

Escape Dates: How you too can "Own Your World" - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

Explore the World like David Sagel and Enjoy the Money You can Make Doing it

For almost 50 years now, David F. Sagel and his family have been living the expatriate dream. They have 'owned their own world' no matter where in the world they've chosen to set up home. They've done so by absolutely embracing the expatriate lifestyle of opportunities and adventure.

Starting way back in the 1960s when David moved to live in a Spain that was under the dictatorship of Franco, he and his family have enjoyed their adventures in nations as diverse as Belgium and Costa Rica. They have been up close and personal with ghosts in a haunted house in England, they have explored far and wide across Europe, and today David has settled into the relaxed pace of life in Central America.

David truly makes the most of his expatriate lifestyle, and he states that for an expat to get the most from their time overseas they must commit to their new country, never leaving one foot in their old home nation.

This dynamic man puts the success of his exciting life down to the two mottos he chooses to live by: firstly "luck favours the prepared mind" and secondly "being in the right place at the right time, and knowing how to capitalize on it is key."

Bringing all his years of expatriate experience to bear on his latest venture, and once again applying his two mottos to this exciting project, David is keen to encourage others to 'own their own world' as he has always succeeded in doing. David has joined Escape Dates, the global social network through which you can make friends, meet potential business partners, travel, explore and even get paid for building your own personal business and social network.

And now he's keen to spread the word and get others to [join in](#).

Enroll in EscapeDates for FREE, Explore the World with David Sagel and Enjoy the Money You can Make Doing it: [CLICK HERE](#)

We decided to ask David himself to tell us more about his experience and reasons for joining Escape Dates, a unique and hugely exciting opportunity founded by Escape Artist:

Escape Artist: Escape Dates is a dating, social networking and business venture, please rank these features in order of importance to you, and tell us why you ranked them this way.

David F. Sagel: Number one is the social networking aspect, closely followed by number two, the business venture and last but not least – dating.

In my opinion and experience, expats, particularly the more mature expats, are looking for companionship with compatible people rather than romantic liaisons – which will evolve naturally anyway if they are meant to be. So I put dating last because through building your social network you'll make friends...and who knows where these friendships could lead.

I put business ventures in second place because doing business overseas is not an easy proposition. If one is younger and has capital, one is more likely to have the attitude 'why not try it!' But more mature expats like me tend to be much more frugal with their capital however, as it can't be as easily replaced!

So, when you hook up and make strong friendships, this may naturally lead you into better business ventures abroad, that you can clearly assess and consider with your friends' help. Dating comes last because love is much more likely to work if it's built on friendship and strong bonds such as a business based relationship first.

The good thing with Escape Dates is that you can enjoy all three, and you start by joining and then building the social network.

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EA: Does Escape Dates really allow you to run a business anywhere in the world, allowing you to live anywhere and on your own terms – or in other words, enabling you to 'own your world'?

DFS: Thanks to the Internet anything seems possible nowadays. I would suggest that would-be expats might be best off establishing and successfully operating a portable business in the US, (or their own home nation), for a number of months prior to moving abroad, rather than the other way round.

However, for those looking for opportunities abroad or hoping to hook up with others they can work with, Escape Dates can give them the platform for communication.

EA: Did having the Escape Artist globally recognized brand behind Escape Dates encourage you to sign up – or was the very low capital outlay more of a significant factor?

DFS: The support from Escape Artist for Escape Dates is critical to me, and will continue to be so, on an ongoing basis. It means that Escape Dates is visible to the very community who can most benefit from it – that being expats living all over the

world, and those who long to move abroad, meet like-minded friends and perhaps build a business overseas.

This means that for a member like me, I am much more likely to meet the people I want to meet on Escape Dates. Of course the low cost of entry is a great bonus, in fact [you can actually join without paying one single cent!](#)

EA: Was there anything else that was a deciding factor for you to become a member of Escape Dates?

DFS: I wanted to create and present interesting and memorable holidays in Costa Rica – not only for my groups but also for all Escape Dates groups. My objective is to become the exclusive Escape Dates provider of tours to Costa Rica. In other words, I decided to join because I could see how Escape Dates would be the perfect platform for me to build and market my idea to a captive and interested community.

EA: Do you think you need to have network marketing experience to be successful in building a business through Escape Dates?

DFS: No, absolutely not! Actually it's an advantage if you don't have this experience because I believe network marketing as a concept is all about brainwashing! Building a business with Escape Dates is all about honesty, openness and genuine communication with already interested people...who you may actually have the added benefit of befriending.

EA: Escape Artist believes that it is possible to 'own your world' by joining Escape Dates and building an income-generating business anywhere in the world. Do you agree with our philosophy?

DFS: Sure! I also believe that to own your world you need a prepared mind – but Escape Dates is a fantastic platform to build your own world from – and own it and share it with new-found friends.

What's more, as an expat I have the added bonus of 'controlling my world' too – something which fellow Escape Artist readers will relate to. In living abroad and building an Internet based business with Escape Dates, one can avoid, or be almost exempt from, much of the restricting national regulations every country employs. Thus, I can be in much more control of the world I own.

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EA: Escape Dates is planning to run educational symposiums in the future, do you think you will gain valuable insight by participating in these?

DFS: Yes, definitely. It's wonderful that Escape Dates will be actively supporting those in the field of working to make a success of their business.

EA: Do you find the support and marketing tools available in the Escape Dates virtual office to already be valuable as you build your business?

DFS: Yes I do. And the fact that Escape Dates is active in continually improving and refining these tools is important and positive.

EA: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with Escape Dates so far?

DFS: The concept is unique and brilliant. I am thoroughly enjoying building my network, profiting from it, making new friends and seeing my business idea grow and flourish. In time I believe my actual results will be worthwhile sharing, just to show how successful the entire concept is.

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Move to Costa Rica and Live Your Life - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

Costa Rica: It's better than watching it on TV.

"It's better than watching it on TV." Lately I find myself saying that when friends ask how I'm doing. Three weeks into the romance of a lifetime with a gorgeous Latino, 20 years younger than me, I tell them, "It's challenging, complicated, full of surprises and so much fun." When you dive head first, right smack dab into the middle of life, that's what happens. It is never predictable or easy but a real life lived is so much more rewarding than watching someone else do it.

The idea of jumping in and living life to the fullest was an integral part of my decision to [move to Costa Rica](#). It was a promise I made to myself. I did not just want a long tropical vacation: I wanted a completely new life and I wanted to live it to the max! At fifty two I was feeling young and healthy, vital and vibrant and nowhere near ready for the rocking chair. Once my kids were grown and I was free of responsibility I decided to go for it, create the life I want to live and live the life of my dreams. Now, four years later I am gratified, elated and I thank God and my lucky stars to be able to tell you that I am doing just that. I am living life to full capacity and enjoying it all.

But it didn't happen overnight. The plans and preparation to leave my home, friends and family; the scary move on my own; finding the right place to live and a way to make money; and developing a social life with good friends – all these important life components evolved over time, step by step. Then the most recent and deeply desired event came completely by surprise. I fell in love. None of these things would have happened if I'd stayed in my comfort zone.

And what a comfort zone I had! I'd lived for twenty years in the lovely little town of Whitefish, Montana – known as the "last best place" to live, in the USA. I owned and ran a prosperous business. I raised my kids there and had many good friends. It was a good life and I loved it. So why, you may wonder, did I want to leave?

The short answer is that I'd outgrown the place and needed to expand my life into something bigger. But I didn't realize that at the time. At that time I was simply bored with my life and disenchanted with the prevailing consumer based society in which I lived. I knew there was a better way. I'd traveled to some third world countries: Tibet, Nepal and Mexico and seen people with "nothing" as happy as can be. I wanted my almost grown children to know that there was a whole different world out there. I wanted to show them there are other ways of life. A month in Costa Rica's Caribbean showed me that my way of life in the United States no longer served me. Back home, after three days of angst, I decided to make the move of a lifetime and go to live in Costa Rica. Seven months later I had sold my business and my car, rented out my property, and joined the ranks of those who'd warned me.

Ah... Beautiful! It's easy to see why some people never leave

Yes, I was warned. On my visit to Costa Rica's Caribbean many expats cautioned me, "Years ago I came, just for a little vacation. I never left! I am still here today. Be careful," they said, "it could happen to you." Well it did happen to me and it was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Yet not so, for all the expats who warned me. Some have since retreated to North America. Some could not handle the culture shock. Some lost their shirts from investment without investigation. Some just could not find a way to get by. Moving here is only the first step. Next, one must find a way to make it work.

My greatest challenge was financial. Everything else – the new culture, the different way of doing things, the language barrier, concern about crime - was simply a gradual learning experience that everyone must go through. My advice is to hold back your judgment, be flexible, watch and learn. Living in Costa Rica will teach you patience and make you a better person. You need to have a good chunk of change in your savings when you get here and if possible a monthly income from back home. Everything takes longer and costs more than you expect it will. Expect the unexpected. After being in Costa Rica for only six weeks, the convertible top of my car was stolen, along with all my clothes and my car stereo. (You can read more about the robbery in my book, ["Costa Rica Adventures: If She Can Do It, So Can I."](#)) This took a big bite out of my meager savings and made me get much more serious about finding a way to make money.

As I said, flexibility is key. If one thing doesn't work you try another. In the States I was an interior designer and a mural artist. In Costa Rica I started out doing art work. Then I got certified and taught English for a year. Two years ago I started a personal **Costa Rica Guide Service**, which has proved to be my most successful endeavor.

Regardless of what you do, there is one underlying factor necessary for everyone: the determination to succeed. I've run into many obstacles. One time my rented property in Montana was vacant for two months and I could not pay my mortgage or property tax. Another time my renters trashed the house. Yet every single problem has increased my determination to stay and keep trying.

Go beyond your comfort zone

Thinking "out of the box" and "going beyond your comfort zone" is challenging but that is what it takes to make a new life in a new world. Giving birth to your own new life is no different than childbirth. Both are difficult, awkward and painful but the rewards are without measure. Never, did I expect to discover I had hidden talents. Yet my new life in Costa Rica revealed that I am indeed, a very good writer. This came about simply by setting up a web site for my friends back home, so they could follow my adventures. Soon strangers were sending me emails full of compliments, urging me to write a book. My guiding clients' grateful appreciation shows me I have a talent for helping and sharing my experience with others interested in exploring Costa Rica. One of my greatest delights since I began my new life is that my daughter decided to live here, too. She came to

visit, met a boy and the rest... well you can imagine the sweet story. They are happily running a restaurant. He is a gem. And then of course, my biggest surprise was falling in love.

