

Update Happiness in Nations: now 144 nations 2000-2008

[World Database of Happiness](#) has updated its list of happiness in nations. This latest list counts 144 nations over the years 2000-2008; the foregoing list over the years 2000-2005 covered only 95 nations. This list is based on responses to comparable questions about life-satisfaction in 234 general population surveys. When more than one survey was available in a country, the average score is used.

Four ranks are computed on the basis of these findings:

Average happiness

The level of happiness in a country is reflected in the mean rating on the 0 to 10 happiness scale used here. Average happiness varies between 8,5 in Iceland (survey before the economic recession) to 3,2 in Tanzania. In the top-five figure West-European nations next to Latin American nations. At the bottom are African nations. The USA is in the sub-top with an average of 7.0. The full report is available at:

http://www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap_nat/findingreports/RankReport2009-1c.htm

Happy Life Years

The degree to which people live long and happy in a country is measured using an index of 'Happy Life Years' (HLY). The highest score is observed in Iceland where the average citizen lives 69 years happily and the lowest in Zimbabwe where the number is only 13. Though Latin Americans tend to be quite happy, they do not live so long and as a result the number of happy life years varies between 60 and 50 in that part of the world. The USA fits that pattern with 55 happy life years. The full rank report on this matter is available at:

http://www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap_nat/findingreports/RankReport2009-2c.htm

Inequality of Happiness

Difference in happiness across citizens in a country is measured using the standard deviation of responses on the 0 to 10 happiness scale. Standard-deviations vary between 1,5 in the Netherlands to 3,6 in Tanzania. Inequality is smallest in Western nations, among which the USA. Inequality is higher in most Latin American nations and in African countries. The full rank report is available at:

http://www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap_nat/findingreports/RankReport2009-3b.htm

Inequality-Adjusted Happiness

The degree to which nations combine a high level of happiness with low inequality is reflected in an index of Inequality-Adjusted Happiness (IAH). Scores on this index range from 79 in Iceland to 20 in Tanzania. Several Latin American nations rank high on this list, e.g. Colombia with a score of 73. The USA is in the top quarter with a score of 63. The full rank report is available at:

http://www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap_nat/findingreports/RankReport2009-4a.htm

More detail about these measures of happiness and their determinants is found in [Measures of Gross National Happiness](#)

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