



EXPATS IN MEXICO

A Research Study

**Expectations
Worries
... and How It All Turned Out**



Reporting and analysis of responses from 1,129 current expats

Conducted and published by *Best Places in the World to Retire*



Topline Summary of the Most Interesting Findings & Conclusions

Motivations revealed: 81.6% moved to Mexico in search of “a simpler, less stressful life,” almost the same percentage who moved for better weather and a lower cost of living. -- 13

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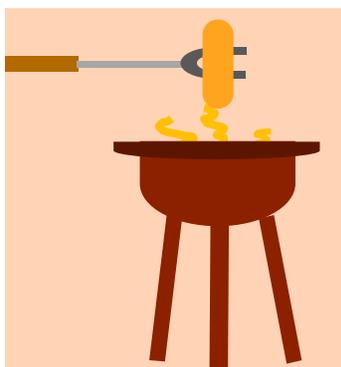
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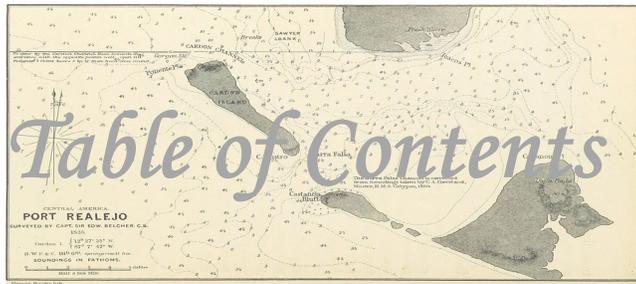
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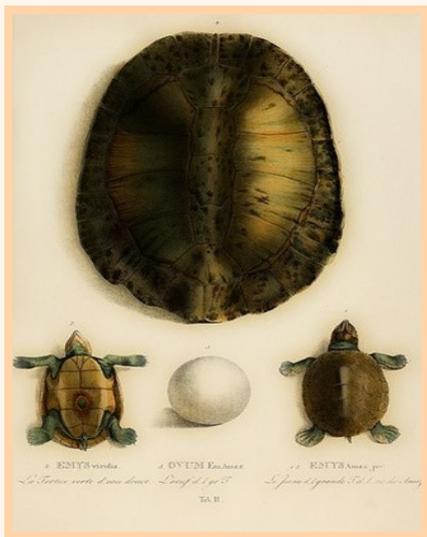
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**Tasty, fresh and juicy content
Get 'em while they are hot!**



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The Story Behind BestPlaces & This Study

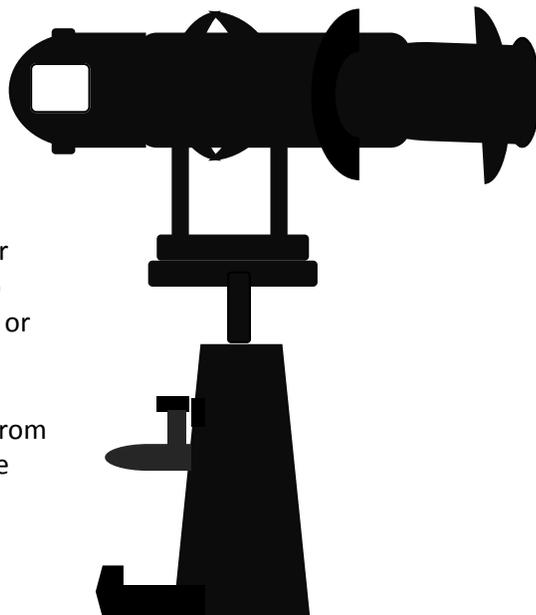
October 5, 2017

Dear reader,

We created [Best Places In The World To Retire](#) to do something no other company had ever done: provide comprehensive, useful, organized, “no spin” information about moving abroad without promoting any agenda, or any destination.

To accomplish this, the vast bulk of the content on our site couldn't be from a single personality who promoted his or her opinions, and it couldn't be from employees who work for our company.

How, then, would we get useful content onto our site for our visitors?



We weren't certain it would work, but we knew what we would try:

- First, we did the research to find the search terms most often entered by people researching moving abroad.
- Then, we turned those search terms into questions and made it so that there could be several legitimate answers to the same question, each expressing a different, but equally valid point of view.
- Lastly, we asked expats and other experts to answer the questions.

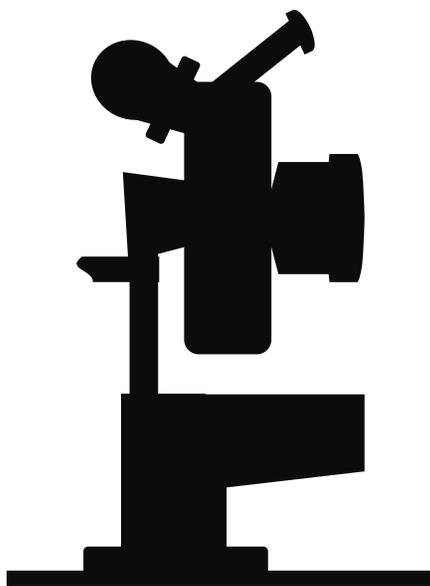
The one that concerned us most was this last bullet.

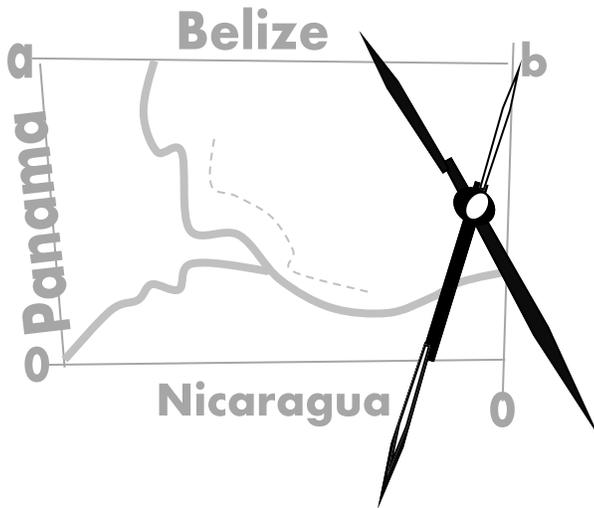
What happened next surpassed our wildest expectations. In May of 2013, we released our site to the search engines with Panama as the only country we covered. Later, we added Nicaragua, Belize and Portugal, and most recently, Mexico. As of this writing, more than 500 [independent experts](#) have posted more than 9,500 [answers](#) and 250 [expat stories](#), providing their insights and experiences for our visitors, in a credible way, in a format that is easy for our visitors to use for their research.

As time went on, and while we are extremely happy with the value our contributors have provided through answers to questions and expat stories, we wanted an additional perspective, one that would provide our visitors with greater context, trends, and either validate or challenge their most basic assumptions. **That's why we created our series of surveys.**

Our surveys allow us to ask a statistically significant quantity of expats the same questions about their hopes, their fears, their expectations, and how everything turned out. Surveys also allow us to segment and compare answers (many provided anonymously) as per the respondent's gender, age, where they came from, where they moved, how long they lived abroad, etc.

After reading through more than 9,500 answers to questions, you would think that the results of our surveys would





You will find Chuck's views in a box like this.



And Jet's Take is a plane about to take-off.

not surprise us, and some did not. However, many of the results did surprise us. And, given that some of the results challenge “conventional wisdom,” we feel confident that you will be surprised as well. In addition, the results create a compelling, interesting narrative.

How We Organized the Surveys, and Why

Even though we didn't know how the results would turn out, we organized our surveys in a logical manner, so the results would be meaningful. For example, right after asking our respondents what were their expectations about moving to Mexico, we then asked them what actually happened. With these two sets of answers, we could combine the results in order to compare expectations with realities (which turned out to be very interesting). We did the same thing by asking about their fears of moving to Mexico and then asking which fears were or were not realized.

Interspersed among the graphs and charts are what we believe to be the more interesting, data driven findings, comments by survey respondents, and selected links for further investigation.

You will also find commentary by Jet Metier and me, gathered from the perspective of spending more than four years completely immersed in the topic of moving abroad, talking with hundreds of expats, and going over the data to assemble the study you're now reading. My comments are identified by the icon “Chuck's Views,” and Jet's comments are identified by the icon “Jet's Take”.

We highly recommend that you read through the respondent's comments. Our goal is to provide you with the representative

flavor of the respondents' comments, not all of which agree with each other. As usual, our respondents are the stars of the show, and give you an excellent human feel for the Mexico expat experience.

We hope you find this study useful, as well as the follow-on studies from the same survey that will cover topics revolving around the expat experience in Mexico. Look for upcoming studies on cost of living, healthcare, safety, relationships and freedom. If you would like to be on the list to receive those, just sign up to receive our newsletter [here](#).

Best regards,

Chuck Bolotin
VP, Business Development
Chuck.Bolotin@BestPlacesInTheWorldToRetire.com



We wish to thank and acknowledge this study's sponsors for their gracious help and support in publicizing the survey from which we gathered many of this study's respondents

In alphabetical order:

BAJA TIMES
Since 1978 English Language Newspaper of Baja California



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Publishing News and Events in Puerto Vallarta and Riviera Nayarit for over twenty years



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EXPAT LIFE



**Lee
Steele**

THE
Yucatan
TIMES
News you can rely on



**Alejandro
Azcarate**



Who These Studies Can Help

This is the first in a series of studies about expats in Mexico created to serve the needs of three groups of people.

1. Those Considering Moving to Mexico

After reading this study, you'll be much better informed.

For many people, moving to Mexico can be one of the best decisions they ever make. For others, it's a big mistake. Which group are you in?

In your search to find out, you may be skeptical of certain claims. You may be frustrated by the lack of credible, balanced, evidence-based information. You may also have a bit of anxiety or uncertainty about the move, which is healthy and normal.

1,129 Expats Surveyed

Tens of thousands of data points

Our objective is to help you get the information and perspective you're looking for. To do so, we carefully constructed a survey to generate the data and comments you would find most useful.

From February 9 to March 11, 2017, we surveyed 1,129 expats, who provided thousands of data points and comments. We then took several months to analyze the data and present it in a way designed to help you to come to your own conclusions. This study is the first in a series to do just that.

To sign up to receive the next studies, sign up for our newsletters [here](#).

Learn what happened to those who flew the coop

You can use this study to find credible, useful, "hard" data on what it's really like to live in Mexico. Can you believe what you read or hear? What's true and what's not? We'll tell you what the data says.

The data may surprise you. It may even entertain you. Whatever your purpose, after reading this study, you'll be much better informed.



2. Journalists

Our objective is to provide
you with

Easy to Use,
fast, thought provoking, surprising,
evidence-based,
and compelling **material**



There are lots of good stories here.



We'll run your custom query against our survey database

Do you have a theory that the findings in his study don't address, or do you have a more creative or interesting angle that could be supported by data? Perhaps we have the data within our survey, but we didn't include it in these studies. Examples may include how married people answered differently than unmarried, etc. Let us know, and if it's possible, we'll run your query against our database and provide your outlet with customized data, including, graphs, respondents' comments, etc.



Be part of the Picture

Compelling catch



In addition

to using these studies to inform
your readers, we offer these
additional services:

Need an expert to interview?

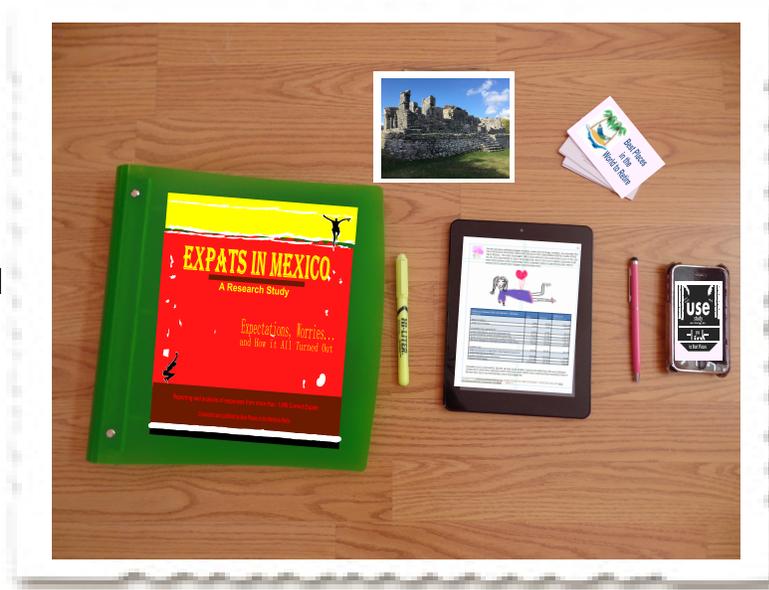
Do you need a person to interview for additional background or local color? We know hundreds of them, either as contributors to our site, or, for those who agreed to be identified, as respondents to our survey. Just let us know who or what you're looking for, and we'll do our best to introduce you.

We are also available for interviews and other background material.

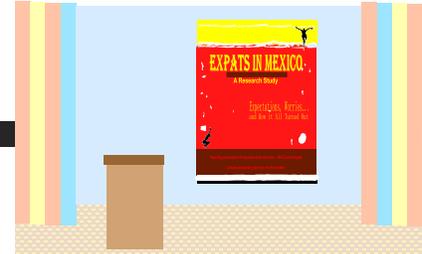
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Chuck Bolotin
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3. For Profit Businesses and Non-Profit Organizations

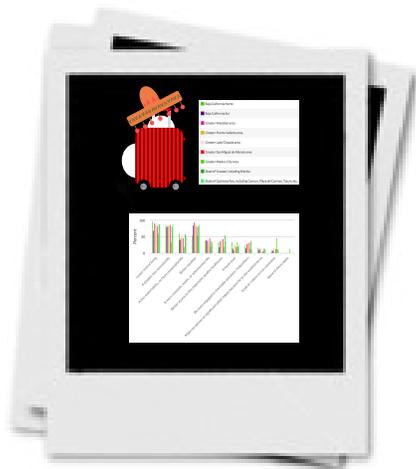


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We believe that the more people who are informed as to the realities of expat life in Mexico, the more happy people there will be. As a result, we encourage distribution of all or parts of these studies, as long as that use represents the data accurately and consistently as presented.

You may freely download this study for your own, personal use.

You may forward this study to others, so they can use it for their own, personal use.

You may cite or re-print this study in its entirety or excerpt any portion of it for commercial use subject to the limitations above, as long as you never remove any copyright notices and you do state the origin of the study as Best Places In the World to Retire. If your use is online, you must also do one or both of the following:

- Link to the download page of the study: <https://bestplacesintheworldtoretire.com/download-free-ebooks>
- Provide any link to the [Best Places in the World to Retire](https://bestplacesintheworldtoretire.com) website.

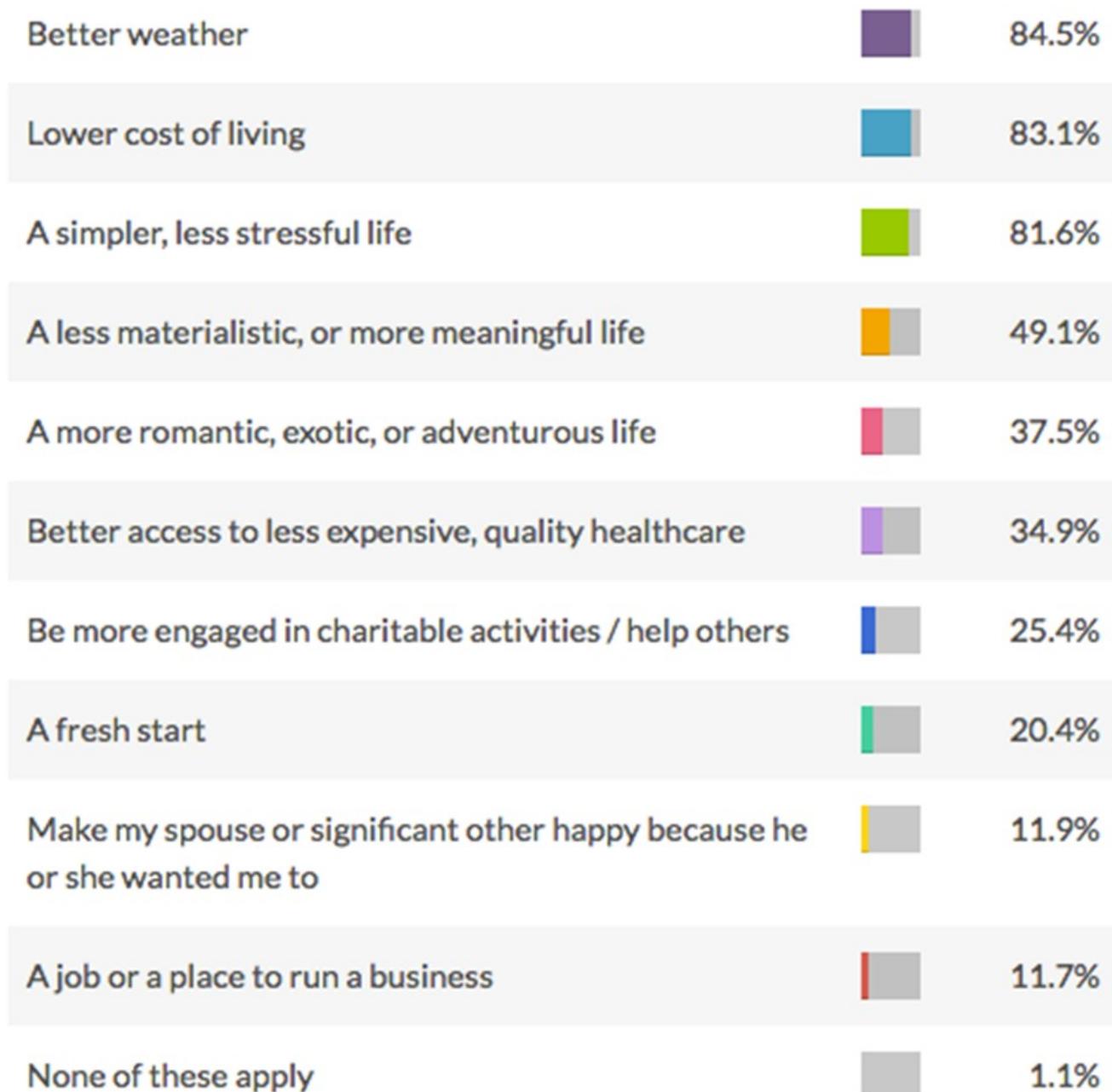
If you would like to use this study in other ways, if you are a journalist who would like to run a customized query of the data for your own article, or if you have any other questions or requests, please contact: Chuck.Bolotin@BestPlacesInTheWorldToRetire.com

We will do our best to help you.

1. The Top Reasons They Moved to Mexico

Of the Top Three, Two Expected Winners and Then... a Surprise

Please check all the things you **THOUGHT** you would achieve by moving to Mexico.





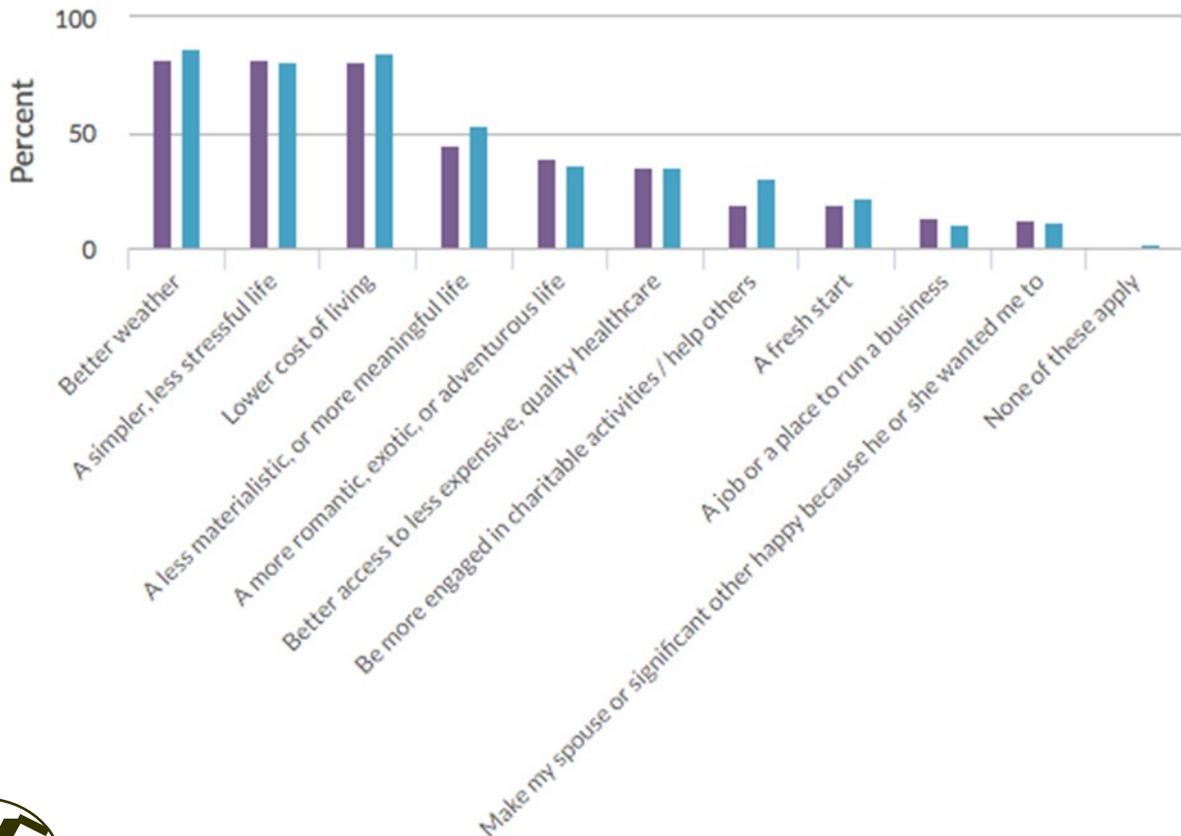
We begin our study on an optimistic note, with a question designed to gauge the overall answer to “What were those moving to Mexico hoping to achieve?” (The answers to the questions about how everything turned out are in the next chapter.)

Very few readers would be surprised that better weather and a lower cost of living were the top two reasons given by our respondents for why they decided to move to Mexico, but the very high importance of wanting to lead a “simpler, less stressful life,” at just behind the first two, can be a bit unanticipated.

Our take on the two highest ranking answers is that the respondents to our survey are practical; they thought they could achieve things that were objectively true and / or attainable without many other, perhaps more romantic eventualities having to come true.



Men and women were very close in what they hoped they could achieve in all categories, except that women were 58.5% more likely to expect to be more engaged in charitable activities and to help others in their new home in Mexico than were men. (Purple represents men's answers, while teal represents women's.)

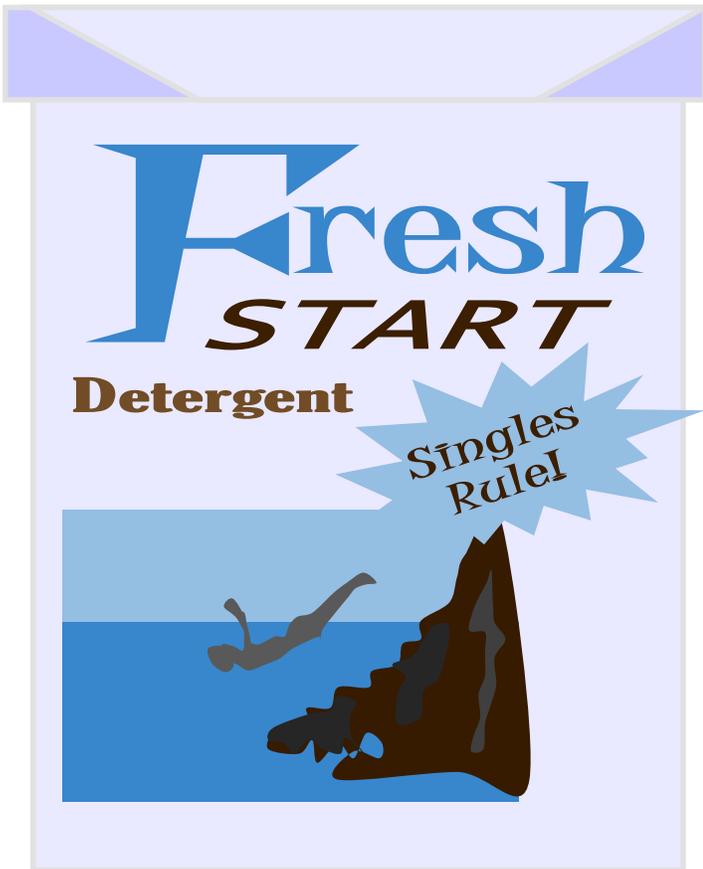


We were surprised by the very large effect of the respondent's age on whether the respondent expected to get a fresh start in Mexico. The average was 20.4%, but interestingly, the percentage of those expecting a fresh start decreased as the respondents got older, as follows:

25 – 44 years old: 51.5% expected a fresh start, more than 250% greater than the average.

45 – 64 year old: 24.1% expected a fresh start, about average.

65+ year old: only 11.4% expected a fresh start, almost half the average and less than a quarter of those 24 – 44 years old.



Married respondents were the least likely to seek a fresh start in Mexico. 36.1% of single people expected a fresh start, while only 15.3% of married expats expected a fresh start.

You're in Mexico?

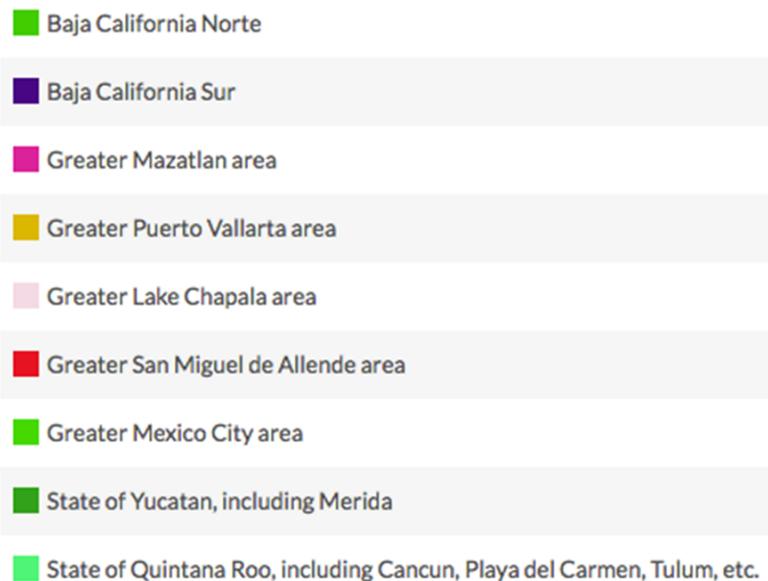
Those most likely to seek a fresh start in Mexico were those coming from the UK, with 36.8% choosing this expectation, 80.3% more than the average.

Even though 57.9% of expats from the UK thought they could achieve a simpler, less stressful life in Mexico, this is about 29% less than the average.

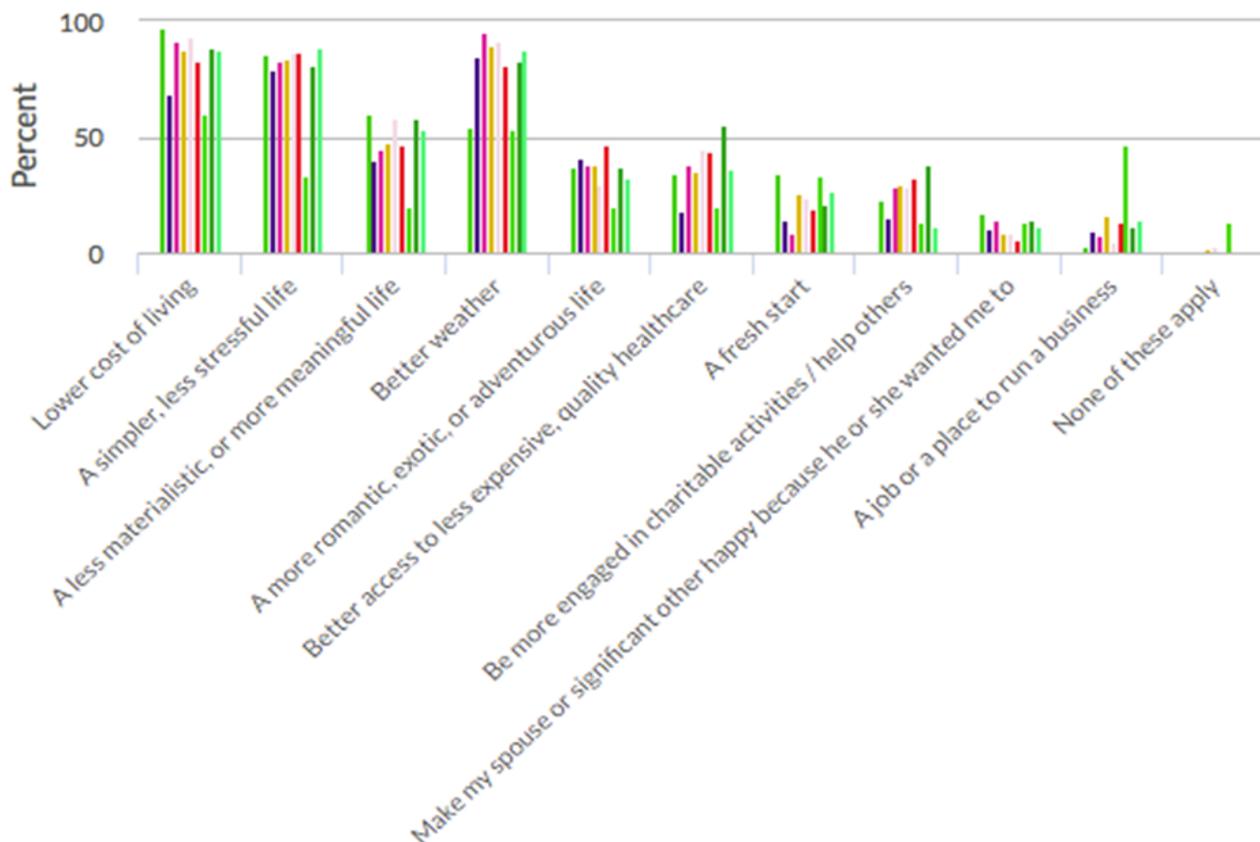


And there are Brits here!

Expats who came from the US were those who most expected an improvement in their access to less expensive quality healthcare (39.2%), 37.5% higher than Canada (28.5%) and 85.7% higher than the UK (21.1%)



As opposed to age, gender, marital status, where they came from, etc., the greatest overall variation in our responses to why our respondents moved to Mexico was in where within Mexico they moved. Use the legend above to review the results below. (The responses by area in the chart below are in the same order as the legend.)





