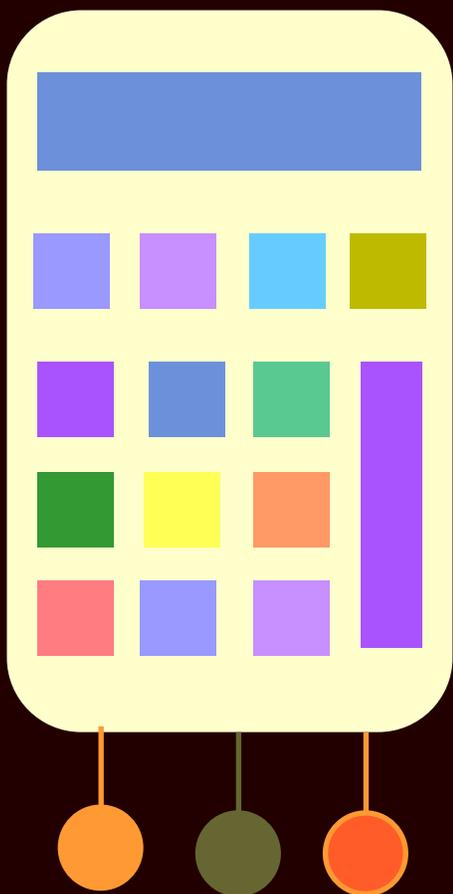
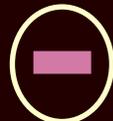


Is It **Cheaper** To Live In

Mexico?



-  Which area had the lowest cost of living?
-  How much less expensive is it to live in Mexico?
-  Did expats enjoy a better lifestyle?

A research study of 1,129 expats

by

Best Places in the World to Retire



Topline Summary of the Most Interesting Findings & Conclusions

Almost half of our respondents reported that, for the same quality of goods and services, for what they would pay \$100 for in their home country, they could buy for \$50 or less in their expat home in Mexico. — 13

Expats reduced their cost of living in Mexico, but bought more goods and services than they did in their home country.— 19

Who worried less about money in Mexico, men or women?— 24

Did expats in Mexico do more chores than in their home country, or less, and how did they feel about it?— 27

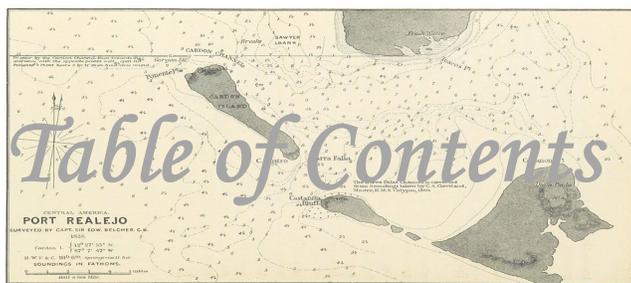
Who proportionately did fewer chores after moving to Mexico, men or women?— 28

If they spent the same money as in their home country, would our expat respondents in Mexico have a better lifestyle in their home country, or in Mexico, and how much better?— 31

In which popular Mexican expat area did our expats experience the greatest increase in lifestyle for their money?— 32



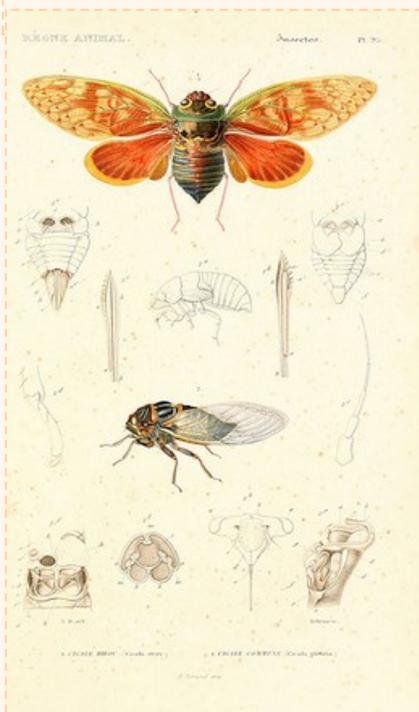
**Tasty, fresh and juicy content
Get 'em while they are hot!**



The Story Behind Best Places & This Study...6



Acknowledgements...8

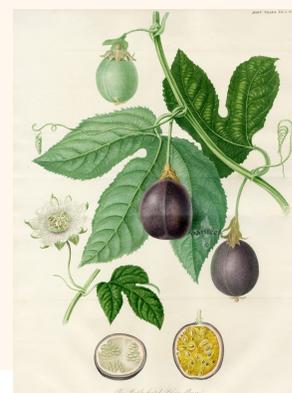


Rights to Distribute...12



Who These Studies Can Help

- ✚ Those Considering Moving to Mexico...9
- ✚ Journalists...10
- ✚ For Profit Businesses and Non-Profit Organizations...11



Findings, Comments & Observations

- 1. Yes, Virginia, It Really Is Cheaper To Live in Mexico—MUCH Cheaper..... 13
- 2. Spending Small, But Livin' Large..... 19
- 3. Want to Worry Less About Money? Move to Mexico 23
- 4. Fewer Chores and More Time..... 27
- 5. Lifestyle Upgrades for Everyone! 31



For Further Investigation...111



Survey Methodology...115



About Best Places In The World To Retire / Contact Information...119

Appendix / Source Data

Listed below are all the demographic questions we used for this study. An asterisk indicates that it was required that the respondent answer the question.



Are you male or female	42
Your age.....	43
Marital status	44
Work status * (For this survey, activities on behalf of charities doesn't count as "work")	45
What is your home country or area? *	46
Where did you move, either full time or part time? *	47
How long have you lived in Mexico? *	48

The Story Behind Best Places & This Study

Jan. 20, 2018

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 each question, each answer 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.

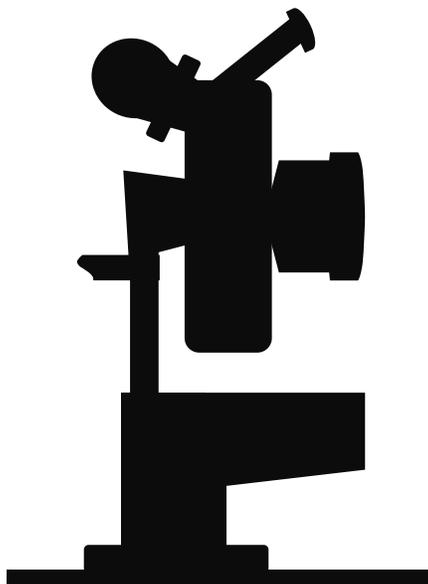
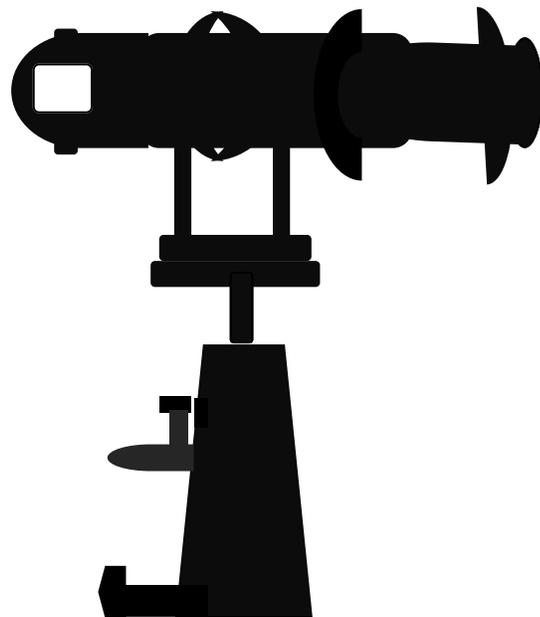
What happened next surpassed our wildest expectations. In May of 2013, we released our site to the search engines with Panama as the only country we covered. Later, we added Nicaragua, Belize and Portugal, and most recently, Mexico.

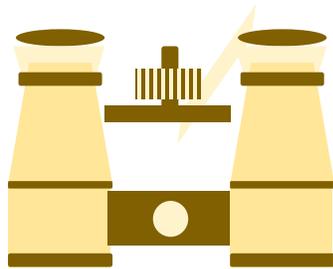
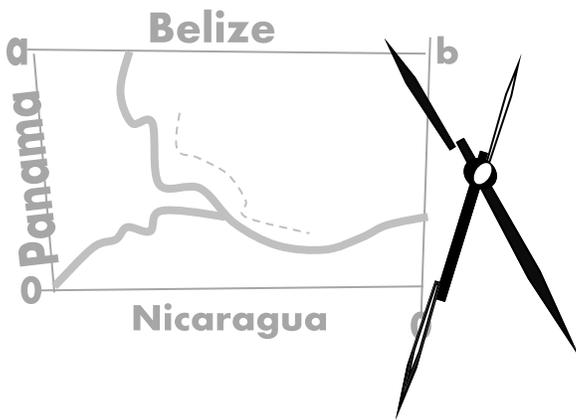
As of this writing, more than 600 [independent experts](#) have posted more than 9,500 [answers](#) and 250 [expat stories](#), providing their insights and experiences for our visitors, in a credible way, in a format that is easy for our visitors to use for their research.

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





**Chuck's
Views**

**Jet's
Take:**

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 respondents’ comments, which we chose to give you a 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 previous study on](#)

[Mexican expats expectations and realities](#) and follow-on studies from the same survey that will cover topics revolving around the expat experience in Mexico. Look for upcoming studies on 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



**Karla & Mike
Sequeira**



Oaxaca Times

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



**Madeline
Milne**

**Yucatán
EXPAT LIFE**



**Lee
Steele**

YUCATAN LIVING

**THE
Yucatan
TIMES**
News you can rely on



**Alejandro
Azcarate**



Who These Studies Can Help

This is the second 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.

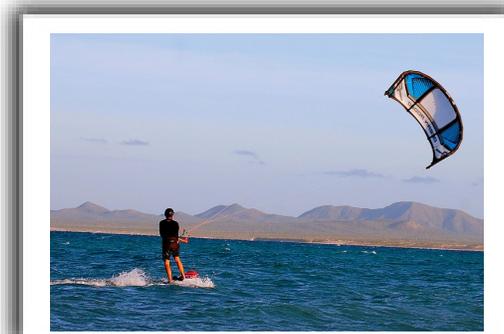
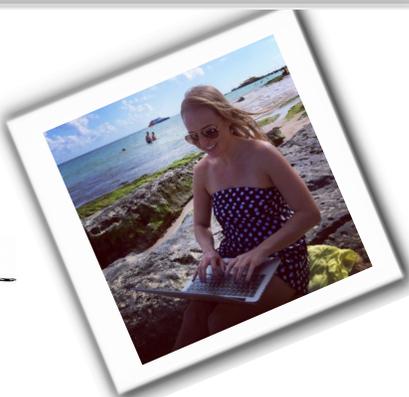
From February 9 to March 11, 2017, we surveyed 1,129 expats, who provided thousands of data points and comments. We then took several months to analyze the data and present it in a way designed to help you to come to your own conclusions. This study is the second in a series to do just that.

Learn what happened to those who flew the coop

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

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.