Now don't get the idea that just because I am with a younger man, I came to Costa Rica and went wild. I will admit that one of the reasons I moved to Costa Rica is because here I feel like a woman again. In the States I felt old and unnoticed. In Costa Rica I can't walk out the door without receiving a compliment. The standards of beauty are different here. In Costa Rica you don't have to look like a movie star to be appreciated. Latin men love women – all kinds of women of all ages and description. And I love Latin men for their passionate enthusiasm for life, but instinctively I keep them at bay. In the four years I have lived here, this man is the first one to whom I've given consent – my first boyfriend. And now, as I again jump head first into the unknown, I am learning copiously about myself and human nature through language barriers, cultural clash and the overwhelmingly intoxicating experience of love. You see? If you take a chance and open Pandora's Box you never know what will come out of it!

The author Lisa Valencia – Happy at home in Costa Rica

My new life in Costa Rica has met with fear, confusion and adversity yet, as in childbirth, I can hardly remember the pain. All I know now and feel is grateful bliss for what has transpired and anxious anticipation for what is yet to come my way. Your dreams are different than mine but you too, can make your life whatever you want it to be. All you need is determination and belief in yourself. We all say we want to live life to the fullest but when we are presented with choices, we often shy away from the unfamiliar. This is your life. It belongs to you. No one can live it for you and no one has the right to judge it. If you are left lonely on the rocking chair it is no one's fault but your own. Get up and jump in. There are always others who've gone before you to help show the way. Before I took my big leap, Rita Golden Gelman, author of [Tales of a Female Nomad](#), gave me some personal advice for my new adventures in Costa Rica. She said: "Always smile, eat whatever you are offered and accept every invitation." This advice has helped me immeasurably. Whenever I hesitate to try something new, I think of Rita's advice, cast aside my doubts and just go for it. I've never been sorry. Try it and see. You never know what you'll end up with but I guarantee you it beats watching it on TV.

You Ask – We Answer: To What Extent Will I Encounter Hostilities as an American Overseas? - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

Anti-American Sentiment – who is to blame?

If you are sitting in the USA, wanting to become an expat at some exciting location, and you are wondering if you will be safe and not harassed, there are very few places that you need to take off the list of possible destinations for fear of encountering a high degree of Anti-American sentiment. The nations to avoid are the ones where the USA has caused great harm in the last few years, but I don't think a sane and rational person would want to migrate to say Afghanistan or Iraq right now.

Susan Beverley, Jamie Douglas and Julie R Butler are writers, world travelers, nomadic retirees and expats and they each share their own experience on the level of anti American sentiment they have encountered or witnessed during the course of their travels and during the years they have lived overseas.

Jamie Douglas

In my extensive travels I have only once come across hostilities directed at Americans, and that was in El Salvador in the mid 1990's, when after a hair raising drive through San Salvador and off into the darkness of the country side, with unlit oxcarts all over the road, we arrived in the little town of San Vicente, where we were taken in by the owners of an old hotel through bomb proof doors. We had New Mexico license plates at the time, and everybody assumed we were Mexicans, but I guess we did not fool everyone, because as we prepared to leave in the morning, the Innkeeper warned us to get right out of town, and as we left the hotel, we saw why. During the night someone painted on the whitewashed wall outside "Todos Gringos Fuera de San Vicente," which means, All Gringos out of San Vicente. It was the blood red paint that impressed me. We left!

Compare that to arriving in Ocotal, in the mountains of Nicaragua, when we sat on the curb late into the night with the locals, drinking Beer, Vodka and Flór de Caña rum into the wee hours, and it seems half the town came out to see us, to assure us that we were safe, because they had nothing against Americans, as it was our messed up government against their messed up government. We made many friends for life that night, and in spite of the mass consumption of alcohol, not a single hostility was expressed toward us.

In our travels during the Bush administration, many people in Europe and Australasia shyly asked us just what in the hell was wrong with the American people, having voted into the highest office a man who was obviously an incompetent warmonger, what with starting the war in Iraq under such falsehoods. Even school children in Moorea, French Polynesia, as well as many of our new found friends in Australia were quietly asking us what had happened to the formerly greatest nation on earth. The same happened to us in Europe as well, and the only answer we could give them was that he was not really elected by the people, but rather through a coup d'état by the supreme court of the USA.

Americans in particular tend to be more visible because of the way they dress and conduct themselves in public, but very rarely have I seen anyone harassed because of their being from the USA. Should you get in a sticky situation, just claim to be Canadian, eh?

Julie Butler

Being a US citizen abroad does mean that you have an image problem to overcome. The preconceived notion is that people from the US are disrespectful and demanding. They are not only sadly uninformed about the world, but they seem to believe that their own culture is superior and therefore are not all that interested in digging into the subtleties of other cultures. They are spoiled by having come from a place where they can get anything they want and they get cranky when things are not the way they think they should be.

We all know that this is a gross generalization, that these characteristics are not inherent to every US citizen. However, the impression persists, not in the least because so many have spent so little time outside of the country, and those who do so often don't try very hard to speak other languages or to learn why certain cultural traits that seem to be "backward" or "inferior" are really just different and possibly even serve a social purpose that is hidden to those who don't bother to look for it.

The truth is that there is a loud and very visible faction in United States that exudes exceptionalism, isolationism, and xenophobia – and any world citizen who looks at the news can see how fear and loathing of Mexicans, Islam, Socialism, and other such "enemies of the state" has taken hold of the country.

Statistics show that small percentages of US citizens travel abroad in comparison with other countries such as Canada, the UK, and even Australia (where, due to geography, travel abroad presents far greater barriers). And this cultural trait, this global incuriosity, plays a large part in causing many people in the US to demonize other people and ideas that are much more complex and nuanced than they are given credit for.

The antidote to this problem is for more US citizens to get out into the world, really dig into other cultures and political systems, and conduct their own citizen diplomacy abroad.

During many years spent in Latin America as a US citizen, my own experience has been that people who harbor anti-US sentiments rarely express them overtly. They are much more likely to express themselves in the form of the cold shoulder, the bureaucratic run-around, the infamous "gringo tax," and other passive-aggressive tactics. It is up to me learn how to not be taken advantage of, but more importantly, to not take any of this personally.

And it is up to us to redefine our image. If we isolate ourselves in an expat community, don't try to learn the language, and only import our lives from home into the new country instead of engaging with the locals and being open to them, then the locals will have no reason to believe anything other than the preconceived generalizations. And if we are in a country that has historically had a difficult relationship with the United States, which is pretty much all of Latin America, then it is even more crucial to engage with the culture that we have chosen to live in, to take the initiative and reach out to people in the community, to empathize, to vanquish the fear of what others may think of us, and to show that we all need to take it upon ourselves to look beyond generalizations and see each other as the unique individuals that we are.

Susan Beverley

I am not an American, but British, however this, in the minds of many people I have met overseas, amounts to much the same thing. With that said I am happy to report that I personally have encountered almost zero hostility from any national whose country I happened to be in.

Have I witnessed any angry exchanges or overt negative behavior directed towards Americans? Absolutely yes, but to be honest I would, without reservation, side with the non-American in nearly all of the situations. This is because the American on the receiving end of the hostility was behaving in a manner in which, quite frankly, he or she deserved to be treated disrespectfully. It is sadly not uncommon to see Americans yelling in English at Spanish speaking store keepers while waving their arms around getting increasingly frustrated that the person behind the counter is not understanding their request for A1 Steak Sauce. Now stop and think for a moment ... who is in the wrong? Is it the store keeper for not speaking English or the American in Argentina who has not bothered to learn how to speak Spanish or cannot accept that a small corner grocery store keeper has never ever heard of "Ah-Uno Salsa de Steak"? The same store keeper interacting with a different American who is behaving more modestly is a different scenario altogether. A polite exchange with some interjection of humor is often observed leading me to the conclusion that there is no serious undercurrent of Anti-American sentiment, merely the existence of a normal human negative reaction to being yelled at.

I decided to ask some other Americans for their experiences and this is what they told me:

Deborah originally from California: "I lived abroad for 9 years. During the Bush Administration, I encountered hostility toward Americans in Greece, where people were clearly VERY anti-American and vocal about saying so, among many people who didn't know me personally. I haven't been back since so I don't know. Everywhere I went abroad, people were appalled at our seemingly stupid and needless invasion and destruction of Iraq. The US lost a lot of friends during that time. I lived in Armenia at the time and don't think there was antipathy toward Americans, just a sense of disbelief and also worry (which exists today) that we will take military action against Iran, Armenia's only friend in the region. In Italy, where I lived from 2006 to 2009, I also encountered hostility among people who didn't know me, especially among government officials who taunted me about Bush. I don't think that Italians are particularly anti-American but in most places, people are disgusted with Americans who behave in a superior, loud or obnoxious manner, don't bother to try to speak the language and expect things to be exactly as they are in the US. I saw this a lot among visitors to Italy."

Doug, originally from Texas: "Neither my wife nor I have experienced any anti-Americanism in Guatemala, Honduras or El Salvador. In El Salvador in particular there is a very strong LIKE for all things American and Americans in general. It is definitely an advantage being an American in El Salvador and Guatemala in many ways. People are VERY interested in us, where we come from and why we are here. Especially since we came from California which is everyone's dream state here in El Salvador."

Jamie, originally from Colorado: "I was in Germany just after George W Bush made his famous axis of evil speech. Many Germans were not pleased that I was an American, and wanted me to justify my than president's actions."

And finally Michael originally from New York: "I'd have to say that, for some reason, as someone who is ethnically Korean I have not faced much anti-American sentiment – despite people knowing that I am a US citizen. Somehow, I seem to be able to escape most of these problems, especially in Asia where I speak Chinese and Korean and can get by."

However, while I was attending an international masters program with 7 French engineers, I constantly faced criticism about being an American. I expected criticism to be about things like the war in Iraq, but actually most of the things were little day to day things:

"Oh Michael, you are so American – all you think about is money."

