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Bali: The Ultimate Spiritual Expatriation

By Phyllis Davis - (0)

"How can one remain awake and alert to the world around them even in the face of pain and suffering and still find joy and peace?" That is the question that deserves addressing because that is the journey we all take, by choice, every day of our lives...

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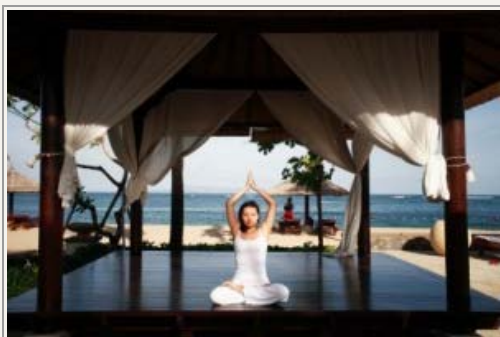
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Bali: The Ultimate Spiritual Expatriation

By Phyllis Davis / May 11 • Categorized as [Overseas Retirement](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Explore the Depths of Your Soul

A famous philosopher of the 20th Century, Jiddu Krishnamurti once said, "If you are aware that you are aware, you are not aware." The perplexity of the modern age leaves many searching for personal transformation and awakening experiences to arouse them from their internal slumber, occasional numbness and disparity about the uncertain future of the world today. But, the punch line is that is if ultimate freedom becomes an individual's ambition, then our very culture tells us that the appetite for attaining the goal of freedom and enlightenment will never be reached and becomes a bottomless pit for 'give me more-more-more-NOW.'

For 15 years, EscapeArtist has offered readers the opportunity to move 'from' and 'to' a location and a state of mind, and we have introduced many opportunities for greater freedom to experience life with new vision and find the EscapeArtist dream for themselves. We know, personally, people who have glimpsed nirvana from the decks of their sea-worthy yachts, or from the front steps of their villas in exotic locations and those who have escaped their repressions (real and imagined) to find peace in the bliss of travel, exploration, power, personal knowledge, learning something new, being in the arms of someone they love, and of course, through the great elixir of monetary success. There is no doubt that surrender and gratitude are all powerful drivers that move people to find the pearls of great price: Joy and peace.

As simple pin-pricks have burst the personas of many ancient and modern-day prophets as well as religious and spiritual leaders and in their place, found mere-humans hiding behind the masks of many of them, it's still hard to argue with the powerful effect their influence has had on society as a whole. After all, if you're struggling to find relief from pain and suffering, even a simple reed on a riverbank will suffice if you're floating down a raging river.

Adopting the awareness that life is a series of opportunities and choices to stay alert and awake seems like a harsh lesson in light of so much pain in the world. After all, with so much poverty and disease in the world, what can a single individual do except protect themselves from the reality of the fact that one billion people do not even have access to clean drinking water or educational opportunities? Many think, "I'll leave that to governments to sort out. Or, the United Nation. Or, the Red Cross. I can't think about it. Too upsetting." And so, we soldier on, fighting our own battles closer to home, doing what we can to stay centered with routine, responsibility, and entertainment to give us purpose and find meaning and hopefully experience good health, love and a good night's sleep. But wait, is there more to life?

"How can one remain awake and alert to the world around them even in the face of pain and suffering and still find joy and peace?" That is the question that deserves addressing because that is the journey we all take, by choice, every day of our lives.

On a personal note, I am a US expat living in Latin America. I wake up every morning to the sounds of exotic jungle birds in my tropical beach paradise and I smile to myself even before I open my eyes because I no longer have the drive to 'search' for more; and after a lifetime of searching . . .

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- I'm present, awake and alert
- My standard of living is higher now than it's ever been and my expectations are lower
- My needs are far more simplified now and my pleasures are amplified
- My incessant consumerism has virtually evaporated because all my needs are met and I don't need a 'thing' to fill the void
- I see the truth of most situations and people much faster than I have in the past and the confusion is gone.

Living in a 'foreign' country is NOT a new experience for me. I've traveled to over 45 countries and lived in six countries in my lifetime and I've seen much of the world from the back of limousines and from the comfortable leather seats of Lear Jets. Obviously, I'm not a new kid on the block of expatriation. I've asked myself many times, "Why here? Why now? Why couldn't I have found this joy in other places and other times in my life?" The answers to these ponderous thoughts could be bottled and sold at inflated prices, but since all our paths take us all down different roads, I'm quite sure my answers would not be heard or understood by anyone. But what I do know that can be told and perhaps understood by others is that in the face of my own personal life experiences, I have not turned a blind eye to the violence of the world, or the suffering, or the loneliness that permeates the human soul – including my own. I have stared it down without flinching, and in that process, I have come to know and understand myself. I have not 'gone placidly among the noise and haste,' nor have I built a grand monument to memorialize what I have found on my own personal journey. I have, however, claimed joy in the quiet of my days, and I can now see it in the eyes of others and that is my own transformation.

Walking among us **are** healers, guides, gurus, patient and gracious souls. There are many good people in the world with crystal visions of whom we are and who we can be. I believe that. Because of charlatans and false prophets in modern life, people have turned a blind-eye to those around us who can actually hasten our growth through true mentoring and leadership and introduce us to our own joy.

I write this to introduce you to a person of clarity of vision and purpose, Kute Blackson. He has spoken to audiences in major corporations, and conferences, on four continents, from 10 to 10,000 people, sharing a message of love, inspiration, and empowerment. He has spent his life 'uncoaching' people to help them break through their limitations and awaken them to the beauty around them.

He is announcing a sacred trip of personal transformation to the beautiful country of Bali in a trip he has labeled **Boundless Bliss**. This unique 11-day, transformational, experiential, immersion, seminar training without walls, uses the beauty of Bali as the backdrop. This is an intensive participatory experiential immersion journey that will transform your life, unlock your true potential, and catapult you into living the life you were born to live. It will be unlike anything you have ever experienced.

Kurt Blackson is taking 22 committed leaders on a thrilling adventure through the heart of Bali, showing you the Bali that most tourists will never see. This is not the Bali you will find in a guide-book. He has created and customized a cutting edge journey, tailored to assist you in breaking through old limitations, accessing your true power, and experiencing a deep bliss and fulfillment in every area of your life.

Will you answer the call? Is it your time to awaken? And, if not, when?

Since space is limited and there is an interview process that you must go through in order to be accepted on this journey. Sign up today to begin your process for joining Kurt Blackson on his experience of *Boundless Bliss* in Bali.

If you are feeling the calling and want immediate information about the Bali Experience please provide us with your information in the form below and we begin journey together:

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We will never sell or share your information with anyone. You can opt-out of our list at anytime.

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Cowboys Against Cancer and Fun in Cabo San Lucas

By Abby Moneyhun / May 11 • Categorized as [Asset Protection](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



opportunity to give a little while you get a little...

Imagine this: You're 37 years old and have a beautiful life. 2 children – a boy and a girl – and you're married to the man you love who is a well-known dentist. You live in a peaceful rural community. The community lacks some healthcare specialists, so you make an appointment in the closest city (which is a tedious 3 hour drive away). As your driving you get a little excited because you can shop in the big city after the Drs appointment. What comes next is inconceivable. You've seen this happen to friends or neighbors but You??... As you stare at the Doctor you hear these words...YOU HAVE CANCER!

This is what happened to my friend, Margaret, some 20 years ago.

We live in Wyoming, population 530,000, oh yes-that's the entire state. Our town has about 23,000 people according to the most recent census. Include a 120 mile radius maybe 100,000 people. The problem is we don't have a cancer treatment center here, so if you're diagnosed with cancer your left wondering "what will I do?" Just recently, they began a test program of chemotherapy at our hospital where a Doctor follows Oncologist prescriptions to treat patients, but they can't do Chemo for all forms of cancer. The major problem for our town is they can't do radiation treatment at all.

I don't know if you are familiar with radiation. The treatment is prescribed typically 5 days a week: Monday through Friday for 6 weeks. The actual treatment lasts only 5-30 minutes. Imagine then having to choose a town to travel to for that treatment which can be a 3 to 5 hour drive away. We also live in a frigid area that can be horrifying to drive on the icy or snowy roads in the winter when you are feeling *well*, so I can't even fathom traveling in those conditions if you are worn out, tired, and nauseous from the radiation treatment. We also face road closures so sometimes people actually miss their treatments.

It's a tough position for families to be thrown into. The patients either have to travel and be away from their family for a week at a time for typically 6 weeks, or travel back and forth daily to receive the treatment. The cost of traveling daily is exorbitant, but staying in a hotel for 6 weeks is a burden as well. Can you imagine the strain on family life? Being separated from your loved ones when going through something that difficult.

I am so proud of what Margaret did after witnessing these things first hand. As soon as she recovered, she was determined to do something to help. She started a foundation called Cowboys Against Cancer. (CAC)

It started really small as a "pay per plate" dinner and auction that made a few thousand dollars. It has grown so much since those early years! Last year was the "sweet sixteen birthday" for CAC and we raised a whopping \$363,000 in one evening. It actually blew my mind that a small town could raise that much money. We have award-winning, renowned chefs that pay their own way to the event, the food is usually donated, and they create an AMAZING gourmet meal!

All the auction items are donated and the CAC board is comprised of volunteers. NO ONE is paid ... all the money

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raised goes to cancer patients. We distribute the money by giving out \$2500.00 per patient getting treatment and would love to give more, but we are getting so many requests for grants that we can't afford to at this point.

The most disheartening thing to me is how far does \$2500.00 really go, especially when you are traveling that much, paying medical bills, and a lot of times being too sick to work so have to deal with the loss of income? And imagine how bad it is when it's the breadwinner who's diagnosed?

One of CAC's goals is to raise enough money to put a cancer treatment center here. Though the cost for a facility like this is reasonable at \$4 million, it's still a lot of money to raise. It wouldn't make the cancer diagnosis better but it would at least reduce the traveling burden so individuals could focus on their health and have the support of their family beside them without the additional expenses of traveling.

Let me tell you what happened last year at the benefit. I won \$100.00 and a challenge: What could I turn that \$100.00 into by November 5th, 2011. I have decide to turn it into at least \$100,000.00 for CAC.

To start I have something that could be a win-win for anyone interested in traveling and helping cancer patients at the same time. I have a condo in Cabo San Lucas that happens to be available for a period of 2 weeks: May 28th to June 11th. It's a beautiful, top-floor 3 bedroom 4 bathroom space (5 queen beds and 1 king) with a wrap-around deck including a hot tub and BBQ grill. I want to auction off the time to the highest bidder and 100% of the proceeds will go to CAC

If this sounds like a vacation with a lot of value on several levels to you, it would be a golden opportunity to give a little while you get a little as well! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

If you'd rather make a financial donation, or an auction item donation, or just volunteer your services, please visit www.cowboysagainstcancer.com/donations.html.

I've watched cancer wreak havoc on the lives of families it touches. I hope somehow we can ease the financial burden it creates by working together to create more monies to be distributed. If someone gets a vacation in exchange for a donation, isn't that an amazing trade?

A true WIN-WIN.

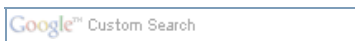
If you would like to see more of the condo and make a bid on it please enter your information in the form below and I will send you information right away!

Cowboys Against Cancer is an IRS 501(c)(3) entity. Donations are tax-deductible.

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Expats in Chile

By Susan Beverley / May 11 • Categorized as [Overseas Retirement](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Santiago – the capital of Chile

Chile is possibly one of the least talked about expatriate destinations, yet one of the best for expats of all ages and from all backgrounds. The nation has so much in its favor – from a good climate to an affordable cost of living, and from a low crime society to a strong and sustainable economy – that it is really worth examining if you're looking for a place to call 'home' abroad.

Whether you want to [retire abroad](#), you want to live in a nation where the people are welcoming and the way of life is suitably laid back, or you want to travel, teach, study or explore, Chile is worthy of your closer inspection.

To bring the nation alive for anyone researching Chile

we've interviewed a handful of [Escape Artist](#) readers who have made a new home abroad in this truly stunning and fascinating country – and as you will see, our readers tell it like it is, warts and all!

Firstly though, to provide a general overview of the nation and to introduce you to why it's really worth a close look, here are just 10 reasons why Chile is an excellent expat destination...