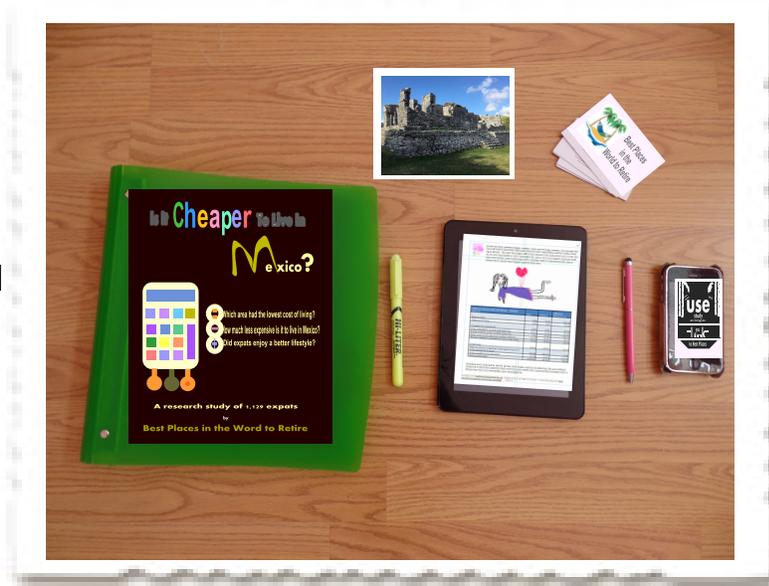
**We are also available for
interviews and other
background material.**

Contact:

Chuck Bolotin

VP, Business Development

3. For Profit Businesses and Non-Profit Organizations



Feel free to distribute or incorporate this study into your presentations

If you could benefit from your prospects, clients, partners or volunteers being better informed as to the reality of living in Mexico, subject to the "Rights to Distribute" on the next page, please feel free to distribute all or parts of these studies or to incorporate all or parts of them into your presentations.

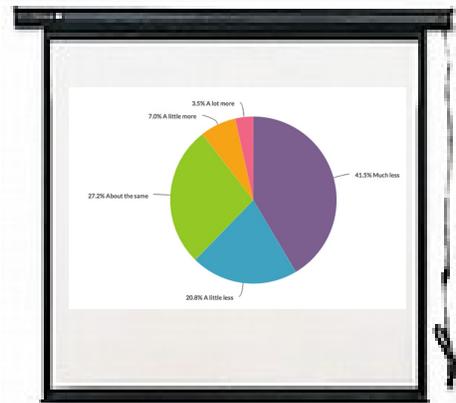


Your company name here

We Can Customize this Study

If you would like for us to create a version for you with your company name, logo and contact information, contact:

BusinessDevelopment@BestPlacesInTheWorldToRetire.com





Rights to Distribute

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.

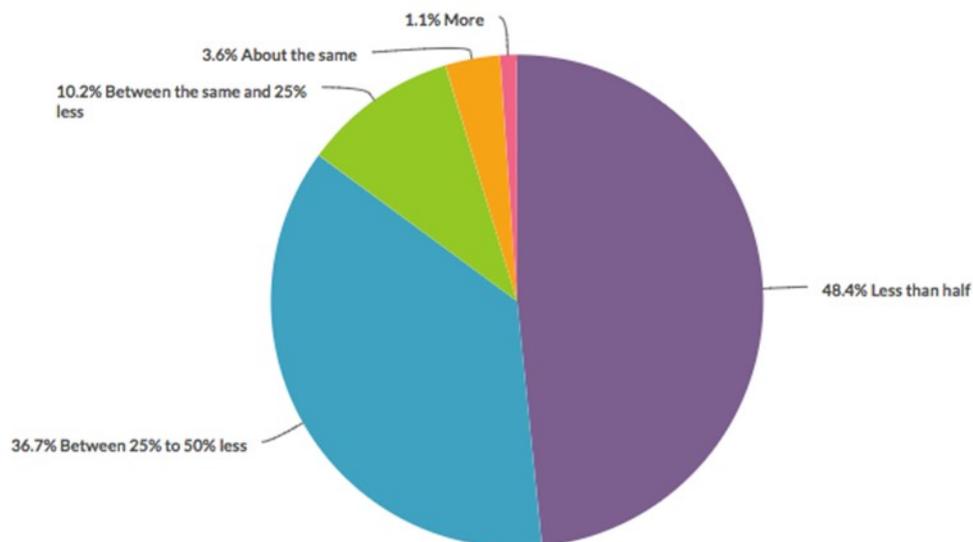
If you would like to use this study in other ways, if you are a journalist who would like to run a customized query of the data for your own article, or if you have any other questions or requests, please contact: Chuck.Bolotin@BestPlacesInTheWorldToRetire.com

We will do our best to help you.

1. Yes, Virginia, It Really Is Cheaper To Live in Mexico—MUCH Cheaper



Overall, comparing “apples to apples” (example: house on the beach compared to house on the beach), how is the cost of living in Mexico?



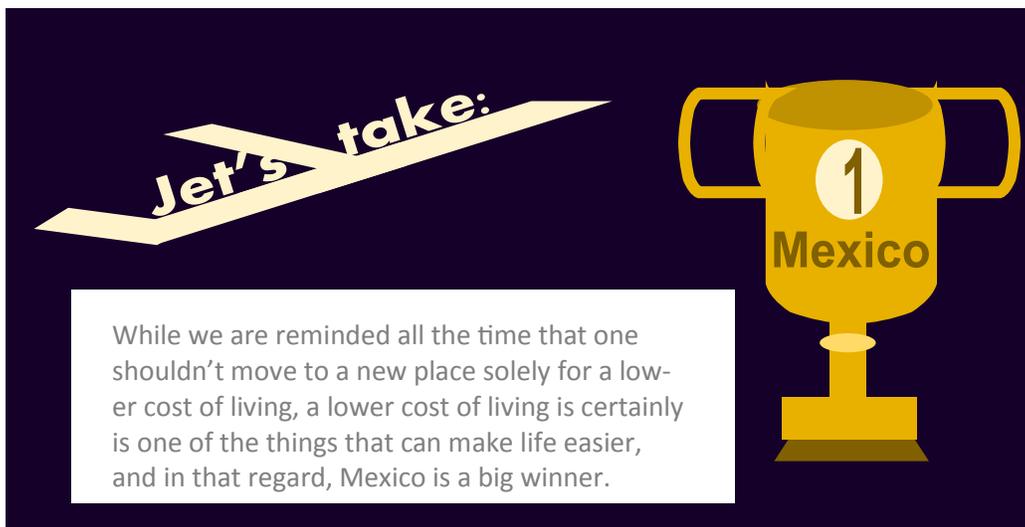
For those interested in moving to Mexico in order to achieve a lower overall cost of living, the data provided by our respondents is compelling, with almost half (48.4%) reporting that, for the same quality of goods and services, for what they would pay \$100 for in their home country, they could buy for \$50 or less in their expat home in Mexico, a whopping savings of more than \$50 they could put into their pockets or use to purchase more goods and services.

Those from the US experienced the greatest decrease in “apples to apples” cost of 50% or greater, at 52.5%, while 40.3% of Canadians felt the same way and just 29.4% of those from the UK reported the greatest difference.



**29.4% of those from the UK
reported the greatest difference.**

These findings were consistent with our first study on Mexico expats, “[Expats in Mexico: Expectations, Worries... and How it All Turned Out](#)”, in which 86.3% of respondents reported that when they moved to Mexico, they found a “Lower cost of living”. You can download that earlier study [here](#).



Here are the winners, in order, of places in Mexico where our expat respondents reported a cost of living of 50% or less than in their home country:

Baja California Norte: 74.2%

Greater Mazatlán area: 63.1%

State of Yucatan, including Merida: 59.1%

Greater Puerto Vallarta area: 49.4%

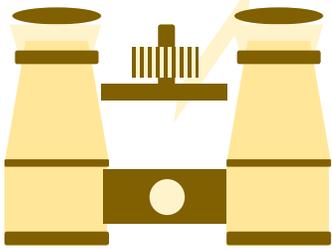
Greater Lake Chapala area: 46.2%

Greater San Miguel de Allende area: 45.8%

State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc.: 45.5%

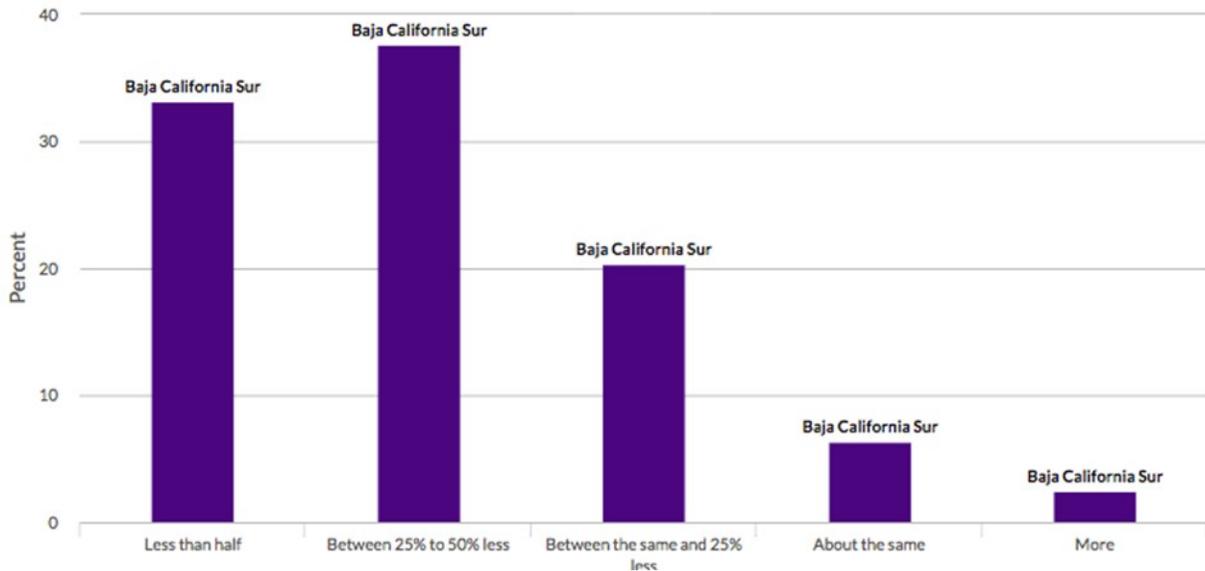
Baja California Sur: 33.2%

Greater Mexico City area: 28.6%



Chuck's Views

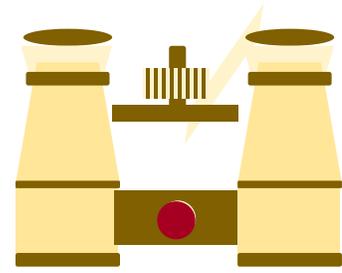
Even those areas within Mexico with the least decrease in cost of living were significantly less expensive than the expats' home country. For example, in the results for Baja California Sur (dominated by the Cabo area and number 8 on our list) you can see that, below, only 8.9% reported that the cost for equivalent goods and services were "About the same" or "More". This means that a full 90%+ of expats in Baja California Sur experienced lower costs of living, many of them by quite a bit.



Jet's take:

After looking at the comments, we suspect that one of the reasons that Baja California Norte was seen as so inexpensive is that many of the people who live there used to live in Southern California, which is one of the more expensive areas of the US.

Please note that this question asks about the cost of living without regard to how much the expat respondent actually spends in Mexico. (For example, even with a lower cost of living, you could spend more, just by buying more things.) We explore how much expats in Mexico actually spend in the next question.