I have not faced any serious or violent discrimination as an American abroad. I do think that my being ethnically Korean has been a large part of this, as I know that many of my Caucasian friends abroad do experience much more trouble abroad."

Do you disagree with our answers? Do you have other options or opinions to share with our readers? What has been your experience? Please leave a comment.

Every week, we receive numerous inquiries covering a variety of subjects that are important to you. Now, we would like to invite all of you to participate in our new feature by submitting questions that are relevant to expat living, whether you are planning to retire, work abroad, study, wander, or are just curious about life as an expat.

We encourage you to submit your questions to us, and our answers will be published on [Expat Daily News](#) on Fridays. This is an effort by your editors, all experienced travelers and expats, to serve you better, and have you share your curiosities with your fellow readers.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

[Click here and ask your question.](#)

About the authors: Susan Beverley is a writer and editor for Escape From America Magazine and also writes for and maintains [Expat Daily News](#) – the expat news blog for [EscapeArtist.com](#). She traveled extensively before becoming an expat herself having found a place to call home in South America where she has lived since 2005. She understands the concerns, needs and difficulties that expats face from first-hand experience and is dedicated to supporting and encouraging anyone who is looking for a new nation to call home. [[send her an email](#)]

Jamie Douglas is an Adventurer, Writer and Photographer with an amazing array of Nikon equipment, and a lifetime of experience traveling and documenting. To contact him for assignments and new adventures, email: jamie.douglas [at] yahoo.com

Julie R Butler is a traveler, blogger, freelance writer, and editor who has authored several books, self-published as eBooks, including *Nine Months In Uruguay* and *No Stranger To Strange Lands* (click [here](#) for more info).

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Live Among the Beautiful Mountains in Panama - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

Trinity Hills Valley: Affordable mountain living

Panama is known for its beautiful and readily accessible beaches on the Pacific and Atlantic oceans....what? Two oceans? Yes, some people still wonder about this. It's not the fact that Panama is the only country with two oceans; it is not. However, it is a such a unique location that you can have breakfast on the shores of the Atlantic and lunch on the shores of the Pacific, on the same day.

But Panama is also becoming known for much more than its oceans. It is a country still with vast areas of dense jungles and savannah. More than 30% of the country is protected by law under a system of national parks. Most of these parks cover mountainous areas some in such close proximity to Panama City to the amazement of many.

Following fast and furious development of the Pacific Ocean shores the cost per square meter of real estate along the coastline rose sharply to well in excess of \$1,500. Suddenly, living in Panama's beautiful mountains is becoming increasingly more attractive

Destinations such as Boquete, El Valle and Sora, to mention the best known examples, continue to attract foreign investment. While some come to these areas enchanted by the success of previous developers, others come to them seeking the tranquility these areas have started to lose.

Overcrowding is now evident in these better known spots. When you take in to account the additional burden on the infrastructure which has not developed at the same pace it is easy to predict potential problems for the future.

The focus of attention is now on other mountain residential developments away from the tried, tested and overpopulated areas. Some of these developments are located in very well preserved areas of stunning natural beauty that locals and foreigners alike marvel at their pristine location.

One such affordable mountain residential area is [Trinity Hills Valley](#) in the district of Capira home to [Los Altos de Campana National Park](#) and only 54 km from the city of Panama.

The proximity to the city of Panama and to the beaches of Pacific Ocean is one of the key reasons why foreign residents of this mountain residential community have opted to establish their second home here.

Affordable mountain living is another reason why this fairly new development continues to grow and attract new buyers. A key to growing in a fiercely competitive market has been to keep congruency between product quality and price point.

Not having been caught in a speculative whirlpool, the developers of this quaint mountain community have kept a reasonable profitable business while offering value to its customers. Since inception in 2008 the value of the property has risen steadily by over 15% yearly.

Keeping in mind that while growing, Panama's status is as developing nation and hence the pricing of real estate is in keeping with this. The developers at Trinity Hills Valley strive to keep their price point in alignment with Panama's cost of living index. The standards of quality however, are, by design, very much in line with what you would expect to find in North America.

Finally, living in Panama's beautiful mountains is not only more affordable than living on its beautiful beaches; it is also much more affordable than living in the US. Yes, you may be swayed in to thinking that the price of real estate in the US is now in free-fall and poised to drop even further and this may be so. However, consider the price of food, medicine and medical attention to name a few of life's essentials. Once you start to factor in your daily expenses in Panama and compare them to similar expenses in the US, you will be convinced that if you are one of the 3.6 million baby boomers who could opt to retire this year there is a place close to home (less than 4 hour flight from Texas) where living on your stock market eroded 401k is feasible without having to give up on the good things in life...hey you didn't work so long and so hard to end up living off of social security alone.

To learn more about Trinity Hills Valley and receive our development plan and prices by email please provide your information and we will send it to you immediately. We do not share or sell your personal information to anyone.

Do you want to Become an Expat Retiree for the Right Reasons? - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

Carefully consider your reasons for wanting to retire overseas

Almost every day, as an editor of [Expat Daily News](#) and [Expat Daily News Latin America](#), I receive inquiries – mostly from North Americans – about wanting to relocate to another nation.

Many of the queries are from senior people who are considering seeing a part of the world they are fascinated by or to stretch their retirement income a little more. So I decided to write a list of things to consider when thinking about becoming an expat retiree: 10 reasons to become, and 10 reasons not to become a stranger in a strange land.

If any one or more of the following conditions apply to you, then by all means, start making plans now.

1. You have a fascination for foreign cultures and faraway lands, a curiosity that cannot be satisfied any longer by watching others live your life on National Geographic and the Discovery Channels.
2. Your curiosity has been aroused sufficiently that you are ready to have a tearful separation at the airport, after a final farewell dinner with all your loved ones who are questioning your very sanity, and not having any plans to return in the near future.
3. You have a willingness to at least learn the basics of another language, to avoid the classic “ugly American” syndrome, where you stand in front of a counter trying to buy something, while getting more and more frustrated at the person trying to help you, and rising your voice more and more, thinking that a higher decibel level will improve your chances of being understood.
4. You want to experience totally foreign concepts of transportation, such as using public transport and walking more than a few blocks to the nearest store, where...
5. You enjoy the challenge of learning what's what on the store shelves, your familiar old brand names having been replaced by new and unknown products and brands. Some everyday items that you may be familiar with and think you must have may not be available.
6. You have a sense of adventure, not just for seeking out a new home, but also for eating strange culinary offerings in restaurants, market stands, and occasionally on the street. Many of the items you find on a menu will be unfamiliar to you, leaving you somewhat at the mercy of fate when you order a meal.
7. You have an open mind when entering your new surroundings. Remember that the way it is done in your former home country may be different; sometimes better, sometimes worse, but rarely the same. I am talking about your basics here: plumbing, electricity, telephones, internet and transportation infrastructure just to touch on a few of the issues that will affect you the most.
8. You are self-sufficient, and not completely dependent on having a maid, gardener, and driver. Depending on your living circumstances, you may need to think about how this might set you apart in your community right from the get-go, exposing you and possibly making you a target for crime. While it is usually Ok to have a maid or gardener come by a few times a week, I do not recommend providing full time live-in employment to several of the less fortunate neighbors and paying them twice the going rate to gain their loyalty.
9. You relish everything about being in a foreign country, with all of its foreign customs, language, eating habits, holidays, and rhythms of life. You will of course need to get used to the metric system for everything from cooking to measuring distance.
10. And lastly, rather than doing what is frowned on in your home country, you plan to assimilate into the culture of the place you have chosen to live in. Hook up with other expats to network with, but don't allow yourself to become dependent on them. Try to cultivate friendships with local people other than the ones you employ. Join in community activities. Engage, pay attention to what the locals wear and do, and consider not sporting your Rolex Presidential wherever you go. In other words, be respectful, nice to people, and don't forget to use common sense.

Make sense to you? Start packing now!

Now here are 10 not so good reasons to become an expat retiree. If one or more of these apply to you, may I humbly suggest Idaho, Montana or Wyoming for relocation? I am quite sure there are more than 10 reasons, but I will try to limit myself to naming some of the most important ones here and explaining why. I am mostly addressing US citizens in this segment, and I am sure to offend many with this, but here it goes:

1. The United States of America is heading for a fiscal disaster! Yes, and it has been ever since the concept of deficit spending became a norm. Then, when the Supreme Court of the USA staged a totally unconstitutional coup d'état in 2000, overruling states' rights and installing George W. Bush as president, the die was cast with large tax cuts and two wars that will have cost the US taxpayer [4 trillion dollars](#) in actual expenditures for running the wars, plus all the future costs of treating injured veterans for their remaining lives. Why, you may ask, is this not a good reason to expatriate? Read on.
2. The value of the US dollar is collapsing and our economy is on the way to hell on a jet plane! Absolutely correct. But if

you think that things are better elsewhere, don't hold your breath. When the US currency has breathed its last gasp, so will all other nations' currency. Please do not delude yourself into thinking that there are secret places on the planet, where you can ride out what is surely to come. The world has become so fiscally interlaced that there will not be any habitable places which will remain unaffected. The more remote a location you will be in, the more severe the crisis will be. So you are going to move to Tonga or Tuvalu or some such exotic locale that, in your thinking, will be unaffected by world events and eat coconuts? You will have stiff competition from locals. Where will your basic staples come from? And who will pay for them? And if you stock up with all kinds of survival foods and flour and sugar etc. how will you tell your 300lb armed neighbors that they can't have any?