1. Chile has weathered the global economic storm exceptionally well. Prior to 2008 the nation enjoyed eight to ten years of consecutive and record growth thanks to a combination of tight fiscal and monetary policy, coupled with a commitment to market-oriented reform and international openness. Going forward, despite the natural slowdown caused by the world's economic issues, [Chile is continuing to enjoy a relatively fast pace of growth in terms of its economic activity](#).
2. In many of Chile's larger towns and cities, and particularly in Santiago, healthcare facilities are exceptional. Most senior medical practitioners have an international education, and the actual cost of accessing private treatment is affordable compared with prices in America, Great Britain and Europe for example. It is expected that in time, Chile will become known as a hub for medical tourism because of the standard of care available and the affordable nature of treatment.
3. Medical insurance is affordably within reach for Western expats; with Americans particularly impressed with how 'cheap' in relative terms health insurance is in Chile.
4. Chile levies no personal income tax on foreign retirement benefits, pensions, and social security payments – what's more it has double taxation agreements in place with many nations including the US. This means that it is legitimately possible to retire tax-free to Chile.
5. Foreign sourced income other than that discussed above in point 4 is income tax free in Chile for the first three years of an expat's residency – with special extensions of this waiver sometimes being granted by the tax authority.
6. In theory gaining temporary and then permanent residency in Chile is relatively straightforward – what's more, if you speak Spanish, you own real estate in Chile and/or you're in receipt of a regular income from investments, pensions or work, these things will all work in your favor and expedite your application!
7. Chile is generally internationally regarded as being safe with a stable political system; what's more it ranks well in terms of transparency and lack of corruption. The people are generally moderate and liberal in their way of thinking.
8. The cost of living well in Chile is affordable compared to living well in most modern and first world North American and European nations. Expat retirees find they can live comfortably on their foreign sourced pension, and if you earn an income outside of the local economy (e.g., if you have an internet based or international business for example) you may find yourself regarded as a 'Chileanairer'!
9. Depending on where you chose to live in Chile you can access a desert like climate in the north, a temperate and wonderful Mediterranean climate in the middle and a cool, even damp climate if you head far south. I.e., Chile has something for everyone in terms of its weather and its stunning scenery too!
10. The infrastructure in Chile's main towns and cities is excellent – and yet it is beautifully contrasted by the unspoiled and untouched natural beauty of more rural Chile where you really can escape, and get off the

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beaten track.

If our brief examination of just 10 of the best things about Chile have whetted your appetite to learn more about living in Chile, read on to hear how a handful of Escape Artist subscribers have already made their new home in this fascinating South American nation.

Mr J: Former US citizen now retired to Santiago

When my wife and I first started looking at places to retire overseas we looked at [Mexico](#) (too crowded), [Panama](#) (too expensive), [Italy](#) (too complicated) and [Argentina](#) (too foreign). We invested so much time and energy discounting nations that when my wife tentatively mentioned an article she'd read about Chile, we were almost too beat to research the nation further! Thankfully we did, and despite hunting really hard in advance for any negatives we'd really face if we took the decision to relocate, we found nothing that put us off.

We visited Chile for three weeks prior to making the commitment to move, and when in Santiago we hooked up with another American couple we'd connected with on a forum online. They showed us 'their' Santiago and I have to say we were hooked. The benefit of having this insider's guide to the city helped us make our minds up that we really could call Chile home...otherwise we'd have gone home none the wiser as vacationers who'd just had a great holiday in a fascinating country.

To make life easier we decided to move to Santiago too – it's the capital of Chile and a really bustling city with so much life and so many facilities, amenities and activities. We needed to learn Spanish, we needed to make friends, and we felt we therefore needed to be in the heart of the country – in its capital city.

We love the general liberalism of the people here, we love the cost of living (so much cheaper than back home, despite the fact that we live well and we live in a city and we have domestic help). We love the dynamism of this country, we feel safe and free compared to when we were living back home, and we also love the travel options. We've explored Chile top to bottom, we've visited Patagonia and seen the best of Argentina.

The only things we miss are our friends back home, and the only things we dislike about our new life are the seasonal smog in this city which you can actually taste on a bad day, and the disparity between rich and poor – but then that exists even in America. We've discussed the option of moving out of the city at some point because there are times when it's too hectic for us, but we've yet to make our minds up – all I know is that we're not moving out of the country, wherever we choose it will still be in Chile, and it will probably still be within reach of Santiago!



Valparaíso

Miss E: US citizen working in Valparaíso

I first came to Chile on a four-month exchange when I was at university studying Spanish – I was based in Valdivia but spent as much of my free time travelling the length and (not very wide!) breadth of the entire nation. (Mini factoid for you – apparently the length of Chile is the equivalent of the distance from Norway to Nigeria!) When I arrived in Valparaíso I felt 'at home' – it's very difficult to explain why exactly, but I just loved the city.

I grew up in San Francisco, and historically Valparaíso has been called 'little San Francisco'

so perhaps that's why it just felt so much like home to me! When I'd graduated I couldn't seem to settle back home and so I decided to take a radical move and come back to Chile and look for work.

Initially I had a temporary visa, but because I quickly found work teaching I decided that I wanted to stay and found the process of obtaining permanent residency fairly straightforward, if a little long-winded.

Valparaíso is culturally diverse, it's definitely a tourism hub too! So life in the city is exciting and fun on a daily basis, and the nightlife is, I think, the best in Chile! I've made lifelong friends here and I intend to remain living in Valparaíso – although I do miss my family very much. They usually visit every year over Christmas and New Year, staying for the best fireworks in the world – the aftermath from which is never particularly pretty I have to say. Street cleaning here leaves a lot to be desired!

The cost of living has risen for me in the last couple of years, and Chile has definitely been hit by the world's economic problems at least in part (even if some people want to deny it), other than that the only obvious negative I'd flag up is the earthquake risk – but I can't think of any other specific negatives about the nation that I'd flag up

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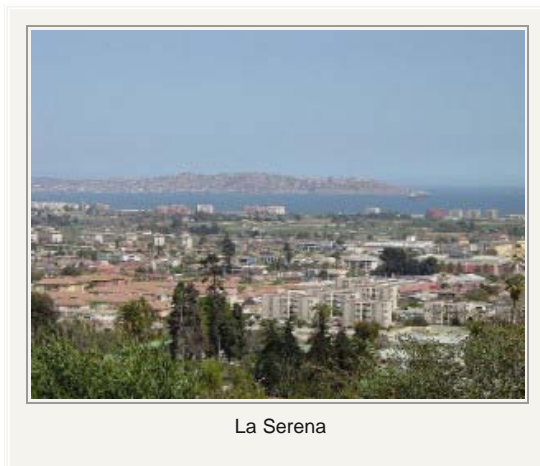
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for a visitor or a would-be foreign resident.



Mr H: British citizen living and working in La Serena

Like many people, when I first moved to Chile I lived in Santiago and believed I was getting to know the country the best way possible – that is by living in its capital city and main hub... however, every time I travelled outside the city I realized that the people in Santiago are not at all representative of Chileans – they are generally more obnoxious and rude and if you want to get the best of the nation you're better off only visiting Santiago occasionally!

I now live in a city in Northern Chile where I like to say it never rains! We have an unusual climate here in that we 'enjoy' heavy dews and

drizzle rather than great big downpours – so everything is kept fresh, but I manage to avoid the constant rain that I really hated when I lived in Northern England.

La Serena is a holiday centre in Chile, which means in season it can be crowded and I do like to get away from the city at the weekend – imagine bumper to bumper traffic and hyped up vacationers taking over. But it's worth it because out of season we get the city to ourselves.

It's historically fascinating, architecturally and geographically beautiful, and it also has a really good range of amenities and decent infrastructure that I think some people still think you're only like to get in the capital. The beach is great too – but remember the water is cold!

If you want to get out of town then the Elqui Valley is right on our doorstep, and it's a fascinating and beautiful part of Chile – unrivalled in my opinion in terms of its attraction and appeal. There's an incredible vibe in the valley, and the climate it enjoys rivals any in the Mediterranean region for example.

I have adjusted to life in Chile completely, I don't think I'd feel at home anywhere else now – but I know other expats who say it's still too foreign or even third world to them, and in my line of work (education) I've seen many come, fail to integrate and go. Personally I don't get this – sure, it's not as sophisticated in many ways as the US or even the UK, but in many other ways the Chileans have got it so much better than those who live in nations in Northern Europe or North America.

In terms of any advice I'd give to anyone thinking about relocating to Chile it would have to be research your location and make sure you will be able to find employment to pay your way or that you have investments to cover your cost of living. Also, do your homework in terms of visas and the bureaucracy that you'll face depending on the country you come from originally, and know that although the cost of living here is cheap in relative terms for many, so the local economy doesn't pay wages that necessarily seem all that attractive to Westerners.

In Conclusion

Chile has an awful lot stacked in its favor, and we had plenty of expat readers to choose from to interview for this article – all of whom have established a permanent new home in Chile. The country has many interesting cities and large towns where it's theoretically possible to find employment and/or establish a comfortable life, however with so much choice comes responsibility to get the choice right!

Chile is definitely a country one needs to try before committing to for relocation – but because it is economically and politically strong, it doesn't suffer from high crime, excessive poverty or extreme corruption and it welcomes foreigners, there will probably be so much in its favor that any negatives you do encounter will be far outweighed by the positive elements of this stunning South American nation.

About the author: 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](#)]

For more information about [Living in Chile](#) take a look at the dedicated section on [EscapeArtist](#) where you will find

lots of articles and resources that you can browse for free.

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Escaping to Koro Island

By Joe Soecker / May 11 • Categorized as [Overseas Retirement](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Meet some pioneers from all over the world

Call it a sign of the times, but these days we are getting more calls on our small island than ever from folks who just want to get out. With the ever-increasing pace of western life, the skyrocketing cost of living in most western countries, pollution, and a general sense of discontent about the powers that run western countries that have largely abandoned the welfare of the middle and lower class. But where to go?

Meet [Greg, a man from Arizona](#) who took matters into his own hands. At 58 years of age he was fed up enough to turn his back on the United States and a lifestyle that he felt was no longer affordable or pleasant. Greg left town. And he did

not just leave town to go to Mexico, or another South American country that seemed close and convenient enough to escape to. Greg did his homework. He wanted a country that was English-Speaking, where there were no guns, where the population had not been colonized and had developed a dislike for Caucasians due to a past of exploitation and greed. He wanted a place where living was inexpensive, land laws were straightforward and where he could afford an acre in walking distance to the beach. He wanted solitude, but not to be completely alone. There needed to be others who shared his dream. He wanted to live off-grid, and reduce his ecological footprint as well. Greg, in short, wanted it all.

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Today we find Greg on a small island named Koro Island in the Fiji group, and he sits on the deck of his small but

comfortable house, overlooking about 100 acres of lush forest, and he smiles a lot. His house, which he built with a local crew and with skills he acquired as a carpenter in the US, cost him about \$30K. Add the cost for his land, about \$40K, and he is looking at having no monthly utilities (his solar panels provide ample power, and he uses water catchment off his roof. He is looking forward to his social security checks, which will provide him with a modest income, enough to supplement the food that is growing on his land. He recently acquired a still, together with some neighbors, to make some alcohol for his evening hours.

Greg found Koro Island through a friend who already lived on the island, a single lady in her 50's from Portland, who is another likeminded soul in recovery from western civilization. [Linda moved to Koro 4 years ago](#), built a beautiful home with a stunning ocean view one Bay over from Greg, does volunteer work in the local villages and lives of her social security as well (\$400 per month). Her gardens produce ample fruit with the help of a local Fijian caretaker, and she plays guitar, makes beer and bakes, and enjoys her time among the trees, wild parrots and horses.

And there are others. [Neal and Hwei-Ying from Scotland and Australia](#), who sailed for 5 years before settling on Koro, after leaving their corporate chains behind, to find a spot for their house above the Bay, where they now live with their dog and pet Hawk, tending their huge organic garden.

Sean, a geologist from Western Australia, whose house in Australia produces enough solar power so he can sell it back to the electric grid, which makes his payments for his home on Koro.

[Marlen from the US](#), whose retirement dollar stretches much further here and affords her beachfront living and her daily dives in the Bay, her boat and an abundance of food tended to by her gardener.

[The Busco family](#), with their 6 kids from Washington, who are still working on their dream on moving to Koro. Their plans are in place.

Matthew and his family with 4 kids from Hawaii who packed up their house years ago and settled in a beautiful geodesic dome, and who are hoping to attract more likeminded folks to their vision of an intentional community.

Samantha and Juanco from England and South America, who just had their first child on the island, and who have lived on Koro for a few years. They run a small coffee shop and country store, look after the library and live very modestly in makeshift structure on their own acre of paradise.

Is it an easy transition? No, Greg says, it does require planning, discipline and work. It requires at least a small cushion of financial security. The younger ones still go home to their respective countries to earn an income, but all have 5-10 year plans to settle on Koro Island. Out of 450 1 acre lots about 80% are sold, which makes Koro Island the most successful off-grid development in Fiji. About 40 homes are built these days with another 4 on the drawing board for this year. While the economic downturn has killed many real estate dreams, on Koro it seems the meltdown has only encouraged owners to work harder and settle sooner, rather than witness the collapse of the engrained structures of the Western world. Interest in Koro is higher than ever, as people realize the value of off-grid living, of living in harmony with nature and the security in growing one's own food.

The stories one hears on Koro Island are of a common thread – those who make the leap go through stages, from elation of leaving the West behind to hardship and realization that living in a different culture and in an environment which is dominated by weather, nature, daylight hours can be hard and taxing, to a sense of appreciation and love for the new found home and culture. Do they think about giving up and going home at times? Of course, since the conveniences of city life cannot be denied. But the thought quickly fades when one watches the light of the setting sun on the Bay, when one hears the singing of locals at work, or when one talks to friends and neighbors about the daily work over a beer down by the water.

So, you ask, could this be for you? Koro Island is a rural island, with a once a week flight and ferry connection. There are small shops, and phone and Internet is available. Any other island could hardly rival its natural beauty. There are wild parrots, horses and waterfalls in abundance. There are inexpensive places to stay. The water and air is warm year-round, and the Fijians are some of the friendliest people on Earth. There are few diversions – no TV, movie theaters, shopping malls or commercial things. BioFuel is made on the island with local coconuts.

