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Expat Financial Forecasting Tools

By Harry S. Dent, Jr. - (0)

Over the last year we have looked at a number of potential scenarios for the topping of stocks long term in line with our Spending Wave peak from the massive Baby Boom Generation and how the stock markets could play out into a likely major bottom by mid- to late 2012 within the Decennial Cycle...



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Mutiny in America: Ditchin' America for Bitchin' Mexico

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By David Cummings - (0)

As some of you who have read a few of my previous articles for Escape Artist will know, I own and run Estancia La Margarita...



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Expat Financial Forecasting Tools

By Harry S. Dent, Jr. / Nov 10 • Categorized as [Asset Protection](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Simple and Unique Forecasting Tools at HS Dent

By: Harry S. Dent, Jr., Author of *The Great Depression Ahead (2008)*, *The Roaring 2000s (1998)*, *The Great Boom Ahead (1993)*, and Publisher of *The HS Dent Economic Forecast Newsletter*.

Over the last year we have looked at a number of potential scenarios for the topping of stocks long term in line with our Spending Wave peak from the massive Baby Boom Generation and how the stock markets could play out into a likely major bottom by mid- to late 2012 within the Decennial Cycle. Ned Davis was the first to document this very powerful cycle and we have found a stronger risk/return advantage from back-testing this cycle than even from our Spending Wave. With the exception of 1987 and 1973-1974 and 1937-1940, all other major crashes have occurred in the first 3 years of each decade since 1920. Being more cautious or out of stocks in this time frame would greatly improve your long-term stock returns even if you knew nothing about demographic or our other major cycles and economic driving forces.

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- Anonymous Banking Transaction Secrets
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We look first long term at fundamental cycles like demographic-driven generational waves of spending, S-Curve accelerations of key technologies, geopolitical and commodity cycles. Then we look at intermediate cycles that repeat largely predictably, like the Decennial

Cycle, the 4-Year Presidential Cycle and the Annual Cycle. In the short term we look at much more volatile technical indicators — gauging everything from momentum to various levels of investor bullish and bearish sentiment — to simply make better guesses about the near term direction and targets for the markets. As important as these indicators are for short term tactics and timing major buy/sell signals, they are more complex and inherently less reliable as seemingly random news events dominate.

The point of the short term technical indicators is to have you make decisions more like the “smart money” or 1% that control most of the wealth and profits, rather than the “dumb money” or herd of investors that buys the most near tops and sells the most near bottoms. In this down Decennial Cycle, we have an unprecedented divergence between our most important technical indicators and our most powerful cycles and short-term fundamental leading indicators. Why? Investors, even the “smart money” ones, are genuinely confused by the first deflationary environment since the early 1930s. They have learned since the 1970s that when the Fed or government stimulates the economy, you don’t fight that trend, until they tighten monetary or fiscal policies.

That is the great illusion of our lifetimes, since Keynesian economics came into vogue in the 1970s after being innovated in the 1930s: that the government can regulate the economy like a thermostat. Even if they could, which they haven’t thus far, it would not be healthy!

Generational and technological cycles continue to drive our economy, not the government, except with their short-term stimulus, aka “cups of coffee.” Coffee wakes you up at first and then you are even sleepier when it wears off. Stimulus only works short term and does not change the fundamental situation. In fact it tends to make it worse by wearing out the system and depriving it of its natural waking and sleeping, inhaling and exhaling, and assimilation and elimination cycles. Try not sleeping for several days. Does the productivity from the greater hours of being awake outweigh the delusion and disorientation that follow? Our enemies use sleep deprivation to disorient their captives and thus extract information that the captive normally would never give out.

Our most powerful intermediate cycles suggest a correction into October or so, and our best short term leading indicators strongly suggest a double dip recession by January of 2011. But the “smart money” is not bearish, and they are normally right! There is still a broader range of outcomes than normal until we see how the pattern plays out over the critical weak months of September and October in the 4-Year Cycle, wherein the Decennial and 4-Year Cycles converge here as they do only once in a decade. You have to understand our broader hierarchy of key cycles to appreciate better the unique situation we are in currently.

The Decennial Cycle calls for weak stock markets and recessions between the “0” and “2” years of every decade, as was most pronounced in 1920–1922, 1930-1932 1960-1962, 1980-1982, 2000-2002, and presently 2010-2012. The cycle is stronger every two decades, although we saw weakness in the early 1970s and 1990s as well. On average, that pattern bottoms by the middle of the “2” year, as in mid-1932, but that very average from the last century was influenced highly by the massive crash that bottomed in July 1932. Every Decennial Cycle will intersect once with the other consistent cycle, the 4-Year Presidential Cycle (also best documented by Ned Davis but obvious to me and many others decades ago) that tends to bottom between late summer and the mid-term elections, such as in late 2002 or currently late 2010.

In past Decennial Cycles, the actual bottom has almost always coincided more strongly with the 4-Year Cycle, as in 1962, 1970, 1982, 1990, 2002, and currently 2010. That is why we have been expecting the greatest crash and most clear bottom to occur into late 2010, even if a near retest or slight new low occurs between mid- to late 2012 on the Decennial Cycle. But to see a major or near-major bottom, we would need to see a 1987-like crash by October to December. Given that the stock market is so divorced from the clearly slowing economic reality and our leading indicators, this could still occur, with targets as low as 3,418 to 6,432. But if the markets do not crash substantially by late October, then it is likely we will see a rally back above 11,300 that will then see a longer decline from sometime in 2011 into 2012.

We have three levels of forecasting tools that are very different from one another: (1) fundamental/long term (decades or more), (2) intermediate cycles (years within a decade), and (3) technical/short term (days to weeks to months). We forecast “days to decades,” unlike most forecasters. The long term is the most deterministic, or cause and effect, and therefore the most reliable. The short term is the most probabilistic, or “best guess,” and thus the most subject to error, due to “news” events that seem almost random at times. Many people expect us to be as accurate in the short term as in the long term, and that is simply not possible (at least at this point).

A good way to summarize our unique approach to forecasting is that it starts with the most fundamental long-term indicators like our Spending Wave, is modified by our key intermediate cycles, like the Decennial and 4-Year, and

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then increasingly is affected in the short term by multiple and more-complex technical indicators that gauge investor bullish/bearish sentiment at different levels of “smart” and “dumb” money — and momentum cycles or oscillators.

Or, as we often say, “In the long term the fundamentals are everything and the short-term technical cycles average out, but in the short term the technical analysis is everything and the fundamental trends only give a slight directional bias.” That’s why longer-term investors focus more on fundamentals and shorter-term traders focus more on technical analysis.

In contrast, we focus on the entire range, from fundamentals to intermediate cycles to short-term technical analysis, to create the greatest advantage and to serve the widest audience. However, our unique advantage clearly is found in longer-term fundamental cycles: demographics, geopolitical, commodity, and technology — that few others have identified. Even if you are a long-term investor, when you finally make major decisions to add funds, withdraw funds, or change your asset allocation, wouldn’t you rather do it at the most advantageous times according to intermediate and short-term cycles? Wouldn’t you be happy to tip those decisions from odds of a random 50/50 to 60/40 or even 67/33 at best? The truth is that you will tend to make such short-term decisions more out of fear or greed and end up at much worse odds than 50/50. You will tend to sell when stocks are down and buy when stocks are up; that is the way 99% of us are programmed: to follow the trend and the herd. That is also why the top 1% of earners control 40% or so of the wealth, as they tend to do the opposite; think of Warren Buffett.

Our shorter-term analysis is designed to get you to think and act more like the smart 1% than the 90% herd. As they say in a poker game: If you don’t know who the sucker is, it’s probably you!”

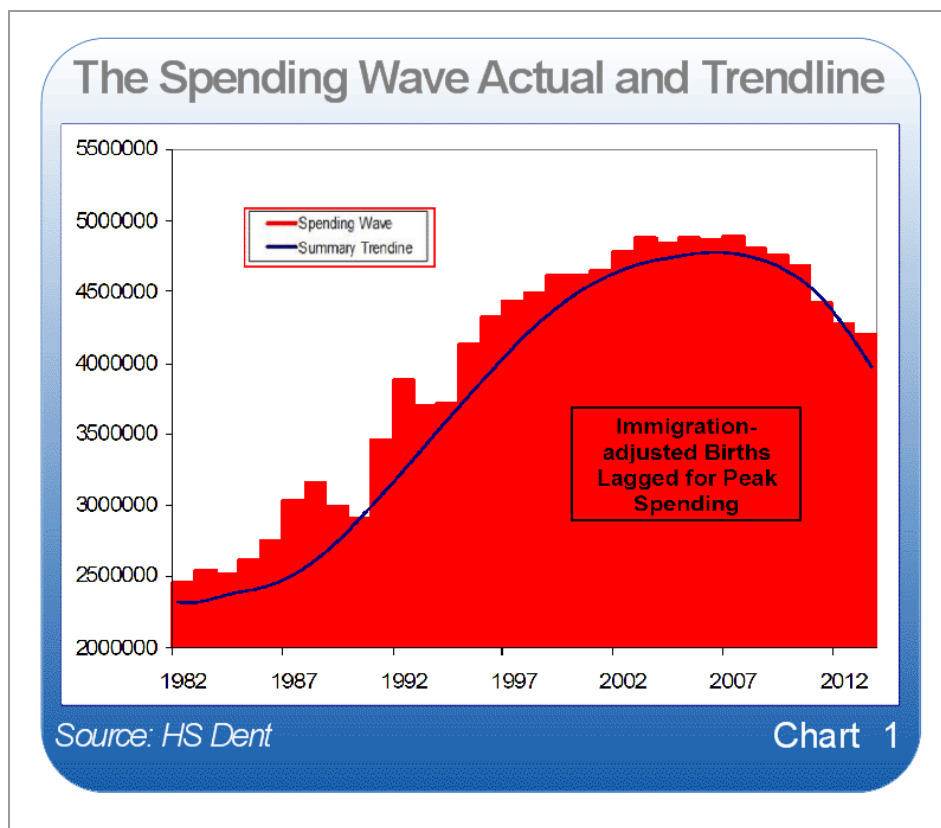
So for step one, let’s take our most fundamental long-term indicator, the Spending Wave and draw a summary trend line through the years from 1980 through 2014 in [Chart 1](#). Then in [Chart 2](#) we add the most powerful intermediate-term cycle, the Decennial Cycle and have it oscillate around that long term fundamental trend line from the Spending Wave. These two simple indicators together would explain the most important long-term and intermediate swings in the market. Since the early 1950s you would have missed every major crash except 1987, as the Spending Wave would have had you out or cautious from late 1968 into at least 1980 and the Decennial Cycle would have largely protected you from the greater corrections in the early 1960s, the early 1980s, the early 1990s and from the 2000-2002 crash in the boom period. It would have taken very good short-term technical indicators to protect you from the 1987 crash, but the best did.

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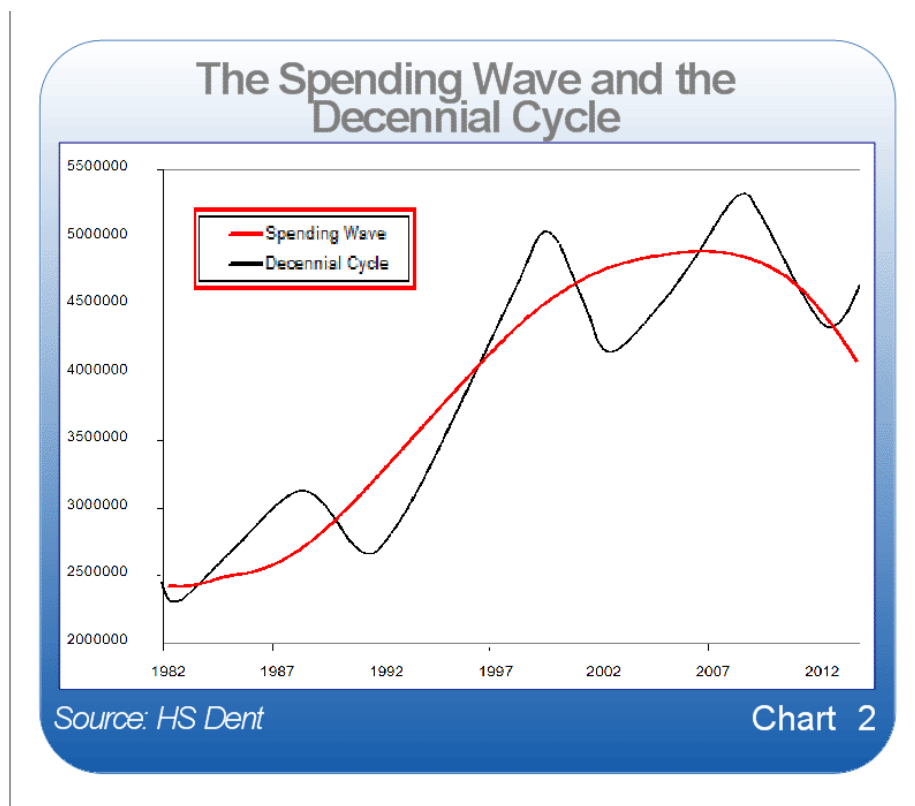
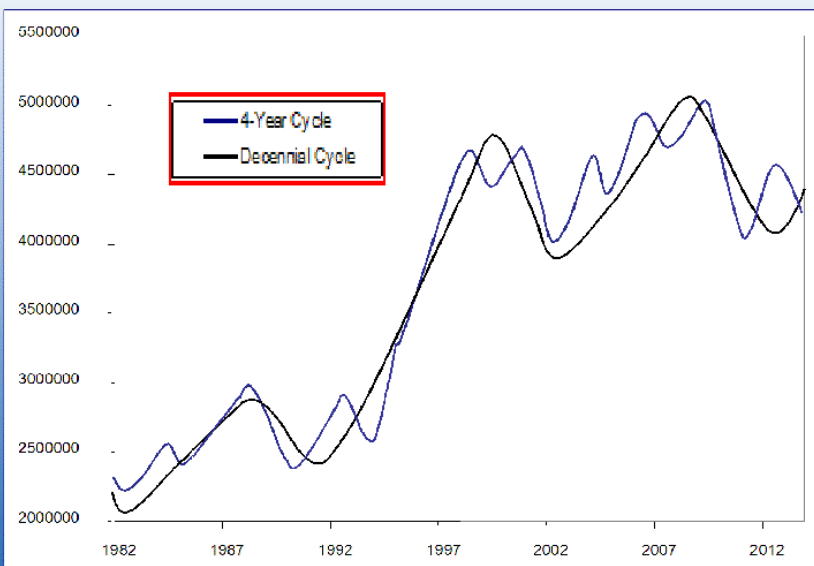