3. The United States is turning into a socialist country, what with Obamacare and having to pay taxes to support the lazy no good free loading individuals (who were fired and now are not being re-hired by the major corporations that are enjoying record profits)! When it comes to socialism, there is a colossal misunderstanding in the USA about just what that word means. Ever since the Russian Revolution, the flames of paranoia have constantly mixed up Communism and Marxism/Leninism with socialism. For reference purposes, please be advised that the USA has practiced socialism for several generations now, with things such as Social (ist) Security, subsidized way below market rate mortgages (FHA) to allow almost everyone to participate in the American Dream (Nightmare), by going into a huge 30 year federally insured debt for that stapled together American Dream House, agricultural subsidies that allow consumers to purchase grains, dairy products and clothing at an artificially low price. These are just illusions, because you have paid for these savings with tax dollars in an oh-so-socialistical way.
4. You want to leave the USA, because your white race is being diluted by immigrants from third world countries. Yeah, that's right; people from Central America are clawing their way up to the USA, just so they can pick your lettuce, tomatoes, strawberries and all other fruits. After having conducted extensive interviews with many illegal aliens, as well as legal residents that do your dirty work, it has become quite clear to me that, given a choice, they would rather have stayed in their home countries with their families, if only there were opportunities to better themselves there, better education for their children, and the possibility of living in a house that does not have dirt floors and is in danger of blowing away in the next above average storm. And by the way, where did your ancestors come from, and why did they come?
5. The United Nations is taking over the USA by forcing cities to install bike paths, and Bill Clinton sold the National Parks to pay off his national debt etc. Please start taking your bi-polar medication again.
6. The North American Free Trade Treaty, NAFTA, was designed to take away American sovereignty and to have a superhighway dividing the land in two, a superhighway going from the Mexican border to Canada. All right, you have been paying too much attention to Lou Dobbs and perhaps Glen Beck. The bad news for you is that this planned superhighway was finished a generation ago. It's called Interstate 35, and it has not cut the nation in two.
7. The government (or the United Nations) wants to take away all your guns. But that will never happen, because there are way too many gun owners who will not allow that to happen, possibly by instigating something along the lines of an armed insurrection, with the support of the police and military, as the members of those organizations are almost without exception proud owners of firearms. And try owning firearms as a foreign resident in your utopian disconnected destination. We'll send an American Consul once or twice a year to wherever you are incarcerated, to make sure you are still alive.
8. I am tired of paying taxes to support (fill in your reason). Currently the average US citizen pays much less in income taxes that virtually any other civilized nation. Let us ignore for a minute that most of that money falls between the cracks and gets wasted. True, there are nations where it is most of the private income that slips through the cracks and is never taxed. But do you really want to live there? Abysmal water or sewage systems, highways that are pothole-laden obstacle courses, unreliable medical care are just some of the results of little public spending, and things that you take for granted, such as automobiles, TVs, electronic gadgets, etc, being the main source of tax revenue, renders them horrendously expensive. No more \$300 32" flat screens and \$300 laptop computers.
9. The United States has become a police state. Absolutely! Why do police officers all wear SWAT style uniforms, jackboots, those scary haircuts, dark sunglasses, and they are equipped with the latest combat gear? Armored personnel carriers? Urban assault vehicles? Just what are they scared of? The people who they were sworn to protect? But you think you will get away from that? No way Joe. United States police and military assistance programs are making sure that all "friendly" governments have access to the same inventory by giving them foreign aid, which must be spent on such goods and US training, which can only serve to oppress the masses.
10. To get away from people like me. Too late! Wherever you go, there I am. There are hundreds of thousands of us out here who left the USA and Canada as well as many other nations for all the right reasons. If you are just generally unhappy with everything, it will not make a bit of difference where you go. Almost all countries are UN Members, taxation is universal in one form or another, and the world is full of evil and good. The choice of which you prefer to adhere to is yours. There are many good reasons to leave the USA, many of them being ideological, but some of them downright ridiculous.

If you are ideologically motivated and are looking for a good place to live, look at Uruguay. It is a socialist democracy, like most nations south of the US border are to some extent or other. Uruguay has one of the best educational systems in the world, with free access to post-graduate education, free laptops for all the children, plus great medical care, decent infrastructure, and a very worldly population. They achieved all that with a relatively reasonable income tax burden, and a liberal political party whose current president drives an old Volkswagen Bug ...and they do not start unprovoked wars with nations a half a world away. Now that is socialism, and not that Red Scare version that has circulated in the USA.

Many destinations worldwide will welcome you with open arms, provided you go there and live there with an open mind and tolerance of things that are alien to you. But hopefully, that is why you are exploring distant shores to begin with.

About the author: Jamie Douglas is an Adventurer, Writer and Photographer with an amazing array of Nikon equipment, and a lifetime of experience traveling and documenting. He currently enjoys the great weather and fine wines of Mendoza, Argentina, and edits [Expat Daily News](#) and [Expat Daily News Latin America](#).

Argentina: Tango in Buenos Aires - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

Picture Caption: Dance like the Stars in Argentina

It is the goal and commitment of Escapeartist.com to bring you the most current and accurate information possible on the myriad investment and lifestyle opportunities that exist in this wonderful country. And to that end, Escapeartist and its readers serve as your eyes and your ears and your feet-on-the-ground; making connections, building relationships, and confirming the veracity and authenticity of these many opportunities so that you, our clients and friends, can make informed decisions. Investing, becoming an expat and turning over your hard-earned dollars—is a serious business, and our mission is to provide you with the best direction possible. However, relaxation, enjoyment, and pure unadulterated fun are important as well! For that reason, Escapeartist always encourages its clients and friends to truly indulge and immerse themselves in the expat lifestyle by becoming an active participant in the community which they have adopted. What does this mean where Argentina is concerned? You need only ask one question.....how do Argentines spell fun? ...the answer? ...*T A N G O!*

With this in mind, I am going to attempt to discover for myself and teach you everything you have ever wanted to know about the Tango, but were too afraid to ask. ...and that could be quite a challenge since, prior to researching this article, the ONLY knowledge that I had of the Tango was that the last Tango was held in Paris...or so I thought! Turns out that the Tango is still VERY much alive and well, especially in Argentina, where in 2009 even [UNESCO](#) approved the Tango to the “Intangible Cultural Heritage List” for Argentina. And additionally, I discovered that not only was the last Tango NOT in Paris, but that the first Tango was held in Buenos Aires! Furthermore, I have discovered by virtue of watching “Dancing With The Stars” that—humble, inept, and uncoordinated writers aside—the Tango is practiced by an assortment of personalities from actors and actresses (both young and old) to professional football players (both active and retired) and other sports figures and even politicians! So, without further adieu, let’s explore the history (past and present) of the Tango.

[Argentina](#), sandwiched between the Andean mountain range and the Atlantic Ocean, is the second largest country in South America. Bordered by Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay, it encompasses the full variety of geographic and climactic zones; from hot arid deserts, to dank over-grown jungle, to the crystalline remoteness of the sub-zero Antarctic. Home to both the highest point (Mount Aconcagua at 6,960 m/22,834’) and the lowest point (Laguna del Carbón is -105 m/344’ below sea level) in the western hemisphere, it is a land of dramatic contrasts and spectacular beauty. Although known for its flavorful and tender Argentinean beef and popularized by the dramatic historical presentation, “Evita!,” and both cheered and booed for its beloved and talented “futbol” (soccer) star, Diego Maradona, what has truly become synonymous with “Argentina” is *the Tango*.

Argentina has a population of over 41 million (July 2010), with Buenos Aires, the official birthplace of the Tango, accounting for over one-third of that. The capital of Argentina, and also its largest city and seaport, Buenos Aires is located on the southern shore of the Río de la Plata, directly across the river from Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay. Renowned for its rich cultural events, its vibrant night life, and its dramatic architecture, Buenos Aires is one of the most sophisticated and cosmopolitan cities in Latin America. Influenced heavily by European immigration and culture, Buenos Aires is sometimes referred to as the “Paris of South America.” But where the Tango is concerned, Argentines are quick to point out that it was Argentina that brought the Tango to Europe (and the world!) and NOT Europe that brought the Tango to Argentina!

The fact of the matter is that the Tango, like so many other now socially acceptable activities of the cultural elite, had its beginnings in the lower-class barrios and brothels of Buenos Aires and the surrounding Rio de la Plata, quickly becoming popular with the “bad boys” and outer fringes of society. Today we tend to associate the Tango with high society, elegance, tuxedos and body hugging sequined gowns. Originally referred to as *Tango Criollo*, the Tango found its influences in the dances and ceremonies of the early European and African slave culture, with the name “Tango” first being used in the 1890’s. Originating as a parody or “acting out” of the relations between a prostitute and a pimp, the Tango in its early days was considered highly vulgar and was viewed as very obscene by society. But.....the Tango was fun, intoxicating, highly erotic and sensual. Not only that, it’s FREE for anyone with the inclination, skill, coordination, and courage to learn. So as is the case with many such things, it very soon found acceptance and favor even in high society.

It was during these early days that the “bandoneon” also found favor and became the instrument of choice for Tango music. Popularized by Eduardo Arolas, this German accordion-like instrument is said to be made for Tango music because of its sweet, melancholy tones. But the bandoneon’s roots are similar to that of the Tango, founded in poverty, although at the opposite end of the spectrum! The bandoneon was actually a religious instrument used in poor churches that could not afford an organ. Today, the bandoneon itself is synonymous with Tango music. So while both the Tango and the bandoneon had lowly beginnings, both have not only found acceptance in all walks of life, but are now even greeted with enthusiasm, pleasure, and awe.

So popular and important is the Tango to Argentinean culture that the two could never be separated. But if this is true of Argentina as a whole, it is exceedingly true of Buenos Aires where *their* famed Tango is a prominent and integral part the city’s life. Everywhere you go—everywhere you look—you encounter Tango. ...from billboards and product advertising, to restaurants and clubs, to schools and private lessons, to performances and competitions...*Tango* is everywhere in Buenos Aires! In Buenos Aires alone it is said that there are over four thousand Tango related stores, clubs, schools, and other tango related venues. You will encounter the Tango at the many exclusive night clubs and restaurants in Buenos Aires, in the quaint boutique and specialty cafes, in the grittier pubs and bars, certainly in the many “milongas,” and in the barrio streets wherever you find a festive mood and the availability of music. ...and Argentines are ALWAYS in a festive mood!

"Milonga" actually has three meanings or definitions; referring to a place where one can Tango, or to a specific Tango event, and also to the music genre. Additionally, people who frequent milongas are referred to as "milongueros." In Buenos Aires there may be as many as fifty milongas on any given day with thousands of milongueros attending. Following is a very brief listing of the more well known milongas in Buenos Aires:

- Confiteria Ideal: an old-fashioned milonga where dances are held afternoons and evenings, almost every day of the week. Confiteria Ideal was the setting for films like 'The Tango Lesson' and Evita.
- Salon Canning: a meeting point for the best dancers of Buenos Aires on Fridays.
- La National: another traditional milonga.
- Nino Bien: another traditional milonga.
- La Viruta: a preferred place for the younger public; up to 200 people attend dancing classes here before the dance. The music includes electrotango and sometimes even salsa and rock and roll.

