

What You Need To Know Before
You Buy Abroad In The Best
Retirement Counties!

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INTERNATIONAL PARADISE
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What You Need To Know Before You Buy Abroad In The Best Retirement Countries

There's so much to look forward to when you buy abroad! You can discover more of the world ... experience unexpected adventures ... get back to a simpler life. But let's face it: this is a life-changing decision and **you MUST be absolutely certain you know what you're getting into.**

At International Paradise, our mission is to offer all the assistance necessary to help you buy abroad ... **to find YOUR international paradise!** We are your ONE-STOP SHOP for education about the best places to live abroad, help with relocating overseas AND well-priced properties in countries that offer a wise investment.

What is best for you and your family? Likely many thoughts have been wondering through your mind ... thoughts such as:

- Will we like it there?
- Can we really do this on our current retirement?
- If I wanted to continue work, can I do that effectively from a Latin American country?
- What are the business benefits?
- If we get sick, can we get the care we need?
- How will we see loved ones back home?
- Will I (or how will I) be able to bring over my significant belongings?
- How do I set up banking to provide the greatest benefits, security and the ability to have access to my money in North America?

All of these are important considerations when weighing the decision to live abroad, because they concern the most precious aspects of our lives: FAMILY and SURVIVAL. At International Paradise, all of our clients deal with these very same questions and many more. So ... is relocating to Mexico or another Latin American country the right choice for you? And how do you know if you and your family will be successful living in one of these locales? **Let's first look at factors that motivate individuals to even consider relocating overseas.**

13 Incredible Reasons to Buy Abroad

1. **Beauty!** Barefoot on a pristine beach, fish taco in one hand, margarita in the other. Hiking through lush mountains with cascading waterfalls dropping at your feet. Winding through the

jungle to the sound of howler monkeys, as a flock of parrots sail by. The brilliance of color and the tender smell of the nearby orchid as it makes its way up the tree. All these scenes – and so many more – are part of everyday life in an international paradise.

2. **Weather.** Tired of the cold? Had it with the heat and dryness? One of the top reasons people retire to beautiful Latin America is the climate. You can even CHOOSE your ideal climate: maybe it's weather that really doesn't change much from beautiful spring-like days all year round. Maybe you'd like a warm humid seafront ... a cooler sea front ... gorgeous mountain vistas ... or the dry heat of desert. In some cases, you can live in one climate and be in another one within an hour.
3. **Cost of living.** One of the greatest advantages of our Latin American retirement countries is their low cost of living. Items such as food, prescriptions, utilities and alcohol can be purchased at a much cheaper price than in North America. Depending on the country, you can live very comfortably for between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per month – and that includes hiring domestic help! You can also live less expensively or more extravagantly, depending on your lifestyle and needs.
4. **Retirement benefits.** Some countries have extraordinary benefits for retirees, but all of our chosen countries have good retirement benefits. If you retire to Panama, for example, the Pensionado program is rated the best in the world. Substantial discounts (up to 50% off) are offered for public transportation, mortgage rates, doctor visits, utilities, restaurants and even airfare. Latin America respects and honors its seniors, and has many facilities to accommodate their changing needs. Family is important, and here you have the opportunity to establish relationships that allow you and your family to become a part of it.
5. **Taxes.** What are the tax laws in each of our countries? How do they work and what will you have to pay? In most cases, property taxes are very low. Property taxes range from just a few hundred dollars per year to not having ANY property tax for 20 years, depending on the house you buy. There are also tax benefits for businesses, retirees, capital gains and income. As in North America, a good tax advisor is essential to your planning process, especially when buying and selling real estate, and running or working in a business. In the United States, as a general rule, you can choose to take either a credit or a deduction for all qualified foreign taxes. The foreign tax credit is intended to relieve you of the double tax burden when your foreign source income is taxed by both the U.S. and the foreign country.
6. **Doing business.** Looking to start a new career or continue doing what you are doing, but just want to relocate it? As you tour different areas of Latin America through our “fly and buy” program, you will be amazed at the tremendous business opportunities. There can be great advantages to having a business in your retirement country, from simple income opportunities to tax advantages. But doing business may be challenging if you aren't familiar with the paperwork process and how long it will take, the support facilities for your new business, the benefits, and being connected with the right people.