Those most likely to expect a lower cost of living, at 97.1%, moved to Baja California Norte. On the other side of expectations, 60% of those moving to Mexico City expected a lower cost of living, which means that 40% of those moving to Mexico City expected either the same, or a higher cost of living than in their home country.

Even though the average expecting a less stressful life in Mexico in general was a huge 81.6%, 66.7% of those moving to Mexico City expected an equally stressful or more stressful life.

Those moving to the state of Yucatan had the highest expectation of better access to less expensive, quality healthcare, at 55.7%, which is 59.5% higher than the average.

Comments:

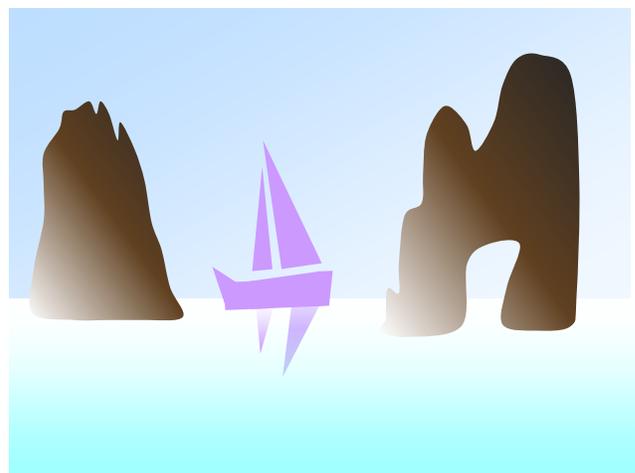
A life reset and affordability were the key factors. I also wanted some place from where I could easily return to the United States. – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for more than 10 years.

A much better lifestyle. Here we can have full time housekeepers and cooks, so we live like queens! – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for more than 10 years.

A more peaceful and relaxing lifestyle is very important, plus the cost of living is much, much lower than the States. – Nancy Fitzmorris, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 6 – 10 years.

After my mother passed from cancer, we had this opportunity to go cruising before our surviving parents needed us. We bought a sailboat and went south. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 2 – 5 years.

I moved for a culture more oriented to people's character as opposed to wealth, station in life and position. – male, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for more than 10 years.



Freedom, fewer rules, regulations red tape. Grand way to live, taking responsibility for one's self while not relying on government; state or city. Fantastic culture that is not litigious. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from Europe other than the UK, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for more than 10 years.



I am a pensioner, so, for me moving to Mexico helped me to stretch my pension. I could not live on my pension in Canada, but here I live comfortably. – Rosaline McGarry, 65+-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Mazatlan area for more than 10 years.

I came here to live a simple, more free life without all the constraining restrictions of life in the USA. I was not disappointed. – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

I came on vacation and called my boss from the beach and told him I wasn't coming back. That was January 2012. Best decision ever!!!! – Launa Brockman, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for 2 – 5 years.

I came originally to escape the cold but fell in love with the people, culture and food, so decided to stay! – 25 – 44-year-old female, from Canada, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for 2 – 5 years.

I can have an excellent quality of life in a gorgeous historic city within my limited Social Security income. After losing my beautiful "Oasis" home on Miami beach and 2 condos in the mortgage meltdown in 2008, I thought my life was over, but when I came to San Miguel I found hope and kindness and peace without the stress in America. The Mexican people are wonderful, kind, generous, helpful and caring... and did I mention hard-working? – Karen Sydney, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 6 – 10 years.

I could afford to retire at a young age and live on my savings in Mexico. Would have had to continue working if I had remained in US. – Carla W., 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for more than 10 years.



I moved here because most people in the US have forgotten how to truly live, be happy and grateful for what they have. Prior to moving here, I had to leave the workforce due to chronic health issues and being not of age, at 56, to retire. I was a Licensed Addiction Counselor. I have been an artist/crafter all my life, and I have the hopes of being able to sell my crafted items here, in Mexico. Also, prior to moving to Mexico, my fifteen-year-old daughter was struggling with depression and the horrible school systems. Since living in Mexico, moving here in September of 2015, my daughter has glowed with happiness. Other reasons for moving were wanting to live in a warmer climate and lower cost of living. After visiting different parts of Mexico over the past several years and meeting the wonderful people and rooted cultures here, the decision was made to move here as soon as it was slightly possible...and I hope to never have to live back in the US again! – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for less than 2 years.

I moved to Baja for the warm weather, better quality of life in ratio to my income and love the water. – Yvonne Carter, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

I targeted Mexico because of the focus on family and community that is part of the Mexican culture. – Dulcey Branch, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for less than 2 years.

I wanted to live a simpler life, raise my youngest to understand that there is a lot of world out there and many different cultures to explore and be a part of! – Mari Fortier, 25 – 44-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 2 – 5 years.

I was going through a bitter divorce. One day I realized that the stress was affecting my health and that I should either kill my ex or move to Mexico. Mexico won! – 65+-year-old-female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 – 5 years.

I was looking for a place where I could live comfortably with just my Social Security. Cabo fills that desire. – Karen, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

I was very young, but I wasn't happy in the US. I felt everyone was too materialistic. I wanted a different experience. – Katherine Camargo, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

In the U.S. prices are too high for everything and the political climate is terrible. We left to escape all of that stress and worry. We found a perfect quiet non-political atmosphere here in Mulegé. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

It was an easy transition getting out of the US rat race. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for 6 – 10 years.

Life just has less pressure when you cross the border. – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 2 – 5 years.

I'm spending my winters here in the Mazatlán area for about a third of what it takes back in the US. Getting out of the Pacific Northwest winter weather is what ultimately brought me here. – Jed Vaughn, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for less than 2 years.



Pacific Northwest Pants



Tropical Pacific Pants



For further investigation ●●

[Mexico Q & A](#)

[Chapala and Ajijic Q & A](#)

[Los Cabos—La Paz, Q & A](#)

[Other areas in Mexico Q & A](#)

[Puerto Vallarta Q & A](#)

[San Miguel de Allende Q & A](#)

[Yucatan: Riviera Maya, Playa del Carmen, Cancun, Merida, Akumal, Tulum, etc., Q & A](#)

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2. What They Found When They Got to Mexico

(It's pretty good, especially if you're a woman.)

Please check all the things you
DID achieve by moving to Mexico.



It would be difficult to look at the results above and not conclude that, overall, most people achieved very positive results by moving to Mexico. (We will compare what our respondents hoped to achieve with what they did achieve in the next chapter.)

Please keep in mind that any response over zero means that the respondent is reporting that they did achieve something.



Oui



Large majorities of people who moved to Mexico achieved important upgrades to their lives in very important categories such as cost of living and better weather, while even those categories with the least responses were generally positive.

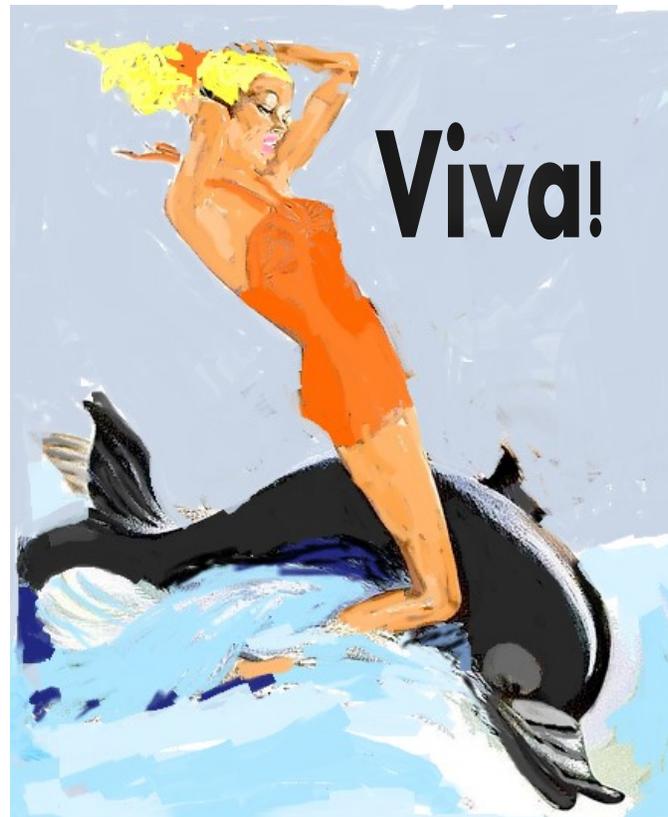
For example, even if, as reported, only 41.9% of people moving to Mexico achieved “A more romantic, exotic or adventurous life,” what percentage of people moving randomly anywhere in the US or even, to take a random example, to French-speaking Canada could say the same thing? We suspect it would be substantially less.



We were extremely surprised that, in every positive category (even for “A job or place to run a business”) women reported better results for themselves as a result of moving to Mexico than did men, sometimes by much more.

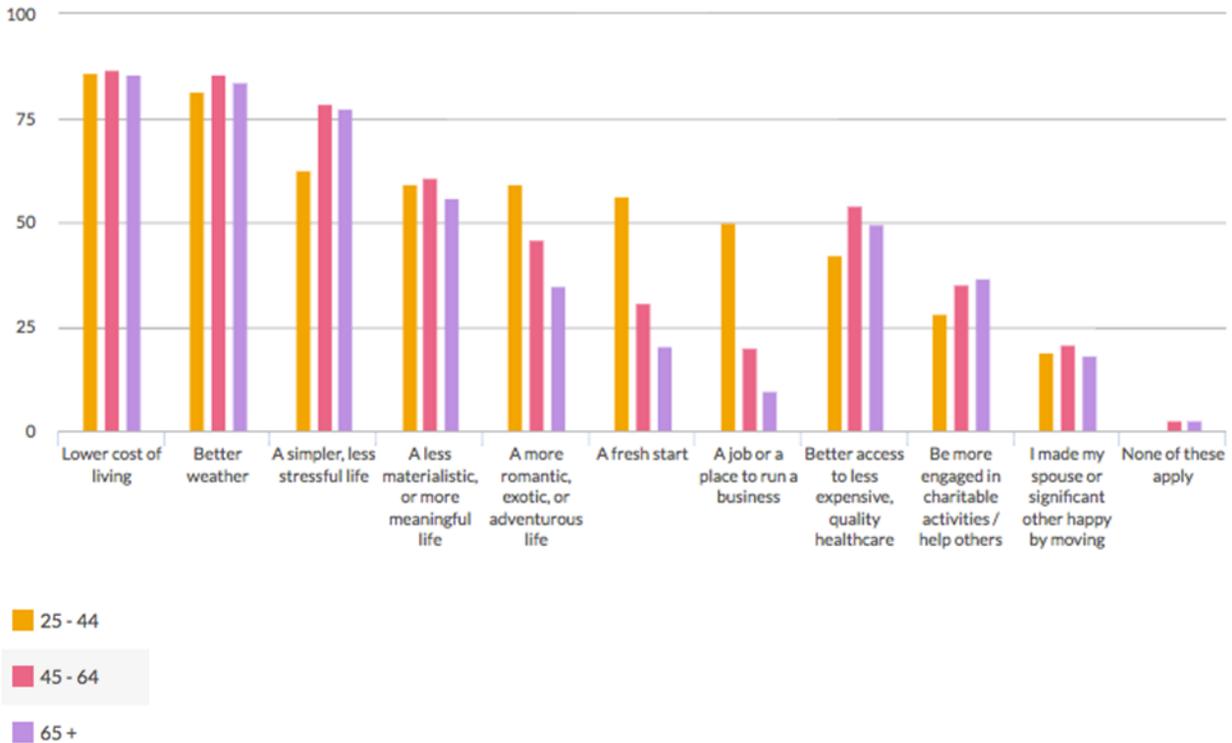
We assume that they moved to the same general places as men, so the difference most likely is not objective, and may be more related to attitude.

To find how much more, turn the page, where we display the results for the percentage of men or women answering “yes” to what they achieved in each category.



Lower cost of living	Male		45.9%
	Female		54.1%
Total			
Better weather	Male		45.6%
	Female		54.4%
Total			
A simpler, less stressful life	Male		46.2%
	Female		53.8%
Total			
A less materialistic, or more meaningful life	Male		43.3%
	Female		56.7%
Total			
Better access to less expensive, quality healthcare	Male		45.2%
	Female		54.8%
Total			
A more romantic, exotic, or adventurous life	Male		46%
	Female		54%
Total			
Be more engaged in charitable activities / help others	Male		38.4%
	Female		61.6%
Total			
A fresh start	Male		44%
	Female		56%
Total			
I made my spouse or significant other happy by moving	Male		48.3%
	Female		51.7%
Total			
A job or a place to run a business	Male		42.9%
	Female		57.1%
Total			
None of these apply	Male		52.4%
	Female		47.6%

The differences as per age group were minor and expected, except when it came to which expats reported achieving “A more romantic, exotic, or adventurous life” and “A fresh start”, where, in both cases, the younger you were, the more you reported success in these areas.



On the next page are the winners in each significant category based on the location in Mexico where the expats moved.

Please keep in mind that many times, the margins were very narrow and the answers provided by respondents were comparing where the expats came from in their home country to where they lived at the time they took the survey in Mexico, not between different destination locations in Mexico.





Lower cost of living: Tie at 93.3%-- Mazatlán and Greater Lake Chapala.

Better weather: Greater Lake Chapala, at 93.3%

A simpler, less stressful life: A statistical tie between Greater Lake Chapala (84.8%) and Greater San Miguel de Allende (84.3%)

A less materialistic, or more meaningful life: Baja California Norte, at 77.1%

Better access to less expensive, quality healthcare: Greater Lake Chapala, at 65.7%, followed by the state of Yucatan, at 64.8%

A more romantic, exotic, or adventurous life: Baja California Norte (51.4%) narrowly beat out Greater San Miguel de Allende, at 49.0% and Puerto Vallarta, at 47.9%

Be more engaged in charitable activities / help others: The clear winner is San Miguel de Allende, at 52.9%

A fresh start: The clear winner was Baja California Norte, at 42.9%

A job or place to run a business: Mexico City dominated with 53.3%



Interestingly, how long our respondents had lived in Mexico had very little effect on what they reported achieving. If you feel like you achieved something right away after your move, if you're like most of our respondents, your feelings won't change as you stay longer in Mexico.

Comments:

My husband moved here to please me after I retired but he likes it as much as I do. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 6 – 10 years.

My lifestyle and my children's lives have been very different than if we had lived in the US. Much happier I think, many parties, many friends, much more social life. – Tami Stout, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for more than 10 years.

My wife was hesitant at first but now she wouldn't go back to the angry rat race in the USA California, where she is from. Kids followed and are successful and thriving, have become bi-lingual, and gained compassion and understanding for cultures and people less fortunate. Learned a high level of work ethic and understanding of how we are all more the same than different. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from Europe other than the UK, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for more than 10 years.

Really good restaurants about half the price than in the United states. – William Greyer, 25 – 44-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 2-5 years.



San Miguel is incredibly stimulating, which to me is the main attraction. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende are for more than 10 years.

Since being widowed here, I find that I know myself better and know more what I am capable of. – Jeannie Kezlan, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

The Mexican people will go out of their way to help you. In return I am sending my first Mexican friends' children to private school and bought a laptop for my friend's daughter to go to college. My American friends do a lot of work for charities, from the children's home to the animal rescues. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 6 – 10 years.



The best surprise: I found the love of my life, and he's Mexican. We just celebrated our seventh anniversary together! – Anne Nicolai, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 6 – 10 years.

The connections made here opened up more opportunities and invitations to travel to other locations with folks to share where to go and what to see. The simpler life has allowed us to be more relaxed and the perfect weather has added twice as much living time to our lives and allows us to get way more exercise without effort by walking and swimming daily. – Margaret Miller-Cohen, 65+-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.

The cost of living (specifically water and electricity) is very high. – 45 – 64-year old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 2 -5 years.

The cost of living is very different than in California We spend less than 1/2 of what we did in California – Marianne Harris, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for more than 10 years.

The life here is so much more meaningful than in the US because the focus is not on working all day and night. There is time for what is important. – Wesley Staples, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 2 – 5 years.

The music, the food, the weather, the people. Mexico is a vibrant, pulsating, passionate paradise. I thrive here. – Laurie Chavez, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Mexico City area for more than 10 years.

The only surprise here is: RELAXATION! – L.J.P., 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 6 – 10 years.

The paperwork process here can really try your patience at times. It is very frustrating, not just to foreigners but to locals alike. – 25 – 44-year-old male, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for more than 10 years.



The people are so kind. My Spanish is not very good as of yet and I enjoy the patience and help with getting acclimated to the country. – Karen, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

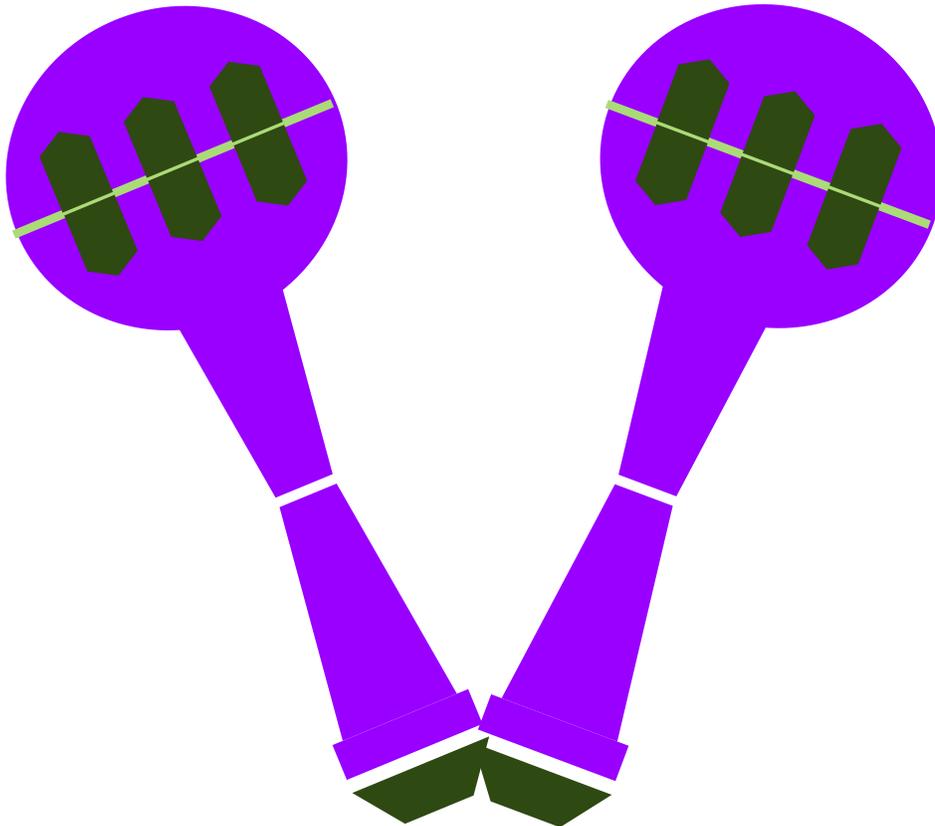
The savings in taxes and insurance pays for a rental. For example, property tax is \$150 per YEAR! – Mike Hopkins, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 2 – 5 years.

The so-called "Golden Years" are truly enjoyable living in Mexico. Fresh fruit, vegetables and seafood, wonderfully inexpensive in a beautiful beach setting are a dream come true. The people are the most loving, helpful and joyous folks you'll ever find. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 – 5 years.

There is so much culture here to be enjoyed and it's affordable! Also, there's thermal mineral springs where I can do watsu (aquatic bodywork) and so many wellness modalities. I call San Miguel a mecca for the healing arts! – Karen Sydney, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 6 – 10 years.

There's a freedom here that I don't feel I get in the United States. Less Big Brother. My dog can run on the beach. The downside is ... other peoples' dogs run on the beach and the people don't show up for appointments. The upside is ... I don't have to show up for appointments (except doctors'). It's a different configuration, which is often frustrating, but it also tends to feel more free and less grid-tied ... – 25 – 44-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

We have more friends and are involved in more activities than we could have ever imagined. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.





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3. Comparing What Expats Who Moved to Mexico Thought They Could Achieve With What They Did— A Mixed Bag

Better Access to Less Expensive, Quality Healthcare was the Big Winner,
While Life was Not as Simple as They Hoped

Overall – Attribute	Expectation	Reality	Difference (Reality is +)
Better weather	84.5%	84.4%	-0.1%
Lower cost of living	83.1%	86.3%	3.9%
A simpler, less stressful life	81.6%	76.8%	-5.9%
A less materialistic, or more meaningful life	49.1%	58.6%	19.3%
A more romantic, exotic, or adventurous life	37.5%	41.9%	11.7%
Better access to less expensive, quality healthcare	34.9%	51.2%	46.7%
Be more engaged in charitable activities / help others	25.4%	35.3%	39.0%
A fresh start	20.4%	27.7%	35.8%
Make my spouse or significant other happy because he or she wanted me to move	11.9%	19.3%	62.2%
A job or a place to run a business	11.7%	17.3%	47.9%
None of these apply	1.1%	2.3%	109.1%



Our respondents had high hopes for their new life in Mexico, most of which were fulfilled, some more than others. Their expectations for better weather were roughly met, while their cost of living expectations were barely exceeded. Their biggest disappointment was that the reality of leading a simpler, less stressful life fell 5.9% short of their expectations.

However, their other expectations were all exceeded by the reality, some quite dramatically. For example, the very important reality of “Better access to less expensive, quality healthcare” was 46.7% better than their expectations. They were also surprised by 39.0% by how much more they would be engaged in charitable activities and helping others.



On the top three attributes (better weather, lower cost of living, a simpler, less stressful life) men and women had similar differences between their expectations and the reality of moving to Mexico. The most meaningful differences between men and women were in the reality of a less materialistic or more meaningful life, where men were happily surprised 21.8% more than women, and in achieving a more romantic, exotic or adventurous life, where women were 123.2% more happily surprised than men.



Difference Between Men and Women -- Attribute Attained	Men	Women	Difference (Women is +)
Better weather	0.6%	-0.9%	-251.5%
Lower cost of living	4.4%	3.2%	-27.8%
A simpler, less stressful life	-6.8%	-4.8%	-29.9%
A less materialistic, or more meaningful life	22.2%	17.4%	-21.8%
A more romantic, exotic, or adventurous life	7.0%	15.6%	123.2%
Better access to less expensive, quality healthcare	42.7%	50.4%	18.1%
Be more engaged in charitable activities / help others	50.3%	33.0%	-34.3%
A fresh start	38.6%	33.0%	-14.5%
Make my spouse or significant other happy because he or she wanted me to move	60.0%	65.5%	9.1%
A job or a place to run a business	23.1%	72.9%	215.9%
None of these apply	1200.0%	16.7%	-98.6%

Canadians were surprised by 162.6% by how much simpler and less stressful their life was in Mexico compared to what they expected, while Americans were 38.8% more surprised than Canadians how in Mexico they led a less materialistic, more meaningful life.

Comments:

Found the love of my life here and am at the happiest, most content time in my life. – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for more than 10 years.

Found certain things different than what we researched.... new government, new laws. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for less than 2 years.

I have made many friends who are citizens of Mèxico. I learned the language. Both of these enhance my enjoyment of life and seeing life from their viewpoint, which is very eye opening. Dining in restaurants, from taco puestos to fine restaurants is always a pleasant and tasty experience. – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 6 – 10 years.

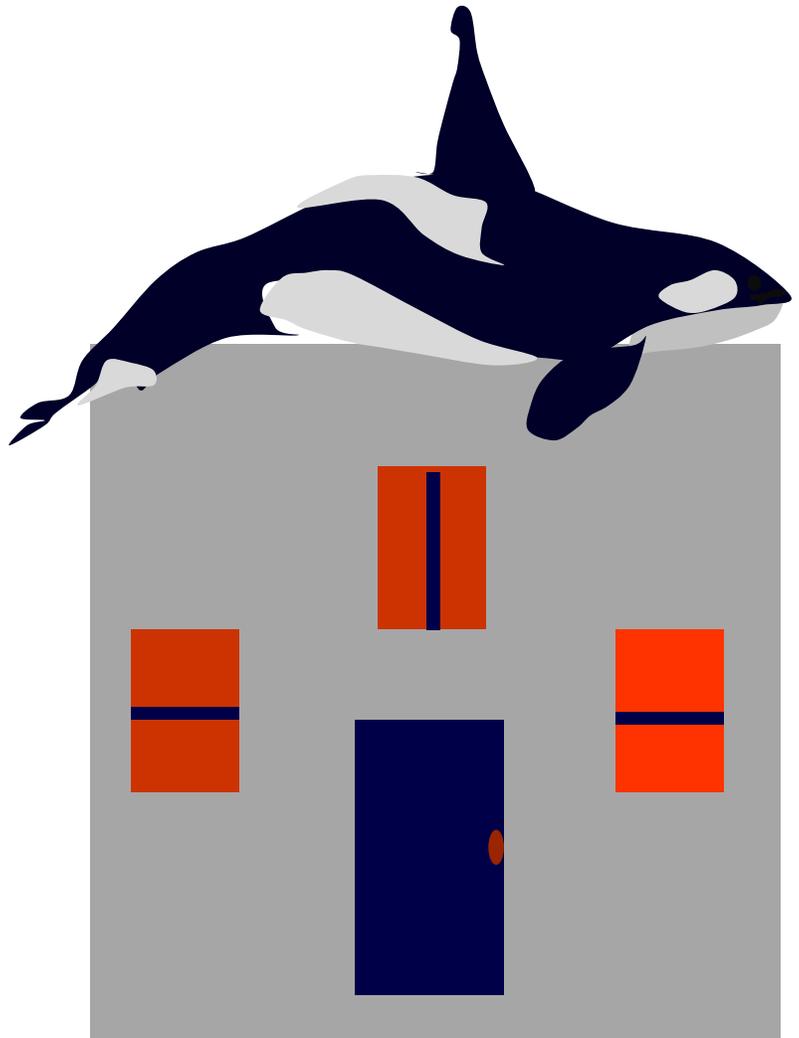
We have so much more time to spend with our children now and they're experiencing the world in a way that will forever change them. – Shannon Murray, 25 – 44-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for less than 2 years.

I am dedicating myself painting full time and enjoying every minute. – Debra Crary, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for more than 10 years.



For health reasons, I needed to get away from a stressful, corporate controlled career which was destroying my health. We had previously purchased a house in Baja which became my economic solution to retire early. The magic of our off the grid rustic lifestyle drove me to share our experience with others to provide a stress relief from their busy lives. We opened a Bed and Breakfast and offer our guests the essentials of health: clean air, healthy food, exercise, no stress, and a way to re-experience "the good old days", which Mexico can offer. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 6 – 10 years.

I bought a spectacular home here that I could never have afforded in the US. – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 2 – 5 years.



We had a great life up north: made good money, had jobs we loved. But we never had enough time for the things that mattered: family and friends. Mazatlán offers a sane, healthy life balance. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for more than 10 years.

We are so happy. We honestly didn't know life could be this good. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for 2 – 5 years.

We have so much more time to spend with our children now and they're experiencing the world in a way that will forever change them. – Shannon Murray, 25 – 44-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for less than 2 years.

Having lived abroad for most of my life, I found that Mérida encompassed all the joys and plusses I found in other countries in one magical place. The weather and people remind one of gentle Asia, the architecture is European, the love of music and dance is reminiscent of Africa, and much of the cuisine in Mérida comes to us directly from the Middle East. The warmth, approachability, and kindness of Mericanos, however, is all their own, and I don't think it can be found elsewhere on this planet! – Patricia Keith Mathisen, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 6 – 10 years.



For us, vacationing in Mazatlán was great. Living here has been even better. – Roger Culbertson, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlan area for more than 10 years.

I have met some wonderfully interesting people. – Sheila Greenaway, 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for more than 10 years.

The sense of community that extends openness, inclusion and caring to all individuals, both expats and locals. The widespread variety of life experiences and talents of the expats and the rich culture that is created here in the Lake Chapala area by them augmented by the local Mexican cultural heritage and arts. The food variety and quality was the icing on the cake. – Margaret Miller-Cohen, 65+-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.

I am a high school dropout and have been a mechanic all my life. Now I am a volunteer English teacher at an after school program for under-privileged girls. I cannot imagine a bigger change in my lifestyle but who knows what tomorrow will bring? – 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 2 – 5 years

I planned to come and live in the Riviera Maya for a short time to cave dive and spend a warm winter. I am from Scotland. Little did I know that I would meet my husband here and raise 2 beautiful bilingual children.

Even though this is not one of the cheapest parts of Mexico, the quality of life here is extremely high. We enjoy the most beautiful beaches in the world. Instead of a fenced in park, my kids play amongst ancient Mayan ruins when they need a run around. The multiple cultures here are making our kids true citizens of the world. I had no idea that I would love it so much and stay for such a long time. – Marieke Brown, 25 – 44-year-old female, from the UK, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for more than 10 years.



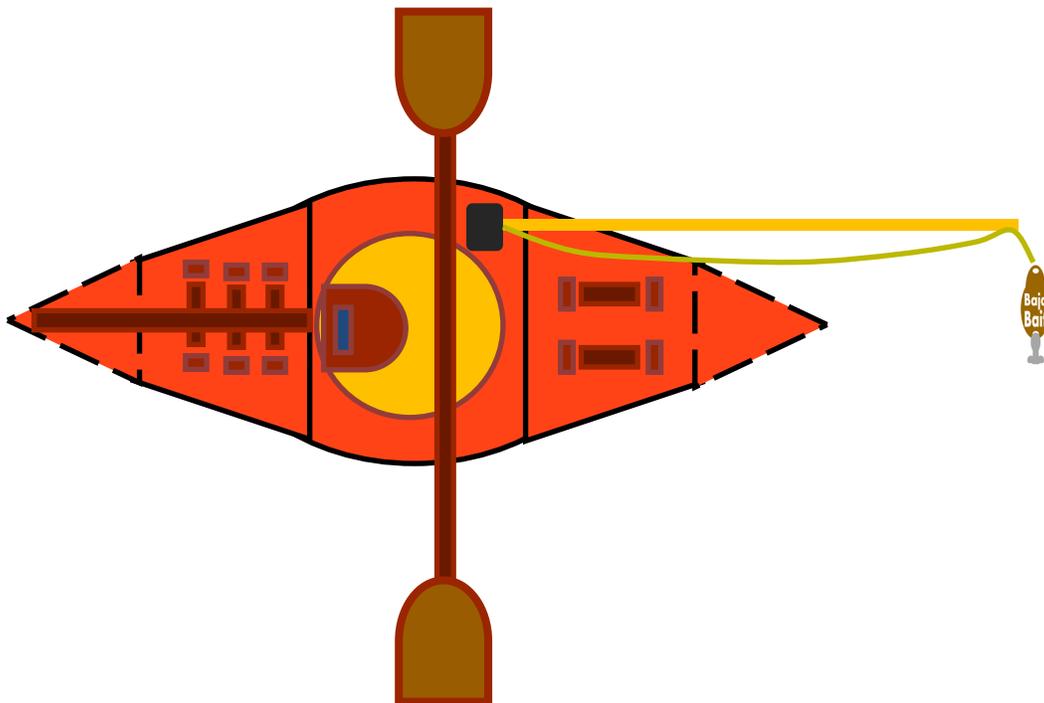
I discovered a country with values like the ones we have in Canada... where family and friends and caring about one another is more important than money. I am reminded daily of the kindness of people, of heartfelt smiles, genuineness and the love for one's family. Of caring between siblings. I experience this daily among the Mexican people.