(List courtesy of: <http://argentina-tango.com/index.htm>)

The Tango became increasingly popular in Buenos Aires and throughout Argentina during the 1890's, expanding first to Paris, then London, Berlin, and other European capitals before finally arriving in and becoming the rage of New York in 1913. Two of the most influential personalities in the Tangos development and popularity were [Carlos Gardel](#) and [Astor Piazzolla](#). Gardel, known for his wonderful and sensual voice and his masculine good looks, became the reigning star of Tangos golden age, popularizing both the music and the dance around the world via radio, records, and movies. Tragically, Gardel was killed in a plane crash in June of 1935. *In remembrance and commemoration of Gardel, a statue stands outside the Abasto Market in Buenos Aires, near where he had grown up.* Still admired and remembered even today, it is said that those in Buenos like to say that "he sings better every day."

Piazzolla was known as having more of an ear for Tango than feet, and is credited with being the founder of Tango Nuevo (the new Tango). Composer, bandleader, arranger, and accomplished virtuoso and master of the bandoneon, Piazzolla was tangos second reigning golden boy, carrying his music, and arrangements, and the Tango into the late 1980's. Like Gardel, even today Piazzolla remains popular and dear to the hearts of his many fans nearly twenty years after his death.

Although Gardel and Piazzolla's influence is undeniable, there have been countless others who have made their contribution to the history of the Tango as well. Big names, personalities, and orchestras such as Juan D'Arienzo known as the "King of the Beat," or Francisco Canaro known for his easy milongas style. ...then there is Anibal Troilo, Osvaldo Pugliese, and Carlos di Sarli with his heavy emphasis on strings rather than the traditional bandoneon. Dino Saluzzi, Rodolfo Mederos, Enrique Martin Entenza and Juan María Solare and many others all share a place in the history of the Tango. Of the more modern and contemporary musicians and artists, there is Carlos Libedinsky, Philippe Cohen Solal, Edouardo Makaroff and Christoph H Muller. Blending milonga, folk, and pop rhythm, Kevin Johansen is a relative newcomer to the Tango scene who has found favor with dancers and listeners alike.

Over the decades, the popularity of the Tango has come and gone, only to return again, time after time. In recent years there has been a strong resurgence of interest in and enthusiasm for the Tango. The younger generation has embraced the Tango as well, adding their own unique character and novel use of instruments to continue the ever progressing evolution of Argentina's beloved Tango. While it is clear that the world "Mecca" of Tango will always be in Buenos Aires, world influences continue to alter, blend, and restructure this elegant form of dance and artistic expression. From its humble beginnings in the poor and destitute barrios of Buenos Aires, the Tango has been transformed into a multitude of styles.

While there may be a multitude of styles, it could be said that the Tango is danced in one of two basic forms (or a combination thereof): "close embrace" and "open embrace." As the names suggest, the close embrace form involves the dance partners dancing closely together, often chest-to-chest, hip-to-hip, or cheek-to-cheek, whereas in the open embrace form partners dance further apart, seemingly more formal but allowing for a broader range of motion. Beyond these two stylistic forms there is a myriad of styles. Styles developed from country-to-country as the popularity of the Tango found its way around the world. But different styles have also developed within the different regions of Argentina and there are even stylistic differences from barrio-to-barrio within the same city. These stylistic differences have developed as a result of music interpretation, culture, clothing fashion of the time, and even things such as how crowded the milongas and clubs had become, requiring more restricted movement.

Some of the more well known and established styles of Tango are: [Tango argentino](#), [Tango canyengue](#), Tango Oriental or [Uruguayan tango](#), Tango liso, Tango salon, Tango orillero, Tango camacupense, Tango milonguero or Tango apilado, Tango Nuevo or New Tango, Show Tango or Fantasia, [Ballroom Tango](#), and [Finnish Tango](#). Each style has its own steps or variations of steps, its own rhythm, and usually its own specific style of music. And each style articulates a different expression, a different mood, a different message. But each style also paints a picture, portraying the simple elegance, the sensuous beauty, the sophistication....the allure that is Argentina.

So, do you want to learn how to Tango? ...then come to Argentina! With more than three thousand Tango schools and instructors in Buenos Aires alone, you are assured of finding precisely the kind of instruction that you need. Let Escapeartist help you experience the adventure of a lifetime. You will be greeted with the open arms and bright smiles of some of the warmest most welcoming people on earth. You will be dazzled by the beauty and majesty of the geography. You will be amazed at the variety of ripe opportunity that exists for investors. You will be entertained, inspired, and awed by the wonderful cultural events. And you will see, hear, feel, and experience more **T A N G O** than any other place in the world. So come—immerse yourself. ...experience and enjoy your first tango in Buenos Aires!

If you would like more information on how IGA can help you travel to, live in, or invest in Argentina, please [CLICK HERE](#).

Medical Tourism Part 1: Focus on Dental Work Overseas - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

Dental Tourism – where you don't have to open your wallet so wide

Medical tourism of today is usually defined as residents of more affluent countries traveling to other countries for medical care at much reduced prices, which are possible because of lower labor and administrative costs. Insurance companies will often cover the lowered medical costs of outsourcing their patients, presenting individuals with the opportunity to deal with their health issues while on vacation in such exotic countries as Thailand, Singapore, Mexico, Costa Rica, and many others. For procedures not covered by insurance or a lack of insurance coverage altogether, the total outcome for someone paying everything out of pocket, including travel expenses usually comes out lower than having costly procedures done in the home country, which means, in effect, a free vacation!

The concept of medical tourism has been around since the Ancient Greeks traveled from throughout the Mediterranean to Epidauria, the home of the healing god, Asclepius. Sanitariums and spas purported to be the source of special healing waters have also been medical tourism destinations through history. And of course, people of means have always traveled to those countries in the world that have the highest quality of medical treatment, such as the United States and Germany. There are also resort destinations that serve up the opportunity to have elective surgery done in style.

Cuba could be said to be one of the first of what we now think of as "medical tourism destinations," because for decades, people from other countries have been drawn there by excellent doctors, low prices, and nearby beaches. Today's medical tourism, where clinics feature highly trained specialists, state-of-the-art equipment, and excellent care and accommodations, usually combined with vacation packages, all at deals that are too good to pass up, began to be recognized as a significantly growing trend at the beginning of the twenty first century.

An early pioneer in the development of the modern medical tourism industry was Thailand, where Bangkok first developed as the regional center serving the corporate Western expat community of Southeast Asia and was quick to see the advantages of offering low cost state of the art medical care enhanced by a first rate experience. India, in turn, began building its current infrastructure in order to treat its own expats returning to their home country, but was soon to hold its own as a world leader in the medical tourism industry. Other early leaders were Costa Rica, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Jamaica, and Hungary, where elective dental and cosmetic surgery became added attractions to popular tourist destinations. Now, with ever-increasing health care costs and Baby Boomers coming of an age when their bodies may require such procedures as hip and knee replacement, the medical tourism industry around the world has grown in both sophistication and scope as one of the many facets of expanding globalization.

The procedures that have been a natural fit for medical tourism are those that are elective, expensive, require long waiting periods for those dependent on the National Health Service in Canada and the UK, are either not covered by insurance or have a great deal of restrictions imposed in order to be covered, or are unavailable in the home country.

Of course, important health care decisions should not be taken lightly, and there are some downsides to travelling abroad for medical treatment. The main concerns are not so much about standards and abilities of foreign doctors and clinics as they are about thoroughness, follow-up care, especially when the patient experiences complications, the effects of travel while in recuperation, and the lack of recourse in the case of malpractice. Another drawback is that the patient usually has to come up with cash payments up front and await reimbursement, if there is to be any, although financing is becoming increasingly available.

Anyone considering medical tourism should find out how the doctors who they are contemplating traveling some distance to visit are accredited. In order to maintain the integrity of this growing industry, organizations have arisen, beginning with the Joint Commission International, to provide international health care accreditation services based on the standards of the home country, as follows:

[Joint Commission International \(JCI\) – USA](#)

[The Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation \(CCHSA\)](#)

[The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards \(ACHS\)](#)

[QHA Trent Accreditation – UK](#)

[National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers \(NABH\) – India](#)

For assistance in navigating the world of globalized health care, *medical tourism providers* are there to help. They act as both facilitators and independent evaluators of the clinics and hospitals that they recommend to clients, providing listings and ratings, assistance in gathering and relating medical reports, medical advice, legal and financial information, travel services, and being sure to address issues of language, pre-travel health (e.g. immunizations), passports and visas, etc. Keep in mind, however, that these providers are not themselves subject to any kind of oversight, and that it is important to look into the qualifications of anyone dispensing medical or any other kind of professional advice.

Dental Tourism

The most popular health service sought by medical tourists worldwide is dental care. This field of health care has been at the forefront of the medical tourism industry for several reasons, among them being the lack of affordable dental insurance, the disparity in costs of living between regional countries, and the nature of dentistry, itself.

Because dentists do not require large medical infrastructures, they are easily able to move their practices from a location where labor and other overhead are high to one where they can live and run their clinics at reduced costs, offering their services to patients from their home countries for less, and ending up increasing their profits. This has been the trend in Europe for several decades, where Swiss, German, and Austrian dentists realized they could relocate their practices to Hungary and take advantage of lower costs while still maintaining an excellent quality of life. In the Western Hemisphere, it was along the Mexican border with the US where dentists began setting up clinics in order to offer their dental skills to US citizens at greatly reduced prices and still do very well for themselves.

Now, there are state-of-the-art clinics throughout the world, wherever overhead remains low, many but not all of which are in resort locations where all-inclusive vacation dental packages give patients even more reasons to flash their new and improved smiles, but always focusing on the treatment of patients from within a regional market who are willing to travel for low cost, high quality dental care.

