

OVERSEAS

Retirement Index 2023

The

10 BEST PLACES

IN THE WORLD TO RETIRE

—IN 2023—

REVIEWED, RATED, AND RANKED

PLUS:

Fully Itemized Budgets And Graded Report Cards...



Retirement Index 2023

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Contents

P.5

FROM THE DESK OF FOUNDING
PUBLISHER KATHLEEN PEDDICORD:

[How To Retire Overseas, Step One](#)

2023

OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX

Rankings

1st[Chitré](#)

PANAMA

2nd[Tavira](#)

PORTUGAL

3rd[Medellín](#)

COLOMBIA

4th[Kyrenia](#)

NORTHERN CYPRUS

5th[Corozal](#)

BELIZE

6th[Costa De La Luz](#)

SPAIN

7th[Oaxaca](#)

MEXICO

8th[Paris](#)

FRANCE

9th[Sanur \(Bali\)](#)

INDONESIA

10th[Da Lat](#)

VIETNAM

P.199

[Destination Scorecards](#)

CATEGORY-BY-CATEGORY

Analysis

P.35

[Cost Of Living](#)

A major reason to move overseas is to reduce your monthly cost of living.

P.59

[Health Care](#)

Health care is a primary concern for anyone moving overseas.

P.85

[Expat Community](#)

There are two general lifestyle types to choose from when you move overseas...

P.107

[Access To North America](#)

This category takes into consideration how easy it is to get to your new overseas haven from the United States and Canada.

P.133

[Recreation](#)

Is your idea of keeping busy more outdoorsy? For many, retirement is a long-awaited chance to escape the confines of the indoors.

P.158

[Crime](#)

As crime rates continue to rise in the United States and Canada, so, too, does the importance of Crime as a category for consideration.

P.176

[Residency](#)

Residency may be the most important consideration in a decision to move overseas.

P.49

[Climate](#)

Climate is a more important category than you might think. The prevailing weather conditions of a place can really affect your life.

P.72

[Entertainment](#)

How do you picture spending your time in retirement overseas?

P.97

[English Spoken](#)

One of the biggest challenges of retiring overseas is overcoming a language barrier.

P.120

[Infrastructure](#)

Infrastructure takes into account the following three subcategories: Internet, Electricity, and Domestic Access.

P.144

[Environmental Factors](#)

Environmental Factors assesses how safe, clean, and comfortable the environment is in your new home.

P.167

[Real Estate Restrictions](#)

Not every would-be overseas retiree is looking to buy real estate overseas...

P.188

[Taxes](#)

One of the big benefits of relaunching your life overseas is the opportunity it can create for you to mitigate your tax burden.



ESCAPE TO A SECRET BELIZE PARADISE...

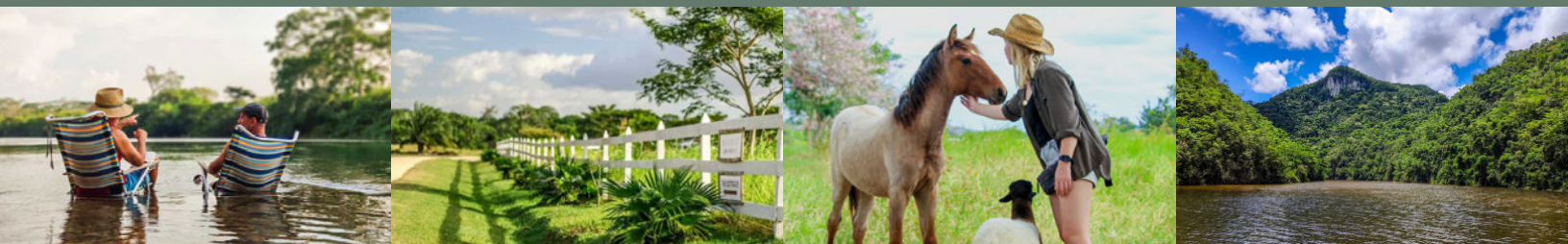
A Self-Sufficient, Off-Grid Community With Lots Starting At Just US\$35,000



A Nature-Lover's Paradise With Plenty of Activities And Easy Access To The Major Town

The development is surrounded by tropical rainforests, the majestic Maya Mountains and the Belize River Valley. Simply a nature-lover's paradise, an undeveloped and still relatively undiscovered frontier of wide-open spaces crisscrossed by rivers for swimming and kayaking, rain forest for exploring and hiking, and Mayan ruins for climbing.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)



TURNKEY INVESTMENT OPTIONS AND FULL-TIME, ONSITE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT ARE AVAILABLE.

ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

HOW TO Retire Overseas, Step One



By Kathleen Peddicord

Dear *Overseas Living Letter* Subscriber,

Why... how... and where.

Those are the three big questions to answer as you consider the world map in the context of options and opportunities for improving your life.

As you're a reader of these dispatches, I think we can take the "why" for granted.

You already understand that taking your life across borders can mean a richer, fuller, more adventure-filled future... including on a very modest budget.

The question for us here at Live And Invest Overseas isn't why would one want to go overseas...

The focus for us is on how to make a plan for your reinvention...

And then, most fun of all, to help you daydream about where best to point your compass.

As we prepare to turn our calendar pages to a brand shiny New Year, it's time to get serious.

The 2023 Overseas Retirement Index presents your best options for where to think about launching your new life in paradise.

More on our picks for the world's top retirement havens for 2023 in the pages of this Index.

Right now, I want to focus your attention on the how.

If you've been considering the idea of launching a new life in a new country, today is the day to start drafting your action plan for making that dream come true.

Here's what you do:

Take out a piece of paper and a pen.

Go on. I'll wait.

Now, find a comfortable chair and settle in.

Are you sitting back... feeling relaxed?

Now make a list.

Write down everything that's important to you.

Consider all aspects of your life, big and small. What do you enjoy? What would you miss if it were gone from your life? What makes you crazy? What would you like never to have to deal with again? →

Write it all down on your piece of paper.

Here... I'll make some suggestions to get you going...

Think about the weather. What do you prefer? Year-round sunshine? Four seasons? Low humidity? Minimal rainfall?

Consider things related to infrastructure. How important to you are high-speed, reliable internet and cable TV?

Think about health care. Would you be comfortable being examined by a doctor who didn't speak English? Do you have an existing health concern that could require emergency medical attention? In that case, it's important to you to be within a, say, 20-minute drive of a First World hospital.

How do you like to spend your free time? Do you like to surf? Boat? Fish, dive, play golf, garden, rumba...

Or are you more interested in gallery openings, live theater, foreign flicks, fine dining, and pleasure shopping?

Do you like to move around? That is, would your ideal life include lots of travel? In that case, you want to be within easy commuting distance of an international airport. We weren't when we were living in Ireland, for example, and we regretted it every time we had to make the long drive from Waterford to Dublin for a flight.

How do you like to eat? In restaurants three or four nights a week? Or do you prefer to cook? If cooking is a passion and a pastime, a big and fully equipped kitchen is a priority.

Do you enjoy specialty cheeses and French butter when you bake? I do... and these things are not available everywhere on Earth.

Do you intend to invest in a place to live in your new home overseas? Then restrictions on foreign ownership of property (if there are any... in most countries we report on and recommend, there are not) as well as the costs of buying and selling it (which can vary from a few percentage points to as much as 20% all in) are important to you.

Do you want to own a car in your new home overseas? Usually, you're better off if you don't. But if you aren't going to have a car of your own, the

walkability of your locale and the accessibility of local public transportation become important. Will you want to be able to return to the States to see your grandkids often? Then the cost of a round-trip ticket from where you'll be living to where you want to visit is important.

Do you intend to live full-time in your new country? Then the available options for establishing legal residency become key.

Do you need or want to generate an income to help support your new adventure overseas? In this case, your best option can be to start a business, which is easier to do today than ever before in history. Maybe you could earn all you need from a laptop biz... meaning all you need is a reliable internet connection...

Or maybe you're up for building something bigger. In that case, you care about things like the quality, diversity, and cost of the available local pool of labor and the country's general doing-business climate.

Will it bother you to have to pay attention to a fluctuating exchange rate between the currency of the place where you're living and the currency your income or savings are denominated in? If so, maybe focus on places where they use the U.S. dollar (assuming that's your home-base currency)... say, Panama or Ecuador, for example... or perhaps Belize, which pegs its dollar to the Greenback.

Would you be uncomfortable living among the locals? Would you prefer to minimize culture shock and avoid learning a new language if possible?

Or maybe that's why you're considering making a move in the first place—to add some exotic to your life.

What would you like to see from your bedroom window every morning when you wake up? The beach? A wildflower-covered hillside? A cityscape?

And what would you like to hear outside your bedroom window each night as you fall asleep?

That's how you get started at this. You make a list.



Kathleen Peddicord
Founding Publisher

2023

OVERSEAS RETIREMENT Index Rankings

Without further ado, here's the final ranking of the 2023 Overseas Retirement Index.

Taking top billing this year is Chitré, a first-time winner and new destination located in one of our all-time favorite countries, Panama. Hot on its heels is Tavira, Portugal, followed by Medellín, Colombia.

Of all the places in the world to spend time overseas, the following 10 are our top choices... But the nature of a ranking means that some places must come out higher in the results and other places lower.

This doesn't mean that the lower-ranking destinations aren't worth your attention... It all depends on your personal preferences and the weight you give each of the 13 categories we use to assess the destinations.

Da Lat, which came in 10th place, may well be your personal winner, depending on what you're looking for in your new life overseas.

Keep reading for a close-up look at each destination...

POSITION	DESTINATION	FINAL GRADE
1 st	Chitré 📍 PANAMA	A
2 nd	Tavira 📍 PORTUGAL	A
3 rd	Medellín 📍 COLOMBIA	A-
4 th	Kyrenia 📍 NORTHERN CYPRUS	A-
5 th	Corozal 📍 BELIZE	B+
6 th	Costa De La Luz 📍 SPAIN	B+
7 th	Oaxaca 📍 MEXICO	B+
8 th	Paris 📍 FRANCE	B+
9 th	Sanur (Bali) 📍 INDONESIA	B
10 th	Da Lat 📍 VIETNAM	B-



Chitré

📍 PANAMA



Taking top billing in the 2023 Overseas Retirement Index is Chitré, a small town in Herrera Province, in the northeastern part of Panama's Azuero Peninsula...

Though Panama is by no means a new retirement haven, Chitré is a new addition to our roster of Index destinations. How is it that this unknown destination has not only been included among our selection of the world's best places to retire but also risen to the number-one spot on the list?

Chitré is a small, safe, and community-minded town. It's four hours from Panama City, located in the "interior" of the country (i.e., anywhere in Panama that isn't Panama City).

Being anywhere other than Panama City in Panama usually means that you don't have easy access to the types of things that expats appreciate—great health facilities, banks, American-style grocery stores, nice cafés and restaurants, entertainment options, and more...→





Chitré is an exception to this rule.

All the amenities offered in the metropolitan area of Panama City, not to mention the abundance of casinos, banks, grocery stores, and hardware stores, can be found in this hidden paradise—a remarkable accomplishment considering its small size.

It's part of the reason some people call Chitré "The Biggest Little City in Panama."

Chitré's other big selling point is its warm, inviting culture. This is *El Corazón De Panamá*... The Heart Of Panama... and few other towns have preserved their traditions as well.

There are multiple folkloric festivals throughout the year with cabalgatas (horse parades), *bailes típicos* (traditional dances), and women dressed in Panama's traditional attire, *la pollera*.

The festivals, the Spanish-colonial architecture, and the ranches where ranchers work Brahman cattle on horseback, give you a sense of what life was like on the Azuero Peninsula decades ago.

About 500 people from the United States, Canada, and other Latin American countries like Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela live in Chitré. They're not just retirees... Safety and access to exceptional schools make Chitré one of Panama's best destinations to raise a family.



The expat lifestyle here is in stark contrast to the one on offer in Panama's biggest expat haven, Boquete, where foreigners make up a large percentage of the population, and the town caters to English speakers.

Life in Chitré is far more authentic. You'll live side-by-side with locals and become immersed in Panamanian culture. Your neighbors and friends will be Panamanian; you'll celebrate Panamanian festivals and take part in their traditions.

That's not to say you'll have trouble finding other expats or expat gatherings—in Chitré you can live fully in both worlds. →

Because it's largely undiscovered, Chitré is one of the most affordable places to live in Panama. A couple could get by on about US\$600 per month, though we recommend having more than that available for the most comfortable, well-rounded lifestyle possible.

The low cost of life includes the price of property. You can buy beachfront property at shockingly low prices... up to 35% less than the value price. This is also a land of opportunity for investors.

The beach is never far—Playa Monagre and Playa El Rompío are only a few miles outside downtown Chitré.

And Chitré is growing steadily, especially in the health care sector, making this an ideal destination for senior citizens, individuals with health concerns or disabilities, families with small children, or anyone else needing superior medical care within a few minutes' drive.

Again, Panama's popularity as a retirement haven is long-standing. Panama offers a top-tier retirement visa, it uses the U.S. dollar as its currency, it's about as friendly as it gets when it comes to taxes, and it's well-connected to the United States and Canada in terms of flights.

Buoyed by revenue from the Canal among other mega-infrastructure projects, it remains stalwart and stable, even



in the face of recession... It's a good place to be during a global economic reset.

These are reasons why Panama is always featured in our overseas retirement indices... But despite how long we've been covering Panama, we're happy to discover that this country still holds surprise. That's what Chitré is to us.

If you're looking for a new home with the comforts of a city but a small-town feel, an opportunity to immerse yourself in Panamanian culture and live side-by-side with locals, and life by the beach without overpriced property, your dream life awaits you in Panama's heartland.



A Tavira

PORTUGAL



Taking second place in this year's Index is Tavira, a charming traditional town in Portugal's Algarve region. It's widely known as the most authentic and beautiful in Southern Portugal.

The Algarve has come in first place in our annual Index more often than any other destination. It offers everything the would-be retiree could want, including:

- Near-perfect weather and sunshine year-round
- An established and welcoming expat community
- High-quality medical facilities
- An affordable cost of living for a high quality of life
- Endless opportunities for fun and adventure, especially for nature-lovers
- English is widely spoken
- Well-developed infrastructure
- Easy access to the United States and Europe →





Indeed, the Algarve is tough competition when it comes to the best places in the world to retire, and it is neck and neck with Chitré in this year's rankings...

Chitré inched ahead by providing a more stable environment in the face of economic crisis. But Tavira (winner of our 2021 Overseas Retirement Index) still has plenty to offer...

Found in the less-touristed eastern Algarve, Tavira has held onto its authenticity, both in terms of its culture and its cost of living. It features all the trappings of a traditional Algarvean town: cobblestone streets, whitewashed buildings, lacework chimney pots, and azulejo tiles.

If you want a view of the Algarve of centuries past, before the golf courses and beach resorts were put in, look no further.

Spliced by the River Gilão, Tavira's riverfront is endowed with promenades and swaying palms, open-air cafés, and restaurants serving the day's catch. Flanked

by Renaissance architecture and connected by an old Roman bridge, the riverfront casts a romantic air about town.

Tavira's population of about 26,000 is still very much local, although expats from the U.K., the Netherlands,



Scandinavia, and France have also established themselves here.

Expats are drawn by the fantastic beaches, agreeable climate, relatively low cost of living, and traditional atmosphere.

Tavira has a well-deserved reputation among nature-lovers. It's situated along Ria Formosa Natural Park, one of the most important wetlands in the world. →

Its protected status means that Tavira's beaches have been unmarred by development and remain the most naturally beautiful in the region. Tavira Island, just offshore, features three perfect, golden-sand beaches and clear turquoise waters...

The Algarve's year-round pleasant weather is one of its main draws. In Tavira, the average temperature is 64°F (18°C), meaning you can maximize your time spent outdoors.

Aside from hitting the beach, top outdoor activities are kite surfing, stand-up paddleboarding, snorkeling and scuba diving, boating, golf, hiking among the dunes of the natural park, and more.

Tavira is culturally vibrant, with open-air markets, fairs, and festivals hosted year-round. It consistently draws tourists, but even still, it's much quieter than other places on the Algarve coast.

Portugal makes life easy for retirees by offering several options for residency, including "self-sufficiency" visas, digital nomad visas, and investor visas. It's not a tax haven but offers some relief to foreign retirees through its Non-Habitual Resident scheme, a tax abatement program.



Plus, U.S. dollar holders continue to have a currency advantage in Europe because the euro is at historic lows against the dollar.

If you're ready to slow down and savor moments in the sun... discover a healthier lifestyle and food... live in a safe place with an emphasis on family and friends... or make a good investment with the benefit of an EU passport... Tavira could be the place for you.





Medellín

 COLOMBIA



Third in the 2023 Overseas Retirement Index is Medellín...

It's one of the world's most livable cities thanks to its efficient public transportation system, friendly locals, ample green-spaces, and weather that most people would describe as perfect. (Because it's never too cold or too hot, utility bills stay low because you don't need to heat or cool your home.)

Its varied cosmopolitan offerings almost put it on par with the world's top metropolises... However, unlike comparable destinations, life in Medellín is inexpensive, particularly for American retirees. The U.S.-dollar-to-Colombian-peso exchange rate accentuates the already-low prices.

This city has a special energy, which emanates from the fun-loving locals, known as *Paisas*. They're undeniably proud of their city and famous for their friendliness. →



They speak Spanish but have their own regional lingo and lilt. You'll want a basic grasp of Spanish to live well here, although more English is spoken here every year.

Paisas are also famous for their colorful regional culture. As an expat, you can experience this culture simply by sticking around for a year and living out its jam-packed events calendar.

A world-renowned flower festival happens every August; the International Poetry Prize, International Jazz Festival, and International Tango and World Latin Dance Festivals are held every year...

There are museums all over town, including open-air ones like the Botero Sculpture Park, where all you need to do is walk around to marvel at the iconic, larger-than-life statues to take in fine art.

There's opera in season, symphonies, theater, and orchestra performances, and major concerts... There's also great shopping, dance clubs, nightclubs (even for the silver-haired crowd), and fine dining...

Locals are active and fit. The whole city seems to come out on Sunday mornings when a major road is closed to motorized vehicles. They also know how to have a good time...

Chiva party buses roll down the street, football fans take a few shots of *aguardiente* (the local firewater) while

cheering on the local clubs, and people dress to impress for a night of dancing.

With its vibrant art, music, and culinary scenes, the city's energy is infectious. It's easy to feel this and be a part of it, whether by checking out the street art, sitting down at a new restaurant, or signing up for salsa lessons.

No matter what your interests are, you'll never be bored here.

The weather is lovely here year-round, earning it the nickname "The City of Eternal Spring." It boasts one of the most scenic skylines in the world, with the Andes Mountains serving as its backdrop.

On top of a long list of other accolades attributed to Medellín, it's often called the world's most innovative city. Just look at its public transport system. It consists of two lines and a funicular service to accommodate the city's geography and get people who live in the surrounding hills from A to B.

It's the only city in Colombia with a metro, putting the capital, Bogotá, to shame with its much-larger population and political importance. The metro is famous for its efficiency and cleanliness and is well-loved by all of the city's residents.

When you consider the standard of living in Medellín, all of this adds up to incredible value. For the retiree or expat looking for a new life in a cosmopolitan setting, Medellín offers a Euro-chic lifestyle supported by modern comforts.



A- Kyrenia

NORTHERN CYPRUS



Northern Cyprus is the southeasternmost corner piece of the European Union. It's a lesser-known corner of the Mediterranean, but one that allows for a luxury lifestyle on the beach for as little as US\$1,000 a month—really.

It's blessed with year-round warm weather, clear blue waters, and over 400 miles of coastline. The summer here is the longest in Europe, beginning in March and lasting until October, even November, with over 300 days of sunshine a year...

Here, English is so commonly spoken that you'd never have to learn the local language (in fact, the locals even speak English amongst themselves). The food is light and fresh; fish and salad are served with every meal, and the coffee is strong and aromatic.

And, to top it off, life (and real estate) is as affordable as it gets in Europe—enjoy a healthy meal and a cold glass of wine for just 10 euros a person, for example...→



Northern Cyprus has plenty of appeal, and Kyrenia, a city on the northern coast, sandwiched between the Kyrenia Mountains and the warm waters of the Med, is its tourism capital.

It's said to have been founded by two veterans of the Trojan War. It's most famous for its old harbor and castle. Before British occupation in the late 1800s, it was a thriving port town that facilitated trade between Europe and the Middle East.

Using traditional *caiques* (fishing boats found in the Aegean and Ionian Seas), Kyrenia was a point of export for everything from wheat and olives to donkeys and goats and a point of import for wood, earthenware, legumes, and dairy products.

Today, the harbor functions as a tourist attraction. So, too, does Kyrenia Castle, an imposing structure that features four massive artillery towers and that, in its history, has served the Byzantines, Crusaders, Venetians, Ottomans, and British. Kyrenia's old town is one of the most charming in the region.

Kyrenia is a safe, welcoming destination. It's home to a big expat population, mostly made up of Greek, British,



Romanian, and Bulgarian people. Not many North Americans are living here yet, but Northern Cyprus would like to change that. Cypriots are currently eager for North American attention.

Kyrenia has a developed tourism infrastructure, including seaside hotels and clubs, casinos, restaurants, and luxury hotels. Gambling was legalized in the 1970s. Since the 1990s, a steady stream of high rollers has been hitting the region's casinos. It's even been dubbed the "Las Vegas of the Mediterranean." →





Medical tourism is another growing attraction. First-class hospitals and health centers offer a range of procedures, from IVF to hip replacement to dental implants, at a fraction of the cost of the United States and the rest of Europe.

Across Northern Cyprus and including Kyrenia, beachfront property is extremely affordable—as inexpensive as US\$70,000 for new builds in modern complexes with access to amenities.

A unique benefit of buying property in Northern Cyprus is that it qualifies you for residency.

This is the best of the Mediterranean at a fraction of the cost of living the Med life elsewhere. Cyprus is one of the EU's most affordable places to live, and Northern Cyprus comes at an even greater discount because it's outside of the eurozone. The local currency is the Turkish lira, meaning prices are 30% lower.

A downside to relocating here is that it's far from North America. Cyprus is at the far eastern edge of the Mediterranean, and getting here involves at least one stopover along the way, as well as a drive once you touch down on the island.



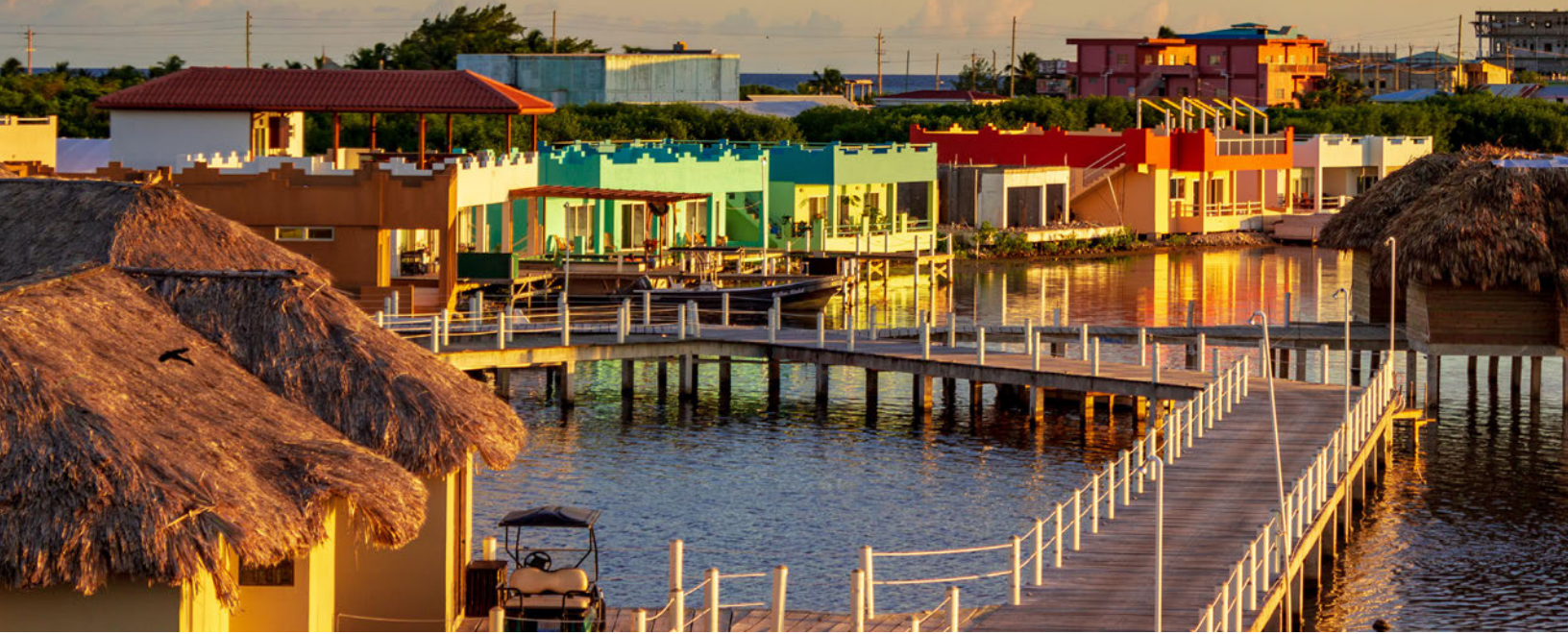
Northern Cyprus is far off the beaten path for the average American or Canadian retiree... Most haven't heard of it, much less Kyrenia specifically. To settle here, you'd have to be the adventurous type.

If you're up for an adventure while stretching your retirement budget to buy you a bona fide luxury standard of living on one of the world's most beautiful stretches of coastline, Kyrenia should be on your list.



Corozal

 BELIZE



Belize just makes sense for expats for a handful of boilerplate reasons:

- It's English-speaking
- It has easy residency options for retirees and expats
- It's tax-friendly
- It's only a two-and-a-half-hour flight from the southern United States
- It has warm weather year-round
- It is blessed with natural wonders, like warm ocean waters, the Mesoamerican barrier reef, the Blue Hole (a 407-foot cenote off Belize's coast)

The majority of the attention is focused on Caribbean island dream escapes like Ambergris Caye and Caye Caulker... But in a specific area of rarely sought-after mainland Belize, you can combine oceanfront living (on the Caribbean, no less) and affordability.→





This lifestyle opportunity is found in Corozal, the name of both a district and a town in northern Belize. The town is home to about 13,000 people, while the district has about 46,000.

Corozal is Belize's northernmost district. This area of the country is rugged and mostly undeveloped... Infrastructure is not yet well-established. Road quality, for instance, is generally poor... which is part of the reason this area doesn't receive the same volume of tourism as other areas of the country. It's not as easy to access.

But Corozal offers some of the best of Belize living, and it's slowly getting the attention it deserves. In November 2019, *Forbes* listed it third in a report of the 20 best places to retire in 2020.

Despite its small size, Corozal offers a nice variety of lifestyle options, including oceanfront, riverfront, lagoonfront, and inland farm-country living. Lots and land are available in private developments and directly from the local market.

A top draw for expats is the opportunity to live on Chetumal Bay, a deeply indented area of the Caribbean. Because it's naturally protected, it's a sailor's and boater's paradise...

Living on the bay or on one of the connecting lagoons or rivers allows access to the reef and ocean through the



break on the Ambergris peninsula at Bacalar Chico. Diving and snorkeling are some of the bests in the world thanks to the reef.

Another quiet benefit is that it is protected from hurricanes by the Ambergris peninsula, lessening any effects of a storm's landfall.

Corozal is more affordable than the islands, Belize City, and Placencia. Rents are low, especially in the villages, but services and social outlets are limited. Groceries are →

affordable, too, especially in the open-air markets that overflow with fruits and vegetables.

The selection of goods is limited in the stores surrounding Corozal... but it's just a hop, skip, and jump from Belize's border with Mexico, and a proper big city, is just on the other side of it. Chetumal, the capital of Quintana Roo state, is just 10 miles away from Corozal.

In Chetumal, expats can avail of cheaper life supplies and access to amenities not available anywhere in Belize, such as access to Sam's Club, cinemas, supermarkets carrying American brands, big-box stores, hardware stores, bars, restaurants, and more.

This also affords expats access to Mexico's high-quality health and dental care—a important benefit since access to health care options in Belize is lacking.

The lifestyle in Corozal is slow-going... A typical day might involve kayaking, fishing, swimming, and reading, among other things... or perhaps just swinging in a hammock with a cold beer or rum cocktail in hand. Come nighttime, you



might meet with neighbors for dinner, drinks, or a game of cards.

For those that seek a long-gone haven—where time stands still and life drifts peacefully by without hassles—Corozal is true nirvana.





Costa De La Luz

 SPAIN



The Costa de la Luz, or Coast of Light, is an area along Spain's southwestern coast that stretches from Spain's border with Portugal down to Tarifa, the southernmost point in Europe.

This region is famous for the very thing it's named for: dazzling, always abundant sunshine. With well over 3,000 sunshine hours per year, vitamin D deficiency is not a risk here.

The Costa de la Luz's centerpiece is Cádiz. It's often called "Little Havana" or compared to Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, because of its long board-walked beachfront backed by colorful ancient buildings...

But Cádiz is the prototype on which those New World cities were based. It's touted as the oldest city in Western Europe, dating to 1104 BC.

Walking its streets, you can feel the history and see the cultural influence of the many civilizations—from the

Phoenicians to the Romans to the Moors—that impacted it over time.

Its Old Town is densely populated, with one of Europe's oldest neighborhoods and ruins hemmed in by old city walls. Individual landmarks syncretize various architectural styles.

Narrow streets spill out into lively plazas where you can sit in the shade of a towering cathedral and watch the world go by...

But there's more to the Costa de la Luz than just Cádiz...

All along the coastline are appealing places to live, including well-appointed beach towns and ancient →

hilltop villages. One such town is Vejer de la Frontera, which is regarded as one of Andalusia's most beautiful hilltop villages.

It features smooth, white-washed buildings that are draped in bougainvillea and make the town visible for miles. Its hilltop position affords it gentle ocean breezes and stunning views of vineyard-covered hillsides...

Just 28 miles north of Cádiz is Rota, famous for its naval base that is shared by U.S. and Spanish forces and is home to lots of American expats because of it.

Rota offers ancient history, fine beaches, a walkable town center, and proximity to golf and natural attractions, including the Camino Natural, a wooden pathway that runs through a pine forest and along the beach.

Chipiona, also north of Cádiz, pure beach town, and it has a resort feel to it. This little town of 17,000 boasts 7 miles of fine, light gold beach. Two beaches, Camaron and Las Canteras, have even been awarded Blue Flag status for their superior quality.

Right next to Chipiona is Sanlúcar, also about 35 miles from Cádiz. It's bigger, with about 68,000 people, and seems among the best appointed of any of these small towns.

It has an active old town center, complete with fountains, attractive building and storefront facades, parks and manicured green spaces, and plenty of cafés where you can sit and people-watch. The town beach is wide and flat with a paved boardwalk, lined by nice houses and condos.

Expat communities of various sizes have established themselves in these towns and villages... They seek this region out for its cultural authenticity, its pristine nature, its excellent health care, and the high quality of life that comes at a low cost.

For North Americans who perceive Western Europe as too expensive, Spain and especially the Costa de la Luz will be a pleasant surprise. And, again, Americans have an advantage in Europe right now because of the strength of the U.S. dollar.

Some downsides to Spain are its complicated tax system and the high taxes it imposes. Spain does not offer a tax abatement program for pensions like Portugal, Southern Italy, and Greece do... although we wouldn't recommend making a choice about where to retire overseas based on taxes alone anyway.

Also, English levels are low. This is a place where you'll need to pick up some Spanish to live well.





Oaxaca

MEXICO



Most people who move to Mexico make a beeline for places like Playa del Carmen and Puerto Vallarta. Both are great places to spend time, but they're expat bubbles.

If you're looking for a place without a Señor Frog's in sight, you'll need to head inland...

Those looking for charming colonial architecture with a vibrant culture that's more Mexico than spring break should turn their gaze towards Oaxaca City.

It checks a lot of boxes: a moderate climate, reasonable prices, flight connections to the States, and high-quality health care.

Also, it isn't super touristy or flooded with gringos. It's becoming more of a popular destination, sure, but the city does not rely on tourism as much as other expat favorites do.→



Beyond the obvious draws of nice weather and a low cost of living, this is a fascinating city with a lot to offer...

Oaxaca is the capital of the southwestern Mexican state of the same name. It's famous for its cuisine (such as the versatile *mole* sauce) and its potent libation, mezcal. Your taste buds are in for a treat if you relocate here.

In its bustling Centro, you'll find colorful colonial buildings and even more colorful clothing and wares from the various indigenous groups that call the area home. The state of Oaxaca is home to about a third of Mexico's indigenous population.

Traditional festivals are a big deal, including Day of the Dead celebrations. People come from all over the world to view the elaborate *ofrendas* (altars) for this important holiday.

This city is surrounded by mountains, making for a stunning backdrop and plenty of opportunities for adventure. It doesn't take long to reach the ancient ruins at Monte Albán or the jaw-dropping petrified waterfalls at Hierve el Agua.

There are some great options for hiking in the area, and it's not that far to the chilled-out beach towns on the Oaxaca



coast. It's a hair-raising ride through the curvy mountain roads, but a quick flight is also an option...

Compared to places like Mexico City or Guadalajara, Oaxaca feels like a small town. It's easy enough to get around on foot, and local buses are cheap and easy to figure out if you need them.

You've got all the conveniences of a big city without many of the annoyances, and it's got more to offer in terms of culture than places like PV or San Miguel. →





While not as well connected as other Mexican destinations, Oaxaca does have an international airport. the moment, there aren't many options for direct flights to the States or Canada... but with its increasing popularity, more flight options will be available soon.

Oaxaca is home to a sizable expat community of over 20,000, with most hailing from the States and Canada. All sorts of events are available, so it's easy to get out and meet people. Whether you're into yoga, books, or hiking, there's a club or class for you here.

The low cost of living is a big draw. If you're up for living like a local, your money will go a long way, especially if you're earning dollars and spending pesos.

Those who find a simple apartment, stick to walking or public transportation, and shop in local markets can live comfortably for a fraction of what it costs up north.

Aside from Oaxaca's unique appeal, Mexico in general is a top choice for Americans and Canadians. There are good reasons why it's home to more American expats than any other country...

It's geographically close... so close, in fact, that it's one of the few overseas retirement destinations you can pack up your car and drive to. It has familiar stores, brands, conveniences,



and so on. It's also easy to set up life in Mexico from a residency perspective.

The pastel-colored buildings of Centro with the rolling mountains in the background... The air in the local markets is filled with a variety of intriguing aromas... That smoky taste of a good glass of mezcal... This is life in Oaxaca.

If you're looking for city amenities with a small-town feel, a moderate climate, and a low cost of living, and if you love Mexican culture—the art, the food, the festivals—then you're going to love Oaxaca.



Paris

FRANCE



Paris arguably offers the world's best quality of life.

This is one of Europe's great cities. It offers culture, with hundreds of museums and galleries and some of the most revered cuisine in the world; space to lounge in parks and on riversides... plus a superb and affordable public transportation system; and other modern amenities, including top-notch health care.

