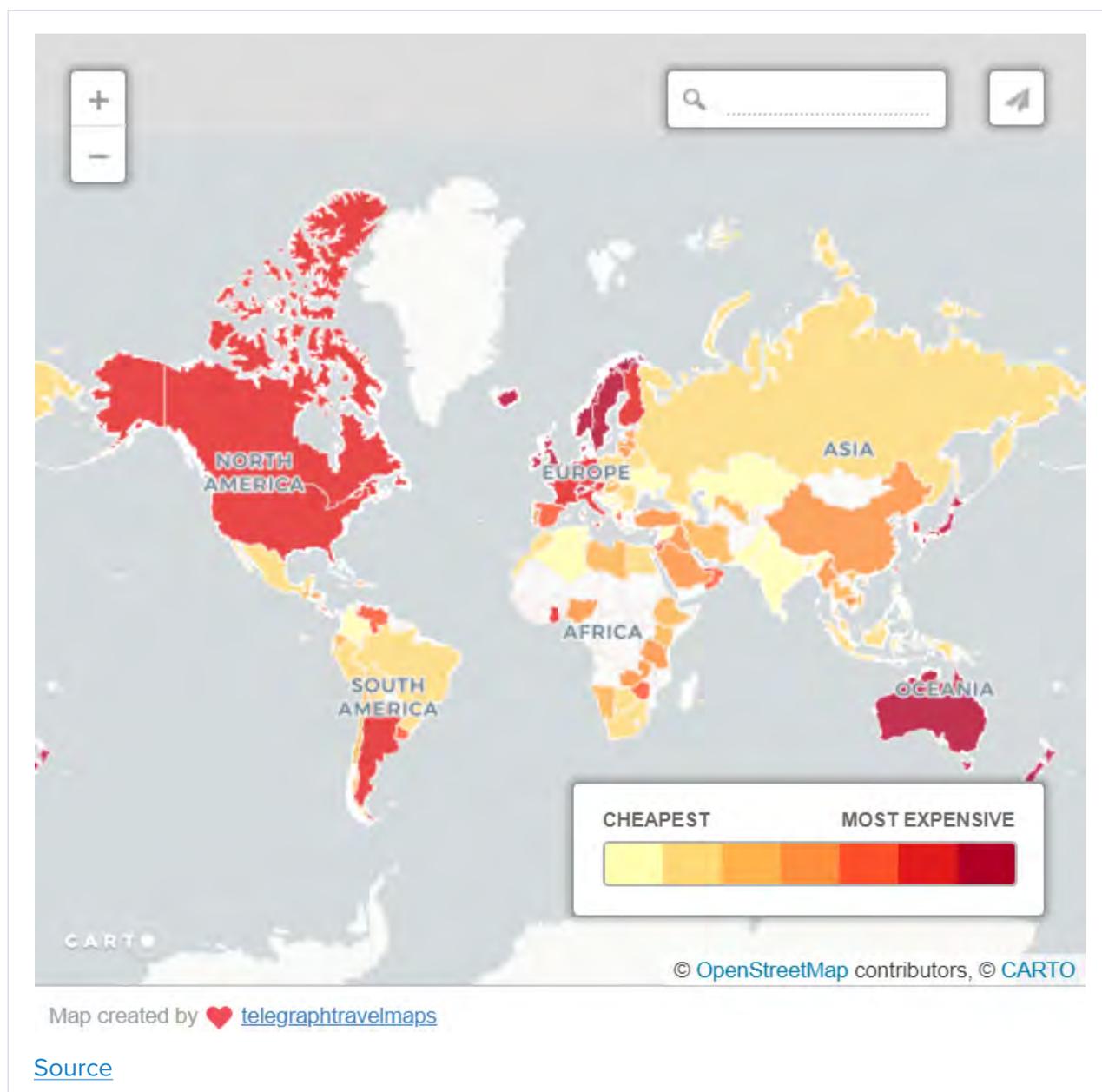
Then, fill out this travel budget template for estimated living costs for one month of staying in that city. As you can see, it's almost identical to the personal cash flow expenses template from the previous section, with a few adjustments.

For now, you can just use rough estimates based on your research. Once you narrow down your choices, you can start documenting the planning and bookings for your actual trip.

Find your info on these travel budget estimators, some of which we mentioned in [Chapter 4](#)'s discussion on digital nomad cities:

- [Nomad List](#)
- [Expatistan](#)
- [Numbeo](#)
- [My Life Elsewhere](#)
- [World Data](#)

Also, check out this [awesome interactive map](#) for a quick visual of typical travel budgets by country.



## REMEMBER

**Don't take any single website or resource for its word. Do a bit more research and try averaging a couple of websites to get a more well-rounded travel budget estimate.**

If you need to make some big purchases to prepare for your travels, like a good laptop, be sure to include those in the 'Misc Expenses' section under 'Nomad gear or tech purchases.' Also, don't forget to add in the cost of your flight to get there, which you can find in the 'Transportation expenses' section.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1		<b>Item</b>	<b>City #1</b>	<b>City #2</b>	<b>City #3</b>	<b>City #4</b>	<b>City #5</b>
2		<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
3		Living expenses					
4		Rent					
5		Water + utilities					
6		Phone payment					
7		Travelers insurance					
8		Other					
9		Transportation expenses					
10		Flight/bus/etc. to get there					
11		Car or bike rental					
12		Gas					
13		Public transit expenses					
14		Food + entertainment expenses					
15		Groceries					
16		Eating out					
17		Entertainment + social activities					

You can [access this travel budget template here](#). Follow the directions for downloading your own copy to use.

Looking at your travel budget template, ask yourself:

- What's the difference between my current costs and the costs for each of these cities?
- If I need to find a new remote job, what's the minimum income I need to make to afford this lifestyle and still have some savings?
- Do I need to make major financial adjustments to be comfortable making the switch?
- Which of these cities is the most feasible as my first destination?
- If anything were to happen with work, do I have (or can I manage saving) three to six months worth of income to live off?

## Don't forget about your taxes

Digital nomads usually don't need to worry about paying taxes in another country unless they want to stay longer than their tourist visa.

But many don't realize their **tax obligations back home**.

For example, some countries like the U.K. and Australia are [making it harder for their citizens to qualify for tax non-residence](#). Tax non-residence means that citizens of these countries don't need to pay taxes if they live abroad.

If you're a U.S. citizen, you have a whole other set of problems.

The U.S. is one of the only countries that taxes based on **citizenship instead of residence**. This means that unless you qualify for certain loopholes and exemptions, **you'll still need to file and possibly pay taxes** if you're a U.S. citizen.

And, if you're a freelancer or otherwise self-employed, you'll also need to pay **15.3% self-employment tax**. This can blindside those who are fresh to the freelancing world and put a huge dent in your travel budget. It might be worth the extra work to incorporate into an S-corp or LLC to save on your tax bill.

**The moral of the story is: no matter where you live, please do your research and hire a CPA if you think you need one. Taxes are nothing to mess with.**

## Shift into savings mode

For many people, a basic level of financial security is important for making the jump.

As you figure out the general costs for your ideal destinations and lifestyles, and examine how to travel on a tight budget, you may be one of those people who thought to themselves, “I’m gonna need to save up for a little while.”

**That’s perfectly normal. In fact, it’s recommended.**

Let’s go over a few ways that you can shift into a more savings-oriented mindset. It’ll help you save some cash, and might even teach you some valuable skills around how to budget your travel costs.

### Reduce or eliminate your debt

Debt sucks. Anyone who has debt knows that it can feel like a dark cloud looming overhead.

If you’re struggling with debt, I feel for you. I also believe that it doesn’t need to keep you from doing big things.

Here are a few strategies and tips that might help to reduce or eliminate your debt so you can contribute more toward your travel budget.