The term “cosmetic dentistry” that is so often used in advertising indicates that the work is merely for show rather than having to do with health and wellness. But because so many people do not see a dentist regularly, for financial or other reasons, dental tourism offers every kind of dental procedure: from teeth cleaning, crowns, braces, dental implants, dentures, root canals, and extractions; to cleft lip and cleft palate surgery, jaw surgery, and dental bone grafts; to bleaching, laser teeth whitening, and porcelain veneers.

For the success of dental tourism, distance is important. The most popular dental tourism destinations are those where travel expenses will not overcome medical cost savings, while also adding the possibility of follow-up care to the advantages of those locations. For this reason, dental tourism in Mexico remains very popular for North Americans, having expanded away from the US border to locations throughout the country. The classic resorts of Cancun and Puerto Vallarta, which continue to be very attractive vacation destinations, as they are distanced from the violence that has caused problems in other parts of the country, have a good head start on their modern dental tourism infrastructure. And now, growing numbers of retirees and expats who have been heading south feed the demand for top-notch dental services at reduced prices wherever they convene in Mexico.

Farther south, successful dental clinics in San José, Costa Rica have built upon that nation’s excellent medical care system, in conjunction with its strong nature tourism industry, to add very inviting dentistry tourism packages to the list of great reasons to visit this beautiful little country.

Panama City, Panama is the other well-established dental tourism center in the region, with the added benefit of being an international travel hub as well as a great vacation destination.

In recent years, San Salvador, the capital of the country of El Salvador, has also developed its dental tourism potential with the lowest prices in the region as its major draw.

For Europeans today, Hungary is not the cheapest option, but it is the most well established dental tourism destination, where standards are very high, costs are still relatively low, and the cultural experience is a big incentive. For decades, Austrians have been crossing the border from Vienna to the nearby city of Mosonmagyaróvár, to take advantage of the top-rate services of Swiss, German, and Austrian dentists who have relocated there. Now, this dental tourism hub is also popular for travelers from further away because it is well located right in the heart of historic Europe, with the music, art, and history of Vienna and the Slovakian capital of Bratislava, as well as thermal spas and nature reserves, very nearby.

Many Eastern European countries are adding themselves to the list of new dental tourism destinations that service Europeans from more affluent countries in the west, with German as the prevalent language. For English speakers, Turkey has become a major destination for dental patients, particularly from Ireland and the UK, with all-inclusive tour packages and other vacation perks as incentives.

Of course, the other major medical tourism destinations of the world offer excellent and inexpensive dental services along with all of the other medical procedures they provide, but they are not “dental tourism” destinations per se, and they will be discussed in forthcoming articles in this series about cosmetic surgery and therapeutic surgery tourism.

There are also great dentists throughout the developing world whose services cost a small fraction of what they would in affluent nations, who are simply local dentists. Their offices may be humble and they probably do not speak much English or offer tour deals or hotel room discounts, so they are not “dental tourism” practitioners. However, if you are travelling or living abroad and you need dental work done, ask around, and you are likely to spend even less than what is charged by those who are marketing themselves to foreigners.

Be sure to look out for the next issue of *Escape From America Magazine* and part 2 of our Medical Tourism series focusing on Cosmetic Surgery.

In the meantime, visit [Escape Artist Medical Tourism](#) for lots more information on overseas healthcare and expat health.

About the Author: *Julie R Butler is a traveler, blogger, writer, and editor who has authored several books, self-published as eBooks, including [Nine Months In Uruguay](#) and [No Stranger To Strange Lands](#) (click [here](#) for more info). Julie presently lives in the sunny wine country of Argentina, where she and husband, Jamie, edit [Expat Daily News](#) and [Expat Daily News Latin America](#).*

Panama: Working for an International Living - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

How to Get Your Working Papers

In these times of mass economic hardship, many people have been left unemployed or made redundant. The world's economy has suffered massive blows that have almost come close to causing total national disaster. You may be living in a place that simply has no forms of work or employment available to you or maybe you just want to start afresh in a new country, that's both beautiful and economically stable, if that's the case then Panama is the perfect country for you. Although Panama is a wonderful country with many tourists' attractions and a rapidly developing economy, many people have not even heard about it. Before you consider working in Panama, you may want a little background information.

[The Republic of Panama](#) is a country situated in the southernmost part of Central America, this country shares borders with Costa Rica on the northwest and Columbia on the south east. Panama was previously a part of what is now modern day Columbia, but due to the direct intervention of the United States Government, it was able to become independent of the republic of Columbia. The name 'Panama' is thought to mean 'many butterflies' in the language of the locals. Panama is a very politically stable nation; it uses a 'presidential representative democratic republic' governing system. That simply means that at any one time in history, the elected president of Panama is also automatically the head of state, government and a multi party system.

Panama features one of the lowest unemployment rates in the world, coming in at only 7%, this makes it an ideal country to work in. Recently the economy of Panama had been booming, it has experienced Growth Domestic Product of over 10.4% during the 2006 to 2008 period. It's clear to see that Panama's economy is one of the fastest growing in Latin America and the whole world at large. Nonetheless, like many different nations from all over the world, Panama has not been totally immune to the crippling effects of the recent economic downturn, but it has done very well economically. This country is ranked as being an upper middle class nation, but it is not uncommon to see the vivid differences between areas of poverty and areas of financial wellbeing. This means the country is very even in terms of the balance of poor to rich.

The economy of Panama is influenced greatly by its significant geographic location. Panama is located on the isthmus linking northern and southern America. It is also bordered by the Caribbean Sea towards the north and the Pacific Ocean towards the south. Panama's main economy comes from its work in the banking, commerce and tourism sectors. Of course, these sectors have many, varied jobs, so as long as you have the right qualifications, there's sure to be a job or two for you in Panama. Due to their previous history, this country shares many close links with the United States of America.

The booming economy of Panama is also due in part to its robust tourism industry. This is because the ideal location of this country and its renowned economic stability, has attracted many tourists from around the world. The culture of Panama is widely influenced by Spanish culture; this involves many forms of European music, dancing and art forms. This country enjoys a modern and widely diverse culture that's very accommodating of foreign ideas and ideals.

If you want to move over to work in Panama and you're taking your entire family with you, there are a few facts you need to know about Panama's education system. Panama is a very well educated nation; almost 20 % of its population is literate. Panama features an education system that makes it compulsory for children aged from 6 years to 15 years old to attend school; this has contributed to the country's high literacy rate. Panama has many well established learning institutions and has one of the world's best education systems.

Money is also an important thing you may want to think about before moving to work in Panama. Panama's currency is the balboa; this has close value to that of the American dollar. Although this country does have its very own currency, in practice the large majority of people use the United States dollar instead. Panama has its own coins in balboa, but all its paper money is in American dollars. Panama did once attempt to launch its own paper currency with the release of banknotes in the year 1941 under the direct instruction of then president Arnulfo Arias. These banknotes were withdrawn from circulation seven days later and were subsequently burned. Since then the country has used United States Dollars instead.

In conclusion, Panama is a well developed and all rounded country with a rich history and extensive historic sites. This country is extremely scenic and is the ideal location for anyone looking for a new beginning.

Expats in Indonesia - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

Indonesia: rich cultural heritage

South Asia has long held a fascination with Westerners for its rich cultural heritage, and one country in particular stands out today – Indonesia. It is the 15th largest nation in the world, with the 4th largest population. It is the largest economy in the South Asia region, a member of the G-20 major economies, and the “I” in CIVETS, the group of emerging market nations that are seen as promising due to their diverse economies, large youth populations, and financial systems that proved sophisticated enough to have weathered the global recession. Indonesia is rich in natural resources, with copper, silver, gold, coal, natural gas, and oil being the most important. Benefiting from high commodities prices, Indonesia also benefits from being closer to China and India, two of the world’s largest commodities consumers, than Brazil and Australia, the other major export competitors.

Home to some 240 million people, over 86% identify themselves as Muslims, giving Indonesia the world’s largest Muslim population, while Hinduism, Buddhism, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Confucianism, and native religions all have their influences. Many centuries of cultural fusion between diverse indigenous groups and a parade of foreign influences – Indian, Arabic, Chinese, and European – has resulted in a complex conglomeration of somewhere around 300 distinct ethnicities, with 742 languages and dialects being spoken amongst different clans and tribes. Nearly all Indonesians are bilingual, though, as the Indonesian language is universally taught.

A total of 17,508 islands make up the country, over 10,000 of which are populated. One might get a better idea of the spread by looking at the areas on the globe it covers. From 11° south of the equator to 6° north, and longitude 95° east to 141° east. Another way to realize the scale of this South Asian giant is to consider that just the island of Sumatra, the largest island that entirely belongs to Indonesia, is larger in area than all of Japan.

Being firmly fixed in the tropic zone means that, rather than varying in temperature, the two seasons vary in degree of wetness, with the rainy season in Jakarta being from November to March and the not-as-rainy season, from April to October. The timing of these seasons varies somewhat across the vast region, while up in the highlands, (Indonesia has mountains and volcanoes, some of which reach up to 10,000 feet) temperatures will be cooler.

In this tropical climate, it is not surprising to find that the biodiversity matches the cultural diversity, as Indonesia is outnumbered only by Brazil in the amount of animal and plant species. And mirroring Indonesia’s unique cultural fusion, its flora and fauna are a combination of Asian with Australasian, where both on land and in the surrounding ocean waters, the amount of species that can be found nowhere else in the universe is astonishing.

The two main locations where expats live are Jakarta, the nation’s lively capital, and Bali, which is imbued with a mystique that is irresistible to travelers and expats alike.

Mark and Luh in Bali

magnificent festivals and celebrations feature elaborate costumes and dances

Bali has a culture unique to itself that has been formed by generations of Balinese Hindu traditions.

It is the one island in the Indonesian archipelago where Hinduism has flourished, and flourished beautifully. The visually magnificent festivals and celebrations feature elaborate costumes and dances.

Beginning in the 1970s, these celebrations, along with friendly attitudes, spectacular beaches, and excellent surf began drawing visitors from all over the world. One such visitor, way back in 1972, was Mark, a member of the US armed forces stationed in Thailand.

I recently had a chance to visit with my friend and his Balinese wife, Luh, and they agreed to share some of their experiences with us.

J.D: After your early visits to Bali, what brought you back?