They are so very kind, generous and hard working. They take pride in what they do. In our home countries, this is fading and I think being in Mexico is such a wonderful reminder of what is truly important in life and I think I am a better citizen when I return home to Canada. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 6 – 10 years.

I have lived in other parts of Mexico. I loved it but family is important to me. Being one hour from the border, three hours from San Diego means family is close. They come here as often as I go there! I live in sports paradise from boating, quad riding, kayak paddling, and group get together's with some fun, friends! – Greg Miller, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 6 – 10 years.

I love the warmth and friendliness of the people who live in Baja Sur. The priorities of the people who live here beyond just having "stuff" and are more oriented to family and nature.

The cost of living makes living here so wonderful! Shopping at the local markets, farmers' markets and local eateries makes the cost of living amazing! My spouse recently retired and needed a place to live where his money could go a long way. Also, being a fisherman, he wanted a place where he could fish everyday on his boat (he did purchase a boat here and is living his dream!) – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.





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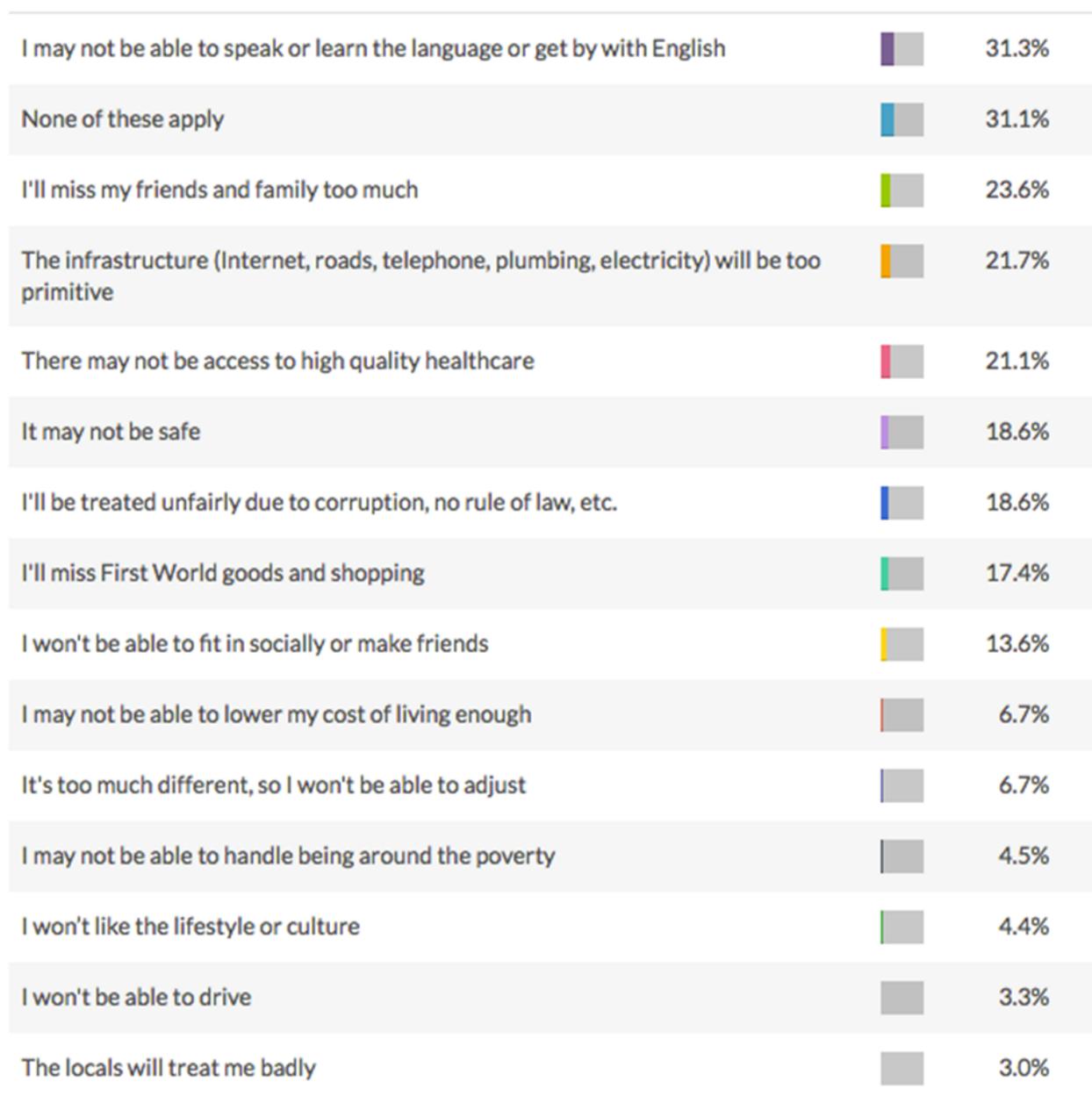


4. Top Worries About Moving to Mexico

Those Moving to Mexico Were a Confident Group, But Not Without their Cares

We now move on to the more pessimistic emotions about moving to Mexico. (Positive expectations for moving were covered in Chapter 1.)

What were your biggest worries about moving to Mexico?





A full 31.1% of our respondents had no worries at all we could identify about moving to Mexico, which we found odd, and much higher than the results reported by expats in our other studies on Panama, Belize and Nicaragua (available for free download [here](#)).

After investigating further by reading the comments, we developed a theory as to why: a high percentage of our respondents had already spent a good amount of time in Mexico before they moved, so they already knew what to expect, and as a result, weren't worried at all. As for the others (excepting those who probably don't worry too much about anything in any situation), there was a wide dispersion of fears, with the most dreaded one more than 32% higher than the next contender: not being able to learn Spanish or get by with just English.





Playing against type, for the answer “None of these [worries] apply”, females led men in giving this response by 54.5% to 45.5%, making women 19.7% less worried than men. However, the remaining women not in the “None of these apply” group were very well represented in most of the fear categories.

Of the respondents who were worried about not being able to learn Spanish or get by with English, women were almost 47% more fearful than their male counterparts (59.5% to 40.5%), but men were much more fearful of being treated unfairly due to corruption, no rule of law, etc., with 65.7% of those who answered yes to this fear being men and only 34.3% being women.



Women who answered this question about their fears before moving to Mexico were more worried than men in the following categories:

Missing their friends and family too much: 61.4% to 38.6%

Missing First World Shopping: 60.0% to 40.0%

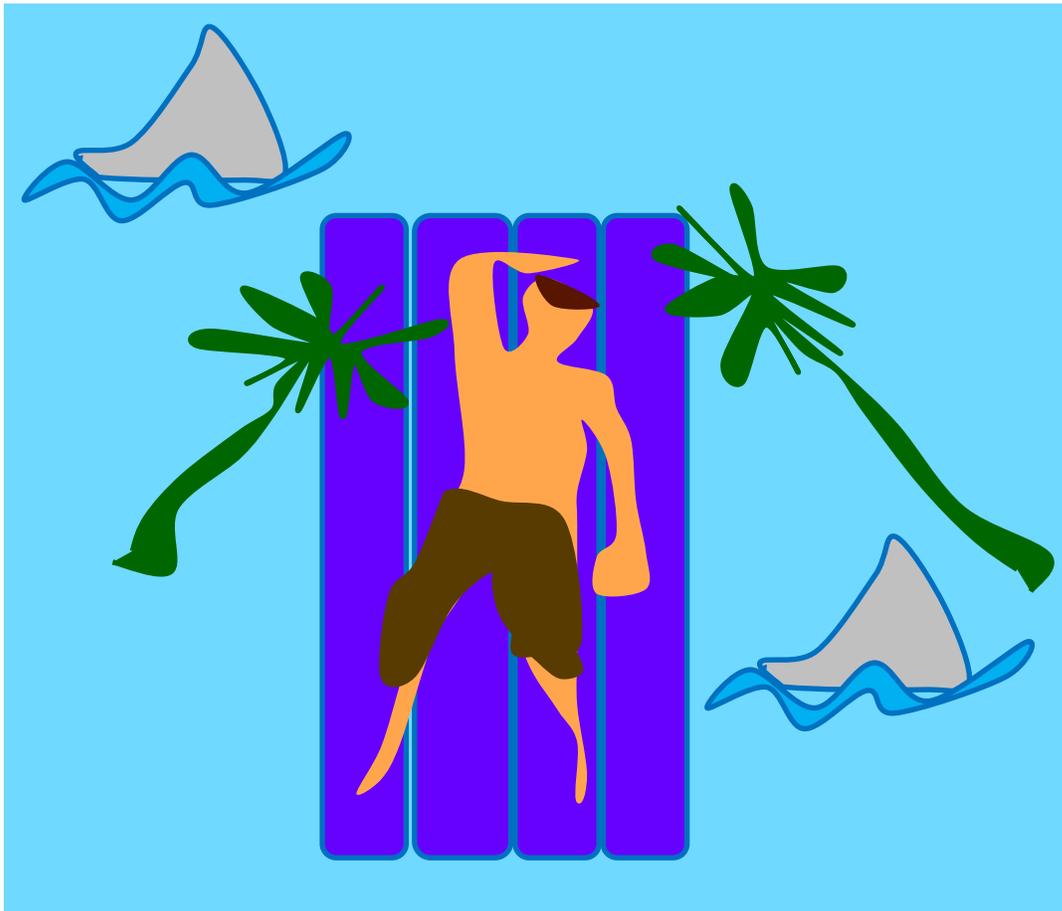
Not being able to fit in socially or make friends: 60.3% to 39.7%

Not being able to adjust: 61.7% to 38.3%



In general, and also contrary to type, other than for the fear of not being able to access high quality healthcare, fears tended to stay relatively constant or to diminish with age.

So much for young people being fearless!



Comments:

After many years vacationing in Mexico, we were not concerned about many of these points. – Deb Shepherd, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for 6 – 10 years.

After visits during the previous 10 years, I had absolutely no worries about moving to Mexico. – Gary Coles, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 2 – 5 years.

Extensive research and multiple visits eliminated any concerns I had. I discovered that I not only was giving up absolutely nothing, I was gaining many appreciable upgrades to my style of living. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 2 – 5 years.

I didn't have any worries. The world is ours, I don't believe in borders, so I thought, if Mexicans can live here, we should be able to as well. – Lisa, 25 – 44-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for less than 2 years.

I came here to experience something new and challenging, not to re-create my American life in Mexico. I view the oddities, the dangers, the hurdles of being a foreigner as learning opportunities and I have grown so much. Learning the language (mostly through karaoke, not classes) has been the most gratifying process because it has opened the door to new friendships. – Anne Nicolai, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 6 – 10 years.

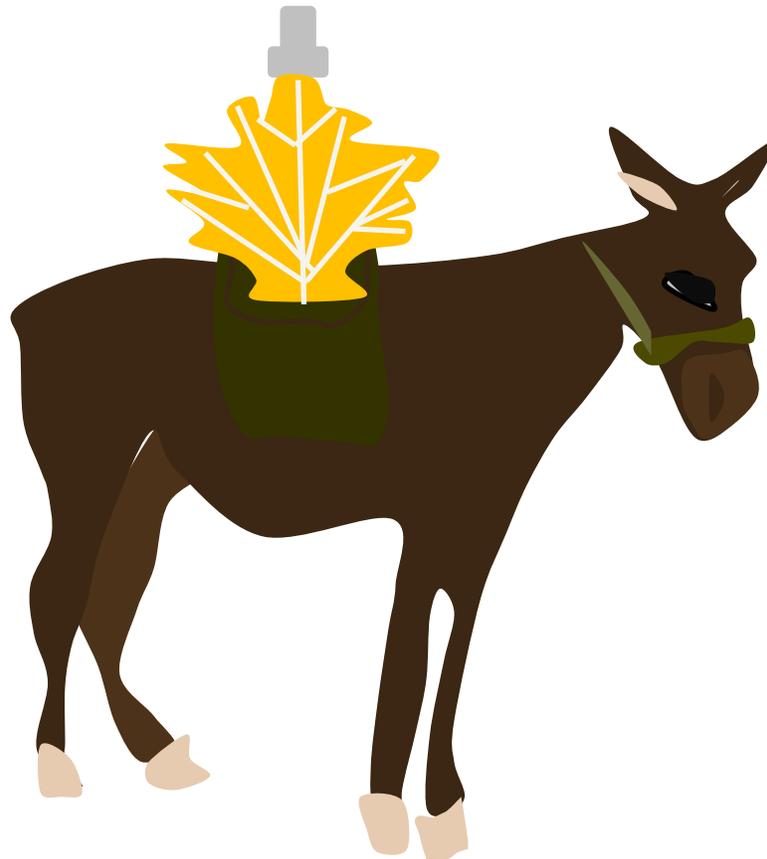


I came to Mexico with a positive outlook and was not disappointed. – Nancy Fitzmorris, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 6 – 10 years.

I did enough research to feel sure that most of the negative propaganda about Mexico was incorrect. I was correct. – Michael Ogden, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.

If you have all or many of the misgivings listed above, you should just stay at home. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.

I had no qualms about moving, because I had visited many times. But, many of my friends were concerned, asking "Aren't you afraid?" – Dee, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for more than 10 years.



I have friends "mule" any Canadian products I miss. As time goes by, I miss less and less. I miss my friends and family a great deal, but I'm close enough to return within a half day if I choose to and that helps just knowing it. – 65+-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for less than 2 years.

I really had no worries. I was willing to accept whatever came my way. – Paul Lafortune, 45 – 64-year-old male, from Canada, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for less than 2 years.

I was so ready for a change, that I really didn't let any fears or worries hold me back. – Lau-na Brockman, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for 2 -5 years.



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5. Which Worries Came True

If You're Thinking About Moving to Mexico and You're Like Our Respondents, Here's What You Should Be Worried About-- It Turns Out, Not Too Much

Now that you know the situation living in Mexico, which of these are true?



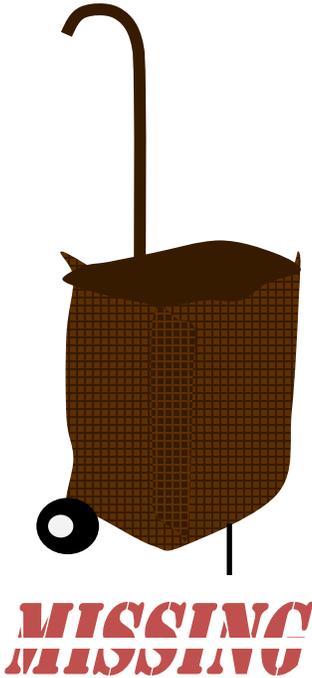


The whopping 70.4% of respondents who reported that none of the most typical fears came true after they moved to Mexico was very surprising, and 71.3% more than the 41.1% that reported the same thing for our study on Panama, Belize and Nicaragua (available for free download [here](#)). After that, what is striking is that none of the complaints gathered more than 11.1% of respondents.

Only 6.3% of respondents complained that there was not enough access to high quality healthcare, which is eye opening, given that a huge percentage of respondents came from developed First World countries such as the US and Canada. We suspect this would have been a larger percentage in the past, but we have no data to back up our suspicions.

“It’s not safe enough” was chosen by only 4.5% of respondents, which directly contradicts what many people perceive to be a major concern about moving to Mexico.





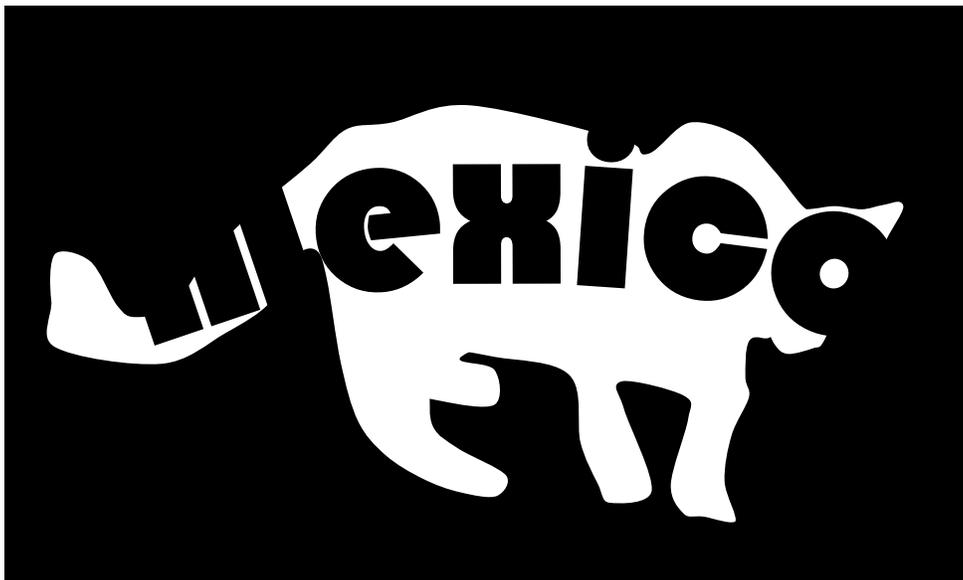
Just like in their worries, women again led men in the “None of these are true” category of realized fears, this time even slightly more dramatically, 56.2% to 43.8%. Women also reported fewer problems with infrastructure than men (40.5% to 59.5%) and very interestingly, being treated unfairly due to corruption, no rule of law, etc. (28.8% to 71.2%).

Women did, however, report missing First World goods and shopping more than men (56.6% to 43.4%), while men complained more about the reality of the infrastructure (59.5% to 40.5%), and against type, men complained more about it not being safe enough (62.5% to 37.5% of those who said it wasn’t safe).

Just like in their worries, generally, the older the expat, the fewer complaints he or she had.

Canadians reported being exceptionally worry-free in Mexico, with 78.5% reporting that none of the categories were true. Americans didn’t have a lot of realized worries either, with 68.7% reporting that none of the categories were true. After that, in almost every category, Canadians had fewer complaints than Americans, except in missing their friends and in not being able to speak Spanish.

There was generally not a large difference in results depending on how long each group had lived in Mexico.

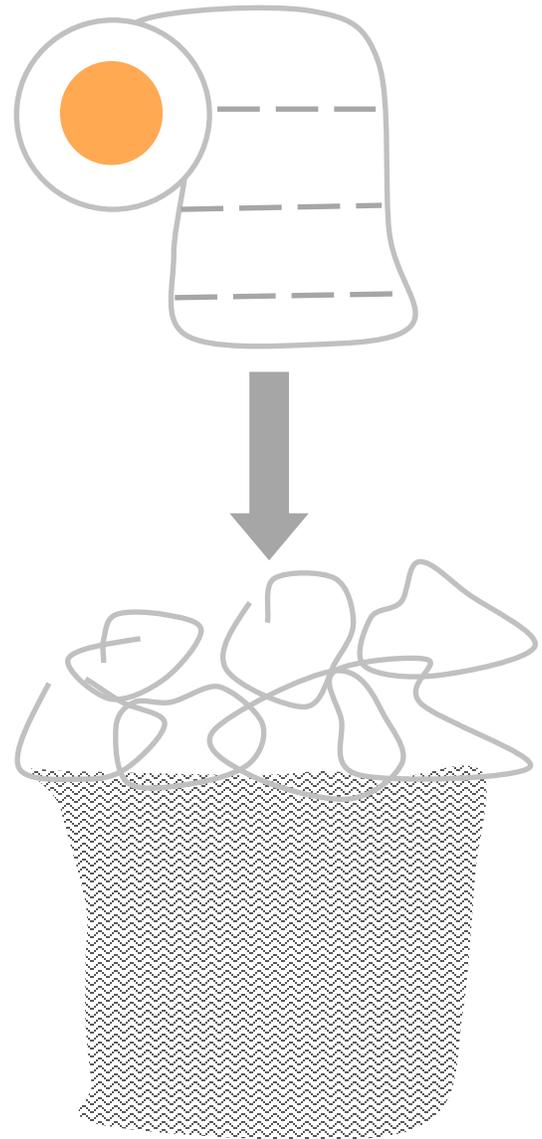


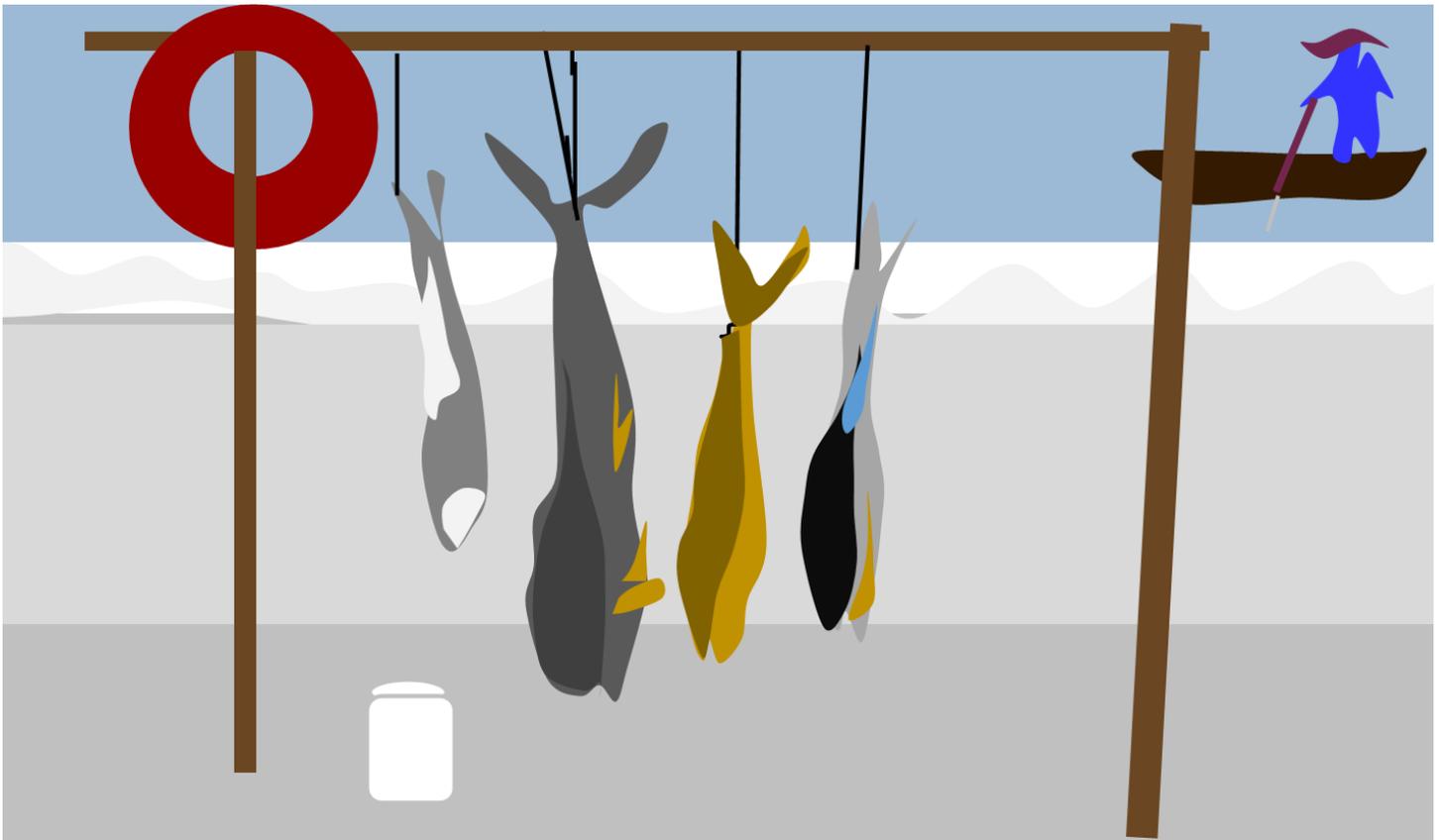


We believe it would be a mistake to believe that those who did not respond “yes” to a realized complaint were completely satisfied. For example, those responding “yes” to “The infrastructure (internet, roads, plumbing, electricity) is too primitive” was 8.9% for those living in Mexico. Especially after reading the comments and as a result of interviewing hundreds of expats for our site, we do not believe that this means that only 8.9% of the expats living in Mexico are 100% happy with the infrastructure. Perhaps many are, but many others probably would like it to be better.

It is our opinion from interacting with expats and reading comments that the 91.1% of respondents who did not check this complaint are probably comprised of:

- 1) those who really find the infrastructure to be fine (for example, there are places in Mexico have better Internet than many places in the US), but also,
- 2) those who just don't find it so bad that they choose to complain about it.



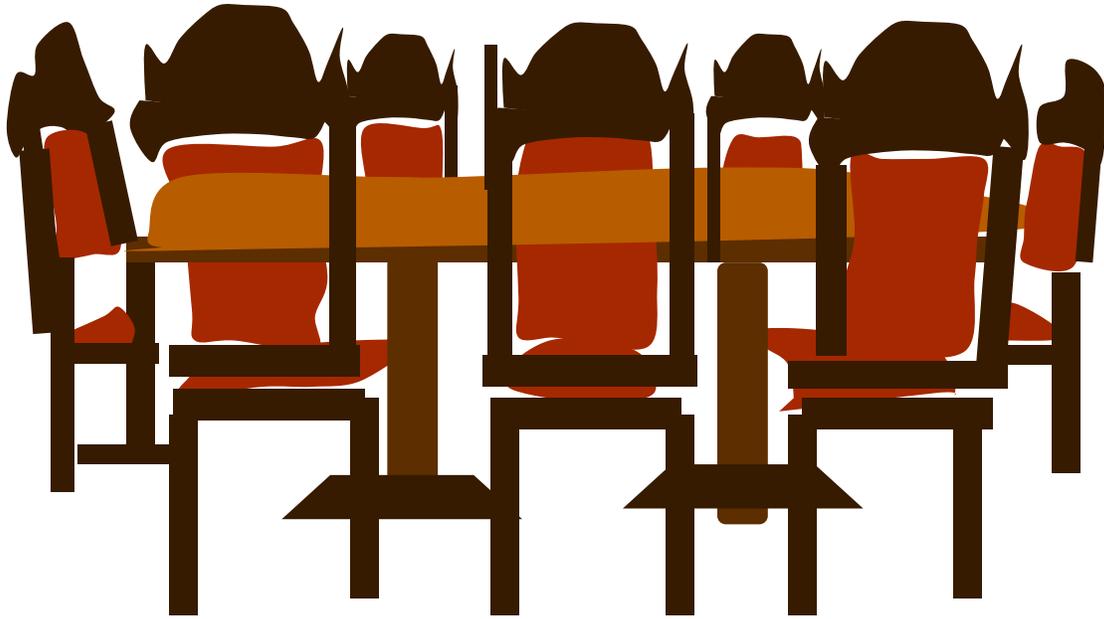


Comments:

None of the questions are applicable because I am one hour from the border and with a SENTRI card (issued by Homeland Security) it takes less than 5 minutes to cross the border! – Greg Miller, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 6 – 10 years.

I am able to afford a condo on the Pacific Ocean! – John Falletti, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlan area for 6 – 10 years.

There was an adjusting period. Now I navigate around just fine as a whole. Love the low cost of living. On a limited income I have better lifestyle. 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 2 – 5 years.



Here on weekends families get together and have a family meal, and teens spend time with family on weekends. Everyone's kind when you go visit. The first thing you get asked is are you hungry or come join us for a taco. You never leave from a visit hungry. – Eduardo Suarez Peral, 25 – 44-year-old male, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 6 – 10 years.

If you can't make it as an "ex-pat" in Cabo, you probably can't make it as an "ex-pat" anywhere. – Hal Beck, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

If I need anything my Mexican friends will do anything to help. They are so kind and friendly. They will go places with us to help translate for us. The pharmacy employees will go to the clinic and translate for you. Most of my meds are cheaper here even than with my co-pay in the states. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 6 – 10 years.

I have no family, so I have made one here!! That includes so many different people from all parts of the world! – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for less than 2 years.

I miss my children a lot but I have made many new friends here and consequently don't miss my old friends as much as I thought I would. – Pete Larson, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for 2 – 5 years.

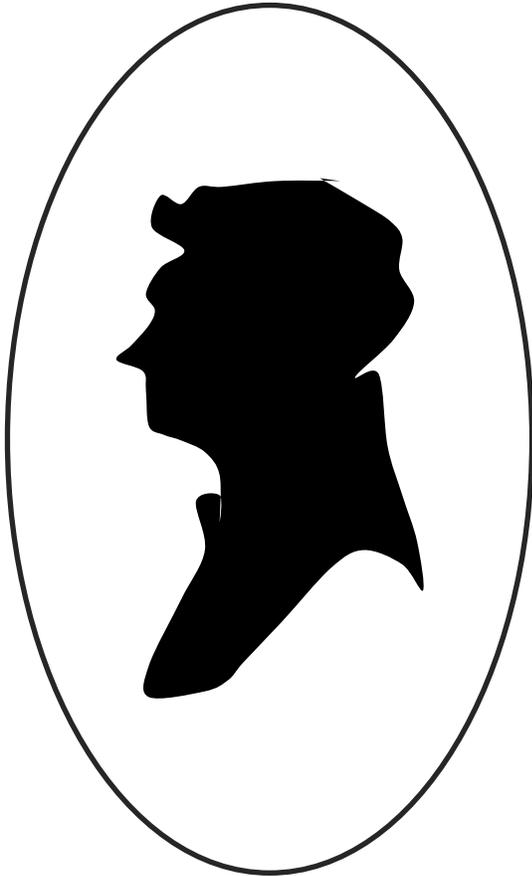
I miss my Father. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for less than 2 years.

I still miss my family but none of the other things was insurmountable. I got over all it. Learned to use what I had access to, learned Spanish and learned to appreciate where I was. – Tami Stout, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for more than 10 years.

I miss quality entertainment options. Broadway shows, major music concerts, etc. I miss my family a little, but not too much. I miss the biking and hiking opportunities I had in the U.S. – Dean, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 6 – 10 years.

I do find it very difficult to be confronted with the poverty of many of the people here. But then I just look at their smiling faces and realize that they do not miss many of the things I am very used to and take for granted. They have never had those things. 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for less than 2 years.

I am struggling to learn Spanish. It is very difficult for me. You can get by with limited Spanish but we want to learn more to fully interact with more locals. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 -5 years.