Chuck's Views

Comments:

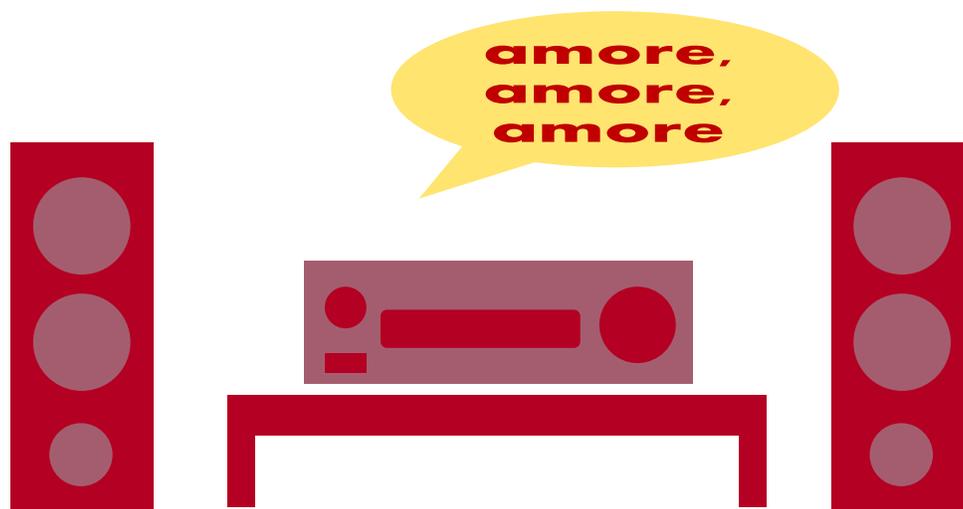
“Compared to California prices my rent is probably 1/3 of what I would be paying.”—65+ year old widowed female from the US living in the Puerto Vallarta area for more than 10 years.

“The cost of living here can be greatly influenced by one's choice to buy local or imported goods. If you must have all the food items/clothing brands/laundry and cleaning products that you use in your home country, your cost of living will reflect that in higher prices. If you're willing to use local products and eat and shop where the locals do, the savings can be very high!” —45 – 64-year-old semi-retired female from Canada living in the Greater Mazatlán area for less than 2 years.



“Frankly, living on a pension, I don't think I could live half so well in Canada”.—Donneley McCann, 65 + year old, living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

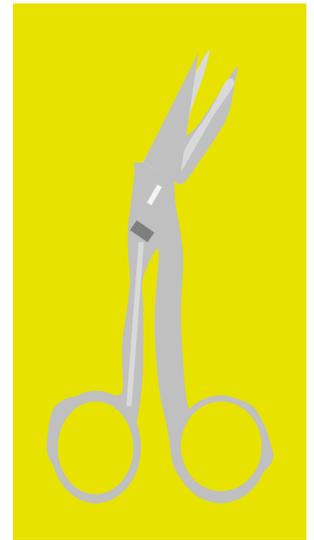
“Groceries, most services, internet, restaurants, entertainment and travel are all about half the price of Canada's. Plus, we save on heating bills and car expenses while living here. On the other hand most electronic and electrical items are more expensive in Mexico.”-- Jerry Wyshnowsky, 45 – 64 year old fully retired Canadian living in the Greater Mazatlán area for less than 2 years.



“I bet in Rosarito the cost is about 75% less than Southern California.”—Salvador Navarro, 45 – 64 year old American living in Baja California Norte for 2 – 5 years.

“I bought a 2005 Skyline 40' park model trailer with a 400 square foot deck on it for \$10,000 USD. My monthly rent is high at \$298 per month, but I am a block from the beach, plus trash service and 24 hour security is included. Compare that to something similar near San Diego. I can walk to town. Monthly water is \$4 and electric is \$15 except in July and August, when it costs \$30 USD. – Dulcey Branch, American living in Baja California Norte for less than 2 years.

“I estimate that my home expenses, including utilities, are about 35% of what I paid for comparable housing in the US. That's an estimate complicated by the delightful fact that most rentals come fully furnished, as did mine, and I'm not sure how to factor in that advantage.” – Michael Ogden, 45 – 64-year-old American living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than two years.



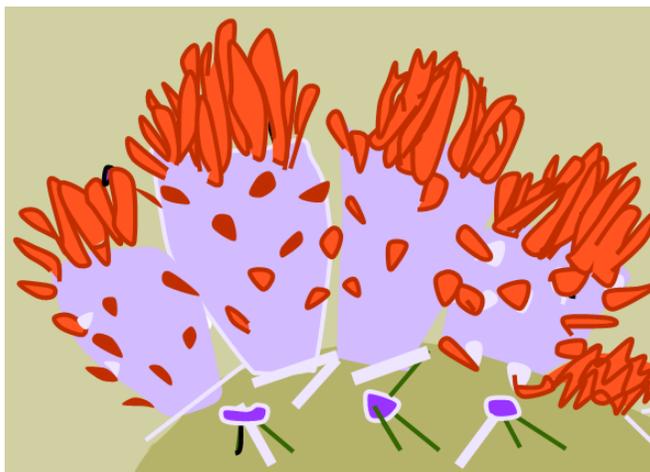
“I live in a small place one block from the beach and pay the equivalent to \$150 a month. My house payment in the US was almost 10 times that amount and nowhere near the beach.” – Karen, 45 – 64-year-old American living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

“I pay \$300 a month and the ocean is my front yard. Need I say more?” – 45 – 64-year-old fully retired single American living in Baja California Norte for 2 – 5 years.

“If you want the best of everything, you will pay for it no matter where you live. If you learn to live more like the natives, the cost can be much less expensive.” -- Debbie Marquart, American living in Greater San Miguel de Allende area for 2 – 5 years.

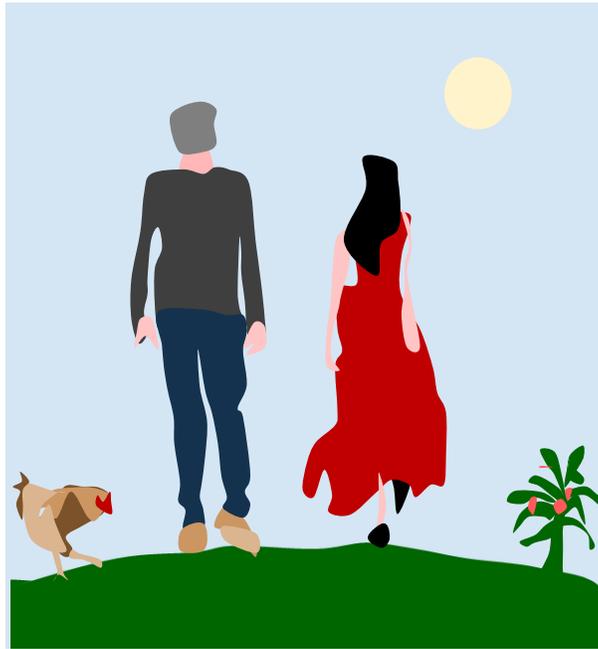
“It all depends if you are working here and earning pesos or you are here working for an international company or living from your saved money in euros or US dollars. Life is expensive if you earn pesos, but it is much cheaper if you are having euros or US dollars!”—24 – 44 year old married female working part time from Europe other than the UK, living in Mexico 6 – 10 years.

“It is crazy how cheap you can live here!!”-- Noelia Matthews, 25 – 44 year old female American living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.

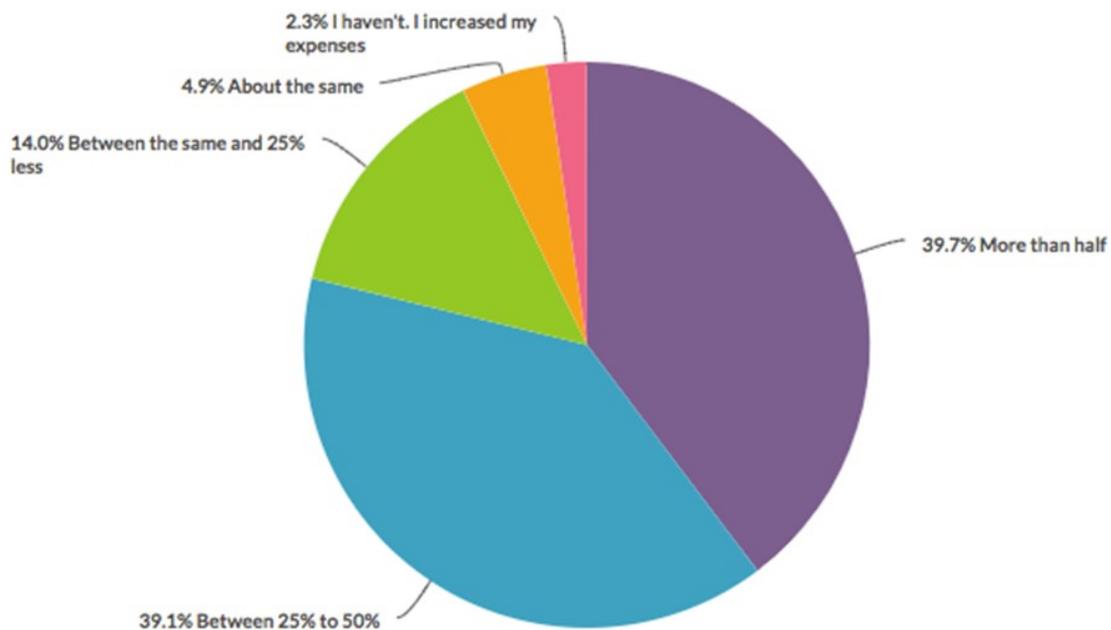


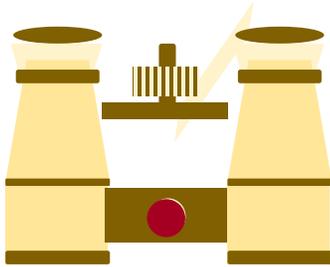
2. Spending Small, But Livin' Large

Expats in Mexico spend less while buying a better lifestyle than in their home country



How much have you reduced your expenses in Mexico?





Chuck's Views

While similar to question 1, which asks how much goods and services cost in Mexico compared to their home country, this question asks how much the expats actually spend. By comparing the two results, we see an interesting phenomenon, but one that could have been predicted: on average, those with the greatest savings generated by moving to Mexico reduced their expenses the least, with the difference between what things cost and how much one purchases representing a lifestyle upgrade.

For example, 48.4% of our respondents reported a 50% or lower cost of living, while only 39.7% reported reducing their expenses by 50% or greater, which means that, this group purchased almost 22% more “stuff” with their lower costs, while still pocketing more cash than if they had stayed in their home country.

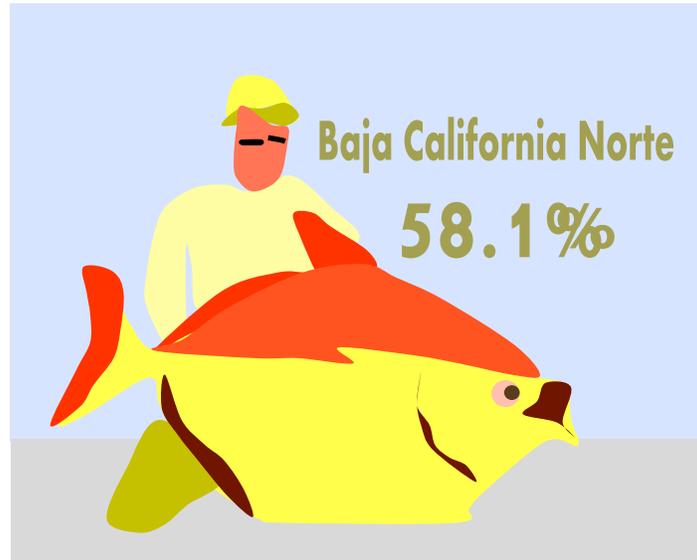
Item	How much less do things cost?	How much have you reduced expenses?	Greater purchases made in Mexico than in home country (“+” = greater lifestyle; “-” = greater savings)
50% less or more than 50% less	48.4%	39.7%	+21.9%
Between 25% to 50% less	36.7	39.1	-6.1
Between the same and 25% less	10.2	14.0	-33.2

As opposed to the results for the cost of living (which were roughly equal between men and women), women’s expenses dropped the most, with 43.3% reporting a greater than 50% reduction in expenses, while only 35.6% of men reported a 50% or greater reduction in expenses.

