BONUS 2: INCLUDED WITH THE DOLLAR COLLAPSE PLAYBOOK

GETTING OUT

The Field Guide to Moving Assets Across Borders, Legally

Offshore vaults. Second residencies. Retirement custodians. Real fees.

DollarCollapse.com
2026 Edition

How to Use This Guide

The Dollar Collapse Playbook makes the case for internationalization. This guide shows you how to actually do it.

Not generically. Specifically. Which vault in Singapore, with what annual fee structure, for what minimum deposit. Which second residency can be obtained for under $2,500 in 2026, and which ones that used to be cheap have gotten expensive in the past two years. Which of the dozens of self-directed IRA custodians are worth using, and which two are the only ones worth calling. And the three mistakes that Americans make most often when they try to diversify across jurisdictions, each of which can cost more than the entire diversification was supposed to save.

Three ground rules before you start.

1. This is legal diversification, not evasion

Every strategy in this guide is compliant with US tax law when reported correctly. The Foreign Bank Account Report (FBAR), Form 8938, and the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) all apply to almost every move described here. The penalties for failing to report are severe, and disproportionate to the tax benefit (because in most cases there is no tax benefit; the point is jurisdictional diversification). Follow the reporting rules. The tax preparer who does your 1040 should know your offshore holdings the year you open them, not the year the IRS asks.

2. The order matters

You do not start with offshore storage. You start with the moves described in the Playbook's Defense and Hard Assets sections: tax-advantaged accounts funded, liquid reserves built, domestic metals position established. Offshore storage, second residencies, and specialty custodians are advanced moves. They compound the gains from the basics; they do not replace them. If you have not completed Playbook Moves 1 through 10, close this guide. Come back after.

3. Treat this as research

The specific vaults, custodians, and residency programs described below are the ones we have researched and, in most cases, used ourselves or seen used by DollarCollapse readers. Every reader's situation is different. The fee structures and requirements change (often quarterly in the residency world). Verify everything with the actual provider before committing capital. Work with a qualified tax professional on the US reporting side.

What Is in This Guide

Each section is self-contained; read in order if you want the full picture, or skip to the one you need first.

Section 1: Offshore Precious Metals Storage.

Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Australia. The specific vault providers, their fee structures, minimum deposits, jurisdictional pros and cons, and the FBAR/FATCA reporting requirements that apply to each. Side-by-side fee tables so you can see exactly what you pay, per year, per $100,000 stored.

Section 2: Second Residencies for Under $25,000.

Paraguay, Panama, Mexico, Portugal, Dominican Republic. The four routes that still work in 2026 for readers who want legal residency in a second country without committing a large capital investment. Cost breakdowns, timelines, and specific notes on what has changed since 2022.

Section 3: The Two Self-Directed IRA Custodians Worth Using.

Equity Trust and Kingdom Trust. Why these two. What you pay. What you get. How they differ. Plus brief notes on Strata Trust as a secondary option, and why we do not recommend the other thirty-plus self-directed custodians in the US market.

Section 4: The Three Common Mistakes.

Jurisdiction wrong. Reporting wrong. Sequencing wrong. Each mistake described with what it looks like, what it costs, and how to avoid it. Based on reader experiences over the past five years, including several expensive ones.

Section 5: The Execution Checklist.

A one-page checklist for readers ready to execute. What to do first, what to do second, what not to do at all, and what to verify before committing capital to any offshore move.

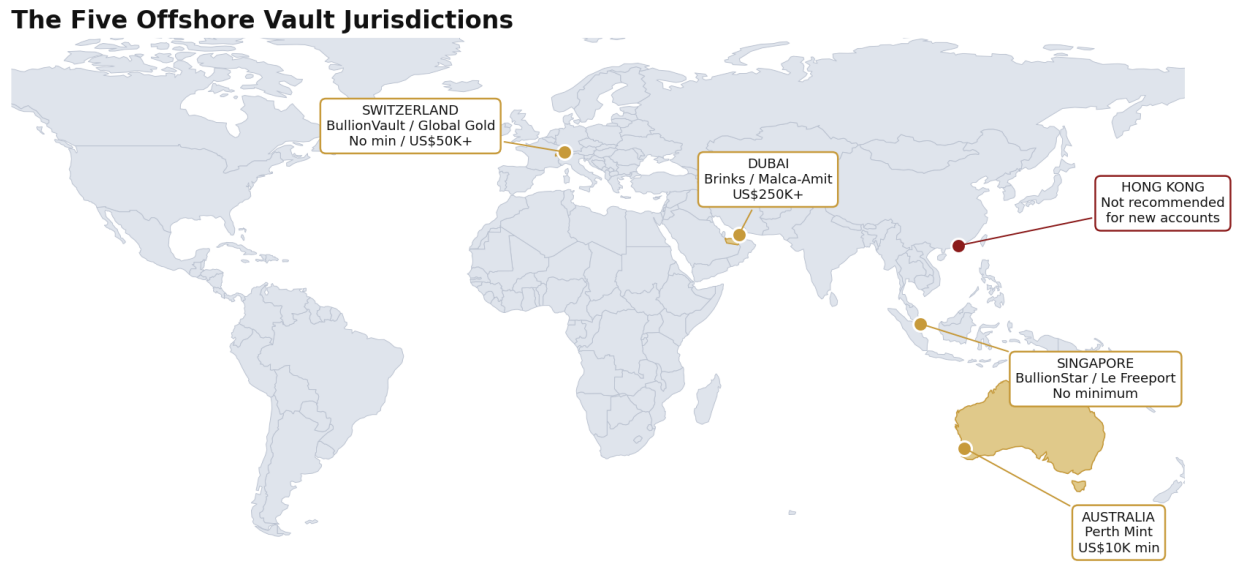
Section 1: Offshore Precious Metals Storage

The case for offshore metals storage comes down to a single word: jurisdiction. Metals held in a vault in Delaware or Texas are protected from most threats, but they are not protected from the threat of US-domestic action. A federal court order, a sanctions designation, an emergency executive action, or any of the one-in-a-thousand scenarios that the Playbook is designed to hedge against can reach into a US vault. The same court order cannot easily reach into a vault in Singapore.