Chart 3 shows an overlay of the 4-Year Cycle over the Decennial, Ned Davis' two most powerful cycles. Note again that in every Decennial Cycle since 1960, the bottom in stocks has come when the 4-Year Cycle bottomed within the downward Decennial Cycle, i.e., 1982, 1990 and 2002. The next such likely bottom time cycle comes between September and December of 2010. Go back and look at the shape of the 1987 crash. The market topped in August, saw a modest and orderly correction into September, and then suddenly crashed in October, by nearly 40% in two weeks. Think about that scenario vs. the recent top on August 9 and the orderly correction into August 27. Or think a bit broader about the late April top, the correction into early July, and the bounce into early August. We could experience a major crash just ahead in a short time frame — such as late August to October or late September to October or December! But as we said earlier the “smart money” in **Chart 4** is still bullish which means the markets should be headed higher, not lower.

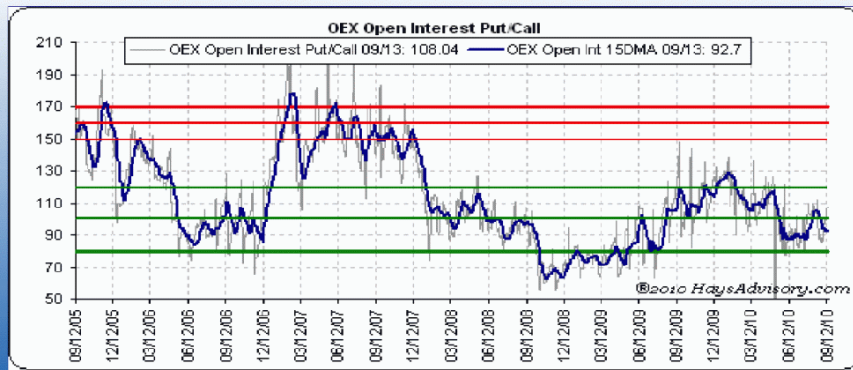
The Decennial and 4-Year Cycles



Source: HS Dent

Chart 3

Smart Money



Source: Hays Advisory

Chart 4

It does not look like we are going to get our typical crash in to the mid-term elections on the 4-Year Cycle in 2010. It is more likely that we will see an extended crash like October 2007 to March 2009 in 2011 and 2012. If so, this would be the first time in six decades that the Decennial Cycle bottom did not occur on the 4-Year Cycle. That would be more in line with composite intermediate cycles from Richard Moge, whom we highly respect, at the Foundation for the Study of Cycles.

Of course, as this extreme short-term scenario suggests, the markets can vary greatly within the broader range set by these key longer-term and intermediate cycles. Our work gets a bit more complex in longer-term fundamental cycles as we add the 34- to 36-Year Geopolitical Cycle, which varies stock valuations by 50% as it oscillates upward in periods like 1983-2000 and downward in periods like 2001 to 2018-2019. Stock valuations at the top in early 2000 were more than twice those at the top in late 2007, as we would tend to expect for this cycle! For commodities and for emerging countries that export commodities strongly, we add the 29- to 30-Year Commodity Cycle, and so on. The Commodity Cycle points downward from 2008-2010 into 2020-2023 or so, which does not bode well for most countries in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Asia.

The situation becomes increasingly more complex as we look further into the short term and as the effects of news events, ever more random and unpredictable, seem to come into play. Yes, the economy is due to weaken, as shown by our leading indicators. That weakening became obvious when the first second-quarter GDP report was

released on July 30 and was even more obvious at its first revision on August 27. We spend much time in the "Technical Analysis" section of our newsletter covering a myriad of technical indicators and making our best guesses about short-term patterns. In that micro or "quantum realm" (to use a scientific term), the environment is much more probabilistic, which means we are making the best guess or guesses as to how the markets will react to news we don't yet know is going to hit.

Many people will be confused at times by what we say in this section. That is fine, but pay attention when we give a stronger short-term buy or sell signal, like on July 16, 2010, and again on September 10. Shorter-term traders will understand this section more, as they have to in order to play the short-term trends. The longer-term and intermediate cycles make less of a difference to them. Such traders are likely to have many sources for technical analysis, not just one—much as we have.

It is worth repeating that we just cannot be as accurate or reliable in the short term as we are in the long term—it is simply not possible. The best short-term forecasters using technical analysis are great if they are right 2 out of 3 times. Even that ratio of accuracy will vary in cycles; various technical indicators work better at certain times, depending on how the news or random events vary.

Technical indicators do work much of the time, as such indicators can measure when most investors are bullish and already invested (which means no one is left to buy, so markets tend to trend downward) or bearish and already out (which means no one is left to sell, so markets tend to trend upward again). However such indicators don't always work precisely, because of the volatility of current events at times when most investors are already bullish or bearish. Prices will drift upward or downward to reflect real impacts on share prices even among existing traders and investors. A smart investor would bet on "heads" coming up after 4 or 5 "tails" in a row, but that doesn't mean that another "tails" or two won't come up, against the odds.

Summary

1). Longer-term trends follow fundamental cycles that revolve around new generations aging, which affects productivity, earning, and spending, and around technology clusters and adoption cycles (S-curve progressions) that create new growth industries and rising productivity of workers and businesses as they are increasingly adopted. Although in current times such cycles are running on near-40-Year Generational Cycles, in the more agrarian eras before the early 1990s, such cycles ran more in line with near-30-Year Commodity Cycles. But even demographic and technological cycles seem to step up to higher levels about every 250, 500, 2,500, and 5,000 years, as we discuss in Chapter 3 of *The Great Depression Ahead*.

2). Consistent intermediate cycles can be seen throughout the last century, including the Decennial, 4-Year, and 1-Year Cycles. These cycles provide direction for the intermediate-term trends, with magnitude often more a question than timing. Even the 1-Year Cycle suggests that stocks are more likely to be down from May into October or November 2010 as has been the case thus far.

3). But to get down to the very short term, you have to get into more and more complex indicators and cycles and tolerate a higher degree of error, due to unpredictable news events, even with the best patterns (Elliott waves, Fibonacci ratios, and time cycles), investor sentiment measures (smart and dumb money and bullish/bearish), and momentum oscillators. The longer-term cycles are almost always more predictable in reasonable time frames than are the shorter-term cycles.

4). In this generational downturn, the credit bubble of the last decade will play an important role. The deleveraging of unprecedented debt and asset values will create the first deflationary environment we have seen since the 1930s. We cover this topic in more depth in our free special report: *The Debt Crisis of 2011-2012* (available for request at <http://www.hsdent.com/escart-lp>).

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Dive into "Underwater" Real Estate

By Justin Johnson / Nov 10 • Categorized as [International Real Estate](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)

Escapeartist Global Awareness Exclusive Event. Clear your schedule before it's too late and come swim with the Whales at the world's largest aquarium and become a Real Estate Shark!

Right now, you're asking yourself, what the hell is this guy talking about? Real estate, whales, aquariums, sharks, what does this all mean? Well, I'm about to tell you...

The world's largest aquarium happens to be in Atlanta, Georgia. Atlanta also happens to be one of the best places in the world right now to buy real estate. The aquarium opened in 2005 and was built with a \$250 million gift that was provided by Bernie Marcus, the co-founder of Home Depot. Bernie felt like much of the success of Home Depot was due to the great citizens of Georgia and he wanted to give them something back for all of their support. Click here for a [virtual tour](#).

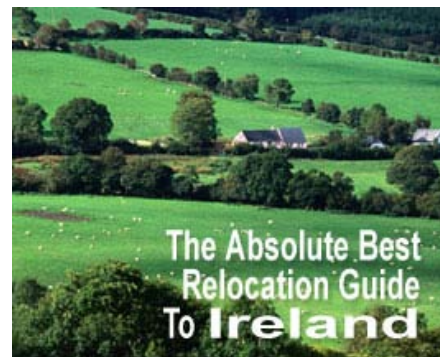


Escapeartist, much like Bernie Marcus, would like to give something back to our loyal followers by inviting them to attend a very special real estate investment orientation at the Georgia Aquarium on Feb. 25 – 28, 2011. Just as Bernie made a generous contribution to the citizens of Georgia, Escape Artist would like to make a generous contribution to all of our real estate investors and real estate investor hopefuls out there by giving you an opportunity to hang with the Whales (our Smart Money Investors) and get an insider look at where the Real Estate Investment Sharks are buying right now.

The Georgia Aquarium is absolutely beautiful and it will be a great place for you to come and meet with these Whales of the real estate investment world. If you are a real estate investor or someone that is just dipping your toe into the salt water then you must act quickly and make sure that you don't miss an opportunity like this.

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Our Whales will be swimming side by side with you through the deep water and showing you:

- * How to talk to REO specialists and gain access to the REO "GreenBook"
- * How to identify Smart Money Investments and secure properties within minutes of them hitting the market.
- * How to properly inspect these properties to make sure they fit our Smart Money Criteria.
- * How to leverage your IRA or other qualified retirement funds to secure these instant winners.
- * How to preserve your principal and increase your cash flow with 'guaranteed' rental income.

Escapeartist has connections with the who', who of the Atlanta Real Estate Community with direct links to the REO Specialists who will teach you the secrets of hot to gain access to the secret vault of pre-listed properties that sell within hours of coming available – in this business it is all about having liquidity and knowing the right people. Instant, equity and positive cash flow is the name of the game and the connections you will make at this exclusive event will open the Escapeartist 'GreenBook.'

The major markets in Atlanta, Georgia have seen massive building booms, and they are now busting at the seams with what the banks consider to be "undesirable" properties. If these banks continue to hold on to these properties then they will experience the same fate as those banks who weathered the first part of the depression. These are U.S. banks that will not get more TARP money the second time around and by holding on to these assets they will simply go bankrupt.

Knowing that another economic downturn is coming these banks are bracing for it by unloading their entire "undesirable" housing inventory for pennies on the dollar. These properties may be 'undesirable' to the bank, but the lower income rental market is booming and these properties are cash cows for savvy investors. While everyone is searching for the \$400,000 home that can be purchased for \$200,000 The most desirable property with the highest potential return is the \$100,000 home that can be purchased for \$30,000 to \$50,000.



For those of you that are outside of the U.S. we refer to these bank owned properties as REO's. REO stands for "Real Estate Owned" and refers to the inventory of non-performing real property assets that are owned by banks and other lenders who have had to foreclose on their mortgage loans. Typically, the foreclosure process resulted in some form of an auction in which no bidders participated and the lender ended up with the property

Since there were no bidders, by default, the lender "wins" the auction and becomes the highest bidder and then takes back the property (i.e. it receives a trustee's deed or Sheriff's deed, as

per local practices), whereupon the mortgage is extinguished and the lender becomes the new owner of legal title to that property, free and clear.

