

October 2021

THE EDUCATED INVESTOR

A GUIDE TO RETIREMENT PLANNING

PAGE 3

U.S. Drops in Global Retirement Rankings: These Countries Do It Better

PAGE 5

Researchers Discover Fossilized Footprints of First Humans in North America

PAGE 6

Recipe of the Month

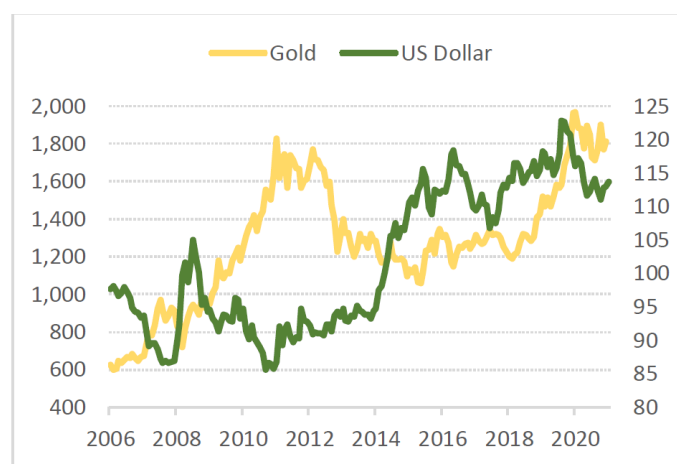
PAGE 7

Sudoku Section & October Holidays

Is Gold Losing Its Shine?

A safe haven during the 2020 pandemic, gold rose 20.9%¹ and outperformed the S&P 500 index which gained 18.7%. However, the commodity has slowed down in 2021 and is down -4.7% for the year² despite widespread inflation concerns. Gold is often viewed as a way to hedge inflation risk, and the recent price drop has left many investors confused. In addition to inflation, gold is influenced by many other factors. A closer look may shed some light.

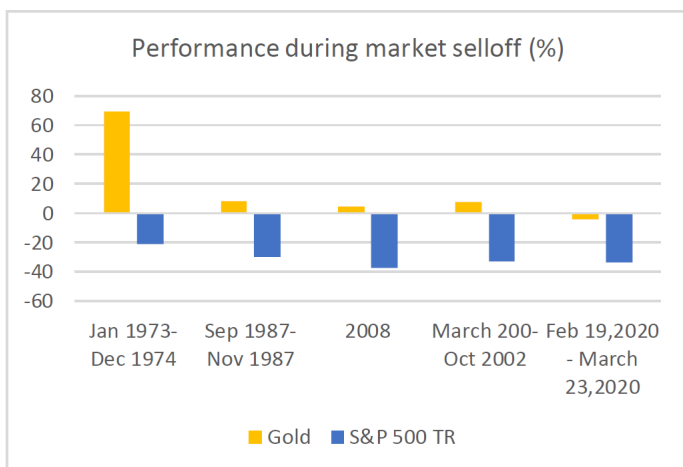
Stronger US Dollar: Gold prices are inversely related to the US dollar, as seen by the historical price chart. Gold is not just a commodity but a monetary asset. The international price of gold is quoted in US dollars, so when the US dollar rises in value relative to other currencies around the world, the price of gold tends to fall in dollar terms. In 2021, the US dollar has risen in value as the US economic recovery continues, increasing the likelihood of higher interest rates down the road. Gold, while shiny, does not have a yield or dividend and can struggle when interest rates rise and offer additional options for investors seeking yield and safety.



Source: FactSet. Gold represented by NYMEX Near Term Futures (NY GOLD-FDS); US Dollar represented by Nominal Trade Weighted Exchange Rate Broad Definition (NEXRD-FDS)

The stock market boom: While gold has an inverse relationship with the dollar, its relationship with the stock market has varied over the years. Investors often perceive gold as a haven in the event of a severe market downturn and gold has proven its weight during periods of equity market selloff, as seen in the chart below (on page two).³

In 2021, the stock markets have soared as the S&P 500 hit 53 new record highs through the end of August.⁴ As investors have piled into equities for 2021, the need for a haven asset like gold has perhaps taken a backseat.

