

International Living, Part 2



By Sidney Secular

July 9, 2022

THE WORLD'S BEST PLACES TO RETIRE IN 2022

The January 2022 issue of *International Living* magazine contains an article with a survey rating the best places in the world for an American to retire. The survey utilizes a formula considering the fifteen most important criteria that Americans use when they consider retiring abroad. The top twenty-five countries for retirement are rated in descending order. These are places the retiree can basically “have it all” at a small fraction of the cost of living in the USA while being free of the deteriorating quality of life we continue to suffer in this country. The results will surprise the average American who is not much of a world traveler and thereby harbors negative stereotypes about certain supposedly inferior “third world” countries.

The Gold Medal of retirement locations went to Panama with a rating of 86.1% edging out close competitors Costa Rica, Mexico, Portugal and Ecuador. Aside from highly rated Portugal, the only European countries to make the list were France, Malta, Spain, Ireland, Italy and Croatia. Thailand has made great strides in recent years and now ranks first among Asian countries. In Thailand, a couple can live on a white sand beach for \$1,800 per month including rent. You can do the same in Panama for \$2,000 a month or indulge yourself in Old World Europe (Portugal) for \$2,200 per month. Portugal captures the essence of Old World Europe as is reflected in its

outstanding score. That country's combination of Old World charm, a rock-bottom cost of living and excellent real estate values earned it the highest rating among European entrants. The UN currently lists 193 nation states and the survey's 25 chosen represent the cream of the crop as far as good living at reasonable rates is concerned.

You may wonder how tiny Panama edged out other better known countries that were considered. To begin with, Panama City is the only cosmopolitan capital in Central America. This exciting international hub is filled with restaurants, theaters, film festivals while having an abundance of athletic and sporting events, and features high culture and international cuisine. Islands and beaches pepper both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts with plenty of mountain retreats and rural hamlets in between. As well, there is the traditional rural lifestyle of the fishing mecca that is Pedasi. Coronado is a bustling little town with every comfort and convenience from high-speed internet to upscale grocery stores. The country itself is comprised of a small, narrow isthmus so travel distances are short. As a result, you can get to Miami in 3 short hours and to New York in 5 while remaining completely outside of the hurricane belt. The government is stable, the tap water is good and good quality personalized medical care is readily available. There are also many national parks and preserves. Of course, the most important items on your list of priorities are safety and freedom and the survey reports that you will be able to feel as safe and free as you desire, something that is no longer a guarantee in the good ol' US of A!

And then there's Thailand, Asia's premium location. Orange-robed monks walk in single file beneath glittering skyscrapers. Everything you could want or need is at hand in this colorful land and there is no long history of anti-American feelings among the populace. Thailand's medical system is among the best in the world. The country also boasts

some of the most beautiful beaches in the world and you can purchase a two-bedroom home for less than \$100,000. Also, the new 10 year long-term visa is a significant perk that will make your life easier.

If, on the other hand, Europe beckons, enjoying the warm coastal nation of Portugal should be a notion to seriously consider. It is the epitome of Old World charm. Centuries-old architecture and vineyards, cobblestone streets, omnipresent outdoor markets, and convivial cafes make your days charming and pleasing. Northern Portugal is a land of deep river valleys and rolling hills. Furthermore, the country is more green and has a milder climate than one might expect. There are towns located on towering hills as well as working fishing villages. South of the capital, Lisbon, the landscape flattens out and presents with olive groves, big skies, and oak tree forests. Further south is the Algarve region with its almond plantations that sweep down to the sea with its coastline dotted with terracotta tiled hill towns and spectacular beaches.

The Algarve is Europe's playground, containing world-class gold courses, tennis clubs, top-rated fine dining and some of the finest beaches in Europe. As with the south of France, a mild semi-tropical climate prevails. The most amazing thing is that all of this is so affordable. A meal for two with drinks will cost less than \$12. Private health insurance for a couple will go for less than \$275 a month. In Portugal, apart from antibiotics and narcotics, you can get almost any needful medicine over-the-counter in a pharmacy. For those who enjoy good wine and tasty fish dinners, there's no better place than Portugal. There is also the added bonus that, because English is taught in the schools, nearly all the people with whom one deals will speak English and everybody knows how that is a must for most Americans.

E-Mail Sidney Secular: Success_Express@yahoo.com