

The world's 10 happiest countries

October 11, 2013 by Michael Yardney

The UN has released its second annual [World Happiness Report](#), which takes stock of happiness and well-being to help guide public policy.

The report ranks countries based on six key factors that contribute to well-being, including GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, someone to count on, perceived freedom to make life choices, freedom from corruption, and generosity.

Denmark is the world's happiest country and Australia just scrapes in to the top 10 list at number ten. I know I'm biased but I expected us to rank higher.

According to the report, happiness helps people live longer, have more productive lives, earn higher wages, and be better citizens in general.

Despite the ongoing economic woes in Europe, Scandinavian countries ranked favourably highlighting the divide between the various countries in the Eurozone.

And despite the obvious happiness impacts of the financial crisis of 2007-08, the report suggests the world has become a slightly happier and more generous place over the past five years.

The top 10 countries are:

1. Denmark

Danish citizens enjoy the world's highest social mobility and a high level of income equality.

2. Norway

Norway is frequently recognised for its prosperity and quality of life.

3. Switzerland

Boasting the highest wealth per adult of any country, Switzerland is also home to many international organisations.

4. The Netherlands

An OECD survey in 2011 ranked the Netherlands, which has been dubbed the world's legal capital, as the happiest country.

5. Sweden

In 2013, The Economist declared Sweden the best-governed nation.

6. Canada

Canada ranks highly in international measurements of education, government transparency, civil liberties, quality of life, and economic freedom.

7. Finland

In 2010, Newsweek magazine named Finland the "best country in the world".

8. Austria

Austria lays claim to being one of the richest nations, as well as having a high standard of living.

9. Iceland

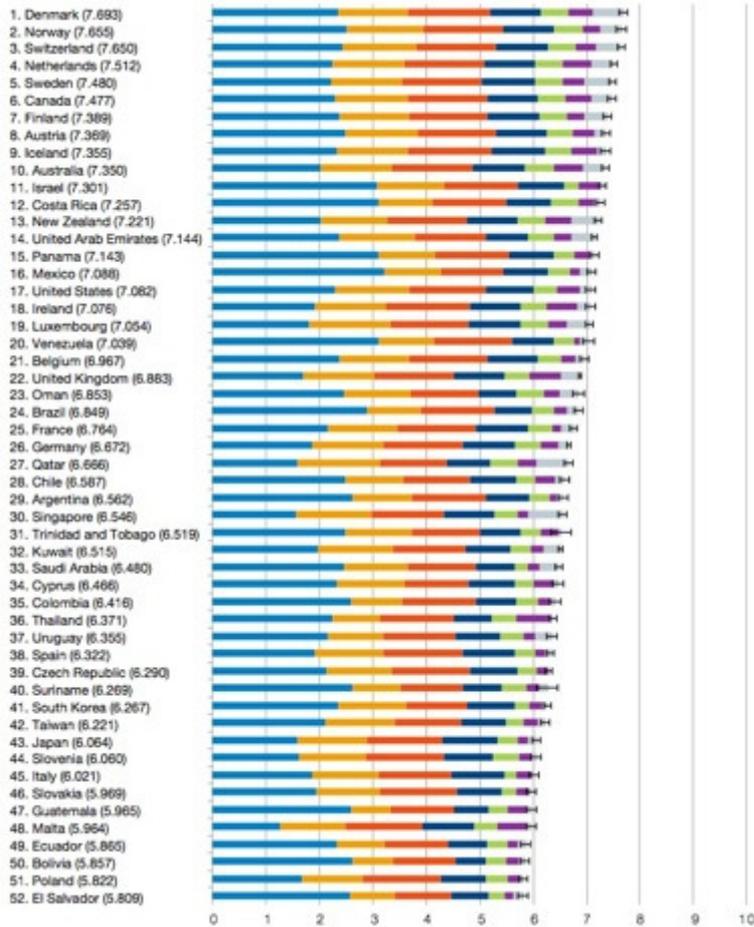
This one surprised me but apparently Iceland is considered politically and economically stable in spite of its ongoing recovery from the 2008 banking crisis.

10. Australia

What can I say? Australia is one of the world's best countries in terms of quality of life, health, education, economic freedom, and the protection of civil liberties and political rights. And it's citizens are amongst the wealthiest in the world.

Here's how the top 52 rank:

Figure 2.3: Ranking of Happiness: 2010-12 (Part 1)



Source: [World Happiness Report](#), and [Yahoo Finance](#)