The group reporting the biggest drop in expenses was divorced people, at 50.5%, followed by singles, at 44.7% and then married people, at 36.6%.

Those from the US reduced their expenses much more than Canadians, with 44.5% of Americans reporting a greater than 50% decrease, and only 29.6% of Canadians reporting the same thing.





Here are the results for the percentage of expats in Mexico reporting a 50% or greater reduction in expenses:

Baja California Norte: 58.1%

State of Yucatan, including Merida: 53.0%

Greater San Miguel de Allende area: 47.8%

State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc.: 47.0%

Greater Lake Chapala area: 44.1%

Greater Mazatlán area: 36.9%

Greater Puerto Vallarta area: 35.6%

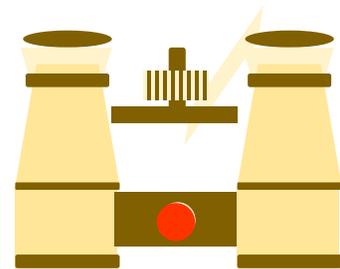
Greater Mexico City area: 28.6%

Baja California Sur: 22.7%

Those in Mexico the least amount of time reported the greatest decrease in expenses, while those in Mexico the longest reported the lowest decrease in expenses. We can only speculate on three possible reasons:

- 1) the longer you're away from your home country, the more you forget how much things cost there; or
- 2) you're saved so much money by being in Mexico longer that you have more to spend and get used to the more lavish lifestyle (i.e., one's spending level tends to stay constant relative to one's ability to spend).

We suspect that while the answer may be a blend.



**Chuck's
Views**

Comments:

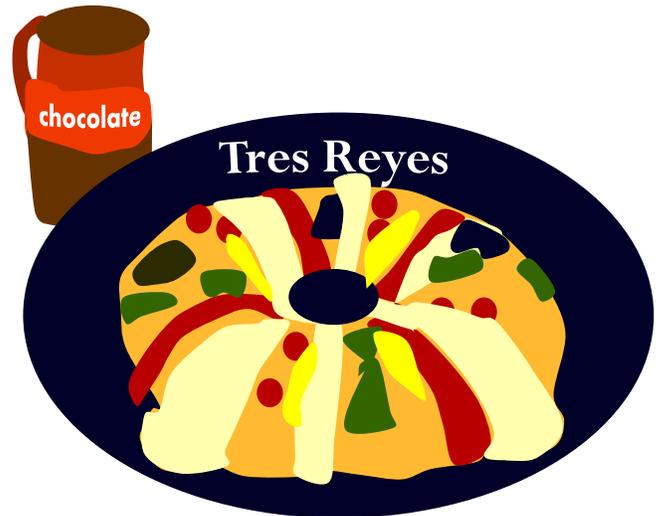
“A nice cart of groceries at our local supermarket in Cabo is about 50% of the cost in Sonoma County. And the fish is fresh.” —Hal Beck, 65+ semi-retired American living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

“I receive Social Security of \$1,000 per month and I am now saving at least \$200 of it.”—65+ year old female living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for more than 10 years.

“I have been here for a long time and I earn next to nothing teaching, but I have no problems paying for rent, food, car, etc. My money goes a lot farther here.” -- Debra J. Ingram, American living in San Miguel de Allende for more than 10 years.

“I live on \$1,000 per month and would have to live like a poor person in Miami ...after working all my life! Here i can live like a queen!” —Karen Sydney, semi-retired American living in Greater San Miguel de Allende for 6 – 10 years.

“I spend about the same but with a much higher standard of living.”—Denis Larsen, American living in the state of Yucatan for more than 10 years.



“In Mexico, you can live like a king for what it costs just to get by in the U.S.” —Greg Hovey, American living in Mexico for more than 10 years.

“It is cheap to live here if you buy local or national goods. It gets expensive if you buy imported goods. We buy imported goods for a treat once in a while but try to shop local goods mostly.” —45 – 64 year old female from the US living in the state of Yucatan for more than 10 years.

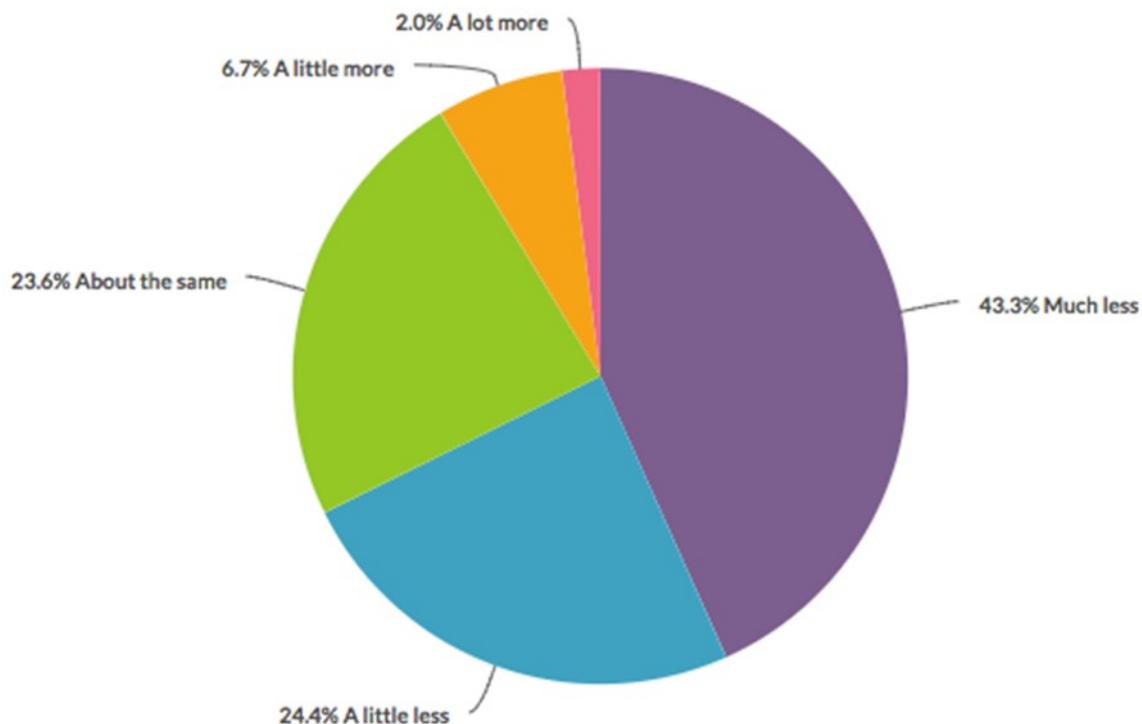
“The money I saved I am spending on new sailboat and adventures.”—45 – 64 year old male from the US living in Baja California Sur for 6 – 10 years.

“More than the cost savings is what we can afford to do that we couldn't at home - front row theater tickets to amazing live events, 4 star restaurants with live music, personal trainer 4 days a week (in our home), etc., etc., etc. -- James Downie, 45 – 64 year old married Canadian, living in the Greater Mazatlán area for 6 – 10 years.

3. Want to Worry Less About Money? Move to Mexico.



What is your level of concern about money in Mexico compared with your home country?



Consistent with goods and services costing less and expats in Mexico spending less, as expected, our respondents' level of worry about money decreased significantly from what they experienced in their home country, but not as much as the cost of living or their expenses. We speculate that, even with lower costs and expenses, some worry about money will still be with us, just less. Still, over two thirds worried either "Much less" or "A little less."

In the "Less Worried About Money" category, women won, with 46.5% reporting "Much less" worry, compared to 39.5% of men.

The clear winner for decreased money worries was those from the US, with a 46.3% decrease in the "Much less" category, followed fairly far behind by Canada, at 37.9%

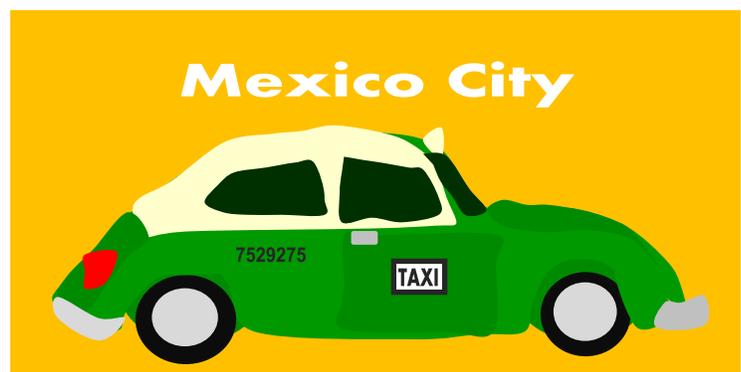


Comments:

"We feel very confident that we can live a very nice lifestyle down here without jeopardizing our future retirement. You just get more for your money here." —45 – 64-year-old married female from the US living in San Miguel de Allende 6 – 10 years.

"As long as my Social Security is not cut I will do fine." —65-year-old widowed female from the US living in Baja California Norte for 6 – 10 years.

"Because the cost of living is much lower in Mexico we spend a lot less time and energy thinking about money and just have fun without any guilt." -- Jerry Wyshnowsky, 45 – 64-year-old Canadian living in the Greater Mazatlán area for less than 2 years.





“For the average retired person money is and will likely always be a concern but that level of concern has been significantly reduced.” -- Ed Harrod, American living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area less than 2 years.

“Here your value is your smile and behavior, not in your pocket.” —65+ year old married male living in Mexico more than 10 years.

“I am teaching at a fairly new (4 years old), very tiny international school, which is challenging and rewarding and will help my professional growth tremendously... and pays 500 pesos (about \$25 US) per day. I adore my students, I'm happy and fulfilled in my job, but that's the tradeoff.” —25 – 44 year old single female from the US working full time in the state of Quintana Roo less than 2 years.



“I cheat. I keep my assets in US dollars until I need to spend it here.” – 45 – 64-year-old married semi-retired male from the US living in the state of Yucatan less than 2 years.

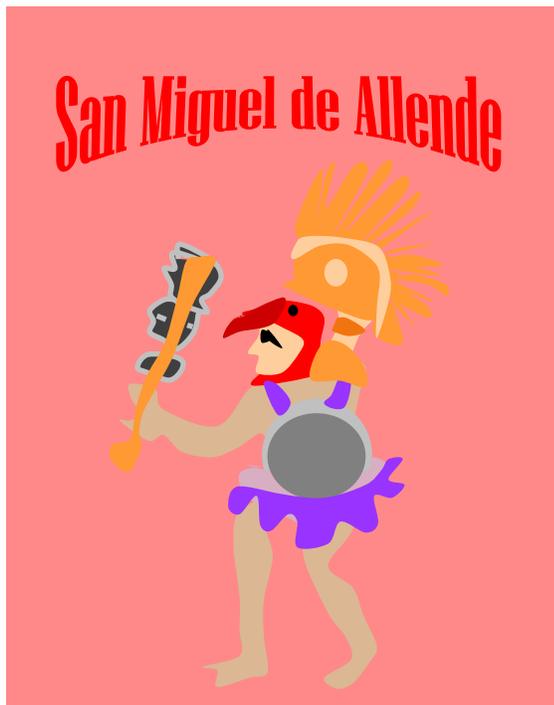
“I still have to work to live but money goes a lot farther and I'm not working my life away to barely get by. Huge difference.” – 25 – 44-year-old married female from the Us working full time living in Mexico less than 2 years.

“If you have done your homework and research, there should not be an issue with money.” —65-year-old female from the US living in the Greater Lake Chapala rea for less than two years.

“I used to make a lot of money in the US, but I make less here. If you need to earn money, this is a hard place because wages are low.” -- Marcia Bales, married female living in the state of Quintana Roo more than 10 years.

“If one earns dollars, one has no problems with the peso.” —45 – 64 year old male from the US living in the state of Quintana Roo less than 2 years.