To learn more about Koro Island, join our [online community of Facebook](#) with thousands of photos and dozens of video interviews. Our owners come from 26 countries in the world, a truly international community. You can own a one acre lot/property form \$25,000 and up, and properties can often be financed as well, with as little as 10% down. [Even completed homes are for sale](#).

Contact Joe at welcome@koroisland.com for more info, if you want to visit the island or talk to someone who has been involved in the project for more than 12 years. We'd love to hear from you, and good people are always welcome on Koro Island.

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To hear the voices of the people that have made the leap, listen to the videos attached to this article.

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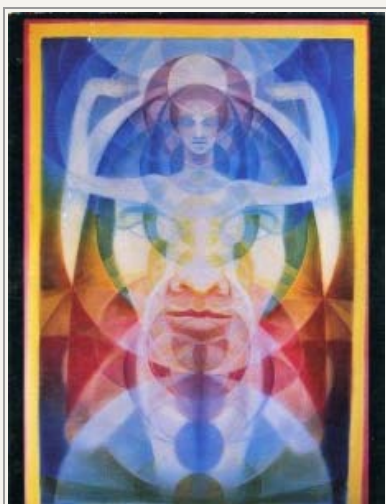
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Artists as Expat Nomads

By Jamie Douglas / May 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Archetypal Human, John Jordan

In my wide and varied travels over the last 40 something years I have encountered a large variety of individuals, and inevitably in some of those meetings I have run across many humble people that have unselfishly dedicated themselves to the betterment of mankind.

From benevolent Prime Ministers to Queens, Kings, Secretaries General of the United Nations, Senators, Congresspersons and Despots, with the occasional former Attorney General on the run after a massacre.

I dutifully listened to their stories, spent a lot of time learning from them, with my special thanks going to two exceptional personalities, Former Secretary General U Thant of the United Nations, and Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, two of the wisest men I have ever had the pleasure of conversing with, on an informal person-to-person basis. Both of them spent many years as expatriates, away from their people and homeland.

As much as I admired those two gentlemen, one from Burma, and the other from Fiji, it was my encounters with free-spirited

artists that gave me even greater inspiration to do the best at what I was doing.

No matter where in the world I was, I would always stop and quietly admire those who were sitting in the middle of Venice, at Mesoamerican ruins, or in the Recoleta Cemetery with a sketchbook or completely set up with their easels, battling the mosquitoes and the elements to create their vision of the present, past, and future. It was something that I always considered a minor miracle, that artists could take the scenery and transform it onto canvas or paper. I, on the other hand never evolved much beyond stick figures drawn by 5 year olds, having no discernible artistic talent. I had to resort to photography to capture the image, and then work for hours in the darkroom with my nasty Cibachrome chemicals, which were so toxic that I had to neutralize them before putting them down the sewer.

Nowadays, my creativity has no more chemical boundaries. My digital photographic equipment renders me images of such clarity that, with the use of several computer programs, I am able to create the type of images that I could only dream of yesteryear. Yet still, I am inevitably drawn back to my friends who put their creations on canvas, paper, and board, because it is an art form that I know I could never master.

So without banging my own drum anymore, let me get to the point of this article, and that is the introduction of a few of my artist friends, many of whom spent years roaming the globe, refining their talent, observing, and working all the time, all the while living modest and sometimes what, to the "normal" observer, would be considered crazy and sometimes bordering on lunacy. I never felt out of place, being a "mere" photographer among them, and it was through our mutual wanderings in search of inspiration and knowledge of the world that we really bonded.

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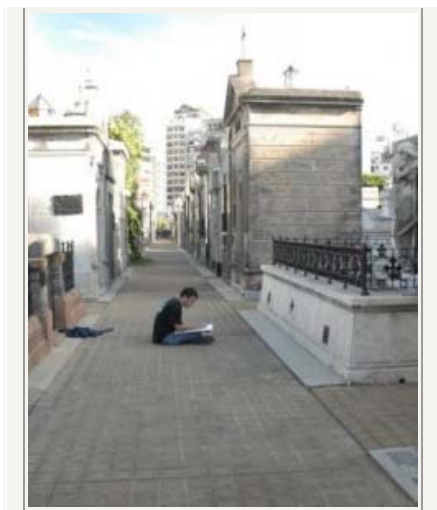
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artist in Recoleta Cemetery, Buenos Aires
(photo by Jamie Douglas)

My comings and goings in places like Pátzcuaro would lead to incredible parties that brought the likes of Judith Deim, John Jordan, Vatché Geuvdjelian, Ralph Gray, along with many other artisans, sculptors, writers, and musicians together, where many times the evening would start out in the late afternoon, with electric spaghetti, mucho cerveza, wine, tequila, pulque and one of our sentimental favorites, *Charanda con E-sprite*, along with the kind of substances existentialist Bohemians have consumed since the dawn of humanity. We would gather together and discuss art, read

literature, create poetry, and make wonderful music that caused our dogs wonder what the hell was wrong with us, creating memories that will outlast all of us.

Unfortunately, we have lost three valued members of our eclectic community to the hereafter, but they have left behind a huge body of work that will remain as long as there are humans around to observe it. One of those artists is [Judith Deim](#), a gypsy at heart, who managed to outlive the rumors of her demise that were greatly exaggerated when, all of a sudden, our house was overrun with all kinds of people from all walks of life and all parts of Mexico and the USA who were on pilgrimages to pay their final respects, convinced that Judith was on her death bed in her modest campesino house in Tzurumutaro, a small village outside of Pátzcuaro. Winged foreign relatives had flown in from all parts, when she promptly got off her supposed death bed, only to resume her work, although at a slower pace, until she finally peacefully passed away, on August 2nd 2006 at the beloved home in Tzurumutaro that she left full of her work.

In the year 2000, when Judith was 90, the award-winning documentary film about her life called [Ghost Bird: The Life and Art of Judith Deim](#) was made. During her lifetime, she traveled to Europe and North Africa as a single mother with four children, being particularly drawn to the gypsies in southern Spain, their communities, their music and dance, and their colorful personalities. Her children continued her cultural and artistic legacy, with her daughter Julie bearing her a granddaughter who was to become the renowned flamenco dancer, La Tania. But before that, she had been a close friend and Muse of John Steinbeck, who funded several trips for her and her artist husband to Mexico, a place she returned to after in the 1980's, only occasionally returning to the US. Judith, to our great horror, insisted on driving herself everywhere, and did all her own shopping, where she first came to my attention in the Indian market in Pátzcuaro, where I was doing my daily fruit, vegetable, and meat shopping.

For more about Judith, see:

[The Art Association: Deim, Judith \(Barbara Stevenson\) – Art, Artist – Biography](#)

Coming out of the tented marketplace, I saw from behind a tall slender woman, hair down to her waist, with the typical Mexican shopping bag walking toward the center. She stopped at the steps leading up to a row of shops where Purépechas were selling those delicious sweet strawberries and turned sideways. I immediately recognized who this elderly woman was, as she was somewhat of a celebrity amongst the artist community, so I went up to her to introduce myself, but before I could, she turned to me and smiled, grabbing my hand, "Oh, you must be Jamie," she exclaimed. "I have heard so much about you!"

I was flattered and immediately invited her over to our house for a party that night, which I was buying supplies for. I offered to pick her up and deliver her back to her house, and we strolled over to the Grand Hotel to have coffee and chat. It was the meeting place for all expats of the world during the daytime, as we could sit at the sidewalk café for hours and watch the busy little town going about its business. Friends came and joined us, we moved on to lunch, and someone who lived closer to her house offered to bring her to the party that night and return her safely back to her house, as her night driving was even more hazardous and everyone kind of looked out for her.

Eventually our little gathering broke up, as I had to get home to start cooking my Electric Spaghetti, which had become infamous for its superb flavor, available with or without meat, as well as with or without added herb.

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We had invited about 10-15 people, but as usual about 40 showed up, bringing several accomplished and famous artists and writers together in our Purple House. The eccentric painter John Jordan, whose passion was envisioning Chakras and building geodesic domes, was a lively entertainer of all present, and is one of those free spirits who is no longer roaming the planet.

And the other is an early Pátzcuaro expat named Ralph Gray, who showed up with his daughter, Monica, both of them prolific artist as well. Ralph had moved from Nebraska to Mexico in the 1940s, driving an old Chevy farm pickup, and had ended up at the far reaches of Lake Pátzcuaro in the Mexican village of Erongaricuario, or Eronga for short. He charmed Mexico's first female mayor and they shortly after married and had two children, Guillermo, who would go on to become a somewhat infamous singer of old Mexican ballads, and the daughter Monica, who, inspired by her father, went to art school in Arizona and became a multi-media artist, for a while dividing her time between Pátzcuaro and the USA.

People kept showing up at our party, and finally Judith arrived, announcing to the world that she was hungry as a bear and was looking forward to eating my world famous Electric Spaghetti. So without further ado, dinner was served, and before I knew it, I had to cook more pasta. There was enough sauce to go around for two helpings, but I underestimated the amount of guests we would have. Without being asked to, someone took it upon themselves to go to the nearest store, at the base of our steep and horrible driveway, to get more pasta.

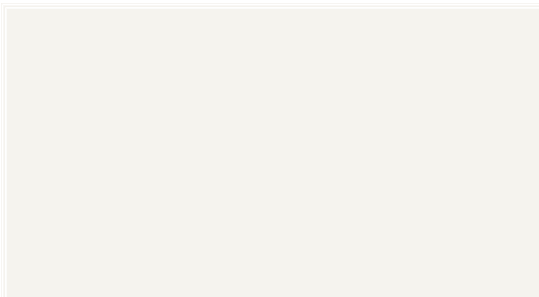
After dinner the serious imbibement began, the instruments came out, and the party really got rolling, with the levitation of John Jordan, followed by his Spiderman act, where he climbed up the walls in the living room. (I have a lot of this event on old Hi-8 video, which we looked at before leaving the States, just to make sure that is was not just a wonderful dream!)

Judith entertained us as well with her regal flamenco dancing, and we all sang, drank, laughed, and smoked those horrible Mexican Faro cigarettes. At one point we had to send someone out again for more alcohol, and Monica, being a former "Junior," one of the privileged persons of Mexico, knew just who to go to who would open their shutters and sell us what we needed that night.

Way too soon, daylight became visible to those of us who went up on the roof of the Purple House. The statute of Morelos on the Island of Janitzio in Lake Pátzcuaro was bathed in the warm early morning sunlight, and we reluctantly yielded the night to the sounds of the diesel buses and trucks that were laboring their way up to Pátzcuaro's rejuvenating heart, where the daily ritual of setting up the market had begun a couple of hours before dawn, and all the produce from the surrounding farmlands was now being delivered for those who did their shopping very early. Vegetables and fruits, herbs and spices, chilies and maize, chickens, cows, and pigs that just yesterday were in their natural environment were now invitingly displayed at Pátzcuaro's incredible municipal market, waiting for buyers, from housewives to restaurants to the eager expats who were always perusing the many and assorted fineries offered there.

Pátzcuaro was founded as a white invaders town, in about 1512. While the first Jesuit ruler was a brutal, heartless exploiter who was so bad that the church finally removed him, he was replaced by a much more benevolent Bishop, Don Vasco de Quiroga, a very enlightened priest who turned the region into an artisan center that survives to this day. Now, local "Indians" make everything from magnificent weavings, to hammered copper art, intricately decorated lacquer ware, distinctive pottery work, and many different wooden products, notably, structural carved beams as well as rustic and modern furniture, and the lake region has become a world-renowned center for its fine *artesanía*.

Through the years, Pátzcuaro has become the home of many fine expatriate artists from all parts of the world. Outstanding among them today is Vatché Geuvdjelian, a multimedia painter, writer, and poet who has grown and changed in the 20 years I have known him, transforming himself from an excellent and creative artist into a legacy. Vatché was born into an Armenian merchant family in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1956, and he has been on the move ever since. For more than a quarter of a century, he has been prolifically inspired at his home and studio near Pátzcuaro. From there, he bounces between Mexico, Canada, and the USA, with additional excursion to Armenia and Europe.



Vatché's journey to Pátzcuaro reflects many an artist's wandering of the planet, in search of his Muse. He first visited Pátzcuaro from Canada in 1983, at the age of 27, with his Mexican wife Sofia and their young daughter. The region around the lake left him with such an impression that the following year, he acquired a VW Camper Van, and moved his little family from Toronto to the Highlands of Central Mexico.



Street Scene of Patzcuaro, Michoacan, Mexico (photo by Jamie Douglas)

His formal art education began at the tender age of 7, with Raffi, a well established artist, as Vatché had shown substantial talent from an early age. He obtained his BA in fine arts from the university in Beirut, and subsequently attended 3 different schools in Toronto, where he

studied figure painting. His style is influenced by no one in particular, although some of his most admired artists are George Barque, Emil Nolde, as well as our mutual friend, Judith Deim. When prompted to name one particular artist who influenced him strongly, he said it would have to be Paul Gauguin. Creativeness comes to him spontaneously, and his body of work includes many different schools of art. Recently, at a successful show in Mexico, he displayed 30 original oil paintings.

