

RIL & MSM Newsletter

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I want to thank everyone who responded to my new portal: **The Mexico Information Center**, which is accessed directly from www.retireinluxury.com and includes a great blog section! The many, many notes of praise and thanks makes me feel my time is well-spent. Thank you All.

Dick and I at a new construction site. We're interested in the next step - building is different in Mexico. This is located in Mazatlan, in the section called Ed Cid.

There are many places in Mexico to retire - just depends on what you are looking for. Here are just a few of the more popular areas for ex-pats: Mazatlan - Costal Mainland; Rosarito - Baja; San Miguel De Allende - 4 hours from Mexico City; Lake Chapala Area - Inland Mainland - Guadalajara Area; Nuevo Vallarta - south of Mazatlan.

When Dick and I first started searching for information concerning places to live in Mexico, Mazatlan and Lake Chapala were the major destinations for expats. Now, Americans are popping up everywhere.

I would love to hear where some of you are living in Mexico, and what you think about the medical situations and, of course, the all-important cost of living. Please drop me a line. I'll share your info!

Please Everyone - If you have ever had chicken pox, make sure you ask your doctor for the shingles vaccination. One of our very dear friends meant to ask his doctor for one - forgot - went home and one week later, he came down with a terrible case of shingles. Now, I have never experienced them, but understand they can be so painful. Dick and I got our vaccine about two months ago - and we got our pneumonia shots too.

FURNITURE

From the first, I've suggested, if you are going to move to Mexico, think seriously about really cleaning out your home and get down to mainly the basic things you are going to need - after all, you are planning to move to a beautiful land with lots to do and relax! You may not really enjoy dusting all those knick-knacks forever.

Furniture made in Mexico may not be just what you are used to though, so you may want to bring the basics. Around the Mazatlan area, it's suggested you go south to Puerto Vallarta or just to the north, to Cuiliacan, the capital of Sinaloa for a good selection of furniture.

To...

Bob Shand, who is in Ciudad Victoria and Dave, who has been living in Mazatlan for over 8 months:

I would appreciate it so much if you would both contact me, via email. I have had several people request an email address for you each - but, I have somehow misplaced both your addresses - woops :)

So, if you would like to spend a few minutes answering some questions from people who are thinking about your area, please, send me an email and I'll pass it on to specific people, with your permission. Thanks, Barbie

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EASY ACCESS INTO MEXICO

An email from one of my readers:

The last time we went to Mazatlan we had our son drive us to the border at Otay Mesa -- we just walked across, got a taxi to the airport and had a great flight with the Mexican airline (can't remember which one). It was quite a bit cheaper than flying from San Diego.

*Outside International General
Buelna Airport near Mazatlan*

GROCERY PRICES

Just wrote down a few prices from Walmart and Gigantia in Mazatlan - Yes, prices have gone up. The best food prices are still found in the Mexican Markets.

Water 5 gallon 1.59	Flank steak, pound 3.00	2.2 pound green pepper .45
Dozen eggs 1.60	All Bran cereal 1.36 pounds 4.40	Gitano jeans 16.00
Gallon milk 4.19	Corn chips, 170 gram, 1.95	Hamburg 2.2# 5.15
5# sugar 1.19	Coke, 2 liter 1.40	Cheese 3.00
Margarine 400 grams 2.10	Yoplait Yogurt 3/1.00	Donuts/cookies/pastry .18 to .50
DelMonte Ketchup 380 grams 1.09	2.2 pound hot dogs 2.49	Bread 12" baguette .50
Ground Chuck 2.2 pounds 8.25	White Onion 2# .96	Whole chicken, pound .85

BANKING IN MEXICO

One concern most people who are considering the move to Mexico, is, "What do I do about finding a bank in Mexico?" This should make you feel a bit more comfortable - everyone knows the Citi Groups.

Banco Nacional de Mexico (Banamex), was created on June 2, 1884, with the merger of Banco Nacional Mexicano and Banco Mercantil Mexicano, two banks that had operated independently since the beginning of 1882. The new bank had branches in Mérida, Veracruz, Puebla, Guanajuato and San Luis Potosi, and a branch in Guadalajara.

For the next thirty years, the bank performed as both commercial bank and national bank, authorized by Mexico's government to print currency, collect taxes and to foster private businesses in the country. Throughout its 118-year history, today's Grupo Financiero Banamex-Accival ("Banacci"), has stayed in the forefront of Mexico's banking industry.

