

Ecuador

from *International Living Magazine*

If you **retire in Ecuador**, every cliché you've heard about living large on little money—about settling into the lap of luxury on even a pensioner's budget—is true.

This is one of the world's cheapest places to live. Take \$350 out of the ATM Monday morning, and your expenses are covered for the week. *International Living* magazine ranked Ecuador as the world's best retirement haven in 1999, after it weathered the earlier economic, political, and natural problems during the two years prior, and went on to prosper.

Of course, low prices alone do not make for an ideal retirement or investment destination. There are plenty of places the world over where you can buy cheap land, but you wouldn't want to live there; not so in Ecuador.

Retirement Ecuador Means Living Well

In Ecuador, not only can you retire on little money, you can also live very well. ***Retirement in Ecuador*** offers something for everyone, and at prices unheard of in North America and Europe. Indulge in a gourmet meal in a world-class restaurant. Why not? The cost is about what you'd pay for bottled water and an appetizer in a restaurant in Los Angeles or New York. Plus, the fresh fruits and vegetables you find overpriced at specialty "organic" shops up north sell at local Ecuadorian markets for pennies.

It's hard to pinpoint the best reason for ***retiring to Ecuador***, but one thing's for sure: this is an affordable and beautiful retirement destination. Ecuador also offers a high quality of life. This is no isolated backwater. It's a land of opportunity, where a middle class is forming. After waking from a long economic slumber, Ecuador is preparing to join the global economy. Recently, for example, the new Mariscal Sucre International Airport opened just outside Quito. It's very impressive, with plenty of immigration and customs stations. No more congested baggage claim area, and plenty of restaurants and shops.



From snow-capped volcanoes to dense Amazon jungle, from sun-drenched Pacific beaches to the famous Galapagos Islands, this is a place of astounding natural beauty. Despite covering a mere 0.02% of the world's landmass, it is home to 10% of the world's plant and animal species. This country's real treasure, however, is its people. Ecuadorians live their lives in jungle river towns, coastal fishing villages, isolated cattle ranches, the grounds of ancient haciendas, and large colonial cities. Its compact size makes it possible to experience many of these different lifestyles in a single day.

Retire in Ecuador and Enjoy Becoming Part of the Community

It's also one of the few places where a foreign resident or visitor can blend easily into the community, being welcomed into a new circle of friends and a new way of life with relative ease. As a foreign ***retiree in Ecuador***, you'll be treated with respect,

and the people will be eager to get to know you.

Ecuador Is an Emerging Retirement Haven

During the last decade, Ecuador has gone through a number of tumultuous changes. Nevertheless, today the country has emerged as a welcoming haven for those wanting to retire or invest here. The property market offers significant bargains. A comfortable lifestyle can be enjoyed in Ecuador on just a fraction of what you'd spend in many parts of the world.

And remember: Ecuador is one place right now where the U.S. dollar is not losing value, which makes an ***Ecuadorian retirement*** especially appealing. Following the late-1990s' debt default, Ecuador decided to adopt the U.S. dollar as its official currency, which eliminates currency risk. Inflation is 4% and most economic indicators are positive. Labor costs are still a tremendous bargain and are not rising appreciably. Property prices, which had been dropping since 2001, seemed to have bottomed out.

It's not just properties that are affordable in Ecuador—nearly everything is. From the cost to hire a full-time maid to the price of produce and dinner in a fine restaurant, you'll be surprised at how low the cost of living is in Ecuador. For example, in the major cities like Quito, Guayaquil, and Cuenca, you won't have to forgo First-World conveniences. New cars abound. Everyone has cell phones, and Internet connections are just as common. World-class restaurants serve excellent meals, yet you'll be hard-pressed to pay more than \$50 for dinner for two—drinks included.

It's easy to ***retire in Ecuador*** on less than \$18,000 per year, and you can live a comfortable lifestyle while doing it. Many foreign residents have their main home in the city, and also have a country home, a beach property, or even property in another country...a feat that would be impossible on a comparable living in the U.S. Additionally, this low cost of living allows retirees the ability to increase their travel, own nice things, or partake in other diversions.