The history, the art, the food, the fashion, the wine, the architecture, the language, the romance... the *je ne sais quoi*. For most, Paris doesn't disappoint. This Grand Dame of cities really seems to have it all...

But living in Paris is not all croissants and accordions.→



France has the best health care in the world, an enviable quality of life, and some of the best gastronomy the world has to offer.

On the other hand, taxes are high, everyone's always on strike, customer service is generally terrible, and the French invented bureaucracy, so getting anything administrative done is a nightmare.

Paris is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world, but all that luxe comes at a cost. It's a fact that Paris is an expensive city. Property prices, both for owning and renting, are sky high for very little space. But Paris can be more affordable than most people imagine.

Paris is a staid, steady, consistent place. You might almost call it boring... It never changes much, and that's the way Parisians like it.

While improvements are constantly being made to its infrastructure, these changes are mostly behind the curtain... You won't see any big plans to tear down and rebuild, to clear space for some new project, or for innovative new buildings to go up on the skyline.



If you're a city person at heart but still appreciate a more traditional, less streamlined way of life... If you want to go to the opera one night and a local produce market the next morning...

If you love being active and walking everyday... If you never tire of museums... If you live for a spontaneous café lunch... If you want to easily make expat friends after arriving... If you want to hop around Europe, exploring every country on the Continent...





Sanur (Bali)

 INDONESIA



World-renowned Bali enjoys a reputation as one of the most beautiful tropical islands in the world. The jungle is lush, with an immense variety of flora and fauna, and the raw beauty of the landscape is unparalleled.

Volcanoes raise their heads above the clouds, and terraced rice fields cascade into the valleys. Even the smallest villages are adorned with unique multi-tiered Balinese temples.

The locals are unfailingly friendly—some of the most serene and pleasant people that you're likely to find anywhere.

Living here, you would never run out of things to do. Bali's coastline is postcard perfect, and the ocean, which is never far away, offers world-class diving, surfing, snorkeling, parasailing, and other water sports.

You would have your choice of dining at one of the many five-star restaurants or spending a pittance to enjoy healthy and delicious local food from a mom-and-pop eatery.

Bars, dancing, and discotheques are all convenient. Festivals and cultural events happen almost every week. You can golf, climb a mountain, visit galleries, talk with artists, commune with monkeys, learn yoga or meditation, or take a cruise. There's always something to do...

Sanur is an unpretentious suburb of Bali's capital, Denpasar. It's a fairly small town on the southeast side of Bali. Quiet and laid-back, Sanur is far removed from the crowds of tourists who flock to Bali for vacations and honeymoons.

Pronounced "san-oor," it's so peaceful here that it's earned the nickname "s-nore" or "snoreville." Even during the height of the tourist season, Sanur never seems to attract much attention. →



It's a nice place, though. There are many reasons to consider this expat haven.

Sanur can be a top choice for indulging in a five-star, luxury lifestyle on a three-star budget. It's close to Bali's best amenities and home to a big expat community.

There's a large population of retired foreigners, many of whom stay here on a part-time basis. The majority are Dutch and Australian. English is spoken everywhere; there is no need to learn the local language.

A barrier reef, which protects the coast and creates calm seas, runs the entire length of Sanur. Parents with children find the beach to be especially welcoming, as there are no dangerous undertows or threatening waves.

The sandy beach and paved pathway that runs the entire length of the Sanur coastline beckon bicyclists, strollers, and sun worshippers. Restaurants and bars located along the pathway provide cool drinks, plenty of good food, and perfect views of swaying palm trees and nearby islands.

Southeast Asia is famous not only for its fantastic beaches but also for its low-cost living... Sanur is not the cheapest town in Bali, but it's also not the most expensive. It offers a high quality of life and provides value for every budget.



Bali has decent health care provisions, and living in Sanur, you'd be within easy reach of the best hospitals and clinics on the island. Sanur is spread out, stretching several kilometers from north to south, so you'll want to have your own transportation if you decide to live here.

If you don't plan to venture too far from home, you can get around well with a bicycle. Several streets in Sanur have bicycle lanes, and the beachfront walkway is popular with bicyclists. Otherwise, the most popular mode of transportation is the motor scooter. →

An upside of choosing Indonesia as your retirement locale is that it offers a retirement visa, which is not common in Southeast Asia. It's easy to qualify for, with a fairly low income threshold, although it stipulates a few odd requirements (like hiring at least one local person as household staff).

Indonesia's environmental problems are one of its drawbacks. It faces issues of air pollution, poor waste management, and insufficient water treatment.

That said, the air quality is better in Bali than in much of Southeast Asia. The island gets little of the smoky haze that is found elsewhere in Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia, and the coastal breezes keep the air circulating.

Another issue with Indonesia is the limits it puts on foreign ownership of property. Foreigners are not permitted to own freehold property in Indonesia, but they can rent or lease apartments, houses, and villas.

Sanur features beautiful homes... Many villas are surrounded by ornate outer walls and beautiful entryways. The grounds are often carefully manicured and landscaped, with mature trees and statuary that provide a real Balinese ambiance.



Sanur can be an economical place to live, though you can certainly indulge in a five-star, luxury lifestyle if you choose. Whatever your budget, you'll find that you can live substantially better for less money in Sanur.

Few places offer more diverse cultural and outdoor activities, stunning beauty, and gracious hospitality than this little island...





Da Lat

 VIETNAM



Da Lat is the resort town that the French carved out of Vietnam's Central Highlands back when the country was a French colony...

Dr. Alexandre Yersin, famed French physician and bacteriologist, was sent into the highlands in 1893 in search of a place of rest and relaxation for Indochina's French population.

He stumbled upon Da Lat, perched on the Lang Bian Plateau at 4,921 feet (1,500 meters). Surrounded by pine forests and misty peaks, game-hunting, and abundant freshwater, the town had an almost Alpine chalet-like quality...

It was quickly established as a French-colonial hill station and endowed with a health complex, schools, a golf course, several parks and manmade lakes, villas, boulevards, and urban planning.

Architectural and cultural remnants from that era remain and cast a historic and otherworldly charm over Da Lat. Whether it's this or the unusually cool climate, something about Da Lat inspires romance...

Today, it's the honeymoon capital of Vietnam and a popular domestic tourism destination. It's not unusual to see young lovers strolling hand in hand or newlyweds taking wedding photos against kitschy backdrops.

International tourists that make their way here are attracted by the verdant, strawberry field-pocked countryside, peaks and valleys sheathed in forest, rivers, waterfalls, lakes...→

The best way to discover Da Lat is by motorbike—the undisputed king of transport in Southeast Asia. You can also hike, cycle, go for strolls, and push off the banks of rivers or lakes in canoes.

This is Asia's "City of Eternal Spring." Its temperate, mountainous climate is pretty much perfect—never too hot or cold, with the temperature perpetually hovering at about 65°F (18°C)—a far cry from the rest of South Vietnam's steamy conditions.

The climate doesn't just make Da Lat an enjoyable place to spend time outdoors; it also makes it the garden bed of Vietnam, giving it its other reputation as "The City of Flowers"...

Da Lat is responsible for a huge percentage of Vietnam's floral output, including cherry blossoms, lavender, hydrangea, purple phoenix and more.

Because of the highland climate, you can get fruits and veggies that aren't possible to grow in other parts of the country: coffee, strawberries, cabbage, cauliflower... Da Lat even has its own wine industry.

Da Lat isn't a bustling metropolis with multifaceted entertainment options on tap, but that doesn't mean



it's not a culturally interesting place to be. It's religiously diverse, home to Buddhist pagodas, Christian churches, Cao Dai temples, and more.

Vietnam is one of the world's most affordable places to live. It's difficult to find a place where you can enjoy such a high standard of living at such a low cost.

The downsides to Vietnam are its restrictive policies toward foreigners when it comes to property ownership and its limited residency options.



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ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Cost Of Living



A major reason to move overseas is to reduce your monthly cost of living.

In appealing destinations around the world, it's possible to live a comfortable, well-appointed lifestyle for much less than comparable lifestyles in the United States and Canada.

You don't have to sacrifice your quality of life either. In many of these places, the standard of living could even be higher for a smaller monthly cost.

This year more than ever, **Cost Of Living** is a critical concern. Inflation is on every retiree's mind. For anyone on a fixed income, inflation is a threat to your long-term quality of life...

But moving overseas can be a powerful strategy for combating this. Inflation rates are lower in many countries than they are in the United States. More importantly, though, the cost of living can be so much lower overseas that inflation is not a concern...

Starting off with a lower cost of living makes the effects of inflation proportionately lower, too. In some cases, they're negligible.

Also, don't forget about the current strength of the U.S. dollar and its value relative to other currencies. This can further enhance the savings in an already low-cost situation.

To help you analyze **Cost Of Living** overseas thoroughly, we provide a monthly budget for all destinations featured in this Index. The budgets are configured for couples and take into account the items that most people are likely to spend

money on in a given month. (Find them in the Score Cards section.)

Specifically, they look at average costs for the following items:

- **Rent:**
The average cost for an unfurnished, two-bedroom apartment or house.
- **Transportation:**
A couple's monthly public transportation costs. If no public transportation is available, we've indicated what residents report spending on their car per month.
- **Gas:**
A couple's monthly cost for household heating or cooking (not fuel for your car).
- **Electricity:**
Your monthly utility bill.
- **Water:**
Your monthly utility bill.
- **Cell Phone:**
A basic monthly phone plan.
- **Internet:**
A basic monthly phone plan.→

■ Entertainment:

The monthly amount a couple would spend on basic outings, including eating out twice a week, going for drinks twice a week, and going to the movie theater twice a month.

■ Groceries:

The amount a couple would spend on the basic monthly shopping haul of local goods. If you're a stickler for brand-name American products, you should factor in a few hundred more dollars per month for your grocery bill.

■ Extras:

(amounts not included in the total)

■ Medical Appointments:

The cost of a basic appointment, out of pocket.

■ Household Help:

The cost of part-time household help, based on an hourly rate specified in the Notes column.

The budgets should be taken as baselines because cost of living varies wildly from person to person...

We try to standardize all categories so that we can not only give you an idea of the cost of living in each place but also the ability to compare destinations...

For rent, for instance, we look at the average cost for an apartment or house of between 75 and 100 square meters (810 and 1,080 square feet) for all 15 destinations. We try to control for location as much as possible, with each example representing a part of town that expats tend to live in.

It's important to note that our cost-of-living budgets aren't all-inclusive... They don't include an amount for health insurance, for instance—an essential consideration and significant monthly expense for anyone going overseas.

We don't include this because it would be impossible to come up with an average monthly amount. Everyone's health insurance plan varies depending on age, what coverage is included, and deductibles.

Grading Cost Of Living

A+	US\$0–US\$1,000
A	US\$1,000–US\$1,250
A -	US\$1,250–US\$1,500
B+	US\$1,500–US\$1,750
B	US\$1,750–US\$2,000
B -	US\$2,000–US\$2,250
C+	US\$2,250–US\$2,500
C	US\$2,500–US\$2,750
C -	US\$2,750–US\$3,000
D+	US\$3,000–US\$3,250
D	US\$3,250–US\$3,500
D -	US\$3,500–US\$3,750
F	US\$3,750 or more

“
A”

In “A” destinations, the average monthly cost of living for two is between US\$0 and US\$1,500.

DESTINATIONS**A+****Da Lat**
VIETNAM

You'd be hard-pressed to find a destination where you can enjoy such a high quality of life at such a low cost. In Da Lat, a couple's basic monthly budget should come to about US\$760.

Rent ranges from US\$250 for a studio apartment in a non-central area to between US\$350 and US\$450 for a bigger apartment in a more central area.

Air conditioning isn't needed since Da Lat enjoys spring-like weather year-round, so electricity bills are always low, and utilities are usually included in the cost of rent.

If you eat and shop like a local, you'll save greatly. Eating at Vietnamese restaurants costs between US\$3 and US\$5 for a →



meal for two. Prices are higher at expat restaurants, where an average meal for two costs about US\$20.

A grocery trip to a local market is about US\$25, which you might need to do a few times a week. This is one place in the world where eating out all the time can actually save you money. Again, if you shop for imported goods, you'll spend much more on groceries.

One thing you should factor into your yearly budget is the cost of flying to and from North America from Da Lat. Southeast Asia is great for the low cost of living it allows, but it's far from the States and Canada, and long-distance international flights add up.



A+ Sanur

INDONESIA



Sanur offers the opportunity to indulge in a luxury lifestyle, including living in a small villa near the beach, employing a house cleaner, and eating out for most meals, at an affordable cost. A couple's basic monthly budget here should come to about US\$939.

That said, Bali is still traditional at its core, and the lifestyle described above is not at all how local Balinese people live...

The varying prices for a cup of coffee illustrate the disparity between the expat and local lifestyles. A cup of *kopi Bali* (the local brew) might cost 10 cents at a roadside local place, while a non-fat oat-milk latte at a trendy, Australian-owned café, might cost closer to US\$4.

For you, this price disparity means wiggle room. You can find a sweet spot somewhere in between a full luxury

lifestyle and a local lifestyle and enjoy a comfortable cost of living.

Hearty local meals might cost about US\$5 a plate. At the upscale foreign restaurants that expats like to go to, you can end up spending US\$30 to US\$40 per person on dinner.

Transportation is one thing that's always affordable, which is why everyone gets around by motorbike in Bali. It costs about US\$65 monthly to rent a motorbike and keep it gassed up.

Renting a nice, two-bedroom villa will cost about US\$500 per month. Hiring household help, whether it's a cleaner, driver, nanny, pool boy, etc., is affordable as well, costing an average of US\$5 an hour.

A- Corozal

BELIZE

A couple's basic monthly budget here should come to about US\$1,403 in Corozal.

Rent for a two-bedroom, Belize-style home is about US\$500 per month. Groceries average \$220 per month, eating out averages \$160 per month, and labor is inexpensive, even for custom-made, handcrafted furniture. One expat had an Adirondack chair with two side pieces made locally for about US\$50...

That said, certain items like gasoline, imported foods, liquor, wine, and electronics cost more in Belize than they do back home. A medium-quality toaster oven, for instance, costs about US\$60 here, whereas it would cost around US\$35 in the States.

It's easy to tailor your habits to keep costs low. Swap your scotch for one of the dozens of great local rums



available. Buy local produce at a farmer's market instead of processed, marked-up imported goods.

Electricity also costs more than in the States, but major appliances are often designed to use less power than U.S. models. Expect to pay about US\$175 for electricity, or more if you plan on using air conditioning.

A- Kyrenia

NORTHERN CYPRUS

In Kyrenia, you could live a luxury lifestyle on the beach for as little as US\$1,000 a month—really. We estimate slightly more for a couple's basic monthly budget at about US\$1,394

Rent for a two-bedroom apartment with a communal pool costs about US\$400 per month. Plus, real estate prices are a global bargain in Northern Cyprus. Its property market is booming, but it's still a relatively new place of interest.

You can find investment opportunities at a fraction of the price of what you could find in the southern part of Cyprus or other European countries. (Go here to find out about relevant opportunities.) Note that most property is priced in British pounds.

Electricity costs about US\$20 to US\$50 per month. Amounts depend on the seasons and how often you run your air conditioner in the summer months (and whether you run a heater during cooler months). In spring and autumn, electricity costs can be next to nothing.

Eating out is an inexpensive indulgence in Northern Cyprus. At local restaurants, you can eat traditional dishes



(kebabs, hummus, salads, etc.) and pay the equivalent of a couple of dollars for a healthy and fulfilling Mediterranean meal. There are also fine-dining options available in five-star hotels and in tourist zones.

Cyprus is one of the EU's most affordable places to live, especially considering this is a Mediterranean-island destination... But Northern Cyprus comes at an even greater discount because it's outside of the eurozone.

The local currency is the Turkish lira, so whether you're coming here with euros or U.S. dollars, the currency exchange works in your favor.

A- Medellín

COLOMBIA

Lifestyle and location have a huge effect on the cost of living in Medellín. Neighborhoods (or *estratos*) are ranked from one to six by wealth, with six being the wealthiest.

Medellín can be an extremely affordable place to live if you choose to go local and live in a lower *estrato*, shop local brands, and eat at local restaurants.

On the other hand, Medellín also offers luxury-level lifestyle opportunities. You can live in a higher *estrato*, dine at fine-dining establishments, shop at high-fashion boutiques, and purchase imported goods such as Peter Pan peanut butter and French wines. You just have to be happy to pay for it and have a cost of living that's closer to what you paid back home.

The two most popular neighborhoods for expats in Medellín are El Poblado and Laureles. El Poblado has many places in *estratos* five to six and is home to the most expensive and luxurious options. Residences in Laureles are primarily in *estratos* three to four, so it's a bit cheaper.



Whichever lifestyle you opt for, remember the U.S.-dollar-to-Colombian-peso exchange rate, which puts everything at a discount for U.S. dollar holders right now.

Taking a middle-of-the-road approach, expect to pay about US\$650 for a comfortable two-bedroom apartment (in El Poblado or Laureles), about US\$370 on monthly groceries, and about US\$25 on the average nice meal out for two.

A couple's basic monthly budget here should come to about US\$1,384.



“B”

DESTINATIONS

In “B” destinations, the average monthly cost of living for two is between US\$1,500 and US\$2,250.

Perceptions about crime should not deter you from moving to one of the following places...



B+

Costa De La Luz

SPAIN

In the context of Europe, Spain is fantastically affordable. Many North Americans have this perception of Western Europe as being financially out of reach, a destination only accessible in daydreams...

The truth is that many Western European countries—especially Spain and the Costa de la Luz—are more affordable than the States or Canada. A couple's basic monthly budget here should come to about US\$1,575.

Also, the current opportunity that Europe presents can't be ignored. The euro is at a historic low against the U.S. dollar, which means that everything from the cost of espresso to the cost of beachfront property comes at an →



unprecedented exchange-rate discount. If you're looking to make a move anywhere in Europe, the time is now.

Rent on the Costa de la Luz is likely to be your biggest outlay, with a well-appointed two-bedroom apartment by the beach costing around US\$600 per month at the upper end of the spectrum.

Groceries cost an average of US\$240 per month. You'll often hear that in Andalucía (the region where the Costa de la Luz is located), “wine is cheaper than water,” and it's true.

You can get a decent bottle of wine for about US\$1 while a liter of water can be closer to US\$2.

Dinner for two, including drinks, appetizers, mains, and dessert, could come to about US\$35. A fancy coffee will be less than US\$3; a beer, which is served in small glasses called *cañas* in Spain, will be about US\$1.20.

Transportation costs depend on whether you have a car. It's possible to get by without one thanks to the train, for which the basic fare is negligible.



B+ Oaxaca

MEXICO

The low cost of living is a big draw to Oaxaca. It doesn't receive the steady flow of cruise ship passengers and spring breakers who inflate prices in places like Puerto Vallarta. A couple's basic monthly budget in Oaxaca should come to about US\$1,588.

If you're up for living like a local, your money will go a long way, especially if you're earning dollars and spending pesos. Those who find a simple apartment, stick to walking or →



public transportation, and shop in local markets can live comfortably for a fraction of what it costs up north.

Rentals are available for 7,000 to 10,000 pesos per month. You can walk almost everywhere or take the occasional bus for 8 pesos or a taxi for 40 to 50 pesos. That means a super-low transportation budget—more dinero for you to spend on nice dinners out and some drinks at the fun bars around town.

Your pesos go a long way on food and drink in Oaxaca.

Oaxaca expat Sasha Savinov says, “I love digging into a delicious plate of mole de pollo in the market or indulging in the best street tacos available anywhere, both of which cost less than US\$5.”

A couple with modest tastes can easily live off of less than US\$2,000 here, and that includes rent. Add another US\$500 to that, and you can enjoy a few nights out on the town and occasional weekend trips to the coast or other nearby towns.

B- Chitré

📍 PANAMA



Thanks to its limited tourism and small expat community, Chitré is one of Panama's most affordable places to live, and the cost of living is highly controllable.

A couple's basic monthly budget here should come to about US\$2,003, but choose a minimalist lifestyle, and you could get by on about US\$600 a month.

Rent for a furnished, two-bedroom apartment in a desirable part of Chitré is about US\$800 per month. Air conditioning is a must, and you'll spend about US\$125 on electricity monthly.

If you live in a central part of town, you can save on transportation expenses by getting around on foot or bicycle and only using your car when necessary. Driving a car will cost about US\$60 per month.

Eating at *fondas* (small, usually open-air restaurants serving traditional Panamanian food at low prices) is cheap—about US\$10 per person for a full meal, including a main dish, soup, and a drink. With US\$15 to US\$20 per person, you can eat at an international eatery like Estambul. A simple breakfast and coffee cost US\$5 or less.

If you shop primarily at supermarkets, your grocery bill will be about US\$425 a month for a couple... but you can reduce this by buying fresh produce and seafood at the open-air market.

Don't forget that if you're living in Panama on the Pensionado Visa, you're eligible for certain discounts, which could translate to further savings. You get a 25% discount on your utility bills and airline tickets, a 20% discount on doctor's bills, a 50% discount on hotel stays (Monday to Friday), for instance.

“C”

In “C” destinations, the average monthly cost of living for two is between US\$2,250 and US\$3,000.

DESTINATIONS



Tavira is less expensive than the Algarve's brand-name towns, like Lagos and Carvoeiro. A couple's basic monthly budget should come to about US\$2,646.

Living here, your big-ticket expense will be rent, which can vary drastically depending on the unit's age, location, and amenities. Anywhere from US\$500 to US\$1,000 a month is reasonable for a two-bedroom apartment.

Your electricity bill will be between US\$50 and US\$70 a month for an average-size, two-bedroom place using electric heating, air conditioning, and appliances. There are

a few hacks that Tavira expats use to keep bills down, like installing electric blinds to keep the heat out in summer.

Groceries will cost between US\$300 and US\$350 a month, depending on which stores you shop at and how many imported goods you buy. Dinners out can cost between US\$10 to US\$20, depending on the restaurant. You'll want between US\$30 and US\$50 for a more upscale place.

As a retirement-age person, you'll enjoy certain savings in the Algarve. Movie tickets are about US\$7 for seniors; you get a discount on public transport and 50% off domestic train tickets. There are also many free concerts and cultural events that take place throughout the year.

“D”

In “D” destinations, the average monthly cost of living for two is between US\$3,000 and US\$3,750.

DESTINATIONS



D

Paris
FRANCE

Paris is an expensive city... If you've visited the city, you're likely already aware of that fact. But you have to remember that you'd be living here as an expat, not visiting as a tourist.

You wouldn't be shelling out for a ride up the Eiffel Tower every week, hitting up the museums with high entrance fees, or eating or drinking in the known tourist traps.

You'd quickly figure out which stores to visit and which to avoid... One friend of LIOS (who has a background in accounting) reports that during a six-month stint in Paris, his expenses went down every single month. →



In other words, you'd figure out the savings tips and tricks that so many who live here use in order to make life in Paris financially manageable. And Paris is financially manageable for a two-income household. A couple's basic monthly budget here should come to about US\$3,724.

Rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Central Paris is about US\$2,500. Utilities of all kinds are generally cheaper on this side of the pond.

The Hustle reports that, “The average American household spends twice as much on cell phone bills as the average French household. For internet, many Americans have the choice between Comcast and, well, Comcast—while French people typically have at least five providers to choose from.”

Food is another area where you'll save. The lifestyle here lends itself to making small shopping trips for fresh food every couple of days as needed rather than buying longer-lasting products once a week, which are always more expensive.

Plus, the quality of goods is so high, you can relish all the locally made products and never buy imported. American goods aren't commonly found, so you aren't tempted



(though if you do hit an American store here, you'll pay dearly for it).

The best time to eat out is for a weekday lunch, when you can get great *formules*, *prix fixe* menu deals, on the dishes of the day. Starter and main, main and dessert, all three... sometimes the main course and wine or coffee... and these menus can be found for as little as US\$10 if you look hard enough. Generally, a dinner out costs about US\$20 to US\$40 a head in Paris.



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ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Climate



Climate is a more important category than you might think. The prevailing weather conditions of a place can really affect your life.

Climate can affect mood... Sunshine is thought to increase serotonin, the brain's chemical messenger that boosts mood and helps you feel calm. There's a reason so many Canadians flock to Mexico... or Brits and other Northern Europeans set up shop in the south of Spain.

Climate can also affect your finances. If you relocate to a tropical destination with hot weather year-round, you're going to need air conditioning, which adds a significant expense to your monthly utilities bill.

On the flipside, if you go to a cool-weather destination, you'll need to factor in the cost of heating. There are also places in the Goldilocks Zone—never too hot, never too cold—where neither air conditioning nor heating are required.

If you move to a place that's big on outdoor recreation but low on indoor entertainment,

climate is especially important. These two categories (Recreation and Entertainment) might seem like the most frivolous in the Index, but they're the ones that affect how much you actually enjoy your new life overseas... just as important as the practical considerations, like Taxes and Cost Of Living.

The thing about climate is that it's subjective. Everyone has a different definition of "perfect weather." Some want nothing but the heat and humidity of the tropics; others require the four seasons to help them mark the passage of time...

We recognize the importance of Climate in a decision to move overseas, so we've included it in the Index... but we don't assign grades for this category. Instead, we break the destinations down by climate type and let you decide for yourself what place suits you best weather-wise.



Warm To Hot Year Round

If you want to do away with your winter coat forever, if you never want to shovel another driveway or see snow again, pay attention to the destinations in this sub-category.

You can count on warm to hot weather every day of the year in these places. This means you will probably want to have air conditioning if you relocate to any of these places, which can up your monthly utilities bill.

Generally, these are places that only get two seasons: a dry season and a rainy season. Sunrise and sunset are at consistent times of day throughout the year, and temperatures fluctuate very little if at all.



Chitré

📍 PANAMA

In Chitré, temperature varies little throughout the year. The average high is 95°F (35°C) and the average low is 72°F (22°C), and humidity is about 77% throughout the year.

The heat and sun are intense—perfect for sun worshippers, but you'll want air conditioning and to make sure to stay hydrated and carry a hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses... heat stroke is a risk here.

Like all of Panama, Chitré has two seasons: the rainy season (May to December) and the dry season (January to April).

If you want heat but dislike rain and humidity, there's no better place to be in Panama...

The rainy season is noticeably shorter in Chitré than in the rest of the country because it's in the country's Dry Arch. It only rains for two or three months instead of the standard seven, for a total of about 99 inches of rainfall per year.

Corozal

📍 BELIZE

Corozal is warm year round, with an average high of 89°F (32°C) and an average low of 70°F (21°C)—perfect conditions to enjoy life on the Caribbean.

Humidity is about 77% throughout the year. Some say they can get by with just a fan and a well-ventilated home in Corozal, but air conditioning will make you more comfortable.

Just like Chitré, Corozal is a two-season destination, with a rainy season from June until November and a dry season from December until about May. It gets 100 days of rain per year for an annual average of 53 inches. It's mid-range in terms of rainy days per year...



Costa De La Luz

📍 SPAIN



Costa de la Luz means “the Coast of Light,” and there’s good reason for this moniker. This region gets 3,070 sunshine hours per year. No need to worry about vitamin D deficiency if you move here.

The weather in this part of the world is hot. Winters are mild and summers are scorching. Using Cádiz, the centerpiece of the Costa de la Luz, as a guide for average temperatures, the average high is 71°F (22°C) and the average low is 60°F (16°C).

Humidity ranges from 64% to 74%. You will definitely want air conditioning here.

This area gets 53 days of rain per year on average or about 21 inches... This is one of the lowest rainfall amounts of any place in this Index—a great choice if you hate rain.

Kyrenia

📍 NORTHERN CYPRUS

Northern Cyprus is known for having the longest summer in Europe, beginning in March and lasting to October, even November, with over 300 days of sunshine a year... Unsurprisingly, it's home to huge numbers of Brits and Scandinavians.

Here, the average high is 76°F (25°C) and the average low, 60°F (15°C). For access to a true Mediterranean climate and the associated lifestyle, Kyrenia is a top choice. You'll most likely want air conditioning in Kyrenia.

It gets 58 days of rain per year, which comes out to an average of 21 inches of precipitation... On par with the Costa de la Luz in terms of rainfall, this is another great place to base yourself if you hate rain.



Sanur

📍 INDONESIA



A bona fide beach destination, temperatures are warm year round in Sanur. Being just a few degrees from the equator ensures this.

The average high is about 86°F (30°C), and the average low is about 73°F (23°C). Humidity is consistently at about 87%. You'll definitely want to have air conditioning living in Sanur.

Its climate is officially a tropical monsoon climate with two seasons: rainy and dry. Rainy season hits in October and lasts until April, when downpours are significant and it rains consistently every day. During dry season, May to September, days are sunny and rain is unlikely. Expect about 40 inches of rainfall annually.

Tavira

📍 PORTUGAL

The Algarve region where Tavira is found has a mild, almost Mediterranean climate, with more than 300 days or 3,300 hours of sunshine a year... Its climate is one of the best in Europe, with temperatures varying between 55°F (13°C) and 72°F (22°C) and humidity hovering at about 69%.

The hottest months of the year in Tavira are June through September, when temperatures are in the low to mid-70s (21°C to 24°C). The coolest months of the year are December to March at around 55°F (13°C). Most have air conditioning in Tavira, although newer-build apartments are designed to keep intense sunlight out with heavy shutters.

Winter coincides with the rainy season, when you might get five to seven rainy days in a month. You can expect about 21 inches of rain to fall annually... Low, just like Costa de la Luz and Kyrenia.



Highland Or Temperate

These are destinations in the Goldilocks Zone. They're never too hot and never too cold, aligning with most people's definition of perfect weather. They stand out for having cooler temperatures compared to the regional average.

All of the following destinations are situated at an elevation... Altitude has two effects: it lowers the average temperatures and keeps those temperatures consistent throughout the year.

You may have a slight change in season in Highland or Temperature locales... usually to do with the amount of rainfall rather than temperature change.

The main benefit of choosing one of the following locations is you won't need air conditioning or home heating—a huge bonus considering the ever-increasing cost of electricity around the world.



Da Lat

📍 VIETNAM

You might automatically think Medellín when you hear the words “City of Eternal Spring,” but if we’re talking about Asia, we’re talking about Da Lat.

It sits at an elevation of almost 5,000 feet (1,500 meters) above sea level, creating a temperate mountainous climate that’s pretty much perfect—never too hot or cold (meaning no air conditioning or home heating is needed).

The temperature perpetually hovers at about 65°F. Da Lat doesn’t really get seasons... Just a bit of rainfall, especially from July to September. Throughout the year, it gets 70 inches of rainfall.

Da Lat’s climate is so agreeable, it’s the reason foreigners came here in the first place and what continues to draw them here today. Think cool weather, misty peaks, and pine forest—all a novelty in Vietnam.

Medellín

📍 COLOMBIA

Unlike Da Lat, Medellín's reputation as the City of Eternal Spring is globally held.

It's also situated at a height of almost 5,000 feet (1,500 meters) above sea level. This altitude gives it a cooler climate than other cities located this close to the equator.

The average high is 82°F (28°C), the average low is 63°F (17°C), and the average humidity about 67%. With pleasant, warm days year-round and cool nights, you don't need air conditioning or heating in Medellín... Most people agree that these factors add up to a perfect climate.

This city is unique in that it has two rainy seasons, from April to May and October to November, getting an average



of 69 inches of rainfall a year. You'll most likely get 20 to 40 minutes of rain in the afternoons or a shower overnight. During raining season when you leave home, wear your sunglasses but also carry an umbrella.

Oaxaca

📍 MEXICO



Oaxaca is a regional retreat from hot and humid weather conditions in Mexico's coastal and lowland areas.

It sits at 5,100 feet (1,555 meters) above sea level, which keeps its temperatures cool. Here the average high is 85°F (29°C) and the average low is 56°F (13°C), with an average humidity of 64%.

Oaxaca gets two seasons: rainy, from May to September, and dry, from October to April. It gets about 99 days of

precipitation per year for an annual total of 30 inches of rainfall.

This city is surrounded by mountains, making for a stunning backdrop and plenty of opportunities for adventure. The comfortable year-round weather means you can enjoy Oaxaca's outdoor recreation opportunities to the maximum.

Four Seasons

The climate in Four Season destinations is similar to what we get in Canada and most of the United States.

In other words, it's four distinct periods that are characterized by significant change in temperature and climatic conditions. The number of daylight hours varies throughout the year as well.

In these places, you'll at least want to have home heating in the cooler months of the year if not air conditioning in the hotter months (if it's available). These are places to focus on if you don't want to say goodbye to seasonal change and enjoy temperature variation throughout the course of the year.



Paris

📍 FRANCE

Paris is the only destination in this year's Index that gets a full four seasons...

Autumns are often gray and rainy; springs are usually brighter and rainy. Winter has just as much blue sky as gray. You might even get a few snow days in winter, but they're rare. Summers are hot and sticky... and air conditioning is scarce.

The average high is 62°F (17°C) and the average low is 48°F (9°C), with average humidity hovering at about 76%. You'll →



typically see about 25 inches of precipitation a year—low for Northern Europe.

It's important to point out how daylight hours can affect you if you move from a tropical to a four-season destination (or vice versa). This is what Kat Kalashian, Live And Invest Overseas Europe Expert, said when she relocated from Panama to Paris in 2018...

"In Panama, I got used to 365 days of 12 hours of light and 12 of dark. For seven years I got up with the sun and commuted home with the sunset. Moving to Paris in December was a shock—the sun came up just before 9 a.m. and set before 5 p.m. My body just couldn't wake up in the dark anymore...

"Then there's the summer... the sun rises around 5:30 a.m. and sets around 10 p.m. I'm now coming up on my four-year anniversary of living in Paris, and I'd say my body has only just recently begun to find a rhythm that feels natural."



ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Health Care



Health care is a primary concern for anyone moving overseas.

It’s a difficult category to address because one size does not fit all when it comes to health. You’ll need to take your personal health concerns and preferences into consideration for every destination on the list.

In some places around the world, it’s possible to arrange good, comprehensive health insurance for US\$100 per month. In some countries, the cost of medical care can be so low that it makes more sense to pay for it as you need it rather than insure against it. And, under certain circumstances, health care can even be free.

These are all potential upsides to one of the most important, complicated, and personal aspects of retiring overseas.

Have misgivings about getting treatment outside of the United States or Canada? You shouldn’t. The United States ranks 37th in the World Health Organization’s ranking of health care, while Canada ranks 30th. Five of our recommended havens in this Index are in the top 25 (France, Spain, Portugal, Colombia, and Cyprus).

Medical tourism is one of the fastest-growing tourism industries in the world. Countries in Latin America, Asia, and Europe are competing to offer advanced treatments and procedures, often performed by American-trained doctors and specialists using state-of-the-art equipment, for a fraction of the cost you’d pay in North America.

These countries know that medical costs in North America are out of control, and they want your business.

Of course, if you’ve got any health problems that require ongoing care, any mobility issues, or a handicap, these special needs should be factored into your decision-making process, too.

Grading Health Care

Health care grades in this report are based on the quality of care offered and the proximity to hospitals (that is, those within an hour of the destination).