7. **National concerns.** So you have concerns about what is happening in the United States, but are struggling with moving to a different country, even if only part-time. Knowing and understanding some major aspects of Latin American politics could be a help in understanding how well you will fit in and what life will be like. All cultures have their unique personalities that you need to learn and respect. All our International Paradises have warm, friendly and gracious people. We know you'll love getting to know them and their country!
8. **Getting back to a simpler life.** Quality of life is so important. Living abroad, your big plans for the afternoon may consist of a hammock nap in the cool shade, then a dip in the surf, followed by an evening of fresh seafood fine dining. Tomorrow? Maybe a shopping excursion to nearby boutiques. Or some golf, swimming, tennis, snorkeling, or just another lazy day on the beach. Or it may be earning an honest wage, without all the red tape, and being able to spend quality time with your family. Whatever the lifestyle you're in search of, you can achieve it in our best Latin American retirement countries.
9. **Investments.** Have you missed your opportunity to buy vacation property or retire in Latin America for cheap? Although it is true the expats that have already moved to these countries have driven up the prices, there are still some good deals to be found. However, with the baby boomer population and 10,000 people retiring a day for the next 19 years, these retirement countries will be increasingly popular – and prices will continue to go up. Not only does taking the opportunity now provide you with a nice investment, you reap all of the benefits discussed here in this report. And that could save you thousands every year.
10. **Asset protection.** Our perspective is not to focus on the “doom and gloom,” but to prepare a smart diversification strategy that provides many possibilities and an exciting new adventure. After all, don't the financial analysts tell us to not put all our eggs in one basket? Isn't it desirable to travel and have assets in other places and other countries? Why not look at it as what you were supposed to do anyway, with a side benefit of protecting what's valuable to you and getting a step closer to your dreams. If your goal is full or partial anonymity, it is possible to achieve that by selecting the right country and the setting up the right structure from the beginning.
11. **Sustainable living.** Have you ever dreamed of living completely off the land? Having all your food, from chickens to fruits and vegetables, be a part of it? Where you can choose to work the land, or contribute to the local economy and have capable workers provide fresh food every day for your enjoyment? Where either scenario is a fraction of the cost and the quality manifests in an explosion of flavor? People all over the world are living this everyday in Latin America.
12. **Culture.** From the everyday life of the people, to the art and music, to the historic ruins, you will find a culture that is rich and vibrant. Getting to know the past, present and future of these fascinating cultures will not only keep you fascinated, but will remind you of the spice of life and what truly is important.

13. **Adventure and leisure activities.** Imagine waking up every day, looking forward to yoga ... or a round of golf ... or diving next to a dolphin, whale or sea turtle. You decide what fun activity you want to do that day or what new sport you want to learn. Activities abound in our retirement countries, even if it is just popping down to the local school to read a book to the children or learning Spanish yourself. Adventure and leisure activities include:

- Golf
- Surfing
- Fishing
- Shopping
- Scuba diving
- Snorkeling
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Kayaking
- Boat rides
- Fiestas
- Massage
- Yoga
- Canopy tours (zip lines through the trees)

There are many other reasons to retire abroad. We can't cover all the reasons because you must evaluate what is important to you. At the end of this special report, we have included a tool that will allow you to examine all the reasons that are important to you, and also remind you of **important factors that you need to know before taking the LEAP into your new adventure!** These are considerations that most people don't even think about, yet are vitally important to final decision-making and ensuring your retirement transition is as successful as possible.

Important Considerations Before Relocating Overseas

International Paradise has taken the top questions and concerns our clients have asked over the years and condensed them into an effective tool to help jump-start a successful retirement plan. Let's get started!

