



Cheat sheet for positive repatriations and return migrations

Repatriations and return migrations are very common but they are not talked about as much as moves abroad. Planning can help make returns positive and the themes below might help you to do this by thinking about what **changes** you might experience, what things will **stay the same** and what is **different** about returning compared to moving to a new place.

Change

Failing to plan for change is the biggest contributor to difficult repatriations. There are three parts to this:

- Changes to a home location. For example, you might not have seen the latest sitcom, paid the latest taxes or seen your friends and family while you have been away.
- Changes to people as a result of moving abroad and the effects of time. You have experienced new things and gained a new outlook; you have got older; and you may have romanticised/demonised 'home' from a distance.
- Changes as a result of moving, full stop. Moving home entails changes, regardless of location. This needs taking as seriously when returning as when moving abroad.

Continuity

There are many things that stay the same regardless of where you live and these things can help you manage the changes by providing some stability and familiarity. This applies when you move home or abroad. For example:

- The people you live with. Keeping up family activities like eating together can help the whole household adjust.
- Your favourite things like music, reading, sport and other hobbies.
- Memories of places you have been. Putting up a picture of where you were living before might make it seem a little closer to your new daily life.

Return

It is really important to be prepared for change but to also embrace what is still the same in your home country, both good and bad. For example:

- You will probably be nearer to friends and family you have known for a long time.
- You might be able to take up some of your favourite hobbies again.
- You already know a lot about the climate and standard of living.

Dr Madeleine Hatfield is a researcher, writer and editor. She did her PhD research on repatriation at Royal Holloway, University of London, sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK.

madeleine.e.hatfield@gmail.com - madeleinehatfield.com - [@maddyhatfield](https://www.instagram.com/maddyhatfield)