A	Excellent quality—suitable for any and all types of treatments.	C	Decent to average quality—suitable for basic treatments. For anything more complex, better-quality care should be sought out.
B	High to decent quality—suitable for most treatments except the most complex.	D	Unsuitable for anything but the most basic treatments. You’ll need to travel abroad to have medical needs treated.



Places that get “As” for health care offer a wide range of excellent-quality medical facilities. Any medical need can be met in these destinations. Moving to an “A” destination usually represents an upgrade in your health provisioning.

DESTINATIONS



Health care is a major selling point for Colombia, its health system ranked 22nd in the world by the WHO. Many of the best hospitals in the country are found in Medellín. In fact, many of the top hospitals in all of Latin America are found here. Colombia's only JCI-accredited hospital (Hospital Pablo Tobón Uribe) is located in Medellín.

Excellent health care will be easily accessible no matter where you base yourself in Medellín.

Medellín is a major medical tourism destination. From dental work to complicated surgeries, people seek out this city to receive medical attention. The difference in price compared to North America is often so stark that it's worth →



it to buy round-trip flights and pay for accommodation just to have work done here.

Many short-term visitors travel to Medellín with basic travel insurance that covers serious emergencies. Part-time Medellín expat Sasha Savinov says, “My personal recommendation is Safety Wing, as it covered my wife and my humanitarian flights back to the States when we got stuck here during the first COVID-19 lockdown.”

Then again, it’s easy and cheap enough to pay for most things out of pocket. Things like routine check-ups, generic prescription drugs, and dental work are such a bargain compared to prices up north.

To access local health care as a resident, you’ll first need a visa and a *cédula* (local ID). Then you’ll be eligible for a local plan under Entidades Promotoras de Salud, or EPS. These are basic health care plans that everyone in Colombia must have by law.

These plans cost 12.5% of your monthly income, or pension for retirees. They cover medical, vision, and dental, but at a basic level. Each plan has its own network, so you’ll need to be clear about which hospitals and doctors you can visit. Most expats opt to sign up for some kind of private coverage, known as *medicina prepaga*, in addition to EPS. The cost depends on a variety of factors, such as your age and pre-existing conditions.

A+ Paris

FRANCE

Paris is a place where you can have any medical need met, regardless of how complex the procedure. France’s health care system is world-class, ranked first in the world by the WHO. In Paris specifically, you’ll have access to the best medical care in the country, and it’s all within arm’s reach—you won’t have to go far to find any of the care you need.

Most of the cost of France’s health care is free if you’re a member of French Social Security (if you’re paying taxes in France). If not, care is still affordable enough that paying out of pocket is a viable option.

Paris expat Kat Kalashian says, “I’m not able to take advantage of the free health care yet, but I’ve seen my share of doctors since moving thanks to pregnancy and childbirth.

“I’ve only had private care, and the most expensive test I had was US\$153... and only a couple of tests were over US\$100. Ordinarily, specialist visits are about US\$50; a clinic visit just US\$25.



These plans ensure shorter wait times and fewer hoops to jump through to see a specialist. There are a few different insurance companies you can go through to get set up on these plans, with SURA being a favorite among expats.

One great thing about health care here is that you don’t even need to go to a clinic or hospital to get diagnosed and buy medication. Pharmacists in Medellín can give basic medical advice, and many medications are readily available over the counter.

It’s not difficult to find a doctor that speaks English here, as many have completed some of their studies abroad and are used to treating international patients. While the health care system here is very good overall, many expats still complain about bureaucracy and wait times.



“To have my baby in one of Paris’ most recommended maternity wards cost about US\$5,300 for a stay of four days, which is the minimum time you’ll be kept in the hospital after birth here. I had to pay out of pocket, but my private insurance reimbursed me for all of it.”

A wide range of highly ranked hospitals If you’re adamant about seeing American doctors, the American Hospital is a great, if expensive institution. There’s also the Franco-Britannique, with British doctors. Doctolib.fr is a great online resource for finding doctors, and you can filter to search for those who speak English.



Panama's health care system is ranked 95th by the WHO... The standard of care in the public system is basic, while the standard of care in the private system is excellent. As an expat, you will almost certainly choose to be cared for in the private system by enrolling in a low-cost insurance plan.

The best private health facilities in the country are generally found in Panama City... Chitré, however, is an exception to this rule.

It offers excellent private and public health care. The two best private clinics are Clínica San Juan Bautista and Clínica Dr. Venancio Villareal. Hospital General Cecilio A. Castillero and Hospital Gustavo Nelson Collado are public hospitals offering exceptional care.

Care is free to residents and citizens with Panamanian Social Security. Without Social Security, the cost is US\$15 per day and US\$1 for a consultation.

Hospital Regional de Azuero, in La Villa de Los Santos (10 minutes from Chitré), is a public hospital that has an

agreement with Johns Hopkins. It specializes in heart attacks and heart disease, and all treatment is 100% free, with or without insurance. The doctors are excellent, and some speak English.

Hospital San Fernando, one of Panama City's finest private hospitals (it is JCI-accredited), is building a second location in Chitré, which is progressing quickly and should open this year. The company just bought brand-new equipment and will hire local doctors.

You have several options for dentistry and orthodontics, including Clínica DentiAzuero, Clínica de Odontología José Villalaz, and Clínica Dental Cambara Calderon.

Optometrists, physical therapists, and massage therapists are also available.

Chitré is growing steadily, especially in the health sector, making it an ideal destination for senior citizens, individuals with health concerns or disabilities, families with small children, or anyone else needing superior medical care within a few minutes' drive.



A Costa De La Luz

📍 SPAIN

Spain's health care system is ranked seventh-best by the World Health Organization. Across the country, hospitals are of a high standard, with highly trained medical staff and high-tech equipment.

Spain offers a mix of public and private care, with about 90% of the population relying on public health care. The Ministry of Health oversees the system, though it's decentralized and delivered regionally. In Andalucía, it's delivered by the Andalusian Health Service (Servicio Andaluz de Salud).

Primary health care is delivered at health centers (*centros de salud*) across Spain. You can register with a GP at a health center after becoming part of the national health system and paying social security contributions. One expat quotes about US\$60 for her monthly contributions.



In Cádiz, there is one public hospital (Hospital Universitario Puerta del Mar) and three private ones. You'll also find public and private hospitals in Jerez (five), El Puerto de Santa María (one), and Sanlúcar (one). Pharmacies are abundant in every town.

A Kyrenia

📍 NORTHERN CYPRUS

Cyprus's health care system is ranked 12th in the world by the WHO. In Northern Cyprus, care is of such a high standard, medical tourists are starting to seek it out.

Many come for world-class treatments in IVF while others take advantage of the low cost of complex investigations (MRIs, CT scans, etc.) as well as inexpensive dental care.

Costs are so low that many pay out of pocket. The average cost of seeing a specialist, for example, is around US\$45. Standards are excellent, and medical professionals are English-speaking and well-qualified.

In Kyrenia, the main hospitals are Kyrenia General Hospital (a public facility), Kyrenia Medical Centre (private), and Kolan British Hospital (private). In all of Northern Cyprus's cities, you'll find private and state-run clinics and hospitals, as well as surgeries, emergency medical facilities, dentists, opticians, and even alternative health care options.

To get public health care, residents must apply for state health insurance in the capital. However, one of the requirements for applying for residency is that you have private insurance, which means you already have coverage.

Emergency care is provided to everyone in Northern Cyprus, regardless of whether they have the financial



means to pay for it. The 112 TRNC Ambulance Service is staffed by trained paramedics and offers rapid response times.

Pharmacies are found across Northern Cyprus and operate almost like clinics. Their staff is English-speaking and can recommend treatments for minor ailments. A range of medications are available, and pharmacists can dispense a wider variety of drugs than in the States, Canada, or the U.K.

Northern Cyprus dentists are often trained abroad, in Europe, Turkey, or the States. Prices can be as low as one-third the cost of equivalent care in the States, making up for the travel expense of getting to Northern Cyprus to have treatments done.

A Oaxaca

MEXICO

A major draw of living in Oaxaca (and Mexico in general) is the high-quality, affordable health care. Your medical bills will be a fraction of what they are up north if you relocate here.

On the most basic level, you can see a doctor in the small offices that are attached to most pharmacies. This costs US\$2 or so and is

great if you're feeling under the weather and need a quick diagnosis.

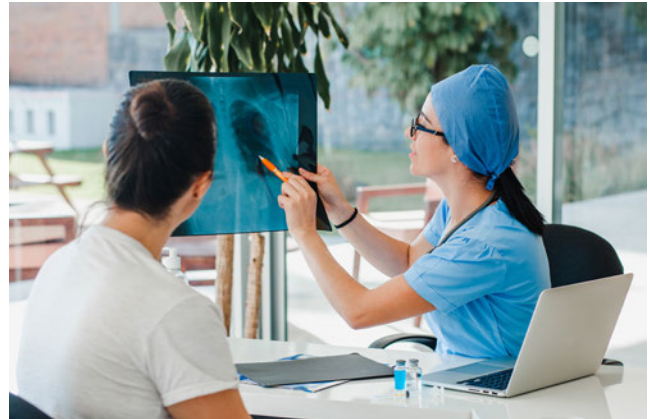
They can give you a quick consultation and write a prescription to be filled next door. Don't expect these doctors to speak English, so come with a friend or a translator if your medical Spanish isn't up to par.

Plastic surgery and dental work are so affordable that some people travel here specifically for operations. Generally, it costs a third (or even less) than it does up north.

There are plenty of qualified dentists and surgeons here, many of whom studied in the States and speak English. Prescription drugs are also way cheaper here than they are in the States.

For more serious matters, Oaxaca is home to plenty of excellent clinics and hospitals, many of which have English-speaking doctors and specialists. Some recommended private hospitals include Hospital del Valle, Clínica Hospital Carmen, and Hospital Reforma.

Your American Medicare or Canadian national insurance won't be any good here. Many people take out an international plan or just get some kind of emergency



travel insurance and pay for minor things out of pocket in Mexico.

If you're looking to become a permanent resident in Mexico, you can eventually join the national program, the Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social (IMSS). It costs about US\$515 a year for someone in their 60s.

Should you go this route, be prepared to have lots of patience and plenty of backup options. You'll need a translator if you're not fluent in Spanish to help sort out your application. While you can expect delays in receiving treatment and problems with language barriers, IMSS is affordable and covers preventative treatments.

Some expats choose to get IMSS coverage but still visit private clinics here and there for things like lab tests. Sure, this costs more, but the time saved and the ease of communicating in English make it worth it.

In case of a serious emergency that requires a lengthy hospital stay, it's good to know that your IMSS coverage is there if you need it.



A- Tavira

PORTUGAL

Portugal ranks 12th out of 190 countries for health care, according to the WHO. Its state health care system is paid for by taxes and is typically available to all residents of Portugal, but many expats take out private health insurance as well.

For U.S. and other non-EU citizens, you'll be required to have private health insurance for your visa entry. If you gain residency and live here, you can access the state system.

Private policies range from several hundred euros per year, up to (or even over) US\$3,190 per year. Costs will depend on many factors, including your age, overall health, and any previous or current conditions.

You may still be required to pay a small percentage of the costs for any treatment you receive, depending on your policy. In Portugal, the private hospitals don't have facilities for all treatments, and depending on your condition, you may still need to go through the state health care system.

In the state system, you can register with your local health center, but due to staffing issues across the Algarve, it's unlikely that you'll be registered with an actual doctor.

If you need to see a doctor, most health centers run a type of triage system. You turn up first thing in the morning, tell the receptionist what is wrong, and depending upon the numbers for the day, you're most likely to be seen that morning or given an appointment to return in the afternoon. Longer waiting times occur if you need to see a specialist, and waiting times of over a year are sadly common.

The private system means that you're more likely to meet with an English-speaking doctor. Although English is



widely spoken across the Algarve, especially by those more senior in the health care industry, finding English-speaking medical staff isn't guaranteed.

Tavira has a handful of public and private clinics. The main public clinic is Centro de Saúde; the main private clinics are Taviclínica Médica, where you'll find a handful of English-speaking doctors. The clinics are suitable for the “walking wounded”—people who are ill but not suffering from something life-threatening.

The main hospital serving Tavira is Faro District Hospital, which is 30 minutes away in the town of Faro. It provides services in a range of fields—genetics, allergies and immunology, vascular surgery, rheumatology, and emergency care—but it gets mixed reviews from expats.

Some bemoan the long wait times for drop-in care; others are satisfied with the professional, high-standard care they have received.

Dental clinics are found across the Algarve, and unless you're covered under your private health insurance, you'll pay per visit. Prices are reasonable: US\$50 for a check-up and polish, and US\$65 for a basic tooth extraction.



“B”

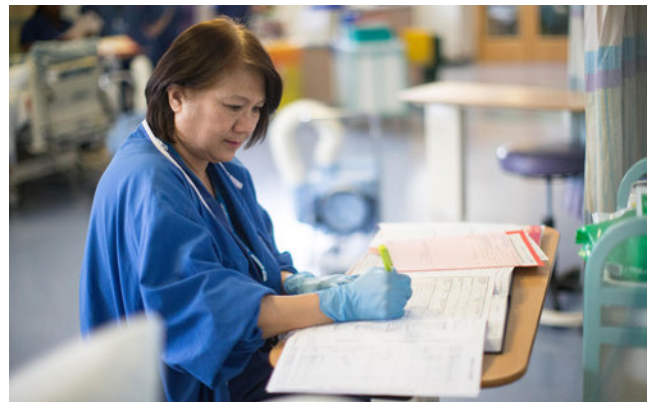
Places that get “Bs” for health care offer a wide range of decent-quality medical facilities. The local facilities are fine for most types of treatments, save for the most complex ones.

DESTINATIONS



While Bali’s health care options don’t match up to Singapore or Thailand’s standards, its hospitals are well equipped to handle medical emergencies. There are over a dozen hospitals and many clinics throughout Bali. Most minor illnesses and accidents can be treated effectively without leaving the island.

Sanur is well positioned to access the best health care on the island. It’s 20 minutes from the modern BIMC Hospital, with English-speaking staff. BIMC specializes in providing care to foreigners in the country for retirement or tourism. They have the facilities to treat trauma-related accidents and medical emergencies, as well as a laboratory and X-ray imaging. →



Another option is Sanglah Public Hospital (25 minutes away) in Denpasar, which offers sophisticated medical facilities. You can have your annual physical, routine lab work, and minor ailments and injuries treated at local hospitals...

That said, Bali does not have the quality of medical care—at any price—of its neighboring countries. Most expats requiring complex medical care fly to Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, or Australia for treatment.

Expats seek out private medical insurance that accommodates that strategy. A medical evacuation can be extremely costly. Many insurance companies, such as BUPA and World Nomads, offer reasonably priced health and travel insurance.

Most medications that require a prescription in the West can be purchased over-the-counter and inexpensively in Indonesia. It's important to check the expiration date when buying medications. Most come in individually packaged “unit dose” containers (one dosage per pack, usually sold in multiple packs), so always make sure that the package shows no sign of tampering.

There are two primary types of insurance on Bali: international and local. International health insurance tends to be most common among expats because of its higher levels of benefits, greater flexibility, better quality of service, and ability to be used in other countries.



“C”

DESTINATIONS

None of the destinations in this year's Index get “Cs” for **Health Care**.

“D”

In “D” destinations, you should plan on saving up an emergency fund or purchasing international health care because you’ll need to travel somewhere else to have your health care needs met. Local care isn’t up to international standards.

DESTINATIONS



Da Lat is home to a handful of public and private hospitals... Expats exclusively use the private hospitals, like Lam Dong General and Hoan My, where the standards of care are fine for basic procedures.

Hoan My Hospital is the more highly recommended of the two because it’s clean, modern, and part of the Hoan My Medical Group, the largest private hospital and clinic group in the country.

The cost of private care is low enough that most expats can afford to pay out of pocket... But there are a few options for local health insurance providers, such as HSBC Vietnam, →



Baoviet Health Insurance, and Pacific Cross Vietnam, for the risk-averse. Plans aren't expensive.

The Pasteur Institute is also recommended for vaccines, injuries, and illnesses. An infectious-disease research center, it's mainly responsible for vaccine production and administration, but since 2014, has also operated a free-standing clinic to serve the local population's general health needs.

For more serious medical needs, you should make your way to Ho Chi Minh City where you can access an excellent

standard of care. The French-Vietnamese Hospital earned Joint Commission International accreditation in 2016, and Vinmec International Central Park Hospital received it in 2017, ensuring better quality health care and patient safety.

It can be difficult to find an English-speaking doctor in Da Lat. Expats tend to ask a Vietnamese friend who can translate to accompany them to appointments. That, or the Google Translate app on your cell phone are your best options.



Belize's health care system is ranked 69th by the WHO. Public facilities that provide basic health care for free are found throughout the country... Most of the clinics and hospitals suffer from inadequate equipment and facilities. Health care is not up to international standards in Belize.

That said, the bedside manner and genuine concern of the medical staff can make up for the lack of equipment and resources.

One expat couple in Cayo recently shared that their doctor exceeded their expectations by performing consistent diagnostic tests, identifying early prostate issues, and even picking up their medication from Mexico. Doctors are quick to offer their personal cell phone numbers and are even likely to make house calls.

Basic health care services are reliable and inexpensive at local hospitals and clinics in Orange Walk and Corozal. The main hospital in Corozal is Corozal Community Hospital.

Serious issues are sent to the public Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital in Belize City. While there is an excellent acute trauma unit in KHHM, standards of care in every other area of the hospital are shockingly inconsistent due to chronic underfunding and staffing issues.

Most expats and wealthy Belizeans go to the private clinics and hospitals, which have better facilities and more knowledgeable staff. Private practices offer good general medical care, and a visit to see a GP will cost you US\$20 to US\$30.

English-speaking staff is always available. Cost of medication is low due to the availability of reasonable quality generic brands, and a large pharmacy can generally order specific medications if you give them notice.

Expats can also drive 30 minutes across the border to Chetumal, Mexico, to be treated, where the quality of care is much higher.



Quality Health Care At Jaw-Droppingly Low Prices...

In certain places overseas, the quality of health care is just as good or even better than back home. It's also much, much more affordable—usually at least 50% cheaper...

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ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Entertainment



How do you picture spending your time in retirement overseas?

Do you crave museums and café culture...? Taking dance classes or doing yoga on the beach...? Would you feel lost without a weekly trip to the movies or to the opera every now and then?

How do you picture spending your time in retirement overseas?

Do you crave museums and café culture...? Taking dance classes or doing yoga on the beach...? Would you feel lost without a weekly trip to the movies or to the opera every now and then?

In **Entertainment**, we cover all the cultural amenities a place has to offer... things like museums, opera, theater, classes (university courses, dance, art, etc.), festivals and fairs, historical sites, restaurants, shopping, lectures, live music, libraries, cinemas, and more.

In most cases, these things are available in cities or other large population centers, which means

they're often condensed into a small area. In some cases, though, you might not have them all on your doorstep... as long as you can get to them within an hour's drive, they qualify for inclusion.

You could argue that **Entertainment** (and its counterpart, **Recreation**) are the most frivolous categories in this index... but in reality, they affect how much you actually enjoy your new life overseas on a day-to-day basis. That's important.

If high culture is your thing, pay attention to these grades

Grading Entertainment

The grading system for Entertainment works a little differently...

We look at how many of the below subcategories each place has (within an hour's drive). The more options the place offers, the higher the grade it gets.

Entertainment Subcategories:

- Movie theaters
- Museums or galleries
- Symphony or opera
- Theater
- Historical sites
- Festivals and fairs
- Shopping
- Fine dining
- English-language library
- Classes (university courses, dance, art, etc.)

A	8–10 subcategories
B	8–10 subcategories
C	2–4 subcategories
D	0–1 subcategory

“A”

DESTINATIONS

Places that get “As” for Entertainment have most every type of cultural amenity you can think of. Finding something to do is as simple as stepping out of your front door, and entertainment is available most any time of day or night, year-round.



A+

Paris
FRANCE

To live in Paris is to be part of what many consider to be ground zero of refined Western culture. Paris oozes culture and history...

For access to the historical, architectural, and social heart of Western culture, there is no better location.

From the countless churches and cathedrals to the dozens of museums and hundreds of galleries to the universities and varied classes of all kinds you could enroll in... this city offers the culture culture a lifetime's worth of fodder. →



“The whole of Paris is a vast university of Art, Literature and Music... it is worth anyone's while to dally here for years. Paris is a seminar, a post-graduate course in Everything,” said writer James Thurber.

Art and music thrive here, both historically and today. This cultural powerhouse has produced and attracted countless authors, painters, philosophers, and revolutionary thinkers. It continues to nurture artistic education and cultivate the arts for its residents.

Want to see an opera next Monday? The ballet on Tuesday? The symphony Wednesday and a fashion show Thursday? Dinner at one of the world's top 10 restaurants Friday

night? A cooking class Saturday and a lazy day sunbathing in the park Sunday? It's all possible in Paris.

Paris has been famous for its nightlife for a century and more. Clubs, bars, cabarets, and all-night parties in Paris... Plus, its wine and cuisine are world-renowned: *steak frites*, *coq au vin*, and *boeuf bourguignon*, and so on.

As for day-to-day entertainment? Paris Expat Kat says, “We find out about random events all the time—last weekend we went to a classical concert, the weekend before we went to a bilingual music class for kids, for Halloween several of the American organizations organized trick or treating. Some of these are free, some have a nominal fee.”

A Medellín

COLOMBIA

Medellín, Colombia's cultural capital, competes with the world's leading metropolises in terms of entertainment variety.

It has modern movie theaters with English-language movies and VIP seating (where the seats are more like full-reclining La-Z-Boys than normal theater seats), vibrant nightlife (trendy clubs, bars, etc.), museums and galleries, shopping malls and boutiques, and a diverse culinary scene, with everything from laidback local joints to fine-dining.

The variety of museums commemorating the region's culture and history is huge, but one of the most popular is Museo de Antioquia. It houses about 100 works of art by Fernando Botero, one of Colombia's most famous artists, as well as pre-Columbian, colonial, and modern art collections. Right outside its doors is where you find Botero's sculpture park, free for all to enjoy.

Festivals take place throughout the year, but Feria de las Flores, the flower festival held each August, deserves special mention. Already a verdant region, Medellín comes alive with eye-catching colors and pleasant fragrances when a myriad of plants bloom in its springtime.

Colombians take sports, and particularly soccer, extremely seriously, and frequent regional, national, and international matches take place at Medellín's stadiums. There are also festivals dedicated to music, literature, dance, and more throughout the year...

Medellín's culinary scene is vibrant and multifaceted, and a handful of events dedicated solely to food take place year-round. Medellín Gourmet Month, when local restaurants



offer fixed menus at bargain prices, is held each spring and fall. Burger Week and Ice Cream Week operate along the same lines.

As a family-oriented culture, there's a host of activities designed just for entertaining little ones, too. At the Universidad Metro Station, you'll find Parque Explora, an interactive educational museum; the Planetarium; a water museum; and Parque Norte, featuring an amusement park for kids...

“
B”

Places that get “Bs” for Entertainment also have a wide variety of cultural amenities to offer. The selection is slightly more limited than in “A” destinations, but a well-rounded lifestyle is still very possible in the following places.

DESTINATIONS**B+****Costa De La Luz**

📍 SPAIN

The culture of the Costa de la Luz is proud, traditional, and vibrant. Unique events based on ancient folklore are hosted throughout the year.

Cádiz's claim to fame is Carnival, which takes place over 10 days every February. Expect colorful processions, live music, dancing, and revelry and entertainment for all. Cádiz's version of carnival incorporates gaditano humor, for which people from Cádiz are famous.

Semana Santa (Holy Week) is a major event in Andalucía, and while it includes floats and processions, it is far more solemn and solemn than carnival. →



Members of local parish churches parade their statues of Jesus and Mary to the cathedral and back, accompanied by brass bands. Don't try to get anything done during Carnival or Semana Santa.

Jerez de la Frontera is most famous for sherry wine. The area between Jerez, El Puerto de Santa María, and Sanlúcar de Barrameda is known as the Sherry Triangle, and it's the only place in the world with the conditions to produce sherry.

People from this region have been making wine for centuries. You can learn more about the process and taste the product of this ancient tradition at Jerez's bodegas. The most famous are González Bypass (also known as Tío Pepe), Díez Mérito, or Bodegas Tradición.

Jerez is also famous for the Jerez Zambombas, a Christmastime flamenco celebration. Zambombas are a type of drum. They look like normal hand drums except they have a cane sticking out of the top of them, which, when played, creates a unique sound that goes along with flamenco Christmas carols.

The closest thing to city-like amenities you find along the Costa de la Luz—things like shopping at malls and



boutiques, dining at a wide selection of restaurants and bars, going to museums, shows, or live music, or taking in a generally lively, social atmosphere—is in Cádiz.

That said, this is a small city. If you're used to an action-packed, cosmopolitan environment with endless entertainment options at your fingertips, this may not be the right place for you.

B+ Kyrenia

📍 NORTHEN CYPRUS



Cyprus is lousy with castles, ruins, tombs, churches, and other ancient and medieval sites to visit, but the majority of the island's museums are in Nicosia (under 40 minutes from Kyrenia).

In Nicosia, you could catch a symphony performance, but you won't often come across opera, ballet, or other upmarket performing arts here.

In Kyrenia, there are seaside hotels, restaurants, and beach clubs, but it's most famous for its old harbor and castle. Before British occupation in the late 1800s, it was a thriving port town that facilitated trade between Europe and the Middle East.

Using traditional *caïques* (fishing boats found in the Aegean and Ionian Seas), Kyrenia was a point of export for →

everything from wheat and olives to donkeys and goats and a point of import for wood, earthenware, legumes, and dairy products.

Today, the harbor functions as a tourist attraction. So, too, does Kyrenia Castle, an imposing structure that features four massive artillery towers and that, in its history, has served the Byzantines, Crusaders, Venetians, Ottomans, and British.

Clubbing is big entertainment in Cyprus, and it's for all ages, so put on your dancing shoes and join in. Many clubs are attached to swanky hotels or are on the beach, often

with themed entertainment like belly dancing, flame throwing, stilt-walkers, and more.

Indulging in Cypriot food is one of the best aspects of living here. It's a perfect blend of Greek and Turkish, with Middle Eastern influences. Souvlaki (Greek roasted meats) or *pide* and *lahmacun* (Turkish calzone and pizza, respectively) are never far away.

Meat—specifically, grilled meat—is a specialty here. “We like to barbecue,” explains a colleague, “it's the most important social tradition for us. What do we have without meat?”

B+ Oaxaca

MEXICO



While it's not quite as exciting as Mexico City, there's plenty to do in Oaxaca. Simply wandering around the Zócalo provides endless entertainment. There are plenty of squares, museums, churches, markets, galleries, and more...

One of the most famous sights in the Zócalo is the stunning Santo Domingo church. Here you'll also find the Museum of Cultures and a lovely botanical garden.

If you're an art-lover, you'll feel right at home in Oaxaca. There are several museums and galleries in Centro, and there's eye-catching street art around every corner. Even just walking through the area with its pastel-colored buildings is like being in a gallery.

Eating and drinking are two of the main attractions in Oaxaca. This city is famous for its mole and mezcal. Pronounced “mo-lay,” this is a sauce typically made from chili peppers, fruits, nuts, and other spices. There are

many different varieties of mole, and you can try most of them in Oaxaca's central markets, such as Mercado 20 de Noviembre.

In its bustling Centro, you'll find colorful colonial buildings and even more colorful clothing and wares from the various indigenous groups that call the area home. The state of Oaxaca is home to about a third of Mexico's indigenous population.

Traditional festivals are a big deal here, including the month-long Guelaguetza that's focused on the dancing and clothing of the indigenous population. The city comes alive in celebration for the entire month of July.

Oaxaca is one of the best places to experience the Day of the Dead, with people coming from all over the world to view the elaborate ofrendas (altars) for this important holiday.

B+ Tavira

PORTUGAL

Tavira is widely considered the most authentic town in the Algarve. It has all the staples of a traditional Algarvean town: cobblestone streets, Moor-decorated doorways, whitewashed buildings, azulejo tiles, red pantiles, lacework chimney pots...

Tavira Castle is the town's best remnant of its Moorish legacy, dating back to the Almoravid Dynasty of the 1000s. Propped up on a hillside, it offers panoramic views of town—once very important for defending against raids from North African pirates. Today, it features crumbling walls and decorated gardens that burst with color in spring.

Tavira is home to a whopping 22 churches, including some noteworthy examples of Gothic and Renaissance architecture. Igreja da Misericórdia, built between 1541 and 1551, is the Algarve's best example of Renaissance architecture. On the outside of the church, you find an elaborately sculpted stone façade; on the inside, the walls are decorated with striking blue azulejo tiles.

Other historical attractions are the Palácio da Galeria, a 16th-century, hipped-roof palace that lends Tavira



a somewhat aristocratic feel. Today it doubles as an architectural marvel and exhibition space for local artists.

Ponte Antiga Sobre o Rio Gilo is a low-arched old bridge built in 1668 on Roman foundations. It now connects both sides of the Gilo Riverfront, where open-air cafés and kiosks, restaurants, and people strolling along the palm-fringed promenade can be found.

The Algarve is famous for its markets, where you can buy all kinds of goods, from fresh produce to antiques to clothing, jewelry, and plants. In Tavira, open-air markets operate year-round.

B Chitré

PANAMA



This is El Corazón De Panamá... The Heart Of Panama... few other Panamanian towns have preserved their traditions as well as Chitré.

There are multiple folkloric festivals throughout the year with *cabalgatas* (horse parades), *bailes típicos* (traditional dances), and women dressed in Panama's traditional attire, *la pollera*.

The festivals, the Spanish-colonial architecture, and the *fincas* (ranches) where *campesinos* (ranchers) work Brahman cattle on horseback, give you a sense of what life was like on the Azuero Peninsula decades ago.

For a glimpse into the past, spend an afternoon in the nearby towns of La Villa de Los Santos and La Arena. La Arena is famous for its *pan de la arena* ("sandy bread") and →

traditional pottery, which is displayed outside small shops around town.

La Villa de Los Santos is where, on Nov. 10, 1821, Panamanians gathered to declare independence from Spain—what is now known as El Primer Grito de Independencia.

The home where this meeting took place was built in the 1600s and still stands... You can see the meeting room, the independence letter, artifacts from the Azuero Peninsula, and more at Museo de la Nacionalidad (Museum of the

Nationality). La Villa boasts centuries-old Spanish-colonial architecture and is Panama's most traditional town.

In downtown Chitré, just off the main plaza, you can visit Catedral de San Juan Bautista (St. John the Baptist Cathedral) and Museo de Herrera (Museum of Herrera).

Other indoors entertainment options in Chitré include seeing a film at the local movie theater, Cines Moderno; testing your luck at Casino Azuero; or checking out the shops at Mall Paseo Central.

B Sanur

INDONESIA

Balinese local culture is fascinating. It's based on the Hindu faith, which arrived here in the first century A.D.

Despite these deep roots, Hinduism is still alive in Bali today, dictating various aspects of the local lifestyle, from the way people dress to the way they place delicate, handmade offerings outside their homes every day to the way ceremonies and rituals follow the same format they have for generations...

Balinese ceremonies and festivals take place throughout the year. Nyepi, for instance, is a day of silence, when absolutely everything shuts down, even the airport, and all of the island's residents have to be silent.

Bali has a long tradition of art, carpentry, and tapestry, which can be seen all over the island. Another form of traditional culture you can experience here is Balinese dance and theatre. *Wayang kulit* is a type of puppet show that depicts stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata and exemplifies Balinese handicraft skills.

In terms of Sanur's expat culture, it's a mixture of the surf lifestyle (think flip flops and shorts, surf shacks with live reggae music and cheap eats), entrepreneurs and digital



nomads, and yogi culture (with concepts of health and wellness, meditation, and green living at its core).

Sanur is full of trendy eateries, and restaurant, bar, and café hopping are popular and enjoyable pastimes. You can take any type of class here, from aerial yoga to salsa to surf lessons... It's a great place to pursue your hobbies in retirement; chances are there will be a group already set up and dedicated to your interest area.

Expats indulge in spa treatments at the innumerable spas. Massage is part of Balinese traditional culture and is practiced at home, so it's not seen as a luxury service and prices are shockingly cheap. You can get an hour-and-a-half Balinese massage for US\$15 here.



“C”

DESTINATIONS

“C” destinations offer some forms of entertainment, but the selection is limited. You should be good at keeping yourself entertained if you’re moving to a “C” destination and not reliant on external stimuli.

**C+** Da Lat
COUNTRY

While Da Lat is popular among expats past and present, it isn't a bustling metropolis where you'll find flashing lights and big-city amenities... quite the opposite.

People are attracted to Da Lat because it's peaceful. If you require European-style highbrow entertainment (like the opera or theatre), this isn't the right place for you...

What Da Lat does have in abundance is charming architectural remnants of Vietnam's French colonial period. The Da Lat Railway Station was built in 1932 by French architects Moncet and Reveron. It has three peaked roofs that look just like the Trouville-Deauville Station →



in Normandy. Today, it runs a daily service to Trai Mat, a traditional village nearby.

Despite Da Lat's small size, it's surprisingly diverse when it comes to religion. Buddhism and Catholicism are the two major religions, though Hoahaoism, Caodaism, Protestantism, and others are also represented here. Da Lat's architecture reflects this religious diversity...

Truc Lam Pagoda is a Zen Buddhist temple and one of Da Lat's main landmarks... The curved roofs of the temples contrast sharply against the pine forest that surrounds them.

About 100 Zen Buddhist monks and nuns practice here and tend the temple's immaculate gardens. It's also home to a Roman Catholic cathedral complete with a looming 154-foot (47-meter) spire.

The hub of cultural activity is the Central Market, which sells everything from cheap sunglasses, vegetables, and winter clothing to trinkets, mut (preserved fruit candy), and plants.

Because of Da Lat's highland climate, you can get a lot of locally grown produce here that you can't get in other areas



of Southeast Asia, like artichokes, asparagus, stone fruits, and berries.

Vietnamese food is some of the healthiest in the world because of its heavy emphasis on fresh herbs and vegetables and avoidance of oil and dairy. Out of necessity, Vietnamese people have learned to do a lot with a little.