## Pay more monthly to avoid interest

The beauty – and the trap – of debt is that you can opt for minimum monthly payments. On the surface, minimum payments can help you get your head above water if you're really struggling. But if you get too comfortable, this will add up and **cost you much more in the long run.**

You can use a handy [debt repayment calculator like this one on Credit Karma.](#)

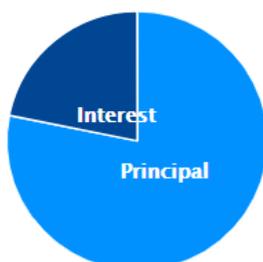
Consider a \$6,000 credit card debt with 17% interest.

If you pay \$215 per month, it'll take you 36 months to fully pay off the debt including your interest, which will tack on an **extra \$1,690.**

### Full Payoff

Balance	Interest Rate	Expected Monthly Payment	Expected Payoff Time
\$6,000	17%	\$215	36 months

### Debt Repayment Chart



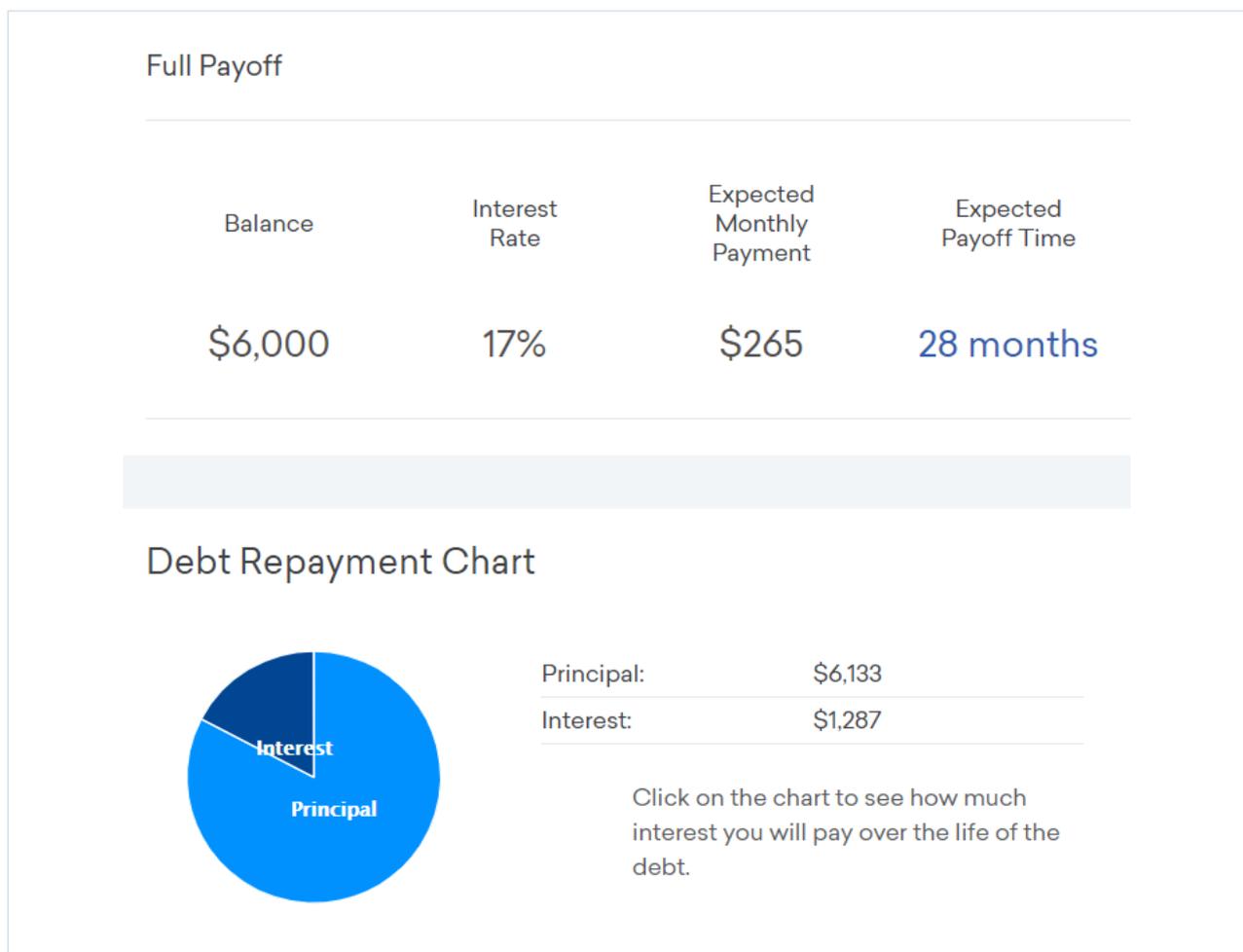
Principal: \$6,050

Interest: \$1,690

Click on the chart to see how much interest you will pay over the life of the debt.

Ouch.

But say that you increase your monthly payment by just \$50. This will cut your repayment down by eight months, and you'll have \$403 extra that you didn't have to pay in interest.

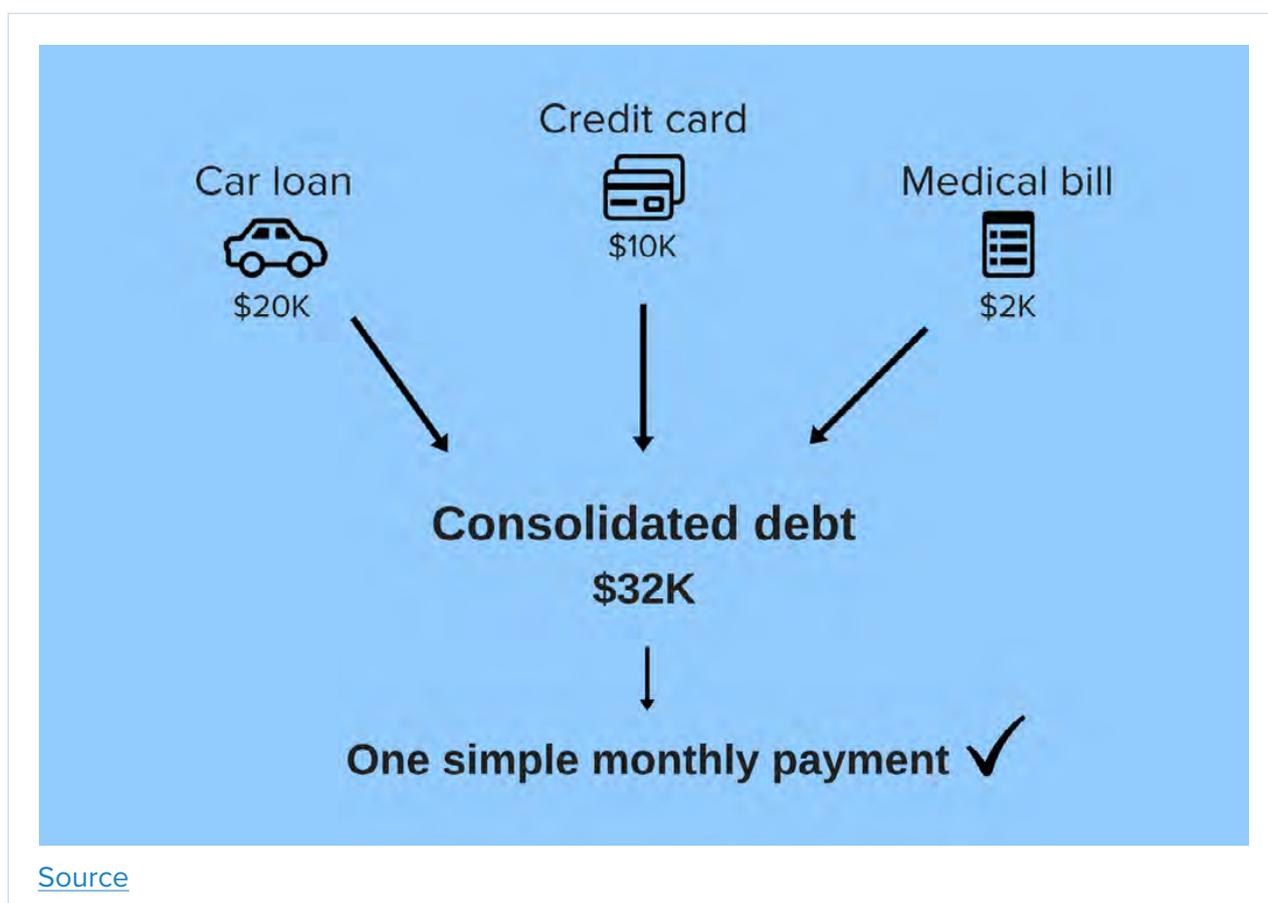


If you have multiple debts, you might want to focus on the one with the highest interest rate first. Pay the minimum on all of your other debts, but as much as you can until your focus debt is gone. Then move to the next-highest interest rate debt, and so on until your travel budget is freed up.