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This is a very 'undesirable' situation for the lender, as REO property is considered an "unproductive asset" and the lender (if a bank) must "reserve" against it. With the multiplier effect at play in our fractional-reserve banking system, for every dollar of unproductive assets that find their way to the lender's balance sheet, an amount equal to approximately ten times that amount must be effectively set aside or "reserved" ... meaning that those funds cannot now be otherwise loaned out to generate interest income for the bank. This is obviously a very bad situation for the bank. A lot of shareholder and regulatory pressures are brought down upon the bank to quickly liquidate unproductive assets – even at substantial losses – simply to get those properties off the books which will enable the lender to free up reserved assets that it can then deploy into other good, income-producing loans.

As a non-performing asset, the lender is under extraordinary pressure from regulators and shareholders to sell those REO assets at steep discounts so as to quickly free up the non-performing capital for other lending and investment programs and to improve the lender's liquidity ratios and other measures of banking health.



Private investors, especially in Atlanta, are seeing this as an amazing investment opportunity. It is not uncommon to purchase REO properties anywhere from 40% to 60% of current fair market value. The bank's problem has become an incredible wealth-building opportunity for private investors. . The best properties end up in a REO Specialist's GreenBook and only privileged contacts get a first look. At this event you will have immediate access to 50 of the most lucrative, highly discounted properties in Atlanta. Life is good!

In Atlanta, we are frequently buying REO properties between 25% and 55% of current FMV. With a little fix-up and TLC these

REO's can be resold to end-buyers (either homeowners or rental-income-investors) well below market value!

These special GreenBook opportunities will provide:

The REO "flipper" to profit handsomely while still giving the end-buyer an immediate positive equity position in the property from day one! Or;

The longer term investor to purchase a home at drastically discounted prices with tenant placement, managed by national property managers for stress free ownership and realize healthy annual returns on their money while the market rebounds. Sit back, collect rents, and watch the value of your real estate grow!

Now just in case you were asking yourself, why Atlanta? Here are 10 great reasons to come to Atlanta:

1. Atlanta is one of the fastest growing, stable metropolitan centers in America.
2. Atlanta is an upbeat city offering excellent public schools, shopping and job opportunities.
3. Metro Atlanta is comprised of 28 counties. There are more than 5.3 million people in the surrounding Atlanta area and more than 145,000 private-sector firms.
4. Atlanta has a diverse economy and has been a popular location for both business and talent. Atlanta's top industry sectors are trade, transportation, utilities, professional and business services and government. The Atlanta area businesses include 11 FORTUNE 500 headquarters, hundreds of other headquarters, over 2,100 international companies, and thousands of small businesses.
5. Atlanta is a top tier higher-education metro area with institutions including Emory University, Georgia Tech, Georgia State University and many technical colleges. Young, educated professionals are a significant sector of the workforce.
6. Domestic and international air service is easily accessible at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. This airport is the world's most-traveled and serves over 90 million passengers annually. 80 percent of the United States can be reached within a two-hour flight and 90 international destinations in 55 countries can be reached nonstop.
7. Atlanta has a beautiful climate and as part of the Southeast region has four seasons of the year that are discernible yet never extreme. Snow is extremely rare as are 100-degree summer days.
8. Atlanta offers residences that are more spacious and considerably less expensive than other major metro areas. The cost of living consistently ranks below the national average. Residents have many recreational and entertainment choices including professional and collegiate sports, theatrical productions, art exhibitions, community festivals, golf, tennis, and shopping.
9. Atlanta has the ultimate buyer's market and right now is an excellent time for an investor to make a purchase. Atlanta will remain strong in these struggling economic times with a good inventory and very low interest rates.
10. Hear what others are saying about Atlanta...
 - Forbes Magazine ranked Atlanta as the #1 rental market.
 - CNNMoney.com says Atlanta is the 4th best city in America to invest in.
 - Forbes Magazine ranks Atlanta as the 4th most affordable U.S. market.

Finally as if that is not enough reasons, Atlanta currently ranks....

- 3rd in job growth.

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- 1st in the U.S. as least costly large city for business.

The Whales (*our Smart Money Investors*) know that within the last 50 years the U.S. has not seen a real estate market this soft and Atlanta, Georgia is one of the best investments that you can make right now. With the prospect of an economic downturn coming in 2012 to 2024 (See *Harry Dents Opportunities in Defaults, Deflation and Depression four part series*) the middle to upper end housing markets are about to sink to the bottom of the ocean. The lower end market will have the greatest demand and if you know the basics of supply and demand then you will understand that when everyone starts looking for "monthlies" under \$1,000, those who own the \$35,000 – \$75,000 properties will reap the greatest rewards.



I urge you to act quickly and make sure that you will be able to secure a reservation and meet with our Whales at the Georgia Aquarium on Feb. 25 – 28, 2011. Secure your opportunity to meet the movers and shakers of Atlanta's real estate investor community and most importantly learn the secrets of the REO specialists and reserve your copy of the REO GreenBook; it is DEFINITELY the smart thing to do!

Escapeartist has over 400,000 subscribers so we expect this event will sell out immediately. Once you have entered your

information a representative will call you to process your event registration fee and assist you with your hotel reservations at the Hampton Inn, Omni Hotel or The W Hotel.



Due to the limited availability of first tier pre-listed properties this event will be limited to 65 attendees. Reservations will be taken in the order that they are received in the information form provided below.

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By Bill Freeman / Nov 10 • Categorized as [Asset Protection](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



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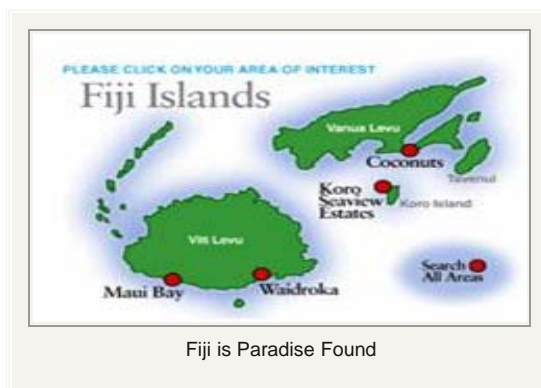



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Affordable Living in the South Seas

By Joe Soecker / Nov 10 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



About 20 years ago I began my search for an island paradise that would allow me a life style that included safety, stunning natural beauty and a low cost of living. I was living in Hawaii at the time and have to say that the lifestyle there was pretty good – if you had lots of money and did not mind the crowds, and with 7 million visitors a year, I mean crowds.

My search was motivated by many things – global overcrowding, geopolitics, the lack of future resources like fuel, water and food in densely populated places and cities, the declining quality of life and what I felt was an ever-more

obtrusive government that simply did not seem to have me or my children's interest in mind. So I went and looked for the most likely place to suit my need. And I looked for several years.

At the end of that journey I arrived in the Fiji Islands, which are now my home of choice. Not only was it easy to obtain residency (an investment in land of \$50,000 will get you full time residency), but property prices are still well below other tropical destinations, and the main language is English, which is taught in all the schools. This is a major benefit as language difficulties are a huge issue in many destinations, especially for those looking to settle down, or possibly even start a business. A former British colony, Fiji in many forms retains a British character while being an absolute nature lover's paradise.

At the time, I was also elated that I could purchase property as a foreigner with only 10% investment, impossible in most other tropical destinations. So I bought 2 adjacent lots on a lush hillside with beautiful views, about 5 minutes walk from the beach, went back to work in the US, and began planning my exit.



About the Fiji Islands

Bula... and welcome our Fiji Islands! Some 330 sunny, unspoiled, magical and exotic islands. A thousand miles of white sandy beaches. Fabulous coral gardens and azure lagoons. Unlimited sports and recreation, and a perfect place to live, retire, invest or escape and unwind. Fiji is the friendliest place on earth, providing a type of hospitality that is all but forgotten in most parts of the world.

Fiji is right on the 180th Meridian making us the first country to enter every new day, and here time slows down, so the rest of the world can catch up. Our islands are about 19 degrees south of the equator which provides warm

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tropical climate year round.

Only 9% of all land in Fiji is freehold and is available for purchase. We have freehold titles available for immediate settlement. Banks here in Fiji offer 4-5% interest on your money, and you can easily live on much less than in most other places.

We Are Fiji Real Estate

Today I work for the Taveuni Development Company (Fiji Real Estate), Fiji's longest standing and most successful Land Development Company. It's the same company that 12 years ago I bought my first property from, and that I decided to join when the offer came about. So now it is part of my job to make sure that investors from overseas have a smooth journey; find what they are looking for, and to share my experiences with them, the good ones along with the challenging ones.

Our company provides a lot more than real estate – we help with travel, immigration, property tours, business licenses and much more. We have sold over 1000 properties in the last few years to overseas investors, making our developments the most successful ones in the Fiji Islands. Our properties have all weather access roads. Lot sizes are from ½ to 2 acres to provide for privacy, and some have power and phone to the lot. Lots are cut to provide maximum views. Lot owners may enjoy nearby resorts or in some cases a clubhouse, pool and other amenities, and property rental service are available through our company. Our central office makes available mail and communication services.

Nearby resorts offer water sports, dining, fishing and cultural activities. You may build at any time, and we can assist with contacts for builders, permits and much more.

Vendor finance is available for lots at 10% with easy terms putting the dream of real estate ownership in your hands. We will pick you up from the airport and we assist with your travel arrangements to view our developments.



I lost my heart to Koro Island (www.koroisland.com), a 3 by 5 mile island that abounds with sandy white beaches, smiling locals and tropical splendor. For under \$35,000 US you can buy an acre of freehold land here, and labor and building materials are available as well. A timber home with 2 bedrooms can cost as little as US\$60,000, a cottage as little as \$25,000. A small airport and roll-on, roll-off ferry support island logistics, and small stores are on the island, along with abundant organic gardens and an ocean full of fish. A fuel plant produces fuel from Coconuts, and homes run on solar plants and with water catchment. An expat community of Australians, Americans and New Zealanders live on the Island in harmony with nature and the local Fijians, and has so far built some 50 homes. 2 small resorts complement the island, Internet is available and the cost of living is amazingly low. Koro is the most fertile island in the Fiji group and deserves its slogan "the way the world should be". About 60 lots are still for sale at 10% down, along with a few homes as well. Learn more about affordable island living on Koro Island at www.koroisland.org and join our international community at www.facebook.com/koroislandfiji.

Check out a young couple from Arizona finding their dream home on Koro Island here – <http://fiji realestate.com/fiji realestate/video.php?development=koro>.

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Another great option for those who want to combine island life with the ability to go and visit a city or town nearby, Maui Bay Estates on the famous Coral Coast of Viti Levu (www.mauibayestates.com) offers a great opportunity to do just that. White sandy beachfront lots with stunning homes line the Pacific, and many beautiful hillside lots are available from US\$60,000. Power is available to each lot. A beachfront club house, pool and overwater pier with pagoda offer lots to do for owners, who enjoy deep sea fishing, surfing, diving and many other water sports. Restaurants and golf are located close by, and a town with an open market is about 20 minutes drive away. The demand for vacation rentals is high and owners who rent out their homes are booked all the time. Maui Bay was featured twice in Househunters International as a prime real estate destination in Fiji. Watch the episodes here – <http://fijirealestate.com/fijirealestate/video.php?development=maui>.

There are also other developments on various islands, simply something for everyone. Waidroka Estates for the surfers, Coconuts Estates for Sailboat lovers and cruisers. Simply contact me and we can go through them to find your spot.

Fact is, we have no idea what will happen within our lifetime, but all predictions that are out there are quite dire, and we can be certain that our respective governments are not going to do much for the little guy.

There is the option to do nothing, or to actively secure an escape route to a place that is safe, fertile and out of the path of major global conflicts, with ample room and friendly locals. The Fiji Islands is that destination, and more and more people are beginning to develop an exit strategy. Large scale changes in the way we live are no longer just a possibility, but are increasingly becoming a certainty. You can decide if you want to preempt these coming changes by being ready, and in a place that will sustain you and your family.

Email me for our "Introduction to Fiji Guide" and more information on the various developments we offer in Fiji, and see which one would fit your desired lifestyle.

[To receive immediate information on availability of lots and pricing information click here.](#)

Sincerely, Joe Soecker (*mobile (679) 9928111 in Fiji)



About the Taveuni Development Company (TDC)

Taveuni Development Company (Fiji Real Estate) was established in 1989 to provide professional service to overseas investors interested in Fiji Island property. All our properties are freehold and we have titles available for immediate settlement.

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How to Buy Real Estate with Your IRA Part III

By Tom Phelan / Nov 10 • Categorized as [Asset Protection](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Leverage your IRA for Cash Flow

In Part I we discussed how Wall Street has clearly dominated IRA funds for thirty years evidenced by its continued control over 97% of five trillion IRA dollars.

Read Article 1: <http://www.escapefromamerica.com/2010/10/self-directed-ira-international-real-estate/>

In Part II we learned about the three major IRA options that will allow your Retirement Plan to purchase real estate. And we learned that Wall Street offers none of these:

Self Directed IRA

Self Directed IRA Check Book Control

Individual 401(k)

Read Article 2: <http://www.escapefromamerica.com/2010/11/how-to-avoid-ira-fees/>

IRA Mistake #3

Understanding the operational differences among the Self-Directed IRA, the Check Book Control Self-Directed IRA and the Individual 401(k), the benefits and burdens of each, and the bottom line cost to establish each and yet you still have not changed from your current Wall Street IRA where a Stock Broker controls your financial future.