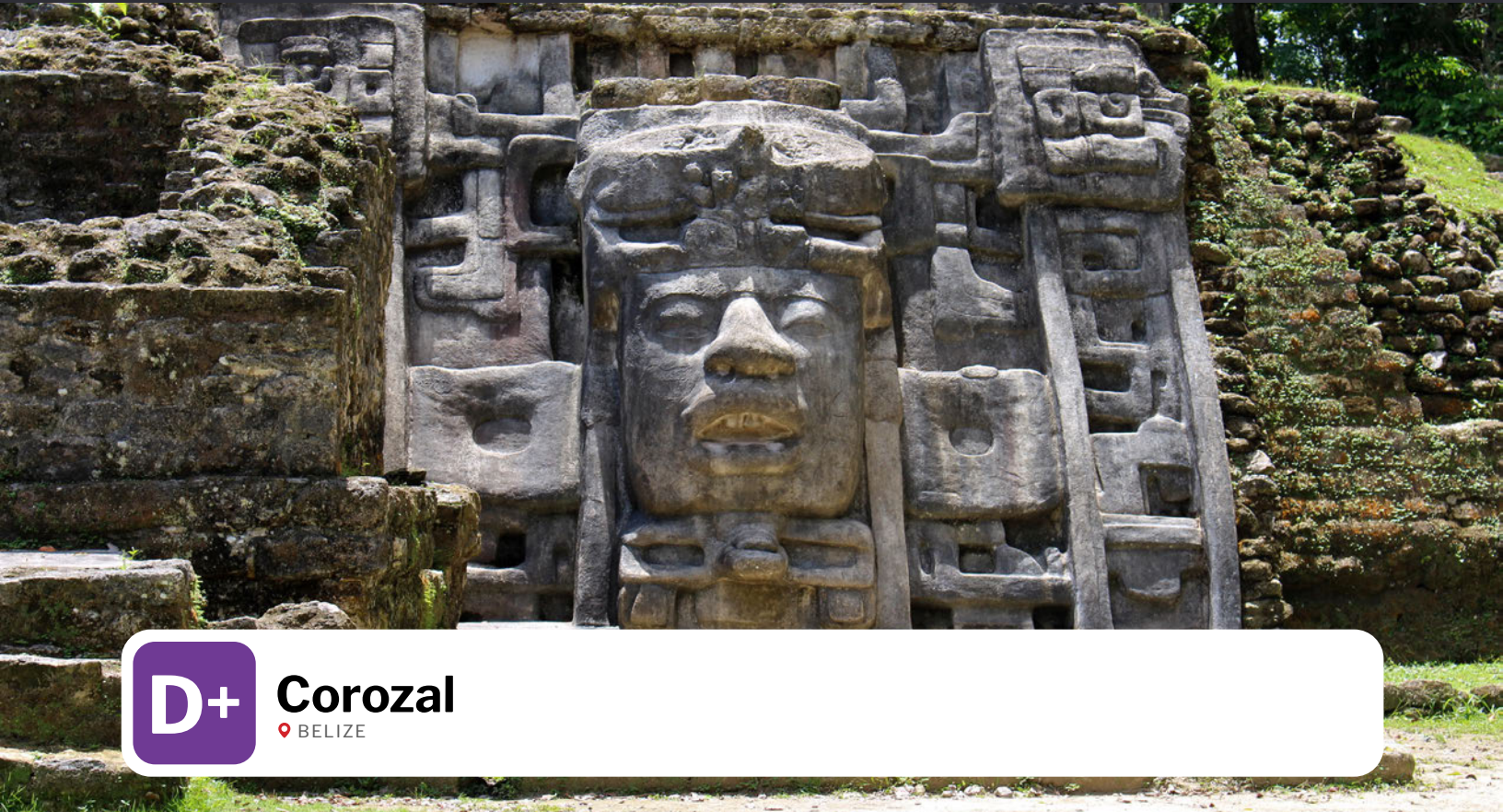
Dishes are prepared with simple, inexpensive ingredients but are expertly prepared... They're also extremely inexpensive, with the average meal costing about US\$2.



“D”

DESTINATIONS

“D” destinations are places where outdoor recreation is really the main form of entertainment. There’s little to nothing in terms of cultural amenities. To live in a “D” destination successfully, you have to be content with a low-key lifestyle or be adept at entertaining yourself.

**Corozal**
BELIZE

Corozal offers its own brand of local entertainment, culture, and history, which is a more down-to-earth form of entertainment than what’s described above (and maybe more appealing to certain people).

Northern Belize is rich in history, with ruins, temples, archaeological sites, and other remnants of the ancient Maya Empire found throughout the area. Santa Rita and Aventura Mayan Sites are nearby and have undergone recent archaeological work. →



Festivals and public markets take place throughout the year and are great places to get a dose of community. The Coconut Festival is a two-day annual festival including a grand re-enactment of the Maya Wedding at Santa Rita.

Corozal Graffiti Festival is held the last weekend in January, and live art, special effects makeup, bodypainting, pyrography, resin work, silent auctions, sailboat rides, and more take place.

One of the most popular regular events for expats and locals is Art in the Park. Held the last Sunday of every month in Corozal's Central Park, it's a chance for the





ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Expatriate Community



There are two general lifestyle types to choose from when you move overseas...

Do you want the ease, comfort, and familiarity of a place with a big expat population, or do you prefer to go local, relocating somewhere with few foreigners and opting for total cultural immersion?

There are half measures between these two extremes, of course, but make sure you get the inside scoop before committing to a place. Know how far you're willing to go to adapt to a new culture and choose a place that you think is within your comfort zone.

Imagine living in a small fishing village where no one speaks English... You'll need to make a big effort to fit in in a place like this. Socializing will likely involve learning the local language and attending local baseball games, rodeos, or festivals.

Now imagine living in a gated community in a beach resort. In these places, you'll find interest-

based clubs and activities, book and bridge clubs, Rotary Club chapters, and happy hours full of expats much like yourself...

You won't have to learn the local language because everyone speaks English... not so much effort but little authentic experience of your new country.

Both routes are valid. The key is being honest with yourself about what you want from your new home. There are pros and cons to every lifestyle type. It takes knowing yourself, how much you're willing to adapt, and the limits of your comfort zone to decide what type of place is right for you.

How The Grading Works

A	These are places with big, well-established, active expat communities made up of mostly English-speakers. Slipping into the local social scene couldn't be easier. All kinds of interest groups, organizations, clubs, and events provide opportunities to socialize and integrate.	C	These are places with small expat populations that aren't as engaged or socially active as the destinations that scored better in this category. The expat community is international and not necessarily English-speaking.
B	In these places, meeting foreigners is still easy, but the expat community is smaller and/or more disbursed. English is not necessarily the common language of the community. There's some organization of social activities.	D	These are places with zero expat community. You're really on your own as an expat living among locals.

“A”

DESTINATIONS

These are destinations that have established, long-standing expat communities. You'll be able to meet other expats easily, join a wide variety of organized activities, and speak English with the people you meet.



Sanur
INDONESIA

Bali's expat community is big, well-established, and active, full of people from all over the world. There are expats from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the States, Russia, Korea, Brazil, Japan, Argentina, and Germany to name a few. The common language of the community is English, which the locals speak to a high level, too.

People from all age groups are represented in this mix, from retirees to digital nomads to expats with young families. Sanur, with its proximity to all of Bali's best amenities (the airport, hospitals, malls, Western-style grocery stores, etc.) attracts retirees in particular.

To get involved in Sanur's expat community, you should start by subscribing to one of the many expat web pages or

online forums. There you'll find out about farmers' markets, open-mic nights, and other community events that take place regularly.

You can pursue a wide range of interests and become part of the sub-culture that corresponds to that interest. Yoga and surfing are huge draws, and plenty of clubs, groups, get-togethers, and so on are organized around them.

You can also get involved by volunteering... It's simply a matter of finding out what appeals to you and seeking out the associated group.

A Paris

FRANCE

If we were grading how easy it is to slip into the local social scene, Paris wouldn't score so highly... In terms of expats, however, there are thousands and thousands here, they're easy to find and get to know. Perhaps one of the greatest benefits to living in a capital city is the density of potential new folks to befriend.

When trying to meet people, start with your interests and research groups dedicated to them. You're nearly guaranteed to find a devoted group that already exists.

There are also plenty of more general groups, like InterNations (which is mostly working folks), several women's groups and parent groups. And if you can't find a group already set up, once you get involved in one of the more generic groups, you can start your own offshoot.

Your best bet for finding all these groups is through social media. Even if you hate Facebook, create a profile (even



a fake one) in order to get to know your local community. Check out [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com), a great resource for finding meet ups with folks you have something in common with.

You'll also meet people and find out about other events through organizations like the American Church and the American Library or just by going to American or British restaurants and shops.

A- Corozal

BELIZE

Northern Belize, where Corozal is found, has a big, well-established expat community, mostly made up of North Americans. Corozal specifically has one of the biggest populations of American expats in the whole country. Tapping into the expat community is easy...

But you also have options when it comes to your lifestyle type. If you want a more authentic lifestyle, you could settle into a humble, Belize-style home in one of the villages on Corozal's outskirts, where all your neighbors would be locals.

You could also opt for a full-on gringo lifestyle by settling into one of the private residential developments. These are basically mini gated communities, complete with amenities like 24-hour security, tennis courts, pools, and golf courses in some cases, and organized activities, like happy hour or beach volleyball.

Cerro Sands and Mayan Seaside are two examples of these types of developments. They feature big, American-style homes on prime beachfront lots with gorgeous Caribbean views...

They also come at a much higher cost than a more authentically Belizean lifestyle. A local-style house can



rent for as low as US\$200 per month, while a home in one of these developments could be as much as US\$1,000 per month.

Regardless of where you settle, you'll find opportunities to connect with other expats online and in-person. Clubs for a wide range of interests, from sailing to bird-watching to art, exist. There are volunteer groups, a Women's Forum, and local chapters of the Rotary and Lions Clubs.

You can also meet other expats as you go about daily life, whether you hit the golf course at Consejo Shores or attend a local festival or just bump into each other at your local watering hole or the fruit and vegetable market.

A- Kyrenia

📍 NORTHEN CYPRUS

Northern Cyprus may be an off-the-radar retirement choice for North Americans... but that doesn't mean it isn't popular with the rest of the world.

The British have been coming to Cyprus since they took control of the island in 1878... and they've never stopped. There are an estimated 110,000 foreign residents in Cyprus, and many of them are British.

The highest foreign populations are Greek, British, Romanian, and Bulgarian. Scandinavians are coming in increasing numbers, as well.

It's easy to slip into the local social scene in Kyrenia with this abundance of expats. Locals are friendly—famous for their hospitality, and the fact that they're English-speaking makes the social side of moving overseas so much easier for expats.



The expat community is active, offering social events and gatherings, interest-based clubs, and recreation opportunities. Golf, bowling leagues, badminton, and darts competitions are a few of the ways Northern Cyprus expats spend their time.



“B”

DESTINATIONS

In the “B” destinations, you won't have any trouble meeting foreigners, but the expat community will be smaller and/or more disbursed than in an “A” destination.

English may not necessarily be the mother tongue of most. If you're interested in expanding your social network with a few foreign friends, then these international melting pots could be for you.



Chitré is a great middle-of-the-road option when it comes to choosing between a local lifestyle and an expat-dominated one.

Life here, in the cultural heartland of Panama, is authentic. You'll live side-by-side with locals and become immersed in Panamanian culture. Your neighbors and friends will be Panamanian; you'll celebrate Panamanian festivals and take part in their traditions.

You should speak some Spanish or at least be open to learning to enhance your social life.

But that's not to say that there's no expat community in Chitré...→



About 500 expats live here. The community holds a meeting every Thursday around lunchtime at Hotel Azuero where you'll have the chance to chat with fellow foreigners, seek advice and recommendations, and learn about clubs and events.

If you're interested in volunteering, the Rotary Club has a branch in Chitré and is dedicated to improving community well-being through social and humanitarian projects. Opportunities to get involved exist here.

Panama Letter Managing Editor Gabrielle Wells says, “During my last visit, I met expats—both retirement age and younger families with children—from the United

States, Canada, and other Latin American countries like Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.”

In other words, you can have a bit of both in Chitré... an authentic experience but also an expat community to tap into.

If you want a fully gringo lifestyle, you'd be better off choosing the City Beaches or Boquete, Panama's biggest expat havens that cater to English-speakers and where foreigners make up a big percentage of the population.

B+ Costa De La Luz

📍 SPAIN



Spain as a whole is home to huge expat numbers. As many as 6 million foreigners call the country home, which amounts to about 13% of the population.

The most popular expat areas in the country are Málaga, Alicante, the Balearic Islands, Valencia, and the Canary Islands, especially among British expats—one of the largest foreign contingents in the country.

The Costa de la Luz is not the most popular destination in Spain for expats... but its authenticity and low-key local vibe is part of its appeal. That said, you'll find sizeable expat communities in certain towns that are scattered along the coast. You can seek them out or avoid them, depending on your preferences.

Here's a breakdown of the main towns' expat communities:

- **Cádiz, despite being the biggest city on the coast, is not home to a huge number of expats. The Old Town is home to no more than a couple dozen expats, and most are here only here on a seasonal basis.**
- **El Puerto de Santa María, Chipiona, Vejer de la Frontera, and Conil de la Frontera are home to sizable expat communities.**
- **Rota, with its naval station that employs U.S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel, stands out for its big American expat numbers.**

You'll find plenty of organizations, clubs, activities, and opportunities to socialize along the Costa de la Luz. Golf is a great way to meet people, and there are plenty of courses here. That said, Spanish skills are key to a well-rounded social life.

B+ Oaxaca

📍 MEXICO

Oaxaca has a sizeable expat community, and all sorts of events are going on all the time, so it's easy to get out and meet people. Whether you're into yoga, books, or hiking, there's a club or class for you here.

While a lot of the expats in Oaxaca are retired, there's a growing number of younger digital nomads relocating to the city for months at a time, lured by the vibrancy of this city and supported by the improving infrastructure.

A great resource for prospective and current expats is the Oaxaca Lending Library. They offer a weekly “Introduction

to Oaxaca” program, language exchanges, community programs, day trips, and more. You'll want to be a part of this group if relocating here.

While it's easy to get socially connected in Oaxaca, Mexico is home to one of the biggest North American expat communities in the world, at almost 2 million people. It's subject to harsher scrutiny because of this. Oaxaca can't compete with the expat communities of places like San Miguel de Allende or Mazatlán...

B+ Tavira

📍 PORTUGAL



In Tavira, you have the choice to settle into an already established expat community or live a more traditional lifestyle, interacting mostly with locals, or a bit of both.

Your level of fluency with Portuguese will determine how well you can make friends with locals. Generally, the process is slow. Portuguese people tend to be reserved, even shy, and the lack of shared history and cultural background takes time to overcome...

The good news is that Tavira's expat community is made up of friendly people, including Germans, Irish, French, Spanish, Brits, Swedes, Canadians, and Americans. Tavira's expat community is diverse and growing.

The most commonly spoken languages are Portuguese and English, but no matter where you go, you hear people speaking different languages.→

The Algarve is hugely popular with expats... one of the most popular destinations in the world, in fact. The people who are drawn to Tavira tend to want a more natural, authentic lifestyle than the resort towns that the Western Algarve offer.

All sorts of organized activities, like walking groups, creative writing classes, tennis and other sports clubs, Portuguese-language classes, volunteer opportunities, and more are available in Tavira.

Groups and clubs for all ages and abilities meet regularly. For anything more specific, like theater groups or the Rotary Club, chances are you'll find it across the wider Algarve.

East Algarve Magazine is an excellent guide to local activities and groups. It's a free publication, widely available across town.



B- Da Lat

VIETNAM



Between 300 and 500 expats live in Da Lat... The exact number is hard to pin down as many of this group are part-timers.

They typically hail from Australia, the U.K., Canada, the States, Russia, Spain, Italy, Japan, and Korea. Some relocated because of work, others are digital nomads or entrepreneurs, but many are retirees.

Expats don't congregate in any specific part of town; instead, you bump into them as you go about daily life. Da Lat is small, and as a foreigner, you stand out here.

To guarantee run-ins with other foreigners, head to expat haunts like One More Café (an Australian-run coffee shop), Primavera Restaurant (an Italian pizza spot), and Escape Bar (a live-music bar that plays the classics and has 1970s décor).

If you prefer to socialize in more structured meetups, Facebook groups like Expats in Da Lat or What's On Da

Lat are good places to start. There you can find groups based on your specific interests (like language-exchange opportunities, vegan meetups, women's groups, etc.).

One Da Lat expat, Lorelle, notes that as more expats of diverse origins arrive here, the entertainment options and range of products available are becoming more interesting.

"A lot of different countries are represented. We've got a young British couple who are opening a vegetarian restaurant. We've got Italians... Fabio is from Italy, and he's got Primavera Restaurant. Restaurant Ichi has been here a long a time and Tomo is Japanese. We've got another young Brit—Rohan—the chef at Biang Bistro.

"There are a lot of Dutch people involved in flower-growing here... A lot of people of all different ages. It's really diverse. Some people are doing online teaching; some people are doing cryptocurrency. A young Russian guy does animation and works online... We've had data analysts, web designers, software developers, and so on."

“C”

DESTINATIONS

“C” destinations have expat populations, but they’re either significantly smaller than or not as engaged as the destinations who scored better in this category.

The common language of the group may not be English. Successful socializing may hinge on your ability to speak the local language at a relatively high level.

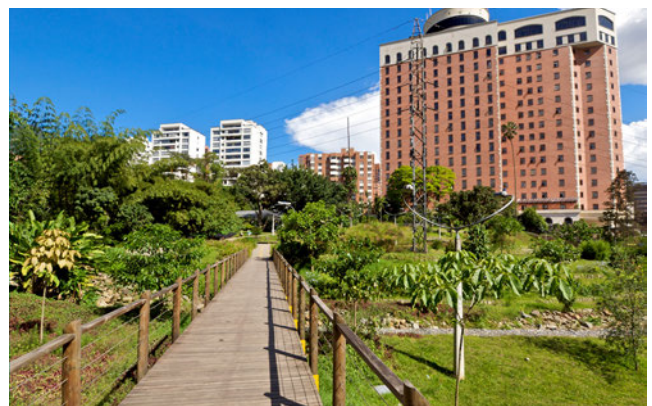
What you’ll find in these locales is a hospitable culture and locals eager to welcome you and help you integrate.



For a city of 4 million, Medellín’s expat community is small. South America Correspondent Lee Harrison comments, “Make no mistake, Medellín has plenty of expats. But in a city this big, the concentration is not high overall.”

The expats that are here are a diverse bunch, spanning generations and nationalities. The community includes single women, couples, and young families with children.

Many young people study Spanish at the universities as well as a fair number of retirees. Many are digital nomads. Medellín has become something of a mecca for remote workers. →



Expats are spread throughout every nice part of the city, with the highest concentration in El Poblado, Laureles, and Envigado, in that order. Some bemoan El Poblado as a bit of a gringo bubble. This is the tourist center of the city and the biggest expat hub.

It's easy to get connected with the expat community thanks to various websites and Facebook groups. Medellín Living and Medellín Guru both have lots of resources and host events from time to time. The Digital Nomads Medellín group on Facebook is a good place to connect with other remote workers.

Medellín is a city with lots of options for getting involved and socializing... It gets a lower grade for Expat Community because the concentration of expats is smaller and the common language of the group may not be English. In fact, successful socializing will hinge on your ability to pick up some Spanish.



“D”

DESTINATIONS

None of the destinations in this year's Index get a “D” for **Expat Community**.

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English Spoken



One of the biggest challenges of retiring overseas is overcoming a language barrier.

A language barrier makes simple jobs, like such as applying for a driver's license or buying groceries, much more difficult. It makes already stressful tasks, like opening a local bank account or filing paperwork, downright overwhelming.

A language barrier also makes becoming part of the local community more difficult. Scheduling and waiting for the plumber or cable guy... small talk in the elevator... chit-chat with the baker...

These little interactions are opportunities to integrate into your new home, but they can also be the source of unneeded anxiety if you can't communicate.

You have options when it comes to your linguistic preferences when you move overseas. There are a few locations in this year's Index that are completely English-speaking...

There are also a few countries where the official language isn't English but where the population is fluent enough that you'll never need to learn the local language... unless you choose to.

And there are places in this year's Index where you'll have no choice but to pick up at least some

of the local tongue because the locals simply don't speak English.

Does the challenge of learning a new language inspire or intimidate you? Be honest with yourself. Everyone wants something different out of their move overseas. Maybe a new language isn't on your list.

If that's the case, don't force yourself into a place where you will become isolated for not speaking the local language. You'll want to look closely at the places that got high scores in English Spoken.

But if you're up for it, don't let your age or any other factor get in your way. We've known dozens of readers in their 60s and beyond (sometimes octogenarians) who have successfully learned new languages for this chapter of their lives.

Grading English Spoken

A	English is the official language or a major language. The locals speak enough English that it may as well hold official status. A wide range of English media is available to you. You won't need to learn a new language here.	C	Outside of hotels and tourist attractions, people won't speak much English. Learning the local language would greatly enhance your life. There's at least one source of English media available to you
B	The majority of the population is bilingual, especially in service and skilled industries. Learning the local language is completely optional. English-language media is available to you.	D	You'll be lucky to find people who speak English anywhere. Learning the local language is more-or-less necessary, otherwise you're accepting that you will not be able to have conversations with locals. Don't count on any English media here.

“A”

DESTINATIONS

Places that get “As” for English Spoken are places where English holds official language status or where it’s so widely spoken, it may as well hold official status.

It’s not all about official recognition though... Language and the ability to converse with people play a big role in integrating into your new community. How else are people going to get to know you and vice versa if you can’t chat with each other?

In “A” destinations, you can have a conversation about any topic with the locals and still be understood. There will be plenty of English-language media options available to you.



English is Belize’s official language. It’s the only country in Central America where English holds this status, and it’s because of the country’s British-colonial roots.

About 83% of the country speaks English as their first language, while many also speak Creole and Spanish. It isn’t necessary to learn a new language to live in Belize.

Leases and legal contracts are in English... English-speaking staff is available at clinics... Media and the news are delivered in English. The average person you come into contact with, whether it’s a cashier or a government official, speaks English.

This ease of language is a big reason why many American and Canadian expats end up in Belize.

As Belize expat Donald Houser puts it, “I thought I’d end up in Mexico. It was always right in my backyard in California, so I spent a lot of time there. But my Spanish is terrible... and I’m someone who loves to talk! I realized that if I couldn’t find someplace where I could converse, I was going to feel sad and alone. That’s how I ended up in Belize.”

A- Sanur

📍 INDONESIA

As a major tourism destination and an expat hub for decades, English is widely spoken across Bali, including Sanur. It's rare to find a Balinese person who doesn't speak English (if not also some Japanese, Dutch, or French).

You won't have any trouble understanding and being understood here. The only exception is the older generation—people in their 70s and above may not be able to chat with you in English.

Local English-language media like *The Bali Times* is available to you in Sanur.

You could live here successfully without learning the local language, but picking up even just the basics will enrich your experience and make life easier. This is where Indonesia offers a unique advantage...



Indonesian is relatively easy to learn. It uses the Latin alphabet and lacks verb tenses and inflection for number and gender. It needs to be a simple language to be a successful lingua franca across Indonesia (which is home to over 700 languages).

A- Tavira

📍 PORTUGAL



The Anglo-Portuguese alliance between the U.K. and Portugal is one of the oldest known alliances, dating back to 1386. Friendly relations with the Brits have continued to this day, and a huge number of British expats are settled in Portugal.

Because of this relationship, English is widely spoken across Portugal. In fact, it's the second-most spoken language in the country. It's the tourism and business standard, taught in all schools from an early age.

You shouldn't have a problem finding English-speaking doctors, real estate agents, and lawyers. Picking up a bit of

Portuguese is always recommended, but it's not an easy language to learn. In the Algarve, people speak quickly and shorten words.

A great resource for newcomers is *The Portugal News*, the most popular English-language newspaper that covers all the major news about Portugal in English. *The Portuguese-American Journal* is an interactive blog dedicated to sharing news and giving insight into the Portuguese-American experience.

“B”

DESTINATIONS

In “B” destinations, you can still get by in English alone, but you’re going to find fewer English speakers, or the level of those English speakers is going to be lower than they are in an “A” destination.

You won’t have a problem being understood when ordering food in a restaurant or asking for directions. The majority of the population is bilingual, especially in service and skilled industries, and English-language media is available to you.

You could probably get into conversation with the average local and be understood. Learning the local language is completely optional, but it will enrich your experience that much more.



B+ Kyrenia

📍 NORTHEN CYPRUS

Cyprus’s official languages are Greek and Turkish, but English, though not an official language, is the lingua franca between these, and it’s rare to meet someone who doesn’t speak it. Over 80% of Cypriots are said to be proficient in English.

English was the official language from 1878 to 1960, during British rule, and continued to be used in courts until 1989 and in legislation until 1996. Not only is it widely spoken, but much of the signage and advertisements are also in English.

In Kyrenia, the local language is Cypriot Turkish. If you take a stab at learning it, note that the local dialect is different

to standard Turkish. Duolingo’s versions, for example, won’t match up with what’s used on the island.

Locals will have no trouble communicating with you in English, nor will they hold a grudge for doing so—quite the contrary, they’d feel rude to make you try to speak their language.

When speaking in English, bear in mind that the American (or Canadian) accent is not well known to most Cypriots, who’re much more familiar with the British or even Australian accent. Speak slowly and be patient. If you feel you’re not being understood, it’s likely that your accent is the hurdle.

B Paris

FRANCE

Despite the stereotypes about the French and their language, many Parisians speak English. The question of whether they'll use their English with you depends on how you approach the interaction...

Politesse is important to the French. Never forget to say hello and goodbye when shopping, and always start by speaking in French, even if yours is no good. If the only sentence you learn is *parlez-vous Anglais?*, it won't be a wasted effort. Start a conversation with that, and you're likely to get English in reply.

In theory, anyone under 30 is pretty familiar with English, those in the 30 to 50 set should know some, and those older may understand none at all. But that doesn't always hold true.

English isn't a mandatory second language here as it is in some countries, so it's hit and miss. Tourist areas and service providers catering to tourists will always speak enough English to accomplish their jobs, but if you limit yourself to these kinds of establishments, you're not taking part in an authentic lifestyle.



Our recommendation is to come to France with the intention of learning French to the best of your ability. You don't necessarily need to become fluent, but the closer you get to it, the richer your life here will be. The bare minimum would be to take a language course when arriving to just get a beginner base.

Many English speakers live in Paris with nothing more than those basics, but their lives are limited because of this.



“C”

DESTINATIONS

In “C” destinations, people won’t speak much English outside of hotels and tourist attractions. You can still have conversations in English, but they will have to be limited to the basic for locals to be able to understand.

Here, learning the local language is key to a comfortable, well-rounded life.



Most Chitreanos speak a little English and will greet you with a “hello,” but English isn’t as widely spoken here as it is in Panama City. Many doctors speak English, but don’t be surprised if workers in the service industry don’t... this isn’t a tourist town yet.

You’ll need to speak Spanish proficiently to live well in Chitré. The locals will do their best to help you, but your quality of life will be better if you go the extra mile to learn Spanish.

There are weekly expat Spanish classes for free, taught by a Panamanian instructor. Inquire about joining at one of the weekly meetings at Hotel Azuero. Your best bet is to practice with friends, neighbors, and household cleaners or gardeners if you hire them.

Don’t be shy—Panamanians are eager to help... and may ask for English practice in return... an excellent way to make new friends.

C Costa De La Luz

📍 SPAIN

English levels along the Costa de la Luz are surprisingly low. You'd think they'd be higher in a Western European nation with high education levels, but not many people speak English in Costa de la Luz, and if they do, it's at a relatively low level.

Sure, you'll be able to order food at a restaurant and buy groceries without much trouble. And depending on which town you settle in, you might have more British neighbors than Spanish, so the language barrier won't affect you as much...

But to make the most of life here, you should really pick up some Spanish. Live And Invest Overseas Editorial Director Sophia Titley says, "When I first came to live in the south of Spain in 2013, I didn't speak any Spanish, and I found the experience extremely isolating. Being alone in a new



country where you don't understand anyone and they don't understand you is a unique form of loneliness."

The local language is Spanish, which is relatively easy to pick up. Note that on the Costa de la Luz, the locals speak a quick and imprecise version of it.



Oaxaca 📍 MEXICO

In Puerto Vallarta and Playa del Carmen, you can easily get by with English alone... Not so in Oaxaca. You'll struggle without any español.

For many of Oaxaca's indigenous population, they're already speaking a second language when using Spanish. There are 16 different indigenous languages used in the state of Oaxaca. Listen closely in the markets and on the streets, and you'll hear many of them in the city.

People are generally patient and easy-going when it comes to gringos struggling to speak Spanish. If you need a bit of help, there are plenty of highly recommended Spanish schools here.



The more Spanish you know, the easier and more enjoyable your life will be. Even if you can only speak a little and have a funny gringo accent, locals appreciate it.

Medellín 📍 COLOMBIA



While English is becoming more common, especially among the younger generation, it still pays to at least have a survival level of Spanish. It's possible to live in a gringo bubble where you rarely speak Spanish in Poblado, but that means missing out on the true Medellín experience.

Don't worry if your español isn't up to par. This is a great place to learn, with plenty of Spanish schools offering reasonably priced lessons. There are also free language

exchanges on a near-nightly basis where you can interact with locals looking to improve their English. It's a fun way to meet people and improve your skills.

Digital nomad Sasha Savinov says, "I've traveled all over Latin America and taken Spanish classes in several places, and Medellín has been my favorite by far. I took lessons at Toucan in Poblado twice and recommend them."

“D”

In “D” destinations, you’ll be out of your depth when it comes to language. The majority of locals won’t speak English beyond the absolute basics. Unless you can pick up a smattering of the local tongue, you’ll have to rely on hand signals to communicate. English-language media isn’t available either.

DESTINATIONS



D

Da Lat
VIETNAM

Da Lat’s English levels are very low. It’s a small city, and its tourism industry is geared towards locals... There hasn’t been a huge impetus to learn English. You’d struggle to have a conversation with most locals in Da Lat.

Regardless, you can get by just fine when it comes to day-to-day activities like ordering food in a restaurant, getting gas, or asking for directions. Simple gesturing or keeping Google Translate open on your smartphone works well. If you’re traveling by bus or taxi, it helps to show the driver the written destination name.

A downside to choosing Da Lat is that Vietnamese is not an easy language to learn. It doesn’t come naturally to English speakers. It has 12 vowels as opposed to English’s 5, and it’s a tonal language, so pronunciation affects word meaning.

Picking up even a little bit of Vietnamese is good practice, though, even if it’s just hello, goodbye, and thank you. The best way to do that in Da Lat is to hire a local tutor, which is inexpensive.



ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

ACCESS TO North America



This category takes into consideration how easy it is to get to your new overseas haven from the United States and Canada.

It looks at geographic proximity between each destination and North America as well as the distance between that place and the nearest international airport. The more direct flights to North America that airport serves, the better. No one likes to make multiple stopovers when flying.

The older we get, the more draining big, international trips become. They're also time consuming and expensive. If you plan on making

frequent trips back home to see the grandkids or because you're a snowbird, pay attention to the results of this category.

On the other hand, you might be moving overseas full-time, full-stop, and not planning on traveling to and from home often after you relocate. In that case, this category might not have much weight in your personal rankings.

How The Grading Works

A	These havens are geographically close to the United States and Canada, in other words, in North or South America. Travel to them is inexpensive and fast. The shorter the overland journey between the nearest international airport to the destination, the better the grade. Likewise, the more direct flights to U.S. or Canadian cities they offer, the better.	C	These havens are even farther from North America; they may be in Eastern Europe or Western Asia. They do not offer direct flights to North America; at least one stopover is required. Flight time will be longer and potentially more expensive. Distance to the nearest international airport is factored in.
B	These havens are slightly farther from the United States and Canada; they are in Western Europe, so flight time and expenses will be greater. The more direct flights to U.S. or Canadian cities they offer, the better the grade they get. Distance to the nearest international airport is also considered (the closer, the better).	D	These havens are as far away from the United States or Canada as possible, namely in East Asia. No direct flights; one or multiple stopovers will be required, and flights will be long and expensive.

“A”

DESTINATIONS

Destinations that get an “A” for Access To North America are geographically close to the United States and Canada. You don’t have to cross a major ocean to get to them: They’re on this side of the pond, either in North or South America.

Travel to and from an “A” destination is quick, easy, and affordable.



A+

Oaxaca
MEXICO

Mexico is the easiest international destination for Canadians and Americans to get to. Geographically, it doesn’t get any closer than this. In fact, Mexico is one of the few countries in this year’s Index that you can actually pack up your car and drive to.

Oaxaca isn’t as well connected as cities like Cancún and Puerto Vallarta, but its international airport offers direct flights to a handful of U.S. cities, and it’s only a 20-minute drive to the city center.

Another way to get here is to fly into a busier airport like Mexico City, Guadalajara, or Cancún, and then hop on a quick and cheap flight to Oaxaca with low-cost Mexican carriers like Volaris and VivaAerobus.→



Oaxaca International Airport (OAX)**Direct Flights From The United States**

Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles

Direct Flights From Canada

None

Other Direct Flights

Guatemala

Domestic Carriers

Aeroméxico Connect, Aeroméxico, Aerovega, VivaAerobús, Volaris



Belize is also geographically close to the States and Canada... It's another retirement destination you could potentially reach by car, and many expats do this (especially since you can import your car duty-free under the Qualified Retirement Program).

Corozal is easy to get to from North America, but it gets a slightly lower grade than Oaxaca because of the drive once you arrive. It's about a two-hour drive from Belize's international airport.

**Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport (BZE)****Direct Flights From The United States****REGULAR**

Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Orlando

SEASONAL

Charlotte, Minneapolis, Newark, Seattle

Direct Flights From Canada**SEASONAL**

Calgary, Toronto

Other Direct Flights

El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama

Domestic Carriers

Maya Island Air, Tropic Air

A Medellín

COLOMBIA

Despite being farther south than Oaxaca and Corozal, Medellín is a well-connected city. Traveling here from North America is a breeze, especially if you live in Florida, which offers several direct flights.

It has two airports, but the main one is José María Córdova International Airport. It's about a 30-minute drive to the city center—an easy drive.

Colombia has a handful of low-cost domestic carriers, too, so travel around the country from Medellín is also easy and affordable.



José María Córdova International Airport (MDE)

Direct Flights From The United States

Fort Lauderdale, Miami, New York, Orlando

Direct Flights From Canada

None

Other Direct Flights

REGULAR

Aruba, Costa Rica, Curacao, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Spain

SEASONAL

Chile, Ecuador

Domestic Carriers

Avianca, EasyFly, LATAM Colombia, Ultra Air, Viva Air Colombia

A- Chitré

📍 PANAMA

One look at the air travel chart for Tocumen International Airport tells you why Panama City is known as the Hub of the Americas. It's extremely well connected with a ton of direct flights to cities in the States and Canada, not to mention a slew of international destinations.

If we were considering Panama City instead of Chitré as a retirement destination, it would shoot straight to top place for Access To North America... But we're talking about Chitré, which is a four-hour drive from Tocumen International Airport (assuming traffic is light—always a crashshoot in Panama).

It's a smooth drive along the Pan-American Highway, but the hassle of making a long, over-land journey to get to Chitré earns it an “A-” for Access To North America instead of an “A+.”



Note that Chitré is home to a small regional airport, Alonso Valderrama Airport, which has flights to Panama City's Marcos A. Gelabert Airport... Alonso Valderrama Airport was not operating during the pandemic. Its current status is unknown.



Tocumen International Airport (PTY)

Direct Flights From The United States	Other Direct Flights
Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Fort Lauderdale, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Newark, Orlando, San Francisco, Tampa, Washington	Argentina, Aruba, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Saint Martin, Spain, Suriname, The Bahamas, The Netherlands, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela
Direct Flights From Canada	
Montreal, Toronto	
Domestic Carriers	
Copa Airlines	

“
B”

DESTINATIONS

Places that get “Bs” for Access To North America are on the other side of the pond, namely, in Western Europe.