Citigroup Inc.'s landmark acquisition of Grupo Financiero Banamex (Banacci) in 2001, and the subsequent combination of Citigroup's Mexican operations under the Banamex brand, underscored Latin America as a key element of Citigroup's global market plan.

Today, the bank operates more than 1,427 branches and 4,492 ATMs in the main towns and cities of all the states of the Mexican Republic.



Another section of Mazatlan

This is an excerpt from an email I received a while ago, from another happy Canadian couple who are living half-year in Mazatlan:

When Anne retired, we sold our house outside of Calgary, which had 10.5 acres of land. With the proceeds from the sale, we paid off the house in Mexico and bought a 14 x 44-ft mobile home in a beautiful RV park south of Calgary. Now we spend November to April in Mexico and the summer months in Canada.

We don't need a car — the bus system is great and the local bus costs 4 pesos (41 cents Cdn.), or you can pay 8 pesos for the air-conditioned bus, which is mostly for tourists. That means we can afford to dine out often. On Valentine's Day we went all out and had dinner at a Mexican-Greek restaurant. We had a large margarita, a bottle of wine, a delicious meal, a dessert flambé and cappuccino for about \$50 including tip. Normally, we don't spend that much. There are many places where the two of us can get a simple meal for \$10.

I would advise those considering retiring here to be realistic about what you're used to. We eventually decided that the original layout of our little home was too small, given the amount of time we are spending down here, so we are building another floor onto the house with a large bedroom, an extra bathroom, a large balcony, and a back deck. It'll cost us about \$20,000, which is still very cheap.

You have to budget a little extra for health care. We have an FM-3, which is a special visa allowing us to live here for one year. It also allows us to buy into the IMSS, the state-sponsored medical plan, at a cost of about \$580 a year for the two of us because we're over 65. We have that plan just in case we get run over or have a heart attack, which would be costly without insurance. For the most part, if we go to our family doctor — who is well-educated and speaks perfect English — we pay directly. It's only about \$20 a visit, and if you need an X-ray or ultrasound, you'll pay another \$20, but you'll get the results immediately and the care is top-notch.

We've been very happy with our decision to move to Mexico for half the year. Right now the skies are blue and it's 29°C, yet at night it cools down and you sleep well. People ask us what we do down here. They'll say, "You can't sit on the beach for six months. Aren't you bored?" The short answer is, no. We can go to the Angela Peralta Theatre, which is beautifully restored, and see a flamenco performance for less than \$14. Movies are released at the same time as in Canada, but in English with Spanish subtitles, and cost \$3 a ticket. And we have an endless round of barbecues, fundraisers and get-togethers, mostly with other Canadians and Americans, but also with locals.

When you buy in Mexico...

...in the "special/forbidden zones", as a foreigner you have three bills to pay.

1. The negotiated price of the house.
2. The Bank Trust (Fideicomiso). This charge is \$2,250.00 USD, paid directly to the bank. (This may vary.) A portion of that fee is for the bank, but the bulk is paid by the bank to the Federal government of Mexico. This covers all the trust documents, permits and the administration fee for the first year. All banks have a trust department, however Bancomer has a trust officer in Mazatlan. You can deal directly with the person who handles the trust.
3. The Closing costs. These fees are paid to the Notario Publico. They include, among other items: A. Title search to ensure the person selling the property is actually the owner of said property, or has the legal power to sell the property. B. Lien search to make sure there is not a hidden claim on the property. C. Avalu or appraisal to set the tax value only, not the market value of the property. (A statutory requirement within 6 months prior to sale.) D. A new Croque or plot plan showing the lot dimensions. E. A new Escritura or deed and the verification that all taxes, phone bills, water bills, and electric bills are current and paid. F. Registration of the new deed once everything is complete and all fees have been paid. G. The acquisition tax, paid by the buyer in Mexico, fixed at 2.2% of the purchase price.

You may be quoted different prices for the above services, but it is usually "X" number of dollars for the permit application, then later, "X" number of dollars for the issuance of the permit, and "X" number of dollars for this and "X" number of dollars for that. It is MOST LIKELY going to cost a couple grand with any bank. Item three is the one that varies from sale to sale. Info based on over a hundred sales, shows that the cost should be approximately \$2250. This is because some of the fees are fixed, and some are based on the selling price of the property.

If you wisely are using a competent contractor/realtor they will make all of this very simple - so don't worry - just make sure you deal with an exceptionally capable contractor/realtor.

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Enjoy! Wishing the best of the good life to you and yours!

Barbie