Part III How to Buy Real Estate with Your IRA

Maybe a little encouragement is needed and examples of how real estate in your IRA can truly "Diversify" your retirement portfolio might encourage you to move forward.

First I would like to emphasize that investing 100% of your IRA funds in real estate is probably not a good idea just as having 100% of your IRA invested in Wall Street products isn't a good idea. Yet incredibly that is exactly what 97% of IRA Owners do, they place 100% of their retirement funds in Wall Street.

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A Great Time To Buy Real Estate

Most of us are aware that the prices of housing, including rentals properties, crested a few years back and are now at bargain basement prices, in many cities rental properties are at the lowest prices in decades.

Your IRA and Real Estate

Before we get into the mechanics of "How to buy rental properties with your IRA" with illustrated examples, maybe we should first discuss ...

"Why buy renal real estate at all?"

This is a good question and a valid one. Just because an investment (rental property) is priced at an all time low doesn't automatically equate to, "you should buy it".

But the question, "Why buy renal real estate at all?" should not automatically snap shut an open mind either.

Let's cover some of the basic facts about rental real estate that will allow you to make a better informed decision whether or not you might want to involve your IRA with the purchasing of rental property.

When I suggest IRA owned real estate it doesn't have to be a single family home "rental property," it could be commercial (medical building) or industrial property (warehouse), but typically these types of property require large sums of money and therefore eliminate most IRA Owners from buying them.

Raw land or a building lot are also real estate candidates, however, neither generate income. Because we are interested in your IRA held assets creating income streams we will focus on rental income property, primarily single family homes.

You can't live in a Mutual Fund.

The majority of people with IRAs continue to allow their Stock Broker or Financial Planner to place their IRA dollars into Mutual Funds. But, no matter how valuable the Mutual Fund shares become you cannot live in a Mutual Fund. And, if you sell Mutual Fund shares to generate income, unless the share value increases the same as or more than your withdrawals, you will deplete the principal and your principal will begin to decrease, possibly quite rapidly and to zero, i.e. you will run out of money.

Most Mutual Funds will increase over a long period of time and so too will the value of a rental property and also the rents it generates. But in contrast to a Mutual Fund, you can use all of the rental income without chipping away at the principal.

With a rental property it is possible to have your cake and eat it too, i.e. as the value of the rental unit grows so will the rents. During the recent real estate debacle many cities across the USA experienced property value declines of 50% of more yet the rentals did not decline as severely.

Replacement Costs

Many recently constructed (2000 – 2010) rental properties today come with prices so low you cannot buy the materials to rebuild the property let alone buy the land. This phenomenon is why many major home builders have ceased building new homes and are scooping up recently constructed homes at fire sale prices far below the replacement costs. Why would a builder construct a new home for \$200,000 when it can buy one down the street for \$85,000?

The Returns on Buying a Rental Property

Example A (all cash purchase):

Single Family Home – Constructed 2004 – 3 bed 2 bath – 1,365 sq. ft., 1 car garage

Ten Homes Purchased at one time for \$375,000 total or \$37,500 each.

Cost: \$375,000 (replacement cost \$750,000)

Combined Rental Income: \$7,500 (\$750 each)

Monthly Costs:

1. Zero Mortgage: \$ -0-
2. Property Management (10%): \$ 750

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- Vacancy Factor (10%): \$ 750
- Reserves (5%): \$ 600

Expenses:

- Taxes: \$ 1,250
- Insurance: \$ 1,000

\$4,350 Total x 12 months = \$52,200

- Net Income: \$3,150 Total x 12 months = \$37,800
- Cash On Cash Return: 10.80% (\$37,800/\$350,000)

This example it is quite realistic because of items #2, 3 and 4. Many rental properties are represented minus items #2, 3 and 4 and based on the erroneous assumptions that:

- You don't need a Property Management Company (you'll do it yourself)
- There will never be a vacancy (our example of 10% was taken from a Census)
- You will never need to replace a defunct water heater, worn carpet or leaky roof.

Fool's Gold

By eliminating items #2, 3 and 4 you artificially pump up the net cash flow by \$2,100 a month thus changing the Cash On Cash factor accordingly:

18.00% (\$63,000/\$350,000)

Example B (50% cash 50% financing purchase):

Single Family Home – Constructed 2004 – 3 bed 2 bath – 1,365 sq. ft., 1 car garage

Ten Homes Purchased at one time for \$375,000 total or \$37,500 each.

Cost: \$375,000 (replacement cost \$750,000)
Combined Rental Income: \$7,500 (\$750 each)

Monthly Costs:

- 50% Mortgage: \$1,050 (\$175,000 @ 6% 30 year amortization)
- Property Management (10%): \$ 750
- Vacancy Factor (10%):\$ 750
- Reserves (5%): \$ 600

Expenses:

- Taxes: \$ 1,250 (\$125 per month per home)
- Insurance: \$ 1,000 (\$100 per month per home)

\$5,400 Total x 12 months = \$64,800

- Net Income: \$2,100 Total x 12 months = \$25,200
- Cash On Cash Return: 14.40% (\$25,200/\$175,000)

You can see that your Cash On Cash Return jumped from 10.80% to over 14.40% because your IRA used 50% financing. Even in the toughest of times few economists would consider a 50% mortgage (50% LTV) for a single family home purchased at a bargain price risky.

Imagine thirty years from now leaving your children ten fully paid for cash flow producing homes?

Don't forget U.B.I.T. (Unrelated Business Tax)

Ah, remember U.B.I.T.? If you use debt financing with your IRA you can trigger U.B.I.T.

If you use debt financing with your Individual 401(k) you do not encounter U.B.I.T.

Here's how U.B.I.T. would impact Example B above.

- Net Income after subtracting mortgage payments and all expenses: \$25,200 annually

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U.B.I.T. requires you to apportion that part of your net rental income derived from financing percentage, i.e. you financed 50% of the purchase price ergo 50% of the net income or \$12,600 is subject to U.B.I.T.

U.B.I.T. allows an annual \$1,000 exemption from the apportioned net rental income.

\$12,600 (50% of net rental income)

\$1,000 exemption

\$11,600 subject to U.B.I.T.

x 35% U.B.I.T. tax rate

\$4,060 U.B.I.T. tax

\$25,200 Total Net Cash Flow

\$ 4,060 U.B.I.T. tax

\$21,140 Net Income after U.B.I.T.

Adjusted Cash On Cash = 12.08% (\$21,140/\$175,000)

All Cash v. 50% Financing

\$37,800 Net Income without Financing

\$21,140 Net Income with 50% Financing

At first glance one might jump at the all cash purchase scenario but you should take into consideration that under Example B you used only half of your cash, \$175,000 v. \$350,000 and that the tenants over time are paying you mortgage off. Also, your cash On Cash Return is greater with 50% financing even after paying U.B.I.T.

All Cash: Cash On Cash Return: 10.80% (\$37,800/\$350,000)

50% Financing: Cash On Cash Return: 12.08% (\$21,140/\$175,000)

How About No U.B.I.T.?

The above Example B with 50% financing triggers U.B.I.T. whether you use an IRA, Self Directed IRA or Check Book Control Self Directed IRA.

With an Individual 401(k) U.B.I.T. does not come into play thus your Cash On Cash Return increases to 14.40% (\$25,200/\$175,000).

There will probably not be a more opportune time to purchase American real estate now as evidenced by the flood of foreign investors pouring Euros and Pounds into good old USA real estate. It wasn't that long ago that a modest rental home in England Ireland fetched US\$600,000. When these foreigners see quality, recently constructed US homes for under \$40,000 they are snapping them up.

For more information on the IRA, Self Directed IRA, Check Book Control Self Directed IRA or Individual 401(k) please fill out the information

BONUS: FREE copy of the tax court case Swanson v. Commissioner please provide the information below and the court case will be sent to you immediately by email:

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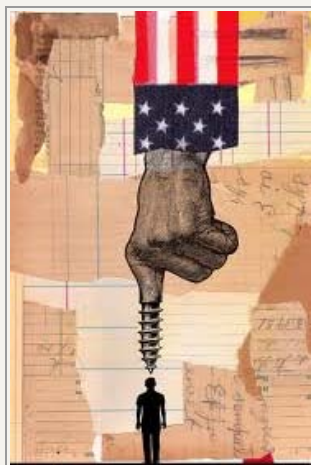



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Mutiny in America: Ditchin' America for Bitchin' Mexico

By Phyllis Davis / Nov 10 • Categorized as [International Real Estate](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



America Putting the Screws to Americans

The Ship of State (pick any State) is sinking fast. People are simply walking away from their homes, commercial real estate properties, businesses, neighborhoods and their old lives. Even immigrants who moved to the US for education and business opportunities are moving back to their home countries en mass where they can enjoy a better standard of living and more freedom.

Have you ever asked yourself, "Where do these people GO, when they just walk away?" They seem to 'disappear' completely. Did they move in with their parents or their kids? Did they move out of state? Have they started tent cities in the deep woods of the High Sierras or Oregon? Are they living in RV's? Or, did they move out of the country? Where are they?

In August 2010, lenders took back over 95,000 homes, which accounts for more homes than in any other month since the US mortgage crises began in December 2007. The banks openly admit they are afraid to put these properties (along with the rest of their huge inventory) back up for sale because of the soft real estate market, sluggish economy, high unemployment, and low consumer confidence.

If you listen quietly to the Baby Boomers in coffee shops across the country, they're beginning to figure it out. They realize their pensions are in jeopardy, their assets are quickly depreciating, they need quality health care and these Boomers are in a **bad mood**. They are so afraid that all they've worked for, for some many years, is now at risk and they're worried they won't be able to relax and enjoy their retirement. It's not a good idea to piss off an entire demographic of 80 million people, most of whom vote, and all of whom were bred to be creative revolutionaries.

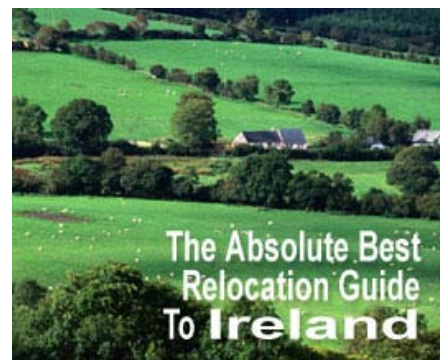
EscapeArtist has done our homework and we know, for a fact, that over one million Americans own property in Mexico and that every year, 100,000 Americans are retiring to Mexico to live a comfortable and more affordable life. Many people are now migrating south of the border. Let us tell you about the **safest beach city in Mexico**, only 25 miles south of San Diego: Rosarito Beach, Baja, Mexico, with a population of 130,000 people including 14,000 expats.

A recent report by the Mayor of Rosarito Beach, Hugo Torres, stated, "Crime in Rosarito DECLINED by 21% from the previous year and is at a five-year low for the city."

- Crime has declined 13% through May 2010, and is again leading the state in crime reduction.
- Mayor Torres has replaced more than half of the police force with well-trained officers and increased the size of the police from 150 to 230 officers.
- A special tourist police force has been created primarily to assist visitors to the city. The new tourist police for Rosarito Beach are trained in the San Diego Law-Enforcement Training Center in a cross-border cooperative effort.
- The city has increased youth programs and education efforts to prevent delinquency.

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Rosarito Beach is safe, or there would not be 14,000 expats living there.

Rosarito Beach is the fastest growing city in Baja California, Mexico, and has become a retirement and tourist destination for visitors from all over the world who come here for the very moderate climate, supportive expat community, relaxing pace, surfing, fishing, medical tourism, local culture, vineyards and wine country, shopping, golf, bird watching, exploring, vacation homes and miles of sandy beaches.

EscapeArtist is on the ground in Rosarito Beach, Baja, Mexico, and we have developed a special relationship with a condominium development that offers affordable luxury living in their beachfront property. It is attracting investors, retirees and second-home owners who want to EscapeFromAmerica or live the EscapeArtist dream. Affordable, safe, new, modern condominium living is available in Mexico at half the comparable US cost (that's assuming you can even find affordable beachfront property in the US).

FOREIGNERS CAN OWN PROPERTY IN MEXICO. Recent changes to Mexican laws now permit foreign ownership of Mexican Real Estate. The title format of the property depends on its location. If the property is in the "Restricted Zone," it will have to be held with a Fideicomiso (Bank Trust).

Rosarito Beach is in the Restricted Zone which is defined as, "... any property that lies within 100 KM (60 miles) of an international border or 50 KM (36 miles) from the coast. The international borders are the United States, Guatemala and Belize. A Fideicomiso is a bank trust that holds title to a property in the Restricted Zone with the foreigner as the beneficiary."