If you can reach them on a direct flight, they score in the higher range of the “B” category. Places that score in the lower range require more on-the-ground logistics to get to.

Travel to a “B” destination from North America is still easy... It’s just not as easy as an “A” destination. The journey is simply longer or requires more connections.

**B+** Paris
FRANCE

Paris is one of the best-connected cities in the world, making it an excellent jumping-off point for interesting global travel. Charles De Gaulle Airport serves an impressive list of international destinations with direct flights, including several North American cities.

Charles De Gaulle is one of two international airports in Paris, and it’s reachable from the city center in about 45 minutes driving, although most locals and residents would take the Metro (also about a 45-minute journey).→



Charles De Gaulle Airport (CDG)

Direct Flights From The United States	Other Direct Flights
REGULAR	REGULAR
Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Raleigh, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington	Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Saint Martin, China, Colombia, Copenhagen, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic Of The Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Sierra Leone, French Polynesia, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of the Congo, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, The Netherlands, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, U.K., Romania, UAE, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam
SEASONAL	SEASONAL
Denver, Minneapolis	Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Maldives, Moldova, Oman, Seychelles
Direct Flights From Canada	
REGULAR	
Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Vancouver	
SEASONAL	
Calgary, Halifax	
Domestic Carriers	
Air Austral, Air Corsica, Air France, ASL Airlines France	



The closest international airport to Tavira is Faro Airport, the main airport serving the Algarve region of Portugal, about a 30-minute drive away. It's small and can't compete with Paris's Charles De Gaulle in terms of range of destinations served...

That said, it serves one North American destination directly. You'll most likely fly into Lisbon if coming here from North America and connect onwards to Faro and then Tavira.



Faro Airport (FAO)

Direct Flights From The United States	Other Direct Flights
None	REGULAR
	Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, U.K.
Direct Flights From Canada	SEASONAL
Toronto	Czech Republic, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland
Domestic Carriers	
TAP Air Portugal	

B Costa De La Luz

SPAIN

Like Tavira, Costa de la Luz doesn't have its own airport. The nearest international airport is Jerez Airport, a 30-minute drive to the Costa.

Jerez Airport is tiny and only serves a handful of international destinations. It doesn't have any direct flights to North America, so it gets a slightly lower grade than Tavira.

The best way to get here from the States or Canada would be to connect through one of the major travel hubs in the U.K. or Germany, or fly into Madrid and catch a domestic flight to Jerez.



Jerez Airport (XRY)

Direct Flights From The United States

None

Direct Flights From Canada

None

Other Direct Flights

REGULAR

Belgium, Germany, U.K.

SEASONAL

France, Luxembourg, Switzerland

Domestic Carriers

Binter Canarias, Iberia Regional, Iberia, Vueling

“C” DESTINATIONS

Destinations that get “Cs” for Access To North America are in Eastern Europe or Western Asia. They don’t offer direct flights to States or Canada, so making at least one stopover along the way is required.

The time, energy, and expense in getting to a “C” destination can be considerable... It’s something to consider if you plan on traveling to and from one of them to North America regularly.



Kyrenia

NORTHERN CYPRUS

We’re looking at the biggest, best-connected airport in Cyprus to consider Access To North America from Kyrenia. This is Larnaca Airport, which doesn’t offer any direct flights to North America but serves a big list of international destinations.

You’ll be able to connect easily through big travel hubs in the U.K., Germany, or the Netherlands from North America to Larnaca International Airport.

Once you get to Larnaca, the drive to Kyrenia is about one hour and 20 minutes... The trouble is that you’ll need to cross the border from the Republic of Cyprus to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus along the way:→



“Crossing the north-south border is easy and fairly fast, with 10- to 15-minute wait times on average. There are nine border crossings on the island, and they’re all open 24 hours a day,” says Europe Expert Kat Kalashian. You need your passport to cross, as well as insurance if you’re driving.

The other option for getting to Kyrenia from abroad is to fly to Ercan International Airport, Northern Cyprus’s main airport. Ercan International Airport only flies to Turkey, so if you choose this option, a layover will be required as well.

Neither option is very convenient, which is why Kyrenia scores a “C.”



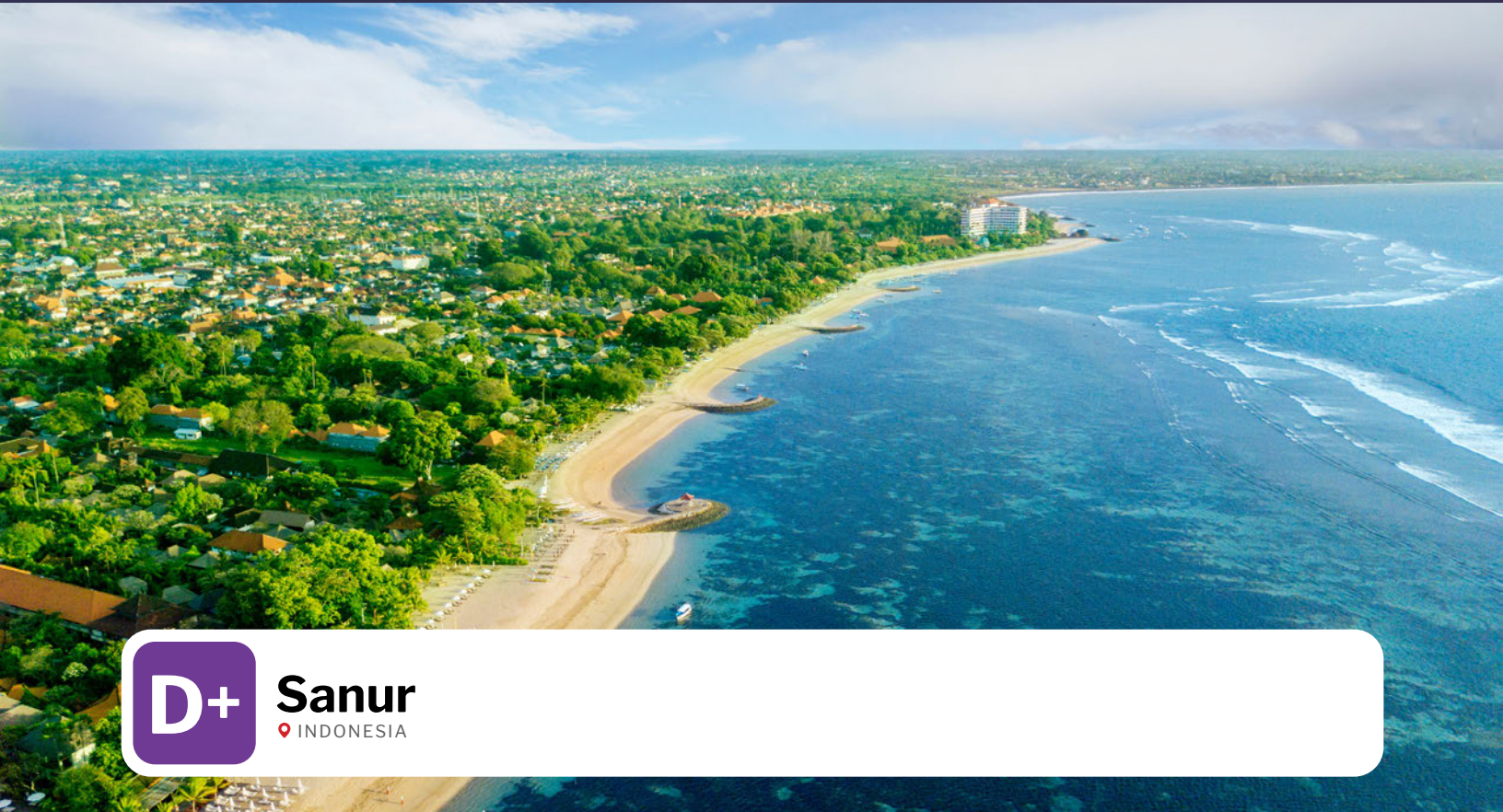
Larnaca International Airport (LCA)

Direct Flights From The United States	Other Direct Flights
None	REGULAR Armenia, Austria, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sweden, The Netherlands, U.K., UAE
Direct Flights From Canada	SEASONAL Finland, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland
Domestic Carriers	
Cyprus Airways, Rus Airways	

“D” DESTINATIONS

“D” grades for Access To North America are reserved for the farthest of our havens that have no direct flights to North America—namely, those in East Asia.

Travel between these havens and the States or Canada will involve one if not multiple layovers. Be prepared for long, exhausting, and likely expensive trips if you settle in a “D” destination and plan on traveling back and forth often.



There's only one international airport on the island of Bali—Ngurah Rai International, found in the island's capital city, Denpasar. The drive from the airport to Sanur is only 20 minutes, so it's easy to reach... But you'll need to have your own car or take a taxi. There's no public transport in Bali.

Ngurah Rai is well-served internationally... It reaches diverse destinations not only in East Asia but also the Middle East, Australia, and even Europe. But being as far away from North America as possible with no direct flights, Sanur gets a “D+” for Access To North America. →



Ngurah Rai International Airport (DPS)

Direct Flights From The United States	Other Direct Flights
None	REGULAR Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Korea, Malaysia, Qatar, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, The Netherlands, The Philippines, Turkey, UAE, Vietnam
Direct Flights From Canada	SEASONAL Iran, New Zealand, Poland
Domestic Carriers	
Batik Air, Citilink, Garuda Indonesia, Indonesia AirAsia, Lion Air, NAM Air, Sriwijaya Air, Super Air Jet, Wings Air	

D Da Lat

VIETNAM

Da Lat is served by Lien Khuong Airport, a small international airport found 30 minutes outside of Da Lat. It only serves a handful of international destinations... four to be exact. That's why it scores lower than Sanur in this category. It's slightly more difficult to access.

Your best option for getting to Da Lat is to fly into one of the country's major hubs—Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City—and then arrange onward travel on a low-cost domestic airline to Da Lat.

**Lien Khuong Airport (DLI)**

Direct Flights From The United States	Other Direct Flights
None	
Direct Flights From Canada	China, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand
None	
Domestic Carriers	
Bamboo Airways, Pacific Airlines, VietJet Air, Vietnam Airlines	



ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Infrastructure



Infrastructure takes into account the following three subcategories: Internet (download speed and cost), Electricity (cost and reliability), and Domestic Access (how easy it is to get around within this destination).



Each of these subcategories gets a rating from one to five. The total number of stars the destination gets out of 15 determines its final grade.

Here's how we break things down...

Internet

The internet speeds are the average download speeds for fixed internet providers offer in that region.

- **5/5 stars:**
Excellent-quality streaming and super-fast download speeds. This allows you to do whatever you need to do online—work remotely, day trade, use bandwidth-hungry apps, and so on.
 - **4/5 stars:**
Good-quality streaming and fast download speeds. This allows you to do most things you need to do online.
 - **3/5 stars:**
Average-streaming and download speeds. This is enough for most people to carry out basic internet-based tasks: check emails, video call, download shows, etc.
 - **2/5 stars:**
Low-quality streaming and relatively slow downloading. Ability to stream Netflix and video call with interruptions and delays.
 - **1/5 stars:**
Low-quality streaming and slow downloading. Interruptions and delays are frequent. It may be enough to get by if you're not asking too much of it.
- We also report average costs for internet plans in this section. Keep in mind that packages that combine internet plans with cable and/or a mobile phone plan can be much more affordable.

Electricity

Electricity grades look at the reliability of power.

■ 5/5 stars:

A perfectly stable power source—think Manhattan... if there were a blackout, it would mean something really serious happened to affect the grid, and it would make the news.

■ 4/5 stars:

Electricity might go out during a thunderstorm, for example, and outages would be more likely to affect rural regions.

■ 3/5 stars:

You experience regular outages, but much less frequently (think once a month or less) and rarely for more than an hour. Outages in these

places may also get much worse during certain seasons—rainy season, winter, or summer.

■ 2/5 stars:

You experience regular outages, but they are more likely to happen in rural areas than in populated ones, and they don't last as long.

■ 1/5 stars:

You experience outages regularly, and they can last for hours—even days in the worst cases.

The costs are based on electricity and heating and/or air conditioning for a 75- to 100-square-meter apartment, monthly.

Domestic Access

This subcategory assesses your ability to get around for basic needs using public transportation. If public transportation is so lacking that you're required to have a car, it gets a low star rating.

■ 5/5 stars:

Public transportation options are diverse, accessible, affordable, and efficient. You can get anywhere you need to go using only public transportation. Having a car is unnecessary.

■ 4/5 stars:

Public transportation options are affordable and efficient but less diverse. You can still get most anywhere you need to go using public transportation but occasionally use taxis.

■ 3/5 stars:

There are some public transportation options available, and if necessary, you can rely on

them to get where you need to go. Instead, you use a mix of public and private transportation. Having a car would make life easier and more comfortable, but it's not strictly necessary.

■ 2/5 stars:

There's at least one public transportation option that you could scrape by using, supplementing with taxis and rides from friends. You should really have a car to make the most of your life here.

■ 1/5 stars:

Having a car is a requirement to live here. There are no public transportation options available.

How The Grading Works

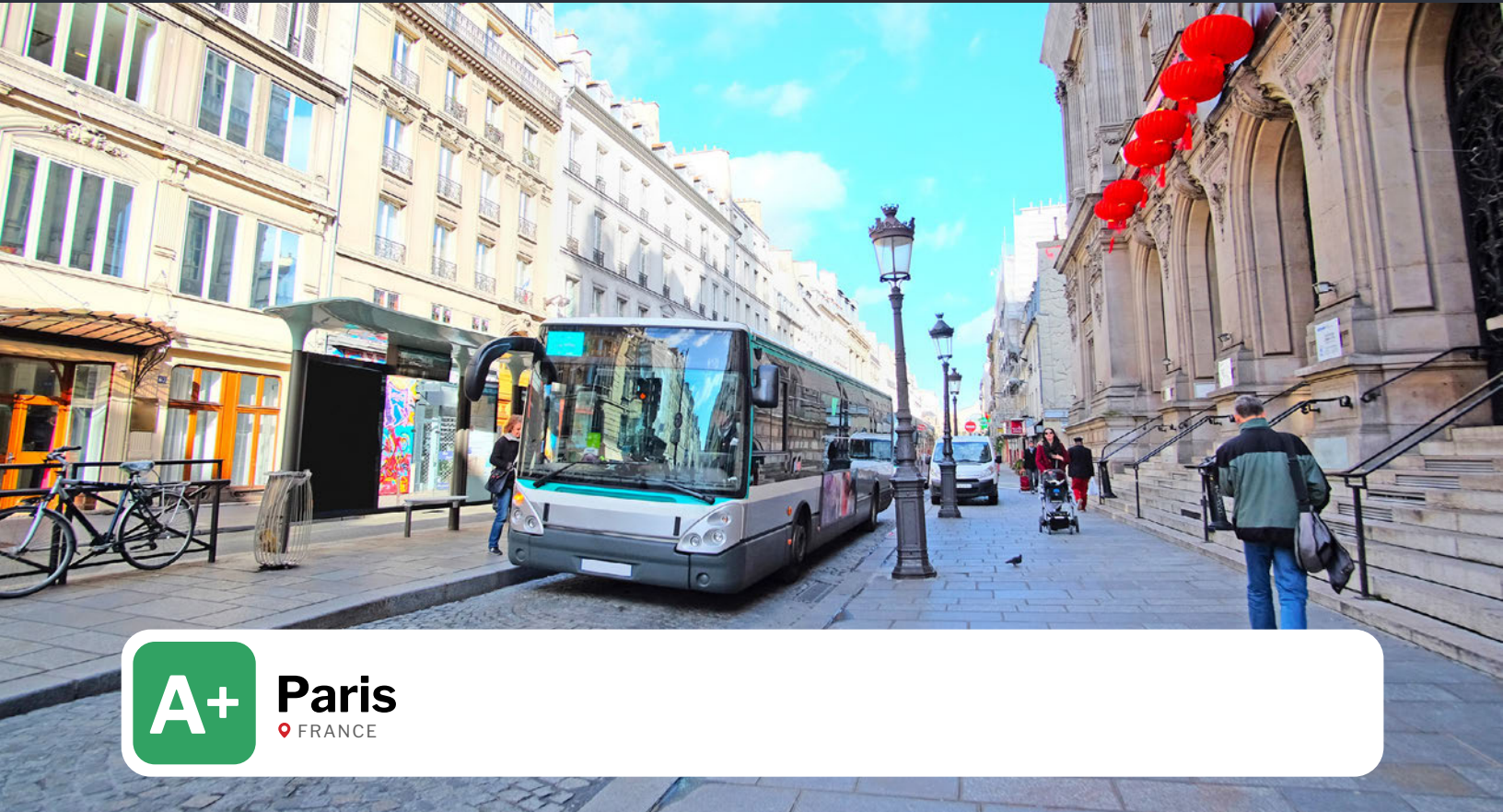
To get the overall Infrastructure grade, we add up the number of stars each place gets across the three subcategories for a total score out of 15.

A	12-15 stars	C	4-7 stars
B	8-11 stars	D	0-3 stars

“A”

DESTINATIONS

“A” destinations have 12–15 stars across Internet, Electricity, and Domestic Access.

**A+** Paris
FRANCE**Internet ★★★★★**

- **Cost Per Month: US\$38**
- **Average Download Speed: 69 Mbps**

Electricity ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$74**
- **Average Reliability: Perfectly stable. Any electrical disturbances would be highly unusual.**

Domestic Access ★★★★★

In Paris, your public transportation options are diverse. They include the Paris Metro, the Paris regional RER train, city buses, the Paris Tramway, taxis and ride-hailing apps, and public bicycles. →



This is as well-connected a city as you could possibly want. Having your own car would be an unnecessary extra expense.

When it comes to getting around Paris, the best option is usually your own two feet. This is a walking city, and it's mostly flat, making walking a comfortable activity. You'll come across cobblestone streets, but for the most part, Paris is modernly paved.

When you want to leave your *quartier* and go a bit farther, we recommend going by bike. It's the most enjoyable way to get around when you need to go faster than walking and the weather is OK. You can buy your own bike (and most apartment buildings have spaces for bike storage) or you can subscribe to Vélib, the city's main bike service.

If the weather gets too nasty, you'll want to opt for the metro or bus. The Paris Metro is one of the oldest transport networks in the world, but it doesn't show its age. The Metro network is fantastic with over 300 stations covering 214 kms (133 miles), it will get you anywhere you need to go.

It's becoming ever-more accessible, with more stations refitted with escalators and elevators each year. That said, not all stations are mobility friendly—some have hundreds of steps, and all have at least a few. A single Metro or bus ticket (they are one and the same) costs 1.90 euros, but if you buy in bulk, you save a few bucks.

The bus is another great option for getting around Paris. It's always wheelchair accessible, too. (If you need it, you can press a button for the driver to lower the wheelchair ramp, and there are big open spaces reserved for strollers and wheelchairs.)

And, of course, there's no shortage of taxis to hail, and a wide range of ride-hailing services are available, including Uber, Kapten, Lyft, Caocao (which uses only London black cabs, with their massive interiors), and probably many more.

We recommend Kapten for price—it's far cheaper than Uber, which is already cheaper than cabs. Cabs, though, can be ordered with options like a car seat or for a dog to ride with you.

A Medellín

COLOMBIA

Internet ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$31**
- **Average Download Speed: 95 Mbps**

Electricity ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$70**
- **Average Reliability: Power outages happen occasionally but last only a few minutes at a time.**

Domestic Access ★★★★★

Medellín's public transportation system is excellent. It includes the metro, metro cable, bus, and tram, as well as taxis, ride-hailing apps, and public bicycles.

Paisas are proud of their Metro, which is the only subway system in Colombia. It has two lines: Line A runs from north to south from Niquía down to La Estrella; Line B goes from San Antonio in the center to San Javier to the west.

Also part of the public transit system are cable cars, elongated bus lines, a tramcar, and some 200 feeder buses that bring you to and from Metro stations.

The four cable car lines go up into the hillside barrios and have been a game changer for their residents. Before them, people living in these informal settlements often faced commutes of several hours.



There are also escalators in some of the hilly neighborhoods, such as the now-famous Comuna 13.

If you're moving to Medellín, you'll want to get a Cívica card. These are free cards that you can use to ride the subway and bus. Not only do they save you from waiting in line, but you get a discounted fare as well.

Cívica cards also work to unlock the EnCicla bikes that can be found across the city. These are totally free. You just need to register, and then you can cruise all around Medellín.

A great time to rent a bike is Sunday afternoons when Avenida Poblado is closed to motor vehicles from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Pedestrians, cyclists, dog walkers, and skaters come out to enjoy some fresh air and exercise, and it's a lot of fun. →

It doesn't take long to get used to the city and understand how to get around. *Carreras* run north-south parallel to the river, while *calles* go east-west. There are also *avenidas*, which are larger main streets.

Taxis are plentiful and affordable. Most drivers are honest and will use the meter, which starts at 80 cents.

Uber has had a tumultuous relationship with Colombia and was banned for a while. It seems to be back in business again, with ordinary taxi drivers being able to use the service now. Another popular local ride-share app is Cabify, which is the preferred choice of locals.

A- Costa De La Luz

📍 SPAIN



Internet ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$33**
- **Average Download Speed: 149 Mbps**

Electricity ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$55**
- **Average Reliability: Any electrical disturbances would be highly unusual.**

Domestic Access ★★★★★

The Costa de la Luz's towns and cities are connected by trains and buses.

The trains are cheap, comfortable, and efficient. Just outside Cádiz Old Town is the railway station. From there, you can travel as far north as Santander and Gijón in Spain, or as far south as Madri in Portugal.

Cercanías Cádiz is the regional company that connects Cádiz to Jerez de la Frontera, with 13 stops between the two. Alvia is the company that provides long-distance trips on high-speed services.

The towns to the south of Cádiz (Chiclana de la Frontera, Conil de la Frontera, Vejer de la Frontera) are less accessible by train. Living in one of those towns, you'd probably want your own car to make the most of what the region has to offer.

Overseas Living Letter Editor Sophia Titley says, "I was pleasantly surprised by how well-connected the Costa de la Luz is. I rented a car while I was there, and the roads are in excellent condition: smooth paving, clear lines, well-lit, and well-signposted. I'm not a confident driver, but I'd feel comfortable driving around here."

As a historically significant port town, it's no surprise that you can arrive and leave Cádiz by sea. Just next to the train station is the port, where you'll often see massive cruise ships docked. You can also see boats being repaired in the dockyard.

From Cádiz, you can catch a ferry onward to the Canary Islands, which lie 1,597 kms (992 miles) from mainland Spain. The journey from Cádiz to Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, takes between 37 and 43 hours and costs about 305 euros (return).

“B”

“B” destinations have 8–11 stars across Internet, Electricity, and Domestic Access.

DESTINATIONS



B+

Tavira
PORTUGAL**Internet** ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month:** US\$64
- **Average Download Speed:** 87 Mbps

Electricity ★★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month:** US\$90
- **Average Reliability:** Power outages happen occasionally but last only a few minutes at a time.

Domestic Access ★★★★★★

Whether or not you have a car in Tavira depends on where you live. If you base yourself in a rural location outside of Tavira proper, you'll need a car. If you base yourself in Tavira's center, you may not need one. The Old Town is walkable. →



It's also very useful to have your own wheels if you're going to a big grocery store or need an item for your home. A car will also open up more of the region in terms of living locations, especially for a renter.

Public transportation options include buses and the train lines provided by Comboios De Portugal. The closer you are to the coast, the more public transportation options you have.

You can buy regional bus cards with a minimum of five trips on them, which can be reloaded, to save around 40% to 50%. If you are traveling to one city on a frequent basis, monthly passes are available.

Train travel planned over a week in advance, when purchased as non-refundable, can make for significant savings over the normal price (about 50%). Senior residents over 65 get half-off bus and train fares.

If you love to cycle, Tavira is a great choice for you. You can get around the town and its immediate surroundings easily on a bike. It's also along the Ecovia Do Litoral, a 78-



mile (215-kilometer) cycle trail that starts at the Algarve's southwestern tip near Sagres and ends in Spain.

Also, you can travel around the waterways surrounding Tavira on ferries, water taxis, and boats. You can catch them from the center of town and from Quatro Águas to get to Tavira's best beaches. A round-trip ticket costs less than US\$3.

B Chitré

PANAMA

Internet ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$85**
- **Average Download Speed: 127 Mbps (Herrera Province average)**

Electricity ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$125**
- **Average Reliability: Power outages happen occasionally but last only a few minutes at a time.**

Domestic Access ★★★★★

You'll most likely need a car to get around Chitré. Public transportation isn't well-developed yet and is limited to yellow taxis and chivas (small buses).

Avoid yellow taxis as they're known to take advantage of foreigners and can drive dangerously, but if you have no other choice, ask someone to give you the phone number of a taxi driver they trust.

There are walking, running, and biking paths around the district... a great way to exercise and save money on gas.

The delivery app Pedidos Ya recently came to the area and allows you to order food from a variety of local restaurants,



supermarket items, pet supplies, and more, plus, drivers will pick up packages and run other errands for you for a small fee.

Chitré is a walkable town for those without mobility issues but poses challenges for people with disabilities. Many sidewalks are narrow, uneven, and drop off into the street below without stairs.

The local government is working to make Chitré more accessible by installing wider sidewalks, ramps, pedestrian crosswalks with audio signals, grooved concrete, and handrails in public bathrooms.

B Da Lat

VIETNAM

Internet ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$12**
- **Average Download Speed: 68 Mbps**

Electricity ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$21**
- **Average Reliability: Power outages happen occasionally but last only a few minutes at a time.**

Domestic Access ★★☆☆☆

The best option for getting around Da Lat is on a motorbike.

Most trips you'll take in and around town are slightly too far to walk but too close to warrant a taxi. Motorbikes are the happy medium. They afford flexibility and are cheap to buy, rent, and fill up with gas. Though it can't be denied that they're unsafe, you'll never be going very fast on Da Lat's streets.

Much of Da Lat can be explored on foot. It's a relatively small city at just under 400 square kms (154 square miles). Walking around is a nice activity, as it's not too hot, sidewalks are abundant, and the main thoroughfares are embellished with flowering plants...



Just be careful when crossing the street. Crosswalks aren't easy to come by and aren't always respected by drivers. Move cautiously as you step into the street and enter the ubiquitous stream of motorbikes.

Taxis are cheap and useful for going longer distances. Mai Linh is the taxi company preferred by locals... They stand out because their cars are bright green. Vietnam is also famous for its luxury sleeper buses that can transport you from one area of the country to the other. It's also connected by rail network.

B Kyrenia

NORTHERN CYPRUS

Internet ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$10**
- **Average Download Speed: 44 Mbps**

Electricity ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$21**
- **Average Reliability: Power outages happen occasionally but last only a few minutes at a time.**

Domestic Access ★★☆☆☆

You'll need a car to get around Northern Cyprus, even cities. Due to the heat, Cyprus has a disproportionately high car ownership rate. “Cypriots don't walk anywhere,” a local colleague informed us bluntly.

Roads are good quality and well maintained across the island, but traffic in the main cities can get bad. The standard of driving on the island is generally low compared



to North America or the rest of Europe, so be wary of other drivers here.

Don't forget that they drive on the left here, and brush up on roundabout etiquette—they're abundant.

There is a bus system that serves the whole country, but no one recommends its use... The network isn't great, they only run until 6 p.m., and they're always hot and crowded.

B Oaxaca

MEXICO

Internet ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month:** US\$28
- **Average Download Speed:** 35 Mbps

Electricity ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month:** US\$33
- **Average Reliability:** Power outages are a regular occurrence, but they rarely last longer than an hour.

Domestic Access ★★★★★

Oaxaca is mostly a walkable place. It's a relatively small city that's laid out in a grid plan, at least in the Centro and Reforma neighborhoods. Those who live in these areas can get by without a car.

If you don't feel like hoofing it, there are always local taxis ready and willing to give you a lift. It helps to know the typical prices and speak a bit of Spanish. Most drivers are honest, hard-working people, but there are certainly those who will try to make an extra buck out of a confused gringo.

It's worth it to try to figure out the local bus system. Most locals get around on public buses and *colectivos* (carpool-type mini-vans). Trips typically cost 8 pesos around town and a bit more for destinations outside of the center.



To use the local public transportation system, you'll need a basic grasp of Spanish. You also need to familiarize yourself with the routes so you know where to get on and when to call for a stop, either by pushing a button or just hollering "Bajar!"

Once you get a grasp on the local bus system, the world is your oyster. You can get out to the ruins at Monte Albán on the bus, for example, or head out to small towns outside of the city for a day trip. It's amazing how far you can go for so little.

Oaxaca's street names can be tricky. Independencia is the east-west axis of the city, and the names of streets are different on either side of the road. This is also true on Alcalá, which is the north-south axis. And several roads have the same name.



B- Sanur

INDONESIA

Internet ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$28**
- **Average Download Speed: 33 Mbps**

Electricity ★★★★★

- **Cost Per Month: US\$38**
- **Average Reliability: Power outages are frequent, although they don't usually last long.**

Domestic Access ★★★★★

There are no public transportation options in Sanur. Your options for getting around include walking, cycling, driving your own car or motorbike, or using taxis and moto-taxis.

Road quality across Bali is sub-par. The roads are extremely narrow, follow convoluted routes, and can be uneven in places, with little-to-no lighting after dark and major traffic congestion during certain times of the day.

The preferred mode of transport in Sanur is the motorbike. They are cheap to buy and navigate the narrow roads easier



than cars. That said, they are also dangerous and noisy, and they contribute to poor air quality.

Without your own car or motorbike, you'd limit yourself to your immediate area.

Delivery service apps are popular in Sanur. If you don't feel like driving, you can have almost anything you need brought to your door using Gojek (an app similar to Deliveroo or Uber Eats). You can order moto-taxis through the local ride-share app, Grab.





“C” destinations have 4–7 stars across Internet, Electricity, and Domestic Access.

DESTINATIONS



Corozal
Belize

Internet ★★★★★

- Cost Per Month: US\$43
- Average Download Speed: 10 Mbps

Electricity ★★★★★

- Cost Per Month: US\$161
- Average Reliability: Power outages are a regular occurrence, but they rarely last longer than an hour.

Domestic Access ★★★★★

Local means of transportation include walking, cycling, horseback-riding, and driving... As an expat, you'll want to →



have your own car, preferably one with four-wheel drive, to allow for maximum comfort and access to the region.

Generally speaking, you can expect road conditions to be poor, whether from a total lack of paving, lack of signage or lighting after dark, or spotty paving with big and frequent potholes. This can cause exceptional wear and tear to your car if you don't maintain it well.

The good news is that 27 miles (43 kms) of road is currently being paved, and two bridges are being built on the Corozal to Sarteneja Road. This will open up northern Belize for

exploration, cutting the time it takes to access the northern coast in half (and likely increasing its land value over time).

Belize's public buses are operated by private companies that operate set routes around the country. The buses are mostly old American Bluebird school buses, repurposed as public transport and known colloquially as “chicken buses” as they used to carry livestock as well.

They rarely, if ever, have air conditioning or toilets, but they're inexpensive ways of getting around. They tend to stop at every request and can take a long time to reach their destination.



“D”

DESTINATIONS

None of the destinations in this year's Index get “Ds” for **Infrastructure**.



ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Recreation



Is your idea of keeping busy more outdoorsy? For many, retirement is a long-awaited chance to escape the confines of the indoors.

Imagine having the time and the freedom to wake up and take a long hike and a fitness class on the beach every morning... spend the afternoon catching some fresh fish and grilling them up for dinner... biking to and from the local market to shop every day...

It sounds idyllic, but it's a realistic lifestyle for many who have found their perfect overseas haven.

For **Recreation**, we take into consideration all the natural amenities available in a destination and all the outdoor and sports-related activities you can do there.

This year's selection of Index destinations provides opportunities to golf, hike, bike, swim and do water sports, rock climb, boat, fish, bird, whale, and dolphin watch. If it's available within an hour of the destination, it's included for consideration.

Just like **Entertainment, Recreation** might not seem like a make-or-break category, as Taxes or Residency do... But it relates to how you actually spend your time in your new home and how much you enjoy yourself. We'd argue that that makes it pretty important.

If you're sporty, outdoorsy, or a nature-lover, pay attention to the results grades in this category...

Grading Recreation

Recreation is graded similarly to **Entertainment**. We look at how many of the below subcategories each place has (within an hour's drive). The more options the place offers, the higher the grade it gets.

Recreation Subcategories:

- Beach
- Mountain
- Freshwater
- National Parks
- Golf
- Fishing
- Rural or jungle setting
- City-based recreation (parks, gyms, sports complexes, etc.)

A	7-8 subcategories
B	5-6 subcategories
C	3-4 subcategories
D	0-2 subcategories

“A”

DESTINATIONS

The places that get “As” for Recreation offer the widest selection of outdoor recreation opportunities. They may also offer something remarkable nearby, like a site of major ecological significance or a natural landmark that stands out.



A+

Tavira
PORTUGAL

The Algarve is by nature an outdoorsy place, and expats who live here tend to be active types. Golf, walking and hiking, cycling, water sports, birdwatching, and tennis are popular pastimes.

The region is most famous for its long, rugged Atlantic coastline that is lined by fine beaches, many with Blue Flag status...

In Tavira, the beaches are unique in that they're almost completely natural. Because they're next to Ria Formosa Natural Park, a massive protected area, they remain undeveloped by mass tourism (although they offer a few amenities, like cafés and shops).→



You need to take a ferry to access Tavira's beaches. Tavira Island is a finger of land that's separated from the mainland by the waterways of Ria Formosa Natural Park. It's home to three well-loved beaches: Praia de Tavira, Praia da Terra Estreita, and Praia do Barril.

If you don't feel like taking a ferry, you can also drive 10 minutes to Cabanas, a small resort town with another long stretch of sandy beach.

The Ria Formosa Natural Park is a major attraction in and of itself. It's the most important wetland of southern Portugal, made up of 18,000 hectares of lagoons, sandbanks, canals, and islands. It's a birdwatcher's paradise—home to flamingos, waders, and countless other species.

Other recreation options in Tavira are kitesurfing, surfing, swimming, boating, kayaking, paddle-boarding, walking or lazing at the beach, and so on... On land, the top activities are golf and tennis.

The Algarve is often ranked as Europe's best golf destination, with some three-dozen courses to choose



from. In Tavira, Benamor Golf Course, Quinta de Cima Golf Course, and Quinta da Ria Golf Course are the local options.

The Tavira Tennis Club, where you can avail of courts, lessons, and tournaments, is the center of local tennis culture. You could also try fishing on the Gilão River, hiking, mountain biking, horseback-riding, and more...

Save for access to mountains, Tavira and the surrounding area offer almost any type of recreation activity you could want.

A Costa De La Luz

📍 SPAIN



The Costa de la Luz is a place for nature lovers, and thanks to a number of natural parks in the area, the nature you find here is pristine... It's a different story to the Costa del Sol, just a few miles east, which is built up with all-inclusive resorts and beach clubs.

