

If you dream of living abroad, retirement may be the best time. Over half a million Americans living outside the US receive some Social Security, and that number is expected to grow. Many retirees cite cost of living as their reason for moving, while others say health care costs contribute to their move away from the U.S.

#### Try Renting First (or forever)

It's a good idea to spend some time in the area you'd like to live in to see if it suits you. Renting for a few months will expose you to the good and the bad the country has to offer and gives you the flexibility to move locations if the first one doesn't feel right.

Don't be too attached to the idea of eventually owning, either. While homeownership is part of the American dream for many, chances are you may not be able to purchase property in your new country. Depending on where you move to, there may not be a distinct benefit to owning over renting, and you may find that you enjoy the freedom of traveling at your leisure.

#### Do Your Research

It's important to understand the residency requirements for the country of your choice. Take some time to research these requirements, like minimum income requirements, to ensure that you qualify before retirement and moving.

Once you've committed, be sure to brush up on current international banking regulations. You may want to consider holding on to your current state-side bank, but note that some banks frown on maintaining an account if you don't have a U.S. address. If you choose to open a bank account in

your new country of residence, you'll likely have to file an annual report with the U.S. Treasury Department.

### Be Realistic

Your move may mean forgoing some of the conveniences you've grown accustomed to in the U.S. Think cheap gasoline, convenience stores on every corner, a large house and yard, and central air conditioning. If you're moving to an area where these luxuries are a rare commodity, be sure you can and want to live without them before taking the plunge.

While not for everyone, retiring outside the U.S. can be exciting and rewarding. If you'd like to build a retirement abroad into your current retirement savings plan, give us a call.

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