

Why Some Plan To Escape To Another Country

I learned in business that it pays to have an exit strategy with well-defined triggers to set your plans into motion.

This is a correct principle of survival that applies universally: always have an escape plan. For some, that means having an option to start over in another part of the world that may be insulated from volatility in their home nation. I have interviewed people who have fled their home countries and have researched many such cases and you definitely don't have to work for the NSA to have to walk out your door and never come back.

Reasons Preppers Choose to Go the ExPat Route

Many become ExPats to travel, to learn a new language through immersion, to pursue a love interest, or to see the world. Some preppers count those amongst the reasons that they make the move ... I went to Brazil for Mrs. Cache but leaving the country can also be a matter of survival.

It's People and Freedom that Matter, Not Possessions

If you are married with 2.5 kids, grandma, a mortgage, and a golden retriever, it may take a real paradigm shift to motivate you do pack up move to another country. I have talked to many American preppers who say it's totally out of the question because the USA is the Promised Land and they are determined to prevail here and nowhere else. I understand. I have seen many countries but can't say I'd rather live somewhere other than the USA. But I also cannot deny that

sticking to a preconceived plan or notion, no matter the consequences can drastically lower your chances of survival.

What I really care about are people. I could leave behind everything that I have accumulated over decades of hard work and I might miss some of those things, but I would get over it. But it is not the same when it comes to loved ones or my freedom. If circumstances were such that I felt my loved one or my freedom were in immediate peril, that would be reason enough for me to leave the USA.

History is flush with examples of human migration to escape volatility. Many Jews had or made escape plans and executed them to flee Axis-controlled nations when the Nazis rose to power. Today, there are many refugees who have fled their home countries. I have met people who fled Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Venezuela, and El Salvador right here in Cache Valley, which is a small community of a little over a hundred thousand souls and was not very ethnically diverse until the past decade or so.

Volatility sufficient to cause someone to flee doesn't always come in the form of genocide or war. It can be localized and personal. Anyone could be forced to flee the state or even the country. It happens all the time. Witnesses to crimes, victims of stalking or domestic abuse, and people employed in law enforcement, corrections, healthcare, the judicial system, politics, the military, or the media must sometimes relocate to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.

People also flee their home nations to escape prosecution which can be wrongful or even frivolous. Americans have been wrongly put on terrorist watch lists or even subjected to extraordinary renditions. If they have the means, such persons often stay in other nations. The long arm of the law may still reach most of them, but some countries will not extradite certain classes of people charged with crimes. US penalties for certain crimes are viewed as excess or even as torture

under their legal systems. These are known as non-extradition countries.

Non-Extradition

Everybody has heard of famous cases such as Edward Snowden, Roman Polanski, and Julian Assange and their attempts to preserve some of their freedom using these methods.

I would give you a list of countries, but it would really be all that helpful unless prefaced. Depending on the crime and the political climate du jour, they may or may not extradite. It's better to research this based on past precedent. Brazil, for example, often won't extradite their own citizens to the US for serious crimes. Also, countries without an extradition treaty may still extradite as has happened with Yemen and Spain. Conversely, while the US has treaties with Cuba, Iceland, Bolivia, Ecuador, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Switzerland, and Venezuela are all known to refuse extradition to the USA.

About half of everyone extradited are drug traffickers. Most of the rest are extradited for homicide, fraud, or pornography. I'd tell you not to get charged with any of these crimes, but sometimes people are prosecuted wrongfully.

Dual Citizenship



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The author's EDC in Brazil.

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Dual citizenship is usually gained through the process of naturalization. For example, because Mrs. Cache is a Brazilian Citizen, I can then apply for citizenship in Brazil. Citizens of other countries who apply for US Citizenship are required to renounce their former nationality during the naturalization ceremony, but the State Department has stopped pursuing cases of individuals found to have maintained residency in their countries of origin.

Many countries essentially allow people to buy dual citizenship by making economic investments in their countries. At least 30 countries grant dual citizenship in exchange for a minimum real estate investment. So, if naturalization takes too long or you're happily married, you can buy your way in if you have enough money. The cheapest I've seen is Fiji at \$125K and the most expensive is Cyprus at a cool \$2.4M, so naturalization is much cheaper.

Financial Motivations



The author enjoying a coconut on the beach in Rio de Janeiro.