EscapeArtist is now announcing our new partnership featuring The La Jolla Condominium Development offering four magnificent 15-story oceanfront towers with two bedroom, three bedroom, Villas and Penthouses for luxury living.

These newly constructed condominiums offer these amenities:

- Travertine or Saltillo Mexican-style tiled flooring
- Built in cabinetry in living areas and bedrooms for books and TV
- Units are prewired for cable, satellite, TV and telephone
- PVC double-paned sliding glass doors that lead to private patios overlooking the ocean
- Kitchen cabinet fronts are made of solid maple
- Wide granite-topped islands that open into the living area offering a comfortable and convenient floor plan, ideal for entertaining or simply relaxing at home.
- All appliances have stainless steel, white or almond exteriors, electric stove with self-cleaning oven, refrigerator, microwave, garbage disposal, and dishwasher.
- The walls throughout the units are concrete and stucco and are available in a variety of textures and colors. This type of construction contributes to soundproofing both within and between connecting units.
- Central heating
- Vertical blinds on all windows

The La Jolla Condominium Development offers these features:

- 24-hour manned security gate
- Located five minutes from downtown Rosarito Beach
- Covered resident parking and visitor parking available on site
- Magnificent landscaping throughout property
- Lap swimming pools, children's pools, and hot tubs
- Lounge chairs and umbrellas throughout the pool area
- Barbeque grills and seating areas for outdoor dining
- Tennis court
- Oceanfront clubhouses
- Health Clubs
- Access to secluded beach with full-time manned security
- Walking paths and trails on property
- Pet friendly property and beach
- Covered parking is provided for each unit and extra storage space is available for sale in the covered parking area.

The first rats off the sinking ship have been spotted on beachfronts all over the world, sipping *piña coladas*, walking, fishing, relaxing and avoiding news on CNN. EscapeArtist has 'first rat status' and we are living in Rosarito Beach, mixing and mingling with the local expat community, enjoying mariachi music at lunch with a higher standard of living than we could have possibly had in the US with our civil liberties tucked safely in our pockets.

So, come join us in Rosarito Beach for a tour of the [La Jolla Condominium Development](#) and enjoy a tour of the city

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2nd Medical Opinion... peace of mind for expats

By Ilene Little, traveling4Health / Nov 10 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Do you REALLY trust your Doctor's Opinion?

Let's say you're residing abroad . . . and you've just been diagnosed with a cardiac or neurological condition and are uncomfortable with the diagnosis, or proposed treatment plan.

What can be done under this circumstance or in a situation where you are adversely affected by symptoms that may not be accurately diagnosed and effectively treated by your local doctor?

Trusting the diagnosis of a foreign physician and putting one's faith in the "health system" is a big challenge for expats who are generally unfamiliar with "who they can trust".

No doubt, medical encounters in a foreign culture can be a nerve wracking experience with lingering doubts "is the doctor good enough?" "Does the system have the technology to accurately diagnose my condition?"

The uncertainty produces significant stress which wears down the immune system. At the point of "doubting desperation", many expats head back to the USA for medical care in a familiar and trusted environment.

This quest for "peace of mind" is costly and not always necessary, as there are "islands of medical excellence" in many emerging countries.

In many cases, it is more about TRUST which is a byproduct of CULTURAL & LINGUISTIC COMFORT LEVEL", says [Shai Gold, Managing Partner](#) of [International-Triage, LLC](#) and a contributing writer to Traveling4Health.com.

"Nevertheless, since 'peace of mind' is as important as the diagnosis itself, I encourage patients to seek a 2nd Opinion from a qualified medical expert who practices in an American, or Latin American, Center of Medical Excellence," says Gold.

"If the 2nd Opinion confirms the local diagnosis, the expat's trust in the local doctor will increase to the point where the comfort level will be on par with that of an American physician," said Gold, "One should consider the cost of the 2nd Opinion 'an integration expense'."

According to Escape Artist spokesman Tom Ocean, "we identified an unmet need for healthcare 'peace-of-mind'. We determined to help our loyal readers who are challenged by lack of trusting their local medical resources."

"Clearly, the decision to live overseas results in healthcare needs that are simply unforeseeable at the time of relocation," said Ocean.

"When you're in a foreign land you don't know if an industry is as regulated as it is in the U.S. And when you're used to U.S. quality health care a 2nd Medical Opinion from the States is really valuable," he said.

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"As the longest running web portal for overseas living, we have been part of our readers' lives for over a decade and have therefore aged with them," Ocean said. We have also witnessed the tragic consequences of traumatic injuries and medical emergencies where family members try reaching out to their home-country health systems during a medical crisis."

Peace-of-Mind is invaluable, but should also be affordable. Depending on the complexity of the medical condition, a patient may require the opinion of more than one physician to participate in the consultation.

"My dad is an old school physician," said Ocean, "and he says that it's always good to get a 2nd Medical Opinion. He also says that a good doctor wants the best for his patient and as such, will welcome the opportunity to interact with an expert."

"As a resource center for expats, we decided to do something about this important issue and reached out to [International triage](#) to offer its 2nd Opinion Services and other integrated travel-for-health services to the Escape Artist family on a preferred basis."

According to Gold, the 2nd Opinions are triaged (directed and prioritized) by medical specialty to a panel of clinical experts in various centers of excellence.

"My 20-years' experience in domestic and international healthcare led to the development of a small and focused VIP Network," said Gold, "We are proud of our direct access to leading American physicians and medical centers."

Says Gold: "Notable medical providers include [Johns Hopkins Medicine](#), (Ranked # 1 Hospital in the USA for the last 20 years by US News and World Report's "Best Hospitals Report"). The [University of Miami](#) Health System; [Jackson Memorial Hospital \(Miami\)](#); Philadelphia's [Fox Chase Cancer Center](#), [Thomas Jefferson Hospital](#), [Alfred DuPont Children's Hospital](#) and others. In addition to our USA based VIP network, we also have outstanding medical providers outside the USA.

"Our network offers balance between "nuts & bolts" medical centers and "super academic" centers. Miami's leading medical institutions are familiar and practical "safe harbors" for anybody in the Caribbean and Latin America regions in need of support for critical care issues; while Baltimore and Philadelphia are home to some of the world's leading academic hospitals that are well known for their investigative approach to medical issues and rich traditions."

"You hear all the nightmare stories about people who have had unnecessary surgeries," said Ocean, "Expats are saving money on healthcare so they may be willing to spend a little more to get the assurance of a 2nd Opinion to make sure the original diagnosis is accurate."

Adds Gold: "A second and independent opinion will rule out the initial diagnosis or will confirm the initial diagnosis. Either way the cost is well justified by the desired outcome which is accurate diagnosis and good treatment in a timely manner, or the relief of ruling out any bad news."

"Whether you're in [Kazakhstan](#), Colombia, Dubai, Mexico, or anywhere else in between, concern about the quality of healthcare services is a constant that weighs heavily on the mind of the expat" said Gold.

"In my twenty years in health care, I have seen patients from emerging and industrial countries flock to the United States for the peace-of-mind that is associated with an American 2nd Medical Opinion," Gold added.

"It's a great service," summarized Ocean, 'affordable access to high quality healthcare solutions'. I think it's a prudent thing to do. You're talking about your health. It's not like taking your car to get fixed."

"This service is priced at a discount to the escape artist community," said Gold, "We look forward to providing a great service to people in need of medical peace-of-mind."

About the author: Ilene Little, is the editor of [Escapeartist's Medical Tourism Blog](#) She has written an excellent Medical Tourism Report on [Seven Reasons to Choose Medical Tourism](#).

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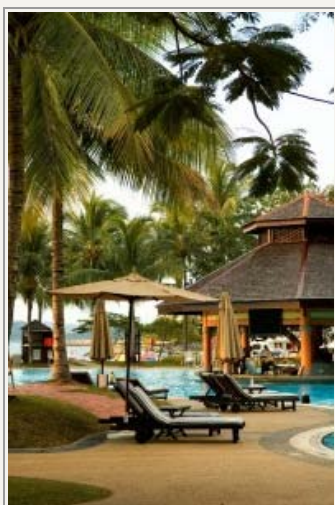



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Five Best Places to Retire in Asia Pacific

By Susan Beverley / Nov 10 • Categorized as [Overseas Retirement](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



tropical paradise style retirement retreats

Geographically speaking, the Asia Pacific region covers an enormous land and sea mass; and from a socio-political point of view it incorporates an exceptionally diverse range of nations. However, perhaps the one thing of absolute note that the region offers expatriate retirees is exceptional *choice* – choice in terms of climate, landscape, cost of living, ease of relocation and quality of life.

- From the first world sophistication of cities like Sydney or Melbourne in Australia to the tropical paradise of the beaches in Bali...

- From the tax-free benefits of living in a country like Malaysia, to the absolutely breathtaking splendour of a nation like New Zealand...

- ...All the way through to the exceptional balance between a low cost of living and a high quality of life on offer in Thailand...

- ...The Asia Pacific region offers it all up to international expatriates looking for a perfect place to hang their hat in retirement.

Continuing our series of articles about where the best places are to retire around the world by region, today we're turning our attentions to the Asia Pacific region and hand picking our top 5 destinations for retirees. Whilst there are over 40 countries or territories to choose from, we have plumped for the most universally desirable.

If you're looking for a part of the world perhaps lesser explored by North American retirees to date, or you want to head for tropical beaches or you're seeking stunning scenery, you will certainly find everything you've ever wished for across the Asia Pacific region.

Australia

Whilst retiring to Australia is not necessarily cheap or easy – (it depends on whether you want to invest to get a retirement visa, or whether you have familial connections 'Down Under' who will sponsor your visa application) – the rewards on offer for those who make the effort to retire to Australia are massive.

The nation is vast but far less populated than the United States for example, meaning that you can enjoy the incredible space that the country has to offer and even find a home with land if you want to spread out in retirement!

Australia has a range of exceptional climates that retirees can benefit from too – from the temperate climate and seasonal changes in Tasmania and the southern most parts of South Australia and the south-western tip of Western Australia for example – to the tropical paradises of the north. If you suffer from respiratory problems or health issues that are made worse by the cold weather, the clean air in parts of Australia as well as the

More in 'Overseas Retirement'

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exceptionally warm climate could really benefit you.

The nation is also a first world, major economy where the gap between rich and poor is much less pronounced than in other such countries such as the US and the UK. There is healthcare for all, social standards are high, and the quality of life available in retirement in Australia is exceptional.

It's easy to integrate with Australians as there is no language or cultural barrier, and the locals are famous for their warm welcome that particularly extends to those from American and Britain for example. Life expectancy 'Down Under' is high, the landscape is stunning, there is plenty to keep you entertained in retirement if you live close enough to a community, and perhaps the only down side is that the cost of living is actually on a par with that in the USA or Canada.

If you're looking for first world sophistication, an amazing climate and a beautiful country to retire to then Australia is worth consideration – but if you have a tight budget to live on perhaps you'd prefer our second choice of nation in the Asia Pacific region.

Bali

If Australia is too expensive and too difficult to retire to, then Bali offers a fantastic alternative. The people of this Indonesian island are peace loving, family orientated, genuinely contented souls, more than happy to share their stunning natural environment with foreign residents who come and want to integrate and enjoy all that Bali has to offer.

The island is famous for its tropical beaches, its perfect green and lush landscape and it's very laid back pace of life. What's more, Bali is famous as a culturally rich destination with dance, art, history, music, painting and sculpture pursuits and professions enjoyed by locals and expatriates alike.

The religion practiced locally is mainly Hindu with a mix of Islam, and as stated, the people are peace loving souls with exceptionally strong and high family values.

Tourism has been a very important income generator for Bali in recent decades, and as a result the infrastructure and services available on the island are improving all the time and suit many Western retirees looking for a blend between tropical paradise and sophistication.

If you want an affordable cost of living you can certainly find it in Bali – and other benefits in the nation's favour for would be retirees are the climate, natural landscape, welcoming people, beautiful flora and fauna and the relative ease of relocation.

For example, if you're over 55 years of age, of good character and you can demonstrate that you are able to support yourself fully in retirement financially speaking, you may be allowed to retire in Bali on an extended temporary basis.

Malaysia

An even easier place to achieve a retirement visa that's exceptionally valuable is Malaysia. This nation has a retiree program that offers tax-free benefits to international citizens; it's called the Malaysia My Second Home Program. It's actively promoted by the Government to allow foreigners who fulfill certain criteria to stay in Malaysia for as long as possible on a multiple-entry, social visit pass renewable every 10 years.