The countryside is Tuscany-like along the Costa de la Luz, featuring wildflower-dotted rolling green hills that are perfect for hiking or horseback-riding. Spain's southern

Atlantic coastline is long and mostly undeveloped, with uncrowded beaches of golden sand.

Anywhere you settle along this coast, a stretch of soft sand will be within arm's reach. Even Cádiz, the city option, has a handful of attractive beaches right in the Old Town.

Some of the top beach towns in the area are Conil, Sanlúcar, and Chipiona. Note that the further south you go towards→

the Strait of Gibraltar, the windier the beaches become because the Strait acts as a natural wind tunnel.

Of course, with so much access to the waterfront, anything you could want to do on the water, you can do here, from boating, sailing, watersports, kitesurfing, kayaking, dolphin-watching, fishing, and more.

In the sprawling Doñana National Park, you can see endangered species like the Iberian lynx and Spanish imperial eagle.

For golf-lovers, the Costa de la Luz is a great choice. This is part of what brought expat Stephanie and her husband here. She says, “Golf is one thing that’s kind of under-the-

radar about this region. My husband is an avid golfer, so that was another consideration for choosing Rota. Unlike the Algarve, where it’s mostly expats and tourists using the courses, the Spanish actually golf as well.

“The courses are much more affordable, too. My husband’s membership at a 27-hole championship course is about 1,300 euros for the year with discounts to other courses in the region. Golf is a great way to meet people.”

Some of the best golf courses in the area are Benalup Golf & Country Club, Barceló Montecastillo Golf, and Vista Hermosa Golf Club. Other outdoor activities you can do here are cycling, rock climbing, horseback riding, paragliding, and more.



A Kyrenia

📍 NORTHERN CYPRUS

The coast and sea are the most obvious forms of outdoor entertainment in Northern Cyprus, drawing millions of visitors every year. Diving, snorkeling, boating, fishing... there’s no limit to what you can do on or near the water.

Despite being a small area, Cyprus offers a variety of beach types. From one kilometer to another, the coast could be fine sand (so fine, it’s home to an endangered species of turtle that can only nest where the sand is so easily burrowed in), cliffside, rocky, or smooth pebbles. The waters around the island on all sides are clear and clean.

In the mountains, hiking is popular in the cooler months, and it’s even possible to ski in the winter in the Troodos Range.

You’ll find several golf ranges on the island. With the stunning views and year-round playing weather, this is an ideal golfing haven. Most of the clubs are around Paphos, with one in Limassol and three in the north.

Cyprus’ wine culture will also keep you busy... There are several towns that offer wine experiences, with vineyards stretching across the island, mostly in the southwestern region.

Limassol’s annual wine festival, Lemesos, takes place in the last week of August and the first week of September. Drawing 15,000 visitors, the events include music and dancing, magic and comedy shows, grape treading, and lots of food and wine tasting.

Birding is a popular pastime here, as the island is home to many endemic species but is also a pitstop for over 300 types of migratory birds.

From August to October, turtle lovers come to watch and help protect the babies hatching all over the island. At the end of May and beginning of June, it seems as though the entire country heads to the strawberry farms for a day of picking.

A Sanur

INDONESIA

Sanur is yet another fabulous beach destination. Sanur has its own stretch of soft-sand beach, and swimming, paddle boarding, kayaking, boating, fishing, kite surfing, and other water-based recreation is available here.

Just off Bali's shores is the Coral Triangle, a marine area with staggering marine diversity and some of the best-maintained coral in the world. It's home to over 2,000 species of fish, 600 species of coral, and more. You can arrange boat trips for snorkeling, scuba, free diving, fishing, or whale watching.

On land, popular outdoor activities include walking along the beach, hanging out at the pool, and cycling, running, and walking along narrow lanes of terraced rice paddies—a scenic way to take in the sights.

Part of what makes Bali unique is that there is so much to do within such a compact area. A road trip around the



entire island takes less than a day, though you could live in Bali for years and still discover new things to see and do.

Within an hour's drive, there is horseback riding, hiking, and mountain biking on Bali's central mountains. Mount Agung is the highest point on the island, reaching an elevation of 10,308 feet (3,142 meters).

Rivers with spectacular waterfalls crisscross the island; you can go whitewater rafting or visit the hot springs of nearby Tabanan. Bali Beach Golf Course and Bali National Golf Club are also within easy reach.

A- Chitré

PANAMA



In Chitré, most of the entertainment options are outdoors. If you enjoy being outside and have an adventurous spirit, you won't get bored here.

Kicking back on the beach is a popular pastime for Chitré expats. Playa Monagre and Playa El Rompío are the two best beaches. Playa Monagre is well-developed, with seafood restaurants, bars, and rentable ranchos (huts).

For the best beaches in Eastern Azuero, head south to Pedasí and Tonosí. Playa Venao, on the route between the

two districts, is one of Panama's most-raved-about beaches for surfing.

Isla Iguana (Iguana Island) is home to white sand and stunning turquoise waters. It's located just off the coast of Pedasí's Playa Arenal, where fishermen charge a small fee to transport passengers round-trip. Isla Iguana's waters are ideal for snorkeling.

You can also enjoy biking, running, or walking in and around Chitré. A few years ago, a *ciclo vía* (bicycle path) was →

developed, linking the town of Chitré with nearby Playa El Agallito.

It has two smooth, paved lanes, follows the rehabilitated highway Chitré-Playa El Agallito, and makes for a fun morning or late afternoon ride with a sea view.

Club de Golf de Chitré is the local golf club, featuring a nine-hole course, a restaurant (with a Wednesday night barbecue), a tennis court, golf lessons, and tennis classes. A group of expats and locals who golf together every Wednesday, and a membership costs US\$80.

Baseball is basically a religion in Panama, and you'll have no trouble finding opportunities to participate. You can catch a game at Rico Cedeño Stadium or play at one of the sandlots across town. If you're feeling competitive, you can even join a league.

There are several national parks in the surrounding area that are ideal for hiking day trips. They include Parque Nacional Sarigua (Panama's only desert), Montuoso Forest Reserve, Tronosa Forest Reserve, and Canajagua Hill National Park.



A- Corozal

 BELIZE

Corozal may offer the world's most underrated strip of Caribbean beachfront.

The town is tucked inside Corozal Bay, a deeply indented part of the Caribbean, which makes for especially calm waters. This is a playground for any type of watersport you like to practice, especially sailing.

Belize is a premier sport fishing destination. There are many fishermen in the Bay of Corozal, but the best sport fishing is on the reef further out. Make sure you have a guide so you don't unintentionally enter a marine reserve.

More treasures are found off the coast of mainland Belize. The Mesoamerican Barrier Reef is the largest living reef in the world and home to over 500 species of fish, making for some of the best scuba diving and snorkeling in the world.

The Blue Hole, a giant sinkhole out on Lighthouse Reef, is one of the natural wonders of the world. Richard Branson

led the first research expedition in a submarine into the Blue Hole in December 2018.

There's also plenty of outdoor activity to be found on land. Northern Belize, where Corozal is found, is cowboy country, with ranches, Mennonite communities, and horse trails. If you have a little land, you can keep your own horse and ride the jungle trails for free.

All of Belize is a bird-watchers mecca, with Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary being a world-class bird-watching destination. You can also camp here (best during the cooler months).

This region is also great for anyone with a green thumb, with subtropical temperatures and nearly 60 inches of rain annually. The question isn't how to grow things here... it's how to get things to stop.

“B”

“B” destinations likewise provide a wide range of recreation options and opportunities to spend time outdoors, but the selection is more limited than in “A” destinations...

DESTINATIONS



B+

Da Lat
VIETNAM

Natural beauty is what made Da Lat popular among the French in the 1900s, who came here in search of an Alpine-like chalet town. The town continues to impress with its non-tropical natural beauty.

The cool weather, pine forest, abundance of fresh water, and vibrant blue skies give way to a good number of outdoor recreation opportunities. The surrounding peaks and valleys provide endless trails for hiking and biking.

Da Lat is not on the coast, but it has some freshwater available. Xuan Huong Lake (formerly known as Grand Lac) in the center of town was created by the French.

It features a walking trail and cherry blossoms. You can rent a paddleboat and go for a ride on it. In fact, paddle boating is popular on almost all of Da Lat's lakes...

Da Lat has plenty of streams, rivers, and waterfalls, too. There are at least 12 impressive waterfalls nearby.

There are three golf courses in Da Lat. Da Lat Palace Golf Club, five minutes from Da Lat, dates to the 1920s and is frequently rated the best course in Vietnam and one of the best in Asia.

B+ Medellín

COLOMBIA

Medellín is surrounded by towering hills. You don't even have to leave the city limits to go for a hike. Pueblito Paisa is a replica village on a hill and a popular place to hike for sunset views.

Another option right in the city is Cerro El Volador, which you can access on a trail a few blocks from the stadium. Down in Envigado, El Salado is a park with a few trails to choose from. There are also tours you can join for some more challenging hiking outside of the city.

This city puts a big emphasis on green spaces, with upwards of 20 parks and tropical vegetation, small gardens, and tree-lined streets everywhere you look. For every new building built, by law, a green space equal to the footprint of the building must be created.

Barefoot Park stands out as a unique city park. It encourages visitors to take off their shoes and dip their toes into hot and cold pools, walk through sand, among bamboo trees, and climb various structures...

Just outside the city, there's plenty of opportunity to be immersed in nature. You can jump off a mountain to see the valley from a bird's perspective while paragliding... Join a bird watching group to see some of the 1,800 local bird species... or spend the day at the botanical garden to interact with iguanas, butterflies, ducks, and other animals.



Colombians are passionate about soccer, and two local teams play at the stadium in Laureles: Nacional and Independiente. The most exciting time is when the two home teams meet in “El Clásico Paisa.” There's always a sold-out crowd of 40,000 for this one, and all the bars in the area are packed with fans.

In the city, you'll also find modern, air-conditioned gyms with high quality equipment. Fitness is a part of the local culture, which is appearance-minded.

Group exercise is really popular in Medellín. You can join Zumba or other aerobics-style dance classes, running groups, bodybuilding teams, hiking groups, yoga classes, and more.

B Oaxaca

MEXICO

Surrounded by mountains, it should come as no surprise that Oaxaca provides some good hiking opportunities. It doesn't take long to reach the ancient ruins at Monte Albán or the jaw-dropping petrified waterfalls at Hierve el Agua.

The former is an archaeological site built by the Zapotecs around 500 BC. It's one of Mesoamerica's earliest cities. The latter, Hierve el Agua, is a massive waterfall made of two rock shelves that stand almost 300 feet (90 meters) above the ground below.

If beaches are more your vibe, you can jet to the coast for the weekend to places like Puerto Escondido or Huatulco. The journey to the Oaxaca coast across curvy mountain roads is hair-raising, but a quick flight is also an option...



Another local pastime is cheering on the Alebrijes de Oaxaca. The city's football club is named after brightly colored mythical creatures. They play in the 15,000-person capacity stadium on the outskirts of the city, and the games are tons of fun to attend.

B Paris

FRANCE

You'd be surprised at how outdoorsy life in Paris could be... A big factor is the element of walking and biking—most residents use their feet more than public transportation, meaning you get a healthy dose of exercise and sunshine every day just by going about your business.

That said, we've marked cities down a bit throughout this category, because all of these grades are relative to the other destinations... We grade nearly everything in this Index on a curve.

Out of Paris' 65 square miles, more than 11 are reserved as protected woods and parks. To get to these wide-open spaces and lakes you could boat or swim in, you generally need to head to the edge of the city.

There are a number of outdoor activities you could pursue here... horse riding, boating, hiking, or simply picnicking.

Dozens of smaller parks can be found throughout the city—it would be hard to walk more than 15 minutes without



coming across some green—but they're not always big enough for practicing any real sport.

If you're into soccer, tennis, swimming, and the like, these are things you can pursue through athletic clubs in the city, but generally indoors.

Golf lovers even have a chance to practice here at the historic Morfontaine course just outside the city. This 27-hole club is made up of a 9-hole course, built in 1911 and known as Valliere, and the 18-hole championship course, built in 1927.



“C”

DESTINATIONS

None of the destinations in this year's Index get “Cs” for **Recreation**.

“D”

DESTINATIONS

None of the destinations in this year's Index get “Ds” for **Recreation**.

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ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023



Environmental Factors



This is an increasingly important category...

Environmental Factors assesses how safe, clean, and comfortable the environment is in your new home.

Specifically, this category looks at pollution (of land, sea, and air), the risk of natural and non-natural disasters, and the effects of climate change, including the current effects and, as much as is possible to predict, the future effects.

Everyone wants to live in a clean and safe environment. Whether it's a white-sand beach, a hilltop village, or a well-maintained city with top-notch recycling facilities, you want your environment to be tidy and cared for.

Some of the destinations in this year's Index are in countries that are still developing. They lack the infrastructure to manage pollution and other human-caused environmental issues.

In these places, you may see litter on the streets or beaches or have to endure bouts of bad air quality during agricultural burning seasons... If you'd have a hard time coming to terms with these realities, avoid the countries that scored low in this category.→



Other countries on the Index list are well-developed. They've had systems in place to manage waste for centuries. That doesn't mean that they're any "cleaner" than their developing-world counterparts, but it does mean you're less likely to see litter on the streets on a daily basis.

Humanity's effect on the environment is one thing to consider. You also have to take into account the effects of Mother Nature, from which no place on Earth is exempt. That said, some places are more at risk than others...

Before moving to a new place, you'll want to know what the risks are, especially if you plan on buying property. Hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, heatwaves, cold snaps, and forest fires can put a real damper on your retirement plans.

Then again, these phenomena can be hard to predict. They're often the trade-off for Earth's most amazing landscapes. (Think of Hawaii's landscape, for instance. Those dramatic jade peaks are the result of being in a tectonically active area.)



Making predictions of natural disasters even more difficult is climate change, which affects normal patterns and exacerbates certain risks (like droughts and forest fires). It's difficult to predict how the effects of climate change will play out on every place in Earth...

It's important to weigh the benefits against the risks and look into how prepared your destination of choice is to respond to these types of disasters. That's what we've attempted to do in this category.

Grading Environmental Factors

A	The environment is in great condition. Effective waste management systems are in place. It's rare to see litter on the streets. The environment is on the government's agenda, and it has made commitments to protect it. The risk of natural disasters is low.	C	The environment is in OK condition. There are waste management systems in place, but they need improvement. Seeing litter on the streets is common. The environment is low on the government's list of priorities. The risk of natural disasters is medium to high.
B	The environment is in decent condition. Waste management is in place, but it's imperfect. Seeing litter on the streets sometimes happens. The environment is on the government's agenda, although it's not serious about addressing it. The risk of natural disasters is low to medium.	D	The environment is in poor condition. Pollution is a problem and/or there is some major environmental concern. Waste management systems are ineffective or nonexistent. Litter is always in the streets. The government isn't capable of addressing the issues at this time. The risk of natural disasters is high.

“A”

DESTINATIONS

Places that get “As” for Environmental Factors are safe, clean, comfortable places to live.

The environment is in great condition, and seeing litter on the streets is unusual because waste is being dealt with effectively.

The governments of “A” destinations take environmental issues seriously. They’ve made commitments to address issues, and they are taking steps towards achieving them.

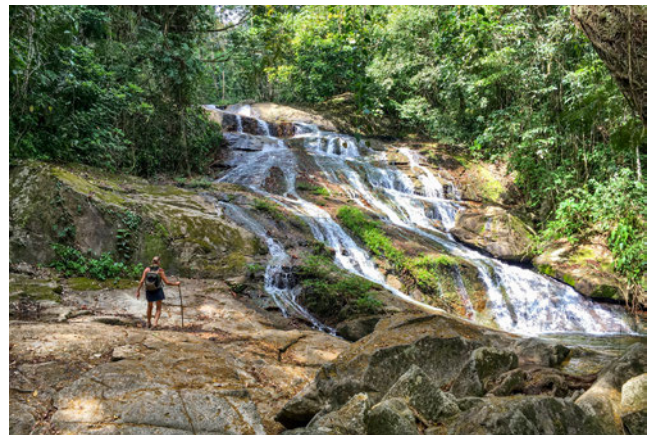
These are also places where natural disaster risk is very low, although, again, no place on Earth is exempt from the effects of Mother Nature.



Belize is tiny, but despite its size, it’s a world leader when it comes to environmental protection—both of its on-land and under-sea worlds...

It’s clear that the Belize government recognizes the importance of the longevity of the natural world. It’s a major draw for tourists, after all, and tourism is a major contributor to its economy.

A recent example of Belize being proactive with regards to environmental protection is the agreement it made with the Nature Conservancy. In exchange for making certain conservation commitments (like increasing its marine protected areas from 15.9% to 30% by 2026), Belize will get a massive loan, worth 30% of its GDP. →



In effect, it has traded cash for conservation. This is not the first instance of Belize being forward-thinking and environment-minded...

- In 2018, former prime minister Dean Barrow imposed an indefinite moratorium on all oil activity in Belize's waters.
- Belize's barrier reef has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1996.
- More than a third of Belize's land mass enjoys protected status.
- On Jan. 22, 2020, Belize's government signed into law the North-Eastern Biological Corridor, which protects some 69,122 acres of jungle from deforestation and connects a system of three protected areas into one.

Belize's natural world is not perfect, but measures are being taken to protect it, which hopefully means it can be enjoyed for a long time.

Corozal is in a rural, undeveloped part of Belize. Poor road conditions have kept Belize from becoming overly touristed for a long time. The roads are improving, but there's not a lot of development here (yet). It's a relatively tidy town.

In comparison to other Caribbean destinations, Corozal and Belize in general experience a disproportionately low number of hurricanes. Only about 5% of hurricanes that form in the near Caribbean ever make landfall in Belize.

Corozal is not especially prone to natural disasters, but the country is at risk of forest fires, which tend to happen annually in the south and west and sometimes lead to evacuations.

All things considered, Corozal is a good choice for a clean, safe, and comfortable retirement.

A- Chitré

📍 PANAMA

Panama doesn't have quite the same track record as Belize when it comes to making environmental moves... That said, in recent years, the Panama government has turned heads with some lofty conservation commitments.

Last year, the Panama Canal Authority announced plans to have the Canal be carbon neutral by 2030. The government is addressing deforestation by committing to plant 1 million hectares of forest by 2050.

Panama will also increase its use of renewable energy over coming decades... Currently, less than 10% of the private sector's energy comes from wind and solar and about 70% from hydro. The goal is to get 95% of Panama's energy supply from renewable sources by 2050.

It's going electric, too. It launched the National Electric Mobility Strategy to initiate public transportation's switch to electric power. It wants a 35% increase in the number of electric buses on Panama's roads by 2030.

Panama is still in the process of development, and across the country (including in Panama City), seeing litter on the streets is normal. Within this context, Chitré stands out as surprisingly and refreshingly clean.

The local mayor is dedicated to making the area more environmentally friendly. *Panama Letter* Editor Gabrielle Wells says, "Of all the small towns I've visited in Panama, Chitré is definitely the cleanest, with no garbage strewn about.



"A local tells me that recently, six solar power plants were created near Parita. There are also increased efforts to pick up trash around town and at the beaches."

Chitré has some environmental issues, like deforestation and desertification. Decades of overgrazing have created a drought effect in the Sarigua area near Chitré. Luckily, Panama is one of the world's most water-rich countries, so this is only an issue on a local level.

Hurricanes are one thing you won't have to worry about if you move to Chitré. Panama lies safely outside the Atlantic Hurricane Belt. Hurricanes rarely make landfall in Panama.

This is an environmentally safe place to live, and in the context of Panama (and Latin America in general), Chitré stands out for its high standards when it comes to keeping things clean.

A- Tavira

PORTUGAL

Portugal is protective of its environment, with the second-highest density of Blue Flag-awarded beaches in the world (amounting to 55% of its beaches), noted for their excellence in cleanliness, safety, amenities, and environmental standards.

While the Algarve's streets and coasts are clean, the region's inner waterways are polluted. The Ria Formosa Natural Park, located right next to Tavira, is the source of income for many fishermen in the Algarve, but local environmental groups have sounded the alarm about pollution levels.

Authorities planned for the construction of a new water treatment plant in Faro in 2016, which is now underway and should address community concerns.

Portugal made headlines this year for issues related to drought, which prompted emergency water-usage restrictions. The government has since allocated millions of euros for awareness campaigns and solutions. Albufeira, not far from Tavira, has been chosen as the site for a desalination plant to address water shortages.

Generally, though, pollution rates are low in Tavira. It's widely regarded as the prettiest town in Portugal. The streets, towns, and beaches are kept clean and litter-free, and air quality has improved consistently over the past few years.



Because of the proximity of Ria Formosa and its protected status, there's been a limit on development, which means fewer tourists... which means less pollution.

Portugal is famous for a massive earthquake that happened in 1755, which affected the entire country... But Tavira itself is not especially prone to natural disasters... There is a chance of flooding, forest fires, and earthquakes throughout Portugal.

Systems are in place to address these risks. For instance, Alerta de Incêndio Florestal (Forest Fire Alert Association) is a charity that monitors forest fire risk, supports local fire fighters, and fundraises for equipment.

Bottom line: Tavira is a good choice for living in a clean, attractive environment surrounded by the best of nature.



“
B”

In “B” destinations, the environment is in decent condition. You may see litter on the streets here and there, although waste management systems are in place.

The environment is on the government’s agenda in “B” destinations to varying degrees of seriousness...

DESTINATIONS

“B” destinations are slightly more at risk of natural disasters than “A” destinations.

**B+****Costa De La Luz**

SPAIN

Just like Portugal, Spain has struggled with drought in recent years. Water demand is highest in Andalucía, where the Costa de la Luz is located. Unlike Portugal, however, there’s a lack of initiative at the governmental level to address these issues.

Plans are underway to increase water supply to western Andalucía through a giant ring main... but the plans are imperfect. They threaten environmentally protected zones and ignore the needs of local populations.

Spain as a country has made commitments to environmental protection. It developed the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change, which involves specific measures that need to be achieved by 2030. It aims to→



be carbon neutral by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 90% between 1990 and 2050.

Along the Costa de la Luz, the towns are generally clean, litter-free, and well-maintained. The towns that stand out as the best-maintained are Conil de la Frontera, Vejer de la Frontera, Rota, Chipiona, and Sanlúcar de Barrameda.

Cádiz is the main population center on the coast, and as such, it suffers from a bit more wear and tear than the small towns. Chiclana and El Puerto de Santa María are the least well-maintained areas along the Costa.

One environmental factor to be aware of here is the abundant sunshine. This area is called the “Coast of Light” for a reason. It gets over 3,000 hours of sunshine per year,

and you can feel how strong the sun is when you’re here. (You’ll find yourself constantly squinting.) If you’re prone to skin cancer, it may not be a good choice.

The Costa de la Luz is made up of 124 miles (200 kms) of coastline, which is at risk of rising sea levels. Chipiona specifically has been identified by UNESCO as being at risk of a Mediterranean tsunami, which it predicts will happen in the next 30 years. By 2023, it will join the list of 40 other “tsunami-ready” cities.

Choose a higher-elevation town (like Vejer de la Frontera or Conil de la Frontera) to mitigate these risks. Overall, the Costa is still a relatively clean, safe place to settle, but the government could be doing more to protect the environment.

B- Kyrenia

NORTHERN CYPRUS

Northern Cyprus’s peninsula shape means that it has extended coastlines on the Mediterranean, including the nicest beaches on the entire island of Cyprus. This is a major tourism draw, but it could also be the source of problems in the future.

The Mediterranean Sea is one of the most polluted bodies of water in the world. The WWF reports that 570,000 tons of plastic go into the Med each year. Microplastic concentrations in the Med are four times higher than in the North Pacific Ocean. This is detrimental to marine life, and as more of it washes up on beaches, it could come to impact tourism.

Oil spills and rising sea levels are other concerns. About 20% of the world’s oil passes through the Med each year, and spills have the potential to obliterate nature and the natural appeal of Northern Cyprus.

Rising sea levels can also destroy coastal areas, not to mention hinder any oceanfront residential development. On land in Northern Cyprus, litter along the roadside and outside of villages is sometimes an issue.

Cyprus has historically suffered from droughts, which have become more extreme in the last couple of decades. In 2015, the Northern Cyprus Water Supply Project was completed, which brings massive amounts of water for drinking and irrigation from Turkey to Northern Cyprus via an underwater pipe.

While the individual homes you’ll see around Northern Cyprus still have big tanks on the roofs for water storage, they are obsolete these days.



In terms of natural disasters, Cyprus is prone to earthquakes and mostly human-caused forest fires during summer months. The Cyprus Civil Defence website publishes information relevant to earthquake safety, while the Department of Forests publishes information about local fire safety.

B- Medellín

COLOMBIA

Medellín is a city of 2.5 million people that urbanized over the span of just a few decades... Progress means more vehicles that tend to burn cheap gasoline and industry, which, in turn, generates more pollution.

Medellín has Colombia's second-worst air quality. This is worsened by the fact that it lies at the base of a valley, trapping the smog and dirty air at its skyline.

This, coupled with the fact that it sits at an elevation, could pose problems for people with respiratory problems who want to live in Medellín.

The government is addressing the growth rate and pollution concerns in several ways. New laws require better grade gasoline, and systems like “pico y placa” limit the number of cars that can be on the road at certain times on certain days.

Earth Days have been established, during which no cars can drive except taxis and buses. And old, inefficient buses



are being replaced with new electric models, in addition to other initiatives taking place...

Natural disaster risks in Medellín include flooding, landslides, and earthquakes, though the consequences are more strongly felt outside the city than inside it. More emergency management needs to be developed to address these risks.

Apart from the air quality issues, Medellín is a pretty well-kempt city. Green space abounds in Medellín, with over 20 parks and tropical vegetation, small gardens, and tree-lined streets everywhere you look. It makes a big effort to protect and enshrine those green spaces in law.

B- Paris

FRANCE



Paris is a major urban area, with over 2 million people in the city and more than 12 million in the wider Paris Region. It's hard to compare a city like this to a town like Corozal, Belize, that's home to about 10,200 people.

Like any major population center, Paris suffers from environmental issues... Smog is a problem, and those who

are sensitive to air quality may be affected by it. Tap water is super-high in mineral content, so it's not recommended to drink it on an ongoing basis.

Paris in general offers clean living, but it's worth noting that the city's cleanliness has declined overall in recent years, and it gets especially bad in summer when people →

are using the parks more frequently. Cigarette butts are a particular litter issue in green areas.

In 2022 especially, issues with litter in the streets, parks, and canals were worse than normal for this usually well-maintained city. Photos of overflowing garbage cans, broken glass, and graffiti accompanied by the hashtag #SaccageParis (“Trashed Paris”) were circulating throughout the year.

Some say the photos and hashtag are part of a smear campaign targeting the mayor, Anne Hidalgo. Whatever the case may be, the city is in a multi-year process of tidying itself up in preparation of hosting the Olympics in 2024.

It’s also preparing itself for climate change. By 2050, it hopes to be carbon neutral and have 50% of its surfaces vegetated and permeable.



While weather extremes didn’t used to be common in Paris, recent years have seen more snowfall in the winter and record-breaking heatwaves in the summer. With weather patterns becoming more extreme worldwide, this is likely to continue.



“C”

DESTINATIONS

“C” destinations may be naturally beautiful... but the environment is not in great shape because of imperfect waste management systems and a lack of government initiative or resources.

Seeing litter on the streets, in parks, or in the water is an everyday thing. This is something you have to come to terms with to live in these places successfully.

Natural disaster risk is higher in “C” destinations.



Vietnam is a developing country, one of the poorest in Asia. Poverty does not equal pollution, but it can mean that the environment is lower on the government's list of concerns to address.

Vietnam is currently sprinting to catch up with the rest of the world, and the environment is bearing the brunt of its rapid industrialization.

It has poor air quality because motorcycles, which have less control over emissions than cars, are the primary mode of transportation. Da Lat is surrounded by 25,646 hectares of forest, which may help balance out the negative effects of motorbikes. →



Because of the air quality and the fact that Da Lat sits at an elevation, living here can be hard on the lungs if you suffer from a respiratory issue. It might not be a good choice if you have a history of skin conditions or skin cancer, as Southern Vietnam tops the charts of the Solar UV Index.

Da Lat is a generally well-maintained and clean city. It's a flower and garden ben for Vietnam, and every road median and island is meticulously decorated with flowering plants. Off of main roads, though, seeing litter in the streets is pretty common.

Vietnam has a long coastline on the South China Sea, which makes it susceptible to tropical storms. This can cause flooding and landslides that damage crops and infrastructure and, in the worst cases, take lives.

Landslides and flooding can happen in Da Lat. A 500-meter (1,640-foot) scar on the face of Lang Biang Mountain, which stares down at the town, is proof of that... But it's unlikely



that a tropical storm would affect the town because of its inland, up-mountain location.

Da Lat is a seismically secure area... so much so, in fact, that it was chosen as the site of Vietnam's first nuclear research reactor.

Oaxaca

 MEXICO

Oaxaca State is home to rugged terrain, including mountains, valleys, canyons, ravines, rivers, rain forests, and 330 (530 kms) miles of coastline.

It's incredibly biodiverse, home to a huge variety of plant and animal species. It has the fifth-most endangered species of any place on Earth.

Some conversation efforts are in place. Environmental Services of Oaxaca, an NGO, successfully opened a voluntary carbon market in 2008, in which it sells carbon credits to Mexican corporations.

There are seven protected areas across the state. Unfortunately, because of exploitation, agriculture, unsustainable tourism development, and a general lack of awareness, conservation efforts are hampered.

Water pollution is an issue, specifically in the Atoyac and Salado Rivers, which affects the ecosystem's and community's health. The misuse of freshwater has led to recurring droughts across the state.

A law has been proposed by Earth Law Center that would make these rivers the subject of rights, including the right



to exist, thrive, and evolve, which would grant them a higher level of protection.

Zapotec indigenous communities have taken water issues into their own hands and established over 500 water infrastructure projects, including dams and absorption wells, to conserve water.

Oaxaca city is currently experiencing an issue with litter because of the recent closure of a dump that the city has relied on for decades. This is likely a temporary issue, but for now, the colonial center is suffering.

“D”

DESTINATIONS

Places that get “Ds” for Environmental Factors are in trouble environmentally...

Pollution is a major problem, but it may not be the only one... “D” destinations have serious environmental concerns that are not being addressed by local governments.

Systems of waste management may not exist... If they do, they’re failing to meet demand. Expect to see litter every day in these places.

To live in a “D” destination, you also have to accept the possibility of natural disasters, for which there is a high risk.



Indonesia is one of the most populous countries in the world, with more than 273.5 million people. It receives millions of tourists every year under normal travel conditions, and most of them go to Bali.

Indonesia has industrialized rapidly and doesn't have the infrastructure it needs to support these big numbers. Some of the biggest problems it faces are air pollution, poor waste management, and insufficient water treatment.

The country is one of the world's biggest contributors to plastic waste. During rainy season on Bali, litter makes its→



way to the streams that intersect the entire island and ends up on the beaches, marring the natural beauty. Heart-breaking photos of litter-strewn beaches brutally illustrate this problem.

The government has taken a small step to combat this: it banned single-use plastic bags from stores, markets, and stalls in early 2020. Expats try to tackle the plastic problem on a local level by regularly organizing beach clean-ups... but it's not enough.

Deforestation, agricultural burning seasons, and wildfires create smog. This destroys the natural habitats of many species, like the critically endangered orangutan. The government has created climate policies concerning forestry emissions, but Indonesia is still one of the world's top greenhouse gas emitters.

Sanur may not be a good choice for you if you have respiratory problems. Air quality is a major concern because of the fires, motorbike emissions, and the local practice of burning garbage to eliminate waste.

Those are the human-caused environmental problems... but Indonesia is also natural disaster-prone. Bali has two active volcanoes, and it's in a tectonic hot spot.

Volcanic eruptions are possible, although volcanic activity is closely monitored, as are earthquakes and tsunamis.



Earthquakes greater than 5.0 on the Richter scale are rare. A series of early-warning buoys ring the island to monitor for possible tsunamis as well.

Bali is not in the path of typhoons but can experience high seas, dangerous coastal currents, and undertows due to storms occurring elsewhere.

Why would anyone want to live in Sanur, considering all of this? Many expats are involved in the clean-up and conservation efforts, so they have a stake in the environment's recovery, bad as things may be currently. They accept the risks of living here as a trade-off for what is still one of the most naturally beautiful places on Earth.





ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Crime



As crime rates continue to rise in the United States and Canada, so, too, does the importance of Crime as a category for consideration. Safety is freedom. You don't realize how great a sense of relief you'll feel until you no longer have to watch your back, check your locks, look out for bad behavior, and so on.

The good news is that many destinations overseas are much safer than areas of the United States and Canada. In fact, every destination in this Index is a safe place to visit and live, as any of the expats living there would gladly tell you.

We'd never recommend upping stakes and moving somewhere dangerous... but no city is free of crime, and no place in the world is completely safe.

As an expat living in a new country, the type of crime that you'd most likely be subjected to is swindling or petty crime as a result of standing out as a newcomer.

For example, you probably won't be able to get as good a price as a local if you're haggling for an item in a market, or you'll get charged a premium in an unmetered taxi. In Latin America, we call this "gringo pricing."

More serious forms of crime are pickpocketing, home break-ins in rural areas, or being asked to pay a bribe to a police officer or government official.

The former two are usually crimes of opportunity—a window left open, a purse left in the shopping cart, a car left unlocked. They can be mitigated by common sense and a trusted network of in-the-know expats and local friends.

The latter—bribery—is rampant all over the world. It's just more transparent in the developing world. In Latin America or Asia, you may be asked for a bribe by a cop who pulls you over on the highway, or by your contractor, who swears you won't get planning permission unless Señor X in the permit office gets his *mordidita* (or "little bite").

We strongly recommend against paying any bribe to anyone, ever... not as a matter of morality, but as a matter of practicality. Once you do, you're forever labelled a payer. That news spreads fast. Once you pay one guy, six more will line up behind him.

Whatever you do, don't trust online research about safety overseas. The U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories are problematic, and expat blogs and forums won't offer you an objective or fully informed view. What you'll find will likely be outdated, uninformed, misguided, and ignorant of the truth.

This category is an overview of how big of a concern crime is in day-to-day life in each location. We talk to expats on the ground to inform our assessment, but remember, opportunists live all over the world. Use common sense, keep your wits about you, and keep your expectations in check.

Grading Environmental Factors

A	Crime is not a concern.	C	Crime is a likely possibility.
B	Crime is a possibility, but unlikely	D	Crime is a day-to-day concern.

“
A”**DESTINATIONS**

“A” destinations are places where crime is not a day-to-day concern...

You can be nearly certain that violent crime is not going to affect you. Petty crime is a possibility anywhere, but if you forget to lock your front door one night, it's no big deal.

You can walk around most places during the day or night in these places without worrying.

If having zero concerns about safety is high on your list of criteria, have a look at the places that got “As” in this category...

**A+****Tavira**
PORTUGAL

The Global Peace Index ranks Portugal as the sixth-most peaceful country in the world. Violent crime is rare, and petty crime is limited to the busy tourist season.

Portugal stands out for its low levels of social unrest. Unlike Spain and France, for instance, public protests and strikes aren't so common here.

