

6 Things to Consider Before Investing in International Real Estate

By [David Leighton](#)



Owning property overseas is a pipe dream for many, but it might be more attainable than you believe. Thanks to advancements with technology and globalization, the other side of the world does not seem as far away as it used to. Nowadays it is much easier to learn about and even travel to many foreign lands. It is becoming simpler than ever to take the plunge into purchasing property abroad.

Even so, investing in international real estate is a serious undertaking, but can prove well worth it if done properly. It is hard to imagine that any one article could prepare a person for such a grand undertaking. But this aims to serve as a guide, and provide a scope of things to consider before making the dream a reality.

Choosing a Location

For some, this is the easiest part of the process, where others stress about the decision for years. Having a very literal world of potential options may seem overwhelming, but there are ways that you can narrow down the prospects. Many buyers choose an area based on familial relationships or a sentimental attachment to a particular region. Perhaps you have studied a foreign language and want to put those skills to the test in a fully immersive manner.

Choosing international property can be an easier process if you have some familiarity with the inner workings of the country beforehand, but it is not required. At the end of the day, it is important that you are pleased with the decision you make. Whether you see the purchase as strictly an investment or the fulfillment of a long time dream, make sure that you see it as an asset in either category. Financial profit can be unpredictable, but owning property in an area you love is guaranteed if you choose wisely.

Research, Research, and More Research

Now that you are looking into a specific area, it is time to do your homework. Becoming as well acquainted with the region as possible will not only prepare you for owning property, but also ensure that you are choosing the right area. Talk to locals and other non-national homeowners. Research crime rates and local amenities you would not want to be without. Familiarize yourself with mediums of communication, transportation, and even weather patterns. Anything you would want to know before moving to a new area, you should look into now. The more you find out now, the less likely you will be caught off guard later on.

One of the most beneficial ways to learn more about an unfamiliar region is to visit for several weeks. Spending more time than your average vacation will allow you to truly experience the area and get well acquainted with what life is like there. Be sure that when you visit you try to see things more like a local and less like a tourist. This will help give you more realistic expectations down the line.

Also, do not be afraid to decide an area is not right for you. With the substantial investment (both of time and money) that international real estate can be, it is important to make sure you are not settling. It is perfectly acceptable to be picky now to save you from regret in the future.

Becoming Familiar with Legal Requirements

Falling in love with a location is only part of the battle. Now you have to familiarize yourself with the legal side of the process. First and foremost, you must establish that it is even possible for internationals to own property in the country of your choosing. Researching any possible regulations, restrictions, and ordinances may seem tedious, but it is absolutely necessary before you get too far along.

Different countries will have varied requirements; some that seem simple compared to the U.S, and others not so much. Never hesitate to seek out help and guidance. Consulting with a local real estate agent and personal attorney can help prepare you for the purchase and ensure that you have not missed anything along the way.

Budgeting and Planning's

Creating a financial plan and timeline is imperative in ensuring a smooth process. Besides the upfront cost of property, be prepared for all sorts of extra costs. There are legal fees, foreign

property taxes, translation fees, insurance, and so on. And that is not even taking into account any early maintenance or home improvement costs you may accrue.

Talking to your trusted financial advisor can help prepare you for most of your anticipated costs. They can also help establish a timeline and benchmarks so you know what to expect during the process. You may find that other countries have quite the disparities when it comes to the length of time things need to process. Being well informed about the reality of the situation, and flexible on that matter will truly be to your benefit throughout the proceedings.

Preparing For the Unexpected

Once you have established a plan, you can prepare to watch things not go accordingly. In any large investment, unforeseen circumstances can come up. And if you are on the other side of the world from your purchase, it can really exacerbate that fact. As impossible as it may seem to expect the unexpected, that is exactly what you must do.

Processes may take longer than expected. Extra legal fees and costs may present themselves. Economic or political instability in the country may cause other delays. During this time, it is important to remain calm and try not to become overly stressed. Remember that the more research you do and the better prepared you are ahead of time, the less likely that unanticipated issues will arise. Even so, it is best to be ready to roll with the punches.

Reach Out to Your Team of Financial Experts

While it is possible to purchase international real estate on your own, it is best to consult with your team of financial advisors – tax experts, planners, brokers, retirement planners, real estate agents and lawyers. They can help you run the numbers and determine whether or not the investment makes sense for your personal situation and goals. In an ideal world these individuals are also experienced with expat purchases in the country of your choice, however, if they are not it is likely they can easily connect with professionals local to the home or land you want buy.

Although it can seem a bit daunting, owning foreign property is a highly attainable goal. By doing your research, maintaining selectivity, and managing your expectations, you too can join those that are living the dream by owning international real estate.

If you need a referral to a great International real estate advisor, let me know. ---