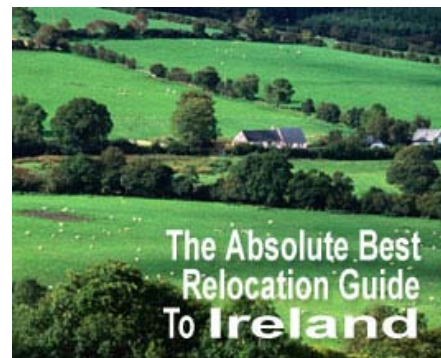
The general benefits for qualifying individuals include but are not limited to tax exemption on pension income remitted to Malaysia, tax free car importation or local car purchase, and multiple property ownership rights – but ensure you check out whether you are eligible to benefit.

Other than these visa based benefits for qualifying individuals, Malaysia is a great place to retire because English is the second language and it is widely spoken and understood, making integration easier for North Americans for example. Additionally, there is every type of recreational and cultural pursuit available in Malaysia from theme parks to golf courses, and from jungle trails to stunning tropical beaches.

The climate is stunning, the landscape is diverse, the people are well educated, friendly and welcoming of foreigners, and the standard of living can be exceptionally high depending on where you choose to base yourself in retirement.

If you want first world accommodation and healthcare for example, Kuala Lumpur could be a good place to live – but if you want to escape and find a tropical paradise where the lifestyle is excellent but the pace of life is very laid back, you can get away from it all in Malaysia and make a home for yourself on your own tropical beach.

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New Zealand

Whilst there is no specific retirement visa category for New Zealand, you can apply under any of the normal residency categories, or apply for temporary retirement through investment.

The nation has become famous through film because its unrivalled scenery has resulted in New Zealand being the backdrop for a number of high budget Hollywood blockbusters – and anyone who visits is always blown away by the striking and dramatic landscapes and seascapes of this wonderful nation.

New Zealand is first world, English is the mother tongue for the majority of citizens, the quality of life is high – with great emphasis placed on enjoying the great outdoors – and the cost of living in New Zealand is lower than in Australia.

Healthcare is universally available and of a high standard, real estate is affordable especially outside the main towns and cities and commuter belts, and if you're looking to get a very long way away from your old life in retirement, you can't get much further away than New Zealand!

The pace of life in New Zealand is certainly slower than in America for example, and it can really suit retirees as a result. Whilst the climate is not as favourable as any of the nations so far mentioned in the Asia Pacific region, you can find a home in a temperate part of the country, and you can buy or rent centrally heated and well insulated homes.

New Zealand could suit you if you don't want to have to learn a new language but you do want a more affordable cost of living, you don't want to live in tropical conditions but you do want stunning scenery, and if you want the perfect blend between an affordable retirement and a first world nation.

Thailand

Our final choice for retirees looking at the Asia Pacific region of our wonderful world for a new home in retirement is tantalising Thailand. The country has gone from being a tourism destination for hippies and students, through a transition as a slightly seedy place to vacation, and it has finally emerged as an expatriate destination of choice – particularly for international retirees.

Thailand offers the blend most retirees are seeking between a low cost of living, a high quality of life, exceptional weather, a beautiful landscape and welcoming people. What's more, in Phuket for example, health tourism is growing as healthcare standards are increasing – which is certainly good news for retirees.

Real estate to buy or rent is affordable in Thailand, as is the cost of living – eating out at a beachfront restaurant is the norm rather than an extra special treat in Thailand, and the landscape around you is lush, verdant, tropical and truly stunning.

The nation is well serviced with the likes of golf courses and sailing clubs for those seeking high grade recreational pursuits in retirement – or you can simply relax into your new life abroad and integrate with other expats and socialise less formally in your own garden or beside your own swimming pool.

In Conclusion

Perhaps the Asia Pacific region offers more tropical paradise style retirement retreats than any other part of the world! It certainly offers up a host of first world yet affordable, friendly and welcoming nations that you could conceivably call home in retirement – particularly if you're looking to escape.

The region is blessed with such a range of country options for retirees however, that it will be well worth an exploration tour before you settle on your preferred country. Things to consider will include your visa requirements, the cost of living, exchange rate fluctuation, healthcare and ease of cultural integration – so happy seeking and ultimately, happy retirement abroad.

You will find hundreds of pages containing free information, resources and articles on [Living In Australia](#), [Living in Thailand](#), [Living in Bali](#), or [Moving to New Zealand on Escape Artist](#).

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.

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Permaculture and the Business of Coffee Beans in Guatemala

By Tracy Barnett / Nov 10 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Rony Lec is roasting coffee beans on a clay comal

San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala – Rony Lec is roasting coffee beans on a clay comal when I arrive, stirring patiently as the smoke rises. He grew the coffee out back, and every step of the process, like many of his processes, is his own.

We're seated at his kitchen table now, in the home he designed and built, sharing a cup of the freshest coffee I've ever tasted. A soft-spoken Kakchiquel Maya with a loose ponytail and a gentle voice, Rony takes a sip of the fragrant brew and settles in to tell me his story.

The light filters in pleasantly from above through a skylight, an artfully placed series of bamboo tubes and the brown, green and white glass cylinders high above us that are set into the

adobe walls. Later I learn, to my surprise, that these colorful cylinders are discarded bottles.

A tree trunk with its gracefully gnarled limbs emerges somewhere from the wrought-iron staircase; a lamp woven from bamboo hangs above us. The stone wall and arched door of the sauna in the background, the lush greenery of the garden out back and the savory aroma of home-grown and home-cooked food complete the picture of natural harmony.

I am at home with a permaculturist. Permaculture, for the uninitiated, is a design system that incorporates everything from agriculture to architecture to community and organizational development into an elegant system that works in harmony with nature. How permaculture came to this tiny village amid the volcanoes on the shores of Lake Atitlan is a story as winding as the canals Rony designed to slow down the torrential floodwaters here.

Rony was one of the hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans whose lives were blown apart by the 36-year civil war. He was just a boy when his father was killed by the army.

"My family was always involved in community development and organizing, and that was the reality in those days; anyone who was working with the community was perceived as a threat." His family, in fear for their lives, fled to the United States with the help of the Catholic diocese of New Ulm, Minn., which has a strong presence in this village.

Rony studied at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, earning a degree in cultural anthropology, but always with the idea of coming back home and applying it in a way that would make a difference for his people.

"I never wanted to gain knowledge just to put it in a book on a shelf," he said. "For me, knowledge has to go beyond theory, it's something you must put into practice."

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Returning home in 1994, when the conflict had calmed and negotiations were underway, he looked around for a project that could apply what he'd learned about his roots in the Mayan tradition, a tradition interwoven with the rhythms of nature.

"My idea was how to reconstruct and rescue the traditional, ancestral knowledge, and of course much of that had to do with agriculture, because that's the base of our culture."

On his own he read far and wide about alternative agricultural practices, and he began to dig into the ancient traditions of his own people. He found his first project on a piece of flood-prone land near the lake, owned by the Catholic Diocese. The land was compacted from many years of cattle grazing, and it flooded, along with the surrounding homes, every rainy season.

Rony asked for the land to try out the ancient system known in ancient Nahuatl as chinampas. The chinampa system is most famously illustrated by the design of ancient Mexico City, which was built by diverting the waters of a swampy lake into canals. Xochimilco, a historic neighborhood in the south of Mexico City, is the last vestige of the old chinampa system.

Here in the Guatemalan highlands, the Kakchiquel Maya had the same concept with a different name, but it fell out of use many years ago with the advent of modern agriculture.

Rony organized a group of subsistence farmers to help him analyze the situation and reclaim the land so that they could farm it, and they spent weeks digging the ditches that would slow down and channelize the rushing waters. But come rainy season, it didn't work; the canals were clogged with sediment, and the project was swamped.

"Of course, in the anthropology books they tell you about the chinampas, but they don't tell you how to build them," he recalls with a laugh.

That's when he was invited to a conference in the States on traditional agricultural practices, and he decided to make the trip with a dual purpose: to visit the Santa Fe-based center of Permacultura America Latina.

It was there at the "permaculture mansion" of one of the PAL board members that Rony began to realize the potential of permaculture to transform living systems. He explained his plan to PAL founder Ali Sharif, who took a look and quickly diagnosed the problem. The canals he had made were linear and angular – not like anything you'd find in nature. The trick to designing systems that work well is in mimicking nature, Sharif explained, working with nature instead of against it.

The trip was a breakthrough for him, and he ended up making another trip to Australia to study with the legendary Bill Mollison, one of the founders of the permaculture system.

Soon after his trip to Australia, he was joined by Rebecca Cutter, an artist, designer and educator from New York, who had heard about Rony's group, then called Ija'tz, the Kakchiquel word for seeds. All she knew about the project was that it combined design and organic agriculture in some innovative ways. She came down to volunteer and ended up staying.

The new chinampa design was by all accounts a success. Rebecca took me on a tour and I was able to see the lush forest they had created on this urban tract of about 60 by 150 meters, where there once was only barren, compacted ground. It was raining, so I saw the canal system at work.

"What this does is slow the water down," Rebecca explained. "Fast water is destructive."

Runoff from surrounding hillsides carries tons of soil, silt, sand and other debris with it, which formerly ended up in the houses of the people who were flooded each year. Now the water as well as the soil it carries is retained on the land, and at the end of each rainy season when the canals dry up, the farmers empty them of that season's load of rich soil, sand and silt, piling it up on the sides. In this way, mounds of rich, fertile soil a meter high or more has been built along the meandering canals.

A profusion of tropical plant life, much of it edible, sprouts from those hills. Rebecca shows me the house where they once lived on the site, and a "banana circle," a permaculture technique involving a circle of banana palms used to treat greywater.

IxChel, Rebecca and Rony's curly-haired, bright and energetic daughter, accompanies us on the tour, running off to gather wild strawberries and yellow flowers to share with us.

The growers collective who made up Ija'tz eventually decided to focus their energy around the production and commercialization of organic coffee. Rony and Rebecca supported their decision but wanted to continue promoting

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Permaculture with a focus on the protection of genetic diversity both locally and throughout Mesoamerica. So in 2000, Rony and Rebecca founded the Mesoamerican Permaculture Institute, or IMAP, and the two associations continue to collaborate and support each other.

In the decade since its founding, the group has organized local growers to produce seeds and vegetables organically and has helped to create fair trade markets and seed exchanges with farmers and organizations working locally and throughout Guatemala; set up a center that has adapted the permaculture system to a subtropical and indigenous setting; where they've taught hundreds of students, both local and international; and responded to the disaster created by Hurricane Stan with low-tech water treatment systems, soil conservation practices, community gardens and other appropriate-technology approaches to disaster relief.

Perhaps their biggest success has been the establishment of a seed bank, housing seeds from thousands of native plants and disseminating them among local growers to keep them in circulation. The seed bank is a concept that has been growing in response to an increased homogenization of agriculture, with corporate growers pressuring local varieties out of existence.

Now, however, it's time for us to go, and the rain is growing stronger. My tour of IMAP and the seed bank will have to wait for another day.

Please follow Tracy on her trip through Central and South America by going to her website <http://www.theesperanzaproject.org/>.

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Buying my Pied-à-Terre in Uruguay

By David Cummings / Nov 10 • Categorized as [International Real Estate](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Waterside Cottage - my fishing shack in the beautiful UNESCO town of Colonia

As some of you who have read a few of my previous articles for Escape Artist will know, I own and run Estancia La Margarita (www.estancialamargarita.com) not too far from Buenos Aires in Argentina. I have lived here for nearly seven years and have owned and run La Margarita since 2005. It's a great life! I get to meet loads of people and have the privilege of living in the spectacular pampas – on top of that, I get to be a farmer. However, I also like to go fishing sometimes and over the years have often been to Uruguay to do just that. In fact I like fishing there so much I decided to buy a house there. After buying a house in Argentina (for sure it does have its quirks) I thought I had seen everything but I was in for a surprise.

I started my looking for a fishing shack in the beautiful UNESCO town of Colonia some years ago. When I first went there in 2004 I saw a house on the river which was a total wreck but it was located right in the old Portuguese built town and was right on the River Plate. I was with my then partner Vero and I asked her to ring the number on the sales board to see what the situation was and the person on the other end of the line said that it had been reserved for US\$86000. Now that was a steal and I asked Vero to make an offer for more than that. It was refused even though I had offered US\$10000 more. With a heavy heart I abandoned my search and within a year I had purchased La Margarita. I still liked fishing though and whenever I needed a break I took myself off to Uruguay. Last year I decided that ok David it's time to buy in Uruguay and I set my budget at around 80000US. I didn't want Punta del Este – too brash for me and in the summer it's full of holiday makers of course. It's sort of like a Buenos Aires on sea for me. Since I live part of my time in trendy Palermo in Buenos Aires which is full of chic restaurants and shops I didn't need that in my holiday home – I was looking for *rustic on the river*.