See the [photo collection of Vatché's oil paintings on Flickr](#)

Some of his favorite Museums in the world include of course the Louvre, also the Courtyards Gallery Institute in London, which features one of the world's great collections of Post-Impressionist art, as well as the Norton-Simon Museum in Pasadena, California. He considers the entire city of Florence, Italy to be one giant museum. Although he is a true Universalist, he favors Italy, Greece, and Morocco, while his true love is Mexico, where he has felt at home since 1984, 27 years, all told. But Vatché does not measure his life so much in time as in the artistic growth and creativity that living in Mexico has brought to him.

Support Art. It is the highest form of civilization. It is what makes us human!

Jamie Douglas

Patagonia

To contact Jamie regarding this article, email: jamie@expatdailynews.com

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. To contact him for assignments and new adventures, email: [jamie.douglas \[at\] yahoo.com](mailto:jamie.douglas[at]yahoo.com)

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Extreme Sports in Argentina

By Tom Ocean / May 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Aconcagua

At Escapeartist we specialize and practice in a field that requires us to “play it safe.” Let’s face it, where investment is concerned, our clients and friends would not give us a second look if we were casually and callously dishing out investment advice and recommendations without first performing our due diligence and verifying that our advice was sound. Sure, all investment comes with some inherent risk. ...that is actually true of anything in life. However, with experience, and knowledge, and sound management principles, risk can be minimized. Even so, there are certain things—certain activities—that are so outside the realm of the norm, so contrary to what a rational, sane individual would consider doing that most of us would never even give it ANY consideration.

So, how is it that I find myself standing on the edge of this precipice, a chill wind blowing through my hair, staring vacuously over the edge at the seemingly ravenous sharp and jagged teeth-like rocks nearly a thousand feet below, whetted by the frothing white-water “saliva” of this hungry river canyon? Rigged only with a helmet, warm clothing, and a “specialized” parachute strapped to my back, I am supposed to jump. This is the “sport” called *BASE Jumping*. Who came up with this idea!

...was it some crazed suicidal maniac who strapped on the chute just in case he *happened to change his mind* on the way down? That cannot be too far from the truth, as nobody in their right mind would ever consider doing such a thing “just for fun!” While my mind is saying, “Jump, jump,” (that’s what you’re supposed to do, right? ...just jump!) my body is pulling out all the stops and throwing up all the barriers—doing everything in its power—to ignore the orders my obviously confused and deranged mind is sending it. ...there is no longer any question where the word “extreme” in extreme sports comes from! Being a person who is ruled a bit more by my heart than I am by my head, I did not jump on this day. ...not on this day or on any other day! It wasn’t so much a *decision* of the heart as it was that *I just knew that my heart would quit working altogether if I did jump!* ...not an attractive option. So, self-preservation prevailed and I lived to write another day.

While it is not so easy to explain or describe what it is that would motivate an individual to be a participant in such an “extreme” sport, it IS clear why Argentina has become one of the most sought after locations in the world for “enjoying” this kind of activity—*GEOGRAPHY!* ...or, in real estate parlance, *Location, Location, Location!* Argentina is a land of amazing geographical diversity. It is a land of harsh extremes and vivid contrasts. The kinds of contrasts and the kinds of extremes that provide the ideal environment for the extreme sport enthusiast.

Argentina is a land that is home not only to the highest point in the western hemisphere (Mount Aconcagua, 6,960 m/22,834’), but also to the lowest point (Laguna del Carbón, -105 m/-344’). With climate zones ranging from sub-tropical to sub-polar, it is a land that is home to both the hottest (120.4 °F at Villa Maria) and coldest (-38.2 °F at Valle de los Patos Superior, San Juan) temperatures in South America. It is a land that can produce high winds, from the cool Pampero Winds of Patagonia and the *Pampas* to the hot, dry, 80 mile per hour Zonda winds of west-central Argentina, to the Sudestada winds with its accompanying torrential rain and coastal flooding.

Argentina is a land of dust storms and snowstorms and blizzards. It is a land of raging rivers, thunderous waterfalls, tranquil lakes, and the often unpredictable southern Atlantic and Antarctic Oceans. It possesses dramatic beach

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cliffs, stunning mountain precipices, frigid crystalline glaciers, hot, arid deserts, rich, fertile grasslands and lush tropical jungle. And most importantly, it is a land with a young and adventurous population, ready, willing, able—and desirous—of living life to its fullest. With such contrasts, with such diversity, with such welcoming warmth, Argentina is perfect for extreme sports and the extreme sports enthusiast!

So what really is an “extreme sport?” According to topendsports.com, “An **Extreme Sport** is any sport featuring speed, height, danger, a high level of physical exertion, highly specialized gear, or spectacular stunts.” With new extreme sports or variations on existing extreme sports being created all the time, the list of extreme sports seems to be nearly endless, a constant work in progress. And with the amazing variety of topography and geography and sheer unimaginable beauty, there is no better place to indulge in the thrill and excitement of extreme sports than in Argentina.

As spiked-online.com states, “There is a new extreme sport born almost every week, each seemingly more bizarre and dangerous than the last.” And if it is not a new sport, it is an off-shoot of an existing one. If it is not an off-shoot of an existing one, then it is taking the existing one to a new, even more insane level of danger and excitement. Like a junkie chasing their high, many extreme sports participants are constantly having to “up their fix” to achieve and maintain the adrenaline rush they have come to expect.

It used to be that extreme sports meant sports such as surfing, skate boarding, mountain biking, sky diving, scuba diving, and the like. By today’s standards, these all seem pretty tame. In a world where the level of enjoyment and pleasure in an activity is measured not by the drops of adrenaline coursing through your veins, but by the pints, one is required to continually push the limits. ...black coffee just doesn’t cut it anymore. Now you need a quadruple triple espresso heavily laced with some kind of super surgery sweetener to get that “extra boost.” ...and there seems to be no end to this quest for the next great adrenaline rush—this need to push the limits just a *little bit* further.

That extreme sports are dangerous goes without saying. But when one considers that this is a group of sports where the whole objective is to see how far you can push the limits without actually “crashing and burning,” the injuries (and worse!) are actually quite minimal. Like our “investment” comparison, it appears that with a bit of knowledge and experience, and one would think a WHOLE lot of common sense, risk of injury can be minimized. Overall, extreme sports are said to be not nearly as dangerous as they appear, with Nicholas Heyworth of Sports England pointing out that, “Statistically, the most dangerous sport is horse riding.”

As mentioned, Argentina’s place in the extreme sports arena is one of geography, topography, and, in some instances, climate. Couple those things with a youthful, exuberant, and adventurous population, and you have the perfect recipe for thrills and excitement to confound your imagination and beyond! Additionally, *travelers beware*; remember that it is easy to get cajoled into doing things we wouldn’t otherwise do when we are visiting new places! ...so please do not throw caution completely to the wind! At Escapeartist, we love the notion that ‘what happens in Argentina stays in Argentina,’ but we certainly don’t wish for that to be in the mortal sense!

Just a few of the extreme and adventure sports that can be enjoyed in Argentina are extreme trekking, mountain biking, rafting, kayaking and canoeing, sailing, car sailing, mountaineering, cave and volcano exploration, base jumping, base climbing, free climbing, dog sledding, coastering, scuba and skin diving, snow skiing, water skiing, hang gliding, four-wheeler and off-road motorcycles, zip-lining and “Tirolesa”, waveboarding, windsurfing, kite surfing, sand boarding, horseback riding, car sailing, parachuting, paragliding, parasailing, gliding, parkour, bungee jumping, surfing, snowboarding, mountain boarding, rappelling, wakeboarding, 4-wheel drive expeditions, canyoning, off-road racing, ice climbing and glacier exploration, orienteering, et al. With such amazing geographical diversity, the extreme sports and adventure travel opportunities in Argentina are limited only by one’s imagination.....and courage!

So, whether you are a seasoned professional seeking the ultimate BASE climbing or mountaineering challenge of tackling the Cerro Torre, or maybe you are just an adventurous tourist wanting to sample the excitement and dramatic vistas of the Juramento River zip-lines, or perhaps you are looking for something more “tame,” but still memorable and unique such as dog sledding through the Patagonian forest...Argentina possesses the diversity AND the opportunities to meet and exceed any interest you might have.

Looking for a truly unique experience? ...try “Car Sailing” either on the beautiful beaches at Rada Tilly near Comodoro Rivadavia or on the lunar-like landscape of the “Barreal” near its namesake town, El Barreal. Sail Cars, Wind Cars, or Land Yachts, as they are referred to, are basically a fuselage with two rear wheels and a single front wheel for steering, having an aluminum mast and utilizing a sail to achieve great speeds. ...with the wind blowing through your hair, it is an enjoyable, refreshing, and exciting activity; one you are not likely to encounter in many other places!

A little more adventurous and looking for some real physical activity? ...visit San Carlos de Bariloche and give

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“Canyoning” a try. Canyoning is an extreme sport for the physically fit combining climbing, hiking, rappelling, swimming in deep pools and rapids and traversing rugged canyons. It is more of a “team” sport usually done with a group and requiring a helmet, rigging harness, rope, and a neoprene suit. ...you will encounter beautiful, rugged scenery and you will definitely get a good workout!

An extreme sport that is just as beautiful to enjoy watching as it is to enjoy doing is “Kite Surfing.” Kite surfing is basically the combining of paragliding and windsurfing, utilizing the wind to get greater loft and more speed. The beaches of Monte Hermoso, with its constant winds, has become the most popular place for this activity, the most popular sport practiced on the Argentinean coast. The colorful kites, or “croissants” as they are often referred to, and the amazing loft and speed that participants are able to achieve make for a dazzling display and create many photo opportunities for locals and tourists alike. It has become a favored spectator sport.

One particular area in Argentina that has become sort of an “amusement park” of extreme sports is Tinogasta in the Department of Catamarca. Tinogasta possesses everything that seems to intrigue, inspire, and excite the extreme sport and adventure enthusiast. From dormant volcanoes, to abandoned mines and natural caves, to beaconing rock faces, to glistening white sand dunes, Tinogasta really does seem to be a field of dreams for extreme sports activities.

Blessed by nearly constant winds, it is a hang gliders and paragliders heaven. Eclipsed only by popularity of the Balcarce Mountain Range near Balcarce for the “air” sports (paragliding, hang gliding, parasailing, etc.), Tinogasta reigns simply for the sheer variety of activities available in the region.

Referred to as the “Six-thousand,” or the “Los Seimiles,” Tinogasta is horized by more than a dozen mountain and volcanic summits reaching more than six-thousand meters towards the heavens. Both guided and unguided trekking—from simple day hikes to enjoy the beauty and the fresh air, to full-on exploratory expeditions of several days—have become very popular in the region, providing valued economic support for the locals.

Considered the nirvana for sand surfers, near to Tinogasta are the famed dunes of the Bolsón de Fiambalá, the highest sand dunes known. As Sandboard Magazine states, “*Snow melts – waves go flat, but Sand NEVER Melts!!*” The dunes at Bolson de Fiambala draw sandboard enthusiasts from around the world. Another relatively new sport, the only thing required for sand boarding are a board, a steep sandy slope, and the desire for fun and excitement. Sandboarding is gaining in popularity around the world and “the Fiambala” in Argentina is the place to go!

When thinking of extreme sports, many parents try to shield their children from exposure and participation for fear of serious injury or worse. But there are actually several extreme sports that are quite safe. ...and remember, horseback riding is the most dangerous sport statistically, and most of us would not give second thought to our children going horseback riding! So consider making your vacation a true family time by participating in “*something extreme*” together. In Tinogasta, as well as several other regions in Argentina, Rappelling is a popular extreme sport and a great starting point for families wanting to share an experience together.

Rappelling encompasses all of the “extreme” of extreme sports—dizzying heights, a “puny” little rope to hold you (rated at a minimum of 2000 lbs!), and your mind working overtime to tell you that you shouldn’t be hanging off the edge of anything higher than the edge of your sofa or bed—with, under proper guidance and supervision, little of the inherent danger. The sport has become so refined that with quality rope, harnesses, *carabiners*, and other hardware—AND proper instruction— there is minimal chance of accident or injury. So be bold, be brave...”Man-up” for your son or daughter (or even your wife!) and go rappelling while in Argentina. ...you will see this beautiful country from a whole other angle!

While it is our goal at IGA to minimize risk, life with zero risk is not “life” at all, but only isolation and mere existence. So we encourage you, do more than just exist! ...reach out and grasp life! ...reach out and grasp everything the beautiful country of Argentina has to offer! Be bold, be brave, and, with the dedicated guidance and advisory services of IGA, be informed. And do yourself (and maybe your family) a favor.....don’t end your exploration of Argentina without first having participated in at least one of the many extreme sport opportunities that are available.

If you would like more information on the extreme sports and adventure opportunities awaiting you and your family in Argentina, or if you would like specific information on visiting, living, and investing in Argentina, please [CLICK HERE](#).

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How to Launch Your Career Overseas in an Emerging Market

By Michael Park / May 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Saigon [Vietnam is like China 20 years ago – get in early!

Dear Mr. Park,

Thank you for your interest in our firm. We receive many applications from highly qualified candidates such as yourself. Unfortunately, we will not be able to accept you for the analyst position at this time. We will keep your file on hand and contact you if a suitable position becomes available.

Best Regards,

Human Resources

Wait, you said I'm a highly qualified candidate. Doesn't that mean I should have that position? Tell me what I did wrong! I can change, I promise.