“One can live so well in Mexico for so much less. After my first three months of worrying about how much I might be spending, given my unfamiliarity with the currency, I realized I could just treat it like play money, because I bought whatever I wanted and rarely spent over \$1,600.00 per month. If I ‘vacation’ to the beach or another town I might spend an extra \$500.00 that month. What sounds like a poverty level existence in terms of US dollars is very comfortable and even luxurious in some ways.” -- Michael Ogden, 45 – 64 year old American living in the Greater Lake Chapa area less than 2 years.

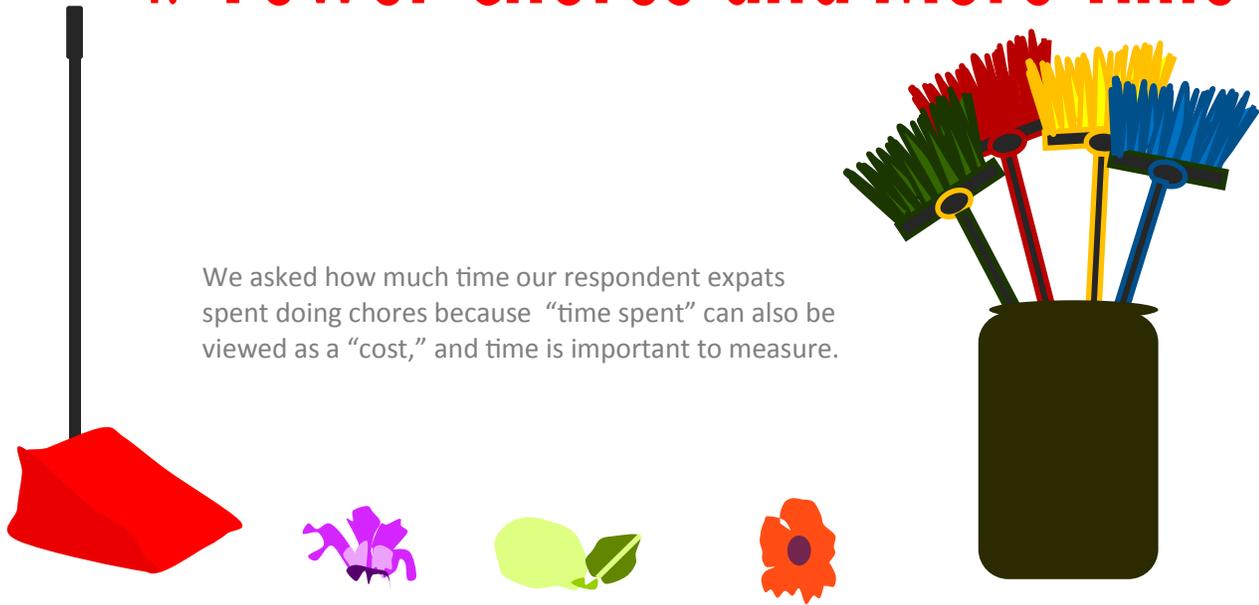


“The lesser cost of living and entertaining makes one grateful” -- Donneley McCann, female from Canada living in Baja California Sur more than 10 years.

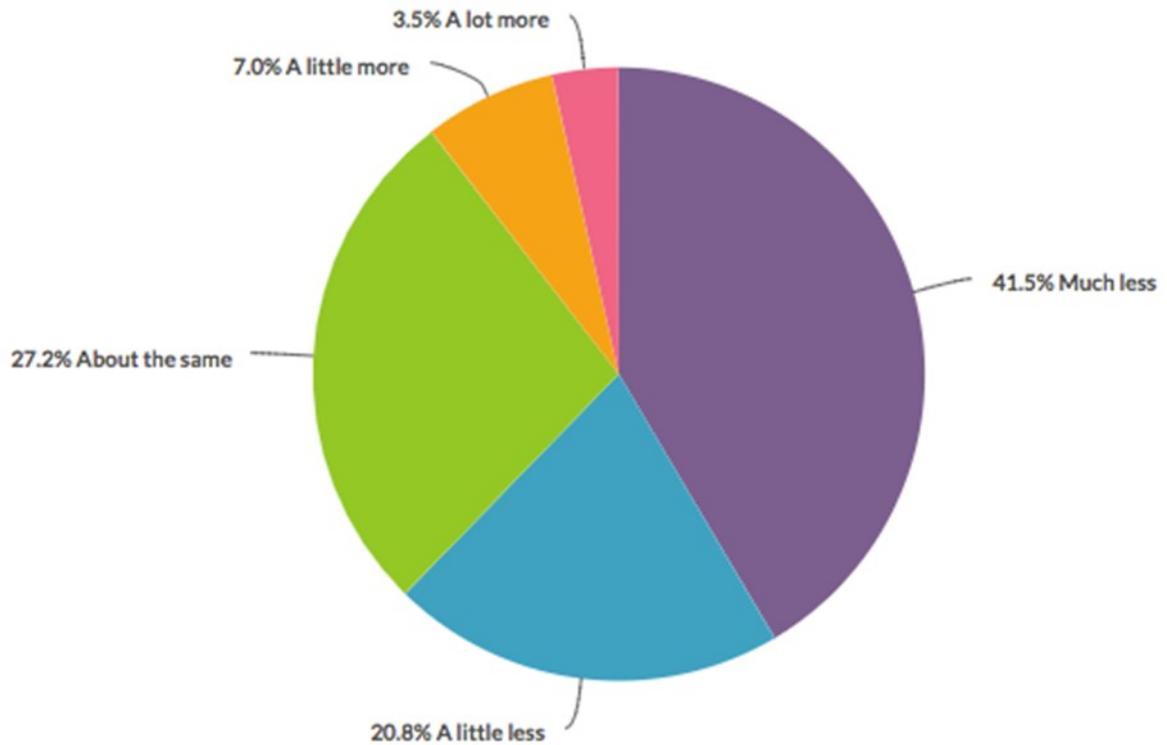
“When I told my financial adviser I only wanted \$2,000 per month from my investments, he was stunned.” -- Dulcey Branch, female American living in Baja California Norte less than 2 years.

“This should be like Homer Simpson saying ‘Duh’” -- Christopher K. George, 25 – 44-year-old American living in Quintana Roo 2 – 5 years.

4. Fewer Chores and More Time



How much time do you spend doing chores in Mexico compared with your home country?





We included this question about time spent doing chores as representative of a component of cost of living in addition to money— time. It could be said, for example, that if one spends less time doing things one doesn't want to, that their cost of living in terms of time decreases.

And here, too, living in Mexico was less expensive / consuming of one's time, with results skewing significantly to having less chores / more time in Mexico, with 62.3% reporting that they did fewer chores.



In our [cost of living study on Panama, Belize and Nicaragua](#), we asked the same question, but got different results. While 62.3% of those living in Mexico reported doing “Much less” or “A little less chores”, only 54.9% of those moving to Panama, Belize or Nicaragua did. This is most likely due to the lower cost of living in Mexico. (To download the study on Panama, Belize and Nicaragua, click [here](#).)

The big winner in doing fewer chores was women, as 46.4% reported doing “Much less” chores, while 35.9% of men reported doing much less chores. 9.5% of men actually reported doing “A little more”, compared with 4.8% of women, most likely owing to more men being able to quit work as a result of moving to Mexico and having more non-work time available, some of which they devoted to chores they would not have had time to do in the past, because they were working.



Comments:

“As Mexico labor is so reasonable, we feel using Mexican labor as much as we can affords us the opportunity to ‘help’ in appreciation for their gracious acceptance of our being here.” -- Margaret Miller-Cohen, Canadian female living in the Greater Lake Chapala area less than 2 years.

“Because I have a great deal more energy and less stress I find myself throwing on Mexican corridos and dance around the house cleaning. Even my housekeeper who comes once per week for 4 hours continually asks me why she comes to clean. Mexican music is like an energy injection.” -- Laurel A. Lockhart, semi-retired Canadian female living in the Greater San Miguel de Allende area 6 – 10 years.

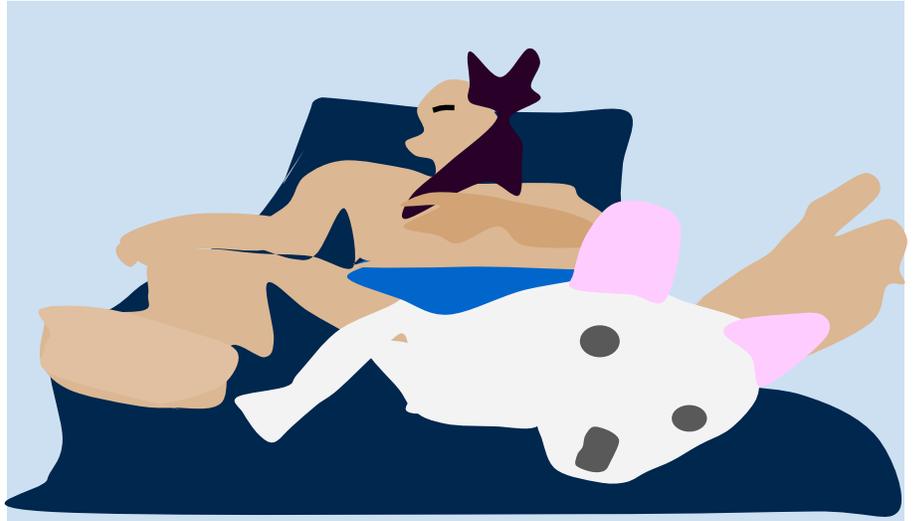
“Can afford a housekeeper, pool man and yard maintenance once a week, so much less chores!” —65+ year old divorced female American living in Baja California Sur less than 2 years.

“I could get a cleaning lady to come for 50 pesos (\$2.50 USD) an hour, but that just makes me feel like I am being lazy. Plus, I live in a 400-square foot trailer.” -- Dulcey Branch, fully retired American living in Baja California Norte less than 2 years.

"I do all my own housework and cooking which I enjoy and really, I am retired!!! Many people hire maids and cooks. We do have a young man who rakes the grounds for us once a week as we have large gardens having the young man do it instead of my husband doesn't interfere with my husband's golf." -- 45 – 64 year old American living in the State of Yucatan for more than 10 years.

"I do the chores i choose to do and hire out the rest."—65+ year old single male from the Us living in Baja California Norte 2 – 5 years.

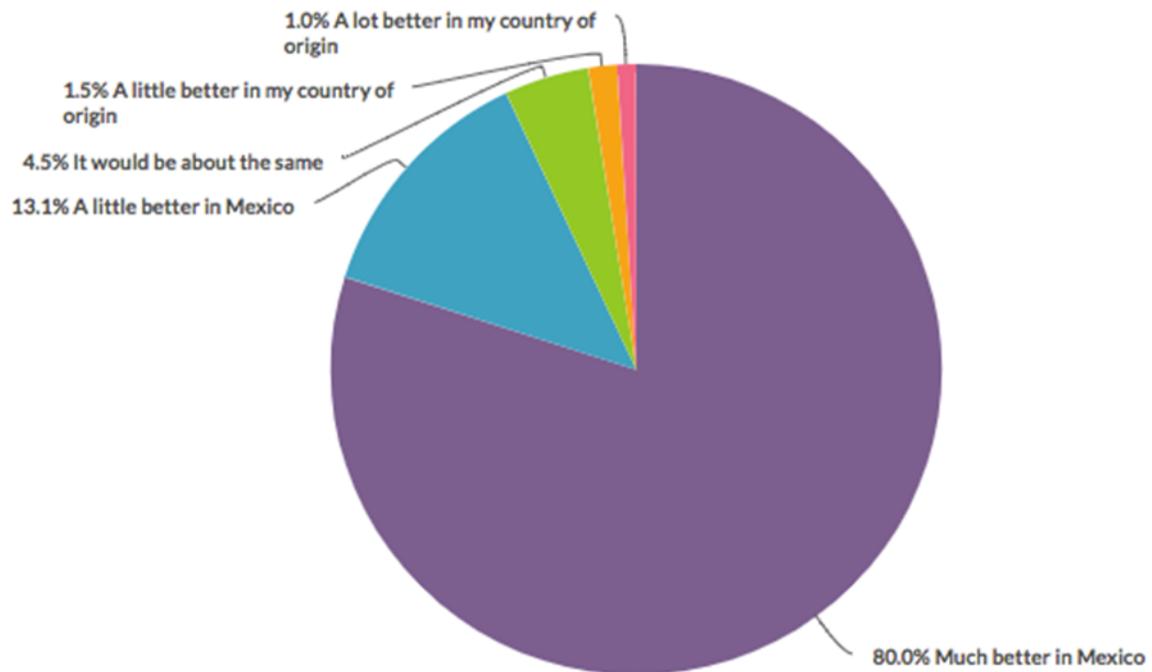
"I have a housekeeper here. I cannot afford this in Canada." -- Robi Smallwood, living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 6 – 10 years.