Whether that additional jurisdictional layer is worth the fees, the reporting complexity, and the friction of managing assets across borders is a decision each reader makes based on total position size and risk tolerance. For most DollarCollapse readers with positions above $100,000 in precious metals, some portion offshore is prudent. Below $100,000, the complexity often exceeds the benefit.

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Where the vaults in Section 1 are, and the minimum it takes to get in. Stylized locations.



Source: provider websites as of April 2026. Confirm minimums and fees before opening any account. dollarcollapse.com

Singapore: The Preferred Jurisdiction

Singapore is, in our assessment, the single strongest offshore precious metals jurisdiction available to Americans today. Four reasons:

1. Singapore eliminated its 7 percent goods and services tax on investment-grade bullion in October 2012. Gold Maple Leafs, Philharmonics, Buffalos, most gold bars, and most silver bullion products are now tax-free to buy or sell. The American Gold Eagle is an exception because its purity falls below the investment-grade threshold.
2. The Le Freeport facility at Changi Airport is a bonded free trade zone where stored goods are effectively outside the Singapore tax jurisdiction indefinitely. The model is adapted from the Swiss freeports and is the gold standard for offshore storage security.

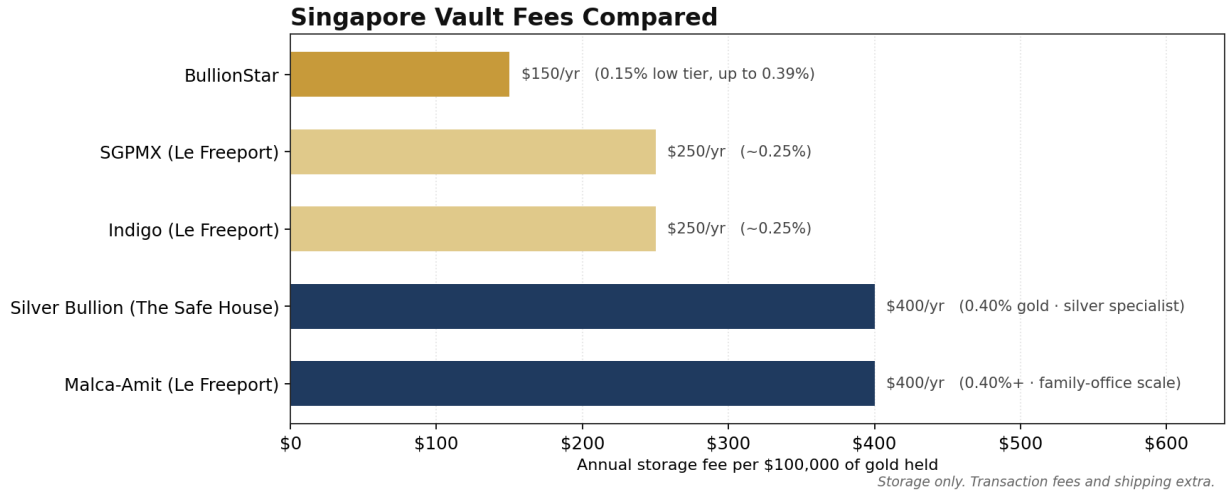
3. Singapore is politically stable, geographically removed from US sanctions reach, and operates under English common law with strong property rights. No jurisdiction the US has pressured has ever successfully extracted client holdings from a Singapore vault.

4. Multiple competent vault providers compete for business, which keeps fees competitive. You can pay as little as 0.15 percent per year at the low end.

Singapore vault providers

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What a year of storage costs on a $100,000 gold position at each major Singapore provider.



Source: provider fee schedules as of April 2026. Fees subject to change; confirm before funding. dollarcollapse.com

BullionStar

Founded 2012, headquartered at 45 New Bridge Road in Singapore, with vault operations at both its own integrated facility and at Le Freeport. Allocated, segregated storage with full Lloyd's of London insurance through Marsh. Live audit system allows real-time verification of holdings, and independent twice-yearly audits are conducted by Bureau Veritas, an LBMA-approved auditor.

Pricing runs approximately 0.15 to 0.39 percent annually depending on quantity and product type, with lower rates on larger positions. Gold is priced lower than silver because silver takes up more vault space per dollar stored. The first two years of storage are currently offered free for new customers above a minimum purchase threshold. No account minimum. The online platform allows 24/7 management, and metals can be shipped internationally (including to the US) with insurance.

Silver Bullion Pte Ltd (The Safe House)

A specialist for larger silver positions. Operates a purpose-built vault called The Safe House outside the airport's free trade zone. Widely regarded as the strongest choice for six-figure-plus silver positions, in particular, because their vault was purpose-designed for silver's storage density challenges. They also accept gold. Fees run approximately 0.50 percent annually on silver, 0.40 percent on gold. Minimum holdings of 5 kilograms for silver, 200 grams for gold. Independent from any dealer, which matters for readers who want their storage relationship separated from their buy-sell relationship.

Le Freeport (accessed via SGPMX, Indigo Precious Metals, or Malca-Amit)

Le Freeport is the facility; SGPMX, Indigo Precious Metals, and Malca-Amit are the three vaulting companies with operations inside it. The facility itself is adjacent to Changi Airport in a secured free trade zone, with round-the-clock police auxiliary security. The architecture is Swiss-designed and insured by underwriters at Lloyd's of London.

Fees through SGPMX run approximately 0.25 percent annually. Indigo charges similar rates, around 0.25 percent on gold. Malca-Amit is the premium provider of the three, with a global vault network and logistics services; their fees run higher (approximately 0.40 percent and up) but they are the preferred choice for family-office-scale storage across multiple jurisdictions. For a 5-kilogram safe deposit box at Le Freeport, expect about S$1,000 (US$810) per year.

