

choose Mexico, Costa Rica or other places in Latin America and the Caribbean. Alternatively, you may decide to spend up to several months in a Mediterranean country such as Tunisia, Spain or Greece. Finally, destinations in the southern hemisphere, such as Australia, New Zealand and Chile, while farther away, offer snowbirds the possibility of an endless summer.

## **Immigration and Citizenship Issues**

### ***Country of Destination Regulations for Visitors***

Retirees who live in another country for less than six months each year can simply visit that country as tourists. Most countries welcome Canadian visitors who come for recreational purposes, and a valid passport is usually the only requirement.

Mexico, for example, is open to seasonal Canadian visitors. Canadian tourists staying up to 180 days do not need to obtain a visa. However, you must complete an entry form, called a *Forma Migratoria de Turista*, or FM-T, available from airlines or at any port of entry. An immigration official will determine the number of days you will be allowed to remain in Mexico and will stamp the form accordingly. Do not assume that you will be granted the full 180 days.

With the permission of local immigration authorities, you can get an extension to a maximum of 180 days. The authorities may demand this form at any time, so carry it (or a copy) with you at all times. You must surrender the original on departure.

Many countries have more stringent limitations on the length of time visitors may stay. For example, Costa Rica allows visitors to stay for up to 90 days. Some countries issue initial tourist visas for as little as 30 days. In some cases, you can lengthen your stay by applying for an extension from within the country, but this is not always possible. In Mexico, for example, extensions beyond the 180-day limit are not permitted, barring exceptional circumstances such as hospitalization and a physician certifying that you are too ill to travel.

Many Canadians are reluctant to settle in a country where they have the right of entry only as tourists, especially if they are planning to purchase a home. Some people deal with this issue by applying for residency status, even though they intend to maintain their Canadian residency. In Canada, residency is a matter of fact, not law, whereas in many other countries a resident is a person who has a resident visa or residency permit but does not actually reside in that