Oh, human resources. For so many years I've wanted to know why you would turn down such a highly qualified candidate such as myself. To add insult to injury, you never contact me about those suitable positions, even though I know they've become available.

I've conducted extensive internship and job searches on three continents and I must humbly admit that I've received this rejection email in four different languages. I did everything right. I did everything I was told to do. I went on the job forums and posted my CV. I applied to all the right companies with the tailor-made cover letter. I found out the HR representative's name and addressed it to her. What else does a guy have to do to get a job around here?

It was time to change my strategy and do something different. I didn't care if it wasn't what I was "supposed" to do, because none of the "rules" were giving me the result I wanted – a plethora of interview offers from consultancies in an emerging market. After testing out many unorthodox strategies, I finally came up with a method that could be replicated by other people in search of a launch pad for their own emerging market career.

I've experienced the entire spectrum of recruitment, human resources, internships, and full time job offers on many different occasions in many different countries. The following blueprint is the product of years of trial and error, repeated failure, and ultimately consistent success.

1. Destination

First, you must choose your target city abroad. Ideally this is a place where you speak the local language and have an existing social and professional network. If you do not that is fine, although you will have to work a bit harder in the process.

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2. Visas and Logistics

Next, you must look through different local language schools in the city that you choose. Select the school that offers the most flexible schedule. For example, some language schools in China will offer an option in which you only have to come to class twice per week on the weekend or at night. This will provide you a long term student or business visa so that you don't have to worry about going in and out of the country.

Goals of this Stage:

- Secure long term visa
- Improve language skills

3. Internship Phase

Compile a list of 10 companies in an industry or industries you like. Find the office phone number and a contact person, preferably someone with a title like "Vice President", "Managing Director", "Head of Business Development." Your goal is to completely bypass the human resources department and other gatekeepers. Get straight to the source by calling the decision-makers. Once you get them on the phone, deliver a confident and articulate 20 second pitch about who you are, the internship you want to carry out, why you are interested in their company specifically, and the value that you can provide given your professional background and life experience.

You will be amazed at how effective this is. Your goal is to get an in person interview with this person specifically and NOT A HUMAN RESOURCES REPRESENTATIVE.

The fact that you are an English speaking foreigner with a degree will often be enough to get you a solid internship, although probably not a full time job (yet). The ideal length of your internship is 2-6 months, with 6 months being the absolute longest time you should spend in that phase.

This is important: in addition to the day-to-day intern work you do, design and propose an independent project that you will conduct in addition to the internship tasks. The problem with most internships is that you do grunt work and don't get to update your resume in a way that will provide you with **relevant job experience** to market to your next employer. Thus, if the next position you want to get into is marketing and sales, propose that you will design and carry out a marketing and sales project independently. This way, you have control over the specific "bullet points" with which you will update your resume.

In my last work placement, I independently carried out two feasibility analyses for a consultancy and did a range of tasks: business development, financial analysis, economic analysis, market research, policy research, due diligence, presentations, and much more. By the end of my six month experience I had a wide range of practical job experiences that have enabled me to get **six interview offers in Asia - while conducting my job search from New York.**

When you update your resume, you will be able to engineer the exact work experiences that you carried out during your internship and independent project.

Goals of this Stage:

- Build work experience and a portfolio in your target country
- Engineer a resume that will attract employers in your target country
- Continue improving your language skills
- Expand your professional network

4. Networking

This stage occurs DURING the internship phase of your emerging market career plan.

You should not assume that the company you are interning for will give you a full time job offer. If they do, that's great - but don't rely on it. Compile a list of important events happening in your city, using resources such as internationations.org, meetup.com, the US embassy website, the US chamber of commerce website, and other business association events. Your alumni network is a good resource too.

Develop your "elevator pitch", which you will be implementing over and over again. This is a 20-30 second summary of who you are, what you are doing in that city, and what you hope to do in the near future.

Ask your internship company to provide you with a stack of business cards on their company's template with your contact information listed.

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The company business card is important for several reasons.

- It gives you social proof and a well-known organization with which you can associate yourself.
- People will subconsciously take you more seriously when you are associated with a company and have a card – sad but true.
- People with hiring power that you meet generally prefer to “steal” someone from a different company rather than hire a faceless jobseeker.

Network at all these functions and follow up on your contacts. Make plans to meet at later dates, whether for other functions or to even go out and have cocktails or coffee. Always make sure you are adding value to interactions. Don't set up a rendezvous with someone “just to chat” or they will find the meeting pointless. As often as you can, bond with new contacts over activities such as sports or festivals. This will both be fun and help you build a social and professional network in your target city.

As you expand your network, begin to make it known that you are looking for full time employment. Your new contacts will help make this happen as long as you have been adding value to their lives. A good example is a client I am currently consulting in Beijing, who is beginning to get job offers because he does language exchange with senior managers in well-known local marketing firms. *Always give before you take.*

Goals of this Stage:

- Rapidly and strategically expand your professional and social network
- Secure job interviews
- Make friends and have fun!

5. Interview Phase

From all the contacts you've made, you should be able to set up 3 interviews minimum. If you have been expanding your network and adding value, people will not hesitate to give you an internal referral. Update your resume and cover letter with your new internship experience. Ideally you've finished your independent project, which has given you strategically crafted work experiences. You can use this to engineer a perfect resume for the job positions you now seek. Finally, at the end of your internship request a linkedin reference from various senior people in the company. This will help you market yourself as you look for your full time job, because the first thing that prospective employers are going to do is scour the internet for your social network history.

During your interview make sure you know everything about your target company – and I really mean everything. Tell them how working there will fit into your larger career plans and describe the independent project you did for your previous employer. The person interviewing you should think “this person has the exact soft and hard skills we are looking for.”

Once you get an offer, your company will take care of your work visa and salary.

I've done this in most of my internships – propose to carry out an independent project while doing regular internship tasks. This way, I have a greater degree of control over the specific experiences with which I can market myself later on.

Emerging market internships and careers are amazing in that the types of opportunities and career advancement possible far exceeds what you would experience in developed countries. Not only do you possess a unique skill-set as an expat, but you also operate in a market so dynamic that you will constantly encounter opportunities to seize and claim.

“Opportunities multiply as they are seized”

-Sun Tzu

About the author: Michael has studied and worked in the United States, Europe, China, and Korea. He received his BA from the University of Pennsylvania in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, with a focus on East Asian Politics and Economics. He then completed his Masters of Environmental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, with a focus on International Environmental Management.

Michael's international work experience includes commercial real estate brokerage in Shanghai, green building consulting for the US Environmental Protection Agency, business development for a European startup company, and environmental consulting in Seoul.

Michael is a native English speaker and speaks intermediate Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and French. He is passionate about helping university students and young expats launch their careers in emerging markets. He can be contacted at michaelparkmp@gmail.com for advice,

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International Investor Beware: US Distressed Real Estate

By RJ Palano / May 11 • Categorized as [International Real Estate](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



There is a lot to be said about knowing how much you should pay before you buy a house in the USA.

Recently, John Schaub, who writes a newsletter on Strategies and Solutions wrote about this very topic and some of the information in this article came from there. First, a few things about John. I first met him in 1981 when he was teaching a seminar on "Making it Big on Little Deals" with the late great Jack Miller. These two active investors corrected my thinking, changed my life, and I am forever grateful. Their seminar was all about the single family house business and the impact they made on

my life has defined in many ways who I am today. Seminars can be phenomenal learning experiences and can provide the springboard and direction of your business activities and investments – especially when given by someone who lives and breathes what they teach and has earned the wisdom by working in their field of knowledge – NOT just teaching it.

If you know what to pay for a house to make a good investment, than all you need to do is take action. And by the way, taking action is the hardest step for most investors. We are not talking about a leap of faith here. When you have the courage of your convictions it is simply a matter of writing a check. Here is some great information that will help even the beginner investor to make a decision.

Is your market still latent with foreclosures and short sales? If so, it can be hard to tell which way house prices are headed. In a confused market how do you know how much to offer when you are buying a house?

You can pay for an appraisal before you make an offer, but that is expensive, time consuming and appraisers do not always get it right. That's right, they get it wrong sometimes. You can make a very low offer and see how the seller responds. One downside to this, if the property is listed, some brokers will refuse to present your offer or will present it in such a way that you don't get a counter offer. Often what happens is they can use your low ball offer to get another client's accepted and thus earn both the listing and sales commission.

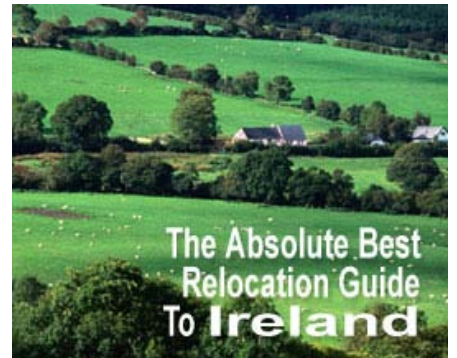
The best thing you can do is to place a value on the property yourself. This is easier in a stable market but possible in any market. John teaches students to estimate a price that is within 10% percent (plus or minus) of the value. Once you determine the value range, offer a percentage that is lower than your bottom range figure. If you are paying cash, you want a discount that is even greater. You can always afford to pay more when the seller finances the property. Particularly, the more attractive the terms are with regards to down payment and interest rate, the more you can afford to pay.

"How much to pay" depends on the direction of the market in your town. The newspaper may report that prices are moving up or down but every town has multiple markets. Some areas and streets will have foreclosures and short sales, while others have none. It is imperative to get the feel of the neighborhood by looking at all the houses and talking to the neighbors. Of particular importance is the percentage of home owners verses renters as this will have a huge impact on your future sales price.

In today's market, the lack of credit for potential homebuyers has eliminated many retail buyers. There are many people who would like to own a home but cannot qualify for a loan. As credit becomes more available, more buyers will return to the market competing for the existing housing inventory.

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The National Association of Realtors reports that the amount of inventory is dropping as not enough new homes are being built to meet the demand. Also, many older homes are becoming unattractive to the market. This is especially true in the Northeast and Midwest as the older housing stock has tremendous deferred maintenance, while real estate taxes and insurance tend to go up! Investors need to do their due diligence especially in regard to a future exit plan of the property. Always think in these terms: who can I sell this house to for more money than I am paying?



Short Sale and Foreclosures are all Cash Sales!

A distressed sale, a foreclosure or a short sale is not sold at market price. Often the house being sold is in poor condition with deferred maintenance and extensive repairs.

Foreclosures and short sales are all cash sales. However, when a street only has distressed sales, then the perception is that all houses have dropped in value. When the distressed inventory is gone, the prices of good houses in good condition will return to normal.

To learn more about investing in distressed real estate request my FREE course [CLICK HERE](#)

Normal Returns on Investment (ROI)

In a normal market, a buyer of an investment house might expect a net return from rents in the 4-7% range. In a distressed market, houses sell for less and the net return from rentals is higher. Today in many markets, you can make 8-12% net return based on today's distressed prices. This is not normal and is only possible because of the bargain prices, not high rents.

The rental market is less volatile than the sales market. Rents did drop, but not as much as prices in hard hit markets. Rents are now recovering, and the rental market is likely to remain strong because of the large numbers of potential buyers who are renting today due to their lack of credit or dependable income. In Georgia we are experiencing strong rental demand.

You should know the trends in the job market and the rental market in your town. When jobs and tenants are disappearing, you might make your best deals, but it is a scary time to buy. When the job and rental market show signs of improvement, you may have missed the bottom of the market, but there will still be plenty of good deals. It's much safer to buy when you know that you can find a good tenant than when you are uncertain about your ability to rent.

You don't want to lower your standards and rent to a marginal tenant. In a soft market, drop your rents to attract (or maybe steal) a good tenant.

Three Ways To Evaluate A House Before You Make An Offer

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Fair market value is the price that a willing buyer will pay a willing seller in an arm's length transaction. Of course the credit market has a lot to do with how much a buyer will pay. When the credit is freely available, prices will be higher than in a tight credit market.

1. Market Sales – Current sales are the primary source of establishing value in a residential appraisal in a normal market. If the market is heavily loaded with distressed sales, then you actually have two markets. There is a market for distressed sales and another for sales of non-distressed (in good condition both physically and financially) houses.

Non-distressed sales can be few and far between. In a typical market, a distressed sale would not be considered as a comparable for a well-maintained house solve in an arm's length transaction. Today in some markets, distressed sales are a majority of the sales making it difficult for an appraiser to find good real comps.

When Determining What To Offer, Look For The Trend In A Neighborhood

When looking for trends in neighborhood house prices, the challenge is finding houses that are "equal." Every house has a unique lot, design, features, neighbors, and has been cared for differently.

The best way I know to compare values in a neighborhood is to compare sales of the same house, accounting for renovations, if any, and changes in the neighborhood.

Appraisers have to produce an appraisal report in a few hours, so they rely heavily on sales figures from public records. Although they try to find comparable properties, they can't take the time to drive every street, and research every property to see if it is indeed a lot like the house that they are trying to appraise.



Look For Signs of Improving Streets and Neighborhoods

When you acquire a distressed property, the next step is to fix it. We have purchased and renovated a number of houses in the last thirty years.

Look for streets where others are fixing up houses to rent or to sell. The average sale price will climb dramatically on these streets in a short time.