I do miss friends and family, but they now have a great place to visit and spend holidays. :-D – Una, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the UK, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 2 – 5 years.

I miss my friends and family more than I anticipated. But luckily, almost everyone wants to come visit! – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for less than 2 years

Life is what you make of it. Wherever you go and Mexico is westernized enough that living here should not be a shock to anyone. – Vicente Castillo, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for more than 10 years.

I do miss quality Wi-Fi. I occasionally find it frustrating to find the items and stores from the US. But I have dealt with it. The tradeoff is definitely worth it. I will always miss my family!! – Launa Brockman, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for 2 – 5 years.

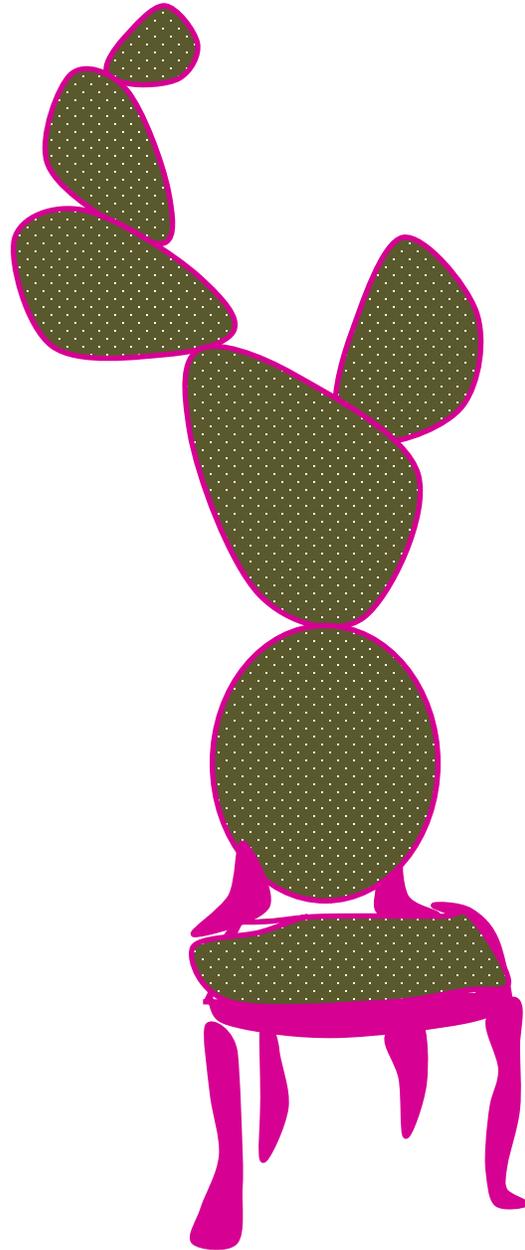
Hard to locate the goods and materials needed due to language barriers, poor advertising, lack of choices. 45 – 64-year-old male, from Canada, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for less than 2 years.

I struggle with the poor service regarding maintenance. Aggravated with lack of quality goods and workmanship. "Don't give a damn" attitude is annoying. – Cheryl Epp, 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in Baja California Sur for 2 – 5 years.

I'm adjusting to the poverty that is prevalent everywhere, as much as it remains a sad point. 65+-year-old male, from Canada, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 2 – 5 years.

I do miss a few grocery products from the United States. I am like a kid in a candy store every time I get the chance to go to H.E.B! – Debra J. Ingram, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for more than 10 years.

Having lived in Mexico for over ten years, I can tell you that Sonora is safer than Arizona. Just follow common sense--don't drive at night, don't flash money and jewelry around, stay away from drugs and prostitution and you will be just fine. – Greg Hovey, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.



I don't want to drive! I have become so active by walking everywhere. Our lifestyle and quality of living has greatly improved. – Michelle Wollenzien, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for less than 2 years.



I love not needing to drive. I am slow at learning Spanish but the locals are lovely people and delighted we try. Many speak some English and we work it out while laughing together. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 2 – 5 years.

If you are considering moving and/or retiring to Mexico, do your homework.... and then you should have no issues as those listed above. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.

I love it here. And after living here for 12 years, it is fast becoming more and more like living in Florida with access to American goods, medical services, many locals speaking English now, etc. Easier every day for foreigners to move to the Yucatan. When we moved here in 2005, we couldn't even find dish towels in any stores, even Walmart! Today, you can find all sorts of things and usually cheaper than in the US. The days of loading up suitcases of stuff and carrying them down from the US are over! – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for more than 10 years.



For further investigation ●●

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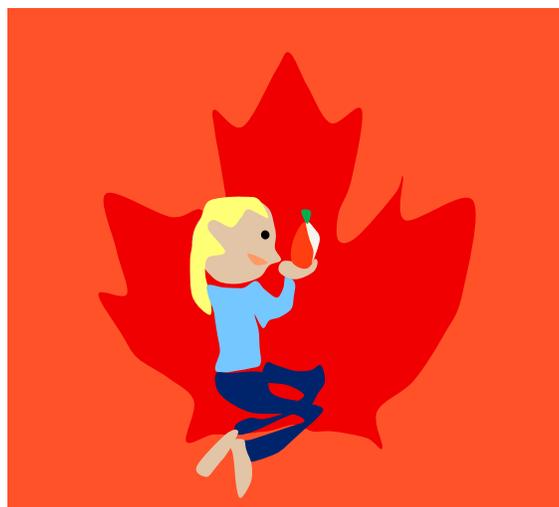
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6. Comparing Worries Before Moving to Mexico With the Reality Afterwards— the 126.4% Relief Factor

We Compare the responses to the question
“What are your biggest worries about moving to Mexico?”
with “Now that you know the situation living in Mexico, which of these are true?”

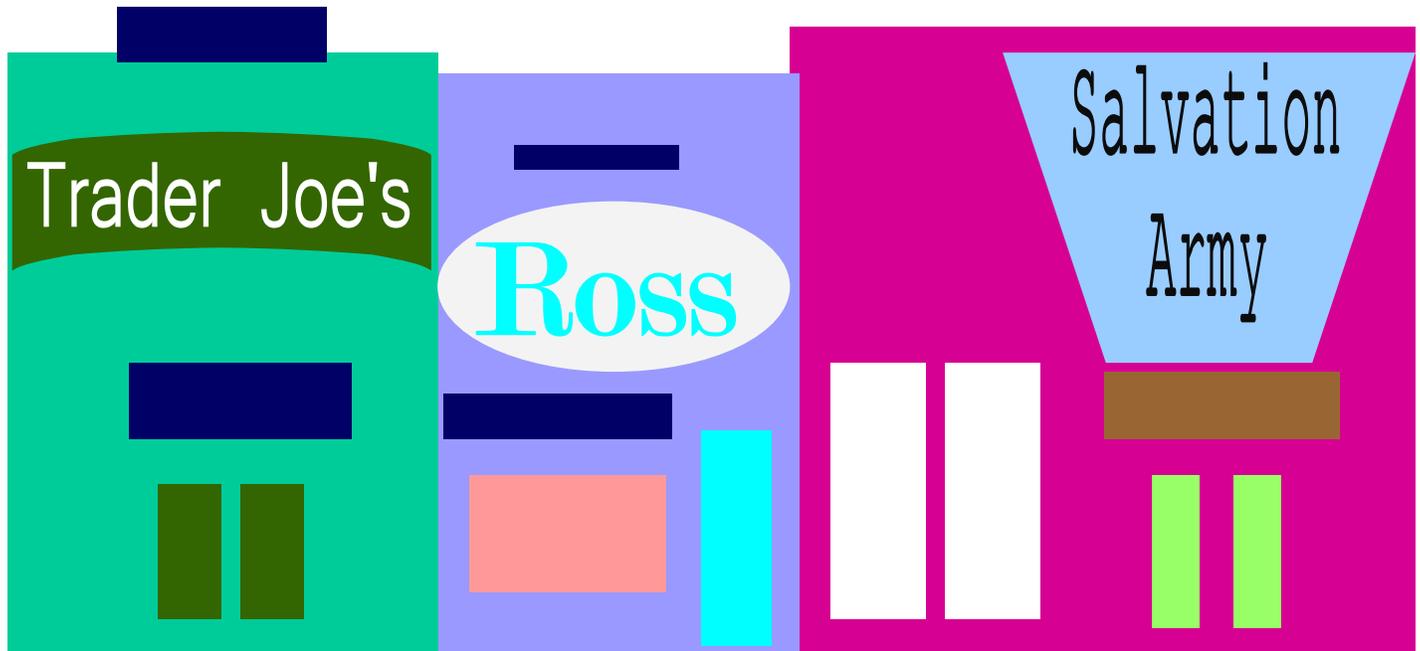
Worries – Attributes All Segments	Worries Before	Reality Afterward	Difference (Reality Afterward is -)
I may not be able to / I'm not able to speak or learn the language or get by with English	31.3%	3.3%	-89.5%
None of these apply	31.1%	70.4%	126.4%
I will / I do miss my friends and family too much	23.6%	6.3%	-73.3%
The infrastructure (internet, roads, plumbing, electricity) will be / is too primitive	21.7%	8.9%	-59.0%
There may not be / there isn't access to high quality healthcare	21.1%	6.3%	-70.1%
It may not / it isn't safe	18.6%	4.5%	-75.8%
I will be treated / I am treated unfairly due to corruption, no rule of law, etc.	18.6%	5.8%	-68.8%
I will miss / I do miss First World goods and shopping	17.4%	11.1%	-36.2%
I won't be able to / I wasn't able to fit in socially or to make friends	13.6%	1.8%	-86.8%
I may not be able to / I wasn't able to lower my cost of living enough	6.7%	2.8%	-58.2%
It's too much different, so I won't be able to adjust / it wasn't so much different that I wasn't able to adjust	6.7%	0.9%	-86.6%
I may not be able to / I was able to handle being around the poverty	4.5%	1.3%	-71.1%
I won't like / I didn't like the lifestyle or culture	4.4%	1.5%	-65.9%
I won't be able to / I wasn't able to drive	3.3%	1.3%	-60.6%
The locals will / haven't treated me badly	3.0%	1.0%	-66.7%

The enormous statistical difference in every category between each fear and the extent to which that fear was realized leads us to conclude that, for the vast majority of people, the vast majority of fears for moving to Mexico are overblown. For example, 31.1% of expats indicated they had no worries before they moved, but 70.4% indicated that none of their fears were actualized. The more than double jump (what we're calling “The 126.4% Relief Factor”) indicates to us that the reality of moving to Mexico is much less scary than even those who decide to do it believed before going.





Every worry we could think to ask expats that they had before they moved to Mexico was worse than what they actually experienced after moving to Mexico. Every complaint after moving to Mexico showed at least a 50% decrease from the worry our respondents had before they moved, except for missing First World goods and shopping, and even that decreased 36.2%. Still, 11.1% still missed their First World goods and shopping.



The fear with the largest difference between how many of our respondents worried about it and how many found it to be a problem after living in Mexico was not being able to speak Spanish or get by with just English, with only 3.3% of respondents indicating that this is an issue for them after moving to Mexico. To this finding we add two points, both gained from our interviews with expats in Mexico and their answers to questions on our site.

- We believe that significantly more than 3.3% of our respondents had trouble learning Spanish to a conversational level. This would lead us to believe that quite a few expats in Mexico get by mainly with English.
- Almost every expat with whom we spoke recommended strongly that people moving to Mexico learn as much Spanish as possible, for several reasons, including that if you do, you will of course have more Mexican friends, get more out of your experience in a Spanish speaking country, and be more independent and confident in day-to-day situations.

In the following two tables, we display the differences between worries before moving to Mexico compared to reality afterwards for women, and then for men.



Worries -- Attributes Women Only	Worries Before	Reality Afterward	Difference (Reality Afterward is -)
I may not be able to / I'm not able to speak or learn the language or get by with English	34.8%	2.9%	-91.7%
None of these apply	31.7%	73.9%	133.1%
I will / I do miss my friends and family too much	27.0%	6.9%	-74.4%
The infrastructure (internet, roads, plumbing, electricity) will be / is too primitive	19.5%	6.7%	-65.6%
There may not be / there isn't access to high quality healthcare	19.5%	5.9%	-69.7%
It may not / it isn't safe	18.2%	3.2%	-82.4%
I will be treated / I am treated unfairly due to corruption, no rule of law, etc.	11.9%	3.2%	-73.1%
I will miss / I do miss First World goods and shopping	19.5%	11.8%	-39.5%
I won't be able to / I wasn't able to fit in socially or to make friends	15.3%	2.3%	-85.0%
I may not be able to / I wasn't able to lower my cost of living enough	6.1%	2.5%	-59.0%
It's too much different, so I won't be able to adjust / it wasn't so much different that I wasn't able to adjust	7.8%	0.8%	-89.7%
I may not be able to / I was able to handle being around the poverty	5.2%	0.8%	-84.6%
I won't like / I didn't like the lifestyle or culture	3.8%	1.3%	-65.8%
I won't be able to / I wasn't able to drive	3.8%	1.5%	-60.5%
The locals will / haven't treated me badly	2.3%	0.6%	-73.9%

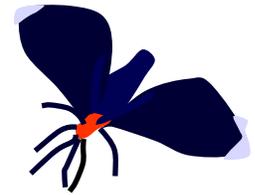
La Cucaracha



Worries -- Attributes Men Only	Worries Before	Reality Afterward	Difference (Reality Afterward is -)
I may not be able to / I'm not able to speak or learn the language or get by with English	27.3%	3.6%	-86.8%
None of these apply	30.4%	66.3%	118.1%
I will / I do miss my friends and family too much	19.6%	5.6%	-71.4%
The infrastructure (internet, roads, plumbing, electricity) will be / is too primitive	24.2%	11.4%	-52.9%
There may not be / there isn't access to high quality healthcare	22.9%	6.8%	-70.3%
It may not / it isn't safe	19.1%	6.1%	-68.1%
I will be treated / I am treated unfairly due to corruption, no rule of law, etc.	26.3%	9.0%	-65.8%
I will miss / I do miss First World goods and shopping	15.0%	10.4%	-30.7%
I won't be able to / I wasn't able to fit in socially or to make friends	11.6%	1.2%	-89.7%
I may not be able to / I wasn't able to lower my cost of living enough	7.5%	3.1%	-58.7%
It's too much different, so I won't be able to adjust / it wasn't so much different that I wasn't able to adjust	5.6%	1.0%	-82.1%
I may not be able to / I was able to handle being around the poverty	3.6%	1.9%	-47.2%
I won't like / I didn't like the lifestyle or culture	5.1%	1.7%	-66.7%
I won't be able to / I wasn't able to drive	2.7%	1.2%	-55.6%
The locals will / haven't treated me badly	3.9%	1.5%	-61.5%

Comments:

Access to top quality healthcare that I could afford was my biggest concern. I require frequent blood tests. But I can get everything I need at the new H+ Hospital. – Cookie Pfeffer, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 6 – 10 years.



All my doubts or fears about living in Mexico are unfounded... – Alyce Magill, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 2 – 5 years.

Although I checked "None," I still would like to have the electricity and the Internet not go out from time to time. – 65-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 6 – 10 years.

Any experience is what you make of it. I think the biggest stumbling block for most people is that they expect and demand their home country, just better weather. Embrace your new home - Mexican brands are just as good as NOTB ["North of the Border"] brands and usually cheaper; get to know your local neighbors, not just the expat community; accept cultural differences, even if it means you sit at home all day waiting for the gas guy; assimilate with where you are, not try to make your new country a warmer version of your old one. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for less than 2 years.

You can acquire and establish new and additional friendships but family is family. You can't replace them and that is and will continue to be an adjustment. Although we won't see them as frequently as we might like we can be more diligent in our communication and make better use of their time and ours when we are together. – Ed Harrod, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for less than 2 years.

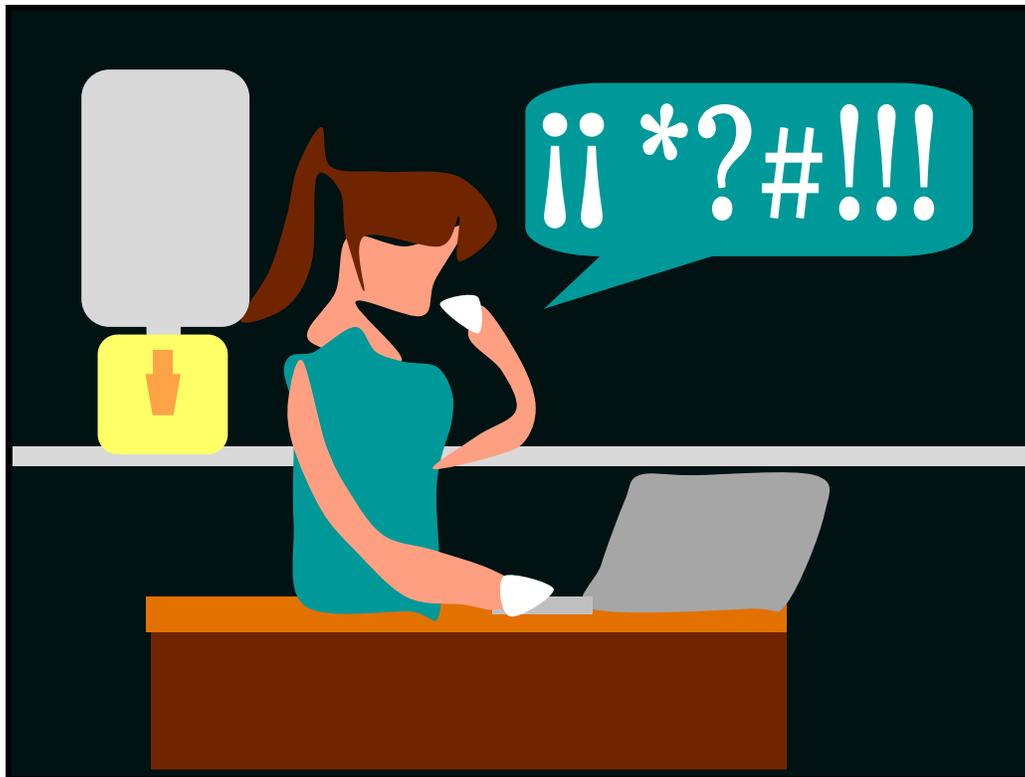
Apart from some bureaucracy, everything is pretty easygoing. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from Canada, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for more than 10 years.



As in most countries where you are a foreigner, patience and a positive attitude are imperative. The locals here are friendly and polite, and many will go out of their way to help you. Trying to speak at least a little Spanish is an excellent ice breaker and will create goodwill between you and the locals. Don't let your fears weigh you down; be cautious but keep an open mind. If you meet a local who is rude or unfriendly, remember there is one in every crowd, even your own country. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from Canada, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for more than 10 years.

One can adjust to life here if their attitude is to look at the positive side. – Bo O'S, 65+-year-old male, from Canada, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

It's not that they are TOO primitive, but it would be nice if Telmex got down here at San Pedrito Beach so we wouldn't be held hostage by the local Wi-Fi guy who supplies Internet for the whole neighborhood. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 2 – 5 years.



Ask for help or advice and it will be humbly given – Shellibomb, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 2 -5 years.

The ability to adjust to Mexico depends on how bad you want it; so, with little effort, you'll fit right in. – Steve Smith, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlan area for less than 2 years.

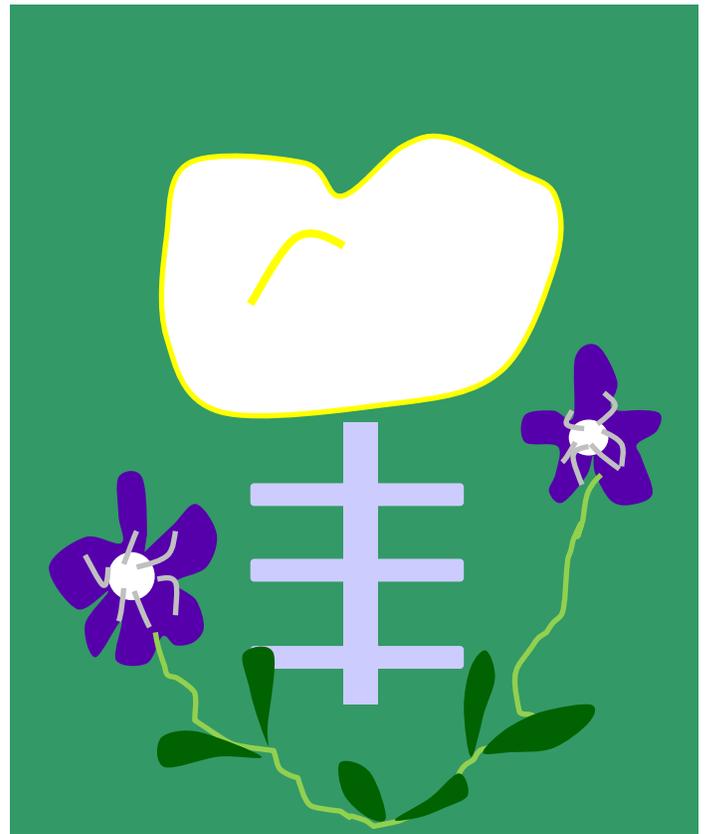
Yes, things are different here but what is important in your life changes. You may think you can't live without some product you've used forever but you let go, adjust and move on. Don't get stuck on the small stuff! – Cathy Quinn, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 2 – 5 years.

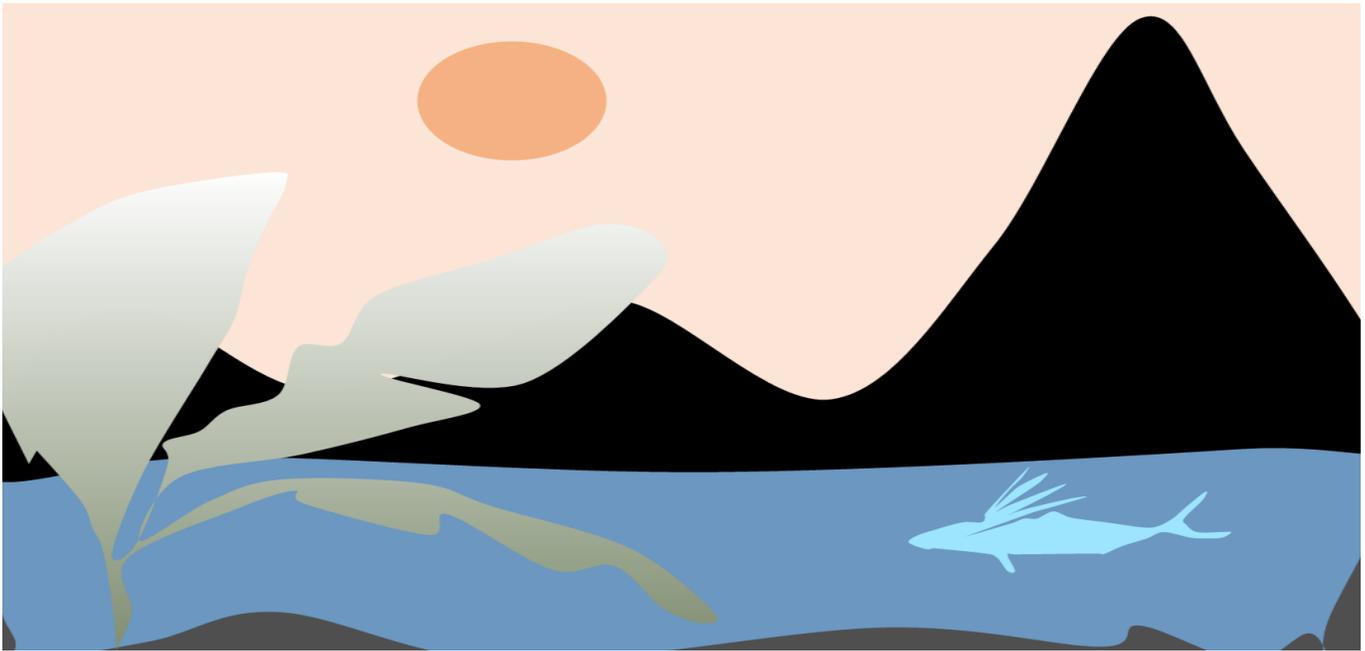
Yes, I do miss family and friends but, every August, I make a trip back to Canada to visit them. I have found medical and dental care here is excellent and very affordable. – 65+-year-old female, from Canada, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 6 – 10 years

VA Hospital San Diego is a 4-hour plane and trolley ride away. A Walmart is 4 blocks away and I have a Sam's Club membership – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

Thrift stores and yard sales are the only things I miss! – Carla W., 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for more than 10 years.

Mayan people are happy, friendly and hard-working. We've met many local families and made lifelong friends. – Mary Hoffenbecker, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 6 – 10 years.





Whatever one might miss is made up by great people, culture, weather and things to do. You can always get a friend to bring some specific "need" down. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for less than 2 years.

We miss certain things but it's not a big deal. We do miss friends and relatives but seems we see most more than we did as they come to vacation – 45 – 64-year-old male, from Europe other than the UK, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for more than 10 years.

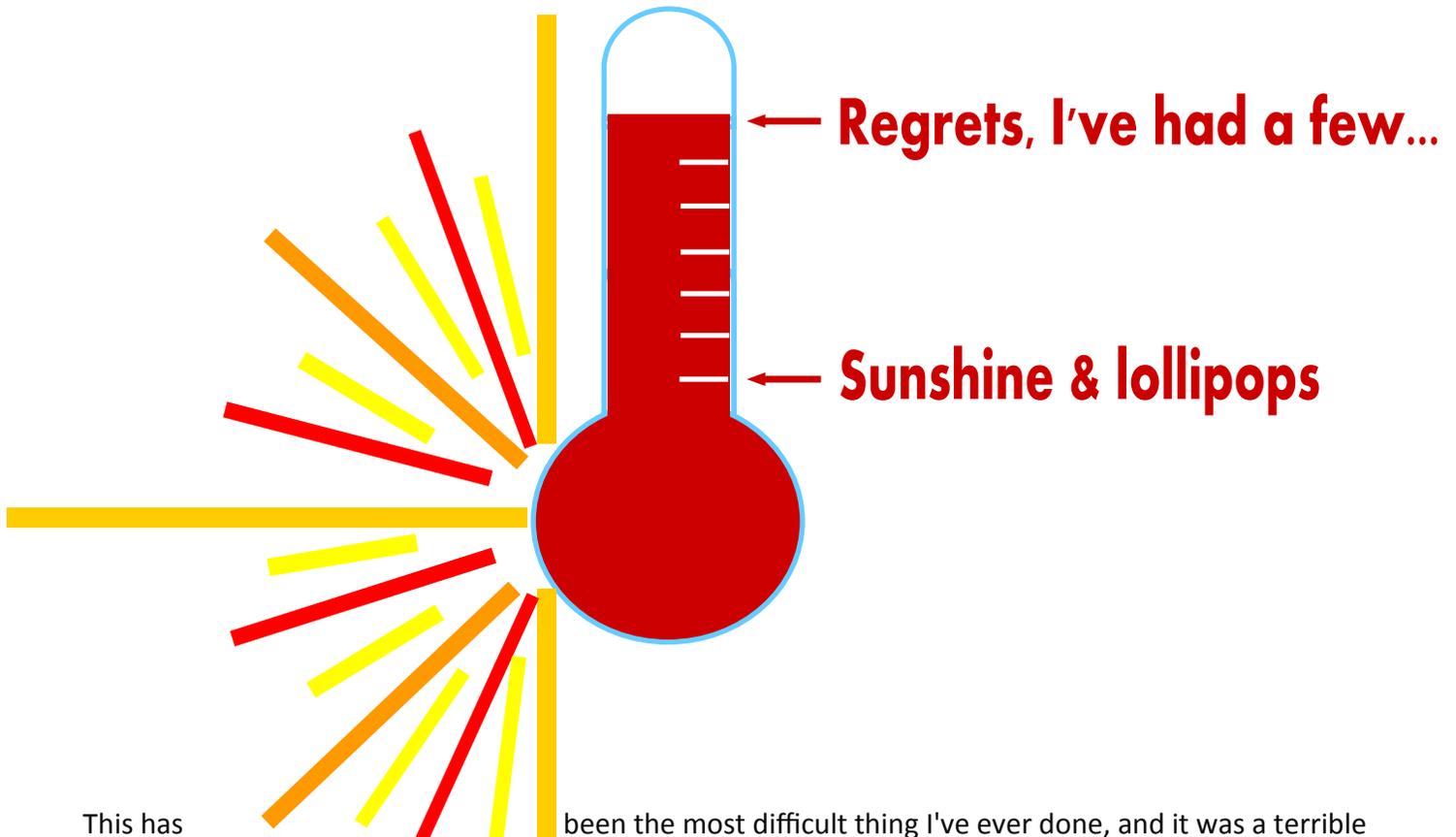
We have learned to bring things down that are not available in Mexico or order it online. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 6 – 10 years.

There are a few things that could be better but the positives outweigh the negatives by 50 to 1. I'm staying forever!!! – 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

It was good for me to learn to live in a different part of the world. It has expanded my view. I have learned that some things I thought were common around the world are common to California only. And living abroad makes me see the whole world in a different light. I have learned that it's ok to be different and it's fun to accept new and different friends. – 45 – 64-year old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 2 – 5 years.

Mexicans work harder than one expects and at usually more than one job. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 2 – 5 years.

Most of the negatives listed above are true to some small extent, but the benefits gained are such that the negatives are insignificant. – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlan area for more than 10 years.



This has been the most difficult thing I've ever done, and it was a terrible mistake. I've lowered my cost of living, but living on Social Security only is still difficult. If you have the funds and can afford to travel home to see your family it will be easier, but on SS only you will not, so be prepared to miss them. Living in Mexico is living through a country's labor pains as it struggles to arrive in the 21st century. I'd much rather live in the US in a familiar environment, with people who hold the same social values I do. This country is not a good fit for me. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 2 – 5 years.

There are obviously things I would change, such as garbage and stray dogs but the people are friendly, the weather good and we love it here. – 65+year-old female, from Canada, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 6 – 10 years.

