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# FLOCKING TO TURKEY

## The Aegean is a new retirement hot-spot, reveals Zoe Dare Hall

**T**URKEY is featuring prominently in the plans of Britons looking to retire overseas. With falling property prices, a warm and sunny climate and, crucially, no euro, the attractions are obvious.

One in eight British people over 55 will live abroad by next year, says the Institute for Public Policy Research. But the strength of the euro has made many would-be émigrés wary of old favourites such as the Costa del Sol, while the collapse of the property market in the U.S. has put people off crossing the Atlantic.

Instead, many people are looking to Turkey's Mediterranean and Aegean coasts, where the vast majority of the 20,600 British-owned properties are located, and where the cost of living is up to 60 per cent cheaper than in the UK.

'Turkey is one of the few logical choices for those seeking to

balance lifestyle and financial advantage in their retirement,' says Julian Walker, from the Turkish property specialist Spot Blue.

'The warm climate in the south allows people to spend a healthier life outdoors, and the cost of day-to-day living is significantly cheaper than back home.'

Stephen Hughes, director at Foreign Currency Direct, has seen a 36 per cent increase in British clients changing their sterling to lira in the past year, most of them pensioners retiring to Turkey.

'The Turkish lira has increased by 6.5 per cent against the pound in the past year, which means that those

who changed to lira find their money goes much further than before,' says Hughes. He also believes that house prices have risen by 10-15 per cent in the past 12 months.

Bodrum is undoubtedly one of the most appealing regions for those with retirement in mind. The countryside is dotted with olive groves and whitewashed houses.

Its glitzy marinas are lined with boutiques and yachts. And as a lively working town, Bodrum doesn't shut down as soon as the summer tourists leave. In addition, easyJet is to fly to Bodrum from April 23.

At Cumberland's Woodland Regency development, set in pine

forests just outside Bodrum, apartments cost from £47,000, and three-bedroom houses from £158,000, with a shared spa, fitness centre and clubhouse on the site.

In Gundogan, a 15-minute drive from Bodrum, the Seaview Regency Prestige villas are the most striking example of value for money on a sought-after peninsula, with three-storey, three-bedroom villas costing from £175,000.

Each has indoor/outdoor living rooms that open onto private gardens, a shared pool and a citrus fruit valley leading to the sea.

Eric Kaya, director of Cumberland Properties, says: 'There's no

building work in summer because this is where rich and influential Turks have their holiday homes, so it's protected.'

Attracted by low prices, Britons have flocked to the Aegean resorts of Altinkum and Didim, where new apartments cost as little as £25,000.

More attractive and less developed is Dalaman, says Dominic Whiting, author of *Buying In Turkey*, who singles out The Hills development in

Akkaya as among the best.

The three-bedroom villas near a golf course and marina cost from £149,000 — or apartments from £46,200 — through Curbanoglu Homes.

On the Mediterranean coast, Place Overseas is seeing interest from retiring Britons in Beycik, where detached, three to four-bedroom houses at Quattro Villas cost from £219,000 off-plan.

'Turkey is not in the euro zone, which makes this an interesting investment for British buyers,' says Cameron Deggin, UK director of Place Overseas.

Avoiding the euro zone was part of the appeal for Adam Jacks, 68, and his wife Julia, 59, who moved from Chester to their two-bedroom villa in Ovacik, near Fethiye on the Turkish Riviera, a year ago.

Mr Jacks says: 'We combine a good level of living on a pension with a lot of sunshine.'

■ *Cumberland Properties (020 7586 7179, cumberland-properties.com); Spot Blue (020 8339 6036, spotblue.co.uk); Curbanoglu Homes (0845 355 5625, curbanoglu.co.uk); Place Overseas (0800 068 3359, propertyturkeyforsale.com)*





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**Appealing: The ancient harbour at Bodrum, which is lively even out of season**

Picture: ALAMY