Within an already safe country, Tavira remains one of the safest cities. What crime exists is seasonal, with spikes happening during the high-tourism months.

Domestic conflicts, occasional petty theft, and some incidents between young adults engaged in nightlife activities are possibilities.

Long-time Tavira expat Marie Moore says, “In my three years here, I’ve known of very few crime-related incidents. For example, my neighbors leave their bikes on the sidewalk all night, and they’re still there when they wake up in the morning. To my knowledge, only one car has been vandalized in our neighborhood.”

A Costa De La Luz

📍 SPAIN

Spain is ranked #29 on the Global Peace Index... It's not exactly fair to compare it to Portugal, though. It's a much bigger country, with 47 million people versus Portugal's 10 million, and it has many more cities.

As such, crime rates are higher, but they are not spread evenly across the country; they're concentrated in urban zones, like Madrid and Barcelona.

If you're not vigilant on the metro in Barcelona, for instance, there's a good chance that your wallet will be swiped from your pocket or bag without you even noticing...

But the Costa de la Luz is a very safe area. Even in Cádiz, the most city-like environment along the coast, you can feel completely safe walking around at any time of the day or night.

In fact, you'll even see kids playing in the town squares, unaccompanied, well after dark. That should be a good indicator of the level of concern locals have about safety.



As one expat, Stephanie, puts it, "For the most part, I feel comfortable in Rota. People stay out so late here, so there are always people on the streets, and I never feel unsafe at night."

Spain is notorious for its strikes, protests, and demonstrations, but again, these are more likely in the major urban zones. They probably won't affect life in the small towns of the Costa.



A Kyrenia

NORTHERN CYPRUS

Cyprus as an island is extremely safe, and crime rates are statistically lower in Northern Cyprus than they are in the Republic of Cyprus.

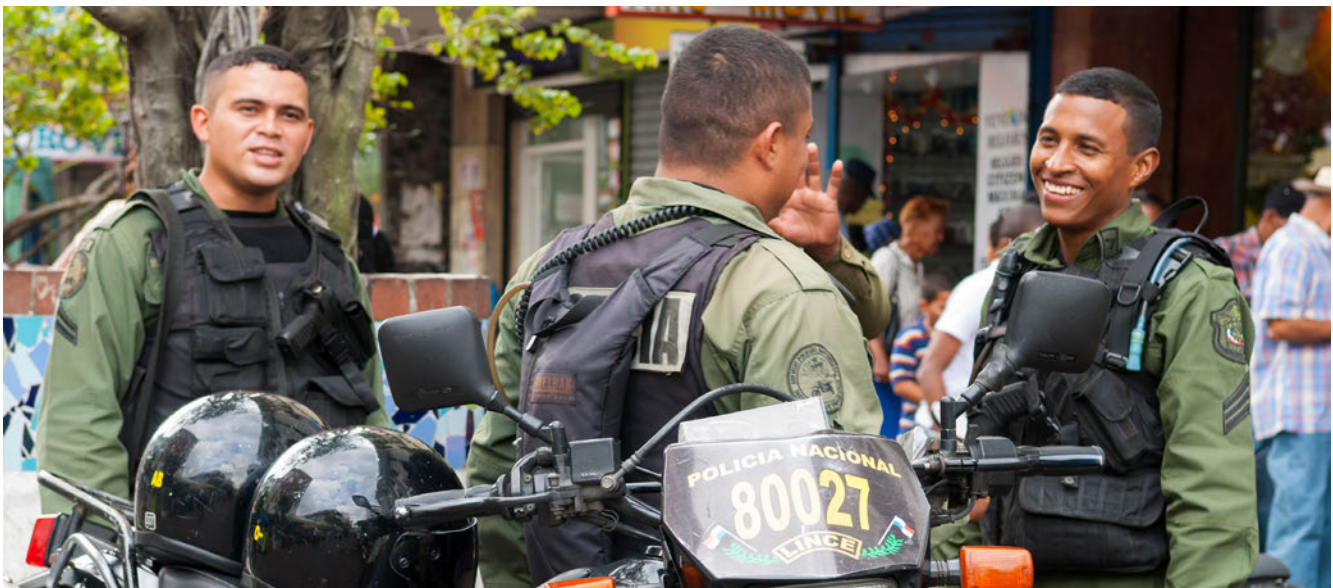
Northern Cyprus has a relatively small population, which creates the sense that everyone kind of knows everyone...

It's extremely unlikely that you'd become a victim of crime while living here. Expats report feeling more at ease in Northern Cyprus than in their home countries.



A- Chitré

PANAMA



Certain types of crime in Panama are standard and part of day-to-day life. Corruption is one example. Bribing police officers to avoid a ticket is commonplace (although, again, we don't recommend it).

Issues with gringo pricing, petty theft, and burglary of homes left unattended for long periods are possible across Panama... But Chitré stands out as an exception to this rule.

It's a place where neighbors know one another, people smile and greet one another on the street, and residents look out for one another. Everyone describes it as safe and calm.

The crime rate is very low and limited mostly to petty theft and low-level street crime. To avoid issues, always lock your house and car, don't leave valuables in sight, and don't carry your wallet or phone in your back pocket...

Exercise the same precautions as you would in your home country, and you'll be fine. People respect one another here.

Panama is ranked the second-safest country in Central America after Costa Rica. It comes in #61 in the 2022 Global Peace Index. (The United States comes in at #129; Canada comes in at #12.)

“**B**”

DESTINATIONS

Places that get “Bs” for Crime are places where crime is more of a consideration in daily life.

You’ll want to be more careful about how you conduct yourself in public (like not flashing wealth or walking down the street with your phone in your hand) and keep a better eye on your belongings than in “A” destinations.

Violent crime is unlikely, but petty crime is a possibility. In general, though, “B” destinations are still safe places to live... probably much safer than most U.S. cities.

Perceptions about crime should not deter you from moving to one of the following places...

**B+****Da Lat**
📍 VIETNAM

Da Lat is a tranquil, peaceful place where violent crime is unlikely.

Petty crime is a possibility if you’re not mindful. You should always park your motorbike in a well-lit parking lot, preferably one where there is an attendant, for instance, to avoid having it snatched.

Vietnam is a poor country, and there will be a massive wealth disparity between you and the locals. It’s possible that you will be targeted for petty crime or small-level scams.

Street hawkers tend to be particularly persistent in Vietnam, although there are fewer of them in Da Lat than in the big cities.

You can generally feel comfortable going about daily life, whether you’re male or female, single or accompanied, without fear of crime affecting you.

Vietnam is ranked #44 in the 2022 Global Peace Index.

B+ Corozal

BELIZE

Belize has a negative reputation when it comes to crime and safety, but much of the commentary and statistics apply to Belize City only. The homicide rate is high due to endemic gang violence.

This doesn't affect the average person living in Belize. Chances are you won't spend much time in Belize City anyway.

Corozal and northern Belize in general are safe and quiet regions. That's not to say that you should leave your common sense at the door...

Security starts with basic common sense and awareness. Take sensible precautions to secure your belongings, like installing a simple security system or getting a dog to curb potential home break-ins.



Lots of expats live in developments like Consejo Shores because of the extra sense of security that living next to friends brings.

Corozal expat Karen Wilkinson says, “Security starts with basic common sense and awareness: Don't flash large amounts of cash, your Rolex, or diamonds in public... the only people you'll impress are the wrong types of people.”

B+ Oaxaca

MEXICO



Tell your neighbor you're considering Mexico as a place to spend time, and—unless they've been there themselves—they'll likely go on a rant about how dangerous it is. It's ranked #137 in the 2022 Global Peace Index, after all.

But, just like in the United States, crime is only a problem in certain areas. Mexico is a giant country. Comparing a place like Oaxaca to Tijuana is like comparing Boise to Detroit.

Oaxaca state is one of the safest states in Mexico, and Oaxaca city has a reputation as a safe place to visit. Rates of drug-related violence are low compared to other parts of Mexico.

That said, Oaxaca is one of the poorest states in the country. There's a notable disparity between the rich and poor in Oaxaca. With its recent surge in popularity, some opportunists are taking advantage of the waves of unsuspecting tourists that are arriving here.

Muggings can happen, but they usually occur late at night. Spending time here as an expat, you'll soon learn which areas to avoid and the proper conduct to avoid becoming a victim of crime.

B Medellín

COLOMBIA

Like any other big city, Medellín has some issues with crime. It used to have a reputation as the murder capital of the world, but things have changed, and today it's a much safer place than most people realize.

Since the late 1980s, the city's homicide rate has dropped by 95%, and the extreme poverty level has plummeted by 66%.

It doesn't even rank in the top 50 of the most dangerous cities in the world. In fact, you're generally safer here than you are in St. Louis, Baltimore, or Detroit.

While the safety situation has drastically improved, incidents do happen. Card skimming has been reported at ATMs, so stick to those located within banks or offices, preferably with guards on duty during business hours.

The most common crime is pickpocketing. With a little common sense and awareness, you can protect yourself from the majority of dangerous situations.



Most of the violent crimes involve gang fights in particular areas of town. These are places you should not live or visit. The government is doing a great job controlling crime... but there are still bad areas that should be avoided.

As an expat living here, you'll quickly learn the areas to avoid and how to behave to minimize issues.

Colombia is ranked #144 in the 2022 Global Peace Index.

B Paris

FRANCE

Paris has high rates of petty crime, especially in tourist zones. Pickpocketing is the only crime you're likely to encounter personally, but you are likely to encounter it—whether as a victim or a witness.

Pickpocketing has really become common in metro stations and in metros, but, on the plus side, the thieves aren't aggressive—any chance of being seen, and they quickly slink away.

Keep your purse close by and keep an eye on your pockets in crowds or on the metro; be especially wary with backpacks. Never leave a purse or pocket unzipped.

Another common crime in Paris is being taken in by small begging street gangs. There are several common scams; for example, someone will pick up a ring from the ground (which they have previously dropped) and approach you, asking if it's yours. They then play on your sympathies to get you to donate money or swipe your wallet.



Another one has groups, usually of women and children, with clipboards, pretending to be mute and to be gathering signatures (while someone in the group gathers your valuables), often by metro stations or at tourist sites. Stay clear and don't engage.

Crime rates are otherwise low in central Paris. Rates of civil unrest are high, with protests happening nearly constantly. France ranks 65th in the 2022 Global Peace Index.

B- Sanur

INDONESIA



Sanur is a safe place to live... But across all levels of society in Indonesia, corruption is an issue.

As an expat, corruption can affect you in a few ways. It can be something fairly trivial, like having to pay off a police officer for an arbitrary fine. Landlords are not held accountable by any laws, and if an agreement goes sour, it can result in stress and financial loss. If a crime is committed against you, it's common practice to pay police officers privately for their help solving it.

It's important to be aware of these risks.

Another layer in the complexity of corruption is how expats are perceived by the locals. After many years of catering

to foreigners, there is a general perception that outsiders arrive in Bali with money to spend.

For instance, in the unfortunate event that a foreigner and a local get in an accident on the road, it's assumed that the expat will pay the hospital bills and cost of repairs, even if it's the local who caused the accident.

Indonesian people in your employ may ask for a loan or handout. These dynamics can be tricky to navigate. No matter the foreigner's socio-economic background, this notion is automatically built into the relationship and something to be aware of.

Indonesia is ranked #47 in the 2022 Global Peace Index.

“C”

DESTINATIONS

None of the destinations in this year's Index get a “C” for **Crime**.

“D”

DESTINATIONS

None of the destinations in this year's Index get a “D” for **Crime**.

ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023



Restrictions Imposed On Foreign Property Buyers



Not every would-be overseas retiree is looking to buy real estate overseas...

In fact, we always recommend that you rent first in your new location for 6 to 12 months to give it a test drive before committing.

Eventually, though, you might decide you want your own set of keys... It's hard to ignore the opportunities available around the world.

Investing in real estate overseas is one of the smartest things you could do with your investment capital right now.

But buying property abroad is nothing like buying property in the States or Canada... Your local lawyer will be able to inform you about the specific pitfalls and risks of buying in your market, but this category, Restrictions Imposed On Foreign Property Buyers, lays the groundwork for understanding.

It examines how easy (or difficult) it is for a foreigner to buy real estate in every country included in this year's Index. Specifically, it looks at whether a country imposes restrictions on foreign property buyers or not.

Some countries are open for business and want to attract foreign investment. They don't distinguish between foreigners and local buyers when it comes to property ownership. The rules around property ownership are clear and easy to follow, apply to everyone equally, and are upheld by law.

A Note On Federal Restrictions

Most countries have federal laws prohibiting ownership in certain areas of the country to all citizens. Usually, these are coastal laws, ensuring that beaches remain public spaces.

We don't indicate these restrictions or take them into account in our grading because they apply to everyone, not just foreigners. But you should be aware of them if you're buying, particularly if you're looking at oceanfront property.

Other countries, for various reasons, impose restrictions on foreign property buyers. They might limit what type of property foreigners can own, how much property they can own, and where in the country they can own it.

In some cases, foreigners have to seek special permission to buy property, which can be an administrative hassle.

As a general rule, the easier a country makes it for foreigners to buy property, the higher the grade it gets in this category (and vice versa).

How The Grading Works

A	Zero restrictions are imposed on foreign buyers.	C	Non-standard restrictions are imposed on foreign buyers. Permission must be sought for foreigners to be able to buy property, and it may or may not be granted. Foreigners may need to establish an entity to buy real estate.
B	Standard restrictions are imposed on all buyers, foreign and non-foreign. Foreigners may have to seek special permission to buy property, but it's generally granted. Standard restrictions are imposed on foreign buyers (i.e., can't buy within a certain distance of international borders, coasts, or military zones).	D	Foreigners cannot hold title to property.

“A”

COUNTRIES

“A” countries treat foreigners and locals as equals when it comes to property ownership.

These are countries that are open for business and make themselves investor-friendly. In fact, they may encourage foreign buyers by offering incentives (like residency, for instance, for property purchases above certain values).

Bottom line: No special buying restrictions are placed on foreigners—one less thing to worry about when shopping overseas property.



A+

Belize

In Belize, you have the exact same rights as a Belizean person when it comes to property ownership. No restrictions are imposed on foreigners.



A+

Colombia



Colombia doesn't impose restrictions on foreigners looking to buy property. It encourages foreign buyers by offering a real estate-specific visa, trading residency for real estate purchases above a specific value.

A+

France



There are no restrictions imposed on foreigners looking to purchase real estate in France.

A+

Portugal



Portugal doesn't impose any restrictions on foreigners when it comes to property ownership. Just like Colombia, it encourages foreign property buyers. The Portugal Golden Visa allows foreigners to get residency in exchange for a property purchase in specific areas of the country.

A

Spain



There are no restrictions imposed on foreigners looking to purchase real estate in Spain... Spain offers a Golden Visa program to incentivize foreign property investment.

It's worth pointing out that as a non-resident property owner, you will pay higher fees and taxes than resident owners, which is why Spain gets an “A” and not an “A+” here.

A- Panama



You can legally own property in Panama as a foreigner whether or not you're a resident, including in your own name or through legal entities like corporations, private foundations, limited liability companies, partnerships, or trusts.

Foreigners have the same legal rights as Panamanians in property ownership, and they're encouraged to invest in property through Panama's Golden Visa. However, they're subject to a few special restrictions...

Foreigners cannot own land within 10 kms of international borders or islands under the jurisdiction of Panama. Panama shares borders with Colombia and Costa Rica; more due diligence is needed when buying property in border zones as well as waterfront and island property.

Rights of possession land must be owned by a Panamanian for two years before it can be sold to a foreigner. After two years, it can be titled and sold again without restriction.

The law stipulates that properties on the beach must provide a public right of way starting from the highest



tide line on the property. Building over water is also tightly controlled; the permits are expensive and difficult to obtain.

Neither Panamanians nor foreigners can purchase property located within *comarcas*, which are sovereign indigenous reserves.

“**B**”**COUNTRIES**

“B” countries are slightly more restrictive than “A” countries when it comes to property ownership.

If you’re looking to buy property in a “B” country, you may need to seek special permission before buying or set up some sort of entity to make the purchase.

It may involve more administrative hassle, but this should not prevent you from buying.

B Mexico

Mexico’s 1917 Constitution proclaimed all land in Mexico to be “ejido” or communal land that only Mexican nationals could own.

In 1973, it amended this to allow foreigners to buy property anywhere in Mexico except for a restricted zone. This zone is 32 miles (50 kms) from the coastline and 64 miles (100 kms) from international borders.

In 1993, it amended the rules again to allow foreigners to buy in the restricted zone, but only through a fideicomiso—a bank trust.

What does this mean for you? If you buy property in the restricted zone, you must take title to it in a fideicomiso. As the buyer, you retain all ownership rights and can sell, give, mortgage, or lease your property as you wish.

It’s an extra administrative step and a small added expense.

“C” COUNTRIES

The restrictions on foreign buyers in “C” are harsher than they are in “B” countries.

“C” countries require foreigners to seek special permission before buying and restrict the quantity and/or type of property they are able to buy. In some cases, foreigners will need to establish an entity to buy property.

Buying property is still possible in “C” countries but involves more administrative hassle.



C+ Northern Cyprus

While Northern Cyprus' status as an unrecognized country may put you off the idea of investing, real estate is titled and secure. That said, foreigners are subject to a few restrictions as property buyers...

First, they must apply to the Ministry of Interior to buy property and get the approval of the Council of Ministers. This process can take three to six months. The Ministry must give approval before a foreign property owner can transfer ownership, sell, or mortgage the property to another foreign person.

Foreigners can only buy up to three houses or apartments in Northern Cyprus. (Married couples are treated as one person.)

Foreigners can buy only 1 donum (1,338 square meters) of vacant land. Foreigners can buy up to 5 donums if the property consists of one dwelling.

Foreigners can't own land in military zones, and the Council of Ministers can limit the acquisition of property by foreigners in special circumstances.

Once you've initiated the purchase of a property in Northern Cyprus, you are eligible to apply for residency and reside in the country while it is processed.

“D” COUNTRIES

In “D” countries, foreign ownership of property is severely restricted...

Foreigners are either not able to hold title to property or, if they can, it's only in specific scenarios, which are usually unappealing to the foreigner.

Policies are geared more towards restricting an influx of buyers than they are towards attracting foreign investment.

In most “D” countries, property ownership isn't worth the hassle or risk. It's better to rent on a long-term basis in these locales.



D Indonesia

Indonesia has some of the most stringent property ownership laws of any country in Asia. Foreign land ownership is not allowed; however, expats have found workarounds...

There are four main ways to go about property ownership in Indonesia. The first is freehold ownership, and it's only available to Indonesian citizens. While there is an option to work with an Indonesian nominee in this freehold system, it is not legally recognized and therefore risky to rely on.

The next option is called right to use the title. This title is a 70-year long-term lease, but it's only for foreigners who hold a work visa or a long-term retirement visa. →



The third option is a right to build title. This agreement is only for foreigners who own a company, and it carries a number of tax reporting requirements with it.

The fourth option is a leasehold system. While a foreigner cannot own land, they can lease it. Leasehold agreements are typically set for 25 years and can be extended for up to 90 years.

Many foreigners opt for a long-term lease agreement. Though you can't own the land itself, you own any of the materials you use to build your home.

Indonesia's property ownership laws are knotty, and the legal system is designed to protect Indonesians. If you're risk-averse, leasing on a long-term basis may be a better option for you in Indonesia.



D Vietnam



Vietnam is an interesting case... As a communist country, all the land in the country is owned collectively by the Vietnamese people and administrated through the government.

No one can own land here; Vietnamese people can only lease land indefinitely, and foreigners can only lease it for 50 years, potentially renewable once.

Foreigners can also own property by forming a joint venture with a Vietnamese partner or by forming a Build, Operate, and Transfer company.

So long as you enter the country legally (even on a tourist visa), you're eligible to buy residential property.

You can buy property in all residential sectors, including apartments and landed properties (like townhouses and villas). Your restrictions as a foreigner are that you can own a maximum of 30% of the units in a condominium complex or 250 landed properties per administrative unit.

Your property can be sold, subleased, inherited, or collateralized.



ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Residency



Residency may be the most important consideration in a decision to move overseas.

It's one thing to dream about retirement in another country... It's another thing to legally be allowed to live in that country for as long as you want.

The most common way to enter a country is on a tourist visa, which typically allows you to stay for between 30 and 90 days at a time.

Unless you're after part-time overseas living (where you split your time between two or more places) or the perpetual traveler lifestyle (where you never actually settle and go for short stints in various places), you're going to want something more substantial than a tourist visa.

Residency gets you legal rights to live in a country long term. Most of the time, you'll start out with temporary residency and then make your way on to permanent residency (and even citizenship in some cases) after spending a specific number of years in a country.

That said, some countries let you jump straight to permanent residency if you can meet certain requirements.→



Every country in the world takes a different approach to immigration...

Some countries, especially those in Latin America, view North American retirees as a hot commodity. They roll out the welcome mat with accessible, user-friendly, and benefit-loaded residency programs.

Other countries make you jump through administrative or financial hoops. They might not allow you to become a permanent resident or citizen. They might set high financial thresholds to qualify or impose restrictive time-in-country requirements.

Regardless of what you're after—whether it's part- or full-time overseas living or a back-



up residency in case you need to leave your home country in a pinch—residency is an all-important consideration. Think of it as your official permission to live in a place.

How The Grading Works

A	Diverse residency options are offered, including a retirement-specific option that comes with special benefits and perks. The restrictions imposed on foreigners (like the time-in-country requirement) are minimal. Temporary residency should lead to permanent residency if permanent residency isn't available right away. Special circumstances may bump a country to an "A" even though it doesn't meet all the preceding requirements.	C	Options for getting residency are limited. Financial thresholds for qualification are even higher, the time-in-country requirements are even stricter, and/or some other stipulation makes achieving residency a burdensome process. It's difficult but not impossible to gain residency in "C" countries.
B	Residency options are fewer. There is no retiree-specific visa option, but there's at least one residency option that retirees can qualify for. The financial thresholds for qualification are slightly higher, and/or the time-in-country requirements are stricter. Residency is still attainable, but it's not as easy to get as in an "A" country.	D	It's near impossible to gain residency in this haven. Residency options that are available impose harsh requirements or are disproportionately expensive compared to the standard of living. Despite this, expats live in these countries, proving that nothing is impossible. "D" countries may only make sense as part-time retirement havens.

“A” COUNTRIES

Countries that get “As” for Residency are countries that roll out the welcome mats with accessible residency programs that even come with special perks and benefits in some cases. The more generous they are, the higher the grade they get.

For a country to be considered generous, we look at the perks it offers as well as the limitations it imposes, like whether the visa leads to permanent residency (and if so, how many years of temporary residency you need to put in to get it) and what time-in-country requirements it stipulates.

“A” countries offer a wide variety of residency options, from investor to digital nomad to retiree residency, so you can choose which programs suits your objectives best.

For the purposes of this Index, we’re putting the most weight on the retiree residency programs on offer. These types of programs are usually aimed at retirees—in other words, people who have enough income to support themselves and don’t need to earn an income locally.

A+**Colombia**

Colombia offers a handful of different residency options. It stands out for the clarity of government information about its residency types and the ease of the application process. Unlike most countries, you may not need to engage a lawyer to help you with the application process.

Most retirees coming to Colombia apply for a Pensionado Visa, a category of its Migrant M-Type Visas. (Other Migrant M-Type Visas are the Rentista and Business Owner visas, both also popular with expats.)

These are the basic requirements (of the Pensionado Visa):→



- Receive an income (pension) of at least US\$700 per month (this is about three times Colombia's minimum wage, which changes annually)
- Your pension must be certified and legalized and be governmental or come from a recognized private pension provider
- Provide a mental and physical fitness certificate
- Provide a criminal background certificate
- Provide proof of health insurance

The Pensionado Visa is valid for one to three years (based on the discretion of the immigration officer), but it loses

validity if you stay out of the country for more than six months consecutively. After five uninterrupted years of holding the Pensionado Visa, you can convert to permanent residency (a Resident Visa).

Colombia also allows you to jump straight to permanent residency or a Resident Visa if you make a significant investment in the country (about US\$141,200 invested in real estate or local business). Resident Visas don't expire; you just have to get a new ID card every five years.

A+ Panama



Panama stands out for the breadth and diversity of residency options it offers, including unique and interesting investor visas and innovative new programs, like its digital nomad visa.

The reason it tops the leader board for Residency is because it offers the Gold Standard of retirement visas... Panama's Pensionado Visa is one of the most accessible and generous in the world.

These are the basic requirements:

- Be 18 or older
- Receive an income of at least US\$1,000 per month
- Have a clean criminal record
- Provide a health certificate issued by a Panamanian doctor

- File your application with a Panamanian lawyer while in Panama

The Pensionado Visa grants permanent residency indefinitely, so long as you spend one day per year in Panama. If you're looking for quick and easy overseas residency with minimal time-in-country requirements, this is the best option in the Index.

The Pensionado Visa comes with special benefits like a 25% discount on your utility bills, a 25% discount on airline tickets, a 20% discount on doctor's bills, a 50% discount on hotel stays (Monday to Friday), and an exemption from import tax for household goods, to name a few.

Considering inflation, the fluctuating costs of gas and energy, and the ever-increasing cost of health care, these benefits are more attractive than ever before.

A Belize

Belize gets an "A" for Residency because it also offers an excellent retirement visa. It's called the Qualified Retirement Program (QRP), available through the Belize Tourism Board, and it's one of the most user-friendly visa programs in the world.

These are the basic requirements:

- Be 45 or older
- Receive an income of at least US\$2,000 per month (deposited in a Belize bank)
- Pass a security check

The QRP is accessible, easy to qualify for, and grants special benefits, like duty exemptions on the import of household effects and a car, tax exemptions, and more.

It falls slightly down in the rankings for a few reasons... It imposes a 30-day time-in-country requirement. The QRP ID



card needs to be renewed annually for a fee. And it doesn't lead to permanent residency, ever. That said, it's still a great option if your focus is gaining residency overseas.

Also, you can get permanent residency in Belize just by showing up as a tourist and extending your visa for the 50 consecutive weeks needed to qualify for it.

A Indonesia

Southeast Asian countries tend to be restrictive for foreigners in terms of residency... Indonesia is a rare exception to this rule. The huge number of expats living all over the country but especially in Bali is a testament to this.

Indonesia offers a wide variety of residency options, from student visas to work visas to its little-known retiree-specific visa, known as the KITAS Retirement Visa.

These are the basic requirements:

-
- Be at least 55 years old
- Receive an income of at least US\$1,500 per month
- Provide proof of accommodation (rental contract or property deed)
- Employ at least one Indonesian domestic worker

These are fairly standard requirements... except for the requirement to hire an Indonesian person as a domestic worker.



This might seem like an unnecessary hassle, but most expats living in Indonesia hire locals for various things anyway. Wages are low (about US\$310 per month), so it's standard practice to hire locals to work as house cleaners, cooks, nannies, drivers, or some other kind of domestic helper.

The KITAS Retirement Visa is valid for one year and renewable. After five years of holding it, it can be converted into permanent residency. Also, it doesn't impose any time-in-country requirements.

A- Mexico

Mexico has some of the world's most generous visa policies, including options to qualify for residency through investment, real estate purchases, and financial solvency... but you might not even need to use them.

Mexico grants exceptionally long tourists stays of 180 days—a great deal more than the standard 30- or 90-day allowance), and it doesn't impose a cumulative in-country limit. Many expats live in Mexico permanently on tourist visas; they just drive across the border to refresh their status every six months.

Since this category assess residency policies, let's take a look at the option most retirees use to qualify for temporary residency—the financial solvency option.

These are the basic requirements:

- Prove an income of about US\$31,760 for the past 12 months or a minimum monthly income of US\$1,900 over the past six months.

Mexico is unique in that it lets you qualify with savings or an IRA/401(k) balance rather than strictly income. It doesn't require a criminal background or health check to qualify. Unlike most countries, there is no time-in-country requirement in Mexico to maintain your residency.

Long-time Mexico expat Lee Harrison says this about getting residency in Mexico, “I got my residency visa for



Mexico in less than 20 minutes... making it one of the easiest residency programs you'll find anywhere in the world. The process is perfect for the do-it-yourselfer. You don't need a lawyer, you do it at a consulate in your home country, and you work with an English-speaking agent.”

It gets an “A-” for Residency because, while its policies are lenient and flexible, it doesn't offer a retiree-specific visa and the amount of income you're required to prove for financial solvency is higher (it works out to at about US\$2,650 per month).

Mexico is one of few countries that lets you jump straight to permanent residency if you can meet a higher income threshold. The requirement is an average minimum monthly account balance of over US\$127,031 over the past 12 months or a minimum monthly income of US\$3,176 over the past six months.



A- Northern Cyprus

There are a few ways to get residency in Northern Cyprus...

You can apply for a short-term residence permit (valid for one year maximum) by showing that you meet certain income requirements. You must receive a monthly income equal to three times the monthly minimum wage, for a total of about US\$1,400 monthly.

The way most expats qualify for Northern Cyprus residency, though, is through a property purchase, which is a unique and exciting offering relative to the other countries in this Index...

These are the basic requirements:

- Own a property that's suitable for residence and being used for that purpose
- Receive permission from the Council of Ministers before buying your property
- Pay at least one-third of the sales price
- Receive an income of about US\$470 per month



This gets you a one-year renewable residence permit for the first three years. After this, you can get a two-year renewable permit assuming the title deed for your property is registered to your name.

Residency in Northern Cyprus is relatively easy to achieve... especially if you're planning on buying property. With beachside apartments for sale for well under US\$100,000, this option appeals to many. Find out more about Northern Cyprus real estate offerings here.

A- Portugal



Portugal also offers a wide variety of interesting and appealing residency types, including a golden visa, a digital nomad visa, are more.

For retirees, the Passive Income Visa (also known as the D7 Visa) is the most relevant. It's not a retiree-specific visa, but it's the option most retirees use to live in Portugal long term.

These are the basic requirements:

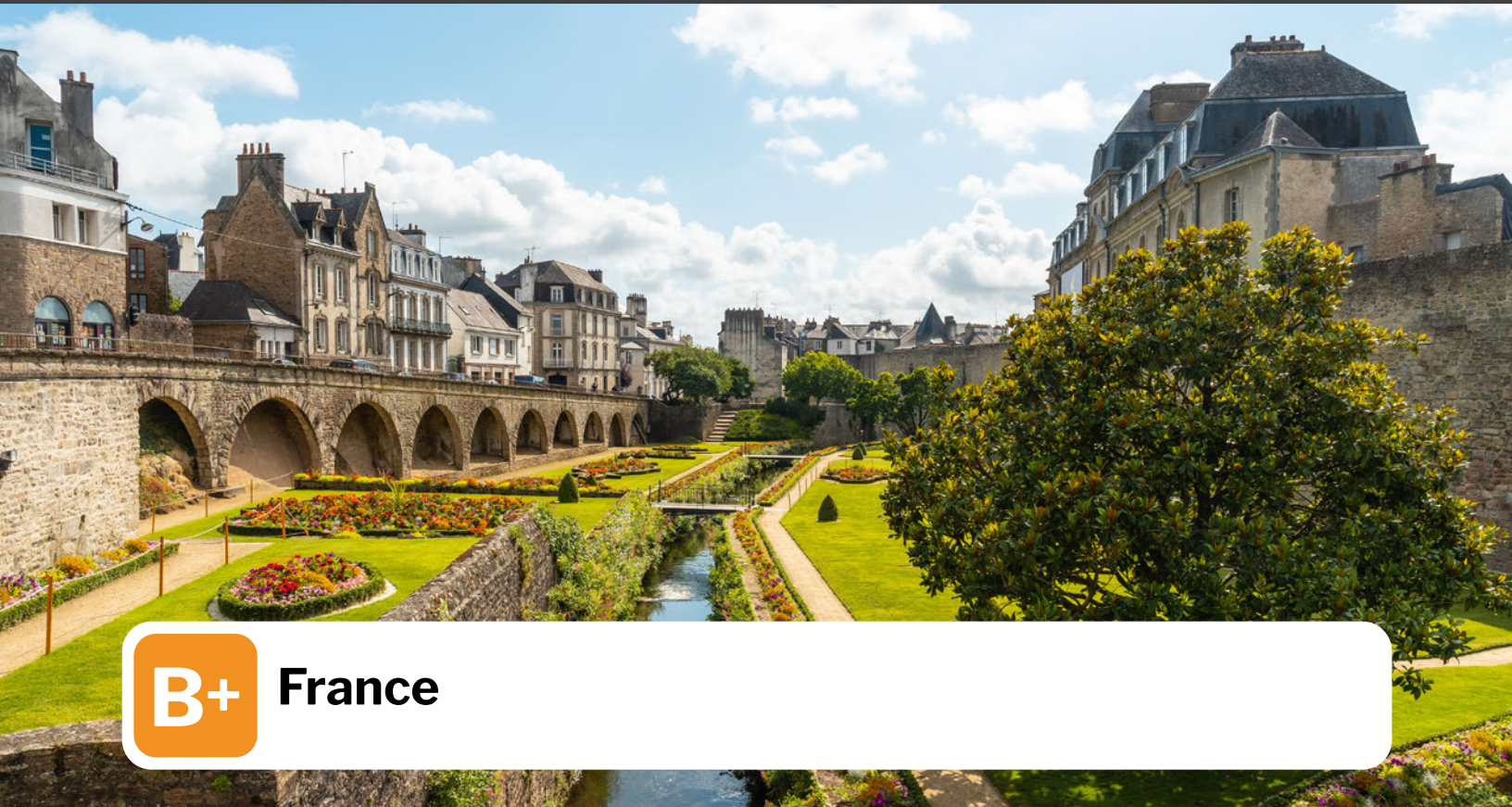
- Receive an income of about US\$1,200 per month (this is the amount LIOS recommends; the official amount is even lower)
- Provide proof of accommodation (rental contract or property deed)
- Pre-pay for 12 months of EU-wide health insurance with about US\$30,000 of coverage

“B” COUNTRIES

Countries that get “Bs” for Residency don’t offer a retiree-specific visa option. The residency options they offer are less accessible to the average retiree than “A” range countries, and their stipulations (like the time-in-country requirement) are more limiting.

In short, “B” countries are slightly less welcoming than “A” countries. They are countries you seek out because you want to live there full-time, not just to acquire an overseas residency because it’s easy, so you’re willing to jump through slightly higher hoops to achieve residency.

You’re still able to get residency in the following places, you might just have to do a bit more legwork to get it...



B+ France

France, like most European countries, will grant residency if you can prove you can support yourself without undertaking paid work.

These are the basic requirements:

- Receive an income of about US\$1,650 per month (the more you can prove, the better)
- Provide proof of health insurance to US\$40,000
- Provide proof of accommodation

You must apply for a long-stay visa in your current country of residence (you can’t go to France and apply from there).

If you have proof of sufficient funds and assets to support your stay without working, you will be given a one-year long-stay visa.

If you want to stay longer than one year, you must apply to extend your visa with the local authorities in France. Again, you will have to prove that you can support yourself. Assuming that all goes smoothly, you’ll be given a permanent resident card, the Carte de Séjour.

There will be additional requirements, but, generally, it’s easy to establish residency in France.

