

Scary buying in a foreign country

Written by T. Rob Brown (aka Roberto Chocolate)

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My friends are about to close their house deal in Panama, and shared with me that it is very scary buying in a foreign country.

It is always scary when your dreams come true - BUT - as my former business partner Brian always said "It is never as bad as you worry it will be, and never as good as you hope"

Panama is a great country, but there are thorns in paradise; did the guide books tell you about; Vampire Bats? Scorpions? Crocodiles? Vipers? Boa Constrictors? Poisonous frogs? Spiders? Fire Ants? Leaf eating ants? Termites? Poisonous centipedes? Mosquitos (not anywhere near as bad as Ontario, Canada).

Since 2007, the only thing my wife and I have encountered were sand fleas, mosquitos and sunburns (and the occasional "sun stroke" brought on by over-consumption of wine). Oh, and ants. I have an on-going battle with ants, termites and all kinds of "hormegas". See my article: [Paradise Worth Fighting For](#).

The most dangerous animal of all in Panama is the "expatasaurus" - the broke expat. This animal is to be avoided at all costs.

In truth, the most dangerous thing in Panama is your own false expectations - thinking things will be as you expect them to be IE: That the judges dispense justice (and not ruling according to who pays the most), that the lawyer you hired is actually looking out for you, and that the Canadian you just met won't cheat a fellow Canadian. **Don't assume anything will be like it was back home**

Ask questions, and check your assumptions at the door.

In fairness, in addition to the scary stuff, I should also mention there are more different species of birds in Panama than all of Canada and the United States combined. They have monkeys -

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all kinds of monkeys, parrots, over 1,500 different kinds orchids (there is even an orchid museum/gardens in El Valle), and seven indigenous tribes that own and control their own lands - you can go and stay overnight with them, where they live as they did 600 years ago. (See the article on the Kuna Indians on the Front Page)

There are mountains, jungles, and two oceans only 50 miles apart. You can swim in the Caribbean and in the Pacific on the same day - it is only an hour away.

They have a dessert, rainforests, cloud forests, a volcano (extinct), and a 1.3 million cosmopolitan city that looks more like Miami than a third world country. Panama City has great restaurants, shopping, dancing and night-life. Hardly third-world.

There are quaint fishing villages and charming farming communities (Panama has won more awards for coffee in the last three years than any other country in the world), and world-class deep sea fishing (more records have been set here than anywhere else in the world) and the people are genuinely nice - they don't hurry or work too hard, and their family is more important to them than your dollar.

It is one of the easiest countries to immigrate to, and to start a business in. It has the best retiree benefits of any country that I have researched - and I have researched many of them, including all of North and Central America.

That said, Panama is not perfect, but it is pretty good. Come and see for yourself. Roberto