

IT would seem that relocating Britons still favour tried and tested traditional countries over fashionable emerging market 'hot-spots' such as eastern Europe and Dubai.

According to the Royal Mail, France pipped Spain to poll position, with more than 13,000 UK households moving across the Channel last year in comparison to the 8,500 who chose Spain. Other popular destinations are Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The data, derived from redirected mail, underlines the split that has developed in the overseas property market between those fleeing Blair's Britain and investors seeking to get a foot on the property ladder.

As Royal Mail's redirection expert, Fraser Chisholm, points out: "The index gives a strong signal as to whether property has been purchased to be lived in or whether it is simply an investment. As such, it provides a real insight into the countries that Britons want to call home.

"While we are willing to embrace new destinations for their investment potential, we are more conservative about where we choose to live."

Indeed, far-flung destinations are likely to be the first choice for buyers this year, according to escapes2, which predicts that beach destinations such as Thailand and Goa will be increasingly sought after. Sales manager, Andrea Hill, said: "Flight costs are coming down all the time and people are finding out that the further you go, the better value for money you get."

The important thing to consider for those investing for their pension is whether the country they choose is likely to have a strong re-sale market.

If this proves to be the case then they would be well advised to follow their heads rather than their hearts.



Britons still warm to hot favourites

VALENCIA

THE prestigious America's Cup comes to this Spanish city (main picture) next summer and if there's a Spanish hot spot, this could be it.

The government has spent billions on regeneration schemes such as the stunning new arts and science quarter while apartment prices in Valencia are rising at a staggering rate. Local agent Spain and Property has a selection of city centre apartments, which include a 70m² two-bedroom property in a 130-year-old building overlooking the ancient entrance gates of the city. In need of renovation, the apartment is priced at €220,000.

A similar renovated two-bedroom property (left inset) which offers 90m² of living space is currently on the market at €312,000. Spain and Property will organise viewing trips. **INFORMATION:** Spain and Property 0204 647 787352/www.spainandproperty.com

MOROCCO

KING Mohammed VI has set in motion a major expansion of Moroccan tourism. His Vision 2010 initiative aims to lure 10 million tourists by that date and put the industry on a par with neighbouring Spain.

New roads, hotels and residential developments are springing up in and around Marrakesh and there are now daily flights to the city from Gatwick Airport.

Escapes2 has units for sale in the Domaine de L'Anhdar complex in Marrakesh. Set in rural grounds amidst olive and fruit trees, the villas are designed by architect Charles Boccara. The enclosed community will be fully managed with a restaurant, bar, spa, children's club and cinema. Prices for a three-bedroom villa start at £193,303 and are expected to rise by 10 per cent once construction starts.

INFORMATION: Escapes2, 0161 3512160/www.escapes2.com