

NEWSLETTER

Aug/Sept
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WHERE DO I BELONG
Go Beyond the Vacation

IT'S BEEN A WHILE

Summer always moves fast! Between our full-time schedule and hands-on field research, we paused our June/July note to focus on deeper destination assessments. As we head into late summer and early fall planning, here is a quick look at what's in the pipeline and key resources for your next transition. We took a brief pause over mid-summer to focus on research and deep-dive destination assessments.

TWO BORDERS. TWO PACES. WHERE DO YOU BELONG?

Summer Field Audits: Mount Airy, North Carolina & Toronto, Canada
In this double issue, we take you inside two vastly different destinations audited on the ground this summer:

- Mount Airy, NC: Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, this historic town offers a tranquil, small-town sanctuary where rich cultural heritage and community anchors define daily life.
- Toronto, Canada: A vibrant, fast-paced international metropolis offering world-class transit, dynamic culinary districts, and high-density urban living for relocators and expats.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: VISA STRATEGIES

Navigating global entry requirements can be complex and costly without adequate research and proactive planning. In this edition, WDIB outlines the essential strategic pillars—from tax thresholds to document lead times—you must evaluate before applying for temporary or permanent residency.

HIGHLIGHT

SUMMER FIELD AUDITS
Two Places. Different Paces.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO
Visa strategies

FRESH ON THE BLOG
Read the latest WDIB Blogs

COMMUNITY GATHERS AND EVENTS
Coffee and Conversations

WHERE SHOULD WE GO NEXT?
We want to hear from you!

THANK YOU!

Two Borders. Two Paces. Where Do You Belong?

City Audits

Is Mount Airy Your Next Sanctuary?

Just off the Blue Ridge Parkway, Mount Airy is famed as the inspiration for Mayberry. But beyond nostalgic storefronts, foothill vineyards, and tourist attractions lies a distinct small-town pace. Spanning under 12 square miles with roughly 10,000 residents, it presents a compelling case for those seeking community and affordability.

On-the-Ground Field Highlights:

- **Downtown & Culture**:
  - Visited icons like Snappy Lunch, Floyd's City Barber Shop, Opie's Candy Store, and the Mount Airy Regional History Museum.
- **Local Economy & Adaptive Reuse**:
  - Toured The Balladeer Hotel (the repurposed 1892 Spencer's textile mill) and the world-renowned Flat Rock Granite Quarry.
- **Community & Nature**:
  - Explored J.J. Jones High School, once the only school black students could attend and the trailheads of Pilot Mountain State Park.



- **Fast Facts from the Field**:
  - Mount Airy was the home of Chang and Eng Bunker, the original Siamese twins.
  - Once celebrated as the "Toaster Capital of the World".
  - The Arlington Memorial Bridge in Washington, D.C., was faced with granite sourced directly from Mount Airy's quarry.

While global trade caused historic textile mills and manufacturing plants to close, the town innovated—turning downtown into a living "Mayberry" economy while modernizing for the future.

Our upcoming report cuts past the tourist appeal to evaluate Mount Airy across core livability pillars—including neighborhood walkability, housing inventory, local vibe, daily infrastructure, and transit connectivity—to determine how it holds up for remote professionals and relocators.Status: In Final Review (Releasing September 2026)

Click **here** to get notified when the Mount Airy Report drops!



Canada: Navigating Regional & Lifestyle Differences

Is Canada Your Next Base?

From provincial cost-of-living variances to healthcare realities and settlement logistics, our regional assessment cuts through the noise of moving north.

Anchoring our field research in Toronto, we audited a dynamic, multicultural hub with world-class urban infrastructure—from transit connectivity to walkable culinary and cultural districts. While Toronto's amenities make it a prime magnet for newcomers, steep housing costs and tight inventory present real hurdles. As a result, many relocators are weighing the trade-offs: paying a premium for Toronto's density and convenience versus exploring alternative Canadian hubs.

Neighborhoods Audited on the Ground:

- Cabbagetown: A tranquil enclave of historic Victorian homes and pocket parks tucked away from the urban bustle, juxtaposed with dense, lower-income corridors and smaller apartments along its perimeter.
- King Street / Entertainment District: The high-density core of downtown living, integrating high-rise residential towers with a bustling commercial and entertainment baseline.
- Healthcare Row / University Avenue: A modern, highly pedestrian-friendly corridor home to premier medical facilities, research centers, and top universities.
- The Annex & Little Italy: Classic neighborhoods hidden behind lively commercial storefronts, featuring a diverse mix of single-family homes and mid-rise condos along leafy residential side streets.



Field Insights from Toronto:

- Virtually Cashless: Daily transactions across transit, dining, and retail run almost entirely on tap-to-pay cards or mobile wallets.
- Transit Integration: Comprehensive multimodal transit network connecting streetcars, subway lines, GO Trains, the UP Express, regional FlixBus routes, and rideshares.
- Cultural Anchors: Home to world-class cultural events, including North America's largest Caribbean Carnival (Caribana).

Our upcoming Canada report analyzes whether the lifestyle benefits justify the balance sheet for remote workers, families, and international professionals.