“Is it safe?” One of the highlights, and a reason our best places to retire are quickly becoming a huge magnet for international investing, are the friendly people and constant feeling of security. Crime is practically non-existent, there is very little tourist bantering, and the people are some of the nicest and most helpful people you will ever meet.

“How do we get our relocation and retirement done correctly?” Hiring professionals that know their business and know how things work doesn't only save time, tons of aggravation and potential trouble, it can also save you a lot of money by making sure things get done correctly in the first place. You usually get what you pay for, as the saying goes.

“Do we have to pay officials to get things done?” Simply, no. Things can get accomplished. However, it can be culturally acceptable to pay for services or to get things expedited in some countries. This is probably a different mindset than what you're used to.

“How do I make sure I'm not getting taken advantage of?” It's funny how everyone has or knows the best attorney, tax advisor or domestic help. Often this is truly the case, but at other times it could be a scam to take your money. We've met many people along the way that thought they had the best ... until they were out a few thousand dollars! It turned out that the person that recommended “the best” lined their pocket a bit as well. Caution is the rule. Check with multiple references. Ask people that you have had successful experiences with whom they would recommend. Never pay for a job upfront. In some cases, you will have to make a deposit, or pay along the way, but the major balance should be paid upon completion of the project. Look at the work the professional in question has done for other people. We maintain a list of excellent professionals that we have worked with and have proven themselves to be reliable and creditable people.

“Is financing possible? How does financing work?” In Latin America, most buyers purchase residential real estate on a cash basis. Financing is done through some banks and finance companies offering loans to foreigners. In some cases, mortgage companies based in the United States offer long-term, fixed rate financing with as little as 20 to 30 percent down. There are also construction loans available. Construction loans use the land value as part of the value and down payment that can be applied to the construction loan. However, the initial purchase of the land is usually done with cash, money from the buyer's home equity loan on a foreign buyer's primary residence, or an IRA. Self-directed IRAs can be a great way to purchase land in Latin America.

“Do I need to speak Spanish?” We are amazed at how promotion companies lead folks to believe that most natives speak English, regardless of the location. The fact is many bankers, lawyers and professionals speak English, but the everyday person does not. If you truly want to get in and fit in, you really should learn Spanish. There are many benefits to speaking the language, including negotiating better deals or deals at all. In some areas of the countries, locals will not work with you if you don't speak the language and may try to take advantage of you. Working on your Spanish skills becomes easy when you're immersed in the culture, and many towns offer Spanish lessons. And by all means, buy a language translator that you can carry in your pocket!

“What is the health care like?” Medical care in our retirement countries is rated very good to excellent. There are hospitals in or nearby the towns you would most likely live in, and many doctors are American. The facilities usually offer state-of-the-art equipment and medical evacuation services if needed. For the first time, you may be met with a sense of urgency when it comes to both doctors and hospitals! There are also facilities for seniors offering anything from light help around the house to meal preparation, and nursing centers that provide a truly loving home environment. Honor and respect for the elderly is still a part of the culture.

“How are the schools and education?” The schools in most of the desirable towns include a preschool, kindergarten, elementary and middle school, and are quite good. In some schools, English classes are taught in addition to Spanish.

“What should I avoid when hiring domestic help?” Depending on the country and the job, it can be more advantageous to pay by the job and not by the hour. Panamanians tend to work at their own pace, take a lot of breaks or even take off for a while. Keeping them motivated to complete the project is important. In Mexico, work gets done at a faster pace, so an hourly wage would suffice. Take care to avoid a scenario where your payment becomes expected or is not used as it is intended. Training is also important and you need to be very specific about what you require.

Setting Realistic Expectations

Now that we have examined many of the reasons to retire to one of our Latin American countries, along with commonly asked questions, let's spend some time discussing realistic expectations when you are going to buy abroad and some pitfalls we have seen. Number one: we see so many people fight to make their world in their new country *like the world they moved from*. These folks usually leave quickly, or become bitter complainers. To be realistic, **you must be very clear about your ability to tolerate change**. For example, are you okay with seeing and living amongst poverty? How important is cleanliness to you? What is your personal capacity for tolerance and patience? Do you need to have strict rules when it comes to driving?

