

4 Great Places to Start Your Slow Travel Journey

Real insights from cities we've actually lived in — perfect for your first long-stay adventure.

Mérida, Mexico

🌟 Why This Is a Great First-Time Slow Travel City

Mérida is one of Mexico's safest cities, full of colonial charm and welcoming locals. It's easy to settle into and has a slower pace that's perfect for beginners.

💰 Monthly Cost Estimate (USD):

One Person:

- - Apartment: \$500–\$700
- - Groceries & Eating Out: \$250–\$400
- - Coworking / Wi-Fi: \$50–\$100
- - Transit or Ride-Shares: \$30–\$50
- - Total: \$830–\$1,250

Two People:

- - Apartment: \$600–\$900
- - Groceries & Eating Out: \$400–\$600
- - Coworking / Wi-Fi: \$80–\$120
- - Transit or Ride-Shares: \$50–\$80
- - Total: \$1,130–\$1,700

📍 Best Areas to Stay:

- - Centro – Colonial charm, walkable, close to cafes and markets.
- - Itzimná – Quieter, more residential, and still well-connected.

🛂 Visa Notes (for U.S. travelers):

180 days on arrival for U.S. travelers; renewable by border run.

🗣️ A Note From Us:

Mérida feels neighborly and welcoming — we slowed down fast here.

⚠️ One Thing to Know:

It gets *hot* — pack light and plan your outdoor time.

Da Nang, Vietnam

🌟 Why This Is a Great First-Time Slow Travel City

Da Nang is a modern beach city with a calm vibe and a growing community of digital nomads. It's easy to navigate and very affordable.

💰 Monthly Cost Estimate (USD):

One Person:

- - Apartment: \$300–\$500
- - Groceries & Eating Out: \$200–\$300
- - Coworking / Wi-Fi: \$30–\$60
- - Transit or Ride-Shares: \$20–\$40
- - Total: \$550–\$950

Two People:

- - Apartment: \$400–\$600
- - Groceries & Eating Out: \$350–\$500
- - Coworking / Wi-Fi: \$50–\$80
- - Transit or Ride-Shares: \$40–\$70
- - Total: \$840–\$1,250

📍 Best Areas to Stay:

- - My An – Near the beach, lots of cafes, good expat base.
- - Son Tra – Local feel with great mountain views and quiet.

🛂 Visa Notes (for U.S. travelers):

90-day e-visa available for single or multiple entries. Apply at evisa.gov.vn. Non-extendable; must exit and reapply if staying longer.

💡 A Note From Us:

We loved how peaceful it felt after larger SE Asia cities.

⚠️ One Thing to Know:

Crossing the street can be... an adventure. Watch the scooters!

Panama City, Panama

🌟 Why This Is a Great First-Time Slow Travel City

Panama City offers urban convenience with a Latin American flavor. It uses the U.S. dollar and has great infrastructure.

💰 Monthly Cost Estimate (USD):

One Person:

- - Apartment: \$800–\$1,200
- - Groceries & Eating Out: \$400–\$500
- - Coworking / Wi-Fi: \$100–\$150
- - Transit or Ride-Shares: \$50–\$100
- - Total: \$1,350–\$1,950

Two People:

- - Apartment: \$1,000–\$1,600
- - Groceries & Eating Out: \$600–\$800
- - Coworking / Wi-Fi: \$150–\$200
- - Transit or Ride-Shares: \$80–\$150
- - Total: \$1,830–\$2,750

📍 Best Areas to Stay:

- - Casco Viejo – Beautiful and walkable historic district.
- - El Cangrejo – Safe, central, and full of local flavor.

🛂 Visa Notes (for U.S. travelers):

U.S. travelers get 180 days on arrival.

🗣️ A Note From Us:

This was our easiest landing spot logistically.

⚠️ One Thing to Know:

The traffic can be intense — use the metro when you can.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

🌟 Why This Is a Great First-Time Slow Travel City

KL is an international city that's both affordable and full of variety. It has great infrastructure, delicious food, and good public transport.

💰 Monthly Cost Estimate (USD):

One Person:

- - Apartment: \$400–\$700
- - Groceries & Eating Out: \$200–\$300
- - Coworking / Wi-Fi: \$50–\$100
- - Transit or Ride-Shares: \$20–\$40
- - Total: \$670–\$1,140

Two People:

- - Apartment: \$500–\$800
- - Groceries & Eating Out: \$350–\$500
- - Coworking / Wi-Fi: \$80–\$120
- - Transit or Ride-Shares: \$40–\$70
- - Total: \$970–\$1,490

📍 Best Areas to Stay:

- - Bangsar – Trendy and lively, with great food and expat-friendly.
- - Brickfields – Affordable, central, and full of local character.

🛂 Visa Notes (for U.S. travelers):

90 days visa-free, but travelers must complete the Malaysia Digital Arrival Card (MDAC) online within 3 days before arrival. It's free and required.

💡 A Note From Us:

We were amazed by the food diversity and ease of living.

⚠️ One Thing to Know:

Humidity is real. Bring breathable clothes and stay hydrated.

💡 Cost Disclaimer

These estimates reflect typical monthly costs for one or two slow travelers based on 2025 data. Your actual costs may vary depending on your lifestyle, season of travel, and neighborhood choice. We aim for a comfortable, mid-range style — not luxury, not barebones.