

BMO: Many Canadians looking to U.S. for buying properties

By Derek Abma, Financial Post March 25, 2011



Sick of the snow? Feel like spending some time in Florida? Canadians are keen on buying U.S. property, according to a new survey. The following are the bank's tips for the increasing number of Canadians looking to buy properties south of the border...

Photograph by: Joe Skipper, Reuters

What should you watch out for when looking to buy real estate in the U.S.? [Find out here.](#)

OTTAWA — Interested in buying some property in Florida?

It's not such a far-fetched idea right now for many Canadians, with housing prices in the United States at depressed levels and the Canadian dollar holding steady above the U.S. greenback.

About one in five Canadians are interested in buying some property in the U.S., according to survey results released by the Bank of Montreal on Friday.

The bank said that housing prices in the U.S., overall, have declined about 30 per cent over the last four years. Some of the hot spots Canadians are likely to have visited in recent months have seen even bigger declines.

In Florida itself, prices in Miami are down 49 per cent and 44 per cent in Tampa, BMO said. Housing prices are down 54 per cent in Phoenix and 57 per cent in Las Vegas, it added.

However, one of BMO's experts said such ideal conditions for Canadians to buy property in the U.S. is unlikely to last.

"Now, with the American economy and employment gaining strength, home sales should pick up and put a floor under soft prices," said BMO chief economist Sal Guatieri, adding that the U.S. dollar is also expected to gain strength. "We expect prices to rise over time as the overhang of unsold homes eases."

Among men, 29 per cent said they would consider buying a home in the U.S. right now compared to 16 per cent of women.

The results were based on an online poll of 1,511 Canadians taken by Leger Marketing in the last week of January. BMO said such a sample size would normally produce results representative of the population within 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.