5. Lifestyle Upgrades for Everyone!



If you spent the same amount of money in Mexico as you would in your country of origin, where would you have a better lifestyle overall?



We saw this question as the ultimate cost of living question, in that, all things being equal, for the same cash, a lower cost of living should purchase a better lifestyle. The lopsided results were very consistent with our previous results, with only 2.5% reporting that their lifestyle would be better in their country of origin if they spent the same amount of money as they did in Mexico.

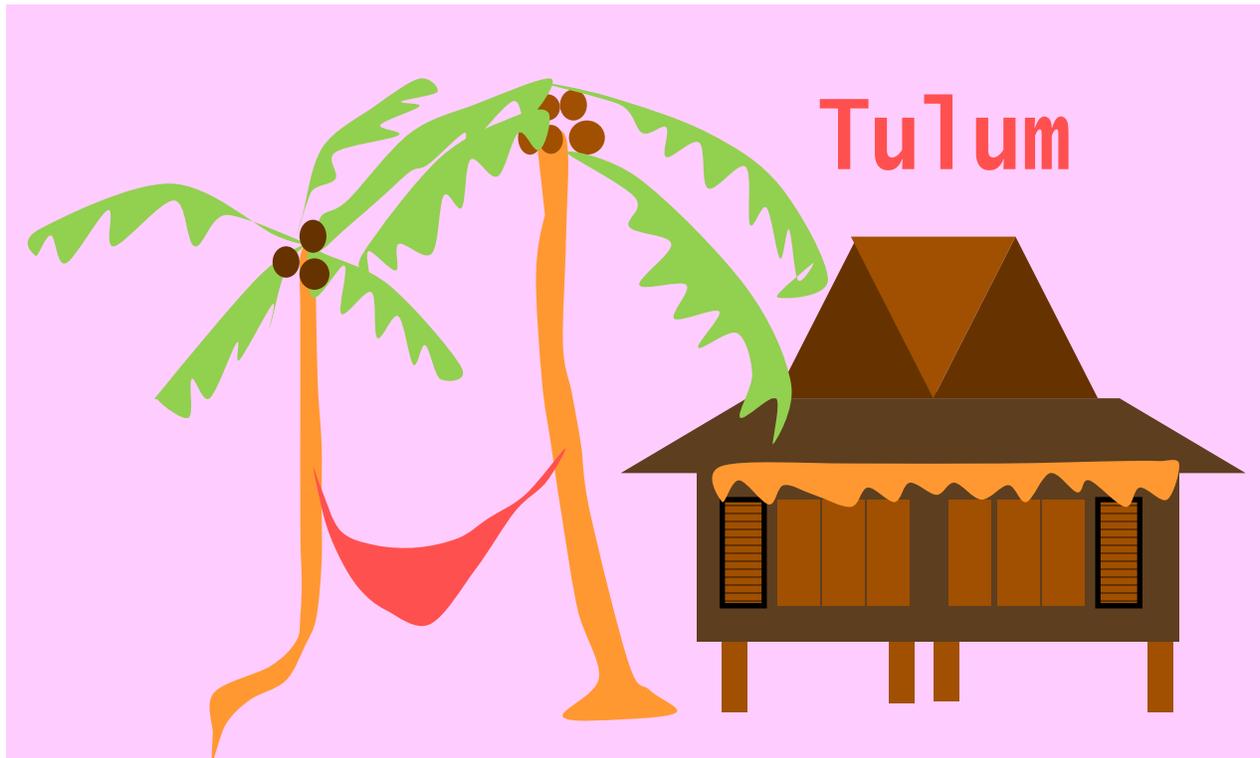


Men and women had very similar responses, as did different age groups, those with different marital status, employment status, country of origin and how long the expat had lived in Mexico. There was, however, some variation in responses due to where in Mexico the expats lived. Here are the results per area for expats who responded, “Much better in Mexico”:

- Greater Lake Chapala area: 93.5%
- Greater Mazatlán area: 90.5%
- Greater San Miguel de Allende area: 87.5%
- State of Yucatan, including Merida: 86.0%
- Baja California Norte: 83.9%
- Puerto Vallarta area: 82.8%
- State of Quintana Roo, including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum, etc.:
78.8%
- Baja California Sur: 63.1%
- Greater Mexico City area: 57.1%



We can only speculate as to the reasons that the answer to this question was not identical to the first question on cost of living is on account of the other quality of life components that go into lifestyle other than just money. We will cover those measures in the next studies.



Comments:

"If I spent the same amount in Mexico as I did in the US, I would be among the super-rich here. I already feel rich at my current spending level. I'd be scratching my head for things to buy if I spent more, but I don't want more. I prefer the freedom of non-ownership. Having more things would decrease my happiness." -- Michael Ogden, 45 – 64-year-old American living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.

"You can really have the champagne and caviar lifestyle here in Mexico on a tuna fish budget!" – 65+ year old married female from the US living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for less than 2 years.

"You can live like a millionaire on \$6,000 a month for a couple - eat out often, join a golf club, etc." -- Nancy Fitzmorris, married American living in Baja California Sur for 6 – 10 years.



“You can live in a house on the beach for what a one-bedroom apartment costs in the US. Which would YOU prefer?” -- Greg Hovey, 45 – 64 year old married American living in Mexico more than 10 years.

“We would be LIVING LARGE!” —45 – 64 year old married female from the US living in the Greater Puerto Vallarta area for 2 – 5 years.

“We could live a very lavish lifestyle if we spent as much as in the Southern California but we don't want to. Part of the motivation for our move was to simplify our lives and retire early to enjoy the time we have. I don't feel our lifestyle has been diminished at all and at a fraction of the cost.” – 45 – 64-year-old female from the US living in Baja California Sur for less than 2 years.



“There would be no reason to spend that much.” — 65+ year old single male from the US living in Baja California Norte for 2 – 5 years.

“No question your money goes farther here with plenty left over for fun things and travel!”—45 – 64 year old married female from the US living in the State of Yucatan for more than 10 years.

“No amount of money could buy the great weather we have here, which makes so many other things more enjoyable.” -- Heather Krause, American living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 2 – 5 years.

“The home I have here would be \$4 million on the beach in Sa Diego, easy.” --45 – 64 year old male from the US living in Baja California Sur for more than 10 years.

“My expenses in the US were \$10,000 a month. Here in Ajijic it's more like \$3,000, and I live very well. Want for nothing.” —65+ year old married male from the US living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 6 – 10 years.

“In the USA I would need to find subsidized housing or live with my children.” -- Jeannie Kezlan, female from the US living in Mexico more than 10 years.

“If I spent the same amount of money in Mexico as I had in the USA, I could have a mansion here. However, I prefer a more minimalist approach because then I have less things to worry about and more time to enjoy life.” —65+ year old married female from the US living in the State of Yucatan more than 10 years.

“Here you could host a catered dinner party serving only delicacies with entertainment by professional musicians from the symphonic orchestra in a mansion plus pool set in lovely landscaping while you'd be normal middle class back in the States.” —Jeff Smith, American living in the Greater Lake Chapala area for 2 – 5 years.





Answers to questions by expats:

[All of Mexico Cost of Living](#)

[Chapala and Ajijic Cost of Living](#)

[Los Cabos—La Paz Cost of Living](#)

[Puerto Vallarta Cost of Living](#)

[San Miguel de Allende Cost of Living](#)

[Yucatan: Riviera Maya, Playa del Carmen, Cancun, Merida, Akumal, Tulum, etc., Cost of Living](#)

Click [here](#) for the following free downloads at Best Places in the World to Retire:

Research study: Expats in Mexico—Expectations, Worries... and How it All Turned Out

eBook: Our Year on the Road & Living in Mexico— Adventures, Challenges, Triumphs, Lessons Learned

Download research studies on Panama, Belize and Nicaragua

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Articles and Stories on the Best Places' site:

[How Not Doing Chores Living Abroad Added 36 Additional Years of Free Time to Our Lives](#)

[How Living in Mexico Can Give You a Lifestyle Upgrade](#)

[Expatriate Stories about Mexico](#)

Selected Articles on other publications:

[4 Reasons Why It Can Be Much Cheaper to Live as an Expat](#)

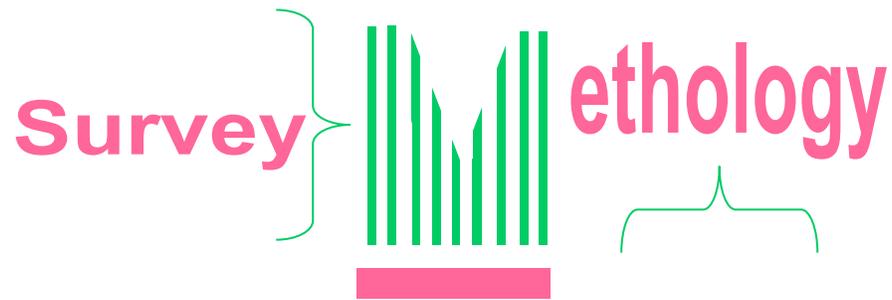
[An Experiment Shows That Living Abroad is Cheaper, More Fulfilling and Enjoyable](#)

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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.

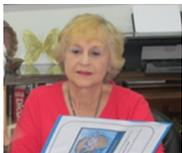
Our intention is to present the most accurate, objective picture possible of what it is like to live in Mexico. Of course, no survey or study can be perfect, for the same well-known reasons. Here is how we dealt with the more common issues:

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.

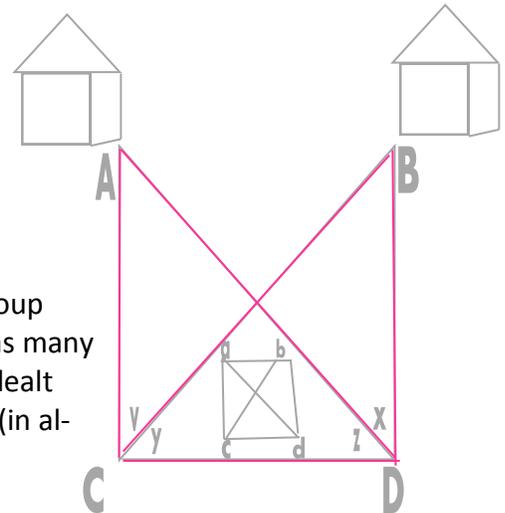
Sampling Bias:

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:

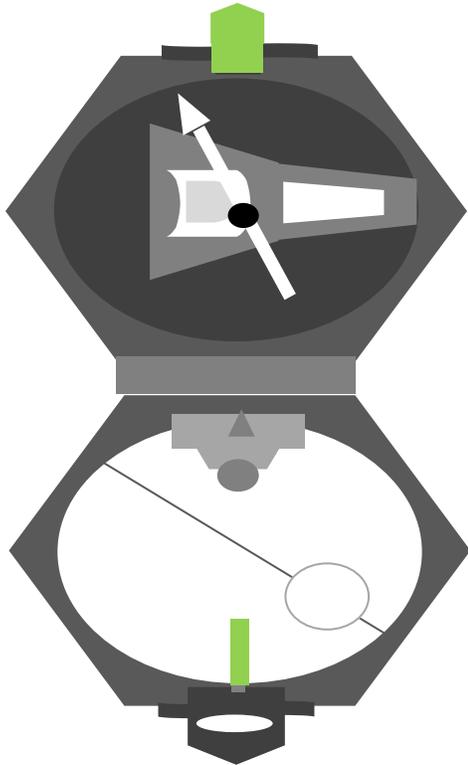
Acquiescence bias is introduced (and sometimes, especially in political "surveys," intentionally so) when



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 a 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 600 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.
- [Expat 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.