Mark: I completely fell in love with the sights, smells and sounds of this culture. I was raised a strict catholic, and all the religious influences on everyday life here attracted me, probably because it was very different from what I had been brought up with.

J.D: I understand that you started bringing some of the Balinese handicrafts back with you to the US. Did you intend to make it a business at the time?

Mark: No, not at all. It went from bringing unique presents to my family in Boston, to bringing back enough to cover my stay in Bali, which went from 2 months in the winter to 6 months. After a couple of years, I realized that there was a ready market in “head shops” and import stores for Balinese goods, and I started to take orders, shipping them directly from Bali to the purchasers.

J.D: What type of merchandise did you sell?

Mark: Well, it started out with batik wall hangings and decorations, woodcarvings, incense, and eventually we got into clothing

and jewelry.

J.D: Luh, when you first met Mark, what was your impression?

Luh: Well, Mark came to our village several times to purchase clothing from several families, and I had great respect for him. He was very nice and generous to everyone he came in contact with, always bringing presents to all the children.

J.D: Did you ever think you would end up married to him, traveling to the many places you have?

Luh: Initially not, but after a couple of years, when I was 19, Mark asked my father for permission to see me, which came as a big surprise to me, because he never treated me any different than my siblings. But I was very proud that I was the one he chose. There had been talk in the village about just such a situation, and several of the eligible girls expressed hope that he would fall in love with them.

Mark: Luh was so different from the other young ladies there. I had a girlfriend in Boston, but she was not at all interested in traveling with me. I had noticed what a beauty Luh was several times, as well as admiring her skills in dealing with me and other foreigners who were doing business with her parents. Her father put her in charge of taking the orders, figuring out all the details and making sure that we were served properly.

J.D: Mark, at what point did you decide to move to Bali?

Mark: It was in the late 80's, business was booming and I had become a well-known wholesaler to businesses in the US, Europe, and Australia. I earned a good reputation by delivering on time and always having quality goods at competitive prices and a constantly changing line of clothing. That was when I decided to stay in Bali full time, so I took the big step of asking for Luh's hand. Her father told me he was proud to have me as a member of his family, and preparations were made for an elaborate wedding.

Luh: Mark had waited so long to ask, that my father was wondering if he should offer him land and a house for us to live in, but Mark did not need any incentive. Our wedding lasted almost a whole week, and in the end my father did give us one hectare of land, but Mark designed the house himself.

J.D: How did the Asian economic meltdown of the late 1990s affect your business, what with currency devaluations and inflation?

Mark: Actually, it had no effect on me at all. All of my pricing was always in US dollars, regardless of where my merchandise was shipped. And in all the years of being in business here, I have only had one down year, and that was 2002. These days, my exports have created about 300 cottage industry jobs, and I make sure that working conditions are good and that the children can go to school instead of working.

J.D: As a whole, how would you rate your quality of life on Bali?

Mark: On a scale of 1 to 10 I would give it an 11. I am very happy here; I love the people, the climate and my extended family. I am glad that I chose this path in life, as it gave me an opportunity to give something back to the local people who have allowed me to live such an extraordinary life.

J.D: Do you see any drawbacks to your living where you do?

Mark: Other than natural disasters and the political upheaval we have suffered, there are none. Politics will be politics, and there is no more to do about that than natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis.

J.D: Thank you both very much for your time, and I wish you continued peace and prosperity.

Waymon in Bali

Waymon is another expat who has heeded the call of Bali's mystique. He is a civil engineering consultant and construction manager whose international know-how takes him all around the world. But he is always glad to get back home. These are his views and experiences:

I am a 100% American born in the small town of Sylvania Georgia and raised just outside of Baltimore, Maryland. In 2000 I was feeling really disconnected with life in the United States after the end of a long term relationship, being robbed at gunpoint three times, and just the American experience in general wasn't working for me. A year or so prior I had met a young lady from Bali, Indonesia and she suggested that if I were to ever have a week or two vacation that I should visit Bali and that I would love it. On February 4th, 2000 I landed at *Ngurah Rai* Airport in Bali and on February 7th I was calling my family and boss to tell them that I was quitting my job and staying in Bali. Ever since I was old enough to imagine flying off to and living in another country I have always wanted it to be on a tropical island with white and golden sand beaches, beautiful trees and plants, friendly and helpful people and a slower pace, if not an altogether lazy lifestyle. I found all of those things on the island that I love to call home.

Believe it or not, there isn't much that I dislike about Bali. But even though I have grown to love native Indonesian dishes and how to now cook most of them, I sometimes want a good American hot dog or need something that you can only get in an American supermarket. And I honestly don't like the way that some westerners (especially Australians) disrespect the people on the island and use it as their personal toilet.

The most difficult thing for me to get used to here has been the cold showers; I am and will always be a hot shower type of guy, no matter what climate I find myself in. Another has been the unreliability of the electrical grid, but you get used to it and it can be quite romantic at times, with the right person.

Paul in Jakarta

Jabodetabek: the 4th most populous urban center in the world

Jakarta and its surrounding urban area are collectively known as Jabodetabek, which is the fourth most populous urban center in the world, home to a densely packed 23.2 million people. It is the political, economic, and cultural center of Indonesia. The port in Tanjung Priok Harbor, located on the northwest coast of the island of Java, has served strategic and trade purposes ever since the fourth century, when it was part of the Tarumanagara Kingdom. This area that has grown into present day Jakarta has served as the seat of power for Hindu and Buddhist empires, Islamic sultanates, and the Dutch East Indies through the ages.

Now it is known amongst the expat community as *the Big Durian*, a term that refers to a strange regional fruit with a penetrating odor that has been alternately likened to almonds, rotten onions, turpentine, and gym socks. Like the fruit, Jakarta's sweltering mass of humanity comes on strong and is repugnant to some but heavenly to others. The infamous traffic, the dense air quality, the chaos, and the enormous income inequality are all part of the vibrancy and utter aliveness of this intense city – all of which is definitely an acquired taste for the uninitiated.

Paul is a youthful expat from Sheffield, UK who is currently living in Jakarta. Here is what he has shared with us:

There was no plan involved in my move to Indonesia.

I went on holiday to Malaysia and met a cute lady, and we got married a year later. When I asked if she would like to go to the UK with me, she refused, saying that it was too cold. Then I went to Indonesia on a 30-day visa and decided I liked the place. So I went home for three months to sell up and sort out, returning to Indonesia with no plans at all. Excepting a visa run to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, I have been here ever since.

I like almost everything about Indonesia.

The food: If there was ever a gift from the Almighty, it's *sambal*. That's a form of chili paste made in various ways but could all be used by NASA to power the shuttle take off. I was quite a fan of spicy and/or Chinese food when I lived in the UK so Indonesian food is not such a shock to my system. There is little I dislike and lots I do. Fried tempe is a special favourite but the all time best is *nasi gila* (crazy rice). It's especially hot and quite wonderful.

The people: Indonesia has the most friendly people in the world – probably (sorry to paraphrase the beer ad). The vast majority are fantastic.

The weather: There's no winter, so I'm happy. A fan or air conditioner sorts out the heat indoors, but it doesn't bother me even when I'm out and about. I love to wander on my mountain bike and snap photos with my camera. As long as I have my hat, I'm a happy bunny.

Dangdut – tasteless, talentless but fun!

Cultural traditions: Indonesian traditional dance is elegant but not really entertaining to me. Same goes for traditional entertainment like puppet shows. I just can't get into it.

More modern is *dangdut*. It's a form of demi pop rock dance where girls, who can neither sing nor dance, have a competition to see who can dress in the most tasteless clothes and prance around on stage in a manner imitating being attacked by a swarm of bees.

The main dislikes I have about Indonesia are the roads and the internet.

The roads are unbelievable. If you could imagine the City of Chaos on a party night where everyone was smashed out of their skulls and high on LSD, that about describes a normal day on an Indonesia road. The internet is rubbish for the most part. It tends to be slow, unreliable, and expensive. Also, paperwork for visas and so on is a game, but it's only once a year.

How to adjust to cultural differences in a foreign country:

Be open minded to new ideas and mix as much as possible with local people. I've found expats that live in expat bubbles never get used to living here and tend to complain about everything.

“Wonderful Indonesia”

These expats take Indonesia's marketing slogan to heart. The jury is out that the people of Indonesia are what make this place so special. And what the country lacks in advanced infrastructure, it more than makes up for with its exotic flavors and the unique experience that is Indonesia.

About the authors: Jamie Douglas is an Adventurer, Writer and Photographer with an amazing array of Nikon equipment, and a lifetime of experience traveling and documenting. He currently enjoys the great weather and fine wines of Mendoza, Argentina, and edits [Expat Daily News](#) and [Expat Daily News Latin America](#).

Julie R Butler is a traveler, blogger, writer, and editor who has authored several books, self-published as eBooks, including *Nine Months In Uruguay* and *No Stranger To Strange Lands* (click [here](#) for more info). Julie presently lives in the sunny wine country of Argentina, where she and husband, Jamie, edit [Expat Daily News](#) and [Expat Daily News Latin America](#).

Remote Island of Salt Cay: Last Salt Raker Standing - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

The marina area of Salt Cay, Deane's Dock

When Spanish sea captain Juan de Bermudez first set foot on the shore of Bermuda so named after him, little did he know the repercussions of his discovery and how it would influence and set in motion the future economy and lifestyle of the Turks and Caicos Islands some 740 miles away..

The early pioneers of Bermuda were excited to cultivate the land as tobacco plantations to meet the demand of British merchants that sold the highly prized tobacco as a medicinal cure for almost every ailment. Books were written on the magical properties of tobacco and throughout the 1600s it was so popular in Europe that tobacco was synonymous with money as a trading mechanism.

Unable to compete with the North American that could cultivate tobacco more cheaply, the settlers and adventurers turned their attention to the Turks islands where they saw a great opportunity to harvest salt which formed naturally in the many shallow Salinas on the island of Grand Turk and the adjacent island of Salt Cay.

And so it was that the pioneers along with their established boat building skills, excess slaves, will and determination settled the Turks Islands in their quest to capture the salt market and become rich by supplying the world with 'white' gold.

