



Nomadic By Trade

For peripatetic professionals, the whole planet becomes one big office space. BY LINA ZELDOVICH

By the Sea: The island of Fotö in the Gothenburg archipelago

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GÖTEBORG & CO

It's about 1 p.m. Central European Time on a Thursday, and I'm riding on a boat off the coast of Gothenburg, Sweden's second-largest city, scouting for seals basking in the sun on the rocky outcroppings that dot the sea. Thanks to my captain, who lived all his life on one of the islands of the Gothenburg archipelago, we find them quickly, delighted to watch them move, play and hop in and out of the water. By 4 p.m. I am back at my virtual office, ready to start my business day just as most of my North American clients are coming online.

I am fortunate to be able to work from anywhere, which lets me be part of the rapidly growing digital nomad community. Defined as a lifestyle in which people rely on technology to work remotely while traveling to different locations, whether internationally

or within their own country, digital nomadism is older than we may think. Freelance writer Steven K. Roberts pioneered the concept in the late 1980s, crisscrossing America on a bicycle and documenting his adventures on a portable computer with a modem. As connectivity improved, more people joined in. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the trend by normalizing remote work on a global scale. When lockdowns forced people to work remotely, location became irrelevant.

Since the start of 2020, the number of digital nomads has more than tripled, according to the recent report by The MBO Partners, which connects companies to an independent workforce. The report finds more than 8 million Americans currently describe themselves as digital nomads, an impressive 147 percent growth

since 2019. That translates into 11 percent of U.S. workers — or one in 10 — being nomadic. While younger generations such as millennials and Gen Z comprise about 64 percent of digital nomads, one in seven are 55 or older. Worldwide, the number of digital nomads exceeded 40 million in 2025 and is expected to reach 92 million by 2030.

Many business hotels and long-term rentals cater to peripatetic professionals ... and not only with high-speed WiFi. At the Radisson Blu Scandinavia where I'm staying, bars, cafés and breakfast areas double as co-working spaces, even when the facilities aren't open for service, and offer plenty of outlets. In the hotel's spa, waiting lounge guests curl up in swings and rocking chairs, tapping on their laptops.

Catching up with the trend, boutique hotels strive to make their lodgings a home away from home. Such is the case with Quinta Camarena, a sustainable eco-resort in Alentejo, Portugal, nestled in one of the country's top wine regions, a stone's throw away from endless beaches and two hours from Lisbon. Set in a restored farmhouse, guestrooms feature natural elements such as wood and stone, each with its own front garden. "We really wanted to create rooms where the guests felt that they could stay there with no desire to leave," said owners Cam and Vera Camarena.

Smart location choices can positively influence lifestyle and

spending. Being hours ahead of your clients allows you to experience the destination with full immersion daily — my favorite feature of nomadic lifestyle. Opting for cheaper locales can maximize your purchasing power. Plus, you can extend your favorite season. You can escape winter cold in Southeast Asia or South America or dodge the summer heat waves in Scandinavia.

That's why I am chilling in Gothenburg in August, enjoying cooler weather; rare wildlife sightings; and a smaller, uncrowded city. "Gothenburg is a pocket-sized metropolis where digital nomads find reliable internet and an international community," said Petra Gamerdinger, Travel Trade & PR manager, Göteborg & Co., "all wrapped up in a walkable, welcoming city that feels both cool and warm at the same time, yet with lesser crowds than you'd expect." Once September rolls around, I'll head south to Türkiye for warmer weather, where I can work dipping my toes in the sand in Fethiye, Dalaman or Marmaris.

For those chasing endless summer, Southeast Asia delivers. Bali beckons with numerous properties that seamlessly blend work and vacation and can be rented via The Luxe Nomad, Asia-Pacific's largest rental management company. It boasts an exclusive collection of more than 1,400 rooms across private villas, chalets and apart-hotels.

Retreat in Nature:

Quinta Camarena in Portugal

PHOTO: © QUINTA CAMARENA





Hangout Space:
COSI Social Hub

PHOTO: © COSI PATTAYA
WONG AMAT BEACH

In Thailand, COSI Hotels feature Social Hubs that double as co-working spaces and gathering spots, while Centara Life Hotels serve breakfast until 4 p.m. and feature a late-night noodle station.

However, if your clients are in North America, the time difference can be daunting. If that's the case, Diani Beach, a popular destination in Kenya, where mild temperatures, surf and beautiful nature delight year-round, may be the answer. "Diani Beach is an excellent choice for digital nomads seeking balance," said June Chepkemei, CEO, Kenya Tourism Board. "Diani provides the ideal setting to work, live and explore." For snowbirds who prefer to fully align with North American business hours, South America and the Caribbean offer perfect options.

U.S. citizens can enter about 160 countries without having a visa in their passports (some don't require it, others offer visa on arrival), but maximum stays range from 14 days to six months. For longer stays, travelers must obtain a digital nomad visa, a concept pioneered by Estonia in 2020, which allows foreign nationals to work remotely in the country for a year. Today more than 70 countries boast the perk, with some offering renewals, according to Citizen Remote, a platform that assists traveling professionals with securing visas to their dream destinations.

The digital nomads visa application process, documents and costs differ between countries. Some allow online applications while others require applying in person at a consulate or embassy. The income level requirements vary significantly also, ranging from \$10,000 a year for Albania to \$7,763 per month for Iceland, while India lists

no official minimum. Age can be a factor; Türkiye, for example, issues nomad visas for individuals ages 21–55. Meanwhile, Spain and Portugal welcome retirees with passive income visas, handy for families where one person is retired and the other still works.

The complex visa requirements can be challenging to navigate, so various organizations provide services to digital nomads, ranging from temporary work and living spaces to cross-border health insurance that covers one in other countries. "That's where we come in," said Tim Marting, founder and COO, Citizen Remote. "We are a global mobility platform where we help clients from all around the world move all around the world. A lot of our clients are families who would like to live abroad."

The cost of obtaining a visa through Citizen Remote can range from \$800 to \$2,000 per person, depending on complexity, and can take from 30 days to several months. "We get on average 500 to 1,000 requests a month," Marting said. Spain, Portugal and France are among the favorite European destinations, followed by Greece and Croatia, with the latter recently extending its stay to three years.

Today countries actively compete for digital nomads — and for good reasons. Remote workers spend more money than short-term vacationers and sometimes invest in the local economy or start local businesses. "Governments want to bring extra revenue and talent to their country," Marting said, "so they continue making these visas a little bit more competitive, to drive more people to their country." It's a bull market for digital nomads right now, so it's time to reap the benefits.