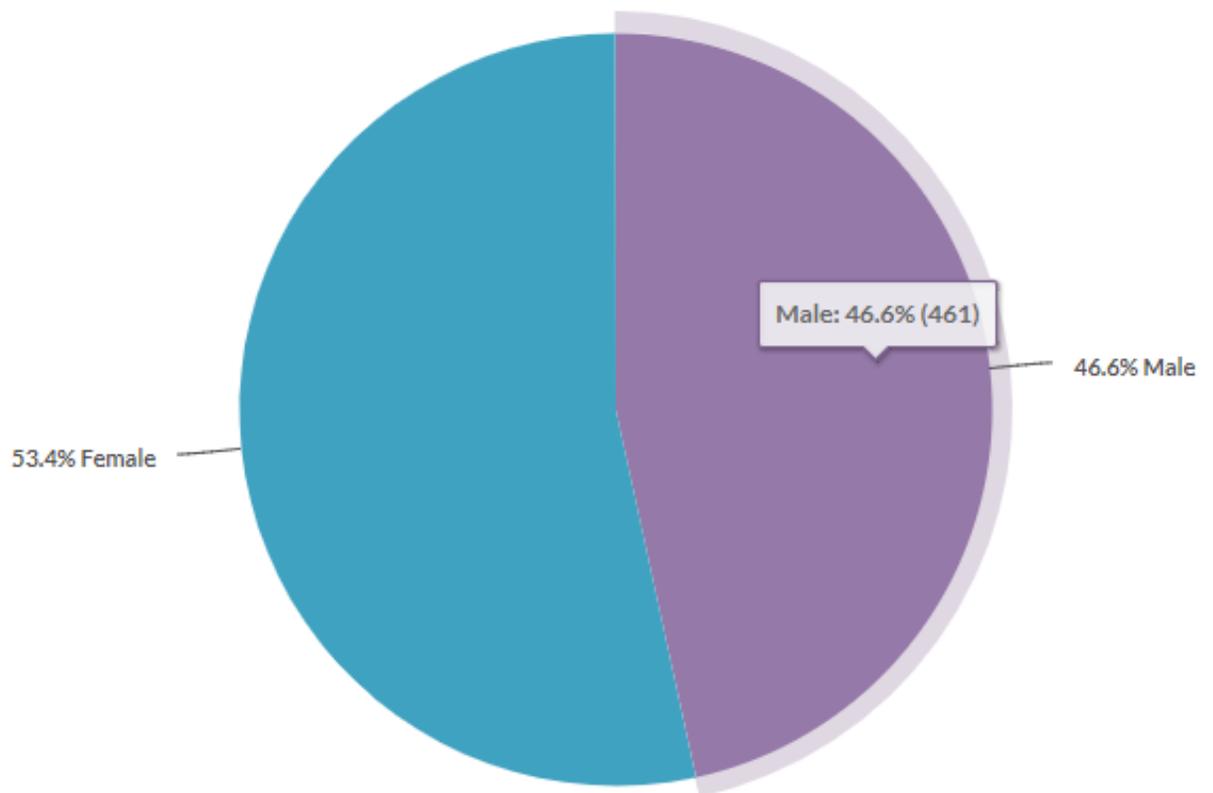
In May of 2016, Chuck Bolotin and Jet Metier became expats, crossing the border into Mexico in a big, white van, with their two dogs. Over the next year, they toured Mexico, from the border in California to the border with Belize, visiting most of the places in this study. You can download the eBook 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

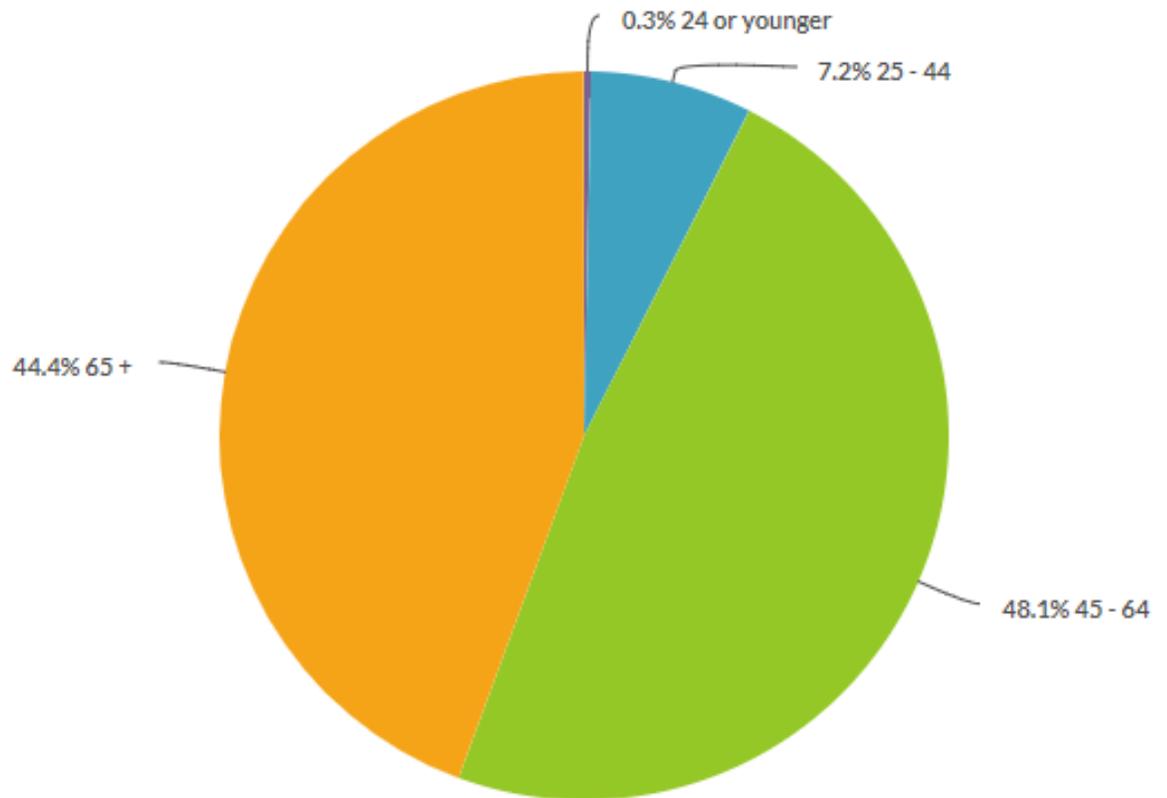
To download a copy of this study, go to <https://bestplacesintheworldtoretire.com/download-free-ebooks>