Malca-Amit (multi-location)

Malca-Amit deserves a second mention because it is the only vault operator in this guide with a global network, including Singapore, Hong Kong, Zurich, New York, and several other locations. For readers with larger positions who want a single counterparty managing metals across multiple jurisdictions, Malca-Amit is the cleanest solution. The trade-off is higher fees and higher minimums (typically six-figure positions).

Provider	Annual Fee (Gold)	Minimum	Best For
BullionStar	0.15–0.39%	None	Entry-level, price-conscious
Silver Bullion	~0.40%	200g gold / 5kg silver	Large silver positions
SGPMX (Le Freeport)	~0.25%	~US$10,000	Ultra-secure Le Freeport access
Malca-Amit	~0.40% and up	Six-figure positions	Multi-jurisdiction family office

Source: Provider websites as of April 2026. Fees subject to change. Confirm current rates before opening any account.

Dubai: The Rising Alternative

Dubai has built a substantial precious metals ecosystem over the past decade, centered on the Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC). The Almas Tower and its associated vault network handle physical settlement for the Dubai Gold & Commodities Exchange (DGCX), and several international vault operators have established operations there.

The case for Dubai versus Singapore is essentially one of jurisdictional diversification. For a reader who already has metals in the US and in Singapore, adding Dubai spreads the position across three very different legal and political systems: North American, East Asian, and Middle Eastern. Dubai operates under civil law based on French and Egyptian models, with English common law applied in the DIFC financial free zone.

Dubai vault providers

The vault landscape in Dubai is less mature than Singapore's, with fewer well-established retail-friendly operators. The three most commonly used by sophisticated individual investors:

- **Brinks Dubai.** The same Brinks that operates across the US and Canada. Brinks Dubai provides vault services to major banks and commodity traders, and accepts individual clients with positions typically above US$250,000. Fees run approximately 0.50 to 0.75 percent annually depending on product mix and quantity.
- **Malca-Amit Dubai.** Operations adjacent to their Singapore and Zurich facilities, allowing multi-jurisdictional storage under a single counterparty.
- **Loomis International Dubai.** Primarily institutional but accepts high-net-worth individuals. Fees comparable to Brinks.

Dubai trade-offs

The Dubai option is not universally superior to Singapore. A few caveats worth considering before committing capital:

- Fees run consistently higher than Singapore (typically 0.50–0.75% vs. 0.15–0.40%), because the vault infrastructure is newer and competition is less mature.
- The UAE is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) compliance framework and has tightened beneficial-ownership reporting over the past three years. Privacy is not what it was in 2015.
- Geopolitical proximity to Iran and Yemen is a factor some readers weigh. The metals themselves are secure regardless, but the perception of regional instability is real.

Dubai is most valuable as a secondary position after Singapore, not as a primary offshore location.

Hong Kong: Jurisdictional Concerns

Hong Kong was, until roughly 2019, one of the world's strongest offshore precious metals jurisdictions. A combination of deep vault infrastructure, favorable tax treatment, English common law tradition, and a free port status made it the obvious choice for metals storage in Asia.

Since 2020, that picture has changed. The implementation of the National Security Law, combined with Hong Kong's closer integration with mainland Chinese legal practices, has increased the jurisdictional risk for US holders. The Storage, a vault facility that had served international clients for years, shut its doors to foreigners in this period. Major Western bullion dealers have shifted their Asian operations primarily to Singapore.

Our current guidance: for most DollarCollapse readers, Hong Kong is no longer the right primary Asian offshore jurisdiction. The strength that Hong Kong once offered (jurisdictional separation from both Washington and Beijing) has eroded. If you want East Asian metals storage, use Singapore. If you want geographic diversification beyond Singapore, consider Dubai or Switzerland rather than Hong Kong.

One exception: readers with existing family or business ties to Hong Kong, and specifically with long-term relationships at established Hong Kong-based family offices

or private banks, may still find value in Hong Kong storage as part of a broader wealth management relationship. For readers opening new storage relationships from the US, however, Singapore is the cleaner choice.

Switzerland: The Traditional Choice

Switzerland has been the default offshore metals jurisdiction for Americans and Europeans for over a century. Three major free-trade-zone facilities (the Zurich Freilager, the Geneva Freeports, and the Chiasso border facility) have handled hundreds of billions of dollars in stored wealth across multiple generations.

Two things to understand about Switzerland in 2026. First, it remains one of the strongest vault jurisdictions in the world. Second, it is also the jurisdiction where US reporting and transparency has most extensively advanced. FATCA is fully operational; the days of anonymous Swiss bank accounts ended in 2014. For metals storage, this is a distinction without much difference (metals are reportable under FBAR and Form 8938 regardless of jurisdiction), but it is worth understanding.

Swiss vault providers

- **BullionVault (Zurich, London, New York, Singapore, Toronto).** The largest retail-oriented vaulting service in the world. Fees approximately 0.48 percent annually on gold with a minimum of $8/month. Regulated in the UK. Widely used by retail investors. Not cheapest, but accessible and transparent.
- **Global Gold (Zurich).** A subsidiary of BFI Capital, founded by Swiss wealth management veterans. Fees approximately 0.50 percent. Higher minimums (typically $50,000+). Strong choice for larger positions who want a dedicated Swiss relationship.
- **Private Swiss banks (UBS, ZKB, other cantonal banks).** Accept US clients but with substantial onboarding friction. Minimums typically $1 million or higher for new accounts. Fees are individually negotiated and typically higher than the specialist providers above.

Australia: Perth Mint

The Perth Mint, owned by the Government of Western Australia and one of the two major sovereign mint operations in the world (the other being the Royal Canadian Mint), operates a vault storage program that has historically been popular with Americans seeking additional jurisdictional diversification.

The Perth Mint Certificate Program allows holders to store allocated, segregated metals at the Mint's vaults in Perth under the government guarantee of Western Australia. Fees are approximately 1.0 percent annually (higher than the Asian or Swiss alternatives), and minimums are $10,000 to open the account.