Do these questions seem strange to you? They may sound unusual, but they can be very important factors when you are considering relocating overseas and which is the best retirement country for you. For example, nothing – NOTHING – will get done fast. **From getting your internet connected to having the car serviced or a meal delivered at a restaurant, life moves slower.** In some cases, you can wait and wait in line ... and then they close the line. No “sorry,” just “tomorrow.” There is not the same sense of urgency that we North Americans seem to have hard-wired inside. You just have to have a lot of patience, and a good sense of humor helps too!

Or let's consider walking in a major city (seriously!). The number of people we know who have fallen into uncovered manholes, fallen into holes in the sidewalk, fallen on mossy or moldy steps – we're not kidding! You can't just clip along assuming the sidewalk is for walking on and will be safe, and **should you have an accident it's nobody's fault but your own**. Unlike North America, you can't sue a shopkeeper because you fell on his steps or the city because your front wheel fell into a manhole while you were traveling at 30km. It just happened, and it's your problem.

We could go on, but the point is that you need to remember why you wanted to move to one of the best retirement countries in the first place, and understand that it will require some change on your part. You can't make your new home like the one you moved from, so you need to be realistic with yourself on what really is important to you and what you can and cannot accept. Our evaluation tool below will help you to be realistic about your new adventure and what places may work best for you. Most importantly, **listen to the advice of other expats who have lived there for more than two years**. Our clients who get socially active, make friends and pay attention to the advice they are given have *less frustration*. Remember ... it's an adventure, a beautiful place, a new way of life and time to relax. Enjoy it!

Looking for the Right Opportunity to Retire to Latin America?

Are you someone who likes to do things the hard way? Or would you rather do it the SMART way?

Gathering information from a specialist who is intimately acquainted with the land, its people, and the opportunities that await real estate buyers gives you a tremendous advantage. You can move fast and safely because you have all the facts. And that's important in retirement countries, because it will give you a head start on feeling comfortable in your new home.

You could take months to explore every acre of Latin America. You'd find urban metropolises, rural areas, mountains, beaches and jungles. It could take years of scouring the country to find just the right place to buy or build your retirement home or the best place for a second home.

Buying real estate isn't like buying a car, a major appliance or a diamond ring. The intricacies of real estate transactions – especially in international markets – require a level of expertise that only comes with years of experience.

At International Paradise, we pride ourselves on delivering top-notch, professional services to ensure the smoothest transaction possible – whether you want to retire or have a second home in any of our locales, including Panama, Costa Rica and Mexico. Our team of highly experienced relocation specialists helps clients navigate the contracts, loans, finance, customs, taxes, legal matters and management issues involved in real estate investment. We will also get you on your way to taking advantage of the many banking and retirement benefits, and making your chosen paradise *your home*.

Know Your Team

Our advice is to make sure you know who you are dealing with. International real estate agents are not licensed or bonded. Many agents may not know the market very well. Some do not know or even care if properties they are selling have title problems. It is very common to see realtors advertising enticing prices, only to find out that you will never be able to title the land, or the title has problems, or there will never be electric, water or roads to the property. If you send a down payment to an agent, the agent could disappear with your money. Even if it is a U.S. brand name franchise, if there is a problem, they will likely claim it is a different entity in Latin America. Standard real estate commissions are 6% to 10%.

There are savings to be made, but you need the advice of someone who knows the market.

Escrow agents are also not bonded, and have been known to empty out their escrow account and flee. You are well-advised to use someone you trust. Fidelity Title in New York and Stewart Title in Houston offer escrow services and title insurance in some areas. They will hold your money in a U.S. account until funds are to be disbursed based on the terms of your offer. Many escrow agents or real estate agents have U.S. accounts, but they can easily transfer funds into associated Latin American accounts.