2. Are you male or female?



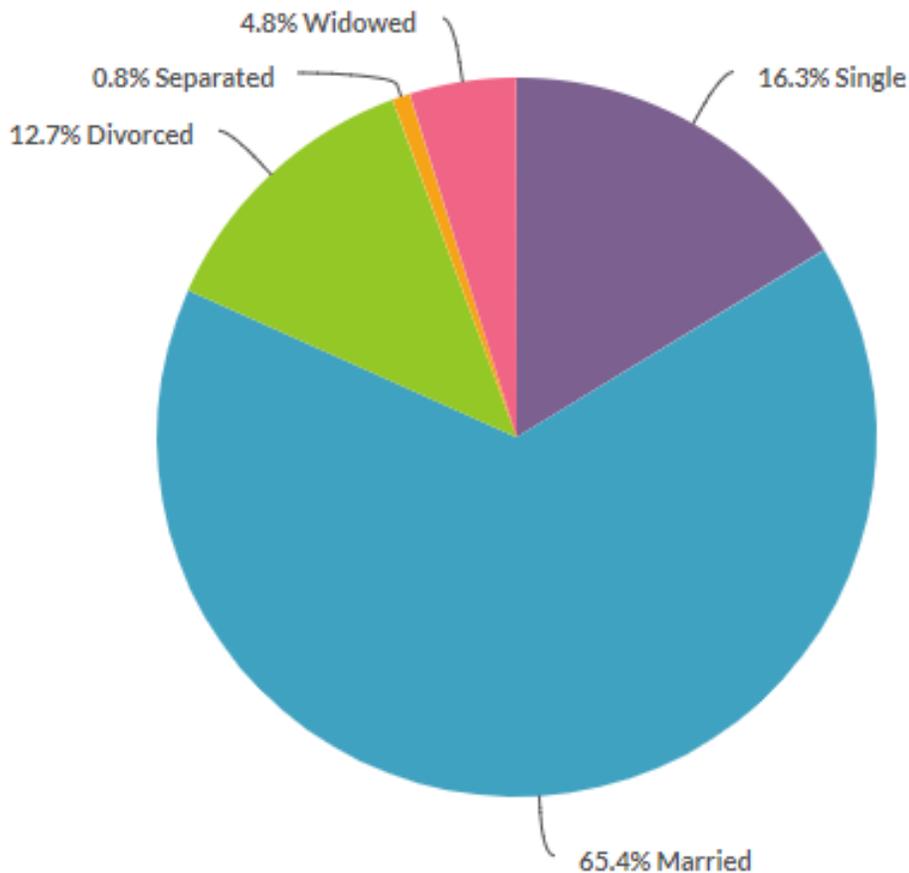
Value	Percent
Male	46.6%
Female	53.4%

3. Your age



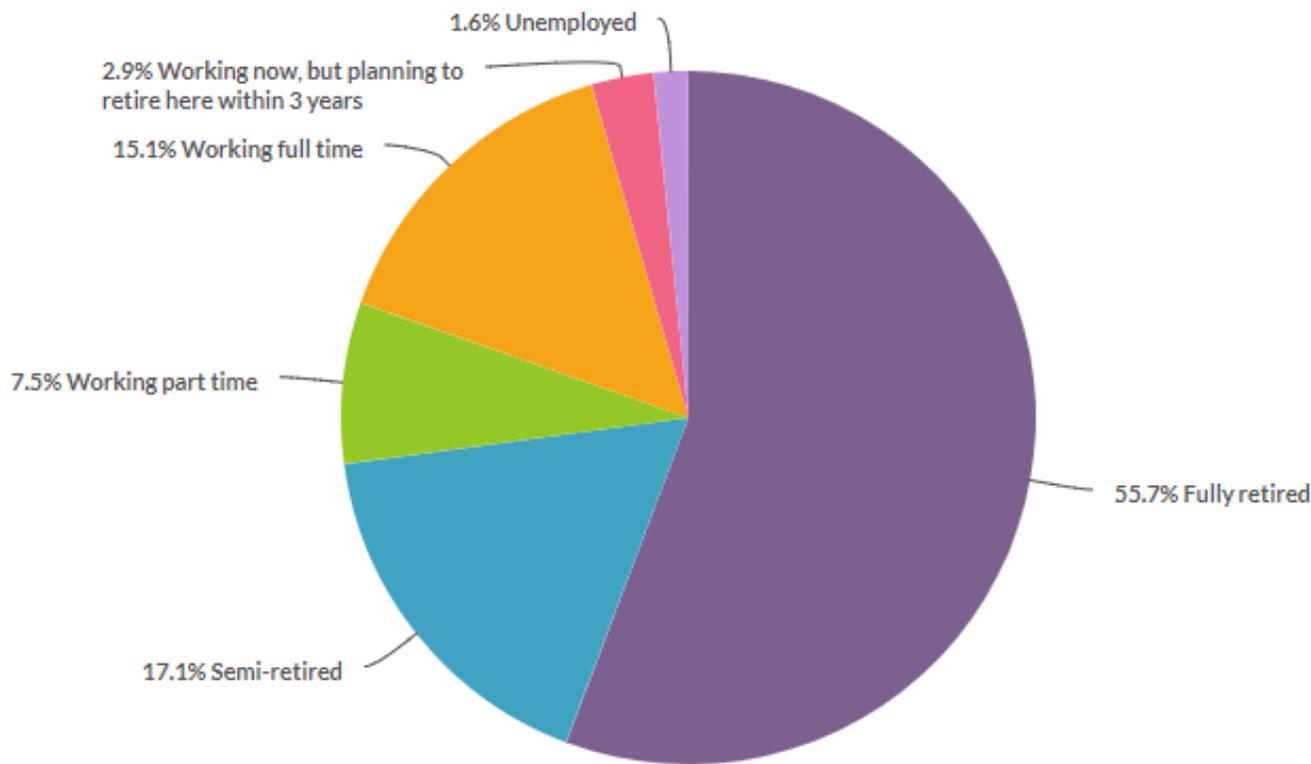
Value	Percent
24 or younger	0.3%
25 - 44	7.2%
45 - 64	48.1%
65 +	44.4%

4. Marital status



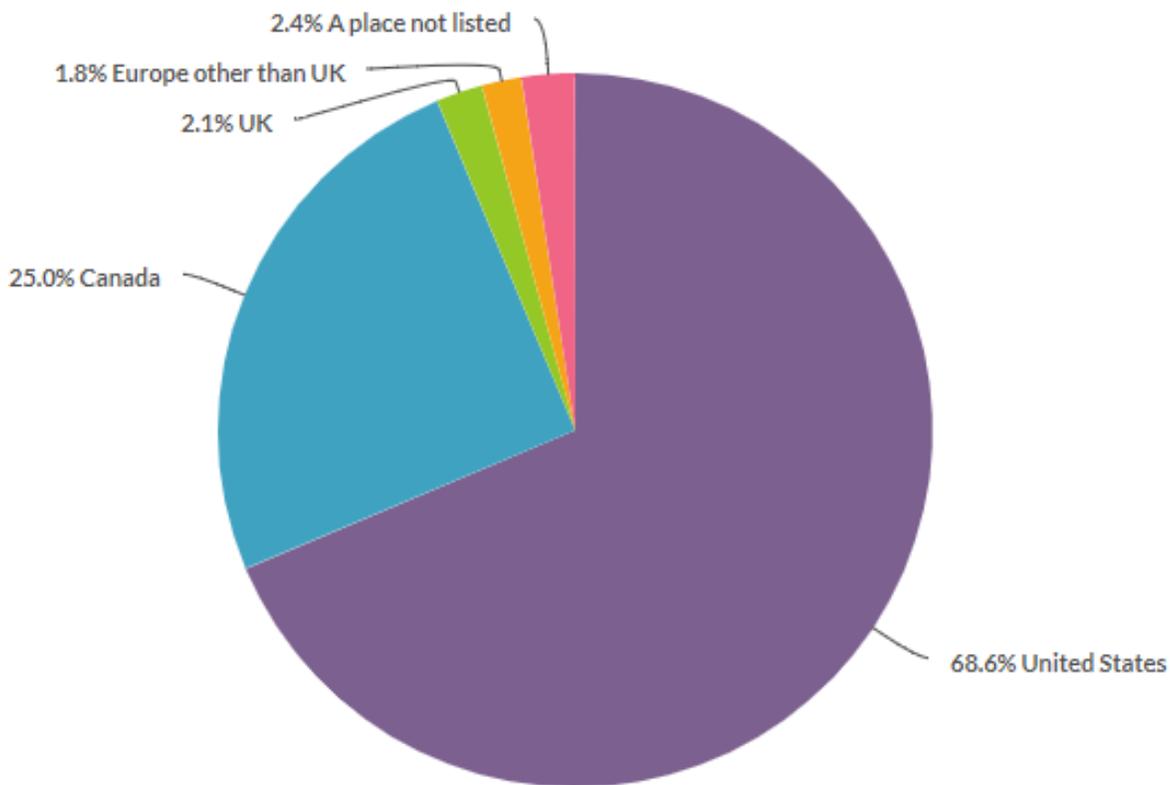
Value	Percent
Single	16.3%
Married	65.4%
Divorced	12.7%
Separated	0.8%
Widowed	4.8%

5. Work status



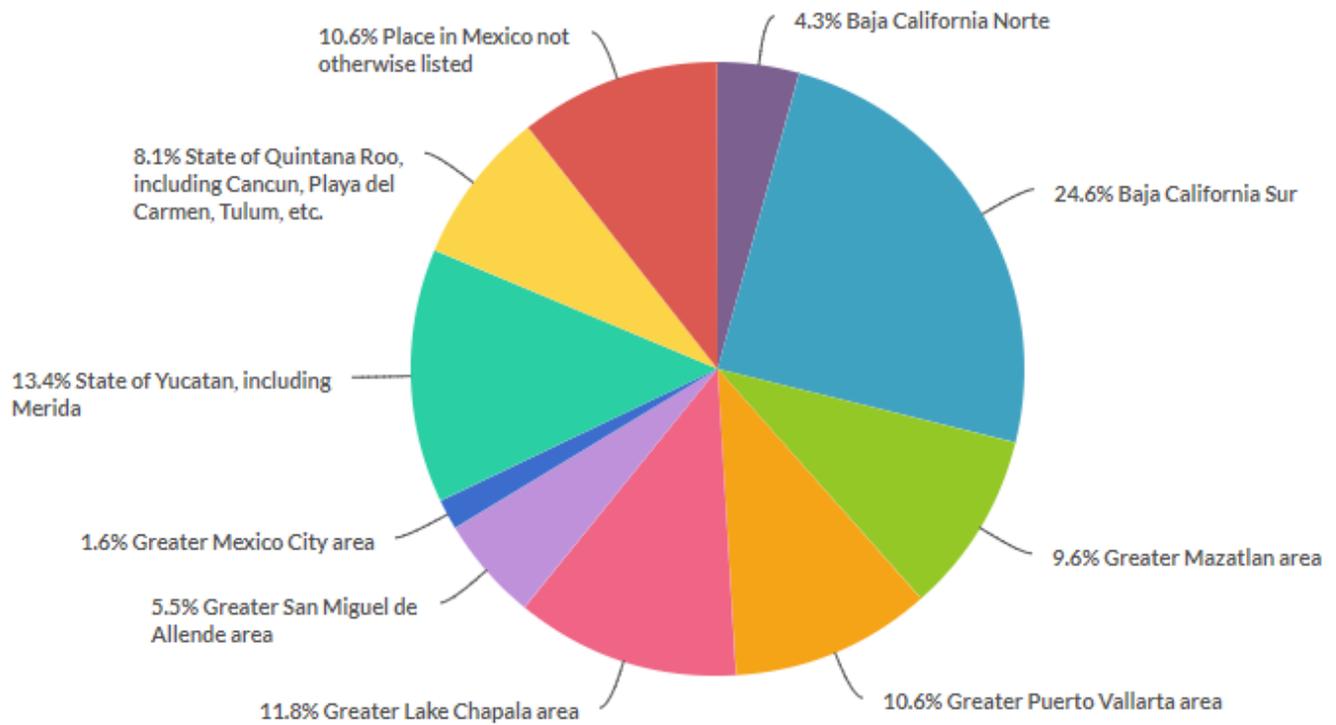
Value	Percent	R
Fully retired	55.7%	
Semi-retired	17.1%	
Working part time	7.5%	
Working full time	15.1%	
Working now, but planning to retire here within 3 years	2.9%	
Unemployed	1.6%	

6. What is your home country or area?

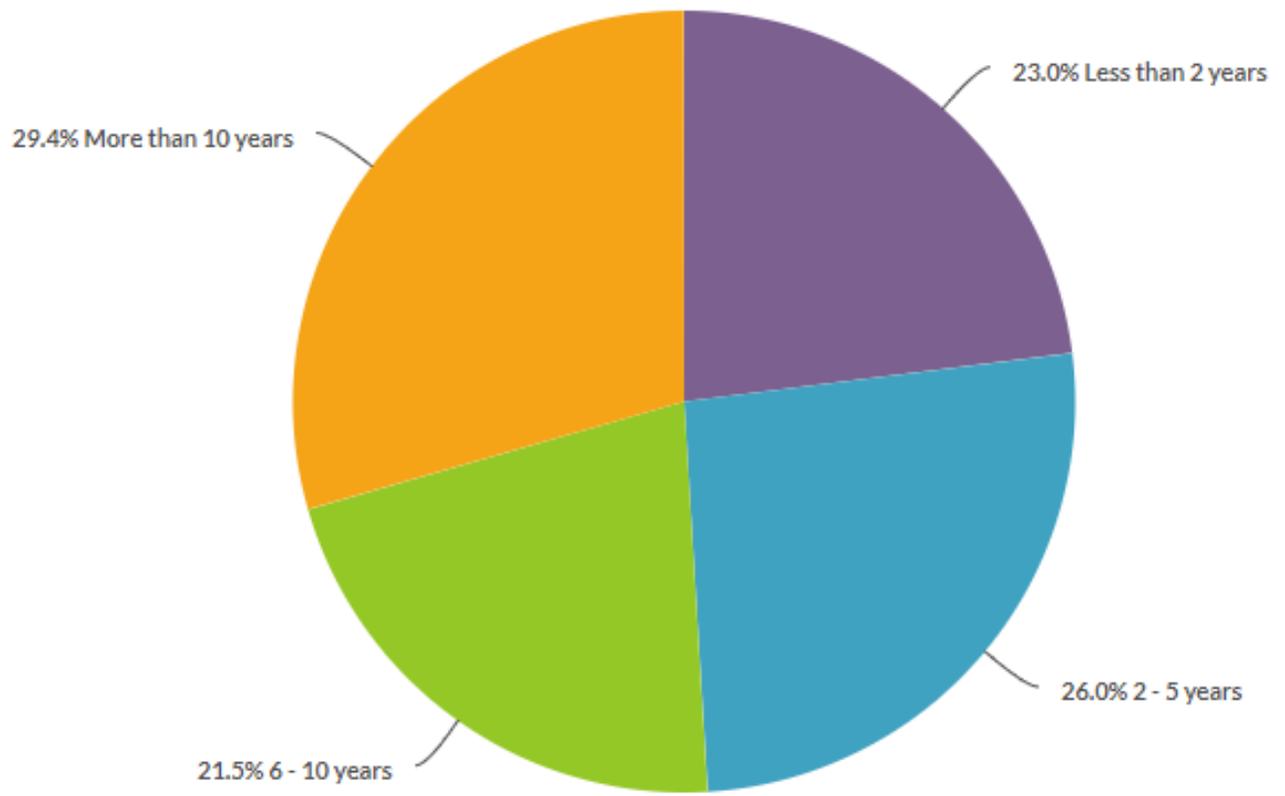


Value	Percent
United States	68.6%
Canada	25.0%
UK	2.1%
Europe other than UK	1.8%
A place not listed	2.4%

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%