The appeal is primarily the sovereign guarantee (the Government of Western Australia's guarantee adds a layer of counterparty protection that private vaults cannot match) and the jurisdiction (Australia is geographically removed from both US and Asian financial systems). The drawback is the fee, which runs several times what Singapore charges.

For most readers, we view the Perth Mint as an interesting option for a portion of a larger position rather than as a primary offshore location. If you allocate $500,000 across three jurisdictions, putting $100,000 at the Perth Mint for the sovereign

guarantee layer is reasonable. Making it your primary offshore position likely overpays for the additional layer.

US Reporting Requirements

Every offshore metals position described in this section is subject to US reporting requirements. The penalties for failure to report are severe, ranging from financial penalties that exceed the value of unreported holdings to criminal charges in egregious cases. This is not a corner to cut.

The two main forms

FBAR (FinCEN Form 114)

Required if you have financial accounts in foreign countries with aggregate value exceeding $10,000 at any point during the year. Most vaulting arrangements do not count as 'financial accounts' for FBAR purposes (because the vault custodian holds metals, not a deposit account), but some arrangements do, particularly those involving precious metals certificates, allocated accounts at banks, or pooled arrangements. When in doubt, file. There is no penalty for filing unnecessarily; the penalties for not filing when required are severe.

FBAR is filed with the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), not with the IRS. Due April 15 with automatic extension to October 15. Filing is free and done online at bsaefiling.fincen.treas.gov.

Form 8938 (IRS Statement of Specified Foreign Financial Assets)

Required if the total value of specified foreign financial assets exceeds $50,000 (for single filers) or $100,000 (married filing jointly) at year-end, or $75,000 / $150,000 at any point during the year. Filed with your 1040 tax return. Like FBAR, Form 8938 typically does not apply to pure vault storage arrangements but does apply to structured products, unallocated metals accounts, and certain overseas retirement-style arrangements.

The reporting rule of thumb

If your offshore metals are held in allocated, segregated form at a licensed vault operator, in your own name, and you have not created any derivative financial arrangement around them, you likely do not need to file either form for the metals themselves. But:

- If you opened a cash account at the same vault provider to fund purchases, that cash account does trigger FBAR once it exceeds $10,000.
- If your vault provider operates a 'bullion savings program' or unallocated account structure, that typically does trigger reporting.
- If you moved funds through a foreign bank to pay for the metals, those banking relationships trigger reporting.

The safe practice is to discuss every offshore metals move with a CPA or tax attorney familiar with foreign asset reporting, in the year you execute it. The cost of a one-hour consultation is negligible relative to the cost of a compliance failure.

Section 2: Second Residencies Under $25,000

A second residency gives you a legal right to live in another country. It also gives you a foundation from which to pursue second citizenship later, should you ever decide you want one. It does not require you to move; most second residencies allow you to maintain them with occasional visits (often as little as once per year, sometimes not at all).

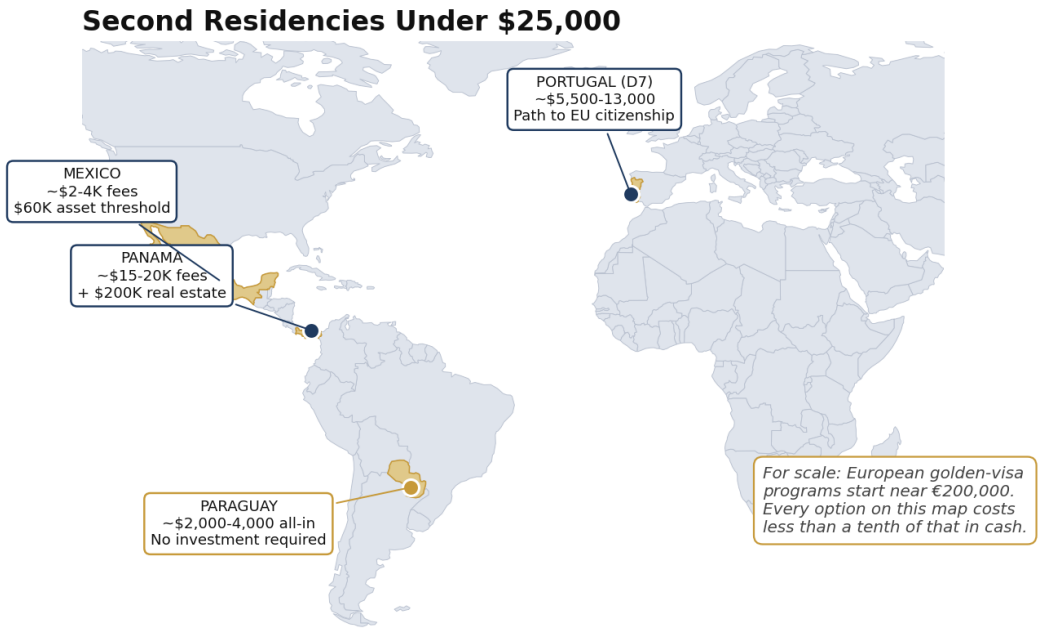
Second residencies do four things for the kind of reader this guide is written for:

1. They create optionality. If your current jurisdiction deteriorates (politically, economically, or in terms of physical safety), you have a pre-arranged legal foothold elsewhere.
2. They sometimes create tax optimization opportunities, particularly for readers who physically relocate or whose income is location-independent.
3. They allow you to open banking and investment relationships in countries that do not readily accept US tourists.
4. They can eventually support a second passport, which is a different but often linked pursuit.

None of this requires you to renounce US citizenship. Dual residency and dual citizenship are legal under US law for almost all purposes. The key constraint is reporting: a US citizen or permanent resident remains subject to US tax on worldwide income regardless of where they live, so a second residency will not usually lower your tax bill. Its value is optionality.

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The four residency routes in Section 2, with the cash it takes to secure each one. Stylized locations.