Pay Attention To The Financial State Of The Owners

Are there a lot of Realtor signs advertising short sales (or just a lot of signs)? Short sales and foreclosures are an indication of the amount of debt (too much) on the properties. These properties will sell below the market, depressing the prices for a while. If you are buying on this street, calculate your best offer, and then reduce it by another 20%.

Look for Long Term Residents

One fun part about walking through neighborhoods and talking to the owners is finding someone who has lived in the same house for many years and knows the history and all about the current residents. We actually knock on the doors of houses next to the ones we offer on to talk to the local residents to increase our knowledge of the area. Many times the neighbors give us valuable information about the house we are attempting to buy and the local "make up" of residents on the street. You would be amazed at what we find out about and it certainly will impact our decision whether to move forward or back off. One of the best contractors I have used over the last several years came about as a result of knocking on a the neighbor's door of the house I was buying.

A lot of long-term residents on a given street speak well of a neighborhood. Neighborhoods can go downhill, even with long-term owners, but I'd prefer to own in a neighborhood where people want to stay, not in one where they want to get out. Talking to people will give you the inside track on what is happening on a street.

2. The Income Approach

Another approach used to establish a property's value is the income approach. Although with residential, this approach is typically given less weight today. It can help you establish what to pay for a house.

Houses are unique among income producing real estate. Some property has only an investment value. The only reason you would buy a commercial or industrial building is to generate an income, so their value is primarily based

on income. A lower income results in a lower value.

A house has value separate from its income. A house is valuable to a user, and often this value is higher than the value it has as a producer of income.

In a "normal" market, a median priced house will rent for enough to give an investor 4-7% return. This is the return after expenses, but before income taxes. This also disregards the effect of leverage. When you finance part of your purchase, then your rate of return will be amplified. In order to compare apples to apples, compare incomes as if the houses were free and clear.

When you can buy a house that will give you a much higher return than 4-7%, then you have reinforcement that you are buying at a bargain price. Of course less expensive houses often produce more gross cash flow, but may also attract higher maintenance tenants, which leads to higher maintenance costs. Be careful to compare houses in the same general price range when comparing net incomes.

3. The Reproduction Cost Approach

A third way to determine value is to calculate what it would cost to reproduce a property. Of course a reproduced house would be new, so an adjustment for depreciation (actual) would be used to adjust the value of an older house.

In the price range that most of us buy houses for investment, the cost of construction would be in a fairly tight range. Different construction materials, block or brick instead of frame might have an impact on both cost and marketability. Some builders have good reputations for building quality houses and others build as cheaply as possible. These factors affect the long-term maintenance cost of a house and its value today.

The part of the cost that is less consistent is the cost of not just the land, but also the site preparation. If a lot is low, it may require tens of thousands of dollars in fill, compacting and grading before you can build. Likewise if drainage is an issue, you can spend an extraordinary amount installing a septic system. Additionally, if you don't have access to a central water system, the well can be a big expense. These items can be expensive, but add little value to the house, as every house needs working plumbing and a building pad. Landscaping is not a big factor when buying a rental, but it can be expensive. Put little value on landscaping and site improvements.

To learn more about investing in distressed real estate request my FREE course [CLICK HERE](#)

In today's market the reproduction cost approach to determining value is very important. If you are buying in an emerging market, and surely that is the best market to buy in; than this approach will tell the whole story. It's hard to buy land and put all the improvements in for a property at less than \$100 per square foot. It can be done, but with the cost of impact fees going up as well as the cost of building materials, it is unlikely. Especially looking forward.



**Recently acquired property: 310 Forest Brook Dr.
\$85,000 / 1,800 square feet = \$47.22 per square foot**

Recently acquired property: 310 Forest Brook Dr.

\$85,000 / 1,800 square feet = \$47.22 per square foot

In a rising market, the market approach has advantages over the other two. Rents will lag behind price increases so the income approach will be low. And existing ready to move into houses will sell for a premium over a house to be built, so your houses will be worth more than reproduction costs.

In a falling market, the income approach is a good gauge. If you can buy a house and get an 8-10% return on your money when banks

are paying a fraction of that, it's a good deal. Combine that with the opportunity to buy with a low interest rate and you have a license to steal.

Your Perception of the Future Will Influence Your Offer

As your perception of your market will influence how much you offer, the seller's perception of the future will influence how he responds to your offer. Find a seller who thinks the market is still going down and your chances

of making a good deal go up. The public is always a day late when it comes to recognizing the top or bottom of a market.

In this market, the majority of sellers are asset managers for REO owners. It's impossible to get seller's financing from them. From these seller it's strictly a cash deal and you may be better off financing these properties at a later date.

However, what's wrong with a safe yield of 8% or higher with the potential for a huge upside in values? Free and clear houses add safety to your portfolio and many retirement plans have been built around free and clear houses.

If you have your money sitting on the sidelines, it's time to reinvest in the good old USA.

You can do it for yourself or find a professional in the business to do it for you.

It's never been easier to buy a bargain house in the United States. But where you buy, is every bit as important as to what you buy.

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Canadians in Argentina: The Best of Both Worlds

By Kate Kirby / May 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



One of many Lakes

One of the great things about San Rafael, in Argentina, is the interesting range of people who live or spend some of the year here. Our neighbours in Rama Caida, just outside the town, fall into the latter category. They both work for the largest Canadian Union – Rhonda is the International Officer and Stephen is Director of Communications. Sitting over coffee in their beautiful garden last week I talked to them about their reasons for coming here.

KK: You presently live in Ottawa because of your work but your permanent base is in Vancouver. From western Canada to San Rafael -it is not exactly a well beaten path – how did you end up in Rama Caida?

RS: We always wanted to travel in Argentina and made our first trip here in 2006, when we went from the top to the bottom of the country. It really appealed to me in terms of the culture and everything and I remember saying to Stephen "I think I could live there."

SH: We love Vancouver in the spring and summer but the winters are long and very wet.

KK: Right, so the weather was a big factor?

RS: Definitely. We love Mexico and have spent a lot of time there. We actually talked for twenty years about buying a place there but in the end we decided it was too hot for a long stay.

SH: We have travelled in a lot of South American countries. One thing that struck us was that the infrastructure here is comparatively good – the roads, the transport systems and so on.

KK: I see, so tell me more about how you came to San Rafael – were you tempted by other areas of Argentina?

RS: On our first trip we really liked Mendoza and in 2007 we came back and spent some time travelling south from Mendoza city down to Bariloche. We had done some research in Canada about the area and San Rafael sounded really appealing.

KK: You both speak some Castellaño but you wouldn't describe yourselves as fluent. Was the fact that there is a lot of information on the internet about San Rafael in English a part of your decision?

SH: Yes, it definitely was. We actually found our house through [Escape Artist](#).

KK: Really, I hadn't realised that. So what were the things that attracted you about San Rafael?

RS: We liked the size. Mendoza is a bit big and the areas on the outskirts are a bit like the suburbs of a Canadian city. San Rafael has all the facilities you need but it still has a compact feel and there is easy access to all sorts of nice little places.

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KK: Yes, there is plenty to do here for visitors.

RS: We liked the dry climate and the fact that it is a fruit growing area.

KK: Okay so you researched all that before you came, then you arrived and presumably found you liked the actual place – how was that trip, did you visit many properties?

SH: No not many, we spent one day looking around but as I said we had already seen this place on [Escape Artist](#) and were interested in it.

RS: Obviously the garden was the big attraction although when we bought it was run down and needed a lot of work.

KK: Yes the garden is stunning – and hugeYour property could be described as a garden with a house rather than the other way around!

SH: Yes, and it needs a LOT of maintenance!

KK: That brings me to my next question – given that you are only able to use the house for a few holidays a year – what made you decide to buy rather than rent?

RS: That was a bit weird, we have travelled a lot, all over the world, and yes we would normally rent apartments or houses, but this was different somehow, it is hard to explain, something to do with the light...we just wanted something more permanent.

KK: San Rafael seduced you!

SH: Yes! And we wanted to be a bit more a part of the place, not just tourists passing through.

KK: I can understand that, and you are very much part of this community despite the fact that you are not here all the time.

You both have high pressured jobs in Canada, do you see yourselves being able to spend longer periods here in the future and do some of your work remotely?

RS: In the short term that isn't really going to be possible though we did initially hope to be able to do that. My job is very intense and involves a lot of travelling, also to be honest at the moment the internet provision here isn't good enough for us to be able to rely on it.

SH: It is one element of the infrastructure here that really lags behind .

KK: Well I certainly endorse that! Talking of politicians – you are both very involved in politics in Canada; do you have any involvement here?

SH: No, that wouldn't really be appropriate as we are not Argentine. We are interested in understanding the political scene. In the future we might become involved in some volunteer work as a way to contribute to the community.

KK: My perception of Canada is that it is a very efficient, egalitarian country. With the best will in the world Argentina couldn't be described in those terms! What are your impressions of how things work here?

SH: It seems to us that the basic amenities are okay here, the trash is collected twice a week, public transport is pretty good and relatively cheap and so on. It is true that some things are very bureaucratic and inefficient and that takes a bit of getting used to. For example I went in to pay my car tax the other day and found that I owed money for the last two years but I was completely unaware of that – they never sent me any bills. And yes there are minor irritations like the endless lines at the bank but when we come here we are on vacation so it's not that big a deal to us.

RS: And you know there are problems everywhere and public services are under threat even in highly developed countries. One thing we like about Argentina is that the income disparity between the affluent and the poorer people is less than in most other Latin American countries – that is our impression anyway. The fact that Argentina still has its own manufacturing base is a big strength – it has maintained its own ability to produce goods.

SH: Efficiency isn't always everything anyway. We like the fact that here the “big box stores” are not as widespread and that we can do virtually all our shopping at the local neighbourhood shops which are all family owned and run.

KK: I definitely agree with that although there are times when I fantasise about being able to go to a hardware

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superstore!

Have you had any experience of the medical services here?

RS: Yes we had to take our granddaughter to the medic when she was staying with us and it was absolutely fine – we didn't have to wait long and the doctor was good.

KK: That's great to hear. Is there anything else you like about the lifestyle here?

SH: It generally seems very laid back and family orientated. We love watching people on Sundays – the way they pile their car roofs with tables and chairs and head off out of the city, often just to sit with their families and drink mate and chat – just being together seems important.

KK: That is very true.

SH: And the food is superb. We love the vegetables.

KK: That's not what people usually think of in terms of Argentine food!

SH: Well yes, the meat is obviously fantastic, everyone knows that, but the variety and freshness of the vegetables are a real treat.

KK: So, can you tell us about what do you do when you are here?

RS: Not a lot! We did all the tourist things the first few times we came. Now we like to visit the odd winery, Stephen plays golf and I really enjoy being in the garden, swimming reading and so on. We sometimes make a trip somewhere, and we have had quite a few friends staying with us.

SH: We actually really enjoy the maintenance and the gardening. We live in an apartment in Ottawa at the moment so we love having the space here and just puttering around.

KK: Sounds idyllic! Are there any downsides to having a vacation home so far away?

RS: At the moment I am travelling a lot for work so the long journey down here is a bit of a nuisance, but really it is not a big deal as we are used to travelling. The main issue is that I changed jobs just after we bought the house. Previously we could have come for four to six weeks at a time but now it's only two which always feels very short.

SH: There is always the odd surprise that you can't do anything about – such as the big storm a year ago that blew down several of our trees. We were here at the time but if that had happened when we were in Canada it would have been hard to deal with long distance. Fortunately we have a local family who look after the place and they are fantastic caretakers so we don't have to worry too much.

KK: And what are your future plans – would you consider living here permanently?

RS: No that is not an option as we have family commitments in Canada but the ideal would be to spend four to six months of the year here when we retire.

KK: Good, I will look forward to that!

About the author: Kate Kirby is a mother, partner, ardent foodie and artist. Originally from Scotland, she has lived with her family near San Rafael in Argentina for three years. In her former life she worked as a cook, a teacher, a cleaner...anything to keep the wolf from the studio door. For more information on her painting and the art holidays she runs in San Rafael please see her website: www.kate-kirby.com

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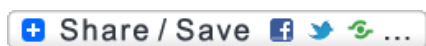
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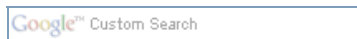
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Visit Argentina for GOOD!

By Escapeartist Staff / May 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



At Escapeartist, we provide you with the most up to date facts about Argentina. We are your direct and personal travel and investment advisors for Argentina. It is our goal to help open your eyes to a new and exciting world of investment opportunity. This information will help to provide you with the necessary tools and resources to create sound business and personal decisions. In order to do business in Argentina, you have to understand the culture which is why Escapeartist offers accurate and fact-checked information that will bring you one step closer to understanding everything there is to know about life

and business and investment in Argentina.

OK,let's face it...the quality of life just isn't the same as it used to be. So why should you continue to pay outrageous prices and taxes when you can soak up all of the sophistication and fun that Argentina has to offer. Whether you want to hear the thunderous crashing of water at Iguazu Falls, or wake up drinking coffee while overlooking the exquisite Seven-Colors Mountain, or simply live in one of the most vibrant cities in the world, Buenos Aires, you can live the life that you have always wanted to. The bottom line is that Argentina offers an incredible panorama of opportunities at a fraction of the cost you will find elsewhere. If you really want to live like royalty, this is your chance. So let us be your travel and investment advisors for Argentina.