B+ Spain

Spain offers a wide variety of visa types, including a golden visa.

The Non-Lucrative Visa (NLV), which is similar to Portugal's Passive Income Earner visa but imposes higher financial thresholds for qualification, is the most relevant option for retirees. It's not a retiree-specific visa, but plenty of retirees use the NLV to live in Spain long term.

These are the basic requirements:

- Receive pension or investment income of about US\$2,316 per month
- Provide proof of health insurance valid for use in Spain
- Have a clean criminal record and medical certificate

The Non-Lucrative Visa leads to permanent residency after five years of holding it. It requires you to stay in the country for 183 days per year, so it's on par with Portugal in terms



of the time-in-country requirement, and it also grants visa-free travel to the Schengen area.

Its downsides are that it's expensive; about US\$2,316 per month in income is a lot to prove, especially if you're on Social Security, for which US\$1,542 is the average payment in June 2022.



“C”
DESTINATIONS

None of the countries in this year's Index get “Cs” for **Residency**.

“D” COUNTRIES

In “D” countries, it’s very difficult to get residency, or it requires an investment that’s disproportionately high to the local standard of living. That said, there are expats currently living “D” countries, so nothing is impossible...

You have to really want to live in a “D” country for it to make sense to get residency there. Then again, a “D” country might make sense for part-time overseas living.



D Vietnam

Vietnam is the least friendly country in the Index when it comes to residency... It doesn't have a retirement visa. The residency options it has available are hard to qualify for and way too expensive.

These are the options: get a business visa, get an investor visa, or live in the country on a tourist status and do border runs.

It's not a great strategy, but many expats currently living in Vietnam do so on tourist status. They apply for three-month visas in advance of arrival and then extend these three times for a total of nine months in the country. After that, they spend time elsewhere and return to Vietnam to repeat the process when they're ready.→



This is not advisable as a long-term method for living in any country because it's unstable. Immigration officers might reject your application for a visa extension, or a global event (like the pandemic) could inhibit your border-run plans.

Vietnam's Investor Visa might now be the best option for retirees.

These are the basic requirements:

- Invest at least US\$125,720 in Vietnam

This gets you a one-year visa for Vietnam... There's an investment option for a five-year visa, which costs about US\$4,200,000. In neither case are you getting very much time for what is a significant capital contribution. That's why Vietnam scores so low for Residency.





ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Taxes



One of the big benefits of relaunching your life overseas is the opportunity it can create for you to mitigate your tax burden.

Certain countries have established their tax regimes in such a way that, as a foreign resident, you may owe no taxes locally.

For Canadian expats (who are non-residents of Canada), choosing one of these countries could mean a virtually tax-free retirement. American expats, however, will always be on the hook for taxes with Uncle Sam...

The United States is one of only two countries in the world (the other is Eritrea) that operates a citizenship-based taxation system as opposed to a residency-based one, which is how most countries' tax regimes work.

This means that an American living abroad may end up with two tax masters... but you shouldn't end up with an increased tax burden because of this. Tax treaties, the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion, foreign tax credits, and so on reduce this risk.

In this category, we look at how tax residency is defined in each country, as well as the tax rates for the bundle of taxes you're most likely to encounter in your new life: income tax, capital gains tax, property tax, net worth or wealth tax, and inheritance, gift, and estate taxes.

We also look at whether the country in question has a tax treaty in place with the United States

and/or Canada. Tax treaties effectively eliminate the risk of double taxation.

Note that the information in this category can only give you an overview of expected taxes... Everyone's tax picture will be different depending on where they're from, what type of income they earn, and where they are relocating to.

On top of that, tax rules around the world are ever-changing... sometimes for the worse; sometimes for the better. More and more countries are creating special tax programs and benefits in an effort to attract foreigners to move and become tax residents, for instance.

You should always consult a tax specialist in your country of interest to get a full understanding of the local tax rules. Do this before making a move, not after, so that you don't miss an opportunity to reduce your tax burden by taking certain actions before becoming a resident.

All that said, here's the greater point: You shouldn't let taxes deter you from making investments or spending time in a place where you want to invest money or spend time. Organizing your life according to tax code may result in you living in a country you don't actually like.

Grading English Spoken

A	These are tax havens—countries that tax on a jurisdictional (i.e., they only tax residents on locally sourced income) or remittance basis.	C	These countries tax your worldwide income but have tax treaties in place with the States and/or Canada. Income tax rates are moderate.
B	These countries tax your worldwide income but offer incentives aimed at retirees and/or expats. They usually have tax treaties in place with the States and/or Canada.	D	These countries tax your worldwide income. Income tax rates are relatively high. They do not have tax treaties in place with the United States and/or Canada.

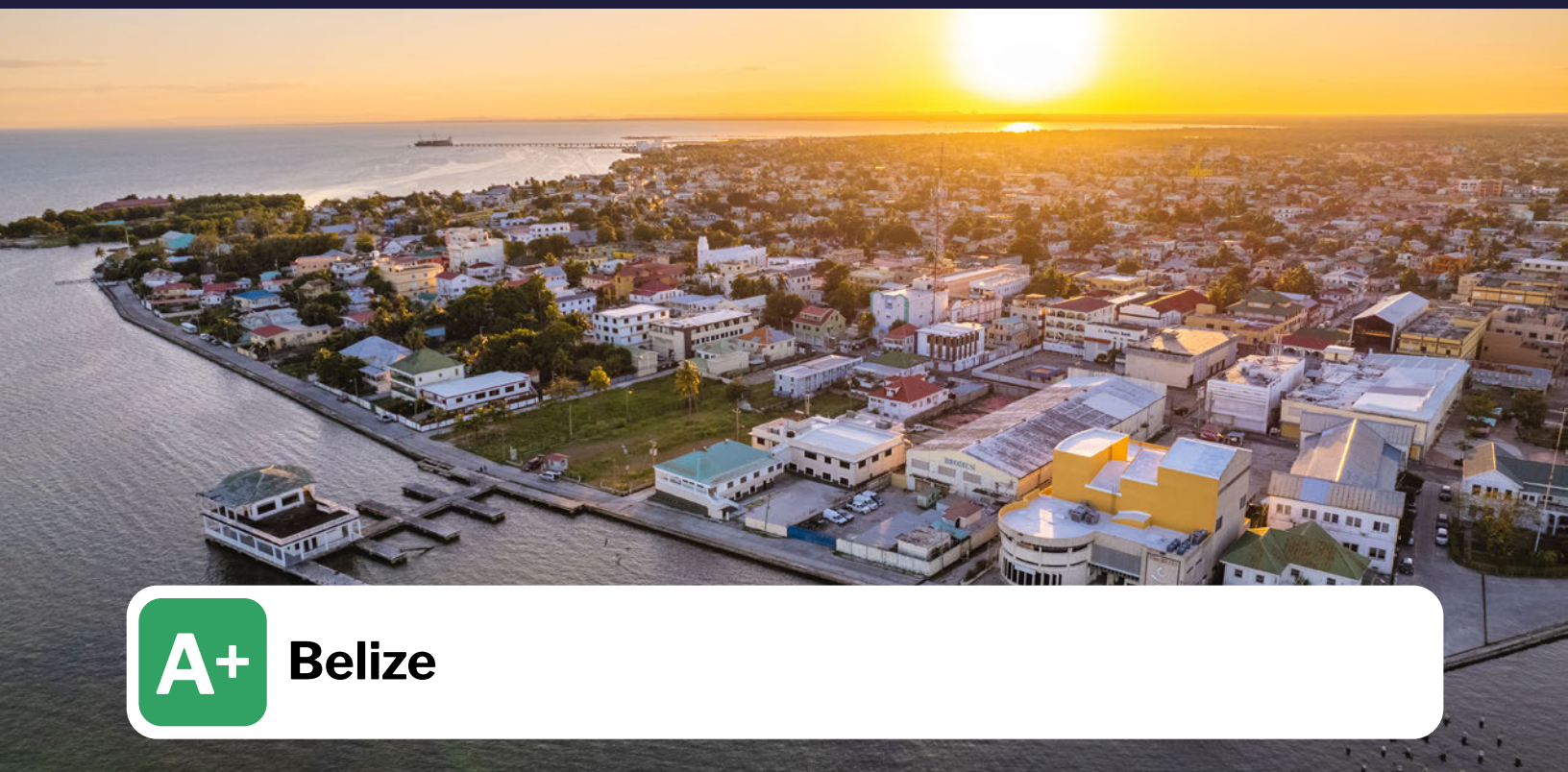
“
A”**COUNTRIES**

The countries that get “As” for Taxes are the countries that create the biggest opportunities for retirees to reduce their tax burdens...

These are places that take jurisdictional approaches to taxation. In other words, they only tax you on income earned in that country, even though you're resident. They do not tax you on your worldwide income, unlike most other countries.

By relocating to a country where taxation is based on the jurisdiction, it's possible to organize your affairs in a way that can reduce or even eliminate your tax burden.

Note that in places with jurisdiction-based tax systems, international tax treaties are less relevant, as you're only taxed on local income anyway.

**A+****Belize**

Belize is a bona fide tax haven. With its jurisdictional approach to taxation, you only pay taxes on income earned in Belize (if you're employed in Belize, for instance), regardless of whether you're resident or non-resident.

As a retiree, you can live here tax-free (although, again, as an American, you'll still have to address any possible U.S. tax liability).

You become a tax resident in Belize if you spend 183 days or more in the country in a calendar year.

Belize income tax is 25% if you earn more than BZ\$26,000 per year. This only applies to Belize-sourced income. Foreign income is exempt from taxation.

Belize does not impose capital gains tax, nor does it impose inheritance tax or wealth taxes. It does impose stamp duty, however, which is 10% when you buy property as a resident.

Property tax rates vary, but they're low across the board... Property is usually taxed at about 1.5% to 3% of the assessed value. The assessed value is generally around 15% to 20% of the current market value. Both land and dwelling are taken into account.

Belize does not have a tax treaty in place with the United States or Canada... but this isn't relevant because of its jurisdictional tax system.

A+ Northern Cyprus

Northern Cyprus also gets an A+ for taxes because it does not tax foreign pensions.

You become a tax resident of Northern Cyprus if you spend more than 183 days per year here.

Tax residents must pay income tax on all Northern Cyprus-derived income as well as money brought in from overseas (if you choose to bring it in). If you're not a tax resident, you're only subject to tax on local earnings.

Income tax rates range from 10% to 37%, with plenty of allowances and tax-reduction opportunities available (including a deduction for spouses living together and an "old age" allowance for people 65 and older).

Just like Belize, property taxes in Northern Cyprus are negligible. The official rate is 1.25 Turkish lira for every square meter of property. If you have an 80-square-meter, two-bed, two-bath apartment, you'll pay 100 Turkish lira in property tax... About US\$5.



Capital gains taxes are also minimal. In fact, first-time sellers of property in Northern Cyprus are exempt from paying capital gains tax. If you're not a first-time seller, capital gains tax is 3.5% for the first three properties you sell in a year.

Northern Cyprus doesn't impose net worth or wealth tax... It imposes an inheritance tax of 1% on property worth more than 100,000 pounds.

Northern Cyprus isn't recognized as an independent state, so it doesn't have tax treaties in place with the United States or Canada.

A+ Panama

Panama eclipses most competition when it comes to comparing tax systems...

It has a jurisdictional approach to taxation as well as generous tax exemptions (for things like bank interest and agricultural income) as well as tax incentives for tourism projects and businesses operating in certain areas of targeted development.

Panama is the gold standard when it comes to taxes. It makes it possible for you to organize your life and your business so that you and it pay little or no tax.

You become a tax resident of Panama if you spend more than 183 days per year and generate income in Panama. Panama income tax rates (on locally earned income) are progressive from 0% to 25%.

Capital gains tax is due at a flat rate of 10% on the transfer of securities and real estate (if the sale is not part of your ordinary business activities).



Panama's property taxes are some of the lowest in the region. The system is tiered, allowing for a base exemption on the first US\$30,000 if it's a vacation or second home and the first US\$120,000 if the property is your primary residence. After the exempted amount, the tax rate is 0.5% on the balance up to US\$700,000 and 0.7% for the value above US\$700,000.

There are no net wealth or worth taxes in Panama, nor are there inheritance, estate, or gift taxes.

Panama does not have tax treaties in place with the United States or Canada.

“B” COUNTRIES

Countries that get “Bs” for Taxes take your worldwide income into consideration when you become tax resident...

But their tax rates are moderate, and they offer special incentives or unique protocols that make them attractive to expats and retirees.

“B” countries usually have tax treaties in place with the United States and Canada. Tax treaties almost always eliminate the possibility for double taxation...

Even without a tax treaty, though, if you’re an American, you can take a foreign tax credit on your tax return if you pay tax in another country on income that is also taxable in the United States.

B**Mexico**

Mexico is not a tax haven, but it has a good tax treaty with its USMCA counterparts (the States and Canada, formerly NAFTA) as well as a generous policy for considering one a “tax-resident.”

Mexico is one of the world’s easiest places to legally avoid becoming a tax resident. You are only a tax resident of Mexico if you have made your home there. Unlike most places, you don’t become tax-resident by spending more than 183 days in-country.

If you have a home in another country, then you are a tax resident of Mexico only if Mexico is your “center of vital interests.” Mexico will be deemed your center of vital interests if you derive more than 50% of your income from→



Mexican sources or if Mexico is the primary location of your professional activities.

As a tax resident, you're subject to tax on your worldwide income. Income tax rates range from 1.92% to 35%. As a non-resident, you're taxed only on your Mexico-sourced income. For non-residents, income tax is either 0%, 15%, or 30%.

Capital gains for non-tax-residents are taxed at either 25% of the gross sale or 30% of the net gain (the highest non-resident tax bracket), whichever is less.

Capital gains are taxed at the same rate as ordinary income for tax residents. If you have owned your property in Mexico for more than three years and claim it as your primary

residence, there is a generous tax exemption granted against your capital gains liability.

Capital gains on publicly traded Mexican stocks are taxed at a rate of 10%.

Property taxes are negligible by U.S. and Canadian standards. They're based on the cadastral value of the property. These vary widely from state to state but are between 0.05% and 1.2%.

Mexico does not impose net wealth or worth taxes. Inheritance income is exempt from income tax, as are gifts from spouses and lineal relatives. Gifts between siblings, for instance, are not exempt.

Mexico has tax treaties in place with both Canada and the United States.

B Portugal



Portugal is not a no-tax or even a low-tax jurisdiction, but it offers options for reducing your tax burden...

You become a tax resident of Portugal if you spend 183 days in any 12-month period in the country.

For tax residents, income is taxed at progressive rates from 14.5% to 48%. Non-residents are subject to a flat tax of 25% on their Portugal-sourced income.

Portugal offers a tax abatement program known as the non-habitual (NHR) tax regime. If you become tax resident in Portugal (but have not been tax resident for the previous five years), you can apply for this special status. Under the NHR, you receive a break on taxes on most if not all of your income for 10 years.

Capital gains are subject to a flat tax of 28%, generally speaking. You're exempt from this on the sale of your primary residence if you reinvest your gains in another property in Portugal or the EU within 36 months of the sale.

Property tax is 0.3% to 0.8% of the taxable value of the property.

Portugal does not impose net wealth or worth taxes. It applies stamp duty of 10% to inheritance and gifts and stamp tax at 0.8% to donations of property.

Portugal has tax treaties in place with both Canada and the United States.

B- Colombia

Colombia is not a low-tax jurisdiction... but the tax implications for most expats are low enough that taxes shouldn't deter you from moving here...

You become a tax resident of Colombia if you (or your spouse or dependents) spend 183 days out of 365 consecutive days in Colombia. You can also be considered tax resident if more than half of your income is sourced in Colombia or if more than half of your property or assets are located in Colombia.

If you're a tax resident, you owe tax on your worldwide income. If you're a non-resident, you owe tax only on your Colombia-sourced income.

Income (including employment income, capital income, and non-employment income) is taxed at progressive rates from 0% to 39%.

Capital gains are taxed at a general rate of 10%. This applies to "exceptional" income, including the sale of assets held for two years, liquidating a company that is at least two years old, gains from inheritances, legacies or donations,



or gains from lotteries or gaming (in which case the rate is 20%).

Property tax ranges from 0.4% to 1.2%.

There's no net wealth or worth tax in Colombia as of 2022. The Colombian government is currently working on a new permanent wealth tax, which may affect Colombia's score in this category in the future. Inheritance and gifts are taxed as capital gains.

Colombia does not have a double taxation treaty with the States, but it has one with Canada. As an American, you can still deduct any taxes paid in the States against any tax you may owe in Colombia.

B- Indonesia

Indonesia taxes income at moderate rates, while property taxes are low...

You become a tax resident of Indonesia if you live there, spend more than 183 days in Indonesia in a 12-month period, or if you're present in Indonesia during the fiscal year and intend on living here.

As a tax resident, you're taxed on your worldwide income. As a non-resident, you're subject to a 20% withholding tax on your Indonesia-sourced income.

Income is taxed at progressive rates between 5% and 30%.

Capital gains are generally subject to the same rates as income tax. Land and building transfers are subject to 2.5% of the greater of the transfer value or the market value (as determined by the government). The buyer pays a 5% transfer duty.



Property tax is 0.01% to 0.3% of the market value of the land or buildings, which is determined by the government.

There are no net worth or wealth taxes, nor are there inheritance, estate, or gift taxes in Indonesia. If you win the lottery, you'll pay a 25% income tax on your winnings.

Indonesia has tax treaties in place with both Canada and the United States.

B- Vietnam

You become a tax resident of Vietnam if you spend 183 days or more in a calendar year in the country. You can also be considered a tax resident if you have a permanent residence in Vietnam.

As a tax resident of Vietnam, you owe tax on your worldwide income. As a non-resident, you owe income tax at a flat rate of 20% on your Vietnam-sourced income.

Employment income is taxed at progressive rates between 5% and 35%. For non-employment income, tax rates vary:

- Business income: 0.5% to 5%
- Investment income: 5%
- Sale of shares: 0.1%
- Capital assignment: 20%
- Sale of real estate: 2%
- Income from franchising/royalties: 5%
- Inheritance, gifts, winnings: 10%



Pension income may be exempt from income taxes, as pensions paid under Vietnam's social insurance law or its foreign equivalent are non-taxable. This is worth checking with a professional tax advisor.

Vietnam does not impose a net wealth or worth tax.

It has tax treaties in place with both Canada and the United States.



“C” COUNTRIES

Countries that get “Cs” for Taxes also take your worldwide income into consideration when you become tax resident...

Their income tax rates are higher than in “B” countries. They also impose more types of taxes, like net wealth or worth tax or inheritance, estate, or gift tax.

“C” countries may or may not have tax treaties in place with the United States and Canada.



Mention France in any tax conversation with an American, and you'll likely be assured that France's tax burden is the worst in the world...

Yes, taxes in France are high, but it's mostly due to the social charges. The way the French calculate income taxes puts many people in relatively low tax brackets.

If you're a resident of France, you'll need to report your worldwide income. If you're a non-resident, you'll need to report only your locally earned income.

You become a tax resident if you carry out professional activities in France, center your economic activities in France, or if your habitual or principal home is in France. →



French income tax rates are progressive from 0% to 45%, plus surcharges in some cases. Taxes apply to the total income of the fiscal household, including married couples and children younger than 18.

Capital gains tax on securities is charged at a flat rate of 30%. Capital gains tax on real estate is charged at a flat rate of 19%. They don't apply if the property is your primary residence.

France imposes a net wealth or worth tax on real estate assets. If the net worth of the household exceeds 1.3 million

euros, this tax is imposed at progressive rates between 0.5% and 1.5%.

France also imposes inheritance or estate tax. Rates depend on the relationship between the benefactor and beneficiary. The rates are between 5% and 4% (after a rebate) if they are close relatives).

France has high taxes... but it has tax treaties in place with the United States and Canada, which almost always eliminates the possibility of double taxation.

C- Spain

The Spanish tax system is complex and confusing, with most tax classes made up of a blend of federal tax rates and autonomous community tax rates. This is definitely a place where you will want to seek out the advice of a local expert.

You become a tax resident of Spain if you spend more than 183 days in the country during a calendar year or use Spain as a base for economic activities. If your spouse or underage children permanently reside in Spain, you'll be considered a tax resident.

There are two types of income tax in Spain: income tax for tax residents and income tax for non-residents who gain income in Spain. Income tax for non-residents is generally 24%.

For tax residents, general income tax rates are a combination of federal rates and the rates set by the autonomous community of Spain that you reside in. In Andalucía, where the Costa de la Luz is located, income is taxed at progressive rates between 9.5% and 23.7%. Rates are set to decrease in 2023.

Property tax, charged at 0.4% to 1.3%, is based on the cadastral value of the property and varies by municipality. Even as a non-resident, you owe tax if you own property in Spain, including a council tax (based on the cadastral value of the property) and an imputed income tax.



This is where Spain falls in the rankings... Its tax authorities assume that if you own property in Spain and don't live in it, you're renting it out (even if you're not). They levy an imputed income tax of 25% of either 2% or 1.1% of the home's cadastral value.

Capital gains are taxed at progressive rates between 19% and 26%.

Spain imposes a wealth tax... But not Andalucía. It approved a 100% relief on wealth tax in 2022.

Spain also imposes gift and inheritance taxes. In Andalucía, these range between 7% and 26% (lower than the national average). High personal deductions are available depending on your relationship with the benefactor.

Spain has tax treaties in place with both Canada and the United States.



DESTINATIONS

None of the destinations in this year's Index get "Ds" for **Taxes**.

REVEALED: YOUR LIFEBOAT TO PARADISE...

ALL AROUND US, THE NEWS IS BAD...

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken the entire planet hostage...



Health care systems are
bursting at the seams

Wages are low and
unemployment is high

The economy is tanking
at a record rate

BUT DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE IS A WAY OUT?

The even better news? Not only is it a way out... It's your
certified path to paradise.

FULL DETAILS ARE HERE



ANNUAL OVERSEAS RETIREMENT INDEX 2023

Scorecards



Chitré

PANAMA

Monthly Budget			
Basics	Rent	US\$800	Furnished, two-bedroom apartment in a desirable area.
	Transportation	US\$60	Car ownership, including bus trips to Panama City.
	Gas	US\$10	For cooking.
	Electricity	US\$125	
	Water	US\$5	
	Cell Phone	US\$35	500 minutes, unlimited data, and flexible contract with Cable & Wireless.
	Internet	US\$85	
	Entertainment	US\$458	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monthly cost for eating out twice a week: US\$360 (US\$22.50 per meal).Monthly cost for drinks twice a week: US\$80 (US\$2 to US\$8 per drink).Movie theater trip twice a month: US\$18 (US\$4.50 per ticket).
	Groceries	US\$425	Basic items for a couple.
Extras	Total	US\$2,003	
	Medical Appointment	US\$35	Basic consultation at a private clinic.
	Household Help	US\$160	Two five-hour cleanings per week at US\$4 per hour.

Grades		
Local Criteria	Cost Of Living	B-
	Health Care	A
	Entertainment	B
	Recreation	A-
	English Spoken	C+
	Expat Community	B+
	Infrastructure	B
	Access To North America	A-
	Environmental Factors	A
	Crime	A-
Country Criteria	Real Estate Restrictions	A-
	Residency	A+
	Taxes	A+

FINAL GRADE

A

Tavira

PORTUGAL

Monthly Budget			
Basics	Rent	€1,200	Unfurnished, two-bedroom apartment in a desirable area.
	Transportation	€320	Car ownership.
	Gas	€50	For heating and cooking.
	Electricity	€85	Including air conditioning.
	Water	€25	
	Cell Phone	€20	Basic plan.
	Internet	€60	
	Entertainment	€486	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly cost for eating out twice a week: €400 (€20 to €30 per meal). Monthly cost for drinks twice a week: €56 (€1.50 to €5.50 per drink). Movie theater trip twice a month: €30 (€7.50 per ticket).
	Groceries	€400	Monthly grocery haul for a couple.
Extras	Total	€2,646	US\$2,604
	Medical Appointment	€70	Basic consultation at a private clinic.
	Household Help	€400	Two five-hour cleanings per week at €10 per hour.

Grades		
Local Criteria	Cost Of Living	C
	Health Care	A-
	Entertainment	B+
	Recreation	A+
	English Spoken	A-
	Expat Community	B+
	Infrastructure	B+
	Access To North America	B+
	Environmental Factors	A-
	Crime	A+
	Real Estate Restrictions	A+
Country Criteria	Residency	A-
	Taxes	B

FINAL GRADE

A

Medellín

COLOMBIA

Monthly Budget			
Basics	Rent	COP\$3,000,000	Furnished two-bedroom apartment in Poblado or Laureles.
	Transportation	COP\$425,000	Public transport use.
	Gas	COP\$225,000	Gas, electricity, and water are bundled together.
	Electricity	-	
	Water	-	
	Cell Phone	COP\$100,000	Basic plan.
	Internet	COP\$150,000	
	Entertainment	COP\$904,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monthly cost for eating out twice a week: COP\$560,000 (COP\$20,000 per COP\$50,000 per meal).Monthly cost for drinks twice a week: COP\$304,000 (COP\$8,000 to COP\$30,000 per drink).Movie theater trip twice a month: COP\$40,000 (COP\$10,000 per ticket).
	Groceries	COP\$1,750,000	Basic items for a couple.
Extras	Total	COP\$6,554,000	US\$1,384
	Medical Appointment	COP\$72,500	Basic consultation at a private clinic.
	Household Help	COP\$600,000	Two five-hour cleanings per week at COP\$15,000 per hour.

Grades		
Local Criteria	Cost Of Living	A-
	Health Care	A+
	Entertainment	A
	Recreation	B+
	English Spoken	C
	Expat Community	C+
	Infrastructure	A
	Access To North America	A
	Environmental Factors	B-
	Crime	B
Country Criteria	Real Estate Restrictions	A+
	Residency	A+
	Taxes	B-
FINAL GRADE		
A-		

Kyrenia

NORTHERN CYPRUS

Monthly Budget

Basics	Rent	£12,200	Two-bedroom apartment with a pool in Kyrenia.
	Transportation	£1,290	Private car ownership.
	Gas	£300	
	Electricity	£400	
	Water	£100	
	Cell Phone	£150	20 GB plus 1,000 minutes of calling.
	Internet	£130	100 Mbps.
	Entertainment	£7,320	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly cost for eating out twice a week: £5,480 (£185 to £500 per meal). Monthly cost for drinks twice a week: £1,600 (£50 to £150 per drink). Movie theater trip twice a month: £240 (£60 per ticket).
	Groceries	£4,000	Basic items for a couple.
Extras	Total	£25,890	US\$1,394
	Medical Appointment	£370	Basic consultation at a private clinic.
	Household Help	£3,600	Two five-hour cleanings per week at £90 per hour.

Grades

Local Criteria	Cost Of Living	A-
	Health Care	A
	Entertainment	B+
	Recreation	A
	English Spoken	B+
	Expat Community	A-
	Infrastructure	B
	Access To North America	C
	Environmental Factors	B-
	Crime	A
Country Criteria	Real Estate Restrictions	C+
	Residency	A-
	Taxes	A+

FINAL GRADE

A-

Corozal

BELIZE

Monthly Budget			
Basics	Rent	BZ\$1,000	Two-bedroom apartment in a desirable area.
	Transportation	BZ\$300	Car ownership.
	Gas	BZ\$325	For cooking and hot water.
	Electricity	BZ\$325	For running fans, not air conditioning.
	Water	BZ\$115	
	Cell Phone	BZ\$30	Basic plan.
	Internet	BZ\$86	30 Mbps.
	Entertainment	BZ\$460	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly cost for eating out twice a week: BZ\$320 (BZ\$20 per meal). Monthly cost for drinks twice a week: BZ\$80 (BZ\$5 per drink). Movie theater trip twice a month: BZ\$60 (BZ\$15 per ticket).
	Groceries	BZ\$440	Basic items for a couple.
Extras	Total	BZ\$2,806	US\$1,403
	Medical Appointment	BZ\$100	Basic consultation at a private clinic.
	Household Help	BZ\$200	Two five-hour cleanings per week at BZ\$5 per hour.

Grades		
Local Criteria	Cost Of Living	A-
	Health Care	D
	Entertainment	D+
	Recreation	A-
	English Spoken	A+
	Expat Community	A-
	Infrastructure	C-
	Access To North America	A
	Environmental Factors	A
	Crime	B+
Country Criteria	Real Estate Restrictions	A+
	Residency	A
	Taxes	A+

FINAL GRADE

B+

Costa De La Luz

📍 SPAIN

Monthly Budget			
Basics	Rent	€680	Two-bedroom apartment in Cádiz Old Town.
	Transportation	€95	Car ownership.
	Gas	€26	For cooking.
	Electricity	€52	
	Water	€28	
	Cell Phone	€25	Basic plan.
	Internet	€31	600 Mbps.
	Entertainment	€423.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly cost for eating out twice a week: €320 (€10 to €30 per meal). Monthly cost for drinks twice a week: €80 (€2 to €8 per drink). Movie theater trip twice a month: €23.20 (€5.80 per ticket).
Extras	Groceries	€240	Basic items for a couple.
	Total	€1,600.20	US\$1,575
	Medical Appointment	€40	Basic consultation at a private clinic.
	Household Help	€320	Two five-hour cleanings per week at €8 per hour.

Grades		
Local Criteria	Cost Of Living	B+
	Health Care	A
	Entertainment	B+
	Recreation	A
	English Spoken	C
	Expat Community	B+
	Infrastructure	A-
	Access To North America	B
	Environmental Factors	B+
	Crime	A
Country Criteria	Real Estate Restrictions	A
	Residency	B+
	Taxes	C-

FINAL GRADE

B+

Oaxaca

MEXICO

Monthly Budget			
Basics	Rent	MXN\$15,000	Two-bedroom property in a desirable area.
	Transportation	MXN\$1,100	Public transport use.
	Gas	MXN\$500	For heating water and cooking.
	Electricity	MXN\$650	Including air conditioning.
	Water	MXN\$225	For drinking water.
	Cell Phone	MXN\$350	500 minutes, unlimited data, and flexible contract with Cable & Wireless.
	Internet	MXN\$550	
	Entertainment	MXN\$4,380	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly cost for eating out twice a week: MXN\$2,800 (MXN\$175 per meal). Monthly cost for drinks twice a week: MXN\$1,080 (MXN\$35 to MXN\$100 per drink). Movie theater trip twice a month: MXN\$500 (MXN\$125 per ticket).
	Groceries	MXN\$9,000	Basic items for a couple.
Extras	Total	MXN\$31,755	US\$1,588
	Medical Appointment	MXN\$750	Basic consultation at a private clinic.
	Household Help	MXN\$550	Two five-hour cleanings per week at MXN\$55 per hour.

Grades		
Local Criteria	Cost Of Living	B+
	Health Care	A
	Entertainment	B+
	Recreation	B
	English Spoken	C
	Expat Community	B+
	Infrastructure	B
	Access To North America	A+
	Environmental Factors	C
	Crime	B+
Country Criteria	Real Estate Restrictions	B
	Residency	A-
	Taxes	B

FINAL GRADE

B+

Paris

FRANCE

Monthly Budget

Basics	Rent	€2,500	Two-bedroom apartment in Central Paris.
	Transportation	€50	Public transportation use (a combination of bike-sharing subscription, the Metro and bus, and occasional taxis).
	Gas	-	Gas is not common in Paris apartments.
	Electricity	€70	
	Water	-	Included in rent.
	Cell Phone	€20	Basic plan.
	Internet	€36	Basic plan.
	Entertainment	€708	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly cost for eating out twice a week: €480 (€25 to €35 per meal). Monthly cost for drinks twice a week: €184 (€8 to €15 per drink). Movie theater trip twice a month: €44 (€11 per ticket).
	Groceries	€400	Basic items for a couple.
	Total	€3,784	US\$3,724
Extras	Medical Appointment	€30	Basic consultation at a private clinic.
	Household Help	€600	Two five-hour cleanings per week at €15 per hour.

Grades

Local Criteria	Cost Of Living	D
	Health Care	A+
	Entertainment	A+
	Recreation	B
	English Spoken	B
	Expat Community	A
	Infrastructure	A+
	Access To North America	B+
	Environmental Factors	B-
	Crime	B
Country Criteria	Real Estate Restrictions	A+
	Residency	B+
	Taxes	C+

FINAL GRADE

B+

Sanur (Bali)

INDONESIA

Monthly Budget			
Basics	Rent	Rp7,500,000	Two-bedroom villa with a pool in a desirable part of town.
	Transportation	Rp910,000	Motorbike rental.
	Gas	Rp20,000	For a large tank that's refilled bi-annually.
	Electricity	Rp600,000	
	Water	Rp120,000	For 4 to 5 gallons of drinking water.
	Cell Phone	Rp200,000	Paying for data as you go.
	Internet	Rp440,000	
	Entertainment	Rp4,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly cost for eating out twice a week: Rp2,800,000 (Rp175,000 per meal). Monthly cost for drinks twice a week: Rp1,000,000 (Rp25,000 to Rp100,000 per drink). Movie theater trip twice a month: Rp200,000 (Rp50,000 per ticket).
	Groceries	Rp700,000	Basic items for a couple bought at local markets.
Extras	Total	Rp14,490,000	US\$939
	Medical Appointment	Rp300,000	Basic consultation at a private clinic.
	Household Help	Rp2,000,000	Two five-hour cleanings per week at 50,000 per hour.

Grades		
Local Criteria	Cost Of Living	A+
	Health Care	B
	Entertainment	B
	Recreation	A
	English Spoken	A-
	Expat Community	A+
	Infrastructure	B-
	Access To North America	D+
	Environmental Factors	D
	Crime	B-
Country Criteria	Real Estate Restrictions	D
	Residency	A
	Taxes	B-
FINAL GRADE B		

Da Lat

VIETNAM

Monthly Budget			
Basics	Rent	₫8,125,000	Two-bedroom furnished apartment or villa in a desirable location.
	Transportation	₫1,275,000	Motorbike ownership, including gas.
	Gas	₫400,000	
	Electricity	₫500,000	
	Water	-	Included in gas bill.
	Cell Phone	₫140,000	Basic plan.
	Internet	₫290,000	Including download speeds of 300 Mbps
	Entertainment	₫3,720,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly cost for eating out twice a week: ₫2,200,000 (₫25,000 to ₫250,000 per meal). Monthly cost for drinks twice a week: ₫1,280,000 (₫40,000 to ₫120,000 per drink). Movie theater trip twice a month: ₫240,000 (₫60,000 per ticket).
	Groceries	₫4,000,000	
Extras	Total	₫18,450,000	US\$760
	Medical Appointment	₫250,000	Basic consultation at a private clinic.
	Household Help	₫1,500,000	Two five-hour cleanings per week at ₫100,000 per hour.

Grades		
Local Criteria	Cost Of Living	A+
	Health Care	D+
	Entertainment	C+
	Recreation	B+
	English Spoken	D
	Expat Community	B-
	Infrastructure	B
	Access To North America	D
	Environmental Factors	C
	Crime	B+
Country Criteria	Real Estate Restrictions	D
	Residency	D
	Taxes	B-

FINAL GRADE

B-