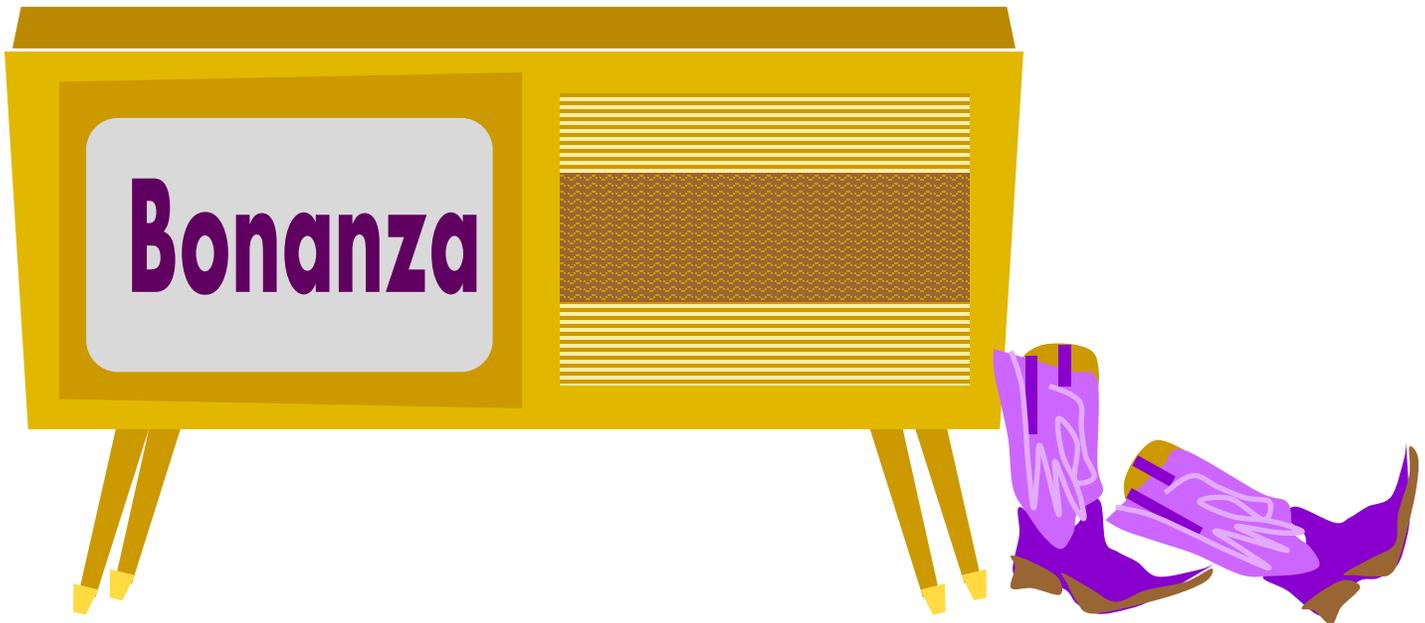
We have learned to bring things down that are not available in Mexico or order it online. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 6 – 10 years.

It's little things, like Adam's peanut butter, Cheddar cheese, cargo shorts, etc. On the flip side, the seafood is much better. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 2 – 5 years.

Love living here! Wish my family and friends would move here, too. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

The only security in the world, is within! I had excellent surgery care. I already speak Spanish. I'm finding keeping my casita functioning to be difficult due to cheap (build-in obsolescence) parts. Would like my family, friends, to move here. The locals are WONderful! – Sharyn McIntyre, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 6 – 10 years.

It's hard to get used to the increase in noise, rockets, loud music. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.



It is essential to learn Spanish if, as we do, you own a car and home and need to pay taxes and hire services. You also need Spanish at Immigration. We are embracing that challenge and enjoying learning the language. It's keeping our minds sharp. We live in an area that is multi-lingual, so we are able to communicate in English much of the time. We also get English channels on Mexican cable TV.— Wendy Woodworth, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for less than 2 years.

It is what you make it. If you want to create a home-from-home then maybe you shouldn't be thinking of moving. I see too many expats only moving within their area (maybe their safety zone) of other expats. They really don't make a big enough effort to learn the language. Therefore, they feel insecure, feel they are being used. They don't move out of being with other expats. Personally I see this as the expats' biggest mistake. They think they are integrating by a change of life style. But they cling to the other expats in their area and don't move out and make Mexican friends and know little about the culture. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the UK, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for more than 10 years.



For further investigation ● ●

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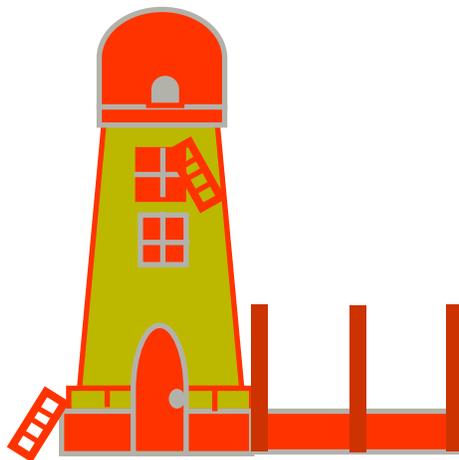
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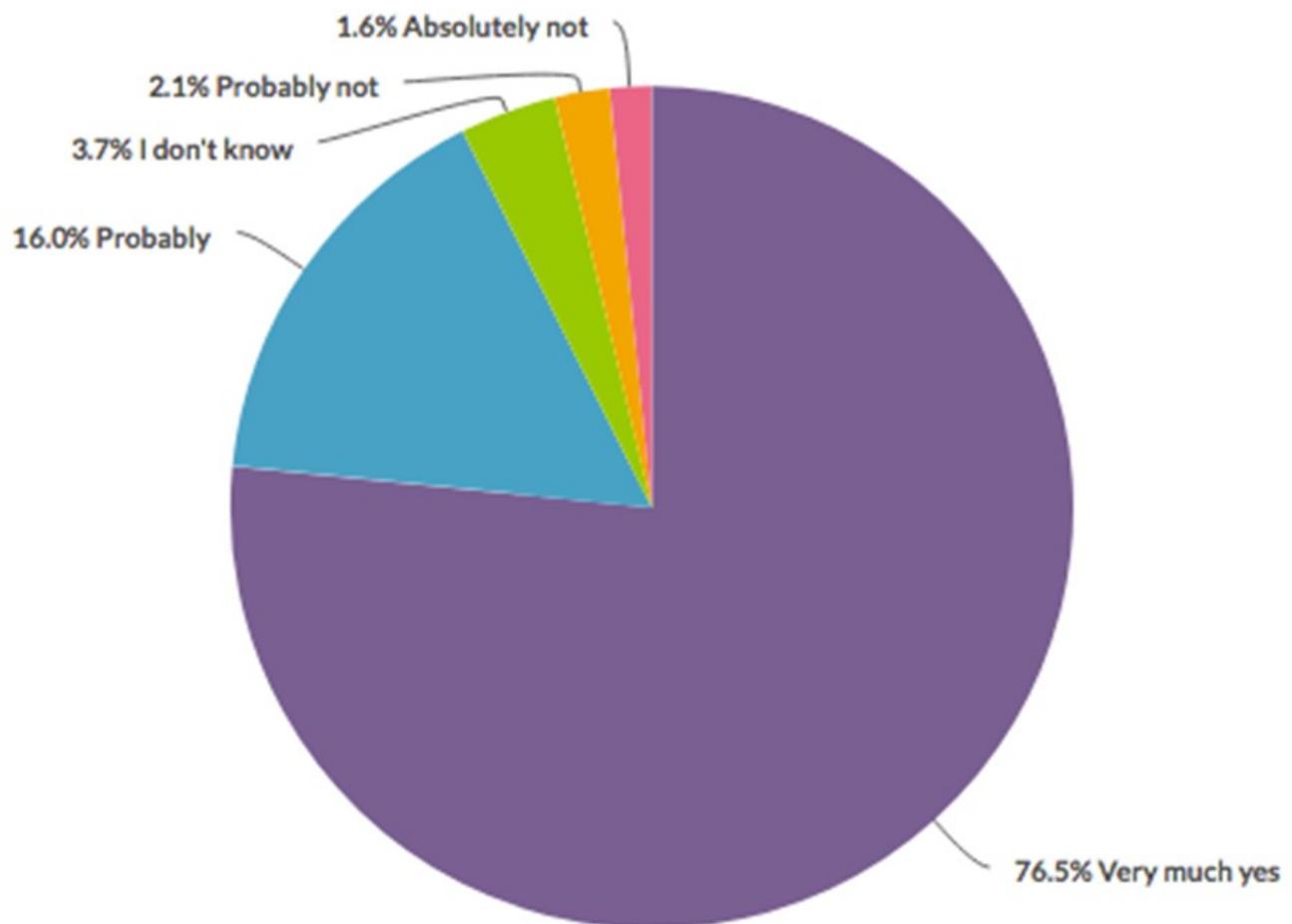
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7. 76.5% of Expats Who Moved to Mexico Would “Very Much” Do It Again. Here’s the Data.

If you could do it all over again or not, would you move to Mexico?



After all the other questions are answered, the ultimate answer is to this question: “If you had to do it all over again, would you?” The sheer dominance of the purple area, with 76.5% of expats who moved to Mexico reporting that the answer to this question is “Very much yes” is very impressive for moving to any place, let alone a different country where there is more uncertainty and unusual circumstances.

Each lessening degree of certainty about moving again to Mexico, starting with “Probably” at 16.0%, to “I don’t know,” etc., received successively fewer votes. At a combined 3.7%, those who say that they either absolutely would not or probably would not move again to Mexico is so small as almost be able to be discounted almost entirely. (As a comparison, according to the Roper Poll, almost 2% of Americans believe they were abducted by aliens.)



When considering these results, please remember that any study has biases. We list ours in the section titled “Survey Methodology,” starting on page 115, which we recommend you review. Our suspicion (completely unprovable via data) is that probably the most significant bias in this study is what we named the “Expatriate Success Bias,” which means that those who took the study are current expats, as opposed, for example, to those who tried being an expat and left to go back to their country of origin. Unfortunately, there is no good way to test this.

The responses for men and women were very similar, as were the responses per marital status, employment status, country of origin, and how long the expat had been in Mexico. However, the older our respondents were, the more emphatic they were about moving to Mexico all over again, with the following percentages answering “Very much yes”:

25 – 44 years old: 71%

45—64 years old: 74.6%

65+ years old: 79.1

In order of highest to lowest, here are the percentages as per destination of respondents who answered the most emphatically, “Very much yes.”



Greater Chapala Area 88.2%

Greater Lake Chapala area: 88.2%

Greater Mazatlán area: 83.1%

Greater San Miguel de Allende area: 80.4%

Baja California Norte: 78.1%

Greater Puerto Vallarta area: 76.3%

State of Yucatan, including Merida: 75.8%

Baja California Sur: 71.0%

State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc.: 69.1%

Greater Mexico City area: 53.3%



Greater Mazatlán area: 83.1%



State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc.: 69.1%



Greater Mexico City area: 53.3%



It was interesting for us to review how different the responses would be depending on how long an expat had been in Mexico. If the positive responses were less positive over time, it would suggest that the certainty our respondents felt at the beginning of their expat experience in Mexico lessened with time. If the positive responses were greater over time, it would suggest that the certainty that moving to Mexico was the right thing to do grew with experience living in Mexico.

However, what we saw is that the responses per how long the respondent lived in Mexico tended to be about the same, which would lead us to believe that if the expat liked living in Mexico at the beginning, they would tend to keep the same opinion over time.





Comments:

Many of our friends and family were horrified that we were moving to Mexico. They were scared for us. But we were never scared and we are so grateful that we seized the opportunity when we had it. We both think it's important to be open to new things, and to constantly learning new things that will help us grow as individuals. We both agree that it keeps us young to be here. It's exciting to be here, it's fun and we are both learning a lot. Sometimes the frustration of not knowing where to go or how to accomplish a specific task becomes a unique and wonderful cultural adventure. It's all in your attitude. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for less than 2 years.

We spent years studying Panama, Belize, Southern Mexico (Yucatan) as retirement locations. We had lived 10 years in Florida, many years in SE Asia, the Northwest US, Nova Scotia, Japan and Australia, and we have endured many forms of culture shock, alien cultures and widely varying costs of living. We made our Mexico decision carefully and slowly. We would reach the same conclusion if we had to do it again. – Robert Bridge, 65+-year-old male, from Canada, living in Baja California Norte for 2 -5 years.



The dogs barking 24/7 and pollution were a real surprise. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for less than 2 years.

My only regret is that I couldn't do it sooner. I missed a lot of life by not living here. – 65+year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for 6 – 10 years.

No money to live in the States. – 65+year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 – 5 years.

Would have done things a bit different and slower. Such as rent instead of buying house right away. Living in different neighborhoods. – Lupe Y Ambrose, 65+-year-old female from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 2 -5 years.

I'm so glad I acted on my intuition without hesitation. There are always barriers to hold you back from your goals if you let them, and I'm glad I turned a blind eye to the "yeah buts" and just said "yes" to myself. – Anne Nicolai, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 6 – 10 years.

Despite the lack of language, I do love the tranquility here. I did not know this before I moved here. – Jeanie Kezlan, 65+year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

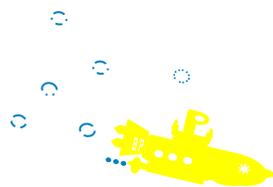
I thought about it for 6 years and 3 years ago bit the bullet and at first was nervous and frustrated but now I wish I had done it 10 years ago. – Karen, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

Very definitely yes! When we retired, we could not keep us with our high mortgage payment so we invested in a home here in Mulegé, paid cash and only have land rental and utilities to worry about except for unexpected expenses. – 65+year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

We are living in a gated community of 24 owners less than a mile from the beach with a lazy river connecting all the units. It would be valued at over \$2 million in Southern California, but with the friendships developed here, it makes the value priceless! – Ben Haddox, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for less than 2 years.

If you are considering moving to Mexico I urge you to not sell your home in the States. Rent it out and find a place to rent in Mexico. Spend at least a year in your chosen area before you make any final decisions. You need time to allow the "new adventure" luster to wear off so you can clearly assess the lifestyle. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 2 – 5 years.





Submerge Yourself

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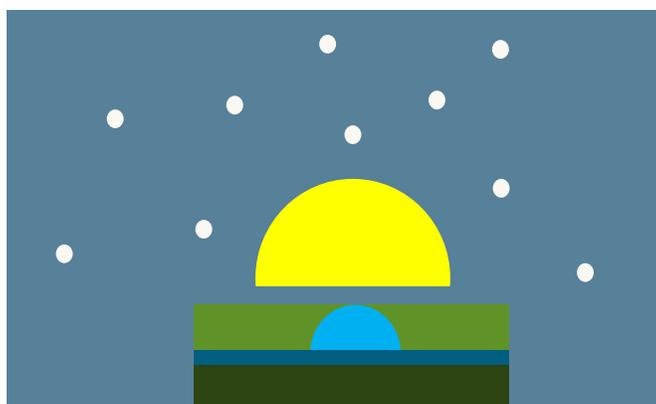
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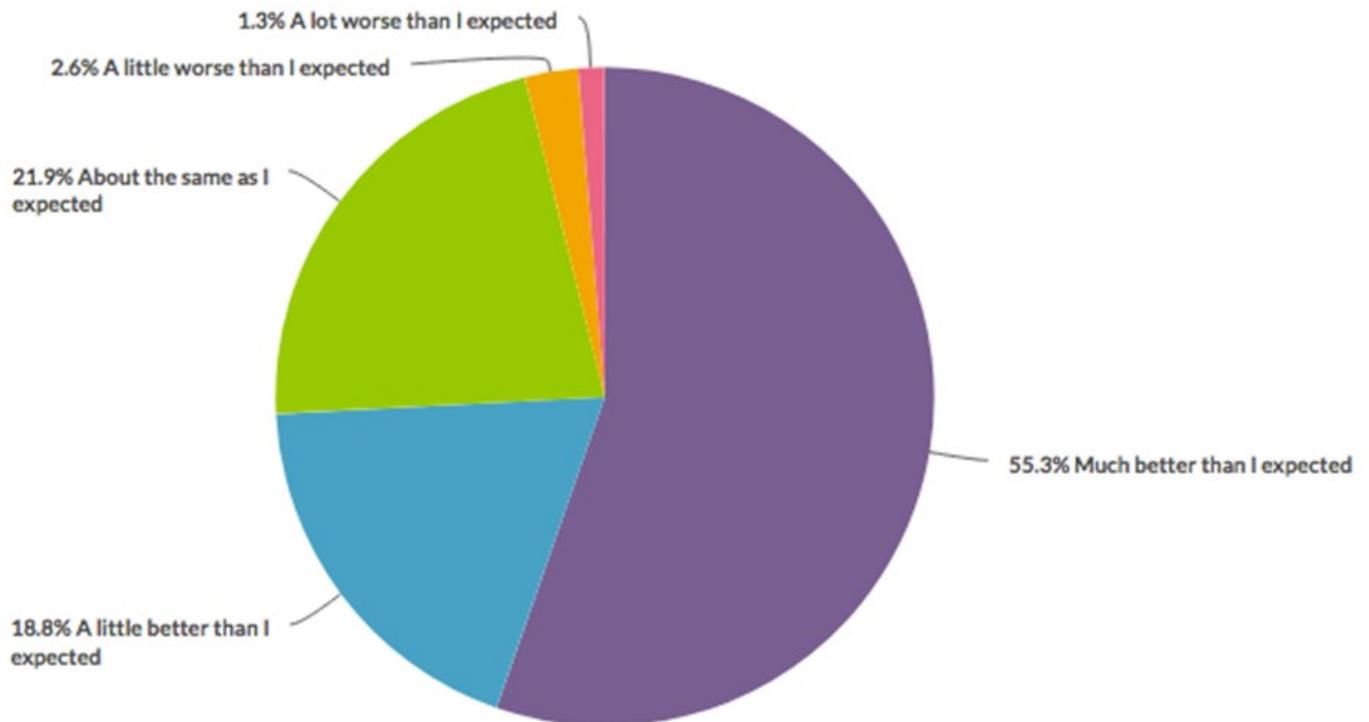
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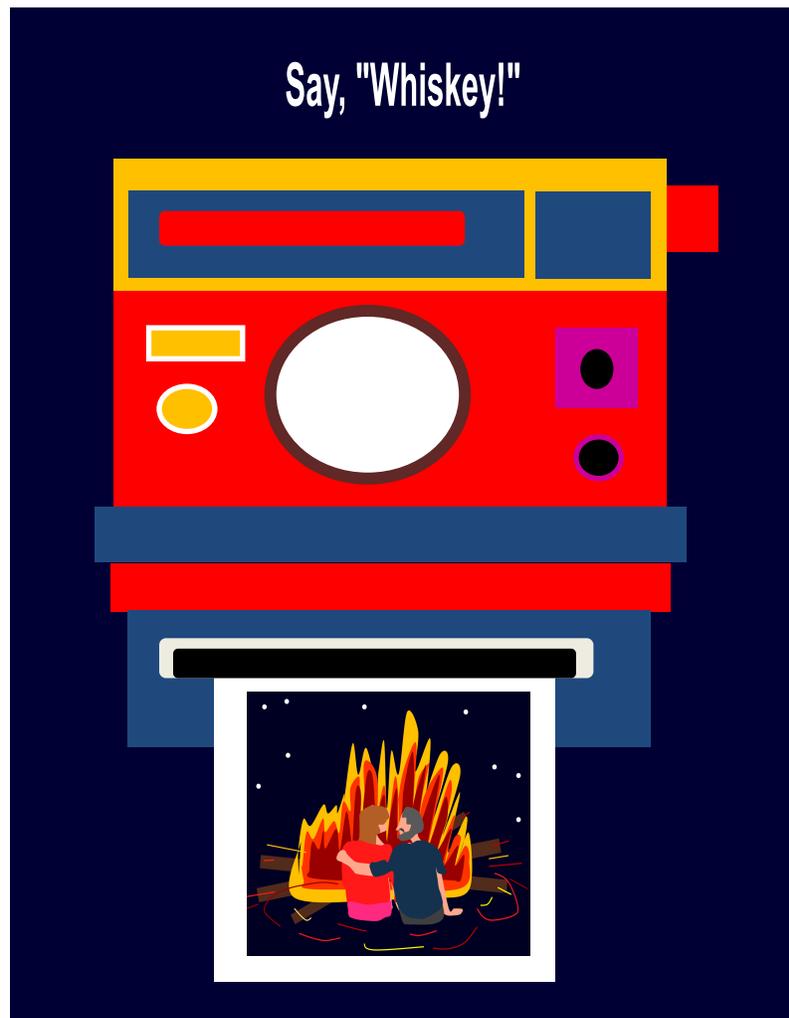
8. How Our Respondents Describe Life in Mexico

To gain more insight why the results were so overwhelmingly positive as to if our respondents would move to Mexico again, here are four more responses.

Living in Mexico is...



Given the positive responses to “Please check all the things you DID achieve by moving to Mexico” and “Now that you know the situation living in Mexico, which of these are true?”, we weren’t surprised by the positive response to “Living in Mexico is...”, but how lopsided the results came in was a bit stunning, especially when we considered that only 3.9% of respondents reported that living in Mexico was either “A little worse than I expected” or “A lot worse than I expected”.



Consistent with what we would expect from the results on the section of our study that reported realized worries, females dramatically outvoted males in the “Much better than I expected” category, 57.5% to 42.5%

Relative to marital status, those who reported emphatically that living in Mexico was “much better than expected” was led by widows, at 69.0%, followed by married people, at 58.4%

Overall living expectations were most exceeded in the Greater Chapala area, with 75.5% reporting “Much better than expected”, followed by the Greater San Miguel de Allende area, at 70.6%

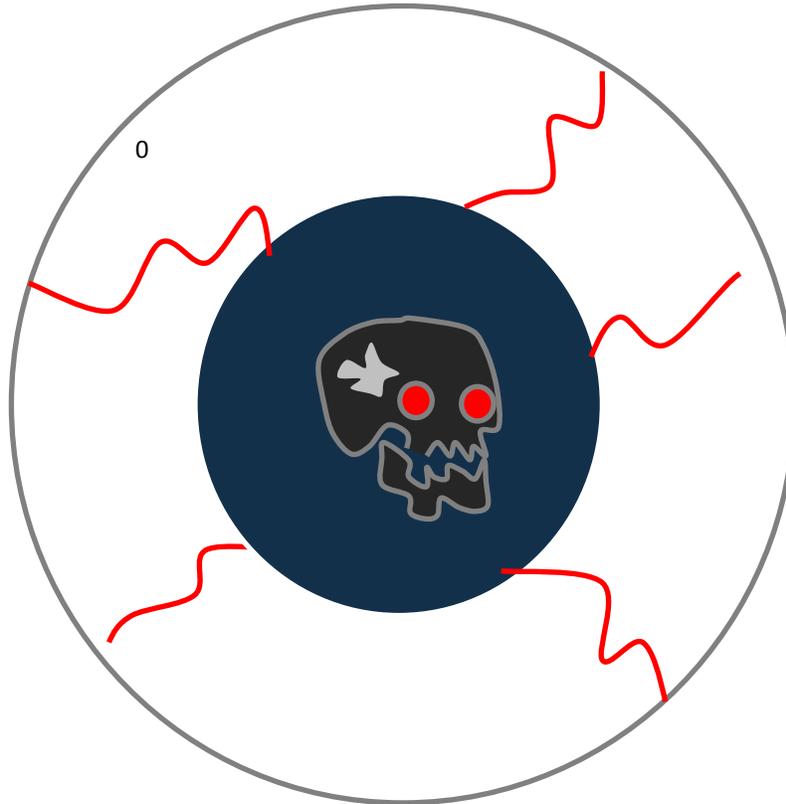
Comments:

We have been coming to this area for 25 years now. Transitioning to living here for 6 months of the year was easy. – Bo O'S, 65+-year-old male, from Canada, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

The perfect mix of laid-back lifestyle and productivity. – Noelia Matthews, 25 – 44-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

Other than the drug wars, it's better than I expected. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for more than 10 years.

The biggest problem in Mexico is the expat folks that want to fix Mexico. – Dallas, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlan area for more than 10 years.



it is important to remember that Mexico is not a First World country so it is expected to be a little more difficult, but the rewards more than make up for a little inconvenience. – Debbie Marquart, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 2 – 5 years.

Infrastructure has evolved considerably in the last decade. – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

We learn more Spanish every year and even some Maya words. – Mary Hoffenbecker, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 6 – 10 years.

We have made so many new, wonderful friends here, and our friends from the US love to visit, so we are not feeling isolated. Besides the beach and hundreds of excellent restaurants, Puerto Vallarta also offers many theater and music venues. – Wendy Woodworth, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for less than 2 years.

We found our little piece of paradise at a price we could afford. While our income has dropped, our expenses have dropped even more, so we come out ahead! – Greg Hovey, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

What surprised us was being able to get U.S. Dish TV and easy access to the Internet. Also, Sirius radio works great here. The prices of prescription drugs are much less than the U.S. and that is good. Plus, it is nice to live in a quiet village where there is no political BS! – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.



good



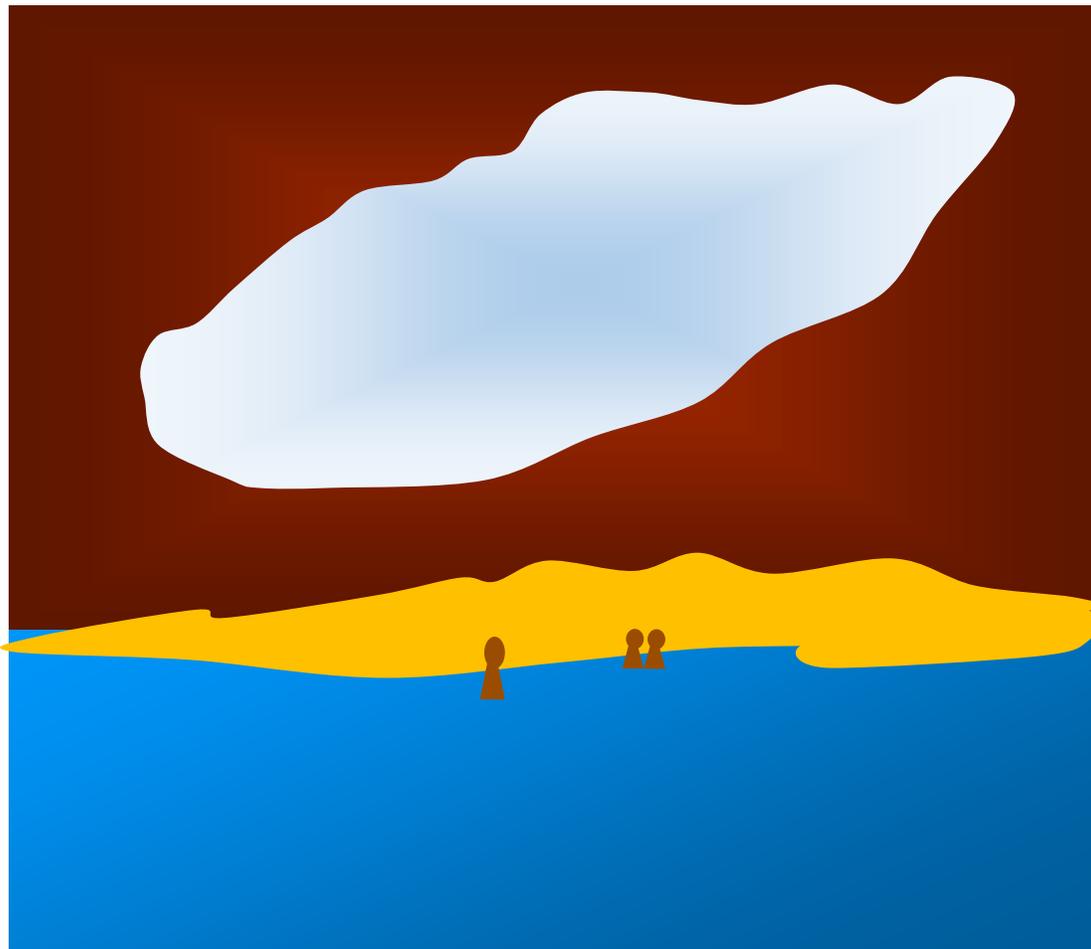
Spanish: bueno
Maya: uts

There are things I miss in the States but it easy to forget after a while. – 65+year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 – 5 years.

The weather has improved my health tremendously. – 65+year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 6 – 10 years.

You can live like royalty on \$3,000 a month. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 – 5 years.

There's a major period of adjustment lasting from about 3 months in and lasting about a year. This time is hard and frustrating, but ... in the end, once adapted and settled into a slower/relaxed pace ... it's INCREDIBLE. The U.S. now stresses me out. – 25 – 44-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.





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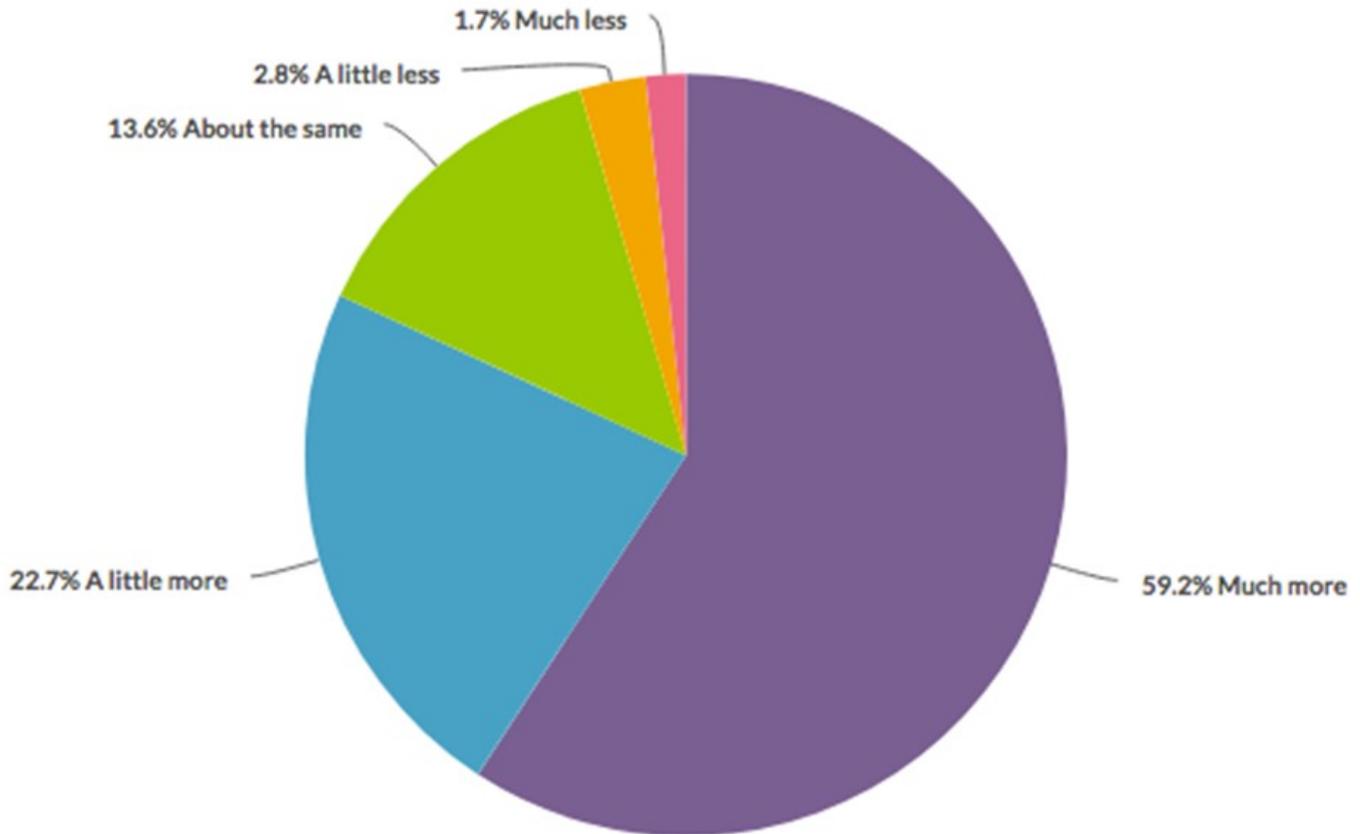
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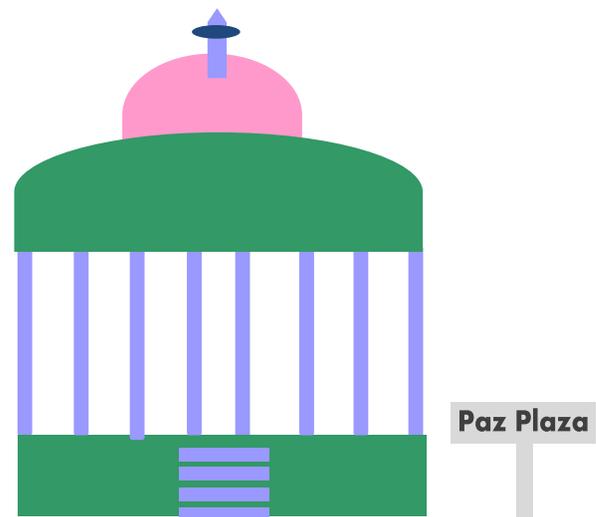


9. How Much (Or Not) Our Respondents Enjoyed Life in Mexico Compared to Their Home Country

How much do you enjoy your life in Mexico compared to your home country?