Source: national migration authority fee schedules, 2026. Verify current requirements before filing. dollarcollapse.com

Paraguay: The Cheapest Legal Residency in the World

Paraguay became the default low-cost residency in Latin America after 2022, when Law 6984/2022 modernized the immigration system. The old $5,000 bank deposit requirement was eliminated. The new structure is: temporary residency first (valid 2 years), then permanent residency after 21 months of continuous stay, with a 10-year permanent residence card issued thereafter.

In 2025, Paraguay received 47,687 applications, a 63 percent increase from 2024. The trend is heavily driven by Americans and Europeans. In April 2026, Paraguay also launched a new Investor Pass that grants direct permanent residency for a $150,000 investment, but for the purposes of this guide, the standard temporary-to-permanent route is the cost-effective path.

Paraguay cost breakdown

Item	DIY	With Agent
Government temporary residency fee	$394	$394
National ID (Cedula) fee	$55	$55
Interpol & local police certificates	$29	$29
US-side documents (FBI check, apostille, translation)	~$368	Handled by agent
Agent/lawyer fees	$0	$1,200–2,300
Travel and accommodation (3–5 day trip)	~$1,200	~$1,200
Total estimated cost	~$2,050	~$3,200–4,200

Source: Paraguay National Directorate of Migration fee schedule 2026, confirmed with multiple Asuncion-based immigration agents April 2026.

Paraguay offers territorial taxation: 0 percent tax on foreign-sourced income. This is meaningful for US readers only in the sense that Paraguay does not double-tax you; you continue to owe US federal tax on worldwide income. But for a reader who eventually becomes a Paraguayan citizen and renounces US citizenship, the Paraguayan tax structure is among the most attractive in the world.

One physical trip to Paraguay is required, typically 3 to 5 business days. Subsequent maintenance of residency requires returning at least once per year (this is loosely enforced but technically required). Applications are typically approved within 2 to 4 months after the in-country visit.

Panama: The Friendly Nations Visa

Panama's Friendly Nations Visa is the historically popular second residency program for Americans, and remains a viable option in 2026, though the costs have risen substantially since the Paraguayan alternative opened up.

The program grants permanent residency through one of two paths: real estate purchase of $200,000+, or a multi-year bank deposit of $200,000+. Lower-cost work-based paths require actual employment with a Panamanian entity.

Panama cost breakdown (real estate path)

- Real estate investment: $200,000 minimum, held for 2 years. Not a cost per se, but the capital commitment.
- Government and legal fees: approximately $15,000 to $20,000 for the full application process.
- In-country travel: one trip required; 5 to 7 business days.

For DollarCollapse readers considering Panama, the math typically works as follows: if you have $200,000+ to deploy in Panamanian real estate (a market with reasonable fundamentals in specific urban areas like Panama City), Panama is attractive. If you are just trying to secure a legal foothold at minimum cost, Paraguay is a much better choice.

Mexico: Temporary and Permanent Residency

Mexico offers a straightforward residency program for readers who meet the income or asset thresholds. Temporary residency requires demonstrating approximately $3,500 per month in recurring income (roughly 300 times Mexico's minimum daily wage) or approximately $60,000 in savings or investments. Permanent residency requires roughly double those figures.

Mexico is a strong choice for readers who want a second residency in a geographically-proximate country with extensive US expat communities, well-developed banking infrastructure, and a cost of living well below the US. It is not the cheapest option (the financial thresholds are meaningful), but the practical utility is high.

Mexico cost breakdown

- Consular processing fees: approximately $50.
- In-country residency fees: approximately $340 for the first year, $200–300 annually thereafter.
- Legal assistance (optional but recommended): $1,500 to $3,500.
- Income threshold: roughly $3,500/month or $60,000 in liquid assets (for temporary residency).
- Total cash outlay beyond the income threshold: approximately $2,000 to $4,000.

Portugal: The D7 Visa

Portugal's D7 Visa (formerly the 'retiree visa,' now also referred to as the passive income visa) has become popular among Americans seeking EU residency. The golden visa path with real estate investment was restricted in 2023, but the D7 path remains accessible.

Requirements: demonstrate passive income of approximately €870 per month (roughly US$950) plus approximately €435 (US$480) per dependent. 'Passive income' is interpreted broadly to include pensions, dividends, rental income, and business distributions.

Portugal cost breakdown

- Consular visa fee: €90.
- In-country residency card fee: approximately €157.
- Legal services (strongly recommended for foreign applicants): €3,000 to €8,000.
- Translation and apostille of documents: €500 to €1,500.
- Initial and renewal medical insurance: approximately €500 annually.
- Total all-in cost in year one: typically €5,000 to €12,000 (US$5,500 to US$13,000), depending on family size and complexity.

After 5 years of Portuguese residency, applicants become eligible for permanent residency; after additional years, for Portuguese citizenship. Portugal is unique among the four options in this section because it offers a legitimate path to EU citizenship within a reasonable timeline. The trade-off is the required minimum stay (legally 16 months over 5 years for residency maintenance, which is a real constraint).

Dominican Republic: The Third-Tier Option

For completeness, the Dominican Republic offers a residency-by-investment program with relatively low capital requirements (approximately $200,000 deposit in a DR bank, or real estate purchase of $200,000+). Legal fees and government costs run approximately $5,000 to $10,000. The DR option is weaker than the four above in terms of jurisdictional strength, banking quality, and long-term stability, but for a reader who specifically wants Caribbean residency at below-Panama costs, it is a legitimate option.

