

U.S. falls out of top 20 in 'world's happiest countries' list

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For the first time, the United States has fallen out of the top 20 spots on the annual world's happiest nations [list](#).

Americans are now No. 23, far behind the top five countries—Finland (No. 1), Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Israel.

"The United States of America (23rd) has fallen out of the top 20 for the first time since the World Happiness Report (WHP) was first published in 2012, driven by a large drop in the well-being of Americans under 30," the World Happiness Report said in a news release. The U.S. placed 15th in [last year's rankings](#).

This decline may not come as a surprise to many Americans, with U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy [citing](#) rising levels of anxiety and [mental health issues](#) among the young as a "devastating" crisis as far back as 2021.

The new global happiness tally was issued to coincide with the United Nations' International Day of Happiness. It's based on citizens' responses from more than 140 nations and is "powered by data from the Gallup World Poll and analyzed by some of the world's leading well-being scientists," the WHP explained.

Rounding out the top 10 countries on the list, beginning with No. 6, are The Netherlands, Norway, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Australia. Canada placed 15th and the United Kingdom, No. 20.

At the bottom of the 143-nation list: Afghanistan.

For the first time, the survey also attempted to assess [happiness levels](#) by age.

"In comparing generations, those born before 1965 are, on average, happier than those born since 1980," the WHP found. "Among Millennials, evaluation of one's own life drops with each year of age, while among Boomers life satisfaction increases with age."

There was variance between countries when it came to differences in generational happiness, however.

"We found some pretty striking results," said [John Helliwell](#), emeritus professor of economics at the Vancouver School of Economics at the University of British Columbia in Canada, and an editor of the World Happiness Report.

For example, happiness among the young (ages 15 to 24) has declined across North America, Western Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia since 2019, the report found.

But everywhere else, [younger people](#) are feeling better now than in years past.

"There is a great variety among countries in the relative happiness of the younger, older, and in-between populations," Helliwell said in the news release. "Hence the global happiness rankings are quite different for the young and the old, to an extent that has changed a lot over the last dozen years."

Lithuania is the happiest place to live if you're age 30 or under, the report found, while Denmark is the happiest spot for folks age 60 or older.

Some countries have seen big improvements in their levels of happiness. For example, Serbia has steadily risen 69 places up the rankings since 2013, to take the No. 37 spot in 2024. Bulgaria charted a similar

63-place rise, to rank No. 81 this year.

More information: Find out more about happiness at [UC Berkeley](#).

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