

Where to be born in 1988

None of us has a say in where he is born, but we can do something about it for our children. To help you decide the best place to bring junior squawking into the world in 1988, the Economist Intelligence Unit has compiled the "Where-to-be-born" index. The index grades 50 countries around the world according to 11 economic and socio-political criteria. Points for each criterion were allocated using multi-variable attribute theory to assign weights and pointscales. Fine for the quantifiable (like inflation, literacy and GDP) but we thought it would be fun, too to introduce some more unusual and subjective measures. Hence the "philistine factor" (for cultural poverty) and the "yawn index" (the degree to which, despite all its many virtues, a country may be irredeemably boring). These two scales have to be read topsy-turvy: high scores mean that a country is very OK indeed. So, naturally, does a high readership of *The Economist* (in this case, the actual figure is shown before the weighting).

In addition we have awarded certain countries bonus points for things that don't always get taken into account:

- Norway, New Zealand and Canada (+2) for scenic attractions.

- Japan, Sweden and East Germany (+2) for having most newspapers read per capita.

- Canada (+3) for having the most desirable passport. Canadians need no visa to visit most western countries, enjoy priority in obtaining work permits in Commonwealth countries and in the United States, are unlikely targets for anti-western terrorists and are not required by their government to perform military service.

- Hongkong (+5) for offering the most diverse cuisine, France, Italy and Japan (+2) for local culinary delights and Switzerland and Belgium (+1) for the best chocolate..... But (sorry)

- Hongkong (-10) for its political and economic uncertainties.

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Sources: The Economist Intelligence Unit; Business International surveys; BI Forecasting Services; BI Cost of Living; The Economist Publications; World in Figures, World Human Rights Guide.

UTOPIA

		Economics					Socio-political								
Country		GDP/capita	GDP growth (1988 forecast)		Inflation (1988 forecast)	Cost of living	Human rights	Life expectancy	Literacy	% of population in higher education	Economist readers per million capita	Philistine factor	Yawn index	Bonus points	Total
1	USA	11	3	10	6	9	10	10	11	451.2	4	12	7	-	9
2	FRANCE	10	2	11	4	9	10	10	5	159.3	3	12	7	+2	8
3	W. GERMANY	11	2	11	4	10	9	10	6	121.0	3	7	2	-	8
4	ITALY	9	3	9	4	9	9	9	5	88.8	2	12	11	+2	8
5	CANADA	10	3	10	7	10	10	10	9	813.4	5	3	1	+5	8
6	JAPAN	11	3	11	1	9	10	10	6	27.5	1	8	8	+4	8
7	HONGKONG	7	8	9	7	8	10	8	3	971.7	5	5	12	-5	7
7	UK	8	2	10	6	9	9	10	4	1482.0	5	9	5	-	7
9	SWEDEN	11	2	10	5	10	10	10	8	264.5	3	3	2	+2	7
10	NETHERLANDS	9	2	11	5	10	10	10	6	300.8	4	5	2	-	7
10	S. KOREA	6	7	10	7	6	8	9	5	18.7	1	6	9	-	7
12	AUSTRIA	10	2	11	3	10	9	10	5	157.0	2	8	3	-	7
13	NORWAY	9	2	11	5	10	10	10	6	500.6	4	5	2	+2	7
13	SWITZERLAND	12	2	11	3	10	10	10	4	684.4	5	2	2	+1	7
15	BELGIUM	9	2	11	5	10	9	10	6	22.8	4	2	1	+1	7
15	IRELAND	7	2	10	4	9	9	10	4	88.8	5	7	3	-	7
15	SPAIN	7	3	9	6	9	9	9	5	92.1	2	7	4	-	7
18	AUSTRALIA	8	2	9	8	9	9	10	5	412.0	4	2	3	-	6
18	FINLAND	10	3	10	3	10	9	10	6	222.8	3	2	3	-	6
18	NEW ZEALAND	8	1	7	8	10	9	10	6	752.8	4	2	2	+2	6
21	ARGENTINA	6	2	2	9	9	9	9	6	18.5	1	6	9	-	6
21	USSR	6	4	10	7	2	8	10	4	0.9	0	7	10	-	6
23	POLAND	5	3	6	10	4	9	10	3	5.2	1	7	9	-	6
24	DENMARK	11	0	10	3	10	10	10	6	332.0	4	1	1	-	6
24	HUNGARY	6	1	8	10	6	9	10	3	37.4	1	7	5	-	6
24	PHILIPPINES	2	4	10	9	4	7	8	6	11.5	1	5	10	-	6
27	GREECE	6	1	7	7	9	9	8	3	184.6	3	7	5	-	6
27	INDIA	1	5	9	10	6	8	4	2	3.5	1	7	12	-	6
27	MEXICO	5	5	1	11	6	8	8	3	8.8	1	6	12	-	6
30	BRAZIL	5	5	1	10	7	7	8	2	10.9	1	6	12	-	6
30	ISRAEL	7	4	7	6	8	9	9	7	249.0	3	2	4	-	6
32	CHINA	1	6	9	11	2	6	7	0	0.4	0	7	12	-	6
32	PORTUGAL	6	3	9	7	9	9	7	2	146.5	3	5	3	-	6
32	UAE	10	2	11	7	9	10	5	2	960.8	5	1	1	-	6
32	VENEZUELA	6	2	2	9	9	9	9	6	17.9	1	6	9	-	6
36	E. GERMANY	7	3	11	4	3	9	10	6	0.6	0	5	2	+2	6
36	SINGAPORE	7	7	10	7	6	8	9	5	1712.0	1	1	0	-	6
38	MALAYSIA	5	4	11	10	5	8	6	1	147.0	3	2	6	-	6
39	YUGOSLAVIA	6	1	2	9	5	9	9	4	12.7	1	5	6	-	6
40	S. AFRICA	6	4	7	9	2	7	8	1	68.8	2	2	8	-	6
41	TURKEY	4	6	4	9	4	7	7	2	16.8	1	5	5	-	6
42	INDONESIA	2	5	9	10	4	4	6	1	6.6	1	5	6	-	6
43	PAKISTAN	2	6	9	10	3	5	2	0	15.1	1	6	8	-	6
44	EGYPT	4	4	4	5	6	5	4	4	19.7	1	6	6	-	6
45	LIBYA	7	3	8	6	2	5	4	2	4.1	1	0	9	-	6
46	S. ARABIA	6	3	12	7	3	5	3	2	258.7	3	1	1	-	6
47	NIGERIA	3	4	7	10	5	4	3	1	8.0	1	1	4	-	6
48	IRAN	6	0	8	2	0	7	4	2	7.1	1	0	9	-	6
48	IRAQ	6	0	4	8	2	5	2	2	1.2	1	0	9	-	6
48	ZIMBABWE	3	0	7	10	5	5	7	1	98.1	2	1	5	-	6