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A little piece of paradise



Rachel Newcombe tours the world's best beaches to bring you our guide to buying the perfect exotic hideaway.

If you're fed up with the British weather and fancy escaping to your own property on a warm beach, then look no further. Here's a guide to five of the top worldwide exotic beach locations for properties.

Thailand

Thailand is an ever-popular destination for tourists and boasts some stunning beaches, so it's no wonder it's a favourite with property buyers. "Natai beach is quickly becoming known as 'greater Phuket', with a locale just 25km from the Phuket International Airport. It's perfect for tropical nature lovers wanting to live among national parks, waterfalls, sparsely populated islands and hundreds of kilometres of untouched, pristine beaches, but who still want to be a short taxi ride from Phuket's world class restaurants, shopping centres and golf greens," enthuses Tom Travers, a real estate agent in Thailand. A new ocean view, two bedroom apartment at Natai, with two en suite bathrooms, a private swimming pool, balcony and garden is on the market for £242,000. It's only 30m from the beach and has gorgeous views across the bay.

Indigo Real Estate

Email: sales@indigore.com www.indigore.com

The Village Coconut Island is a new development on the north shore of Koh

Maphrao, 500m off Phuket's east coast, overlooks the gorgeous Phang Nag Bay. There are two, three and five bedroom villas being built, many with direct beach access, and all with their own private pool. Owners also get rights to a boat berth on the pier. Offplan prices for a two bedroom villa start at £250,000.

The Village Coconut Island

Tel: +66 (0) 76 239 724 www.thevillage-coconutisland.com

Mauritius

Until recently, it's not been possible for foreigners to buy in Mauritius, but that's now changed. The 780 square mile island is now opening up to buyers from abroad and most properties are being marketed as a luxury investment. A government law states that all properties sold to foreigners must have a minimum price of \$500,000, so they attract wealthy buyers. But the dollar purchase price is a bonus at the moment for UK buyers and the gorgeous location

Not surprisingly, purchase prices aren't cheap, but they are mostly priced in dollars, which is a bonus at the moment for UK buyers. It's also worth keeping in mind that there's no capital gains tax and no inheritance tax here, and income tax is only 15%. "The combination of an emerging property market for foreigners with an established tourist base must be a winner," says Sarah May-Brown from Knight Frank.

The Anahita residential resort is being developed by Ciel Investment on an old sugar plantation on the east coast of Mauritius. It will consist of about 300 homes altogether and the first few releases sold out quickly. The third phase, Luneau, consists of 28 freehold exclusive waterfront villas, which were recently released. Located 30 minutes from the airport, it's a high-class development with lots of extra amenities on hand, such as an 18-hole championship golf course, spa and restaurant. Prices for luxury villas start at £762,000.

Erna Low Property

Tel: 020 7590 1624 www.ernalowproperty.co.uk

Mexico

The beaches in Mexico lie on the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea and it's a

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popular destination for tourists. Mexico has one of the most thriving economies in the world – a GDP of US\$8,500 per capita - and Goldman Sachs are predicting that it will become the fifth largest economy by 2040.

Tourism is a vital element if you're going to let a property out and indications are that Mexico is proving popular. According to Obelisk International, over 11 million international tourists visited Mexico in the first half of 2007, which was an increase in 9% on the previous year.

The five star golf and beach resort at Yucatan Greens is a new off-plan development situated on the Yucatan Peninsular, near Cancun. The resort incorporates ecotourism standards, a 27-hole golf course and all the usual on-site facilities. Land plots are currently available for sale, for you to build a villa on or to sell on for a profit. Plots of 600m² cost \$60,000 (USD).

Property Showrooms

Tel: 0800 047 0597 www.propertyshowrooms.com

Also available in Mexico are properties at the Campeche Playa Golf Marina and Spa Resort in Campeche. The resort is set to be a world-class fishing area, with a marina and yacht club, as well as having an 18-hole Jack Nicklaus golf course. The beach is renowned for its fine white sand and the whole area has a good climate all year round. Two bedroom apartments overlooking the golf course start at £150,000 and overlooking the marina they begin at £180,000.

Bridge Property International

Tel: 01293 763 028 www.bridgepropertyinternational.com

Caribbean

When you think of exotic beaches, the chances are the Caribbean will immediately come to mind. Although buying here may have seemed like a far off dream, thanks to the Barbadian dollar being tied to the US dollar, it's recently become a much more affordable option. "There are great buying opportunities for British investors on all the islands that have pegged their currency against the dollar, including Barbados," explained Mark O'Sullivan, head of trading at Currencies Direct. "You can expect good growth of around 8-10% a year and rental appeal to both a European and US client base."

In Barbados, the Merricks Resort Spa and Residence is on a cliff top overlooking a half-moon bay on the island. Set within the five star Merricks Beach Resort, the property owners or guests can have full use of the resort facilities, including the spa, swimming pools, tennis courts, restaurants, bars and shops. Prices start at £225,000 for a studio apartment and villas cost from £325,000.

Gem Estates

Tel: 0800 731 8494 www.gem-estates.com

Elsewhere, a new exclusive beachfront development – and the first one on the island – has recently been launched on the small island of Bequia in the Grenadines. Measuring only seven miles square, and with a population of 6000, Bequia is the perfect exotic island escape. It's 11 miles away from Mustique and is accessed via a 25 minute flight from Barbados.

The Adams Bay Resort consists of 63 two, three and four bedroom villas arranged on a gently sloping estate, including 28 beachfront villas. Plot sizes range from 4,500 to 5,000 square feet, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre for some properties. They're finished to luxury standards, with decked areas and private pools. The development will also have a luxury beach club, concierge service, rental management, restaurant, spa and more. Prices start at \$734,500 ranging up to \$1,325,000; it's due to be completed in four years.

Prestigious Properties

Tel: 0208 8124734 www.adamsbay.org

Brazil

Brazil has no end of luscious beaches, and predictions suggest it could be a great place to buy. Travel company Opodo predicted that Brazil will be one of the top emerging destinations for travellers this year.

Ian Clarke, director of Our Home Abroad, says, "Brazil is starting to dominate the overseas property market as investors realise it's perhaps one of the best kept investment secrets around. It already represents 42% of the GDP of Latin America and this figure is expected to grow significantly as we move into a new era. Property prices are still low, but growing quickly."

Rio Grande do Norte in north-east Brazil is an established tourism base and one of the safest regions in the country. The Pipa Paradise development is within easy reach of the international airport and capital, Natal, and features two private gated communities of villas and apartments. The area is known as the, 'Brazilian Bali,' and is a very sought after property location. A two bedroom apartment starts at only £55,126 and a three bedroom villa at £120,525.

Experience Brazil

Tel: 0800 612 0901 www.experience-brazil.co.uk

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