## Look into debt consolidation

If you have multiple debts with high interest, [debt consolidation](#) can roll them into a single payment.

It's then paid off in one of two ways: taking out a personal loan that often has a lower interest rate, or joining a debt management program without taking a loan.



While debt consolidation can be a good idea for some, it can also rope you into a longer agreement that might end up being higher. So if you decide to take this route, go into it with the mindset of **paying it off as quickly as possible**.

You might also have some luck calling your lenders and asking for a lower interest rate. This method really works for some!

## Build an emergency fund

One essential travel budget tip is to put money into an emergency fund. If you're struggling with debt, this can feel overwhelming on top of learning how to budget your travel.

But to put it frankly: **it's critical for you to have an emergency fund** as part of your travel budget in case something goes wrong, like losing your income source or being involved in an accident.

**Ideally, your emergency fund would cover six months of your living expenses. If this doesn't feel attainable, I strongly recommend a minimum of three months.**

This process can be as easy as setting aside \$50 a month into an off-limits savings account.

I know a digital nomad who used a cash method to save up before she started traveling. She would randomly put aside \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills into a physical piggy bank.

Over the course of a few months, she had saved a few hundred dollars. She then deposited it into her savings account before she hit the road.

## Cut down unnecessary expenses

Maybe you remember the delightful story of the millionaire who told millennials to lay off the avocado toast if they want to afford a house.

Millennials had [a lot to say about that](#).



At the end of the day, you might need to make some sacrifices to free up your travel budget and make the digital nomad lifestyle work. Just don't beat yourself up if you want to enjoy an avocado toast every now and then, okay?

**Overall, think about all your expenses that are 'wants' instead of 'needs,' and see which of those you can cut back on without sacrificing too much of your short-term happiness.**

Here are some ideas to get your hamster wheel turning:

- If you have a car, carpool with friends and family more often, or occasionally walk or ride a bicycle to save on gas money
- Cook more meals at home, and cook extra so you have leftovers for lunch the next day
- Bring your own lunches from home instead of going out frequently with coworkers
- Make a physical grocery list to reduce all those delicious impulse buys
- Plan your weekly meals in advance so you're not throwing away unused groceries
- Try opting for generic or sale items when you're doing your shopping
- Cancel subscriptions and memberships that you can do without
- Eat a snack before you go out to dinner so that you're satisfied with smaller plates or appetizers
- Make your own coffee every morning instead of buying from a cafe
- Unplug gadgets when you're not using them, as they still suck electricity even when they're off
- Make service and skill trades with your friends, like pet-sitting in exchange for a haircut
- Try to plan more friend gatherings – like a cheap picnic – instead of always going out to eat

Sometimes, all it takes is a little creativity to make some helpful upgrades to your bank account.

# Take advantage of these travel budget tips

There are loads of travel budget hacks that can really add up. Let's look at a few key tips as you get serious about planning.

## Fly with budget airlines

Budget airlines are popping up all over the place in response to demands for cheap travel. The business model is that they won't offer you little luxuries like free drinks and snacks, which helps them to lower their costs so they can pass the savings on to you.

Many budget airlines will also charge significantly for checking baggage – or even bringing a carry-on – so this is something to look into before you book.

Some top budget airlines for different regions include:

- **USA:** Frontier Airlines, Allegiant Air, Spirit Airlines, Sun Country Airlines
- **Europe:** RyanAir, easyJet, Wizz Air, Vueling, Volotea, Eurowings
- **Asia:** AirAsia, JetStar Asia Airways, IndiGo, Lion Air, Nok Air

Budget airlines aren't known for international travel, and some regions don't have too many of them. For example, flying in South America is generally more expensive in comparison to flying between European countries. Keep this in mind for your travel budget plan.

## Look at bus, train, and ferry options

In some areas, you might have the option to choose a bus or train (or even a ferry) over a plane ride. Or in some cases, you can fly to a different airport that might be a bit farther away.

**While these alternatives will typically take longer, they might save you a surprising amount.**

Consider this travel budget example: say you want to get from Bangkok, Thailand, to the Thai island Koh Samui. There's an option for a direct flight that's only about one hour long, but costs around \$100–150 USD for a one-way ticket.

Instead of the direct flight, you can take a flight to Surat Thani for \$20–30 USD, then take a high-speed ferry from Surat Thani to Koh Samui for another \$20.

This would add a few extra hours to your travel day, but could be well worth it depending on your travel budget.

## Consider hostels or private room Airbnb rentals

In general, I wouldn't recommend staying in big dorm rooms of hostels in the long run. While they can be mega cheap – some costing less than \$5 per night depending on which city you're in – they're also not a guarantee that you'll get a good night's sleep or a productive workspace.

There's a solid chance that you'll encounter things like loud snorers and people stumbling back at 3 a.m. after partying the night away.

Look into dorm rooms with fewer beds, or private rooms in hostels.

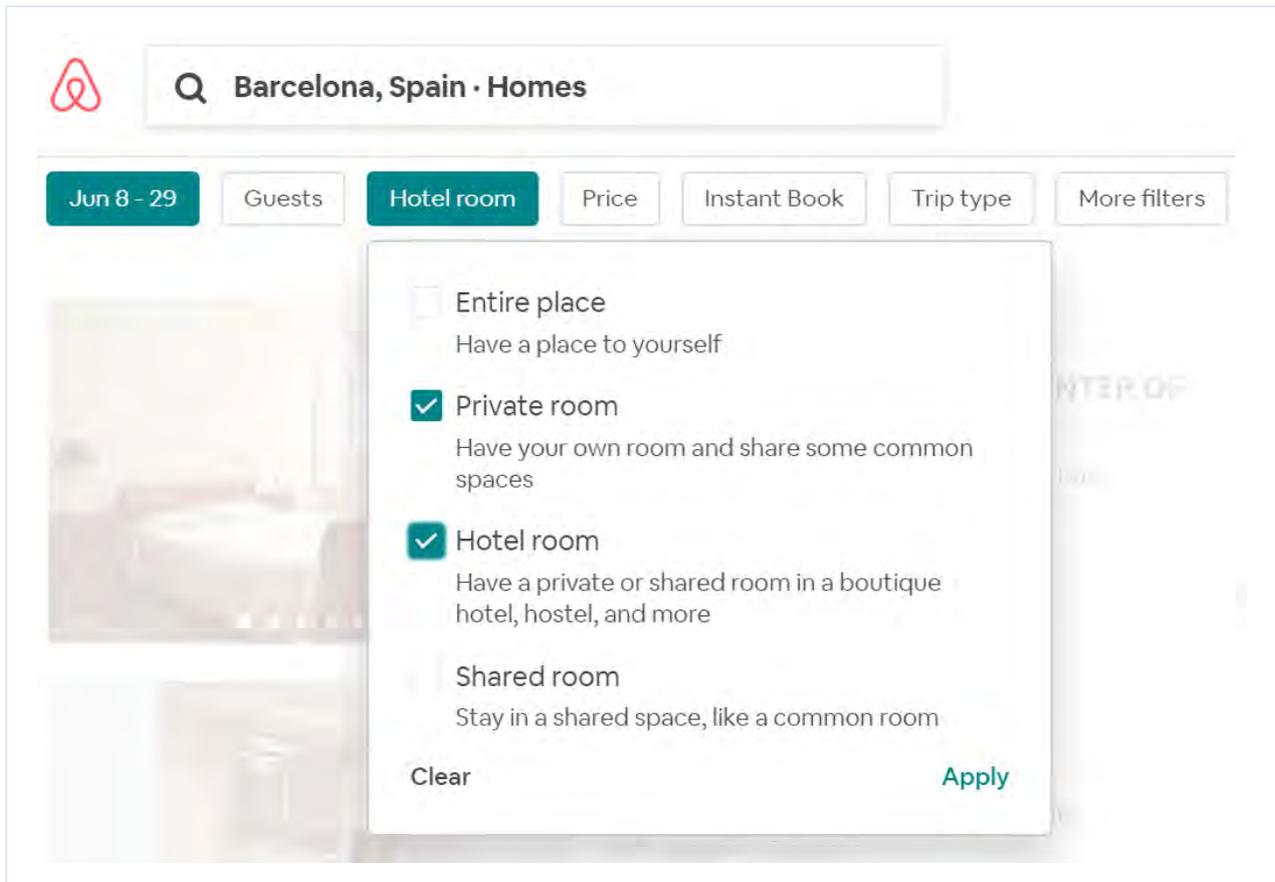
Check websites like:

- [Hostel World](#)
- [Hotels.com](#)
- [Booking.com](#)
- [Hostel Bookers](#)

Another consideration is that hostels don't have the best internet reputation. Many have slow and groggy connections that can drive a nomad nuts if they don't have a backup plan.

One possible remedy for the potential woes of hostel life is to find **private rooms on Airbnb**, where the host(s) rent out an extra room in their house or apartment. This allows you to maintain some privacy and peace, while still having shared access to coveted amenities like a kitchen and living room.

And since it's a private home, they'll usually have a decent wifi connection. You can just message hosts before you book to double-check if it's suitable for working.



By choosing the private room option, I was able to find rooms for around \$30 USD per night, as opposed to a full apartment which was more than \$100 per night.

**Another perk of Airbnb is that many hosts are super friendly and welcoming, often offering to take their guests out and show them around town.**

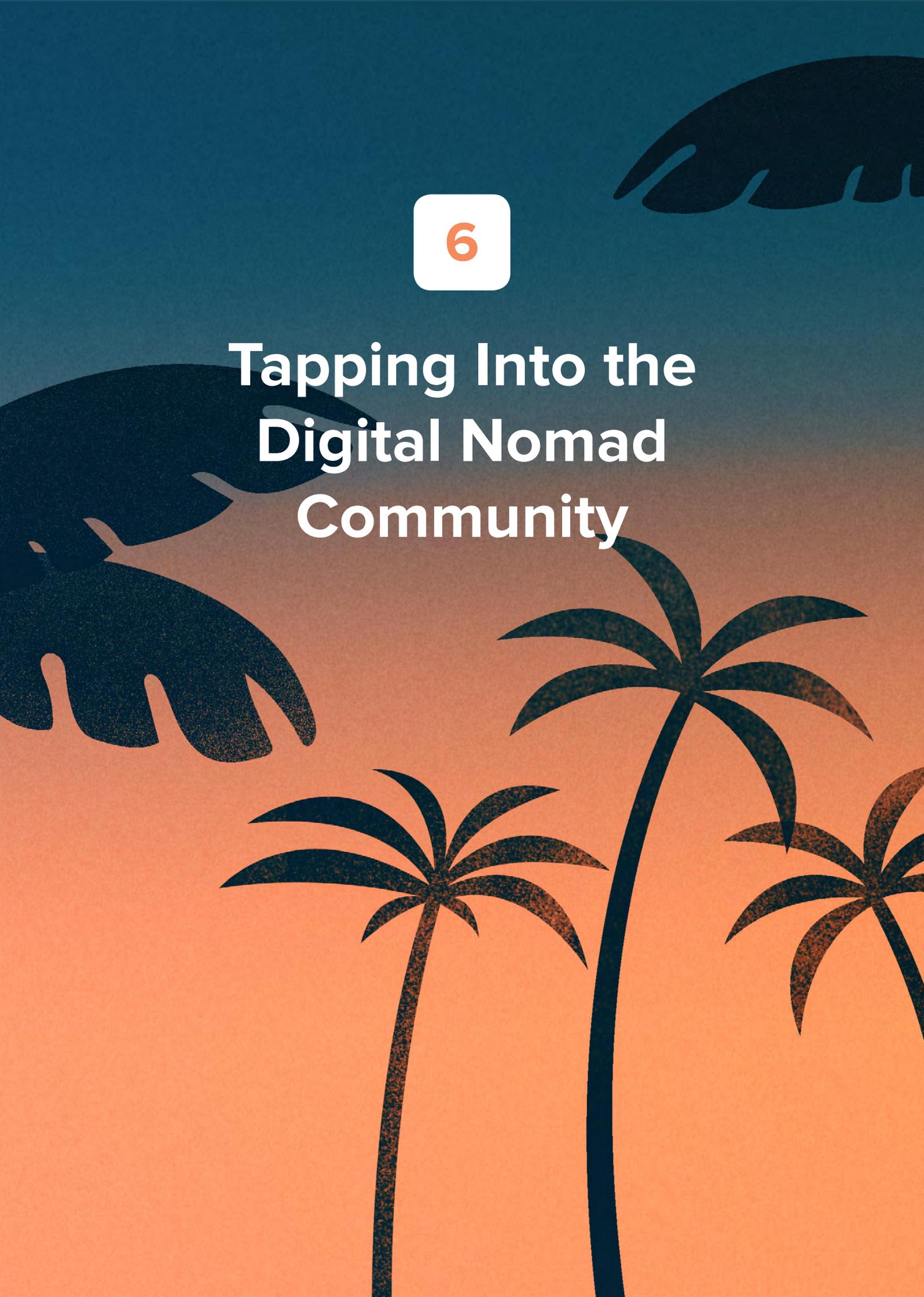
I still keep in touch with several of my past hosts!

Hopefully, you have learned many new travel budget tips and now have lots of ideas about how to travel the world on a low budget. Now, let's look at some recommendations for connecting with a community of like-minded nomads.



6

# Tapping Into the Digital Nomad Community

The background features a gradient from dark teal at the top to a warm orange at the bottom. Silhouettes of palm trees and a large, dark leaf are scattered across the scene, creating a tropical atmosphere.

Life on the road is glorious. But anyone who lives the lifestyle can tell you that one of the biggest obstacles is maintaining a digital nomad community – or any community for that matter.

Hopping around from place to place comes with its own trade-offs. You get to explore the far corners of the world, **but it can sure get lonely.**

Some digital nomads even start to feel a bit jaded after a while.

When it comes to your social life, it can feel like you're having the same introductory 'getting to know you' conversation over and over again. Then when you're starting to build truly meaningful connections, one of you is off to your next destination.

In a more significant, existential sense, it can start to feel like you're misunderstood, isolated, or directionless. Things can get overwhelming pretty quickly, especially when you're learning the ropes and finding your flow.

And on top of that, you might encounter some obstacles and challenges that put a damper on your experience, like internet connectivity problems or trouble getting comfortable in certain new places.

**While these are very real struggles for digital nomads, you can manage them.**

It'll take conscious effort on your part, but you can tap into the online digital nomad community as one of the ways to build a support network, keep your head on straight, and ensure you're making friends along the way

In addition to the potential for good company, the digital nomad community is also **a wealth of collective knowledge and wisdom.** You can ask questions, read about other nomads' experiences, and get some great hacks, tips, ideas, and inspiration.

Franklin Hatchett of [eCom Elites](#) is all about that life. He's a connected digital nomad entrepreneur who sees professional communities as a gateway to opportunity.



**Franklin Hatchett,**  
eCom Elites

“In the world of entrepreneurship, building your support network and putting yourself out there is **the most basic requirement.**”

Joining relevant communities can open your gates to **a whole new world of valuable connections.** Build the right relationships, and you'll avoid some major roadblocks ahead by receiving advice on what direction to take.

