
Retiring (Temporarily) to Paradise

By Kerry Pechter Wed, Oct 12, 2016

An old friend who retired early to a hacienda by the sea in Nicaragua sent me an e-mail recently, responding to my question about his life there. His answer wasn't exactly what I expected, but it made perfect sense.



If you're an advisor, perhaps a few of your clients have mentioned the possibility of retiring someplace warm, unhurried and inexpensive, like a beach town in Central American. Sounds like bliss, right? Well, yes and no.

Not long ago, through Facebook of course, I contacted a fellow I knew long ago and far away. His passion at the time was composing music, but I didn't know whether he pursued it or not. At one point, I had heard that he retired early to the tropics. For personal and professional reasons, I wanted to find out how it worked out.

Here's what he wrote back:

My wife and I retired in 2004 after years in the music business. We bought a house here in Nicaragua eleven years ago. By then my parents had passed away—we spent years taking care of them—and our kids were in college. So we sold our apartment in Manhattan, rented a smaller apartment there, and hit the road. We traveled all over the world for about four years, using our rental in Manhattan as a pit stop.

At one point, we were in Uruguay, in a fishing village called Punte del Diablo on the border with Brazil. We met an American there who had ridden his motorcycle from San Francisco down the west coast of South America to Patagonia and was heading back up the east coast. We asked him what his favorite place had been. He said, "Nicaragua."

A year or two later our daughter was working on a water project in Costa Rica, so we went down. We rented a house and hung out there with our three children for Christmas and New Year's. My wife and I felt Costa Rica was too developed. You have to remember we had lived in New York City since 1973. We'd both been in the music business. We had a house in the Hamptons. We were dealing with type A personalities. We felt surrounded and just wanted to get out.

On our travels, we found that we felt most at home in Third World countries. Costa Rica is First World. It reminded us of LA, which we hate, so we left and went north to Nicaragua. We found a house in the middle of 'National Geographic Nowhere' and bought it. We're very remote. The nearest town is ———, near the Costa Rica border. We are about fifteen miles south of it, via dirt road.