We have developed a trusted team of field partners and resources that we have been very successful working with, both domestically and in Latin America. These field partners include:

- Lawyers
- Tax advisors
- Public notaries
- Banks

- Mortgage professionals

Michele Garbus has over a quarter century of experience in all areas of real estate, mortgage and business development. As a talented strategist, Michele has helped many individuals and corporations see the “big picture” of their goals, and pinpoint practical tactics to help them get there. As an experienced real estate investor, she applies her strategic planning skills to help her clients achieve the high returns and real estate solutions they desire. She does this by not only spending time with her clients, selecting the best solution for their needs, but also talking and planning with them about their financial strategies and goals for the future. In this way, she has built a remarkable record of providing her clients with the best of care and safety on their investments with on-site partners.

David Garbus has been a real estate investor since 1999. He started his real estate career by providing funding and credit in partnership with the former president of the Colorado Association of Real Estate Investors in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Dave also had the privilege of a long military career of 25 years. He served both on active duty, and the last 20 years of service with the Army National Guard, where he spent 10 years with Aco 5th Bn 19th SFG(A), five years with 135th Aviation Bn and five years with the 193rd Space Support Bn. His diverse military experience and extensive world deployments provides International Paradise a unique and candid analysis of global security and country assessment that gives a rational view of safety that you can't get from reading a book or listening to the evening news. Dave's strong ability for analysis, project planning, IT support and the ability to examine situations from multiple angles, has provided his companies with properties that have yielded multiple streams of income.

In 2006, Michele went into partnership with Dave, where they started a real estate investing company that has bought and sold properties both domestically and internationally. As you'd expect, purchasing real estate in Latin America is different from buying on North American soil. **Michele and Dave started International Paradise to help clients turn their dreams into reality by helping them navigate the path smoothly and successfully.** International Paradise knows all the ins and outs of how things are done in the best retirement countries. We'll walk you through each step, making sure you understand exactly what to expect at every turn.

Getting Started

When it comes to an international paradise, all of us have some features we are willing to compromise on, and some we either don't want to change or can't change. We want you and your family to be happy in your new home, and we want you to completely understand what it is like to live abroad in our retirement countries. Knowing what you want, and who you are, goes a long way toward ensuring that your retirement country and home will be the perfect fit for you. We have developed a simple tool that allows you (and us) to look at what you want and need in your new home. Some of these questions can appear blunt, but it allows us to help put you in the country that truly fits. There is a perfect paradise for everyone, but even in knowing what you don't want really helps identify where you truly will be the happiest. **Fill out the pages below and we will help you identify the International Paradise for you!**

Country Evaluation Tool

Name: _____

Best Contact Info: _____

What is important to you when retiring abroad?

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate how important the following are to you:

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Weather	Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Important	
Safety	Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Important	
Infrastructure	Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Important	
Socializing with locals	Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Important	
Medical care	Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Important	
Ease of travel to North America	Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Important	
Government stability	Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Important	
Economic growth	Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Important	

Low taxes	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Retirement benefits	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Anonymity	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Culture	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Low cost of living	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Business benefits	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Sustainable living	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Asset protection	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
School systems	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Church	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Adventure activities	Unimportant	Important	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		

This is Who I am

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the truth about the following:

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Notes</u>
I adapt to change	False True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I am patient	False True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I am tolerant	False True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I am organized	False True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I do not need to control my environment	False True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I like cleanliness	False True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I enjoy learning	False True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I like new things	False True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I like being by myself	False True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I accept poverty	False True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

I don't mind driving in a busy environment	False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	True	
I don't mind diverse road conditions	False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	True	
I need to travel back to North America easily	False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	True	

If you answered a five or below to any of the above questions, you will want to make sure your new town and country will accommodate your particular need, or that you have a plan going in how you will address this area when it comes up.

E-mail or fax us your answers to these questions, and International Paradise would be happy to offer you a FREE consultation with one of our relocation specialists. You can reach us at (303) 674-0139, by e-mail at info@internationalparadise.com or fax to 1-877-866-6140. **We look forward to starting your adventure abroad with you today!**