In addition, communities provide you with access to an entire segment of people who might potentially be interested in the product or service you sell. They can also put you in touch with their contacts who would require your offerings.

**More leads, revenue, and profits are often a hidden benefit** of being an active member of a professional community.”

In this chapter, we'll look at various nomad networks and resources like:

- Digital nomad websites and blogs
- Apps for the digital nomad community
- Digital nomad groups and forums
- Coworking and digital nomad co-living spaces

Let's do this.

# Digital nomad websites and blogs

## [Nomad List](#)

We mentioned this resource in [Chapter 4](#)'s discussion of choosing your first digital nomad destinations, but it's worth a little extra love because it's such a great resource.

It's easy to tell that this website is by nomads, for nomads. It's a comprehensive guide for most of the things you need to know when work and travel is your thing.

The site ranks top cities based on 'Nomad Scores,' showing all kinds of helpful information, from cost and quality of life info all the way down to which power plug adapters you'll need.

The screenshot shows the Nomad List website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Find your place" and a search icon. To the right of the search bar are navigation links: "Chat", "Trips", "Hire Remotely", "Remote Jobs", "Log In", and a red "Join" button. Below the search bar is a red "Add Filters" button. To the right of the filters are options for "Nomad Score" (with a dropdown arrow), "Sheet" (with a green icon), "Chart" (with a red icon), "Map" (with a green globe icon), and "3D" (with a brown icon). The main content area displays a grid of city cards, each with a rank number, a city name, a country, an internet speed icon and value, a weather icon, a "FEELS LIKE" temperature, an AQI value, and a monthly cost. The cards are as follows:

Rank	City	Country	Internet Speed	FEELS LIKE	AQI	Monthly Cost
1	Canggu Bali	Indonesia	20 Mbps	32°	25	\$1,009 / mo
2	Bangkok	Thailand	24 Mbps	36°	56	\$1,442 / mo
3	Seoul	South Korea	21 Mbps	17°	72	\$2,458 / mo
4	Prague	Czechia	26 Mbps	8°	23	\$2,046 / mo
5	Taipei	Taiwan	20 Mbps	23°	51	\$1,752 / mo
6	Medellín	Colombia	7 Mbps	23°	38	\$1,214 / mo
7	Lisbon	Portugal	21 Mbps	21°	35	\$2,080 / mo
8	Ho Chi Minh City	Vietnam	9 Mbps	-	-	-
9	Buenos Aires	Argentina	8 Mbps	-	-	-
10	Chiang Mai	Thailand	20 Mbps	-	-	-

Below the grid, there are two promotional banners. The first one says "The world's first insurance made for nomads, by nomads. Get global travel medical for \$37 per month" with a red "Get Insured" button. The second one says "Automatic (creator of WordPress.com) is hiring remote workers: marketing, g" with a red button.

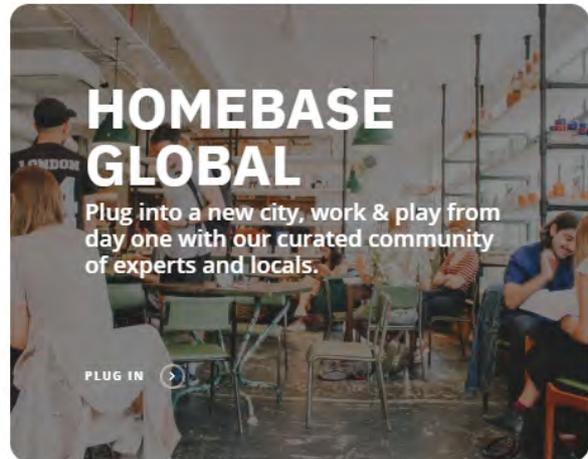
If you decide to join this digital nomad community for \$149 per year, you'll have access to cool features like chatting with other nomads and building your own personalized trips.

**Even if you don't want to fork over a membership fee, it still gives you some fantastic information for free.**

## Web Work Travel

Web Work Travel focuses on creating something of a luxury nomad experience. It's not so much for the cheap backpacker's life – this brand is more focused on young entrepreneurs who are looking to grow professionally while having fun and meeting like-minded people.

It's a well-rounded offering: a magazine and travel guides, as well as partnerships with cool education, coworking, and digital nomad meetup events like [Nomad Cruise](#) and [Homebase Global](#).

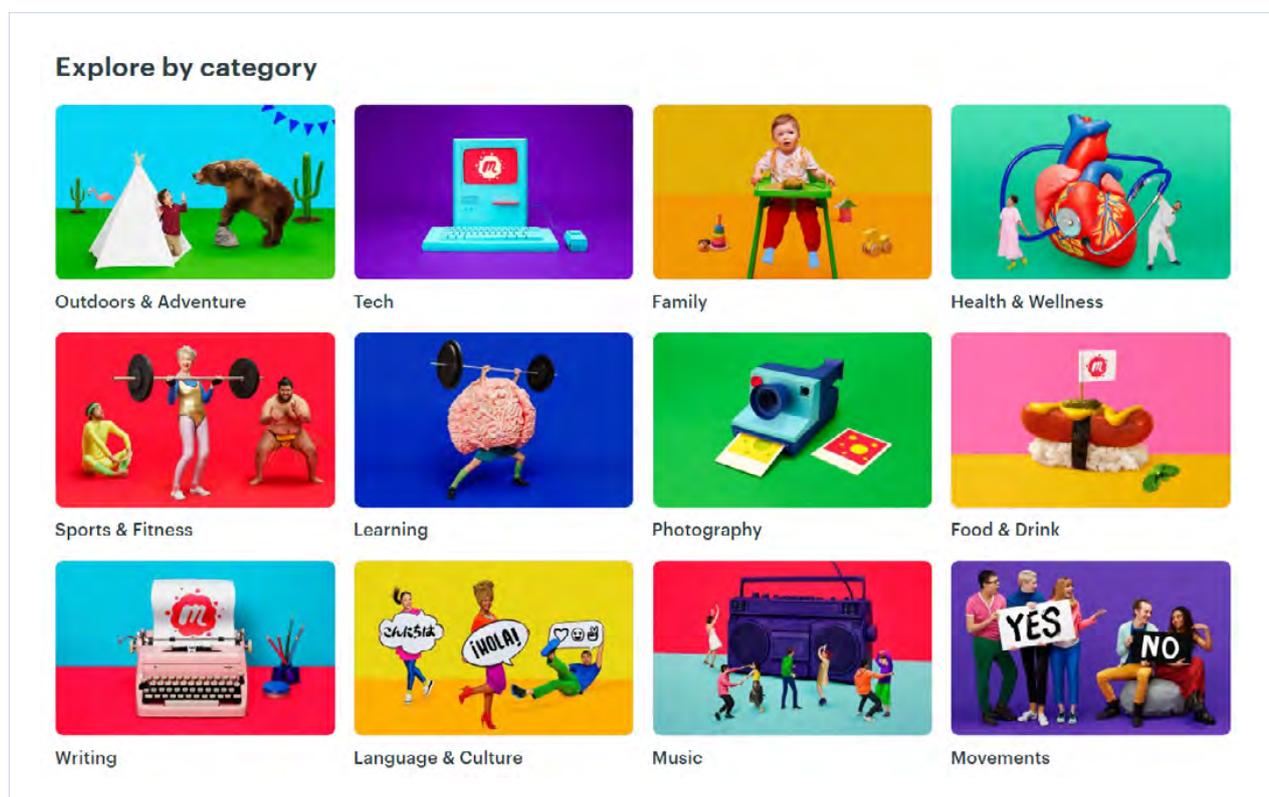


They also have a Facebook group called [Global Digital Nomad Network](#), which is a digital nomad community where you can find support, mentorship, remote job openings, and more.

## Meetup

While this isn't a nomad-specific website, it's an awesome way to meet people near you who share similar interests. There are two dozen categories to choose from, with plenty of travel and networking options around the world – just click through and see if there are any related meetups taking place in your current or upcoming destinations.