With all this in mind I started to explore the small resorts located around 60 -100 kilometers from Colonia which is an hour's ferry ride from BA. It's very convenient because when I am in BA I can catch a ferry to Colonia and in one hour I am in Uruguay. There I can drive my own car or hire one and in 40 minutes I can be tackling up to fish. All seemed perfect to me. The small resorts near to Colonia are rustic, have a few food shops and not much else apart from great sandy beaches and the river to swim or fish in and some excellent walks – perfect. I knew what I was looking for. A small house with two bedrooms with direct access to the river, a house in good condition without a need to do much renovation, located in a nice peaceful location and within easy reach of the ferry terminal in BA – easy eh umm not quite.!

I started to search the internet for what I was looking for with not much luck. It seems that selling houses on the internet hasn't quite reached this part of Uruguay (it's not Punta Del Este for sure). However after a number of searches I found a house which seemed to fit the bill. It was a small two bed house of about 20 years old and it was first line. It did have a small road in front of it but on the other side of that road was the beach. The published price

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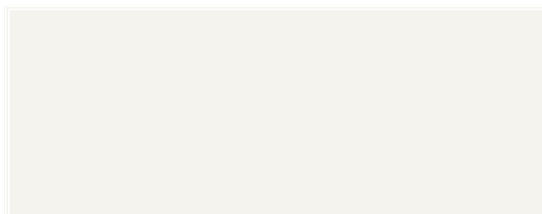
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was 65000\$US. It all seemed great, all I had to do was get there to see it. Problem was as always happens I didn't have time to get and see it immediately – in fact it took a month. However, I was delighted to hear when I spoke to the agent and when I found the time to view it that it was indeed still for sale and I informed him ok I will book my ticket and see it the next day. Full of anticipation I set out to find the house with fingers crossed that it was what I was looking for. It was located 60 kilometers from the ferry port in a small resort called Blanca Arena and with a name like that how could I go wrong! I found the house easily enough. I had told the agent to save him time I would have a look on the outside and if it was for me I would call him. When I arrived I knew immediately it was for me. It had a great view of the river, it was small so manageable and hey, I could fish almost from my doorstep!

On the white sandy beach were some guys fishing so I went to talk to them to see what fish were biting. Their catch was good and it was all by now getting pretty exciting. One of the guys asked me if I was just passing through and I said nope I was looking at that house over there with a view to buying it. 'Umm' he said, 'I think you are a day too late, it was sold yesterday for 46000US\$'. My spirit wilted. I rang the agent and he said that as far as he was concerned it was still for sale but would check with the owners to confirm it. Five minutes later he called me back so say sorry it was sold yesterday by the owner who accepted that offer of 46000US\$. I repeatedly told myself the house just wasn't for me the house just wasn't for me the house wasn't for me – dam why didn't I come earlier my brain was really saying. Truth was I was really disappointed but one thing for sure I was determined to find my little shack on the river in Uruguay more than ever now. I decided to use my now extra time in Uruguay to explore some of the other resorts. A few kilometers down river I came across a house which looked as though it had direct access to the river. I stopped my car and made my way through the over grown garden and to the end of the garden and there it was – the beach of white sand and the river beyond. This was it, I had found what I had been looking for- now to do the deal. I rang the number on the board and the agent said he could show me the house but that the owner was away and if I wanted to do a deal I would have to return. 'Ok' I said, 'no problem just show me the house and I will be back as soon as the owner is around'. Within an hour Cesar the agent arrived with keys in hand. We did a quick tour of the small house which was rustic but suited me fine and then on to the terrace outside to see the view of the beach and river. It turned out that the owner was asking US\$80000. OK just in my budget I thought and who knows he may accept an offer. I agreed to come back within 6 days when the owner was around.

The next week I arrived back in Uruguay with the full intention of buying the rustic house on the beach even if I couldn't get the owner down a peso. When we arrived at the house there was the owner and Cesar the agent waiting for me. We did a quick tour of the house again and the owner told me the story of the house – how it had had been in the family for years and that he was sad to sell it but he had recently divorced and that he needed the money to settle with his ex. Once our tour of the house was over I asked to speak to Cesar in private. I said that I would make an offer for the house of 60000US\$. He said he would speak to the owner. Off he went to his car and made my offer. Cesar came back and said he will take 75000US\$. Ok! I thought we are in the game! Back and forth went Cesar until we settled at 69000US\$ with the furniture included- I was very happy and so it seemed was the owner. We all immediately headed to the lawyers to sign a reserve contract with a 10% deposit of the asking price. When we got to the lawyers I realized that I had forgotten to bring all the money I intended to bring and had only 4000US\$. The Lawyer said the owner would accept that and we duly signed the legal reserve document. In the document the lawyer inserted a fine clause meaning if I didn't come back on the agreed date to finalize the deal I would lose my money and I would have to pay double the reserve i.e. US\$8000 in total – I fully intended to come back so it was no problem for me. The lawyer said that in one week more or less we would be in a position to sign the contract and she would call me to confirm it. A week later I got a call from the lawyer but not the call I expected! She said that the owner had changed his mind and that I should come back and pick my money up and the fine money of 4000US\$. One week later I was at the lawyer's office picking up my money and the 4 grand from the owner thank you very much. To be truthful I was really sad – although I had made a quick 4 grand I didn't have my house. The lawyer said it was the first time it had ever happened. She added that normally the fine is less but since I was a foreigner she thought it would be me who defaulted not the owner and the owner had asked to put in a bigger fine – how wrong can you be. Why he backed out I am not sure but I suspect the house was a bargain and someone offered a much bigger price

With my little windfall in my pocket I decided to explore some small resorts next to the one I was going to buy since there wasn't anything suitable in Blanca Arena where I so nearly became the happy owner of a rustic shack on the beach.



The next resort I drove to was called Boca del Cufre. When I arrived in the tiny resort I liked it. Although it was tiny it had charm. As I headed towards the beach I passed a house which had a for sale board. I hadn't arrived at the beach yet so I was pretty sure it wasn't on the beach but I decided to have a quick look. I As I walked up

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Good catch!

the small path to the house my heart leapt – I saw that although it wasn't on the beach it was right on the River Cufre with a great view of the estuary and the beach beyond. That was it – I didn't care what the house was like the location was all that mattered to me. In fact the house looked great and the location was perfect. I decided to have a chat with the next door neighbour who luckily was in. She said that they

were asking 65000US\$ and that it was a local family who owned it. I got the number from the sales board of the owners. I rang them and asked if I could have a look around the house. They agreed to show it to me the next day. The next day at 11am prompt I arrived and found the owners already there. They were busy tidying the house. They showed me around the property which it turned out was built in 1970 – it needed painting and a few bits of renovation but looked solid as a rock. It had two bedrooms a living room with a great fire place, small kitchen and bathroom. Outside was a further bathroom which needed to a bit of work and a small outhouse perfect for eating out with a great view of the river and beach. To say I was very happy was an understatement – it was just what I was looking for. A small house right on the river (I could fish from my garden), one minute to the beach and in a quiet peaceful location out of season but very rentable in season. Ok all well and good, now we had to talk about the price. Once again I was happy to offer the asking price but of course being a Brit I had to make an offer below the asking price – it's in the blood! To avoid looking like I was really keen I said I would have a think about my offer and contact them when I was back in Buenos Aires. A few days later I rang Soledad who was in charge of the family sale. I offered US\$40000 – cheeky, but hey worth a shot! She said, 'look David, we don't intend to give this house away so come back with a better offer' – ok I was in the game once again! . We finally settled on 48000 with me paying their legal fees – to me it was bargain and I was as happy as Larry.

We arranged a time for me to come to Uruguay again and sign the exchange contract. In July I was back in Uruguay to sign for the house. We agreed to complete the deal a few days after the final of the World Cup since I was to be in UK watching England get to the World Cup finals! I wished my new Uruguayan friends good luck in the World Cup confident that they would be knocked out well before us – gulp! Umm, how wrong can one be! . They wished me and England good luck safe in the knowledge that they had won the World Cup twice to our once. The rest is history and no more talk of football here in this article.

On the agreed date I arrived back in Uruguay and we signed and completed the deal. I can reliably confirm that buying property in Uruguay is not the nerve racking experience it is in Argentina where all the cash literally has to be laid on the table and counted. We used cheques drawn on my account and within an hour I was the very happy owner of a little house in the river.

After the sale I went to my little house on the river and opened up the proverbial bottle of wine and sat by the river in my garden looking at the sunset- I was a very happy and I think a lucky man.

Since the purchase I have spent about 5000\$US doing some improvements in the house and Soledad is now looking after the house for me when I am not there. I have decided to rent it in Jan and Feb since I will be working full out on La Margarita. It is already rented for Jan and Feb is looking very good. I love living in Argentina but I also love escaping to Uruguay and now I have my little house in the river to fish in I am very very happy.

Over the past few months I have spent some primetime in what is now called Waterside Cottage Uruguay and also tested to see if the fishing was as good as everyone said it was – it was in fact spectacular!. In November I went fishing at the bottom of my garden and caught my first Dorado and I can testify that they don't have that reputation for being one of the fiercest fighters for nothing. Not only did I catch it we eat it that night in a recipe given to me by my neighbour – delicious!

I really love this little house and I am pretty sure others will too so I decided to do a little web page for it if you want to have a quick peek here is the link <http://watersidecottageuruguay.blogspot.com/> and if you are ever in Uruguay and feel like renting it just send me an email to info@estanciamargarita.com. If you enjoy being chilled out and fishing you will love it

Hasta La Proxima



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Living in the Canary Islands: Until death do us part (or until someone better comes along)

By Barrie Mahoney / Nov 10 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



It is traditional for Canarians to marry when they are young

Recent divorce statistics from Spain's National Statistics Office are, at first glance, alarming. The figures show that in the Canary Islands the rate of 3 divorces per thousand of the population is the highest in Spain, where the divorce rate has fallen by 10 per cent since the time of the last survey in 2008.

Given that, for many, these islands appear to be an island paradise that draws many Northern Europeans to the islands, begs the question "What has gone wrong for these couples?" I can only guess that most of these breakdowns will be in the younger age group and are linked to the stresses caused by a lack of jobs, homes and a bleak future.

It is traditional for Canarians to marry when they are young. Many are still not out of their teenage years when the pressures of many overbearing families, and a mostly symbolic Church, forces them to take their wedding vows. It is not unusual to see, what appears at first, to be a brother and sister taking a baby out in the pram or playing with a toddler on the beach. It is

only when chatting to these 'brothers and sisters' that we discover that they are in fact husband and wife and that the child is their own.

Canarians are struggling with nearly 30 per cent unemployment, and this has hit the youth particularly hard. One in every three unemployed are under 30 years old leading them to be dubbed "the lost generation". Statistics indicate that more than half of those in their thirties are still not financially independent and rely on their parents for support.

Needless to say, many of these young couples do not have the financial resources to rent a flat or to start a mortgage and, as a consequence, they are forced to live with their in-laws. This brings its own pressures on any couple. In the past, this has meant that grandmother has taken on the burden of raising the child and later providing after-school care, whilst the young parents are able to finish their education or start a career, but times have changed. The pressures of living within an extended family for far longer than in the past, and the inability of obtaining a home of their own, places unbearable pressures upon many families.

The problems have become more acute in recent years with the influx of expats moving to these islands. The best and most affordable properties have been snapped up by expats, forcing house prices, goods and services to increase as a consequence. It is an anomaly that despite the popularity of these islands as a holiday destination, they remain the bastions of unemployment, low pay, long hours and a reliance on 'black money' rather than secure contracts offering a living wage to local people.

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The islands' government has attempted in recent years to provide affordable housing for young families, but the supply and availability of such properties has been slow and requires a steady income, which many young couples do not have. As many of us will remember from the UK, affordable housing, starter homes and other such well-meaning schemes do not remain affordable housing for very long.

We are often told that Spain is a very family-orientated society, and so it is – far more than many would consider realistic or desirable in the UK. In Spain, it is customary for all members of the family to take responsibility for, and to look after, the young, elderly and sick members of their family. In the Costas and the Canary Islands, residential homes for the elderly are few, with the exception of several run by nuns for the elderly with no families.

Island living, although idyllic in many ways, also brings other pressures that are often not realised. Island living often creates, by definition, an insular view of life. Despite attempts by schools to widen their pupils' experiences, many have never left these islands. Whereas school leavers in Peninsular Spain and other parts of Europe attend universities far from home, gaining rich experiences and meeting a wide variety of other people, as they complete their formal education, many Canarians study locally and have never left the islands. I recall putting the question of travel to Peninsular Spain and further afield to one young Canarian in his thirties. His reply was, "Why should we? We have everything that we need here." However, it is this insularity of knowing maybe only the people that we went to school with, or those from the same town or village that creates its own problems.

Hopefully, these recent statistics will provide opportunities for some soul-searching amongst clerics, local and national politicians. The statistics will also provide useful fodder for university researchers and the like. Hopefully, society too will look seriously at the pressures that young Canarian families currently face and take action. However, in these days of recession and financial cutbacks, I somehow doubt that anything positive will happen to address an obvious problem.