The answer to the question of how much the expat enjoyed their life in Mexico compared to their home country are similarly lopsided to the other results for how living in Mexico is in general, with only 18.1% reporting that their enjoyment was about the same, a little less, or much less and 81.9% reporting "Much more" or "A little more".



Yucatan

State of Yucatan, including Merida: 68.3%

Percentage of expats in reach region who answered, "Much more":

Greater Lake Chapala area: 76.7%

San Miguel de Allende area: 68.6%

State of Yucatan, including Merida: 68.3%

Greater Puerto Vallarta area: 63.4%

Greater Mazatlán area: 58.4%

State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc.: 54.4%

Baja California Sur: 50.4%

Baja California Norte: 53.1%

Greater Mexico City area: 33.3%

Puerto Vallarta

Greater Puerto Vallarta area: 63.4%

The age segment that led with “Much more” were the youngest, from 25 – 44 (65.1%), followed by those in the middle, age 45 – 64 (61.2%) , and then the oldest, 65+ (55.7%). The results were reversed for “A little more” and “About the same”, with older people giving the more moderate responses.

Expats from the US were the most effusive in their reported enjoyment in Mexico, with 61.9% saying “Much more”, while 49.8% of Canadians reported “Much more”.

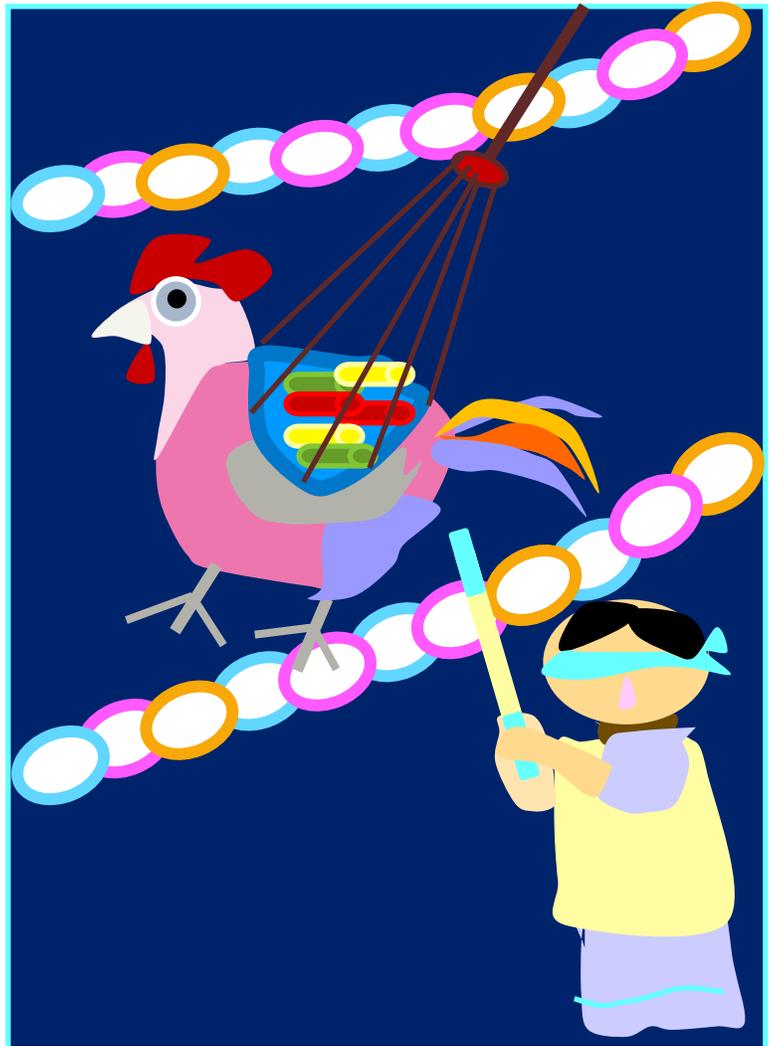


There are many different groups of people that live here. One of the common things though is that everyone is welcoming and open to developing new friendships. That is not always true in the US. It is very easy to talk to people, get to know them, and continue a relationship if you want to. And there is no judgment if you decide not to pursue a closer friendship. I also love that we have gotten out of some of the ruts that we were stuck in. I'm referring mostly to just home habits that you slide into and old friendships or obligations that you are no longer interested in or enjoy. Mexico has given both my husband and me a chance to grow, a chance to explore and try new things, and an opportunity to meet new interesting people. We can pursue whatever interests us and we feel no obligation to follow any of the "should's" in life. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for less than 2 years.

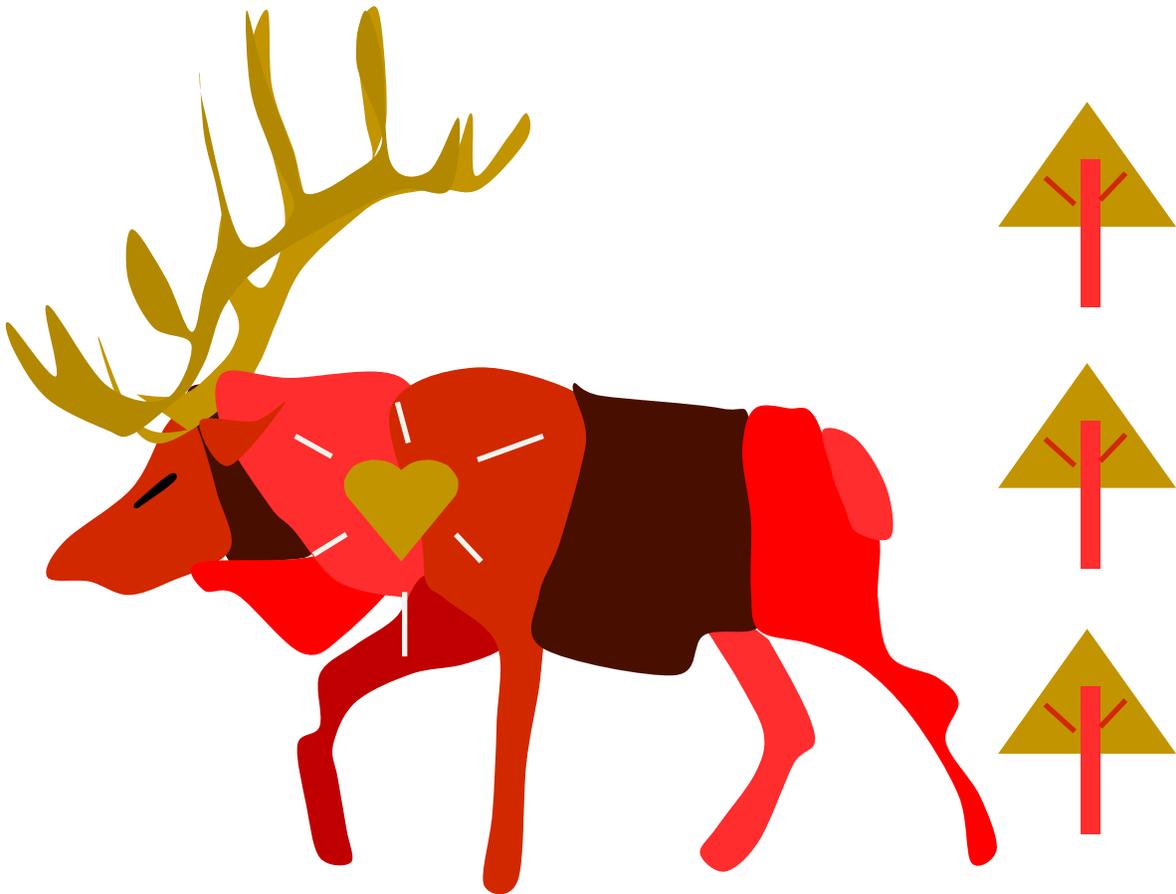
I love my home country, but I hate the winter months. Mexico has been a great alternative. Beautiful summers in Canada and beautiful winters in Mexico. Living in a completely different culture helps keep one's senses keen. The opportunity to learn so much about the people and culture, the country with all its different flora and fauna. I really believe it helps keep people feeling younger and engaged in life. – Lois Dykstra, +65-year-old female, from Canada, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

I was totally bored at home. I am never bored here. The weather is great, I have tons of friends and have activities planned for every day. There is no time to be bored in the Lakeside area! – 65+year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for more less than 2 years.

Comments:



Other than the weather I would way rather be back in Canada. 45 – 64-year-old male, from Canada, living in Baja California Sur for 6 – 10 years.

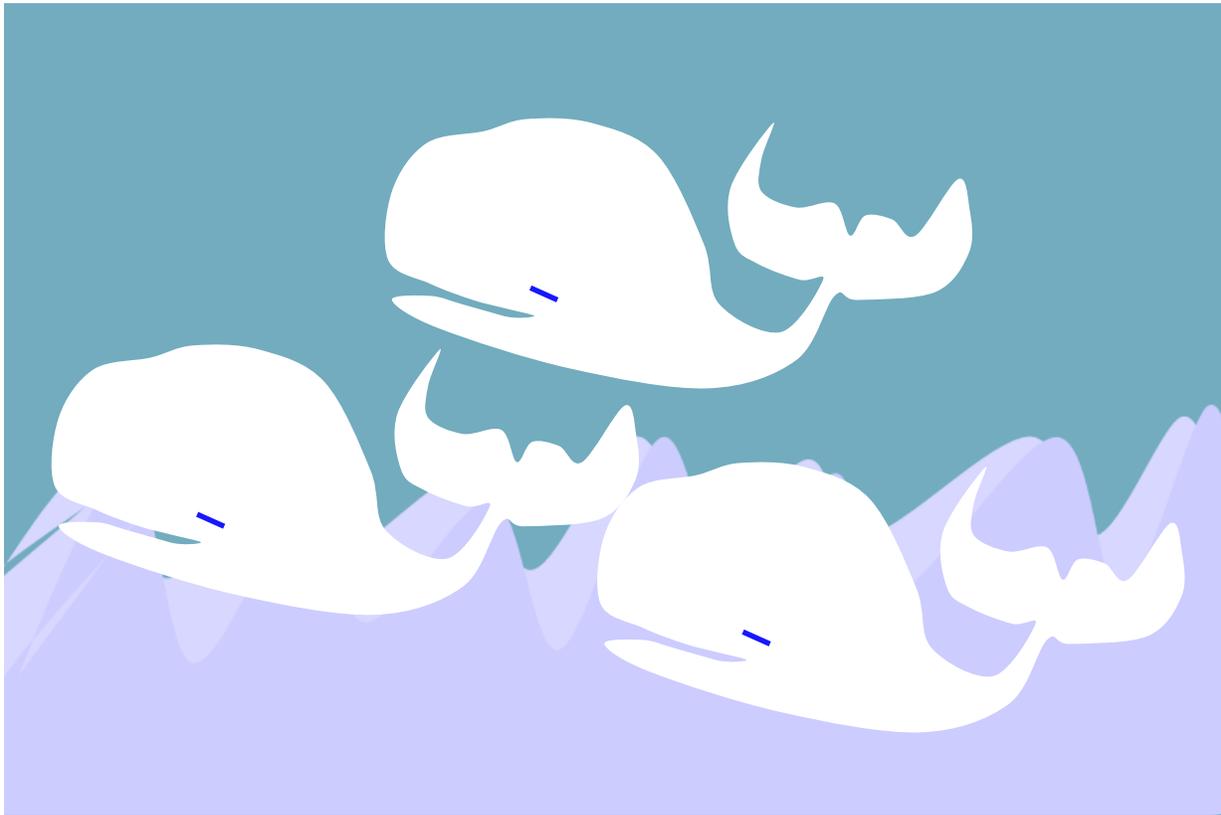


More time to socialize with like-minded people! – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 6 – 10 years.

No winter is GOOD! – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 – 5 years.

Permanent Vacation!!! – 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

There are pros and cons. It's not Canada and you need to understand that before planning on a move here. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from Canada, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for 6 – 10 years.



So much easier to socialize and I love the smiles, the warm courtesies, eye contact despite being in my 60's (you never get that in the US anymore). 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for less than 2 years.

The lifestyle afforded me by my husband's business would not be possible at home. – Tami Stout, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for more than 10 years.

There is a lot more interaction with friends here than our home in the USA. – +65-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for 6 – 10 years.

There seems to be an event almost every day here - either by charities raising money or festivals or races. There is always something to do. – Dulcey Branch, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for less than 2 years.

Walked into the dentist's waiting room full of people. Everybody greets you! That doesn't happen anywhere else! – Bob Morton, +65-year-old male, from Canada, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for more than 10 years.



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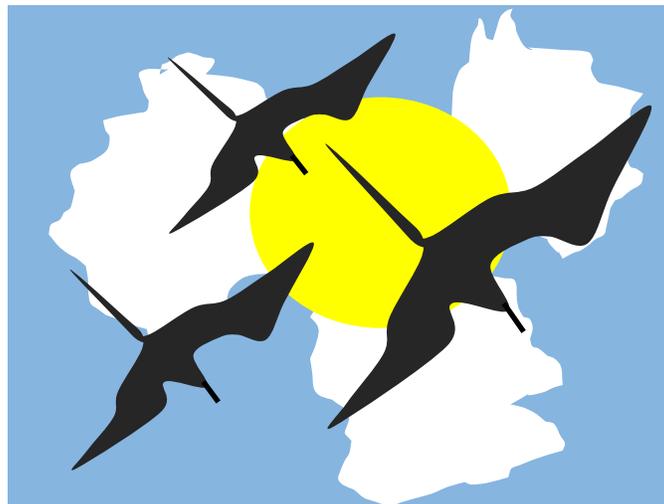
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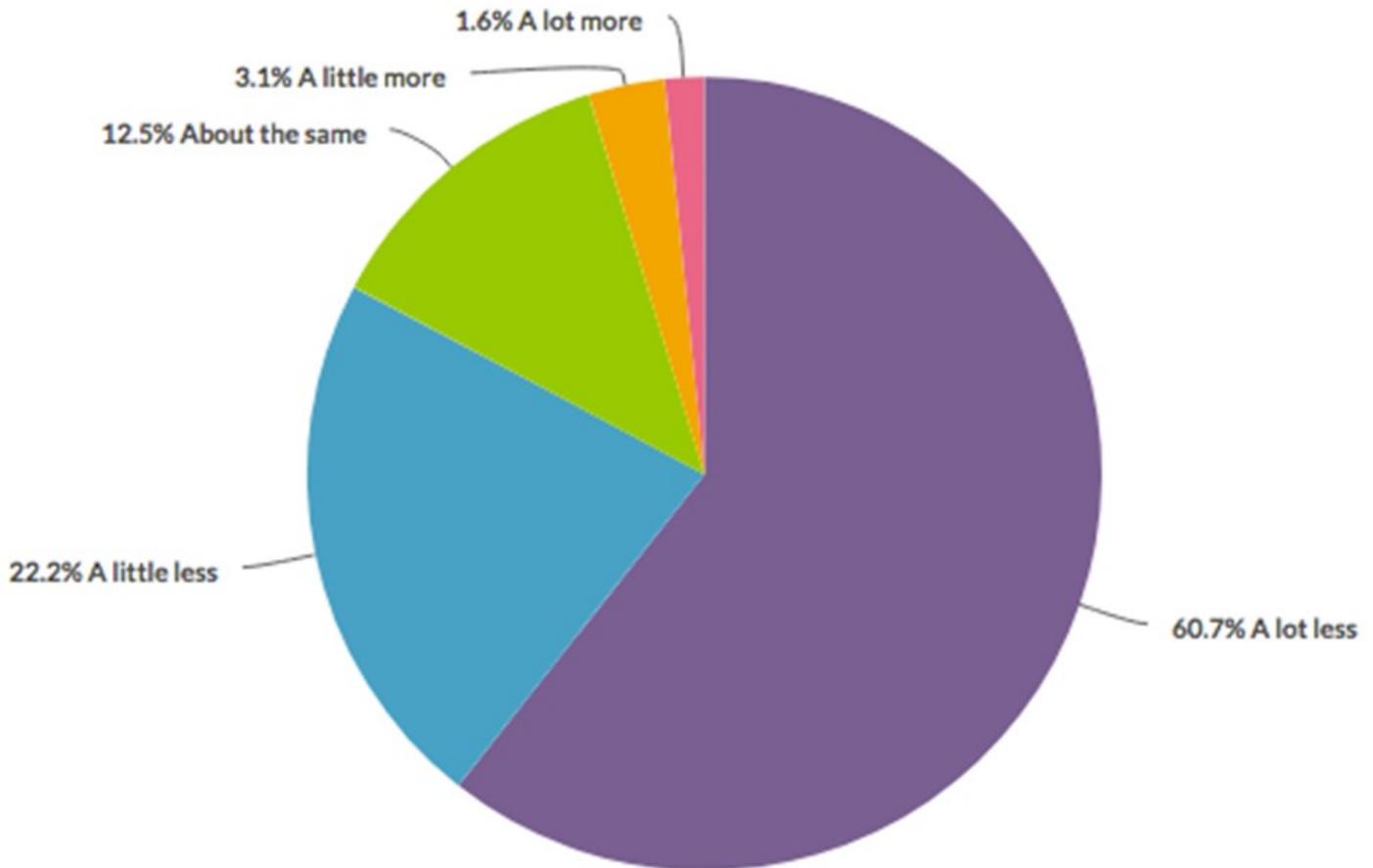
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10. Stressed Out? Read This.

What is your level of stress in Mexico?



After reading and hearing so much about Mexico's *Manana Culture*, burdensome bureaucracy, etc., the percentage of expats reporting so little stress surprised us a bit. Our theory is that any new stress from these things were more than outweighed by less stress in other areas; for example, better weather, lower cost of living and other lifestyle benefits coming from both (like for some people, not having to shovel snow, worry about bills or do any chores).

Men and women were almost identical in every category.

Older people reported the greatest reduction in stress, with the following responses per age category for “A lot less”:

65+: 63.9%

45 – 64: 59.4%

25 – 44: 50.8%

The two destinations leading with the greatest percentage of respondents reporting a lot less stress:

Greater Lake Chapala area: 75.0%

Baja California Norte: 71.9%





The group with the highest response of “a lot less stress” was from those who moved to Mexico less than 2 years earlier: 68.0%, while 53.8% of respondents who had been in Mexico more than 10 years reported “a lot less stress.”

Our theory is that those who had been in Mexico the longest either had forgotten the stress differential, or their home country was less stressful when they moved than it is now.

It is stressful when you do not feel that you can communicate with someone that you want to, or need to. I'm working on that by taking Spanish lessons. Sometimes there is stress because you don't know where to go to find something that you need or you are unfamiliar with the correct way to accomplish a task. Much of this is mitigated with some studying about the culture, the customs, and the people. I find it less stressful here because everybody around me is so very mellow and laid-back. The Mexicans always have a smile on their face and are extremely polite. Nobody is racing around trying to beat everybody else for a concert ticket, a parking spot, or a great deal on something that they saw in the store. People are just more cooperative, more polite, and more interested in connecting with you rather than beating you. Whatever pace you choose to go is perfectly fine with everybody around you. I just don't have that sense of underlying competition here. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for less than 2 years.

As soon as I cross the border going south, I am always amazed how my stress level disappears. Waiting in line on the way back to the States I can feel the stress creep right back in. – Greg Hovey, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

Comments:





Cost of living is number one for me. I pay only \$200/mo. and that includes water, and trash. Living on the water with a boat, my own dock, even my own boat ramp! I have awesome neighbors, some retired, and some weekend warriors. I am three hours from San Diego, and four hours from Phoenix! – Greg Miller, 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 6 – 10 years.

Different things are stressors than in the States. In the USA, it was the traffic. Down here there isn't the traffic but the tradeoff is dealing with tradesmen and their lack of integrity. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

Due to the low cost of living, my stress is less. Also, due to the political situation in the US, I feel less stress here. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

A little apprehension when talking with locals and businesses. A lot more laid back though. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 2 -5 years.



I am very type A personality so I create my own stress. It has taken me more time to relax and enjoy days when I do not have to do anything if I don't want to. – Sandy Schoon, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 2 – 5 years.

I can be myself and not worry to fit in with a crowd, which is much less stressful. – Eduardo Suarez Perales, 25 – 44-year-old male, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 6 – 10 years.

I never feel any stress. The pace is much slower and I never feel rushed like I do when I am in the States. – Yvonne Carter, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

Because my life is simpler here, I no longer have to own and maintain a house or a car. I rent a very nice house from an excellent landlord and public transport is sufficient and affordable. – 65+-year-old female, from Canada, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for 6 – 10 years.

Being within budget of Social Security only has significantly reduced my stress. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.

Car traffic was killing me. Here: very little traffic. – 65+-year-old male, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

I pay my bills and credit cards on-line so that makes it easy to live outside of the U.S. Living in a condo is easier than a house. I have security, maintenance and affordable maid service. – Barbara Greenberg, 65+year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for more than 10 years.

I left my stress in Toronto! – Allen Manana Graham, 65+year-old male, from Canada, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for 6 – 10 years.

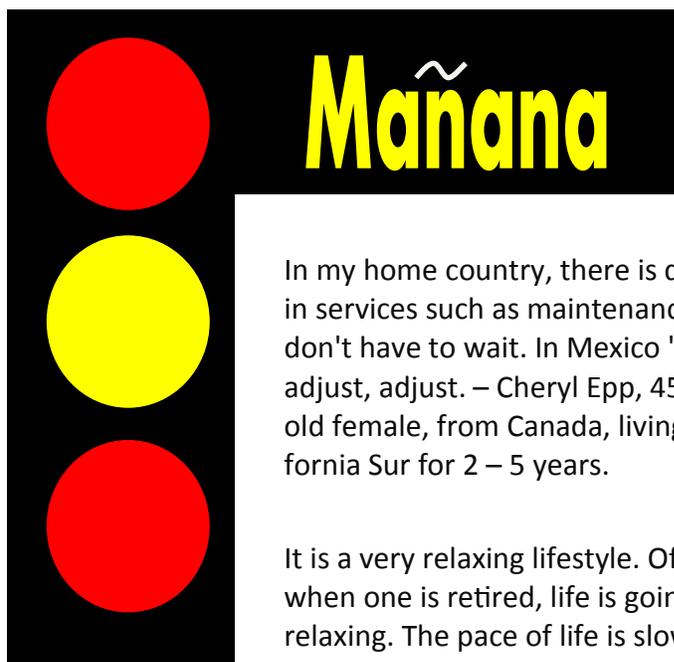
I think I have the same or even a higher amount of workload here but stress is easier to handle here. The relaxing surrounding and "take-it-easy" mentality helps not to take everything so seriously. – Andrea, 45 – 64-year-old female, from Europe other than the UK, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years

Enjoying my retirement down hereno stress with work. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for less than 2 years.

I am loving life in Mexico. It is more laid back and less materialistic. There is more emphasis on the family and less on the almighty dollar. – Gary Coles, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 2 -5 years.

I HAVE NO STRESS ANY MORE AND I THINK THAT I AM GETTING YOUNGER!!!! – Salvador Navarro, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Norte for 2 – 5 years.





I was able to come off a lot of stress-related medication. – Launa Brockman, 45 – 64-year old female, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for 2 – 5 years.

I've learned to be much more patient living in Mexico. That's a good thing! – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 – 5 years.

If you let go of having to fix everything right away. – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

No keeping up with the Joneses is terrific! – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 -5 years.

In my home country, there is quality of care in services such as maintenance, and you don't have to wait. In Mexico "manana"; adjust, adjust. – Cheryl Epp, 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in Baja California Sur for 2 – 5 years.

It is a very relaxing lifestyle. Of course, when one is retired, life is going to be more relaxing. The pace of life is slower, no worry if something doesn't happen today, there is always tomorrow or the next tomorrow. It is difficult for people coming here who are used to a fast paced lifestyle and job. They don't get "it"- that things run at a much slower pace here. Then they complain and don't enjoy their vacation or life here. - - 45 – 64-year

It's very important to adopt the Mexican mindset of time but once you do there is very little stress. – 25 – 44-year-old male from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for less than 2 years.



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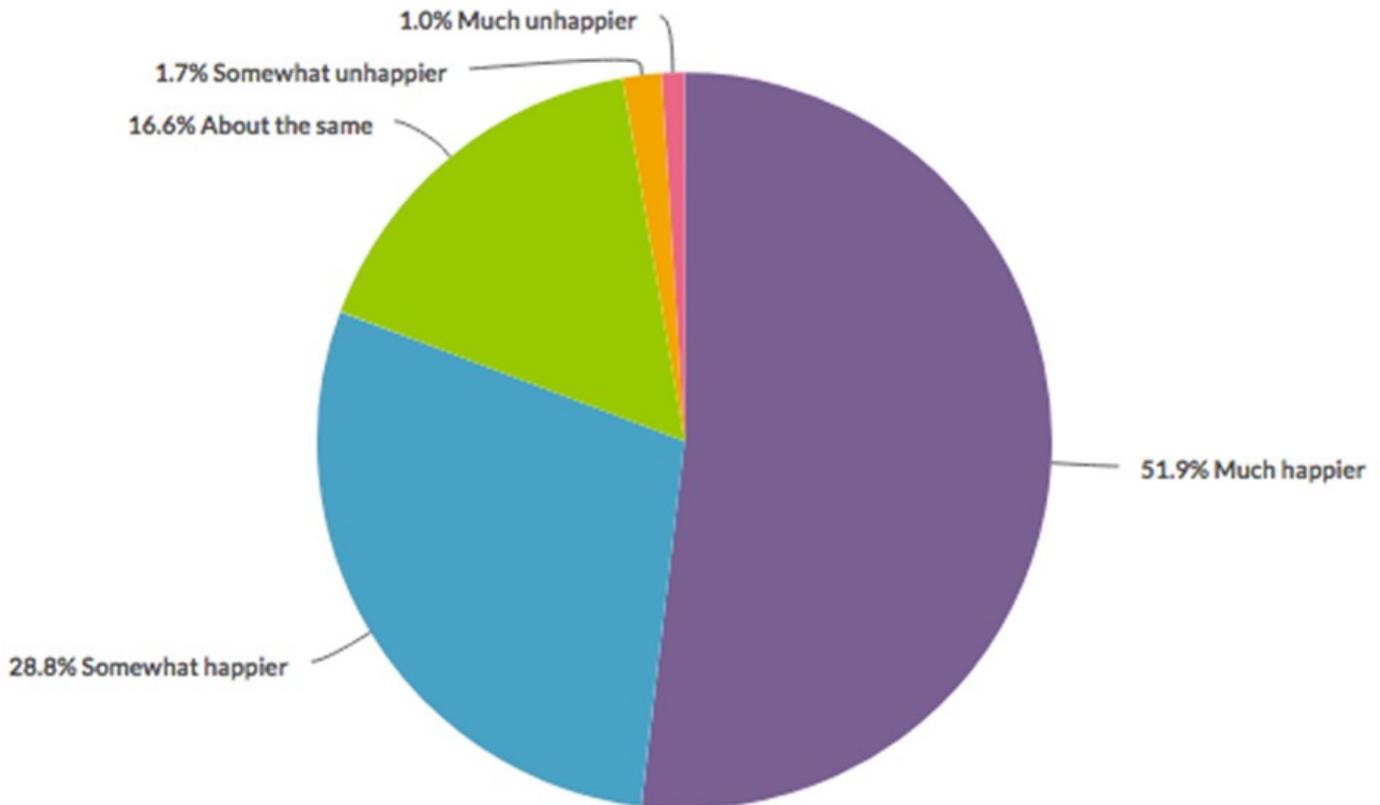
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11. Can Moving to Mexico Affect Your Happiness?