**If you're seeing a lackluster assortment, you can always become a group organizer and create your own digital nomad meetups and nomad networks.**



## Digital nomad blogs

Here's a big juicy list of a few of the top digital nomad blogs in 2019.

**[Nomadic Matt](#)**: Matt's blog is chock full of travel tips and stories. He even hosts his own [forums](#) and a [media school](#) with courses on various remote skills.

**[Expert Vagabond](#)**: Join (another) Matt, a photographer who shares tips and blogs his way through adventures all around the world.

**[Digital Nomad Girls](#)**: A digital nomad blog for women, by women. They even host retreats for female nomads to link up and share inspiration. Check out their [Facebook group](#) too.

**[BucketListly](#)**: Not only does Pete have an informative and interesting blog, but he also makes beautiful videos of his travels.

**[Digital Nomad Wannabe](#)**: Not your average digital nomad blog – it's run by a woman who's living the nomad life with her husband and three kids.

**[I Am Aileen](#)**: When she was 21, Aileen quit her corporate job and left the Philippines to explore the world. Now she's sharing and teaching others.

**[Nomad Capitalist](#)**: This fantastic blog is all about helping nomads lower their taxes, growth their wealth, and become global citizens.

**[Stingy Nomads](#)**: The name says it all – they're living an adventurous lifestyle, with specialties in scuba diving and hiking, and they're doing it on the cheap.

**[Digital Nomad Empire](#)**: A blog dedicated to teaching you the right skills and knowledge to become location independent.

**[Location Rebel](#)**: In addition to the blog, you'll find a six-part course on how to build the lifestyle you've been daydreaming about from your desk job.

**[Legal Nomads](#)**: Jodi Ettenberg used to be a lawyer, but now she's dedicated to telling stories through food and travel.

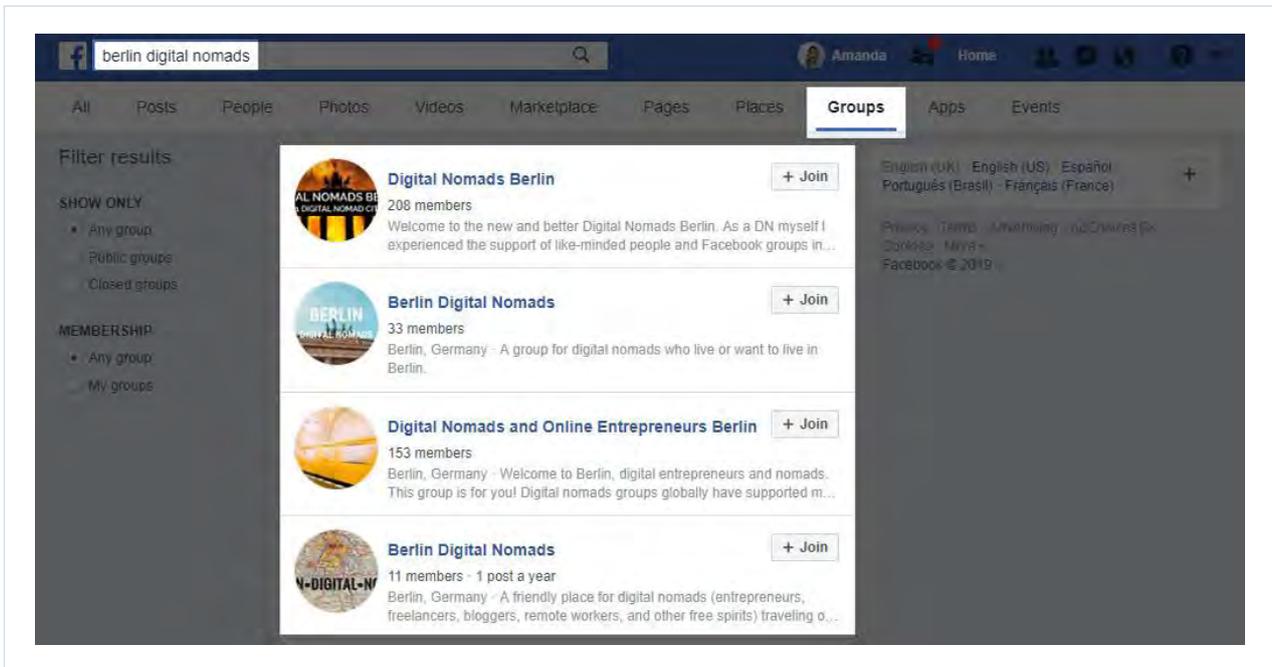
**[Making it Anywhere](#)**: Nomadic couple Mish and Rob refused to accept what's 'normal,' and they're showing their readers how to do it too.

## Digital nomad groups and apps

### Facebook groups

Facebook groups are incredibly handy, because you can find some sort of resource for virtually any city. To start, just log into your Facebook account and type '[city name] digital nomads.' In the top menu bar, you can narrow down your categories, like looking through posts, videos, pages, groups, or events related to the search.

If you click the 'Groups' tab, you can become members of those communities if they look valuable.



You can try other city-based searches too, like:

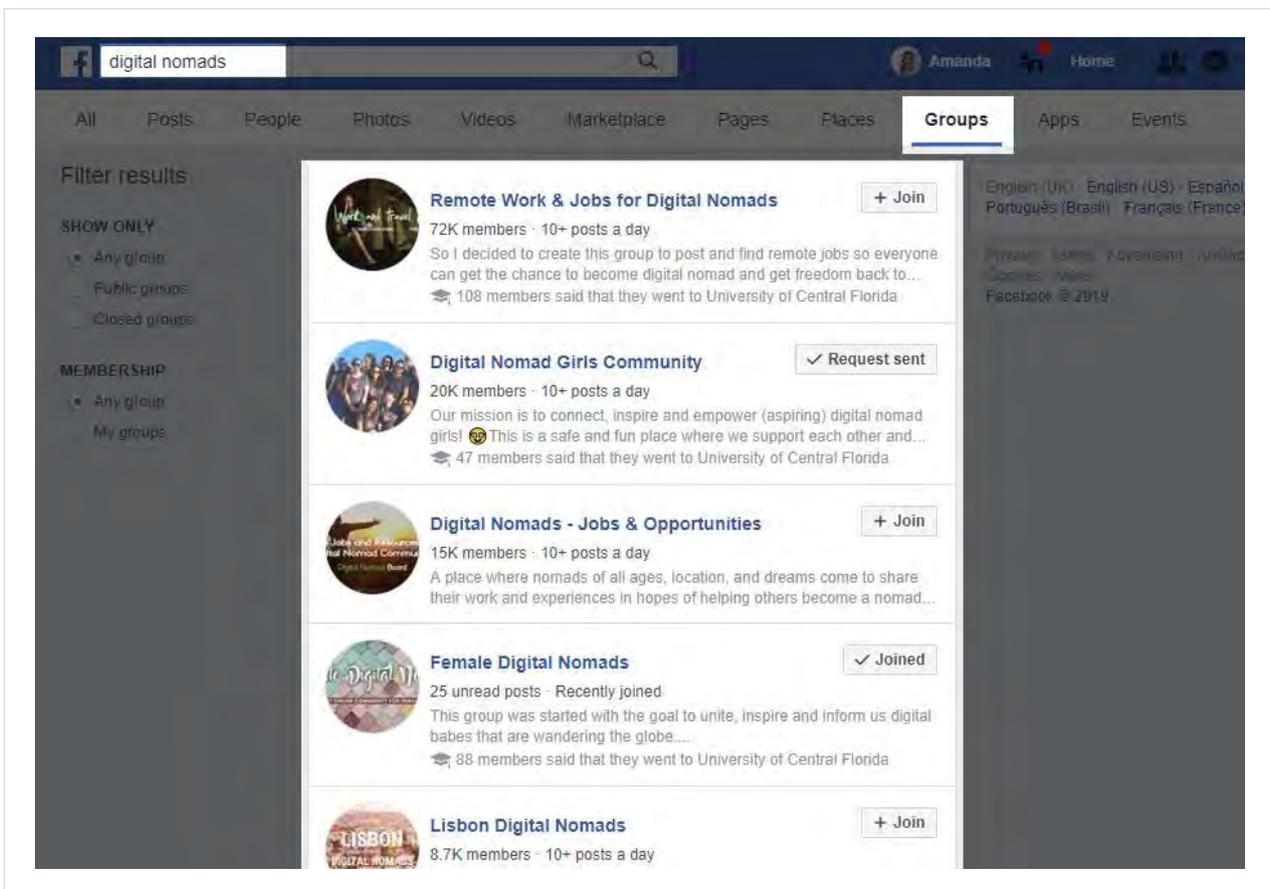
- [city name] expats
- [city name] travelers
- [city name] backpackers

