Travel Difficulty Index: My Tiered List for English Only Americans

May 08, 2023 • spencerburleigh.com/travel-areas

This is a list of the difficulty I perceive it to be to travel (as an English speaking American) to different parts of the world that I have been to or am familiar with.

These rankings are probably most useful if you haven't done much international travel. There are a lot of pretty easy-to-visit places that are still very interesting, so you should probably start there. I wouldn't advise going more than one level higher than you've been before unless you're visiting a local friend.

Geopolitics are dynamic so you should always check the latest news and do your own research. I visited these places at different times than you will and have different travel experiences. The US [a], UK [b], and Australian [c] governments all produce pretty comprehensive guides. If you are based in the US, I also recommend enrolling Geopolitics are dynamic so you should always check the latest news and do your own research. I visited these places at different times than you will and have different travel experiences. The US, UK, and Australian governments all produce pretty

comprehensive guides. If you are based in the US, I also recommend enrolling in STEP [d] (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program).

Updated February 2026

I haven't been here but have heard from friends = *

0: Incredibly safe land of English speakers

- Bermuda*
- New Zealand*
- Singapore

1: Easier to navigate or safer than the US

- Australia
- Canada
- Denmark
- Finland
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Maldives
- Netherlands
- Norway*
- Qatar
- Sweden*
- Switzerland

2: As easy to navigate / as safe as the US

- Austria
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- Kuwait
- Oman*
- Taiwan
- UAE (Dubai, Abu Dhabi)

- UK
- Uruguay*
- US

3: Slightly more difficult than the US

These places often have a larger language gap, petty crime, infrastructure challenges, or a dynamic geopolitical / security situation.

- Argentina
- Baltic States* (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania)
- Belgium
- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Czechia
- France
- Georgia*
- Hungary
- Israel
- Italy
- Japan
- Malaysia
- Namibia*
- Panama*
- Poland
- Portugal
- Philippines
- Saudi Arabia
- Slovakia
- Spain
- Thailand
- Vietnam

4: Substantial challenge

You should spend a lot of time researching these places. They often have security concerns in some parts you should learn about and avoid, serious language gaps, or technical challenges (Google Maps not working, payments via a mobile app foreigners can't use, etc).

- Albania
- Botswana*
- Brazil
- Bulgaria*
- Chile*
- Colombia*
- Croatia*
- Ecuador*
- Egypt*
- Georgia*
- Greece*
- Indonesia*
- Jordan*
- Kenya
- Mexico (CDMX and possibly Tulum / Cancun are a 3 – many places are a 5. Check the US State Department [e])
- Morocco*
- North Macedonia
- Peru*
- Puerto Rico
- Romania
- Rwanda*
- South Korea (totally different apps)
- Tanzania*
- Turkey

5: Serious obstacles, research and make a detailed plan

These countries can be extremely dangerous, have very low or no English speakers (find a friend who speaks or hire a guide), technical limitations (firewall, entirely different apps), or suffer from governmental challenges that adversely affect foreigners.

- Belarus
- Brazil
- China
- Dominican Republic* (Americans love to visit but it's actually quite dangerous!)
- Ethiopia*
- India
- Lebanon*
- Nicaragua*
- Madagascar*
- Russia*
- Serbia*
- South Africa*
- Ukraine

Links

a. travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html
b. gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice
c. dfat.gov.au/geo/countries-economies-and-regions
d. step.state.gov
e. travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/mexico-travel-advisory.html

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