

Spain

Mainland Spain & the Balearics

A city home, a coastal retreat or a new beginning. Understand the purchase process before making your commitment.

01 Define your search

Set your preferred area, budget, property type and whether the home is for lifestyle use, investment or relocation.

02 Prepare to purchase

Foreign buyers normally obtain a Spanish NIE identification number for dealings connected with Spain. Appoint an independent Spanish lawyer early.

03 Find the property

View and compare suitable properties, including location, community costs, condition, licensing and rental considerations where relevant.

04 Offer and reservation

Agree commercial terms. A reservation agreement and payment are common, but your lawyer should review the terms before money becomes non-refundable.

05 Legal due diligence

Your lawyer checks title, ownership, registered mortgages/charges, planning or licence matters, community liabilities and other documentation. A Nota Simple is a key registry check.

06 Private purchase contract

Once checks are satisfactory, the parties commonly sign a private purchase contract. A further deposit is often paid under the agreed terms.

07 Notary and completion

The public deed of sale is signed before a Spanish notary. The balance is paid and possession is normally transferred.

08 Tax and registration

Purchase taxes are settled and the new ownership is registered at the Spanish Property Registry.

What to budget for

First delivery: IVA and AJD

A qualifying first delivery of a dwelling by a developer generally attracts 10% IVA in mainland Spain and the Balearics; some protected housing has a different rate. AJD may also apply at the regional rate. Tax classification, rather than the marketing description “new”, determines treatment; separately sold land, commercial premises or parking can differ.

Resale: regional ITP and taxable value

Ordinary resales generally attract ITP. The Autonomous Community sets rates, bands and reliefs. The applicable cadastral reference value can mean the tax base exceeds the agreed price; higher declared or consideration amounts can prevail. Ask the lawyer to confirm the statutory base, including cases with no reference value. It is not always price multiplied by one national rate.

Completion and ongoing costs

Obtain quotes for legal work, notary, registration, surveys, bank valuation and foreign exchange; distinguish purchase-deed costs from mortgage-deed costs. Budget separately for municipal IBI, community fees, maintenance and relevant income or wealth taxes. Reservation and contract deposits normally count towards the price, subject to the contract.

Build your budget from the price plus a property-specific tax assessment, quoted professional and registration fees, finance and currency costs, and any works or moving costs. Show annual ownership costs separately. Confirm what is included in the price and what is payable at each stage. No single “all-in” percentage is reliable for every purchase.

Reviewed 28 September 2026. The main process below concerns ordinary residential purchases in mainland Spain and the Balearics. Regional tax rates, municipal rules and the legal tax base vary. The Canary Islands, Ceuta, Melilla and foral territories require their own assessment.

Before you commit

- Obtain your NIE and instruct an independent lawyer before paying a reservation deposit.
- Check the Nota Simple, planning position, licences and any community debts.
- Ask your lawyer to explain deposit terms, withdrawal consequences and the completion timetable.
- If rental income is part of your plan, check local permissions and community rules before relying on it.

What changes for your purchase

Autonomous Community and municipality

ITP and AJD differ by region and may be progressive. Andalusia, Madrid, Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearics cannot share one assumed rate. Municipal planning, coastal restrictions and rental permissions must be checked for the address.

Price and tax base

A higher value can move a purchase into another band or remove a relief. Check the reference value and total property value, especially for a share or linked assets. Ask for a written tax calculation showing the base, bands, reliefs and transaction date.

Resale, new build and off-plan

Check the actual IVA/ITP classification. For off-plan purchases, have the lawyer verify planning permission, protection of advance payments, specification, completion deadline and refund rights before paying.

Apartment, villa, rural or mixed-use

For apartments, check community debts, rules and planned works. For villas and rural land, verify boundaries, lawful buildings, utilities and access. Land, commercial premises, mixed use and separately titled garages need tailored legal and tax advice.

Home, holiday use or rental

Main-home, age, income and other conditions can affect regional reliefs. A holiday home or letting investment may not qualify. Do not assume a tourist licence is available or transferable; check regional, municipal and building rules.

Residence, structure and finance

Residence and nationality are different. Check non-resident filings, ownership structure and inheritance planning with advisers. Buying a property does not itself grant immigration permission. Mortgage availability, valuation, currency costs and lender conditions vary.

Official resources

[FCDO · Buying property in Spain](#)

[AEAT · IVA or ITP](#)

[Catastro · Taxable and reference values](#)

[Andalucía · ITP and AJD](#)

[Catalunya · Transfer-tax bands and reliefs](#)

[Illes Balears · Transfer-tax rates](#)

General guidance only. Obtain independent legal, tax and financial advice before committing to a purchase. Not updated automatically. Recheck rules for the actual transaction date.

Local terms, made clear

Local legal terms matter. These are plain-language explanations, not equivalent legal categories across countries. Confirm the actual ownership rights and documents with your independent local lawyer.

Pleno dominio

Full ownership, rather than only a bare-ownership or use right. It can still be subject to mortgages, easements, planning restrictions and community obligations. Your lawyer must confirm the rights actually being sold.

Nuda propiedad / usufructo

Bare ownership and the right to use and enjoy a property can belong to different people. Buying nuda propiedad does not necessarily give immediate occupation. Check the usufruct's duration, beneficiaries and obligations.

Propiedad horizontal / comunidad de propietarios

An individually owned unit with a share in common parts and community obligations. Check the cuota de participación, statutes, regular charges, unpaid debts and derramas (special assessments). This is not automatically British leasehold.

Nota simple / Registro de la Propiedad

The nota simple is an informative extract of registered ownership, rights and charges at the time of issue. It is not the sale deed or a guarantee of planning legality. Obtain an up-to-date extract.

Escritura pública de compraventa

The public sale deed signed before a notary. Your independent lawyer should check its terms and arrange the appropriate tax and registration steps. The notary's role does not replace your own legal representation.

Catastro / valor de referencia

The Catastro is an administrative property record, distinct from the Land Registry. Valor de referencia is a cadastral value relevant to certain taxes; it is not the asking price or a surveyor's market valuation.

Arras / contrato privado

A deposit or private contract can create binding obligations before the notarial deed. There are different forms of arras: withdrawal rights and loss or repayment consequences depend on the agreement. Never assume a universal 10% deposit.

Superficie útil / superficie construida

Usable area and built area are different measurements. Ask whether common parts, terraces, annexes or land are included, and reconcile the listing with the deed, registry, Catastro and a professional measurement where needed.

Official resources

[Registradores](#) · [Nota simple](#)

[BOE](#) · [Código Civil](#)

[BOE](#) · [Ley de Propiedad Horizontal](#)

[Consejo General del Notariado](#) · [Comprar una vivienda](#)