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Expats
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Property taxes can be unbelievably low compared to the US and some nations don't tax on income earned in other countries. In many cases, freelance work for clients outside the country and online businesses are not taxed. They may also allow you to bring in a car every 5 years or so duty-free. Some countries don't have tax breaks but have lower tax burdens and give expatriots "pensioner status" which entitles them to discounts on everything from healthcare to utilities.

Don't Put All Your Eggs in One Basket

This is one of the fundamental correct principles of preparedness and being able to leave the USA and live in another country is a great way to accomplish this. You don't have to pick up and move permanently right now. We were able to find a tiny apartment in Brazil for about the cost of a storage unit here in the USA. This gives us a place to stay when we visit and a place to store things. Think like you are trying to create a lifeboat in case you have to walk out your door and never come back and that gives a good idea of what you'll want to store.

Safe deposit boxes and PO Boxes can also be incredibly cheap in developing nations and that can help you insulate your residence from your mailing address to make sure nobody shows up at your hidey-hole uninvited.

You Can't Predict the Future

If history is any guide, all societies and nations eventually experience volatility and come to an end. And when they fracture, it can be along economic, religious, political, or ethnic lines. And when they do, cities and entire regions get split in two as people group up with others of the same politics, economics, religion, or ethnicity, just like they do

to survive in the federal prison system.

The problem is that we seldom know far enough in advance because humankind has a lousy track record of predicting the future. If you open a history book, most read like lists of Black Swan events, events that we couldn't predict, which harmed us.

So, how do you prepare if you can't predict the future? In *Antifragile, Thing that Gains from Disorder*, Nassim Nicholas Taleb makes the brilliant point that although we can't reliably predict the future, we can recognize fragility and we can replace it something robust, or even something antifragile. What is antifragile? It is that which benefits from some way from volatility. We can store money, food, weapons, and medicine in case of a rainy day. We can also create a life raft in another nation so when our society is on the brink, we can remove ourselves to someplace less volatile for a time.

Learn to Let Go

If not taken to the extreme, minimalism can be a very appealing alternative to how cluttered, complicated, urbanized, and over-stimulating the world has become. Letting go is cleansing and melts away stress.

Technology has made it possible for people to support themselves while vagabonding. My job is an example. I can create online content from anywhere. All I need is a computer, an internet connection and a way to get paid and I can write at the lake, in the mountains, or on the beach.

You may have seen blogs by people who travel the world with only a carryon and publish content detailing their travels for income. It is possible to constantly roam without a fixed address like Jack Reacher even without a military pension. Mail and packages can still be received through a mail-

forwarding service, by shipping to a temporary address or by shipping in the care of a trusted designee.

Privacy

If you travel regularly to a foreign country, get a PO Box and pay someone to check it or set up a ghost address. JJ Luna taught me that this can be used as an address for a privacy LLC.

Here's how it works, let's say you want to be able to drive without fear that a violent ex will see you and write down your license plate, have a buddy at the DMV look it up and then come pay you a visit intending to finish what he started. Setup a Wyoming or New Mexico LLC in the name of a registered agent, giving him the foreign address and use it to pay cash for your vehicle. Then register to the vehicle to the LLC. Then if Bluto's buddy looks up your plate, all he finds is "ABC, LLC." Even if someone serves the registered agent a subpoena, all that will get them is an overseas ghost address.

An overseas address will stop most searches cold. International investigations are expensive and making it expensive and time-consuming to find you is all you can do. Even the federal government doesn't have unlimited resources. They may be able to lean on US companies but getting information from companies in certain foreign companies can be anywhere from more time-consuming to next to impossible.

The best things you can do for your privacy is to separate your mailing & shipping address and your vehicle from your residence address. This keeps bad guys from showing up where you live, but if your residence address becomes compromised, having another place at home or abroad gives you the options of walking out the door and not coming back.



View of Paraiba, Brazil from the balcony of an apartment rented by the author.

What About Firearms?

There are countries aside from the USA that allows their citizens, and sometimes even tourists, to purchase and own firearms! Nicaragua is one and as of 2019, Brazil is another. The Czech Republic, Switzerland, Paraguay, and Estonia are all countries that allow firearms ownership. You may need a permit or a license, but in Paraguay, even a tourist can legally purchase firearms. I was impressed with the state of gun ownership in Switzerland. Many citizens are required to attend firearms training and own firearms. Nearly every home had an H&K G3 and Switzerland also had record-low crime rates.