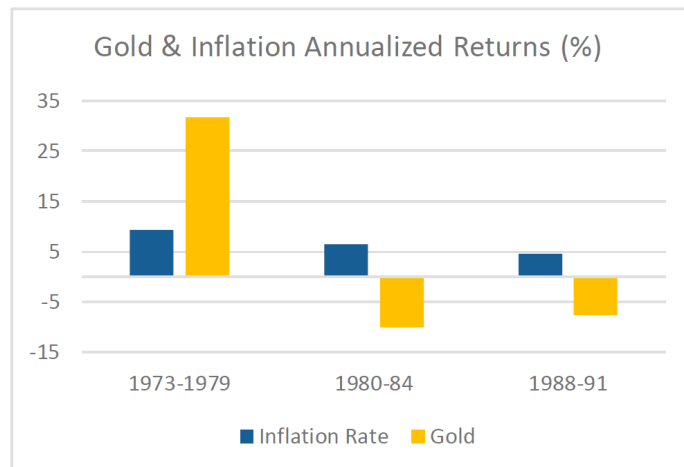


Source: Morningstar. Gold represented by LBMA Gold Price PM USD. Equity returns represented by S&P 500 Total Return Index.

Crypto mania gains steam: Gold, the conventional way of addressing inflation, may have taken a backseat to cryptocurrencies as large gains have attracted more investors. Despite large gains, it's important to highlight cryptocurrencies are still in their infancy, and there aren't proven track records to show success as a hedge against inflation.

In the near-term, gold can be impacted by many other factors beyond inflation as discussed so far, but that still leaves the question of whether gold is a proven inflation hedge. A look at the longer-term data on the historical record of gold as a hedge against inflation shows mixed results. According to research by Morningstar, during the high inflationary period of the 1970s, where the average annual inflation rate was roughly 9.3%, gold generated stellar returns of 35%.⁵ However, during the more moderate inflationary environments of the early 1980s and 1998-91, gold had negative returns.

Gold's inconsistent historical relationship with inflation and potential competition from newcomers like cryptocurrencies may give pause to some investors, who now have more investment options than ever before. However, given low correlations with equities, gold may still have a role in diversified portfolios as a hedge against potential downturn.



Source: Morningstar. Inflation represented by Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, not seasonally adjusted, 1982-1984. Gold represented by LBMA Gold Price PM USD

In short, gold hasn't lost its shine, but factors such as a strong US dollar, stock market boom, and crypto mania have made today's portfolios more dynamic.

1 Gold is represented by the Bloomberg Gold Sub Index. Return Source: FactSet.
 2 Source: FactSet. Year to date returns through August 27th, 2021.
 3 <https://www.morningstar.com/articles/993455/beware-the-hype-when-investing-in-gold>
 4 <https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-stock-markets-dow-up-date-08-30-2021-11630310455>
 5 <https://www.morningstar.com/articles/993455/beware-the-hype-when-investing-in-gold>

AssetMark, Inc. 1655 Grant Street, 10th Floor
 Concord, CA 94520-2445
 800-664-5345

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This is for informational purposes only, is not a solicitation, and should not be considered investment, legal or tax advice. The information in this report has been drawn from sources believed to be reliable, but its accuracy is not guaranteed, and is subject to change. Investors seeking more information should contact their financial advisor. Financial advisors may seek more information by contacting AssetMark at 800-664-5345.

Investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal. Past performance does not guarantee future results. Asset allocation cannot eliminate the risk of fluctuating prices and uncertain returns. There is no guarantee that a diversified portfolio will outperform a non-diversified portfolio. No investment strategy, such as asset allocation, can guarantee a profit or protect against loss. Actual client results will vary based on investment selection, timing, market conditions, and tax situation. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Indexes are unmanaged, do not incur management fees, costs and expenses and cannot be invested in directly. Index performance assumes the reinvestment of dividends.

Investments in equities, bonds, options, and other securities, whether held individually or through mutual funds and exchange traded funds, can decline significantly in response to adverse market conditions, company-specific events, changes in exchange rates, and domestic, international, economic, and political developments.

AssetMark, Inc. is an investment adviser registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. AssetMark and third-party service providers are separate and unaffiliated companies. Each party is responsible for their own content and services. ©2021 AssetMark, Inc. All rights reserved. 102902 | C21-17997 | 09/2021 | EXP 09/30/2022

| U.S. Drops in Global Retirement Rankings: These Countries Do It Better

The U.S. has plenty to improve upon when it comes retirement. While Iceland is rated as the top country for retirement security for the third year in a row, the U.S. dropped to No. 17 in the 2021 Global Retirement Index (GRI). The U.S. fell one spot in the annual rankings compiled by Natixis Investment Managers and CoreData Research after posting lower health scores, including a sharp decline in life expectancy.