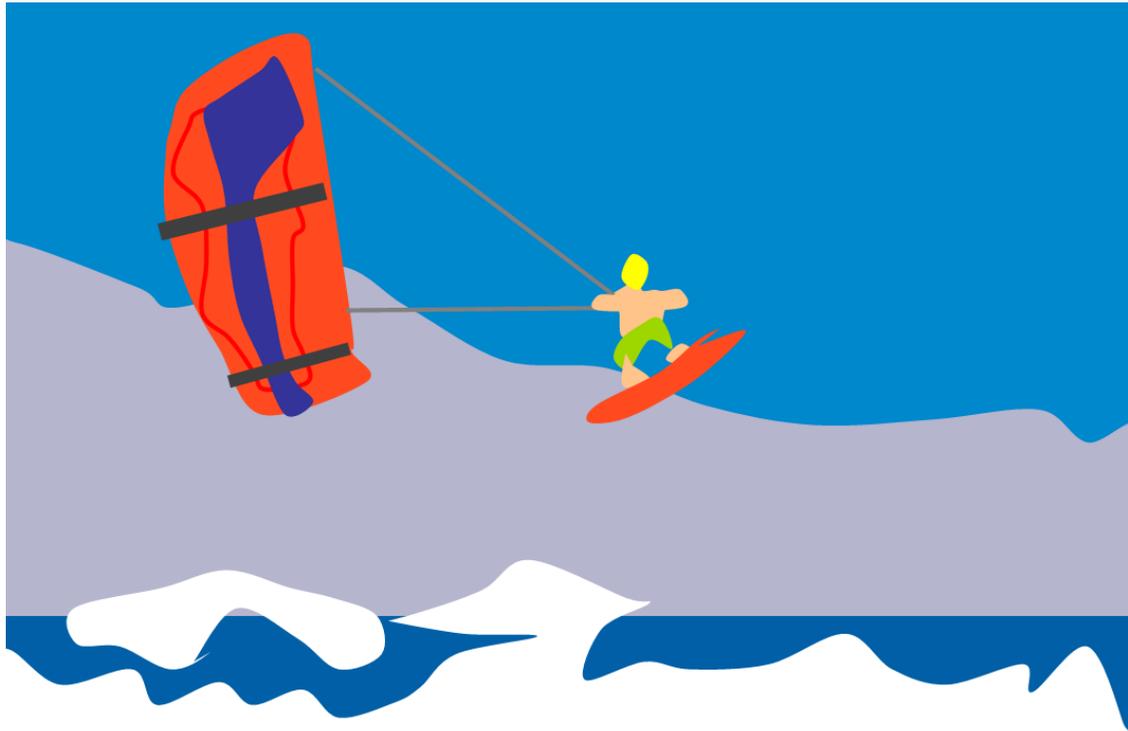
What is your level of happiness in Mexico?



A whopping 80.7% of expats who moved to Mexico reported being either much happier or somewhat happier than they were in their home country, while only 2.7% were much unhappier or somewhat unhappier.

Women and men were about equally happy in Mexico, while young people were only slightly happier.





At 62.2%, single people were the largest group reporting being “much happier.”

Expats from the US were 43.1% more likely to report that they were much happier than those from Canada (57.7% to 40.3%)

The Greater Chapala Lake area has the most people reporting being very much happier, at 88.2%, followed by Greater Mazatlán, at 83.1% and the Greater San Miguel de Allende area, at 80.4%.

Comments:

And a lot happier in the winter. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Mazatlan area for 2 – 5 years.

White noise and the stress of adhering to others’ expectations are finally over and life is an open door. – Laurel A. Lockhart, 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 6 – 10 years.

When I have returned to Canada or visited in the US or Europe, the first thing people remark is that I seem happier and less stressed. – Karen, 65+-year-old female, from Canada, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 2 – 5 years.

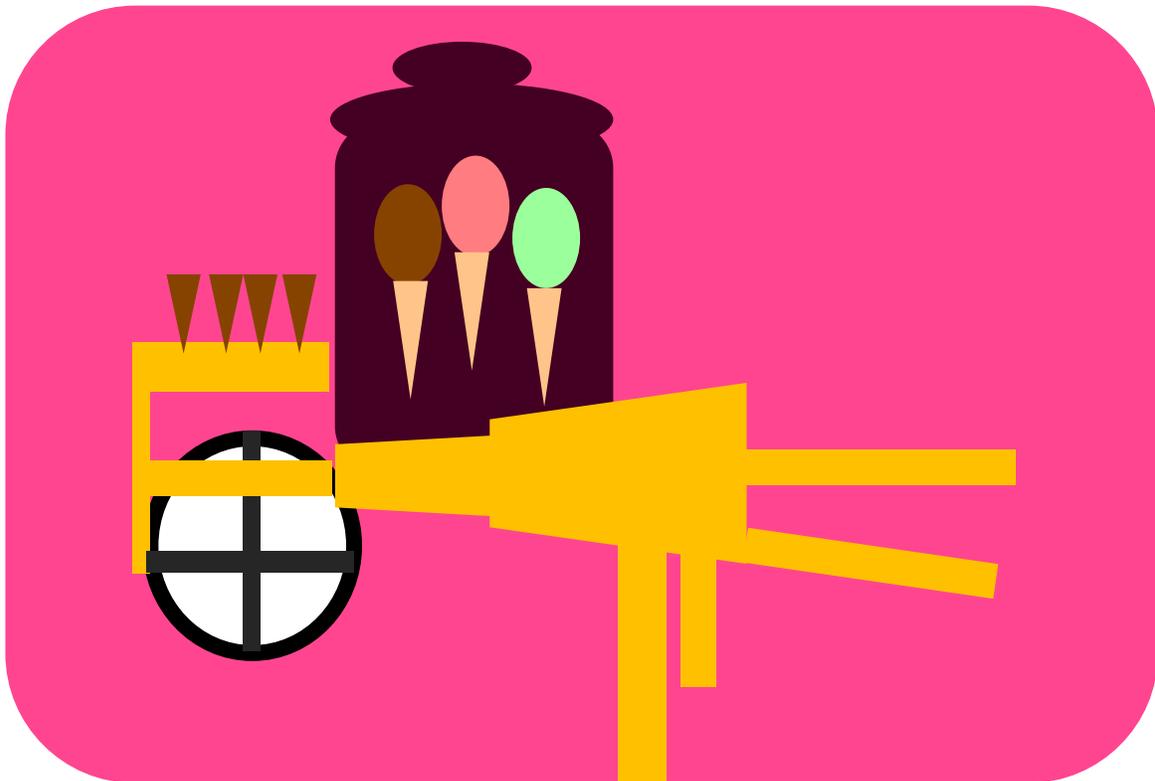
Whenever I am having kind of a down day, I just go out my front door and start walking around. It is impossible to stay in a bad mood when you are surrounded with :-) happy people, a blue sky, gorgeous flowers, beautiful colors on the homes and stores in Centro, and the vibrant energy that you feel in this magical place. I am usually smiling within 20 minutes max. I love the stimulation of the people watching, the energy and all the new cultural activities that are constantly around me. This place is an interesting mix of old and new. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for less than 2 years.

We are now retired and our money seems to go much further, allowing us to do a lot of traveling which we were wanting to do upon retirement. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 6 – 10 years.

Unhappy people will still be unhappy even when they move. That said, the weather and fresh, cheap avocados and limes can definitely bring a smile to your face. – 25 – 44-year-old male, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for less than 2 years.

This response is influenced by the fact that I don't have any work responsibilities. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

The summer is rough, but if you can get through it, the rest of your time here will be perfect. – Noelia Matthews, 25 – 44-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.



We didn't realize that we would feel so much better and happier here. It is a wonderful thing.
 – Cathy Quinn, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 2 – 5 years.

When Canadians or Americans drink too much they start fighting. The Mexicans start singing!!
 – Bob Morton, 65+year-old male, from Canada, living in the Greater Mazatlan area for more than 10 year.



There have been times while living in Mexico, walking down the street, I would just start laughing out loud because I was so happy I could not contain myself. – Debra J. Ingram, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for more than 10 years.

Probably because I'm not working. 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.



People here are genuinely happy and it is infectious. They are less concerned with money and careers and more with family and friends. – Jerry Wyshnowsky, 45 – 64-year-old male, from Canada, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for less than 2 years.

Most unhappiness is related to baggage brought with us from up north. Work, etc. – 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 2 – 5 years.

Mexico is not perfect, but I feel better here. Life is a fun adventure. And I get to dance more! – Kat McNulty, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 6 – 10 years.

MUCH happier. My husband was just telling me how happy he was living here yesterday. Priceless! – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 2 – 5 years.

Love getting up every day excited for what the day will bring. 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for less than 2 years.



For further investigation ●●

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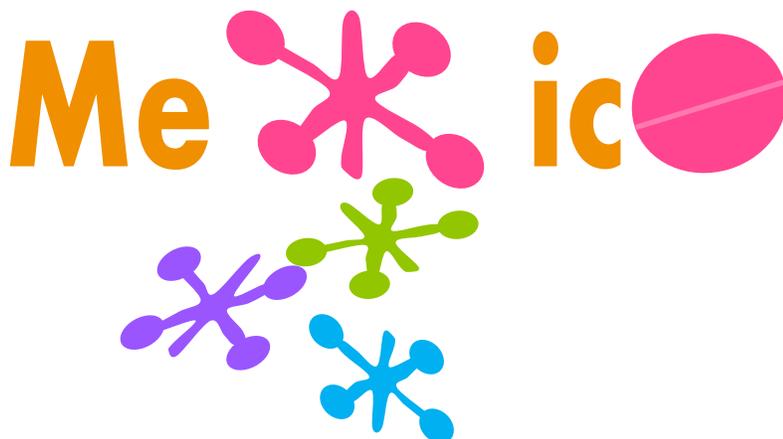
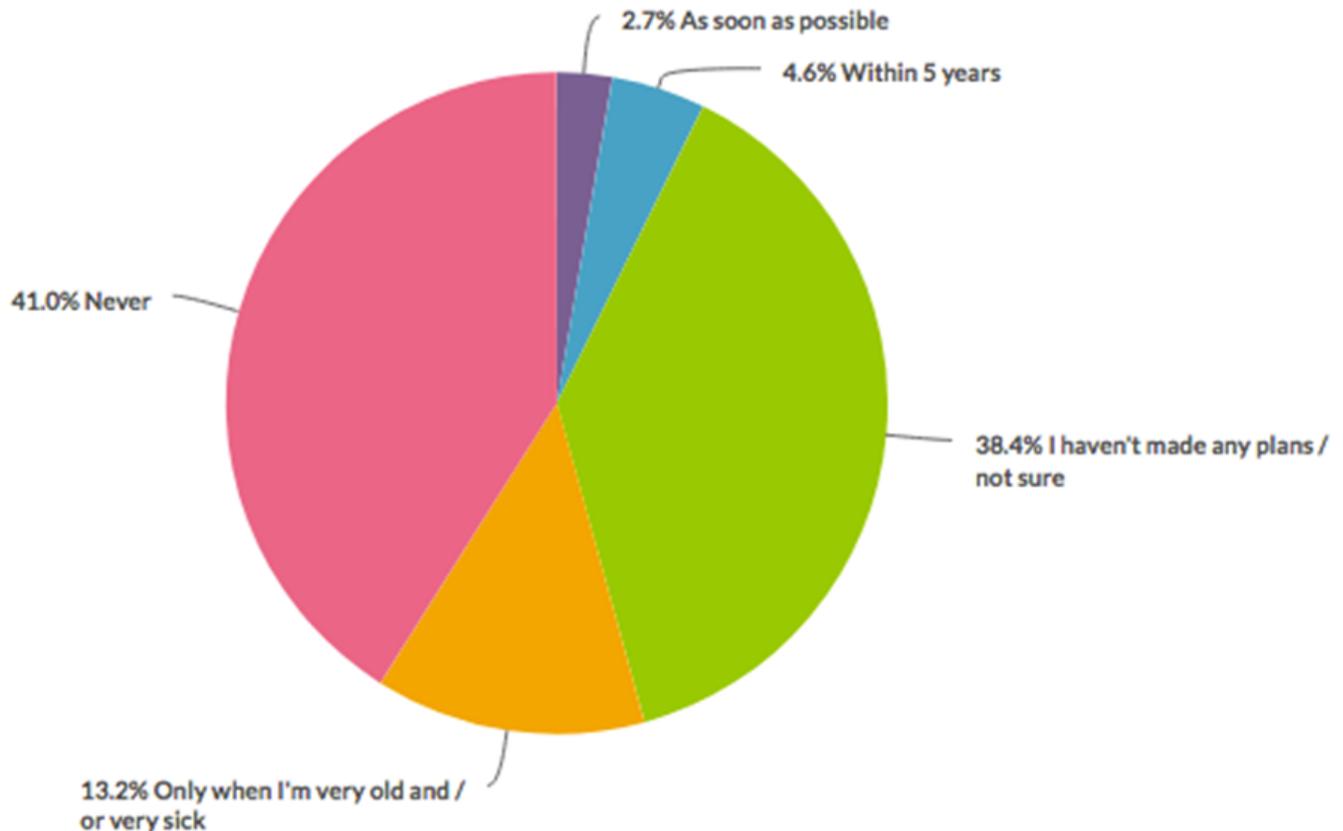
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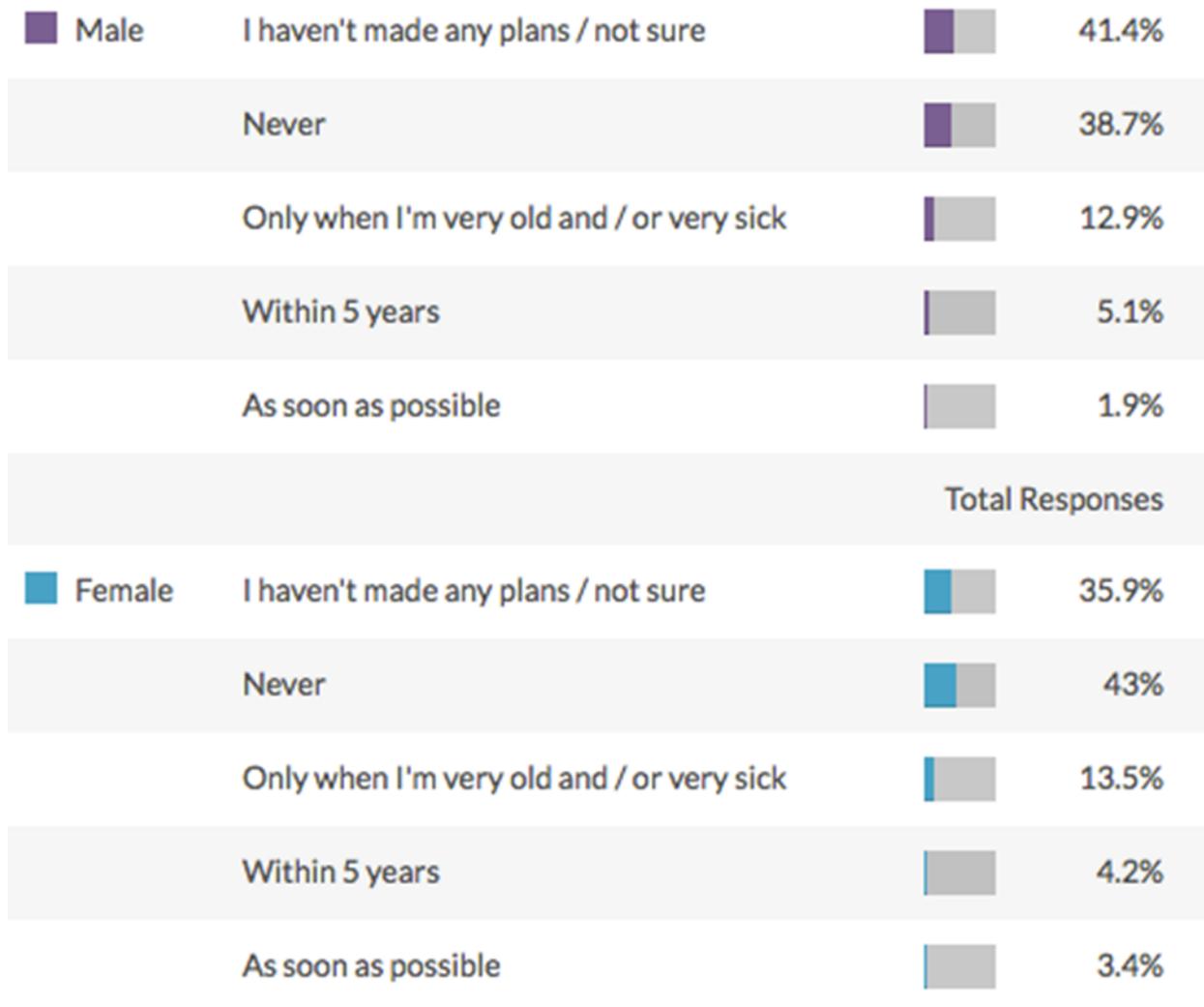
12. 41% Are Never Going Back

When are you planning to go back to live in your country of origin?



The response of "Never" going back to their country of origin narrowly edged out "I haven't made any plans / not sure" for the most often responded reply by just 1.6%, but only 7.3% had made any definite plans to move back (4.6% answered "Within 5 years" and 2.7% answered "As soon as possible").

As with previous answers, females seemed to be happier with the Mexico expat experience. Here's how it breaks down:



Consistent with our other findings, those from the US were more emphatic than Canadians about their enthusiasm for life in Mexico. 43.9% of Americans reported that they are never going back to live in the US, while 31.5% of Canadians said that they would never go back to live in Canada, a 39% difference.

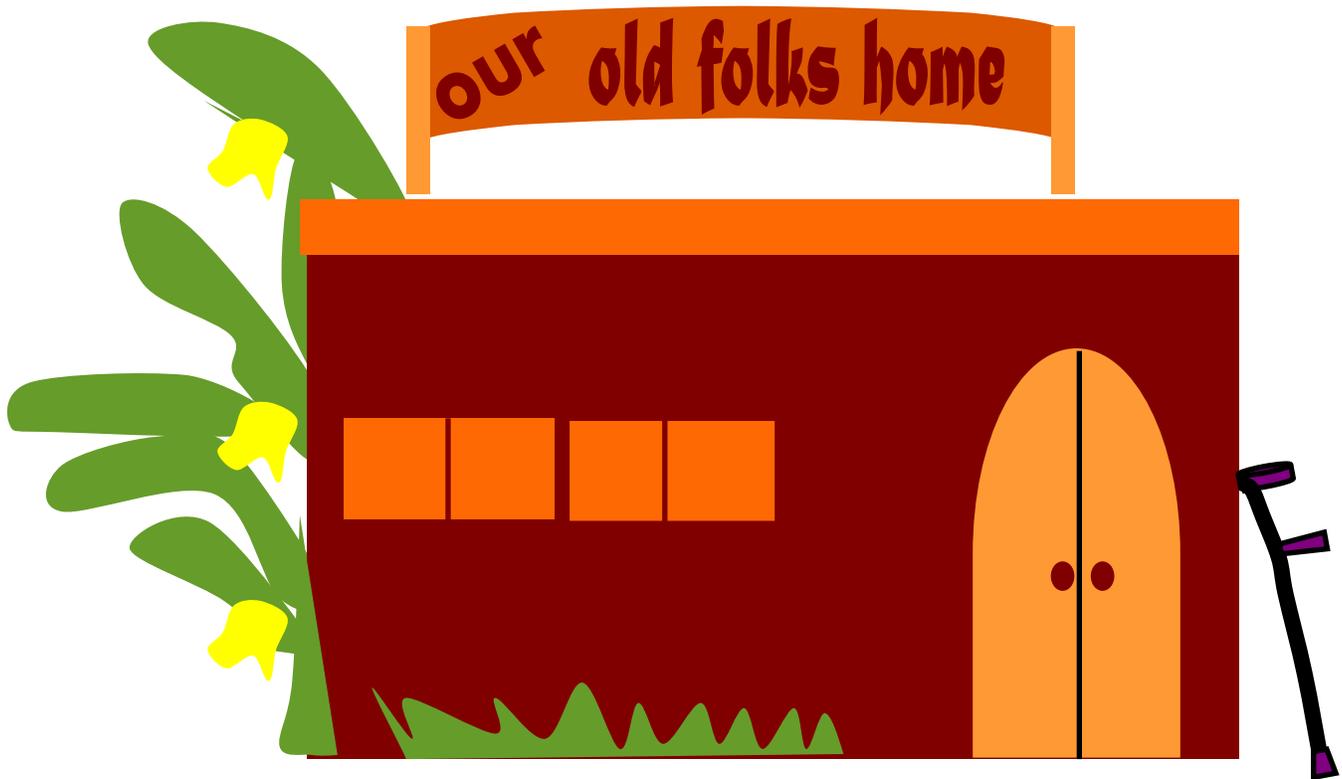




Once again, the Greater Lake Chapala area expats led other areas, with 64.4% reporting that they would never return to live in their country of origin. The state of Yucatan was second, at 52.5%, followed by Greater San Miguel de Allende area, with 49.0%

Examining the answer to this question as per how long the expat had lived in Mexico, the group that dominated the “Never” answer were those in Mexico more than 10 years, with 49.0% responding in this way. The percentage responding “Never” for remaining 3 classes were all within .4% of each other., clustered around 37.7%





Comments:

It is so easy to grow old here. The kind and loving people are natural care givers. We will start our own assisted living community when we need it. We have Juan to keep things running, Liliana to look after domestic needs and Arcilia to cook for us. What more do we need! – 65+-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 6 – 10 years.

Just to visit friends and family. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

Life is pretty perfect. Spread my ashes out there with the whales :) – Jeanne Dalaba, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 – 5 years.

Medical resources are improving every year so that will make it possible to live here longer to a more advanced age. – Janet Tompkins, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

The level of care and low cost of care in Mexico leaves little reason to move back. I can keep in touch with family through social media or Skype. – Dean, 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 6 – 10 years.

Maybe when great grandkids are born. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for less than 2 years.



Might have to go back if I can't find elder care at a price I can afford. But otherwise, why? – Kat McNulty, +65-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 6 – 10 years.

Much easier living than we first thought. – 65+-year-old male, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 6 – 10 years.

Mexico is my home. It holds my life, it holds my heart. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.



Mexico is a beautiful country. I wish it were cleaner and that as a culture they would be taught simple things like pride for your area by keeping things clean and neat. There are a lot of negative things that I wish I could fix. If there was at least a tiny fraction of regulations that were actually enforced in some places like building standards/property management it would improve living conditions.

It's kind of nice to be able to do just about anything you please but it can also be very inconvenient. There is also not as much entertainment here. I don't live in an expat area and there is virtually nothing to do. The nearest movie theater is 45 minutes away, the restaurants are awful and I couldn't even begin to call them sanitary. Regardless I'm working doing what I love and making a comfortable living in a warm place so that's already better than life in Ohio. – 25 – 44-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for less than 2 years.



Mexico is a very complex country, with heartbreaking poverty, ingrained corruption, and certain dangers we all know about. But it is also a country of constant surprises, incredible beauty, a benevolent climate, and warm people. Once you've made a home here it's very difficult to leave. But please learn Spanish, and understand that if you come to live in Mexico you should try to integrate as the immigrant that you are, even if temporary. The term "ex-pat" seems to imply a certain distinction from the local people, which is never assigned to migrants from poorer countries when arriving in richer ones. I am an immigrant from Canada. And Mexico is my home. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

It is warm here. We have tacos and mojitos and the beach and endless summer and I am working in my dream job. Right now, no. I'm staying put. 25 – 44-year-old female, from the US, living in the State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc. for less than 2 years.



My wife, sons, daughter and grandsons know this is the place where I want to end. – 65+-year-old male, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.

Never planning to go back. I might return if there were problems with my children or grandchildren and they needed me to be there. – Karen, 65+-year-old female, from Canada, living in the State of Yucatan, including Merida for 2 – 5 years.

Not planning on moving back. I can't afford to live in the US and healthcare here suits me better here! – 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

The instructions are to put my ashes in a tequila bottle. – Pat Huber, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 2 – 5 years.



The Mexican culture honors the elderly and treats them with so much compassion. The elderly are not shuttled off to nursing homes by their children. I have had Mexican caregivers in my home to help with my husband when he was ill. I can't express in words how kind, how caring these wonderful people were and still are to both of us. If I need something even in the middle of the night, I can count on my Mexican friends & neighbors. – 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 6 – 10 years.

The US is no place to get old -- hope it works out ok here, vamos a ver [we will see]. 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for less than 2 years.

One of the best decisions I made was retiring in La Paz. There are certainly irritations and things don't happen the way they do in America, but weighing everything out if you are willing to learn some Spanish ... the good outweighs the bad. 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for 2 – 5 years.

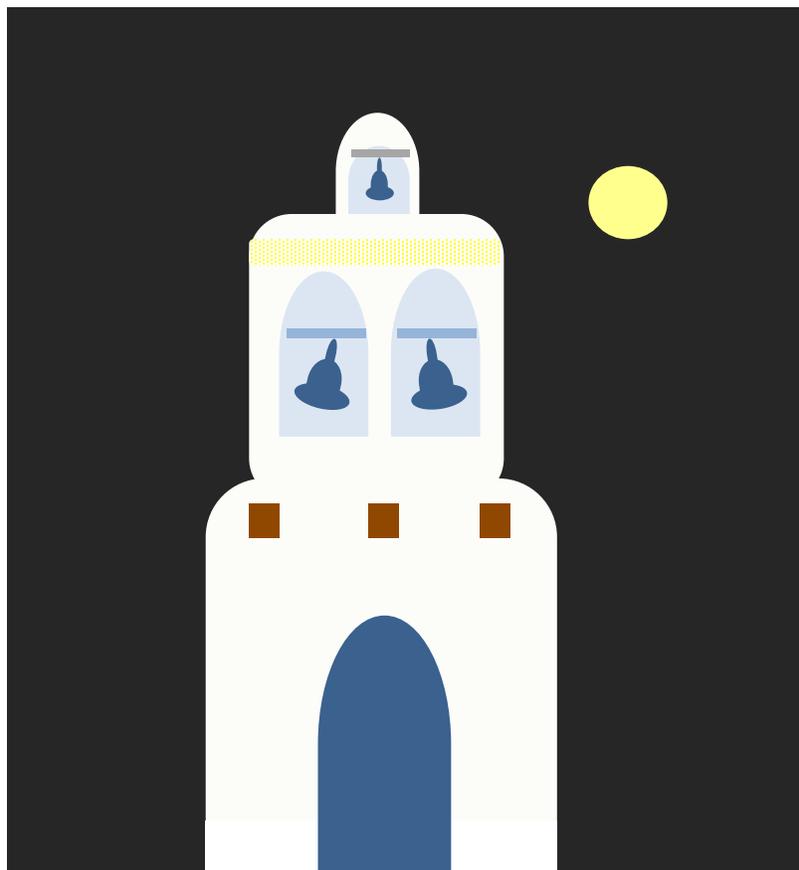
Only when my health prevents me from living here alone. – Barbara Greenberg, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for more than 10 years.

Sorry, but the States is a Rat Race; this is life!!! – 45 – 64-year-old male, from the US, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

My husband and I are in our first year of part-time living in Mexico. While we have visited other parts of the country, we have decided to make Mazatlán home base due to the nature of the city and her people. We have encountered nothing but kindness and a feeling of welcome since coming here, and in terms of infrastructure and safety, I find no appreciable difference between Mazatlán and our home province in Canada. We are looking to spend many happy winters here, with the goal of eventually retiring here full-time. – 45 – 64-year-old female, from Canada, living in the Greater Mazatlan area for less than 2 years.

My joy would be for my family to join me, here, in San Miguel de Allende. – Sharyn McIntyre, 65+-year-old female, from the US, living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 6 – 10 years.

My life is here. My children are here. – Katherine Camargo, 45 – 64-year-old female, from the US, living in a place in Mexico not otherwise listed for more than 10 years.





For further investigation ● ●

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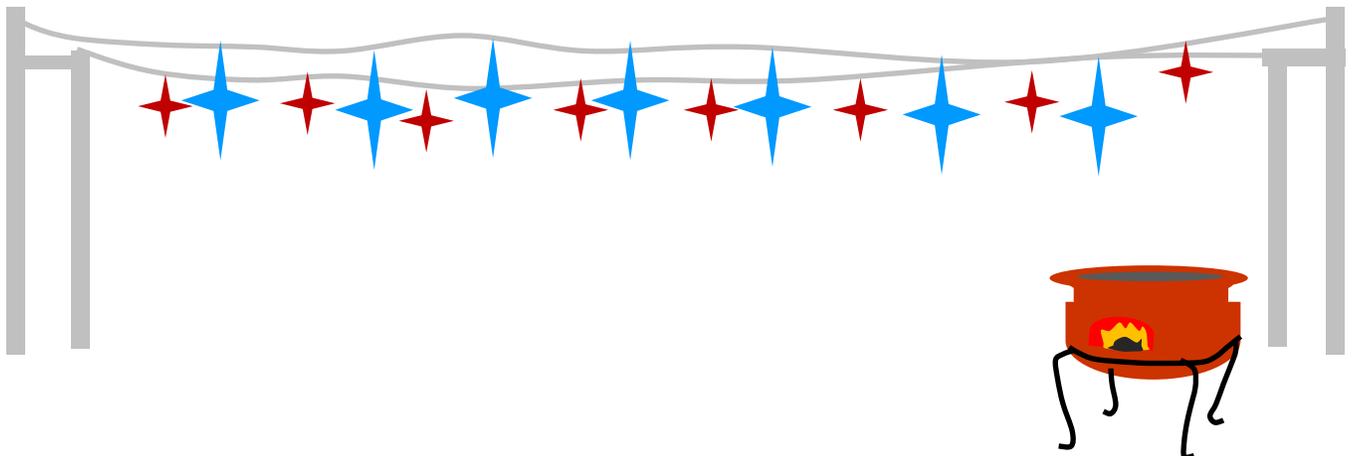
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Survey } ethology

The survey from which this and follow-on studies will be published was hosted on SurveyGizmo and was conducted between February 9 and March 11. We received a total of 1,129 responses, of which 787 were complete.

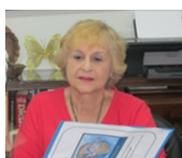
Our intention is to present the most accurate, objective picture possible of what it is like to live in Mexico. Of course, no survey or study can be perfect, for the same well-known reasons. Here is how we dealt with the more common issues:

Nonresponse Bias:

A nonresponse bias is introduced when only the most motivated people respond. These people would tend to be the most outgoing, opinionated, vocal, etc., and may not accurately represent the target group as a whole. In order to mitigate this bias and to encourage participation by the widest, most representative group possible, we made it very well known that, in exchange for participating in the survey, each respondent would be entered into a drawing for very attractive prizes, listed below in order of money value, the same way they were presented to potential respondents:



Estrella del Mar Golf Condos and Beach Resort offers the prize of two nights and three days in a deluxe ocean view room at Mazatlan's best kept secret-- the fabulous Estrella del Mar, an 816-acre, gated community with lush tropical landscaping, anchored by one of Mexico's top rated golf courses, the Robert Trent Jones Jr. 18-hole championship golf course and boasting 3.5 miles of pristine beach. American breakfast daily and three unlimited golf green fees. Based on availability. Some restrictions apply. US \$800 value.



Casita Montana Bed and Breakfast offers the prize of three nights and four days in one of their newly remodeled, spacious guest suites with a full kitchen, dining area, bedroom, and bathroom right in the heart of Ajijic. Includes a tour of the city and breakfast each day. US \$285 value



AvensaTravel offers the prize of two nights in Hotel Cosijo, a beautifully designed boutique hotel in Tlacoahuaya, a traditional village 22 km from the city of Oaxaca. The peaceful surroundings make this hotel perfect for people looking to escape stress and discover the beauty of a small traditional Mexican village. The village is well known for its recently restored 16th century church of Dominican convent. Hotel Cosijo has a lap pool and offers yoga lessons, massages, bike tours and horseback riding. US \$280 value.