Despite the many ferocious hurricanes, invasions, wars and plagues the settlers persevered in this quest for over three hundred years building a rich and colorful culture. A culture that bonded the mixed races through elaborate storytelling, days salt raking in the ponds, building sloops, drinking bush tea and practicing bush medicine all inspired by the old negro slaves captured from the shores of Africa and beyond.

Music and dance was an integral part of daily life. The players would use every day objects to strike up a cacophony of sounds that later became known as the Turks and Caicos 'ribsaw' music.

In fact the main instrument of the 'rib saw' band was and still is a common hand held carpenter's saw, stroked across the serrated teeth with a metal object creating an unusual melody in harmony with the syncopated beat of the "rim," a simple drum made from stretched cowhide.

Accompanied by shakers and whistles and anything else that would produce sound, the men would often serenade the ladies providing entertainment and a much needed distraction from the sometimes hostile and harsh environment, overseers and salt merchants that kept rigid time.

Bermudan style salt merchant homes were built in the early 1800s. The salt was stored in vast basements for protection from the rains and the white merchants lived on the second floor with many windows that would catch the breeze from the constant trade winds, providing respite from the midday sun.

From the wide East verandas the merchants would look out over the vast Salinas and watch the raker's gather salt, shovel it on the mule and cart and move the heavy load along the 'pickle' packed roads to the salt houses and wharfs.

From the West veranda the ladies would sit with their crochet, reading Longfellow and sipping their afternoon teas from delicate willow pattern teacups brought in by the sailing ships and steamers from England.

They watched the fishing boats and lighter boats struggling out to the larger vessels to offload their salt and often times turtles which were also in great demand for their pretty shells that were used to make combs, hairbrushes and jewelry in the European markets.

Meanwhile the salt raker wives were gathering wood to light their fire wearing simple white dresses and handmade straw hats often brought to Salt Cay on sloops from the Caicos Islands where an abundance of Silver Top and White Top palm trees provided the raffia for the local women to weave shade hats.

This cycle of life continued until the mid 1900s when heavy competition from other countries closed the salt raking industry down and forced the men to find work on the large cargo ships carrying iron ore and other commodities round the world.

However sitting on a stone wall outside his salt raker cottage most every day we find 84 yr old 'Prince Albert' reflecting on days gone by when he would wake at the crack of dawn and walk out into the Salinas to rake one of the most precious commodities in the world.

Prince Albert is now one of the last salt raker's standing!

Today the island of Salt Cay has a population of fewer than eighty residents living on a land mass of less than 3 square miles and is ranked one of the most unique and least inhabited islands in the world.

Salt Cay is without a doubt an ideal vacation spot, off the beaten track and only a 25 minute airplane ride from Providenciales the main tourist area of the Turks and Caicos Islands located less than a 90 minute flight from Miami, Florida.

It is certainly worth the extra \$180.00 dollar island hop with the airline carrier "Caicos Express" to Salt Cay if only to experience

the history and culture of these islands. The salt pans glimmer and shine as they have done for centuries and the pace of life has a slow natural rhythm.

The roads are unpaved and there are only two or three cars. One is more likely to encounter the offspring of donkeys that once pulled the carts and hauled the salt. Today they wander freely through the small settlement of Balfour Town and amble on across the dunes to the watering holes.

It's like stepping back in time, very romantic, brilliant for nature photographers and the shoreline has some of the quietest, powdery white sandy beaches in the Turks and Caicos. An added attraction is the coral formations which are within easy swimming distance from the shore.

Divers particularly enjoy the wall diving overhung corals, ledges and crevices and with weather permitting can explore the HMS Endymion, a 44 gun frigate which was shipwrecked in 1790 after hitting a coral head. It's amazing to see the huge cannons and, attractive fish life that weave around the massive chain and anchor.

The local dive shop 'Salt Cay Divers' has been established for over sixteen years bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge of the marine life. Non divers often take a 'Discover Scuba' course for a day to see if they would enjoy diving. The professional guidance and clear water makes the participation easy and fun and leaves the trainee longing for more.

Now the very best time of year to come whale watching is during the months of February and March. A charismatic local man of the sea, Captain Allan Dickenson has an eye for spotting whales at a distance and will take you out for an enjoyable sea voyage so that you can see these magnificent creatures breach and frolic in their natural environment.

The trips are \$125.00 dollars per person with young children enjoying the adventure free of charge.

There is a small choice of comfortable lodgings on the island each with their own style, quirks and benefits each providing personal friendly service and all excellent for families, small groups and friends.

However I would be remiss if I did not mention my own friendly well established guesthouse 'Pirates Hideaway' with its clean comfortable, spacious en suites, internet, whale watching deck and fresh water, free form swimming pool nestled in a tropical garden.

There is a barbecue on the deck, bottled water in the fridge, fresh coffee brewing, assortment of books and easy conversation! One of the en suites has a full kitchen in case you are bringing your own gourmet!

The price of the en suites average \$175.00 dollars a night inclusive of the 11% Government tax.

An adjacent modern salt raker home 'Blackbeard's Quarters' is perfect for a family or group of friends and can comfortably sleep six. With a full kitchen, breezy living room, four bedrooms and two bathrooms this house is ideal for a short or long term rental.

At the high end of the price spectrum is 'Sunny Side,' a lovingly restored majestic Georgian colonial salt merchant home directly overlooking the ocean. The house is tastefully decorated in a classic style with high ceilings, three large bedrooms each with bathrooms, hot showers and luscious towels.

There is a spacious reading room and library. The sweeping verandas provide superb views from every angle and with comfortable soft sofas is the best location on the island for spotting whales.

A state of the art kitchen is set in the old Bermudan 'buttery' with access to an open romantic dining area overlooking the sea.

The house rents for \$850.00 dollars a night with daily maid service, bicycles and the option of a golf cart, the preferred means of exploring Salt Cay. Upon request groceries and beverages can be stocked ahead of time.

There are three restaurants and two bars on the island full of character and charm and each with a varied menu. Naturally the main theme centers around fresh fish, conch and lobster, peas and rice ...but the meat and spud man will also be happy with his choices.

Salt Cay is a superb vacation spot for the intrepid traveler who enjoys a peaceful natural environment away from city life.

About the author: Candy Herwin is a published author, veteran traveler and local historian.

If you mention that you have read this article on Escape Artist I will offer a 15% discount on accommodations at 'Pirates Hideaway' and 'Sunnyside'.

Contact: Piratequeen3@hotmail.com or visit her website - www.saltcay.tc and blog www.saltcayblog.com

Expat Daily News: Top stories from July 2011 - EFAM | Escape From America Magazine | EFAM

Expat Daily News

If you enjoy Escape From America Magazine and would like to read more about these topics, check out [Expat Daily News](#). There, you will find original articles published on a daily basis covering news, expat information, culture, current events, and other issues of interest to expatriates and anyone planning to make the big move abroad.

Our new Friday [Q&A segment](#), where we will be address readers' most pressing concerns proved to be hugely popular in June and two of the featured question posts made it into the top five most popular articles in June.

For a taste of what you will find, here are the top five articles from July 2011:

Retirement in French Polynesia is Possible

Huahine, French Polynesia_thumb[2]

Huahine, French Polynesia

The names alone, Bora Bora, Moorea, Raiatea and of course Tahiti, conjure up images of green mountains rising out of blue waters and a friendly local population of Polynesians who are always smiling and drinking from coconuts, while catching their breath between free diving for pearls...

Sound too good to be true? I am afraid it is.

The main island of Tahiti, home of the Faa'a International Airport is also home to most of the population in this lovely French Overseas Territory. As a newcomer, it is always helpful, when meeting new acquaintances, to let them know that you are not French, as most white settlers from the "Motherland" are not all that welcome. [Read the full article](#)

Huahine, French Polynesia

Expat Observations on a Busy Weekend

And what a weekend it was! The weather in this part of Argentina could not have been better: daytime temps around 20° C with nice cool overnight sleeping temperatures and crystal clear skies, allowing for some great viewing of the International Space Station, in particular on the evening of the 20th, when it passed directly overhead. While we were watching it in all its glory, it approached the southern cross and passed directly through the eastern most star in it – a most definite "Huzzah!" moment. For those of you interested in following the space station who would like to find out when it passes overhead where you are, go to [Heavens Above](#). After entering your latitude and longitude, which you can find on Google Earth or Wunderground.com, you can see when that marvel will pass overhead, too. [Read the full article](#)

Cost of Living: The Least Expensive Cities for Expats

For many potential expats, in today's pending economic chaos, which is actually already in progress, it is becoming more and more important to keep the overhead down, something that is not possible by choosing to live in Switzerland, Singapore or Sydney.

However, if you are willing to forego many comforts that life has to offer, there is a range of other options to consider, that range from Botswana to Belarus to Bosnia to Herzegovina. Below you will find, in descending order leading to the least expensive place, the 25 least expensive places for expats to live (?) while waiting for the grim reaper to come. Please bear in mind that this is a lighthearted look at these places: [Read the full article](#)

Q&A: Expatriating with Medical Concerns

Thanks to all of you who have responded to our [call for questions](#) about Expat living.

This week, I will address two different questions, both having to do with traveling compounded by medical problems. In both inquiries, I will try to enlist the feedback of my readers, as this is a relatively new issue in Latin America. Of course, the ADA does not extend beyond the southern border.

We are considering retiring outside the US, and are wondering if Central and South American countries are generally "handicap accessible"? I have recently been diagnosed with a degenerative nerve condition in my legs, requiring me to use a scooter when I want to travel very far outside of a vehicle. This includes shopping and site seeing. I have not seen this topic discussed in any of the web sites dealing with relocating for retirement, just the topic of available medical care. Thanks. [Read the response](#)

Grocery Store in Karachi, Pakistan

Health Insurance for Expats

First off, let me state that this is not an advertisement for expat health insurance! I have been fortunate enough to never fall seriously ill while traveling, but as is well known, stuff happens, and sometimes at the most inconvenient of times. You and your partner have just settled into your new expat home in Parador, when one of you suddenly falls very ill. There are 3 possible scenarios that will apply to you.

1. You have no health insurance.
2. You were smart enough to have bought health insurance locally, as soon as you realized that you would be in Parador for an extended period of time.
3. You purchased traveler's insurance before you left to cover you worldwide.

[Read the full article](#)

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