How Retirement Rankings Were Determined

The GRI, which studies 44 countries across five continents, examines various factors that drive retirement security and aims to help retirees determine “where and how to most efficiently preserve wealth while enjoying retirement.” Each year, researchers consider data from a number of sources and develop a composite retirement security score for each country. The scores are based on four different sub-indices that comprise of 18 metrics:

Finances in Retirement: Measures a retiree’s access to quality financial services to help preserve savings value and maximize income. This sub-index accounts for inflation, interest rates, tax pressure, governance and other indicators.

Health: Measures access to quality health services, taking into account life expectancy, health expenditures per capita and non-insured health expenditures.

Material Well-Being: The material means to live comfortably in retirement, including income per capita, unemployment and income equality.

Quality of Life: Measures the cleanliness and safety of an environment, taking into account air quality, water and sanitation, happiness and other factors.



Best Countries for Retirement

Iceland leads a group of 18 European countries that rank in the top 25 for retirement security. The tiny Nordic island nation is first overall for Material Well-Being, sixth for Quality of Life, ninth for Finances in Retirement and 12th for Health.

Meanwhile, Switzerland is ranked as the second best country for retirement, followed by Norway, Ireland and the Netherlands. New Zealand, Australia and Canada are the only non-European nations considered among the 10 best countries for retirement.

Here’s the top 25 for 2021:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Iceland | 13. Sweden |
| 2. Switzerland | 14. Czech Republic |
| 3. Norway | 15. Finland |
| 4. Ireland | 16. Slovenia |
| 5. Netherlands | 17. United States |
| 6. New Zealand | 18. United Kingdom |
| 7. Australia | 19. Israel |
| 8. Germany | 20. Malta |
| 9. Denmark | 21. Belgium |
| 10. Canada | 22. Japan |
| 11. Luxembourg | 23. South Korea |
| 12. Austria | 24. Estonia |
| | 25. France |

Why the U.S. Has Fallen

While the retirement conditions in the U.S. have improved since 2013 when the first GRI ranked the U.S. 19th overall, the country has never cracked the top 10. The U.S. slipped one spot from No. 16 in 2020 after life expectancy in the U.S. dropped one full year amid the COVID-19 pandemic, pushing the country's Health rating down.

Despite solid rankings for health expenditures per capita and non-insured health expenditures, the U.S. has suffered the largest COVID-19 death toll in the world (617,321 deaths as of August 2021), the study notes. "While the USA has an impressive healthcare and medical infrastructure in many ways, it failed to take coordinated, nationwide actions such as testing and tracing Covid-19 cases in the initial stages," the study states. "This has been exacerbated by the lack of universal health coverage in the US compared to other advanced nations."

What to Consider When Retiring Abroad

Having seen the rankings, you may be rethinking your retirement plans and exploring options beyond the U.S. borders. However, if you have your sights set on retiring abroad, that kind of a move requires careful planning and plenty of research. Two key components of any retirement plan are especially vital for those who are retiring overseas: healthcare and taxes.

While most retirees rely on Medicare to cover at least a portion of their health expenses, it doesn't typically cover Americans while they live overseas. As a result, you'll need to consider your healthcare options where you'll be living. The good news is that every country in the GRI top 10 has some form of universal healthcare, but you'll likely need to establish permanent residency to become eligible. The requirements for becoming a permanent citizen vary from country to country, so your research should start there.

You'll also need to keep your tax bill in mind when you retire abroad. Despite the fact that you'll be living in a foreign country, the U.S. government will tax your worldwide income, including any income you earn abroad. However, the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion should help you lessen your tax burden, as it allows those who qualify to exclude up to \$108,700 in 2021 foreign earnings from their income.



Bottom Line

When it comes to retirement, Europe seems to have figured out what we in the U.S. haven't yet. According to the 2021 Global Retirement Index, Iceland is the best place in the world for retirement, followed by Switzerland, Norway, Ireland and the Netherlands. The U.S. ranks No. 17 overall, falling one spot from a year ago. If retiring abroad is in your future plans, consider how difficult it is to become a permanent resident or citizen in the country to which you're looking to move. Becoming a permanent resident is key, especially in countries with robust, universal healthcare. Also, pay close attention to your tax liability and take advantage of the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion.