Hacienda San Pedro Nohpat offers the prize of one night and two days at its stunning and historical hacienda in Merida, Yucatan. Stay in a real life, 400 year old hacienda turned into this charming, intimate B & B. Breakfast included. US \$135 value.



AvensaTravel offers the prize of an authentic Oaxacan cooking workshop for two people. Not only will you cook one of Oaxaca's famous moles using traditional kitchen tools but you will also have a real Mexican experience in a traditional village close to Oaxaca city. A Mexican lady will welcome you in her house to spend an unforgettable fun afternoon together that you will never forget. US \$110 value.



Vallarta Food Tours offers two separate prizes for two separate tours: the first is a guided 3 to 3½ hour food and city walking tour featuring ten food tasting locations carefully chosen to highlight the best regional flavors Puerto Vallarta has to offer. Stops include Vallarta's best mole enchiladas, traditional ceviche tostadas, a tortilla factory, fresh coconut, tacos from an authentic taco stand, traditional drinks, savory soups, regional candies and more. The second separate tour is of San Miguel de Allende. US \$52 value for Vallarta tour and \$60 for San Miguel de Allende tour.

88.9% of our respondents answered "Yes" to "Would you like to be entered into our prize drawing?", even though they had to give their name in order to be entered.

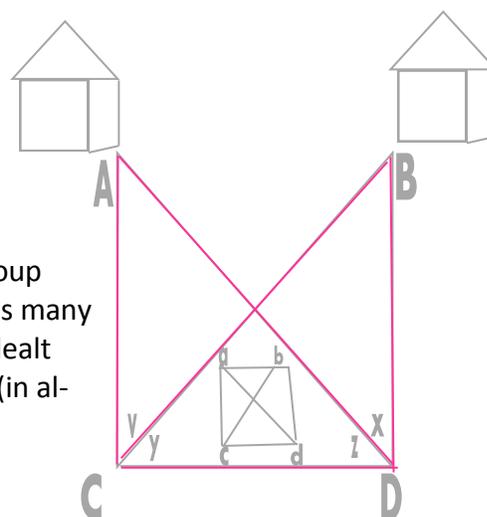
Sampling Bias:

A sampling bias is introduced when not every person in the target group takes the survey. The main way this is handled is to make sure that as many people as possible in the target group knows about the survey. We dealt with this by repeatedly publicizing the survey in the following places (in alphabetical order):

- Baja Times
- Best Places in the World to Retire Facebook page
- Best Places in the World to Retire newsletters
- Facebook Groups (at least 10 of them) representing the various areas and interests in Mexico
- Mazatlan Messenger
- Oaxaca Times
- The Yucatan Times
- Vallarta Tribune
- Yucatan Living
- Yucatan Expat Life
- Yucatan Today

Acquiescence Bias:

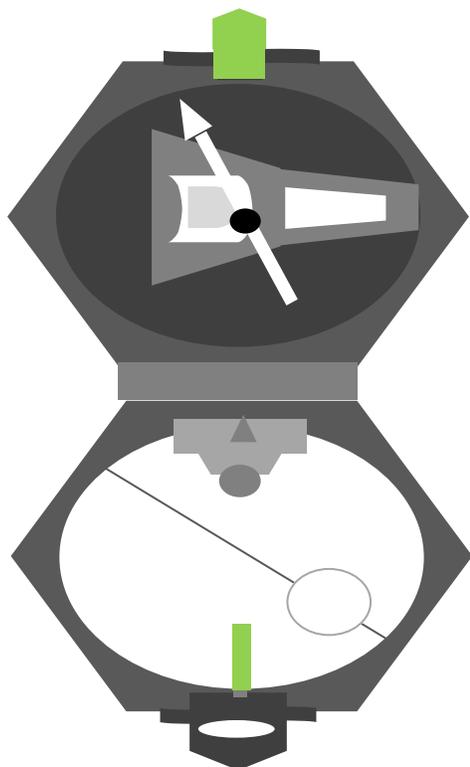
Acquiescence bias is introduced (and sometimes, especially in political "surveys," intentionally so) when the survey "leads" a respondent towards a desired answer. Generally, this is done via questions that start



with a question similar to “Do you agree with....” and / or some seemingly reasonable statement of “facts”. There were no such lead in’s to questions in our survey.

Social Desirability Bias:

Social desirability bias is introduced when the respondent answers in a way that he or she believes will put him or her in the best light amongst his or her peers, as opposed to answering honestly. In order to guard against this bias, we made it very clear that, if desired, the respondent may remain anonymous. 61.3% of our respondents chose to remain anonymous.



Order Bias:

Order bias is introduced when the order of the answers to a question gives a hint to the respondent as to the desired responses. In order to guard against this, the answers to the questions in most of the survey are somewhat random (but not annoyingly so), and, interestingly, many were answered in a way that surprised us. We did, however, order answers in areas where not to do so would have caused annoyance and less clarity, for example, in “scale” questions that asked how satisfied the respondent was with something.

Expat Success Bias:

The people who took our survey are expats, meaning that they currently live abroad. It could be argued that people who live abroad are more likely to give positive reviews about living abroad, as opposed to, for example, those who used to live abroad and who no longer do. There could be some merit to this argument. Unfortunately, we did not see any reasonable way to

test it, so we don’t have an opinion. Even if we were able to locate people who were no longer expats and have a sample of them take our survey, we saw no logical way to normalize the results. (Which ones would we seek out, how many would we ask in proportion to existing expats, etc.?) Therefore, in light of this, we leave it to the reader to make any adjustments to the data he or she feels would make sense for his or her particular need.

Other Integrity Enhancers:

In order to guard against people taking the survey twice, each respondent was forced to provide an email address (duplicate email addresses were not allowed), and prizes are only given to expats.

The quantity of comments we received for each question indicated to us that those taking the survey took it seriously, and that there were very few, if any, respondents taking the survey just to get the prizes.

We saw no abnormalities that would indicate anything suspicious.

Margin of Error:

It is very difficult to obtain an reasonable estimate for how many expats live in Mexico. One of the reasons is that so many “foreigners” live in Mexico who have family or other ties and aren’t legitimately the subject of this study. In order to calculate a margin of error, we chose an estimate of 500,000 expats living in Mexico who have no family or other ties. (We recognize that this estimate may be substantially off and probably high, but we have no good way of checking it.)

Assuming 500,000 expats living in Mexico and a sample size of 1,129 (the quantity of respondents to our study), according to the American Research Group, the theoretical margin of error is + / - 2.91%, 95% of the time, on questions where opinion is evenly split.

For the demographic breakdown of respondents, please see the appendix.



About Best Places in the World to Retire / Contact Information



[Best Places in the World to Retire](#) was released to the search engines May, 2013. Since that time, we have added more than 250 expat stories and 9,5000 answers to questions about living abroad, provided almost entirely by more than 500 experts.

Our first country was Panama, which was followed by Nicaragua, Belize, Portugal and Mexico. We plan to add 9 additional countries in the next 3 years.

Our objective is to provide credible information about moving, living, retiring, visiting, or doing business abroad.

The Best Places in the World to Retire website is divided into the following sections:

- [Questions & Answers](#) provides answers to the most often asked questions. There are usually several answers to the same question because different people can have different opinions, none of which are definitively wrong. As an example, several people can have valid but different opinions on “How’s the shopping in Panama?” or “Is it safe in Granada, Nicaragua?”
- [Location Advisor](#) is an interactive, real time questionnaire that makes a recommendation on the best place to live based on the answers to up to 13 questions.
- [Expatriate Stories](#) are comprised of entries either written by an expat or a local, or are an interview of the most interesting people in each location.
- [Marketplace](#) is the only commercial area of the site. This is where for profit and non-profit organizations let our visitors know about their services.

We invite you to visit Best Places’ [Facebook page](#), [YouTube channel](#), and to sign up for the Best Places [newsletter](#), where we will also let our subscribers know about the release of our next studies.

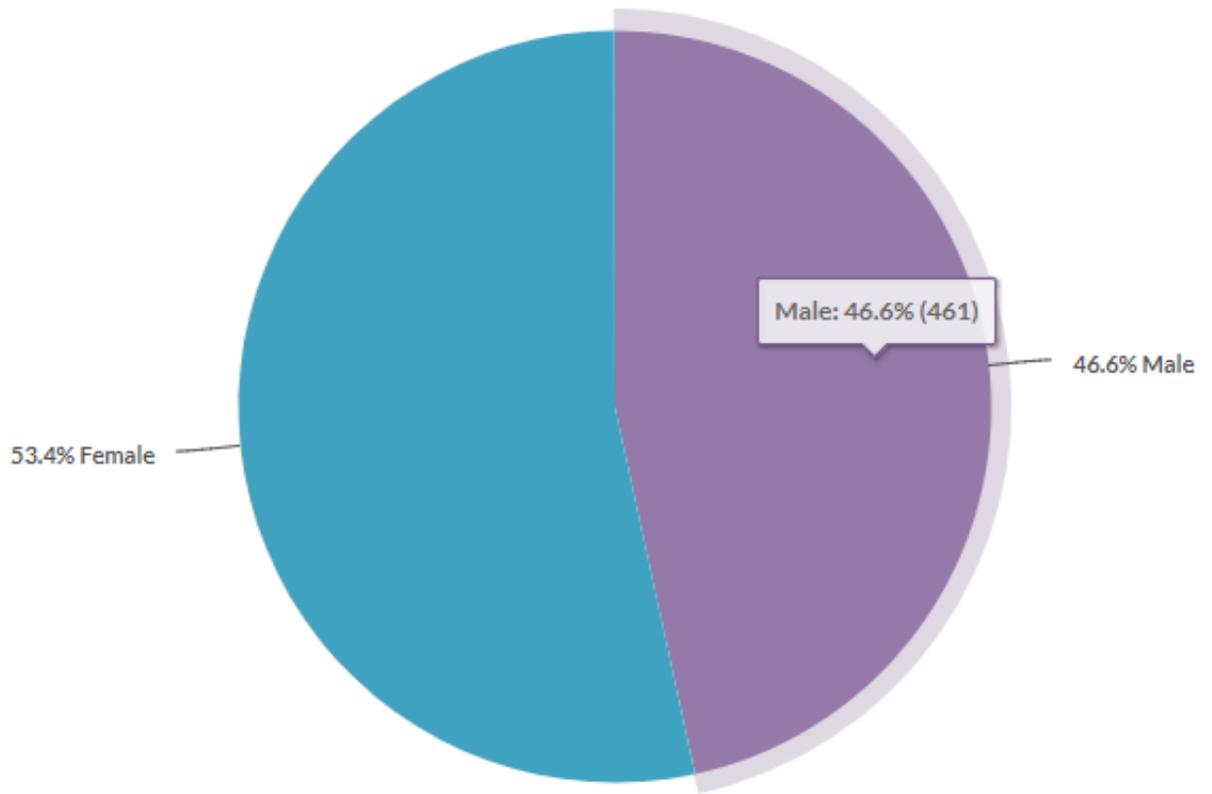
In May of 2016, Chuck Bolotin and Jet Metier became expats, crossing the border into Mexico in a big, white van, with their two dogs. Over the next year, they toured Mexico, from the border in California to the border with Belize, visiting most of the places in this study. You can download the eBook about their trip, *Our Year on the Road & Living in Mexico—Adventures, Challenges, Triumphs, Lessons Learned*, [here](#).

Jet Metier is the creative consultant for Best Places in the World to Retire. Jet created the graphics and overall look and feel for this study, and is the editor of *Panama—the 62 Things You Must Know* (available for [free download](#)). She also conducted 21 interviews of the most interesting people overseas and wrote 11 stories of her own. We provide Jet’s comments through “Jet’s Takes” on account of her ability to connect with expat perspectives. Jet may be reached at JetMetier@BestPlacesInTheWorldToRetire.com

Chuck Bolotin is the Vice President of Business Development at Best Places in the World to Retire. Chuck was one of the founders of the company, developed the survey, and has interviewed over 500 expats read. Chuck may be reached at Chuck.Bolotin@BestPlacesInTheWorldToRetire.com

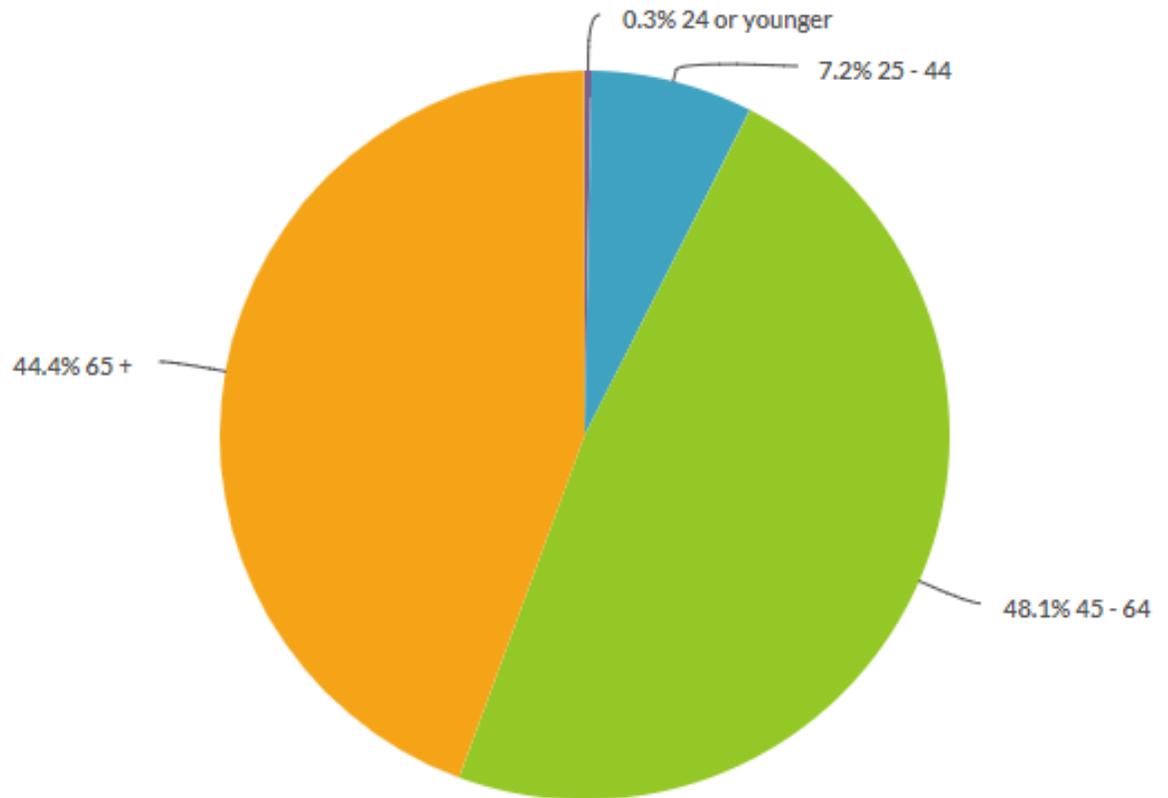
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2. Are you male or female?



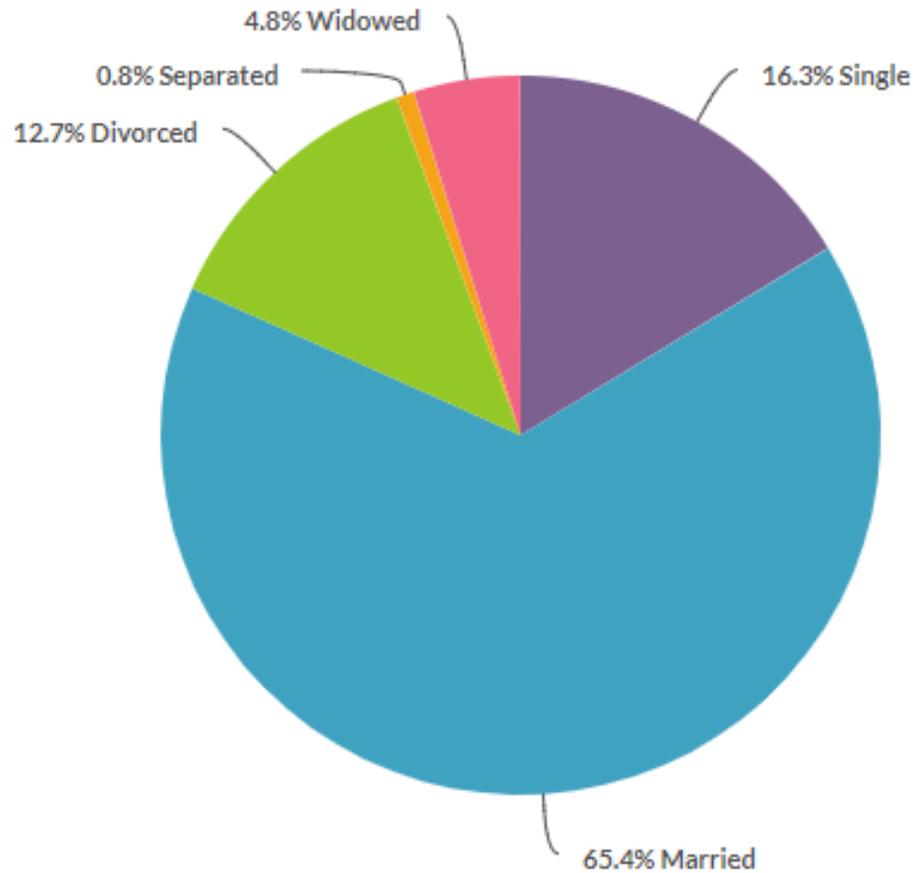
Value	Percent
Male	46.6%
Female	53.4%

3. Your age



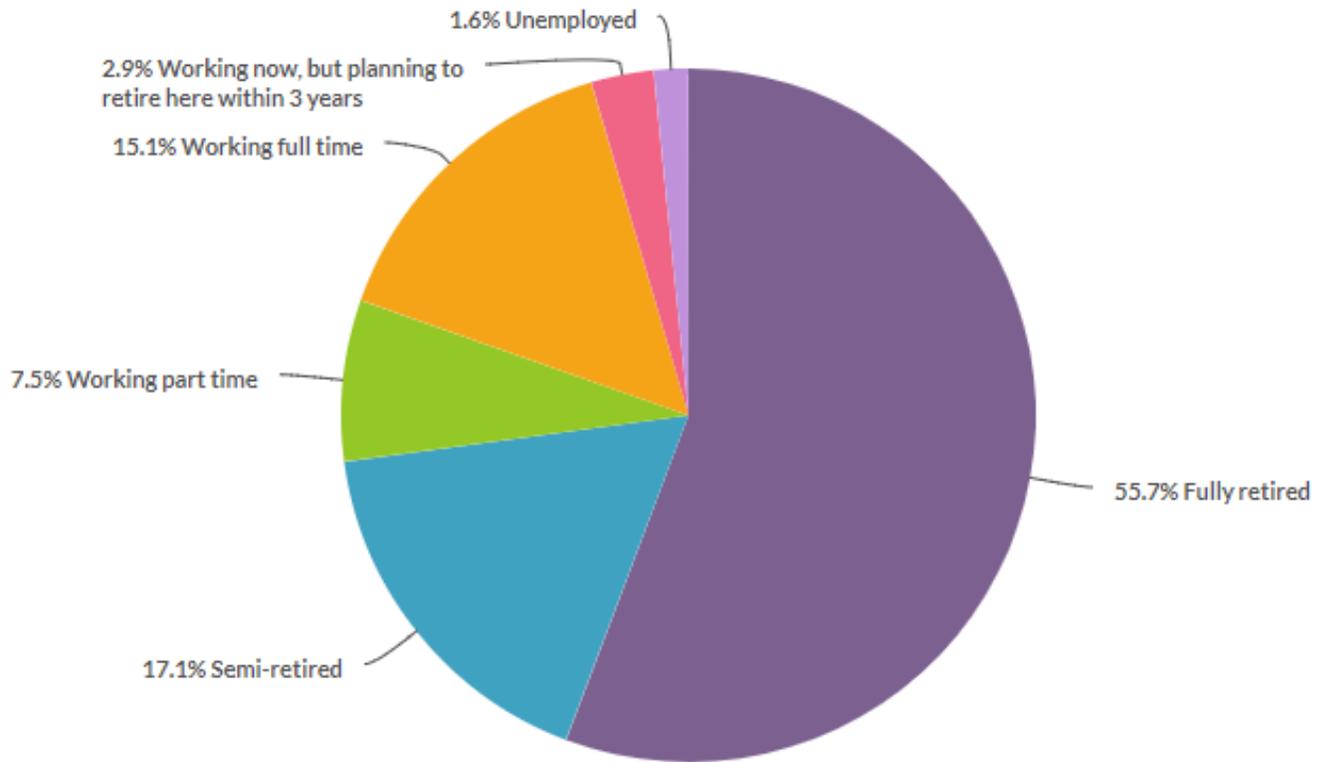
Value		Percent
24 or younger		0.3%
25 - 44		7.2%
45 - 64		48.1%
65 +		44.4%

4. Marital status



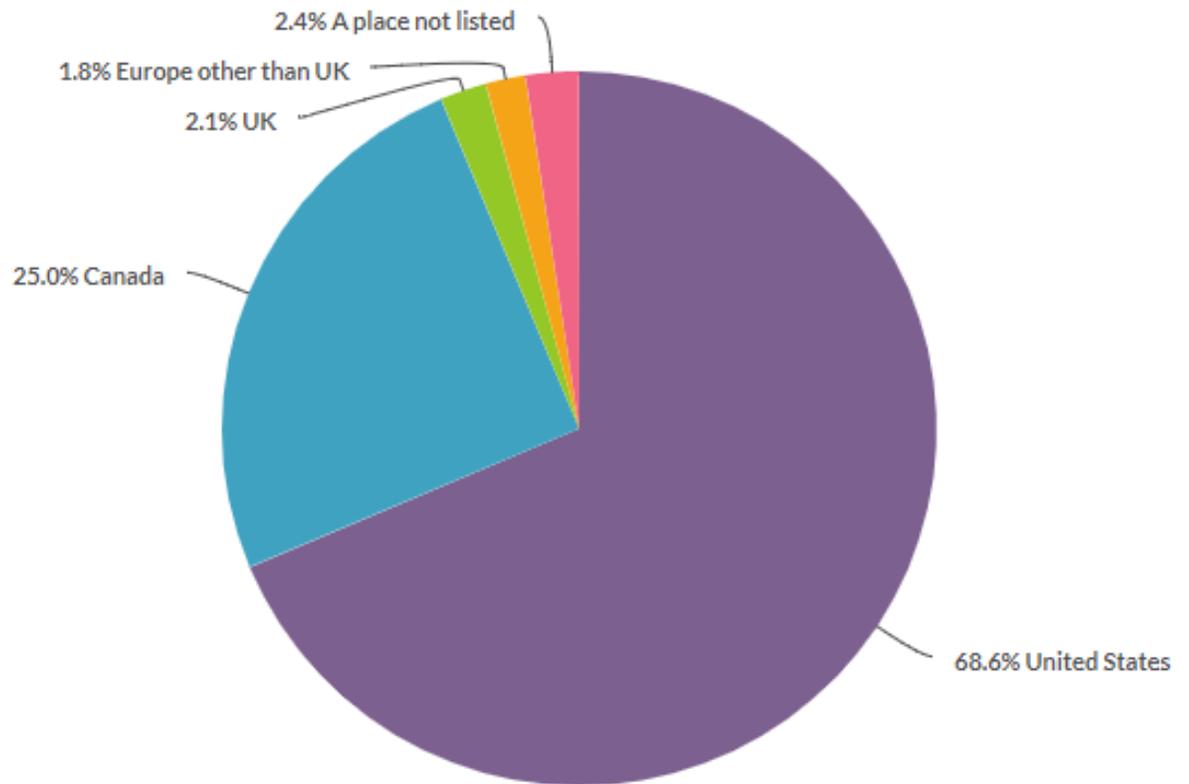
Value	Percent
Single	16.3%
Married	65.4%
Divorced	12.7%
Separated	0.8%
Widowed	4.8%

5. Work status



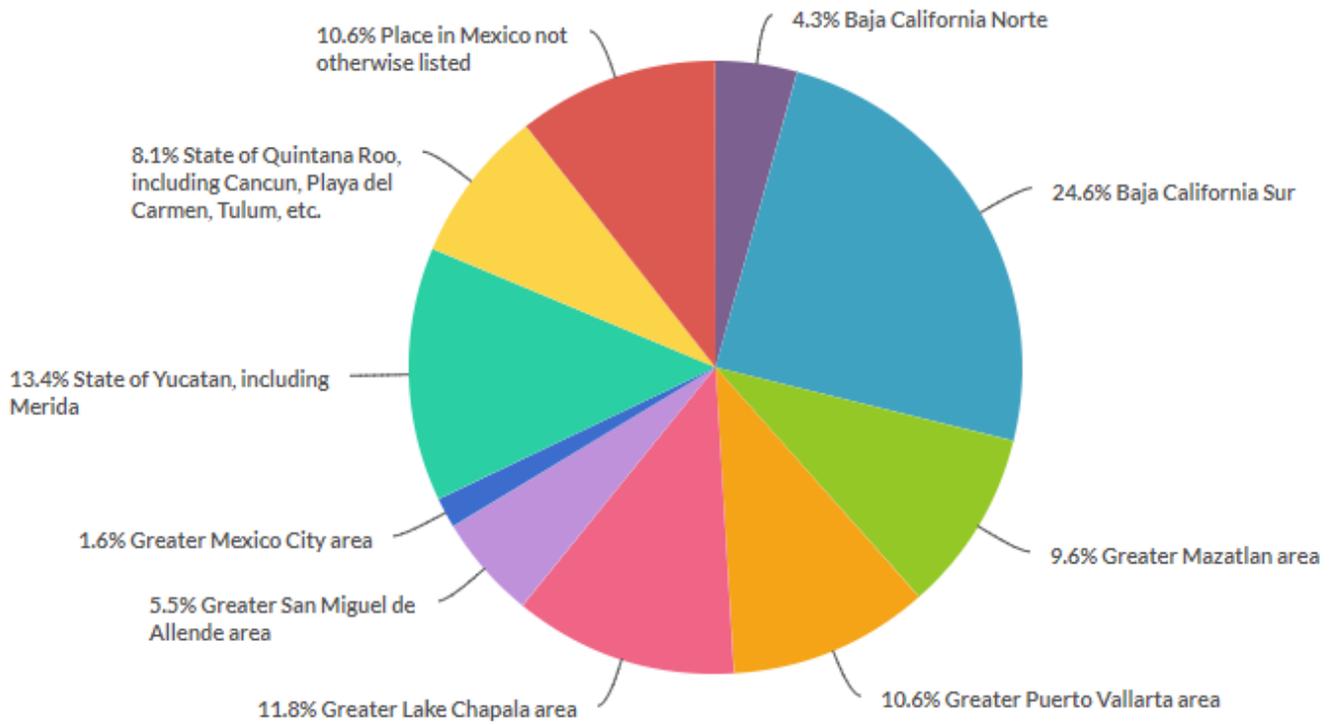
Value	Percent	R
Fully retired	55.7%	
Semi-retired	17.1%	
Working part time	7.5%	
Working full time	15.1%	
Working now, but planning to retire here within 3 years	2.9%	
Unemployed	1.6%	

6. What is your home country or area?

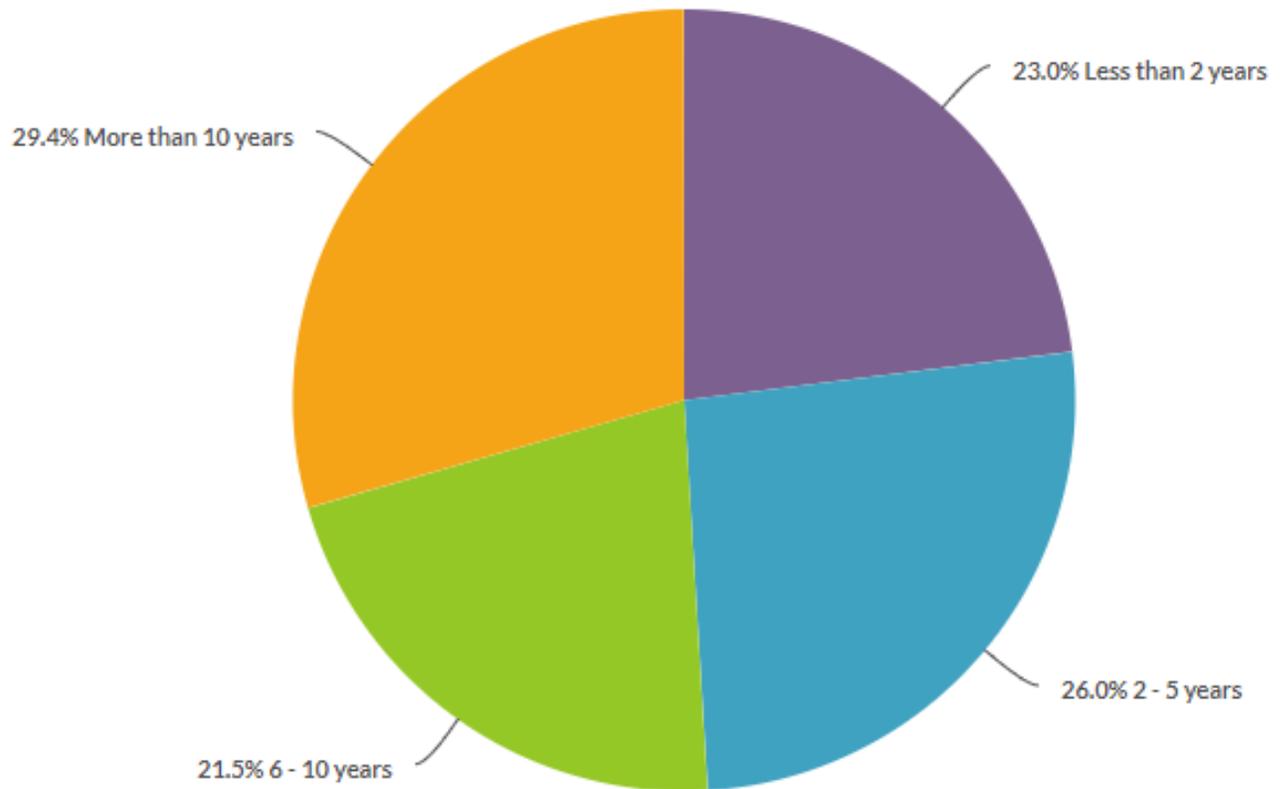


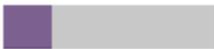
Value	Percent
United States	68.6%
Canada	25.0%
UK	2.1%
Europe other than UK	1.8%
A place not listed	2.4%

7. Where did you move, either full time or part time?



8. How long have you lived abroad?



Value		Percent
Less than 2 years		23.0%
2 - 5 years		26.0%
6 - 10 years		21.5%
More than 10 years		29.4%