Argentina is known for its delectable meals. There is a heavy influence of European cuisines such as French, Spanish, German and especially Italian meals. Due to massive immigration movements, Argentina has been blessed with the globalization of their food, making it exceptionally easy to adapt to and able to satiate even the most eclectic tastes. You can find local favorites, such as empanadas, a fried pastry stuffed with meat, or carne asada, where large amounts of meat are grilled over an open fire, or delectably seasoned chorizos. ...and don't forget about the tasty treat, dulce de leche which you can find in almost all of the different pastries. Most of the food made in Argentina is fresh, which gives you that extra quality of being treated like royalty. Argentina is a large producer of meat (from Las Pampas), corn, milk, soybeans, beans and wheat. But even with the wonderful quality of the food, don't be surprised to see many fine restaurants serving some of your favorite meals for just a few dollars.

Geographically, Argentina is one of the largest countries in the world thereby encompassing a wide variety of climatic zones which provides you the opportunity to live in any type of environment that you choose. Whether you want to live in the Mediterranean-like wine country of Mendoza, or settle in the pristine beauty of the Andes Mountains, or live with the penguins in Patagonia, or join in the fast paced life of Buenos Aires, you can do it all in Argentina. Argentina stretches from Bolivia all the way to the tip of South America, sharing most of its border with Chile to the west. Argentina also shares a border with Uruguay and Brazil in the Northeast and Bolivia and Paraguay in the North. The highest point in the country is located at Cerro Aconcagua at 22,841 feet. The lowest point in all of South America is also found in Argentina at the Laguna del Carbón at 344 feet below sea level. With a population of more than 40 million, Argentina is the 4th largest country of Spanish speaking people in the world. Due to foreign presence and cultural exchange, most Argentineans speak English, making the transition for newcomers extremely easy.

Generally speaking, climate or temperature can be an issue for people. In Argentina however, depending on where

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one chooses to live, the climate can range anywhere from subtropical all the way to sub-polar. That's right, for you skiing and winter sports fans, there is snow in South America! Therefore, you never have to miss out on the seasons if this is something that is important to you. You can see the leaves change while walking through Mendoza and you can still go skiing in Bariloche! If you want to stay warm, you can always stay close to the desert area in La Rioja. Just look at the travel guide in Argentina from IGA and we can recommend the best areas for your personal stay. Most people want to live in a comfortable temperate climate. For those people, Buenos Aires is near perfect, with summer to winter temperatures ranging between 50 and 80 degrees on average.

Known as the "European Capital," or "the Paris of South America," Buenos Aires has a certain air of elegance, which is probably why it is called Good (Buenos) Air (Aires). Home to the famous Eva Perón, you will never have to cry for this city. Stepping onto the Plaza de Mayo, you can capture 500 years of grueling yet magnificent history. You can stand in the center where the May Revolution took place for Argentina's independence or where thousands of people listened to Eva Peron's last words. It is a truly magnificent place to experience. Argentina is a center of interest for historians and fashionistas alike, as there are hundreds of museums and shopping centers that you can peruse and explore at your leisure. One can hardly think of shopping in Buenos Aires without Avenida Florida coming to mind as this is where you will find the best shops and discounts in town.

But there is much, much more than just city life. You can get in touch with nature too in this beautiful and majestic country. Argentina definitely does not lack in natural beauty! There are numerous rivers, lakes, waterfalls, deserts, mountain ranges and glaciers that give Argentina a spectacular presence that cannot be mimicked by any other country. You can feel the grandeur and spiritual presence when you visit and live in these incredible areas. Even if you live in the city you will still be able to capture the essence and enjoy the beauty of these areas with just a short drive or bus ride.

It is our desire, our goal, and our commitment to bring you the information and the resources that you need to learn about the latest news and information regarding Argentina. In future updates, we will provide you with travel and investment strategies for Argentina that includes specific information for assisting you in moving and living abroad, as well as meeting your investment objectives. You can continue to invest in Argentina with confidence, becoming either a full or part time resident, all the while soaking in the adventure and elegance that Argentina has to offer you. At the very least, you will be given the knowledge to make an informed choice leading to the best decision regarding your future.

Some of the information that you will find in future updates include:

- Entry Requirements into Argentina – Passports, visas and residency permits.
- Banking – How to set up a bank account and receive loans.
- Healthcare – The costs, quality, requirements and benefits of public and private healthcare.
- Transportation – options for getting around Argentina including how to obtain a drivers license.
- Employment – The advantages and disadvantages of starting a business or finding a job.
- Leisure Time – What to do in Argentina.

Each of these themes will be discussed at length and focus entirely on Argentina. Upon completing this series it is our hope here at Investment Group Argentina that you feel better prepared to make the exciting decision of joining the expat lifestyle. Argentina is an exuberating and lively country full of such immense geographical and cultural diversity that it must be explored to be fully appreciated. So, come! ...and let Escapeartist be your travel and investment advisors as you explore Argentina first-hand.

If you would like additional information about investing and living in the wonderful land of Argentina, please [CLICK HERE](#).

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Ten Interesting Facts about Living in Argentina

By Kate Kirby / May 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



speciality shop - nothing but cleaning products for sale

It is easy enough to find out the [basic facts about a country](#) if you are thinking about living abroad – the average cost of living, crime rate, systems of health and education – all those are relatively easily accessible. What is harder to research are the small things that make one country so different from another – those little things that can either make you mad or make you laugh but which definitely contribute to the whole rich experience of living as an ex-pat. So, in no particular order here are my observations on some of the idiosyncrasies of life in Argentina.

1. Speciality Shops

One of the things that surprised me most when I first came here was the sheer quantity of shops

and the fact that they are so specialised. For example in the UK I would have been able to buy diapers, medicines, cosmetics and much more under one roof, whereas here there are separate tiny stores selling nothing but diapers, or nothing but make up or whatever. There are a few small supermarkets which have a range of things but the choice is very limited. You cannot buy many food items in the supermarkets either and have to go to a "dietetica" (a health food store) for things like spices, nuts and seeds or dried fruit.

The fact that there is no one huge mega store monopolising everything has its charming side and it is a pleasant way of shopping if you have time at your disposal. People in general are extremely courteous and nice, and everyday transactions are always enjoyable on a human level. If however, like me, you are always in a raging hurry, it can be slightly irritating to have to race around five shops instead of one. Especially as, despite the super abundance of all these little shops, there always seem to be lengthy queues – no doubt because the serving person is having a courteous and protracted conversation with each and every customer!

Another thing that causes delays is that in many shops there are several counters – at one you choose your goods and receive a receipt, and then you have to go to another counter to actually pay for them. In some places you then have to return to the original counter in order to collect your stuff – after showing your second receipt to show you have paid. When you repeat this process at a few shops the time flies by and you can easily find the morning gone with the surface of your "to do list" barely scratched.

2. School Uniforms

As a devoted but fairly scatty mum I was horrified to discover that the school uniform here consists of a white overall worn over normal clothes. The uniform is standard right across the country in the public school system although the private schools have their own. I believe it was introduced by Peron to reinforce the Nations' sense of identity.

All well and good, but white? White! In one of the dustiest places on the planet! We live in San Rafael which is literally an oasis in the middle of the desert. The climate is great on the whole but we get frequent strong winds which regularly dump what appear to be tons of dust. I have long since given up on the ideal of an immaculate

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house and surrendered to the fact that dust – dry “clean” dust you understand – is an inevitable part of our life.

Which is why I am astonished on a daily basis when I see the gleaming white overalls worn by the kids at my son's school. He himself is adept at creating mess wherever he goes – he can't entirely help it, he has my genes – and already, four weeks into the school year, his overalls are starting to look bedraggled and grimy. Those of his peers however look like an advert for some shiny new washing powder despite the fact that we live in a rural, fairly poor area and the majority of people don't have washing machines.

I suppose I should feel ashamed but I don't as apart from the fact that I have other things to do apart from endless scrubbing and bleaching I don't want to pour any more chemicals than are strictly necessary into our antiquated sceptic tank. So that is my excuse and my son will just have to look scruffy until he is old enough to do the laundry himself or they change the uniform to a more practical colour – like brown!



a family of three with one safety helmet between them

barely one working light at either end – lurch along unimpeded.

My husband's truck falls into the latter category and I am not in the least proud to admit that at times nothing seems to work on it whatsoever, apart from the wheels and the engine. Yet despite the fact that he gets regular parking tickets in town he has never been called to account for the less than road- worthy condition of his vehicle. Which brings me to.....

4. Health and safety

In the UK the concept of health and safety has been taken to laughable extremes in recent years. I could give numerous examples of officialdom interfering in situations where common sense used to prevail, such as when they removed a much loved wooden rocking horse from the children's section of our local bookshop on the grounds of Health and Safety.....no one had ever fallen off it and no young children went there unaccompanied, but still it was DANGEROUS!

In Argentina however this mentality simply does not exist. The idea that the State might interfere in matters of personal comfort and safety appears to be completely alien. I was struck on arrival here by the wide concrete ditches that run alongside the roads carrying a foot or more of fast flowing water. These mini canals are bridged every few feet by concrete paths. Any child that fell in and got swept along would stand a good chance of bashing their head on one of these. When I remarked on how dangerous this was to an acquaintance she laughed airily “well who hasn't fallen in when they were a kid?”

I must admit that three years later I worry less about this and similar issues – children do seem to adapt to the risks around them in a way that is perhaps ironically healthier than being wrapped in the proverbial cotton wool, which tends to happen in more H. & S. conscious cultures.

However I do still come out in a cold sweat sometimes when I see people riding their bikes through busy traffic with small children perched on the handlebars or standing up on the rim of the back wheel. Likewise you will often see young babies travelling on motorbikes – propped up front by their proud parents and of course wearing no helmet.

This cavalier approach to life is widespread. After a big storm last year there were many fallen trees and it was quite agonising to watch people teetering around on the feeblest of ladders to remove branches from the electricity cables.

5. Everything is sold by the kilo!

3. Arbitrary application of laws...

The police here seem to uphold the law in an arbitrary way. For example it is illegal to have a child under the age of twelve in the front seat of a car. My transport is my trusty bicycle, but friends have told me that they have been stopped and reprimanded for driving with their child securely belted in beside them while in the other lane a family of three or more chunter blithely past on a single moped with maybe one safety helmet between them.

Likewise tourists in their safe, reliable rental cars are routinely stopped for the offense of not having their lights on (obligatory at all times) – while rust- buckets held together with string, with

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When I still had my British H.&S. attitude firmly in place I practically died of shock when we visited one of the many tiny shops which sell only cleaning products and equipment. Rows and rows of used soda bottles lined the shelves, full of toxically bright, colourful solvents, detergents and bleaches. Not a child proof bottle top in sight! I shuddered and was grateful that at that point my son had shown a distinct aversion to the fizzy drinks so popular here.

More or less everything is sold by the kilo or the litre. In our local grocery you have to take along your own container if you want to buy cream or honey and so on. In dieteticas they have huge transparent sacks of dry food which they weigh out in scoops. I am all in favour of anything that dispenses with the extra packaging that causes so much pollution – however it can be annoying when you buy crisps or cereals and get home to find they are inevitably soggy.

Even firewood is sold by weight rather than volume and my husband often gets asked for the price per kilo of the alfalfa rolls he makes.



birthday cake - topped by candles and often an indoor firework

6. Parties

The dieteticas do good business catering to the party market. One thing you can't help being struck by here is how everyone loves to celebrate. Any event will do but it is mostly birthdays that are given the all-star treatment, and that holds especially true for children's parties. A typical party here features: a bouncy castle, a huge lengthy table groaning with ritual party food: mini pizzas, sandwiches, bowls and bowls of violently coloured crispy crunchy snacks, and of course the inevitable cake. This will invariably be oblong, with four or five layers of thin sponge sandwiched together with different fillings such as dulce de leche, fruit, cream, ice

cream and any combination of those. The whole thing will be smothered with incredibly sweet, sticky icing. It will be topped by candles and often an indoor firework which shoots out a spectacular plume of fire while everyone sings Happy Birthday.

There are no party games such as "[Pass the Parcel](#)" or "[Musical Chairs](#)", rather there will be hours of playing on the bouncy castle while the grown-ups steadily eat their way through the party food. Eventually there will be a [piñata](#) and party bags. We have been to many parties since moving here and they have all followed the same pattern. The main thing that struck me at first was the length – three hours minimum and they often go on for much longer.

I was puzzled for a while about how spick and span people here look most of the time (not just in school uniform!) Then I realised that the customary birthday gift is an item of clothing, and when a child has a party ALL their relatives get invited, not to mention their entire class from school. So it is no wonder children look like they are wearing new clothes every day – they are! I have to say my son isn't at all impressed with this policy and getting him to look pleased and grateful as he opens his twelfth present to find yet another tee shirt is a challenge.

7. Holidays, holidays and more holidays.

Argentina must come pretty high up in the list of how many public holidays a country has. There are the Saints' days which are observed in all Catholic countries but also many historical dates are celebrated with a day off work – the Day of Independence and so on. San Martin, the great Argentine hero has at least three days to his name. Last week we had two days off to remember the "disappeared" from the period of the military dictatorship.

There are also numerous days "of" so and so. For example there is the Day of the child, Day of the family, Day of animals, Day of the worker as well as more specific profession- based "days" – teachers, shop workers, bank clerks, farmers etc all have their designated days. Not all of these are holidays but many of them are.