Status: In Research (Releasing Fall 2026)
Click here to join the Canada Audit early-access list →



Know Before You Go: Essential Visa Strategies

Securing legal residency is the foundation of any successful international move. Immigration frameworks are tightening globally, and entry criteria vary drastically from one border to the next. For instance, Canada evaluates candidates through its Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS)—scoring applicants on age, education, language proficiency, and work history to prioritize skilled labor via Express Entry. Before submitting an application, evaluate these core strategic pillars:

- **Intent & Duration**: Match your timeline with the appropriate legal category—digital nomad/remote work visas, non-lucrative residency, or skilled talent and investment streams.
- **Income & Solvency Thresholds**: Verify whether your target destination requires proof of continuous remote salary, passive income, or substantial liquid capital.
- **Tax Residency Triggers**: Account for local tax liability rules (such as the 183-day residency threshold), foreign-earned income exemptions, and bilateral tax treaties to avoid double taxation.
- **Document Lead Times**: Budget time and fees for apostilles, background checks, and certified legal translations before booking travel.
- **Healthcare & Dependent Rights**: Confirm that private health insurance satisfies strict consular standards and check whether accompanying family members receive local work permissions.
- **Professional Guidance**: Because visa requirements and tax implications change rapidly, working with an immigration attorney or cross-border tax specialist can prevent costly filing errors.





WDIB

Stories of Impact

A MOMENT FOR SELF-REFLECTION

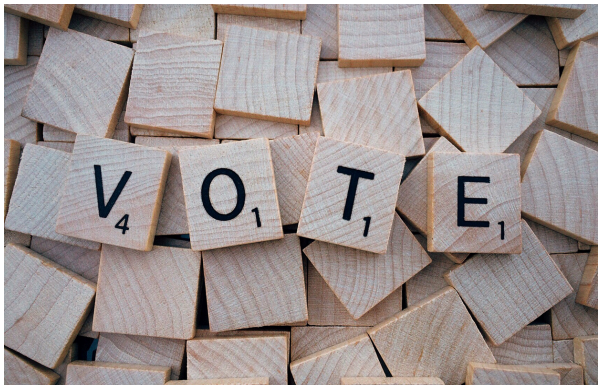
Where you belong begins with who you are. Our blog supports your path toward self-worth and personal growth. True transformation begins with self-acceptance and discovering what brings you lasting inner peace—something you won't find in others' expectations, which were never meant for your unique journey. Take a moment to explore our latest articles and find encouragement for your next chapter. Read the Latest Blog Posts

YOU DECIDE!



WHERE ARE WE GOING TO NEXT?

Where should WDIB head next? Our upcoming audit calendar is guided directly by our community:



Vote on the Next Public Audit: Have a hidden gem or emerging international hub you want evaluated? Submit your destination request for your transformative travel journey. Include "CITY AUDIT" in the subject line. The top-voted cities are added to our upcoming field schedule.

Vote Here!

Planning a high-stakes relocation on a tight timeline?

We accept a limited number of privately commissioned audits tailored to your exact housing, family, and lifestyle criteria. [Inquire about private audit availability $\rightarrow$]

Upcoming: The Porto Kickoff Retreat

Turn Relocation Research Into Real-World Discovery

Save the Date

Join the Where Do I Belong team in Porto for our first in-person relocation retreat. Over five days, we combine boots-on-the-ground neighborhood scouting, visa and tax masterclasses, and curated cultural experiences to help you evaluate Portugal's second city with total clarity.

Location: Porto, Portugal
Dates: September 2027
Who It's For: Remote workers, retirees, and future expats.

Request Early Invitation Details:
https://www.wheredoibe.com/upcoming-events

COMMUNITY GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

LET'S connect

Get ready for the Fall Community Coffee Chat, an exciting gathering where fellow travelers and expats come together to connect, share, and learn. This event offers a unique opportunity to swap travel and relocation tips, explore various visa pathways, and delve into the wealth of knowledge within the WDIB (Where Do I Belong Community). Whether you're a seasoned globetrotter or new to the expat lifestyle, this chat promises to be a valuable experience filled with insightful conversations and new friendships. Bring your favorite coffee, a curious mind, and an eagerness to connect with others who share your passion for exploring the world!



next-level goals

Send us a quick note to let us know if you would be interested in attending a coffee and discussing topics about moving abroad or other travel tips you would like to discuss. Be sure to put **NEXT LEVEL GOALS** in the subject line.

EmailAddress: frances@wheredoIbe.com

Thank you!



Wherever you are on your relocation journey, thank you for being part of our growing community. We look forward to sharing our complete findings in the upcoming release cycle.

Stay Connected:

📋 Mount Airy & Canada Early Access: Get Priority Reports
🌊 Porto Retreat (Sept 2027): Join the Waitlist
🗳️ Community Input: Submit a Destination for Audit
📖 Personal Growth & Journal: Read the Blog

Let's Connect

We read every message. Send your notes and inquiries to frances@wheredoibe.com.

Luggage Lessons: Too Many Shoes, Not Enough Self-Acceptance

The heaviest baggage you will ever carry isn't in a 50-lb suitcase—it's old expectations and the pressure to please others.

Leave the "just-in-case" backup shoes at home. Pack light, step onto the pavement as you are, and leave room in your luggage—and your life—for the journey ahead.



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