Or you can look for more generalized groups. Try broad searches like:

- Digital nomads
- Remote workers
- Expats
- Backpackers

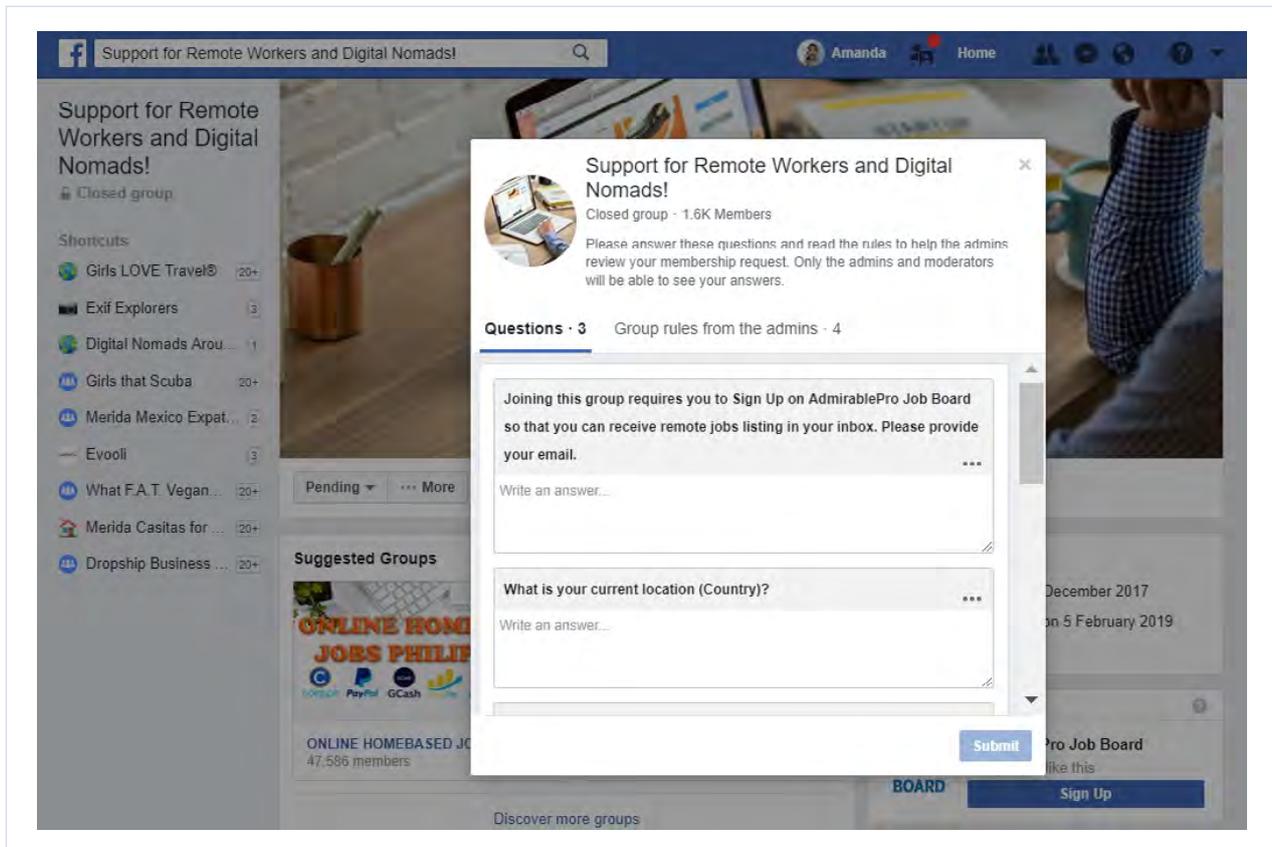
As you skim through your options, you'll find all kinds of specialties, like female-only or remote work job posting groups.

Of course, if you're looking for a unique specialty, just type it into your search bar and see where the mystical Book of Faces takes you.



Keep in mind that if it's a closed group, which is quite common, you'll likely need to answer a few questions and wait for the page's admins to accept your request to join. This is usually pretty speedy, but can take up to a week in some cases.

**So it's best to do this in advance instead of waiting until you're down to the wire.**



Here are a few of the top digital nomad groups on Facebook to get you started.

**Workationing**: This Facebook group supports the blog and podcast started by two best friends who ditched their possessions in a storage unit and set off for their new life.

**Digital Nomad Entrepreneurs**: This growing digital nomad network will soon be hosting events and meetings for its members to connect and build relationships.

**Digital Nomads Around the World**: A community of more than 100,000 people who share tips and stories, ask for advice on their current or upcoming travels, and connect with available remote jobs.

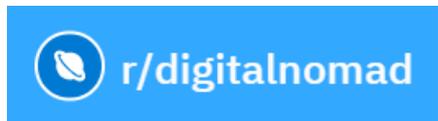
**[Remote Work & Jobs for Digital Nomads](#)**: This group focuses on connecting aspiring and current digital nomads with remote work opportunities. You can upload your resume or post your own job.

**[Digital Nomad Jobs](#)**: Remote Job Opportunities: Another group focused on helping nomads and future nomads find good gigs and positions that match their skill sets.

And here are some of the most popular location-specific digital nomad groups:

- **[Digital Nomads Medellín](#)**
- **[Budapest Digital Nomads](#)**
- **[Digital Nomads Bali](#)**
- **[Chiang Mai Digital Nomads](#)**
- **[Tarifa Digital Nomads](#)**
- **[Digital Nomads Spain](#)**
- **[Digital Nomads Cancun](#)**

## Reddit digital nomad group



The subreddit [r/digitalnomad](#) has more than 400,000 subscribers around the world, some of whom are already nomadding and others who are daydreaming or planning their transition.

**You'll find all kinds of user-generated content, from laptop recommendations to financial advice to stories about making friends in strange places.**

To start, check out their handy '[Digital Nomad Newbie Survival Kit](#)' post, which has a **big list of FAQs** that beginners are often asking.

## Digital nomad apps

Here are a few cool apps to help you make friends and organize digital nomad meetups while you're on the road.

**[Backpackr](#):** As the name implies, this app is made for connecting backpackers so they can have a buddy while they do what they love in new places.

**[Find a Nomad](#):** Find other nomads, discover where they're off to next, and meet up with them if your paths align.

**Tinder**: You've probably heard of this massively popular dating app. What you may not know is that it's a 100% viable way to make some pals, and it's used from people all over the world.

**Bumble**: Similar to Tinder in that it's intended for dating, but it gives more power to women. Once a match is made, only females can send the first message. Bumble also offers a 'BFF' feature, which lets others know you're not there for dating.

**Party With**: Want to explore the nightlife of a new city? Link up with some locals or fellow travelers to have a few drinks, go dancing, or just see where the night takes you.

**Eat With**: Eating is one of the most social activities we do as humans. This app lets you meet with others for dinner parties, food tours, cooking classes, and supper clubs.

**Nomad Projects**: A clever app that helps team up nomads looking for a side project. Find a partner for your awesome new idea or join a mastermind to bring theirs to life.

**Date a Nomad**: Looking for love on the road? Don't compromise your desire to travel by dating in one place. Find someone who's just as hungry for adventure.

## Coworking and co-living spaces

As we discussed briefly in [Chapter 4](#), coworking spaces can be a real life-saver. They're especially handy in cities with less developed infrastructure, where the internet – or the power! – is more likely to cut out unexpectedly.