Comparing the Five Residency Programs

Country	Cash outlay	Investment	Timeline	Best for
Paraguay	~$2,000–4,000	None	2–4 months	Lowest-cost legal foothold
Panama	~$15–20K	$200K real estate	4–6 months	Buyers willing to deploy real estate capital
Mexico	~$2–4K	$60K liquid assets	3–6 months	US-proximate practical second home
Portugal	~$5–13K	~$950/mo income	6–12 months	Path to EU citizenship
Dominican Republic	~$5–10K	$200K deposit	6–12 months	Caribbean, second-tier option

Our recommendation

For most DollarCollapse readers looking to establish a second residency as pure diversification (not with any intent to move), Paraguay is the clearly best value in 2026. Total cost under $4,000, processing in 2 to 4 months, no investment or bank deposit required, and territorial tax structure. For readers with an actual interest in EU residency or eventual EU citizenship, Portugal is the right choice despite its higher cost and stay requirements. Mexico fills the middle ground for readers who want a practical

nearby second home. Panama still works if you have real estate capital to deploy; otherwise, Paraguay has structurally replaced it for the under-$25,000 tier.

Section 3: Self-Directed IRA Custodians

The US self-directed IRA landscape contains 30+ firms that advertise themselves as custodians for precious metals IRAs. Most of them are not worth using. The primary issues we have seen over the past decade:

- Most 'custodians' are really marketing companies partnering with a handful of true custodian firms behind the scenes. You end up paying two layers of fees for one service.
- Several widely-advertised providers use fee structures that look cheap on paper but accumulate to 1 to 2 percent annually on account value when storage, administration, and transaction fees are combined.
- A minority of providers have been subject to regulatory actions or customer complaints serious enough that we will not name them by recommendation but will say only: stick with the two firms described below.

Two firms are worth using for a precious metals self-directed IRA: Equity Trust Company and Kingdom Trust Company. A third firm, Strata Trust, is acceptable as a secondary option.

Equity Trust Company

The basics

- Founded in 1974. IRS-approved as a self-directed IRA custodian since 1983.
- Headquartered in Westlake, Ohio.
- Approximately $50 billion in assets under custody and administration (as of Q1 2026).
- One of the two largest self-directed IRA custodians in the United States.
- Accepts independent dealer relationships (does not force bundled purchases).

Fee structure

Item	Fee
Online application (account setup)	$50 one-time
Annual administrative fee (Precious Metals-only account)	$225
Storage fee, segregated (metals held separately in your name)	$160/year
Storage fee, non-segregated (metals pooled, ownership tracked)	$110/year
Transaction fee (per purchase or sale)	$40–75
Wire fees (outgoing, to dealer or depository)	$30 each

Source: Equity Trust retail fee schedule, accessed April 2026 at trustetc.com/fees. Fees subject to change; verify current rates before opening account.

All-in first-year cost for a typical Gold IRA at Equity Trust: approximately $525 to $650 on a $100,000 account (setup + annual admin + segregated storage + 2 transactions). That is 0.5 to 0.65 percent of assets. Compare to 15 to 25 percent effective markup at bundled marketing providers.

How to open an account

Call Equity Trust directly at 1-888-382-4727. Ask for new account opening. Or apply online at trustetc.com. The online application takes about 45 minutes and requires your driver's license, Social Security number, and (if you're rolling over existing IRA funds) your current IRA statement.

Equity Trust works with any IRS-approved dealer and any IRS-approved depository. You choose these independently. The workflow for a Gold IRA purchase is: fund the Equity Trust account (via rollover or contribution), select your dealer (we recommend Miles Franklin, covered in the main Playbook), direct Equity Trust to wire funds to the dealer, dealer ships to the depository, depository confirms receipt to Equity Trust, Equity Trust confirms holding in your account.

Kingdom Trust Company

The basics

- Founded 2009.
- Headquartered in Murray, Kentucky.
- Approximately $17 billion in assets under custody.
- Smaller than Equity Trust but with a strong reputation among alternative-asset-focused investors.
- Specializes heavily in alternative assets (precious metals, cryptocurrency, private equity, real estate).

Fee structure

Item	Fee
Account opening	$75 one-time
Annual administrative fee (Precious Metals IRA)	$375
Storage fee (through partner depository)	0.50% of asset value
Transaction fees	$50 per transaction

All-in first-year cost on a $100,000 account: approximately $925 to $1,050 (setup + annual admin + 0.50% storage + 2 transactions). Somewhat more expensive than Equity Trust on mid-sized accounts; roughly comparable on larger accounts where the fixed fees matter less.

Why Kingdom Trust still makes sense

Two reasons a DollarCollapse reader might choose Kingdom Trust over Equity Trust:

- **Alternative asset concentration.** If you plan to hold a mix of precious metals, cryptocurrency, and private assets in the same self-directed IRA, Kingdom Trust's concentration in alternative assets means they are more fluent in the relevant procedures and paperwork. Equity Trust handles all these asset types, but their customer base is more mainstream.

- **Customer service quality.** At Kingdom Trust's smaller scale, the individual representative relationship is often noticeably more personal than at Equity Trust, which operates at near-institutional scale. For readers who value service over cost, this can matter.

Strata Trust Company

Founded 2008, headquartered in Austin, Texas, with approximately $5 billion in assets under custody. Strata Trust is the third option we view as legitimate. Their fee structure is comparable to Kingdom Trust, somewhat higher than Equity Trust on most profiles. Strata has a strong reputation in the industry but a fraction of the precious metals IRA volume of the other two.

We recommend Strata as a secondary option primarily for readers who for whatever reason cannot or do not want to use Equity Trust or Kingdom Trust. The quality is there; there is just no specific advantage that would lead us to start with Strata.

Custodians We Do Not Recommend

We will not name the specific firms here because we do not want to get into defamation territory, but the pattern is consistent. Custodians we have seen DollarCollapse readers struggle with share the following characteristics:

- The firm's primary marketing is to retail customers through aggressive advertising (TV, radio, direct mail).
- The firm bundles the custodian relationship with a preferred dealer and steers customers toward that dealer.
- The firm's fee structure is opaque: advertised as 'no fees' or 'flat fee' in marketing, but actual annual cost on an average account runs well past the advertised number when all charges are aggregated.
- The firm has a parent company or holding structure that is not readily apparent from the website.
- Customer reviews consistently describe difficulty transferring funds out of the account, with substantial exit fees, delays, or procedural complications.