Title: U.S. Drops in Global Retirement Rankings: These Countries Do It Better
Source: <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/u-drops-global-retirement-rankings-012510937.html>
Author: Patrick Villanova
© 2021 Verizon Media. All rights reserved.

Researchers Discover Fossilized Footprints of First Humans in North America

Ancient fossil footprints found at White Sands National Park in New Mexico have recently been discovered to belong to some of the first humans in North America. First spotted by the park's Resource Manager David Bustos, these ossified tracks give a fascinating window into life in the area thousands of years ago. Archeologists and researchers from Bournemouth University, the National Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, Cornell University, and the University of Arizona led joint research to learn more about the origins of these markings.

Data uncovered by the experts revealed the footprints to be about 21,000 to 23,000 years old—several thousands of years before humans were originally believed to have arrived on the continent.

“It’s the earliest unequivocal evidence for humans in the Americas,” says Matthew Bennett, a professor of environmental and geographic sciences at Bournemouth University and the lead author of the study. “A footprint is a really good, unequivocal data point. That’s the importance of this site—we know they were there...There are multiple footprint layers spanning a significant amount of time, suggesting a sustained human presence in the area during the Last Glacial Maximum, as opposed to a single event.”

Though it is mostly desert now, the area used to be a verdant wetland at the time these impressions were made, populated by prehistoric animals such as mammoths, giant ground sloths, dire wolves, and wild camels. People likely hunted there, and animal tracks can be found intermingled with those of their two-legged neighbors. The fossilized human footprints were



originally formed in soft mud on the banks of what used to be a shallow lake, which now forms part of Alkali Flat at White Sands.

Utilizing seeds found embedded in the prints and in the layers of sediment above and below them, scientists used a process called radiocarbon dating to analyze and establish a timeline for when these markings occurred. “Our dates on the seeds are tightly clustered and maintain stratigraphic order above and below multiple footprint horizons,” says Kathleen Springer of the U.S. Geological Survey, “this was a remarkable outcome.”

Further information from the study can be found in the journal *Science*, where the research was published.

Title: Researchers Discover Fossilized Footprints of First Humans in North America
Source: <https://mymodernmet.com/oldest-human-fossil-footprints-white-sands/>
Author: Arnesia Young
Photo: NPS: <https://www.nps.gov/index.htm>
My Modern Met © 2021. All rights reserved.

Pumpkin Deviled Eggs



INGREDIENTS:

- 12 large eggs
- 1/2 c. mayonnaise
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1 1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp. paprika
- 4 chives, cut into small pieces

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place eggs in a single layer in a saucepan and add enough water to cover eggs with 2" of water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and cook, covered, 1 minute. Remove from heat and let sit, covered, 14 minutes, then rinse under cold water.
2. Crack shells and carefully peel under cool running water.
3. Halve eggs lengthwise. Spoon out yolks into a small bowl and place whites on a serving platter. Using a fork, mash yolks, then stir in mayonnaise, lemon juice, and Dijon and season with salt and pepper.
4. Spoon mixture evenly among egg whites and smooth top.
5. Carefully dust paprika all over yolk mixture, completely covering yolk. Use a sharp paring knife to make ridges down the paprika-dusted yolk to look like a pumpkin.
6. Place chive above egg mixture to look like a stem and serve.



Sources: <https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/recipes/a44140/pumpkin-deviled-eggs-recipe/>; Produceforkids.com



SERVINGS: 6

Prep Time: 35 Minutes



The Sudoku Section



5	9	8	3	7	2	6	4	1
1	4	3	6	5	8	7	2	9
6	2	7	9	4	1	3	8	5
2	5	1	7	8	6	9	3	4
8	7	6	4	9	3	1	5	2
9	3	4	1	2	5	8	6	7
7	1	5	8	6	4	2	9	3
3	8	2	5	1	9	4	7	6
4	6	9	2	3	7	5	1	8

The answers

8					2			
9	7							
				9		5		7
7		8		2			3	6
	5							
	3	6	9					2
5		3		4	6		2	9
		7				3		
	4						6	



October Special Days & Holidays

(Financial Planning Month)

1st- World Smile Day

4th- World Animal Day

& Child Health Day

5th- World Teacher's Day

12th- National Savings Day

15th- International Credit Union Day

16th- World Student Day &

World Food Day

23rd- Make a Difference Day

24th- Mother-in-Law Day

26th- Pumpkin Day

31st- Halloween



Source: www.printmysudoku.com