

The best places to live in retirement

Taking your leave from the 9 to 5? From Torquay to Aberdeenshire, Tim Palmer picks Britain's best places to find your perfect retirement home



Retirement ain't what it used to be. Far from shuffling off to a seaside bungalow to see out their days in a fug of Countdown, cardigans and central heating, baby boomers are busy learning Italian, trekking to Machu Picchu or attending hot yoga classes. Now that we're living longer — and with any luck remaining healthier — we can hope for more from the post-career years. These days, we believe retirement is about having a good time. But where should you start?

Every retiree — and we recognise that there are many ages and stages of retirement — has different priorities, and we've reflected that in our Best Places to Retire list. For many, staying close to friends and family, particularly growing grandchildren, is more important than starting a new life in a far-flung corner of the countryside. Others may be looking to immerse themselves in culture, recultivate old hobbies and try new ones.

BEST PLACES TO RETIRE

- 1 Anglesey
- 2 Ascot, Berkshire
- 3 Bristol Harbourside
- 4 Chester, Cheshire
- 5 Chichester, West Sussex
- 6 Clapham, London SW4
- 7 Poole, Dorset
- 8 Royal Deeside, Aberdeenshire
- 9 Shrewsbury, Shropshire
- 10 Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire
- 11 Torbay, Devon
- 12 Truro, Cornwall



If the list appears weighted towards the south and southwest, that's purely because of the weather. And while the number of mature people in an area can be a plus point, we have steered clear of locations with a high proportion of very elderly residents, due to the inevitable pressure that puts on local services, and because these aren't the places where a busy, active 60-year-old is likely to find a community of like-minded neighbours.

We've also looked for locations that offer a good selection of appropriate accommodation, not just purpose-built blocks and designated culs-de-sac for the over-55s, but also aspirational flats and townhouses you will want to live in for as long as you can.

The places Home has picked all combine an attractive lifestyle with good transport connections, a strong sense of community and all the services and infrastructure you may need as you head deeper into retirement.

“For many of us, the ingredients of a good later life are the same: to have financial security, good health, good relationships and a sense of purpose,” says Natalie Turner, senior programme manager for the charity Centre for Ageing Better. **“Making friends and getting involved in a new community can make a real difference to how good your later life is, but can often be overlooked.”**

It may also mean that after due consideration, a few jaunts around Britain and a cream tea or two, you conclude that you are already living in your best place, in which case, many congratulations. If not, read on.

Royal Deeside, Aberdeenshire

If it's good enough for the Queen, it should certainly be good enough for the rest of us. And while Her Maj is showing no signs of retirement, the fact that she chooses to spend so much of her downtime in this glorious, wind-washed corner of Scotland speaks volumes. Apart from the scenery — rushing rivers, lofty pine trees and views of the mighty Cairngorms — the chief advantages are a welcoming climate with low rainfall and the freshest of fresh air. Balmoral is taken, so you will need to find your own base. Aboyne and Banchory both have hospitals, busy community centres and regular buses to Aberdeen, and there's a fair choice of cafes and shops (many with royal warrants).

Banchory, though, has the **Inchmarlo retirement village**, one of the first and still one of the best in the UK. Buyers from all over the country have been moving in here since 1986, confident that they will be able to stay as long as they need. It's in a beautiful setting, surrounded by 100 acres of parkland close to the River Dee. It has alarms, 24hr security, nurses and a care home on site. There are also plenty of activities; next up, a fiery November 5 bonfire party. Two-bedroom flats start at about £135,000; two-bedroom houses about £200,000.

Pastimes come in true Scottish style: fishing, golf, whisky tasting and woodland walks, many on the flat along an old railway line.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Retirement by royal appointment.

ALSO CONSIDER: Those in line to the throne make do with the manicured magnificence of the Cotswolds.

To find out more about life at Inchmarlo Retirement Village call 01330 826242 or email info@inchmarlo-retirement.co.uk

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