If you are currently using a self-directed IRA custodian and want to evaluate whether it is one of the ones worth using, the simplest test is to call and ask: 'What is the total annual cost of maintaining my account, and can you itemize every fee category?' An honest custodian will read off the fee schedule in under two minutes. A non-honest one will redirect, obfuscate, or quote a low number that does not match your actual billing history. Compare your last year's total debits to the quote.

Section 4: The Three Common Mistakes

Every DollarCollapse reader who has tried to internationalize has made at least one of these three mistakes. Many have made all three. Each one costs meaningful money and time. Here is what they are, what they cost, and how to avoid them.

Mistake 1: Jurisdiction Wrong

Picking an offshore jurisdiction for how it sounds, without checking whether US legal process can still reach into it.

Examples we have seen:

- **The Cayman Islands metals account.** The Cayman Islands are a well-developed offshore financial center. They are also a British Overseas Territory with extensive US legal cooperation treaties. US federal courts routinely reach Cayman holdings through mutual legal assistance treaties (MLATs). A reader who moves metals to Cayman because it feels offshore has typically gained exactly zero jurisdictional diversification versus a US vault, while paying higher fees and triggering reporting complexity.
- **The Bahamas bank account.** Same structural problem. The Bahamas has extensive US cooperation agreements. A Bahamas account is a reportable foreign account with all the compliance friction, and almost none of the jurisdictional protection compared to an independent jurisdiction like Singapore.
- **Vanuatu or other Pacific micronations.** These jurisdictions market aggressively on 'privacy' but their legal and financial infrastructure is thin. Vault providers are few; insurance quality is questionable; enforceability of property rights depends on political stability that fluctuates. Vanuatu sells privacy it cannot enforce.

How to avoid it

Before opening any offshore account or vault position, answer three questions in writing:

1. Is this jurisdiction a party to a mutual legal assistance treaty or FATCA intergovernmental agreement with the United States? (If yes, the jurisdictional benefit is limited. Not zero, but limited.)
2. Does this jurisdiction have a history of respecting foreign property rights when political pressure is applied? (Singapore, Switzerland: strong track records. Certain Caribbean micronations: weak track records.)
3. Is the vault provider itself independently regulated and insured by a major Western insurer (Lloyd's of London, Marsh, or equivalent)? (If no, the underlying security is not what it appears to be.)

If all three answers are yes, the jurisdiction is legitimate. If any one is no, consider a different jurisdiction.

In 2026, the jurisdictions that consistently answer yes across all three are: Singapore, Switzerland, Dubai (with caveats noted earlier), Australia (Perth Mint), and Canada (Brinks facilities). Beyond these five, rigorous analysis is required.

Mistake 2: Reporting Wrong

Opening offshore accounts or vault positions without understanding which US reports apply, then discovering years later that penalties exceed the entire value of the protected assets.

This is the mistake with the most severe financial consequences. Penalties for willful FBAR violations can reach the greater of $100,000 or 50 percent of the account value, per year of non-filing. A $200,000 offshore account that went unreported for five years can generate penalties exceeding $500,000. We have seen readers in this situation.

The most common reporting errors

- **Assuming vault storage does not count as a financial account.** For pure allocated segregated storage, this is usually correct. But most vault providers also offer cash accounts, unallocated pool accounts, or 'savings programs' that DO count as financial accounts for FBAR purposes. If your vault provider holds any dollar balance on your behalf, you may have an FBAR filing requirement.
- **Assuming the threshold is per-account rather than aggregate.** FBAR applies when the aggregate value of all foreign financial accounts exceeds $10,000 at any point in the year. Two $6,000 accounts in different countries trigger filing; one $9,000 account does not. This is an easy mistake to make with multiple small positions.
- **Filing FBAR but not Form 8938 (or vice versa).** These are two separate filings with separate thresholds at separate agencies. FBAR goes to FinCEN; Form 8938 goes to the IRS with your 1040. Readers routinely file one and forget the other, even though the assets being reported are often identical.
- **Not telling your tax preparer.** The single most common root cause. A CPA who does not know you have offshore assets cannot file the required forms for you. Tell them in the year you open the account.

How to avoid it

Four rules:

1. Tell your tax preparer about every offshore account or vault position in the year you open it, before tax season.
2. If your tax preparer has not filed FBAR or Form 8938 before, find one who has. Most small-practice CPAs can learn the forms but you are better off with one who already knows them.
3. File FBAR by April 15 (with automatic extension to October 15 if needed). There is no cost to file.
4. If you are currently behind on FBAR or Form 8938 filings, do not start filing this year and hope it goes away. The IRS offers specific disclosure programs (Streamlined Filing Compliance Procedures) that shrink penalties for readers who come forward proactively. Consult a tax attorney experienced in foreign asset disclosure before you make any move. The attorney consultation typically costs $500 to $1,500 and can save six- or seven-figure sums in penalties.

Mistake 3: Sequencing Wrong

Executing offshore moves before the basic domestic defensive position is complete, which results in jurisdictional complexity that the reader is not yet ready to manage.

The classic pattern: a reader encounters the Playbook and immediately starts researching Singapore vaults and Paraguayan residency. Six months later, the reader has a Singapore vault with $25,000 of gold in it, a pending Paraguayan residency application, a handful of reporting forms to figure out, and the following unfinished items back home:

- No tax-advantaged retirement account contributions for the current year.
- No emergency cash reserve.
- No domestic physical gold.
- A pile of credit card debt at 22 percent interest.
- No updated estate documents reflecting any of these international moves.

That is an expensive and complex way to avoid the work that matters most. The first three Playbook sections exist in that order for a reason: domestic defense, then hard assets, then internationalization. Doing step three without steps one and two is worse than not doing step three at all.