Cover

About the author: Barrie Mahoney was a teacher, head teacher and school inspector in the UK, as well as a reporter in Spain, before moving to the Canary Islands as a newspaper editor. He is still enjoying life in the sun as a writer and author.

If you enjoyed this article, take a look at Barrie's websites: www.barriemahoney.com and www.thecanaryislander.com or read his latest novel, 'Journeys and Jigsaws' (ISBN: 9781843865384).

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Istanbul: A city with so much to discover

By Syahidah Ismail / Nov 10 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Discover Istanbul

The only things I knew about Turkey before I came here were that it was once home to a great empire that ruled on three continents and how the country was transformed into a republic under the leadership of the great Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

I started searching for information and read a lot about Turkey in order to understand the country before I would begin living there. I was captivated by its great history and couldn't wait to explore Istanbul. There was already a huge "to do" list I had noted in my mind — I had to watch the whirling dervishes, visit the Blue Mosque, spend some money in the Grand Bazaar, visit numerous historic sites in Istanbul, enjoy a Bosphorus cruise and get a chance to experience a hamam.

I arrived in Istanbul one day before the holy month of Ramadan began. I had been living in Malaysia for 23 years, and now I had to be independent and cherish every moment I would spend in Istanbul. I had to fast and experience the holy month the way Turks do, rejoice it and celebrate Eid al-Fitr on what was once Ottoman soil. The first night of Ramadan I was awakened by a loud sound from the street. When I looked out the window, there was a man pounding on a drum, which was, as I later found out, to wake people up for sahur. It made me remember the many villages in Malaysia in which the people were awakened by the sound of tabuh — a log hit by a drummer at surau or a mosque.

I loved the way Turkish people gathered with their families around the mosque to wait for the adhan for iftar. It showed how they appreciate their family and the mosque itself. My friends and I did not want to miss the chance to be part of the Turkish tradition of waiting for the mahya to be illuminated at the Blue Mosque, which is lit up as a sign for iftar. Apart from that we also took advantage of the opportunity to perform our prayers at the Blue Mosque. One of the items on my "must do" list was accomplished when I watched the whirling dervish ceremony; my housemate took me and my friends to a restaurant near Sultanahmet after iftar, and we were lucky because the show was just about to begin. I was incredibly excited and blown away with the semah show, which is also known as the sufi dance. Check! I had crossed off an item on my list.

When it came to day-to-day living in Istanbul there were some similarities between Turkey and Malaysia. The first thing I noticed is how Turkish people are so hooked on their çay, while in Malaysia most Malaysians are addicted to teh tarik (tea mix with milk prepared in two mugs). It never crossed my mind that two countries separated by thousand miles with different languages, culture, lifestyle and backgrounds could still share a few similarities.

Besides çay, I also found Turkish people welcome their guest as their relatives, a common practice in Malaysia. Even though we were barely knew each other, my friends and I were invited to our housemate's aunt's home for iftar. Aunt Fatma's home was facing the Eyüp Sultan Mosque, and we enjoyed a savory Turkish meal for our iftar. Then we took a long walk to the Pierre Loti hill. On our way we saw a carnival grounds alongside the road. There

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were stalls selling kebab, sweets, drawings, corn, dolma and much much more. My housemate explained to us that it was only during Ramadan that the municipality held these kinds of activities. Upon arriving at Pierre Loti we found ourselves elevated above the marvelous Golden Horn and, even though it was late at night, the scenery from the top was absolutely breathtaking. We sat for a while at the Pierre Loti cafe, sipping our Turkish coffee down to the last drop.

To prove that we were able to be independent living in Istanbul, my friends and I decided to go to the Grand Bazaar on our own — without a Turkish guide. We just followed the Istanbul map we had, which we picked up at Atatürk Airport and which featured the city's public transport lines. However, we still we asked our housemate how to get there because the map didn't provide enough information. And yes... we did take the wrong train from Zeytinburnu. But we managed to change trains and reach the Grand Bazaar. Here I was welcomed by some merchants who could speak my language! They said "Apa Khabar?" (nasilsin, or how are you) and "Murah-murah" (ucuz, or cheap). Despite their insistence, I didn't spend much because it was pricey and without a doubt we were begging to be ripped off with the curious and eager looks on our faces. Afterwards we continued exploring Istanbul, guided by the map.

We were told that Eid al-Fitr (Ramazan Bayramı) was not celebrated for as long as Eid al-Adha (Kurban Bayramı) here in Turkey, which is different than in Malaysia. In Malaysia, Eid al-Fitr is celebrated for an entire month, the month of Syawal. Before the end of Ramadan, Muslims in Malaysia begin preparing for the day with new attire: a baju kurung for ladies and baju melayu for men; both are traditional Malay costumes. My friends and I decided to wear our traditional costumes and, of course, we caught the attention of countless eyes on our way to a celebration at a Malaysian house in Etiler. We took a photo together as our memento of our first and perhaps only Eid al-Fitr in Istanbul at the Kabataş-Üsküdar ferry jetty with the beautiful Bosphorus as our background.

As Ramadan is long over, the time had come for me and my friends to taste Turkish cuisine. Our housemate once gave us lahmacun, and ever since then we began eating it every day until we were acquainted with new foods such as iskender, tavuk kanat, beyti, tavuk şiş and much more. I also tried dolma on the street, çay on the ferry and İzmir lokma at Eminönü, the last of which is similar to "kuih keria" in Malaysia. Every day we would pass by a row of shops selling baklava, but we didn't know which one was the best and we'd end up buying all the flavors to taste. I enjoyed baklava so much, in addition to künefe — a delight I seemed to be alone in as my friends found it intolerably sweet. There are desserts in Malaysia, but they are not nearly as sweet as baklava, künefe and lokum. I wonder if the percentage of people suffering from diabetes in Turkey is really high?

Seeing Turks spend their summer evenings with families around the Sultanahmet garden made me and my friends eager to join them. We planned picnics every weekend during summer in a different part of Istanbul. We were so fortunate that we got a free ticket from the tourist guide to enter Topkapı Palace and found the chance to picnic in the palace garden. We cooked our own meals — Malaysian food, of course — and enjoyed weekend evenings in Istanbul. Picnicking is unquestionably rarely done in the center of Kuala Lumpur as the heat will burn your skin. Usually Malaysians picnic at the beach as there are plenty of beautiful beaches in Malaysia, plus the wind from the sea cools down the warmth of the sun. But, the funny thing is we continued to picnic until the fall season came in, and we were the only people who spent our evenings in freezing weather in a garden facing Hagia Sophia. And of course people were staring at us, but it is still one of my most vivid memories of Istanbul.

Istanbul definitely holds a special place in my heart as a part of me fell in love with this city. Almost all of the items on my "to do" list were checked off, except for the hamam, and oh yes, how would I get my hands on a Cola Turka once I got home? My next Eid in the upcoming days is going to have such a big void.

This article first appeared on [Today's Zaman](#), a website truly worth visiting for more news, stories and information about life and living in Turkey.

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Found in Translation: A Beginner's Guide to TEFL Training in Prague

By Neville Thomas / Nov 10 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Prague - a city of culture and fun

For many years, Prague has been a Mecca for TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) training but how is the industry evolving and what should you know before committing to a TEFL course?

The financial crisis has undeniably had an adverse effect on the whole spectrum of language learning in Europe recently and language schools in the Czech Republic have also been hit by the recession.

The Czech Republic (and Prague in particular), has in the past picked up the reputation of being a sort of lush grazing ground for certified and uncertified English teachers and at one time all

the credentials needed for standing in front of a classroom of paying language students was a passport from an English-speaking country.

Sad to say that the days of enormous demand for teachers are over but Prague still remains one of the hubs in Europe where Aussies, Brits, Kiwis and North Americans rub shoulders with local Czechs, while teaching English and soaking up the local flavor of the city's well-deserved international reputation as a city of culture and general jovial frolics.

Taking an internationally recognized TEFL course will provide you with the foundations from which you can teach English and travel, and Prague is the city of choice for many who opt for TEFL training with an eye on afterwards remaining in the city to teach or heading off after certification on a world travel epic.

The absolute best time to take a TEFL course in Prague is either at the beginning of the new school year (September), or in January — at the start of the new school semester.

This is when language schools open up new courses and when typically there is increased demand for English teachers (although teaching positions are available almost any month of the year in Prague).

It's important to note that in some countries the school year has a different start date so if you are wanting to head off to South Korea after your TEFL course for example then you want to be planning ahead for a March start date for your new school teaching year.

The following are answers to 10 of the more frequently asked questions by TEFL students wanting to come study in Prague:

1. [Do I need to speak the local language in order to teach English?](#)

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The simple answer is that you don't. TEFL gives you the tools with which you're able to teach English from Absolute Beginner level all the way up to Advanced level and this goes for any country where you can interview for an English-teaching job.

2. What kind of people take the course?

A whole range of people from many different cultural backgrounds graduate from the TEFL course and TEFL schools encourage and welcome all applications — regardless of sex, age, race or nationality.

Conditions of entrance are set by international guidelines. These are that applicants:

- should be native English-, or non-native advanced English-speakers (i.e., English is your first language or mother tongue and/or you speak English proficiently)

- must be 18 or over

TEFL schools encourage and welcome applications from both native English- and non-native English-speakers.

3. Which is the right TEFL course for me?

It's always recommended that you take either an onsite residential one-month or combined online/onsite course if you have no previous teaching experience. Both the combined online/onsite or one-month residential onsite course are

intense-but-rewarding learning experiences and you will gain the necessary tools needed to then feel confident going into any classroom in the world and teaching a class. Straight online courses are recommended for people with previous teaching experience and are the course of choice for people already in the teaching industry but who don't have any official teaching qualification.

4: Is there a dress code?

To a greater extent it's left up to the individual teacher to decide what they choose to wear to classes (in TEFL training classes and paid English-teaching classes). Some teachers dress up in blouse/skirt or shirt/trousers, whilst other teachers prefer a more casual approach and head off to classes in jeans and T-shirt. As a general rule, for every first new meeting you should dress smartly to ensure a well-received first impression and for women this means smart blouse and skirt/trousers and for men a smart shirt and trousers (with the option of wearing a tie and jacket). Czechs tend to be relaxed in their dress so there is no need to wear a tie to class and

most teachers do tend to adopt the smart/casual approach of jeans and blouse/shirt.

5. Do I need to have a degree?

While you don't need a degree to teach English in Prague you will need a degree for some Middle Eastern and Asian countries, most notably Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Taiwan.

6. What does 'Prague 1' mean?

Prague is divided into districts 1-22 and Prague 1 is in the center: the place where you want to be taking your TEFL course. The center is the throbbing, pulsing, cobblestoned heart of the city — where all the historical sights of interest are and where the city gets its reputation for café culture and party nightlife.

7. How much money should I bring over with me?

This is a tricky question to answer because people's consumer needs vary a lot and Prague has multi-layered pricing systems. As an example a glass of beer can cost 25 CZK in one bar but in another go for as much as 250 CZK.

The simple tip is to avoid eating and drinking where tourists go and, as early as possible, to try to find local eateries and watering joints. You can get by on as little as 500 CZK per day for your general day-to-day necessities, with the odd spoil here and there. To be on the safe side, though, plan to bring \$1,000+ (USD) spending money for each month you plan to be here while you aren't working and remember that most schools won't pay you your first month's wage until the second month of teaching.

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8. What should I bring over with me?

You should definitely bring over any relevant work documents such as college degree documents and written references. Also clothes, books, music and electronics are more expensive in Prague and you should plan for four very distinct weather seasons and the weather variations which come with this meteorological blessing, such as, of course, rain and snow and very cold/very hot temperatures in winter/summer. More often than not, the one thing we can't bring with us are our loved ones back home so make sure you bring your

notebook over so that you can keep in touch and smother the niggling embers of homesickness — signing up for a free Skype account is recommended.

9. Do I need a visa for the TEFL course in Prague?

Citizens of Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and New Zealand don't need to prearrange visas and are issued a (free) 90-day tourist visa upon arrival and don't need a study visa. Citizens of other countries should check with their local Czech embassy or consulate

whether they require a pre-arranged visa for trips to the Czech Republic.

10. Is Prague safe?

Compared to many Western cities, Prague is very safe and the vast majority of visits are trouble-free. However, you must be very aware of petty crime such as pick-pocketing and other thefts — a real issue in the city but avoidable by using common sense and not flashing your valuables in public.

Prague has an enormous wealth of options to offer the most varied of tastes and taking your TEFL in the Czech capital is a great way to experience the city either as a one-month sojourn before heading off to teach English in another worldwide location, or making Prague home and staying for a while — either for a few more months until the tourist visa expires or for longer.

For further information on TEFL certification options please contact ITTP Prague info@tefl-prague.com.

For lots more information, articles and resources about [Living in The Czech Republic](#) visit our dedicated pages on [Escape Artist.com](#)

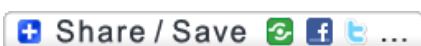
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