### IMPORTANT NOTE

**Keep in mind that there is such a thing as a coworking space with slow or choppy internet. This can be a real bummer, but you have to be prepared for this possibility when you go to a less-developed city.**

Outside of these connectivity issues, coworking spaces can be a wonderful place to connect with the digital nomad community and meet local entrepreneurs.

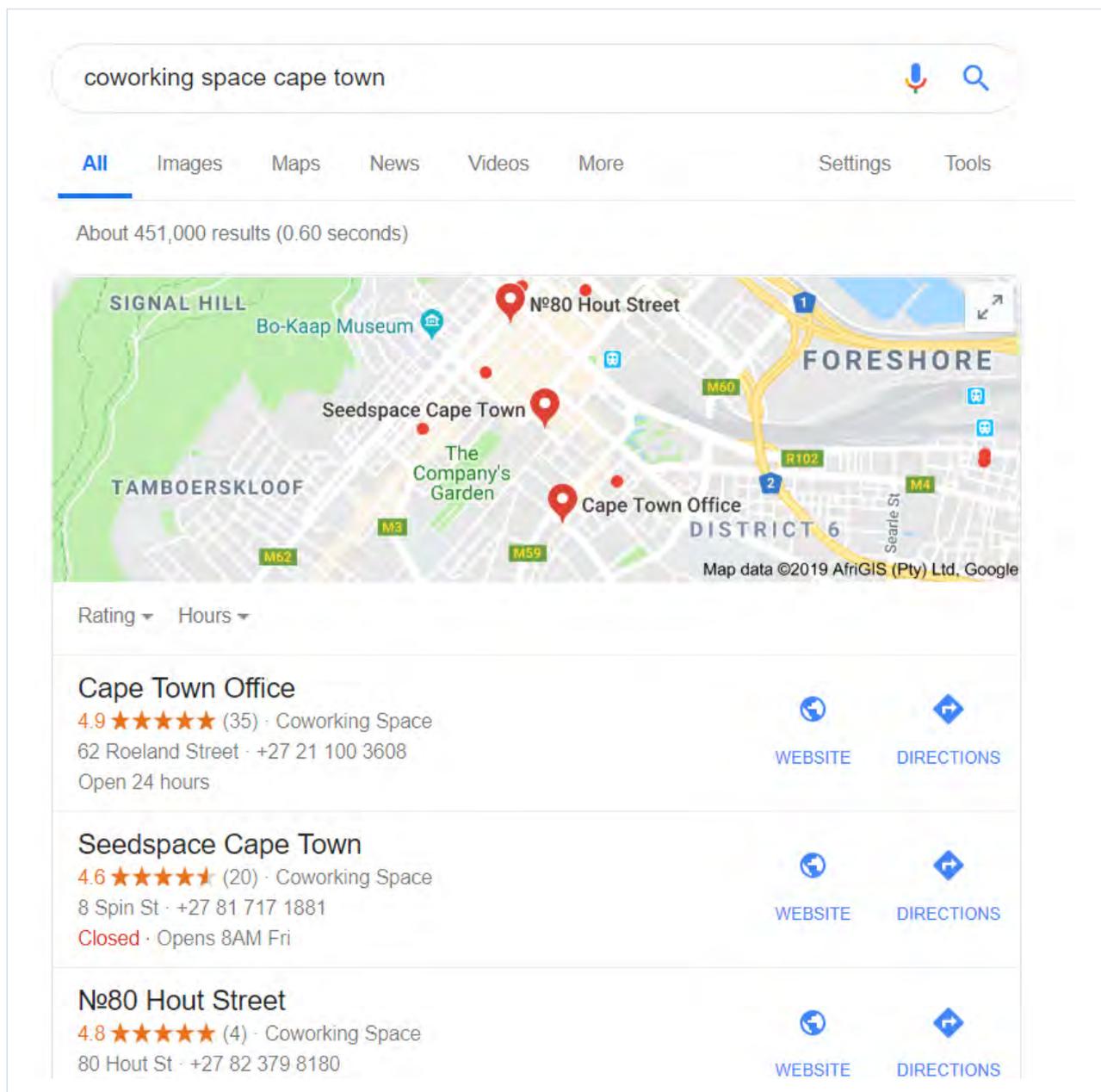
**They can also help you to maintain productivity so you're not slouching around on the couch all day.**

These spaces are usually situated to resemble open office spaces, with loads of desks and chairs for you to work comfortably, as well as more relaxed areas to lounge and chat. Many coworking spaces offer coffee and tea, as well as a cafe for you to get a snack or meal during your work breaks.

You might also be able to rent your own desk and chair, or a private room to make phone calls or host a meeting, if you so desire.

The best way to find a coworking space is a good ol' Google search, like:

- Coworking space [city name]
- Coworking [city name]
- Coworking space near me



**There are a handful of international coworking companies that have spaces all over the world, but a Google search is a good way to make sure you're not overlooking the smaller local options for each city.**

If you have the opportunity, check out [WeWork](#), which many consider to be the global pioneer of coworking spaces. While there are many names growing quickly, they still haven't managed to keep up with WeWork.

As of March 2019, the company has [620 locations](#) in 103 cities and more than 30 countries, including:

- More than 30 in the U.S.
- Mexico
- China
- Argentina
- Indonesia
- Brazil
- Colombia
- Australia
- Israel
- Spain
- Japan
- Germany
- Vietnam
- Peru
- South Korea
- And more!

In every WeWork location, you'll find a lot of cool amenities to feel more comfortable and catered to, like private phone booths, 24/7 hours, office supplies, and bike storage. You'll even get swanky perks like micro-roasted coffee, fresh fruit water, and craft beers for when it's time to power down for the day.

### Included Amenities

You focus on growing your business, we take care of the rest.



Super-fast internet



Micro-roasted coffee



Daily cleaning



24/7 building access



Business-class printers



Front desk service



Craft on draft



Professional & social events



Unique common areas



Private phone booths



Fresh fruit water



Mail & package handling



Bike storage



Community managers



Office supplies



Global network

## Co-living spaces

A growing number of coworking spaces also offer accommodation with other visitors, commonly called ‘co-living.’ These places tend to fill up with like-minded travelers who are looking for adventure while staying serious about their careers. For many digital nomads, co-living spaces offer an opportunity to connect to the digital nomad community.

Some digital nomad programs even offer full packages that handle everything for you.

For example, the ‘landing package’ from [Hubud](#) in Bali includes:

- Free pickup from the airport
- A private orientation to get to know the place and ask all your questions
- A ‘welcome kit’ with some goodies for your first few days in your new home
- A SIM card with prepaid internet
- A beautiful private or shared apartment
- Unlimited access to the coworking space



Your home away from home



Personal orientation with the team



Unlimited membership at Hubud



An instant tribe

If you’re a little hesitant to plunge into a new country all by yourself, or if you’re interested in being pampered, one of these digital nomad co-living programs might be right up your alley.

# Plug in and branch out

There you have it.

Hopefully, you're feeling inspired, informed, and motivated to check off all the boxes you need to take the plunge into a digital nomad lifestyle.

Throughout this book, I've discussed:

- A definition of digital nomad, some of the major pros and cons of the lifestyle, and how to know if you're a good fit
- How to snag a digital nomad job that fits your skills and interests, including potential online businesses and freelancing gigs
- A few tips for how to become a digital nomad and prepare yourself for the switch
- How to do research to pick your first destinations, including some of the top digital nomad cities around the world
- Tips for getting your finances in order and learning how to travel on a budget
- Some global resources and tools to help you tap into the digital nomad community

You might be brimming with so much excitement you can barely sit still. Or you might feel a pit of fear and apprehension in your stomach every time you think of such a drastic change.

Either way, the only direction to move is forward.

And the only time to do it is now.

**Keep your fire burning by writing down three steps you're going to take this week to work toward your new life of freedom and badass Instagram photos.**

And if you're feeling stuck, dig into all the nomad resources I've discussed, or drop us a line for support.



 Oberlo

