

A NEW LIFE

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Five years ago all I read made me anxious. Time was running out to buy my home in Ecuador. Land prices were skyrocketing in Costa Rica. Panama was following a similar path after the disposition of General Noriega, and the end of affordable housing in Ecuador was imminent. Internet information sounded like my dream of living here was rapidly becoming impossible.

Well that was a bunch of hype and false information about Ecuador.

There is still time for you to find your new life.

Matter of fact, this year is even better for you to visit this Nevada size country and select your new home. If you are considering moving to an exciting, less expensive country...it costs about one third of what I was paying to live in North Carolina. There are two gated communities under construction that may satisfy your needs. One is in the sierra mountain Village of Cotacachi, where the weather is springtime year round, and the other community is on Ecuador's Pacific coast, in the fishing village of San Clemente. Both communities have paved roads, community water, underground electricity, 24 hour Security Service, other U.S. expatriates, and the North American owner may offer financing! You choose which generous-size lot you want to build your condo, choose the floor plan, and soon, work will begin on your new home. Click on the window below for more information on these neighborhoods.

You can read the travel books about living in Ecuador, but let me give you an honest idea of a day in our life at the beach:

About 5:45 the first alarm goes off. It's one of the amorous Oven Birds alerting his mate. Then, fifteen minutes later the community rooster sounds the second alarm. Daylight comes at 6 a.m. After a shower, I and the neighbor boy's dog, Lassie, meet the local baker out in front of our cabana. The dog always tags along because she receives a couple of croissants to start off her day too. Fresh warm bread, pastry horns stuffed with fruit, and a selection of other irresistible buns compliment our breakfast of fresh fruit, juice, and rich Ecuadorian coffee.

My wife, Isabelita, and I load the bird feeders and sprinkle the ground around the feeders with the fruit rinds and seeds and in minutes a family of Mockingbirds, Baltimore Orioles, and our alarm clock Oven Birds are enjoying the food. A flock of green Ecuadorian Parrots visit an hour later when the sun is beginning to warm the day. You know when the Parrots are near. They swarm in, all calling cadence, but none of them seem to be listening to the other parrots, as they sit in the treetops of our garden area pulling at the fruit rinds.

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About 8:30 one of the local fishermen visits on his bicycle and from the shoulder of the road, blows his "Clarabelle" horn. His catch varies. One day he has shrimp, another day he may have sea bass, and still another he may have lobster, for sale at wholesale prices.

Midmorning, a small red pick up truck passes. A farmer announces on his megaphone that he is selling produce. Pungent onions, crisp carrots, tomatoes, green bananas, melons and a watermelon lay in the truck's bed.

There is a saying here along the coast. "A man can reach over to the right and pick a banana, or cast his line out on the left and catch fish without ever leaving his hammock." Well, that's a bit of a stretch of the truth, but life is at a more enjoyable pace than my fifteen hour work days in the States, and the people in Ecuador look well fed. They are not the skinny, undernourished like inhabitants from other countries that you see on television.

The afternoon provides time to enjoy the beach. Warm tropical Pacific currents keep the water clean and even in shoulder deep water you can still see your feet. After a swim we dry in the sun strolling the beach and gathering shells and pebbles. There is no one else in sight for a couple of miles in each direction. We share the golden strand only with an occasional ghost crab and hungry sand pipers.

Around 4 p.m. we hear the calliope on the ice cream truck. Lassie is barking to make sure I know the truck is approaching...and we run to the gate flagging-down the ice cream vender. I buy seven cones of different flavors. One for me, one for Isabelita, one for the ever-faithful dog, three for the neighbor children, and the last one for the gardener. \$1.75 to be a hero is not too great a financial burden.

Mosquitoes, yes, there are a few in some months along the coast, but our home has screens on the windows and doors and mosquitoes are no problem. As I look out at the streetlight this evening, there is not one insect flying around the light.

This evening we bicycle to one of the local restaurants. It's right on the beach, and we enjoy two plates of fresh sea bass, salad, rice, patacones (fried green bananas), and a liter of cold local beer for \$6.00. Remember? You can probably live here comfortably for considerably less than you are living in the States.

Some additional facts:

Ecuador is a petroleum-rich country. Gas prices are \$2.19 for Extra and \$1.48 for Super...and the service station attendant pumps it for you. The currency here is the U.S. dollar. Ecuador began using the dollar in 2000, so you won't have problems converting prices in your head.

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Morning temperatures start off the day around 70 degrees and warms to about 85. We try to get in our jog on the beach while the sun is still young.

A final thought. Move here and instantly loose 5 pounds! The earth is egg-shaped, and it is at its longest circumference along the equator. The gravitational pull is at its weakest, therefore, if you are near the equator you weigh less.

What are you waiting for? Click the information window and come enjoy a “sun shower” in this enchanting country.

Until next time.