In some ways it is great to have lots of days off but as a parent it can become a bit annoying when it seems like almost every week there is holiday – especially as so far I have been unable to find a comprehensive list of these dates so it usually comes as a complete surprise to me when the teacher casually mentions that there are no classes the next day.

8. Transport

As a train lover it saddens me to pass the empty rail tracks and derelict stations around here. Up until a few

decades ago there was a working train network throughout the country, now they only function around Buenos Aires and in some tourist areas. It is a great pity because Argentine produce – beef, wine, fruit and so on, is ideally suited to being transported by train, and vast swathes of the country are flat so it would be more economical and better for the environment if they could still be moved that way. Instead the roads, many of them in a poor state of repair, are full of overloaded fume-belching trucks.

From a passenger's point of view a long distance train journey across the Pampas must have been quite an experience. Of course many people prefer flying these days. There is an extensive network of domestic flights within Argentina but it has its flaws. The foremost irritation is the fact that there are no direct flights connecting the provinces – if you want to fly from one end of the country to the other you have to go via Buenos Aires. The daily connection we have here with the capital is not entirely reliable – it is apt to be cancelled or postponed with no warning.

The good news is that the country has one of the best long distance bus systems in the world. I was sceptical about this at first having had truly horrible experiences of 24 hour bus travel in Europe, but after my first journey I was well and truly converted. The buses are extremely comfortable. They travel overnight between here and Buenos Aires so you make good use of your time as you sleep on board. Surprisingly, despite the fact that time-keeping is a very low priority for the majority of the Argentine population, buses both long distance and local do seem miraculously punctual.

9. Dogs

Did you know that if you want to live in Argentina you have to possess a minimum of three dogs? Okay I am joking, but only just. Walking down an average street anywhere in the country you would be forgiven for presuming that a love of our furry friends is compulsory. Dogs here are treated differently from in the UK. Very rarely do you see them being walked – apart from in city centres where the majority of people live in apartments. In Buenos Aires you do see dog walkers with ten or fifteen dogs on leads but in our rural area people keep them in their gardens or yards primarily as guard dogs, and they get their exercise from tearing around crazily in those confined spaces.

Before we moved here I was beset by worries of all shapes and sizes about the unknown – nearly all of which were completely unfounded. One of my nightmares was that there would be packs of savage wild dogs roaming the streets. There are some strays around but so far I haven't come across any really aggressive ones. Dogs with homes, good or otherwise, are naturally territorial and will make a show of chasing you if you come too near the entrance of THEIR property, but it is generally all theatre and you very rarely hear of anyone being actually bitten.

I was never particularly fond of dogs but, as in so many other ways, moving here has changed me. Now we have two and they are quite a handful, full of energy and the joys of life. They are excellent pets for my son and they look quite ferocious which is good even though they are really big softies at heart. The only downside is the symphony of barking that goes on at night time as the neighbourhood hounds compare their days!

10. Kiss kiss!

Kissing is the standard form of greeting here. As an up-tight foreigner trying to fit in I used to be concerned about the exact etiquette – who do you kiss, how many times and so on. For instance if you meet a slight acquaintance in the street with her family, obviously you kiss her, but do you also kiss the three kids and baby? I used to study peoples' body language, looking for that slight sway forward that indicated that I too should lean forward and kiss, at least once, often twice.

Now I just live by the policy of: "When in doubt, Kiss." Thus in any typical day I may kiss the school teacher, my neighbours, the gas man....for me the most disconcerting time was discovering it was the "done thing" to kiss your gynaecologist – somehow that just doesn't seem right!

At parties the usual thing is to make a round of quick kisses and hellos when you arrive, introducing yourself to those you don't know. As a shy person I initially found this quite awkward but now I like the ritual and find that to break the ice in this formalised way makes it easier to go back and talk to people.

Of course kissing is not just for saying hello but also for bidding farewell. The length of time between these two smackeros has also caused me some farcical angst. If you are at a large gathering and haven't spoken to everyone apart from your initial greeting do you then have to go round again kissing good bye? When you stop and speak to your neighbour for five minutes do you kiss again on leaving? Do you kiss the teacher after talking to her briefly about your child? The answer has to be yes, yes and yes, on both cheeks!

About the author: Kate Kirby is a mother, partner, ardent foodie and artist. Originally from Scotland, she has lived with her family near San Rafael in Argentina for three years. In her former life she worked as a cook, a teacher, a cleaner...anything to keep the wolf from the studio door. For more information on her painting and the art

holidays she runs in San Rafael please see her website: www.kate-kirby.com

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By Ken Harper / May 11 • Categorized as [International Real Estate](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



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Looking for a real estate investment, retirement home, a second vacation home where the air is pure, free from pollutants, the mean temperature is 75 degrees Fahrenheit year around, gorgeous views of a beautiful lush green rainforest river valley overlooking a lake and a horizon view of the Pacific Ocean stretching from the big Island of Boca Brava for over a 100 miles of coastline to the border of Costa Rica? LOOK NO FURTHER, BELLA VISTA DEL MUNDO, Chiriqui, Rep. of Panama offers all the above and more!!!

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in the mountains that divide the Caribbean coastline from the Pacific coastline. The mountain resort is located just one mile off the main highway from the interamericana (Pan American Highway) at the small Pueblo Chiriqui going north to the Province and islands of Bocas Del Toro. Please visit our web site for more information concerning location at www.bellavistadelmundo.com. One can swim in the Pacific Ocean in the morning and swim in the Caribbean in the afternoon and be back in the coolness of the highlands in the evening at Bella Vista Del Mundo.

Bella Vista Del Mundo is no ordinary residential mountain community! This new development will have for the use of the community a 36 room Boutique Hotel and Spa. The social area will encompass facilities for exercising, swimming pools, first class spa for massage and a salon for the ladies, along with a bar and restaurant for the residents of the community. Horizonte Hotel and Spa is located within the Development and will have the amenities and the attractions that come with a Mountain resort, as well as a food market located within the Hotel itself.

In addition to the spa facilities available on sight will be horse rentals for riding to explore the rain forest fauna and the river Esti and its numerous waterfalls as it descends to the beautiful lake below. For those that prefer engine driven available on site will be four wheels off the road vehicles for the mountain trails or mountain bikes for those that are a bit more energetic. Hiking trails to the waterfalls are on site and waiting for you to explore the beautiful countryside of Belle Vista Del Mundo. Just north of the community is the Fortuna National Forest where you can find birds and animal life throughout- a naturalist haven, unexplored in all its natural beauty.



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2. **Villa Valencia** is for the individual who is impressed with the style of *Villa Marbella* but prefers a much less expensive home. *Villa Valencia* is built with economy in mind but preserving the quality and style that one deserves. The model is the least expensive. The pre-construction price on this unit is only \$119,000.00. Buy now and preserve your bargain basement price!

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4. **Texas Rancho** is designed for the individual who enjoys the mountain range, horseback riding and cows in the pasture. A truly magnificent home that brings the outdoors indoors with its vaulted ceiling and windows which allows one to enjoy the surrounding views of Mother Nature. \$249,000.00

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6. **Villa Bali** is exotic, spiritual and tranquil as you spend your days relaxing around the pool with a close up view of the waterfall overlooking the River Esti residing in our Bali Neighborhood. The vaulted ceilings and interior workmanship makes this villa a bargain at \$179,000.00.

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Should you need further information, please email keharper50@aol.com. looking forward to showing you the property on your next trip to Panama!

Thanks,

Ken E. Harper
Bella Vista Del Mundo
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Wilderness Medicine: Prepare Yourself for Living Abroad

By R. Bryan Simon, RN, CNOR, FAWM / May 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Bryan and Deb Simon - Why not be prepared?

So you want to 'live where you want to live and live how you want to live,' but are worried about the uncertainties of a home abroad? Moving overseas is an exciting and adventurous decision but also one that comes with many concerns. One of the chief worries that many have with living full time in another country is access to adequate health care. Some of these apprehensions can be alleviated by gaining basic medical skills that will help prepare you for any health crisis that you may face while enjoying your piece of paradise, wherever on the globe that may be.

Why?

While researching prospective countries medical systems is crucial in preparing for your move, educating yourself in first aid and other basic medical skills can bring peace of mind. After all, if you are willing to pick up and move to the other side of the Earth than most likely you have the independence and 'can do' attitude to prepare for any eventuality that may arise.

Having lived abroad for extended periods throughout my life I have often been confronted with non-emergency self-care situations. A perfect example occurred while riding down the Amazon River on a local ferry. While attempting to open a can of peaches, I cut my finger rather deeply. As there were no medical facilities on the boat, I used my own first aid kit to staunch the bleeding, clean the wound, and dress it until we reached Manaus, where I promptly received three stitches from a very nice and professional doctor. While not an emergency, knowing that I had the knowledge to care for myself in a variety of situations allowed the freedom to explore off the beaten path. Accidents happen to us all, but with knowledge and preparation, we can care for ourselves until able to reach proper medical facilities.

A second, but equally compelling reason for educating yourself medically is the chance of natural disasters throughout the world. We have just witnessed the earthquake, tsunami, and subsequent nuclear disaster in Japan. This technologically advanced nation struggled for weeks to provide the care needed to its citizens. The recent tornadoes in the southeast United States are yet another example of how quickly mother-nature can turn paradise into chaos. Why not be prepared?

Learning the Basics.

An education in rudimentary first aid is a great start for anyone with concerns about health facilities and access while living overseas. There are many organizations that provide basic courses for a small fee. The American Red Cross offers cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and basic first aid courses to the general public. The CPR course focuses on resuscitation in case of cardiac or respiratory arrest. The First Aid course discusses some common household emergencies to include heat and cold injuries, cuts and scrapes, as well as muscle and bone

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injuries. These courses cost little, usually between \$35 and \$65 and are a great place to start your personal medical education. Visit www.redcross.org for more details and to find a local chapter for course schedules and locations.

Another provider of quality basic medical education is the American Heart Association (AHA). This organization provides classes to the public with a focus on CPR. There is even a study at home option that is available for those who do not need or care to have a certification card. This home study course costs only \$35. The group course varies based upon location but is generally very affordable. For more information regarding the courses offered by the American Heart Association, please visit their website at www.heart.org or contact a local provider.

What is Wilderness Medicine?

Know the basics and want more information? There are many more challenging and in-depth courses available that address various medical issues that can arise while living and traveling abroad. Wilderness medicine is a developing field that focuses on providing care in limited resource environments. This is often defined by the time it takes to reach definitive medical care, often calculated at between one and two hours. There are many rural locations within the United States and abroad that fall within this definition.

One of the basic tenets of wilderness medicine is to improvise and use whatever equipment is available to care for the sick or injured. This translates easily to living overseas where medical facilities and infrastructure may not be as robust as here in the United States. You may not have access to a well-stocked local drug store and the importance of a first aid kit, accompanied by the know-how of wilderness medicine, and use of common household items such as safety pins, clothing, and tape may make the difference when responding to an emergency.

Within the larger scope of wilderness medicine there are a large variety of topics that are applicable to overseas living whether you plan to reside at a quiet villa in Italy, a home on the coast in Thailand, or a retreat in the highlands of Panama. Topics range from exposure to environmental extremes and treatment of traumatic injuries to disinfection of water supplies and identification of edible and medicinal plants. Some courses focus on a particular aspect of adventure travel or sports such as diving injuries or altitude illness. A topic that is universally included in these courses is the stocking of a first aid kit and how to use a variety of items to care for you and your loved ones.

How can I learn more?

There are many organizations that teach various aspects of wilderness medicine. While some are non-profits, the majority of companies are for profit entities whose main focus is instruction in the field. The two most common courses for the individual seeking a foundation of knowledge are the Wilderness First Aid and Advanced Wilderness First Aid courses. These programs are generally taught on a weekend and include 16 hours of instruction with time outdoors practicing techniques. The next step up in training is the Wilderness First Responder course. This course is a week in duration and includes a CPR certification. While geared primarily for instructors and guides for outdoor companies and summer camp counselors, the information is definitely applicable to anyone planning to live overseas and has more hands-on practice time than the weekend first aid courses.

Some of the organizations that offer training include the Wilderness Medicine Institute of the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), Wilderness Medical Associates (WMA), and Stonehearth Outdoor Learning Opportunities (SOLO). Two non-profit organizations where you can learn more about wilderness medicine include the Wilderness Medical Society (WMS) and the Appalachian Center for Wilderness Medicine (ACWM). There are also books available from a number of resources that cover the topic and allow for home study of techniques.

Conclusion.

A study of basic first aid and wilderness medicine is worthwhile for those considering a move abroad. A small amount of instruction in this field can provide the training necessary to care for loved ones and insure their safety and health while providing peace of mind. As Benjamin Franklin so aptly put it, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

About the author: R. Bryan Simon, RN, CNOR, FAWM, a former US Army infantry officer and Army Ranger, is an active lecturer, author, and instructor of various facets of wilderness medicine both within the United States and overseas. He and his wife travel extensively in remote and wilderness areas around the world and he has acted as a consultant to outdoor guiding companies, participated in rescues both here and abroad, and currently serves a Board Chair of the Appalachian Center for Wilderness Medicine (<http://www.appwildmed.org>).

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