The right sequence

The order that works:

1. Playbook Moves 1 through 7 (Defense): Tax-advantaged contributions, debt reduction, emergency reserve, insurance review, estate documents. Complete all seven before moving on.
2. Playbook Moves 8 through 16 (Hard Assets): Domestic precious metals position established through a recommended dealer, stored either at home in a quality safe or at a US depository. Get comfortable with the mechanics of buying, storing, and selling metals before going international.
3. Then and only then, Playbook Moves 17 through 22 (Internationalization), supported by this guide. Offshore portion of metals position, first second-residency application, possible additional jurisdictional moves.
4. Playbook Moves 23 through 27 (Offense) at the same time or after, as your total position size allows.

The test

Before opening any offshore position, answer: Have I completed Defense Moves 1 through 7? Have I completed at least 80 percent of Hard Assets Moves 8 through 16? If no to either, the right next step is the basic move you skipped.

The offshore positions will still be there when you are ready. They will not disappear because you spent six months getting your domestic position in order first.

Section 5: The Execution Checklist

A one-page checklist for readers who have completed the Playbook's Defense and Hard Assets sections and are ready to execute internationalization moves. Work through it in order. Do not skip steps.

Phase 1: Offshore metals storage (weeks 1-6)

- Confirm Playbook Defense Moves 1-7 complete. Confirm Hard Assets Moves 8-13 complete.
- Identify target offshore allocation: typically 20 to 40 percent of total precious metals position goes offshore.
- Select primary offshore jurisdiction: default recommendation Singapore via BullionStar for positions under $250,000, Silver Bullion for large silver positions, Le Freeport via SGPMX for positions $50,000 to $250,000.
- Discuss offshore move with tax preparer. Confirm which reports will apply in the year of the move.
- Open offshore vault account. Most providers allow online applications; allow 5 to 10 business days for verification.
- Fund the account via international wire. Confirm receipt before authorizing any purchases.
- Execute first metals purchase through the offshore provider. Keep the initial transaction small ($10,000-$25,000) to confirm the workflow before committing larger amounts.

Phase 2: Second residency (months 2-6)

- Decide on residency objective: pure legal foothold (Paraguay), practical second home (Mexico), EU path (Portugal), or real-estate-linked (Panama).
- Obtain FBI Identity History Summary (~$18), State Department apostille, and any required marriage or birth certificates.
- Schedule the required in-country trip. Paraguay requires one visit of 3 to 5 business days. Mexico requires two visits. Portugal requires a longer first-stay period.
- Engage in-country legal agent if you are not Spanish- or Portuguese-fluent. Budget $1,200 to $3,500 depending on country.
- Submit residency application in-country. Processing typically 2 to 6 months depending on country and case complexity.
- Upon approval, obtain the national ID card (cedula in most Latin American countries, residency permit in Portugal). This typically requires a follow-up trip or can be handled by power of attorney.

Phase 3: Self-directed IRA precious metals (weeks 1-10 parallel to other moves)

- If pursuing a Gold IRA rollover, call Equity Trust at 1-888-382-4727 to open a self-directed IRA.
- Initiate the rollover from your existing IRA. Allow 7 to 10 business days for custodian-to-custodian transfer.
- Once Equity Trust account is funded, call Miles Franklin (or alternative recommended dealer) to quote the purchase.

- Confirm the purchase. Equity Trust wires funds, Miles Franklin ships to IRS-approved depository.
- Receive confirmation from Equity Trust when metals are in place.

Phase 4: Compliance and review (annually)

- File FBAR by April 15 (with October 15 extension available) if aggregate foreign financial accounts exceeded $10,000 at any point during the year.
- File Form 8938 with your 1040 if thresholds apply.
- Review all offshore positions for fee changes, provider changes, or jurisdictional changes.
- Visit second-residency country at least once per year to maintain residency standing.
- Review total portfolio allocation: domestic vs. offshore metals, retirement vs. taxable, jurisdictional balance.

Resources and Further Reading

Vault providers mentioned in this guide

- BullionStar (Singapore): bullionstar.com
- Silver Bullion Pte Ltd (Singapore): silverbullion.com.sg
- SGPMX / Le Freeport (Singapore): sgpmx.com
- Indigo Precious Metals (Singapore/Hong Kong): indigopreciousmetals.com
- Malca-Amit (multi-location): malca-amit.com
- BullionVault (Zurich, London, Singapore, Toronto, New York): bullionvault.com
- Perth Mint (Australia): perthmint.com

Residency agents we have seen used successfully

We do not formally recommend any residency agent. Below are the firms we have seen DollarCollapse readers use, with a note on track record. Verify their current rates and credentials yourself before engaging.

- Paraguay: NTL Trust, ExpatMoney, Paraguay Simply. Typical agent fees $1,200 to $2,500.
- Panama: multiple Panama City law firms offer friendly nations visa services. Fees typically $5,000 to $10,000.
- Portugal: Global Citizen Solutions, CS Associates. Fees €3,000 to €8,000.
- Mexico: Mexperience, Mexlaw. Fees $1,500 to $3,500.

IRA custodians

- Equity Trust Company: 1-888-382-4727, trustetc.com.
- Kingdom Trust Company: 1-888-753-6972, kingdomtrust.com.
- Strata Trust Company: 1-866-928-9394, stratatrust.com.

US reporting forms

- FBAR (FinCEN Form 114): filed at bsaefiling.fincen.treas.gov.

- Form 8938: filed with your IRS Form 1040. See irs.gov for current thresholds.
- Streamlined Filing Compliance Procedures (for late disclosures): see irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/streamlined-filing-compliance-procedures.

Recommended additional reading

- *Offshore Living and Investing* by Kathleen Peddicord. A comprehensive reference on expatriate life, updated periodically.
- *Second Passport Strategy* by Mark Nestmann. Focused on citizenship (beyond the residency scope of this guide) but useful for readers considering long-term second passport pursuits.
- *The Sovereign Individual* by James Dale Davidson and Lord William Rees-Mogg. The foundational work on the logic of jurisdictional diversification, published in 1997 but more relevant now than when it was written.
