

Moving to Spain

The 12-Month Checklist

A friendly, month-by-month plan — from first idea to fully settled in your new Spanish home. Print it, share it with your partner and tick boxes as you go.

How to use this checklist: work backwards from your target move date. Most of the slow steps — apostilles, sworn translations, consulate appointments — take 6–8 weeks each. Start the document chain at least 6 months before you fly.

12-month timeline

12 MONTHS BEFORE

Decide and research

- Pick your destination region (Costa Blanca, Costa del Sol, etc.)
- Choose your visa route (NLV, DNV, Golden, work, study)
- Open a savings buffer for the move (€10–€20k recommended)
- Start learning basic Spanish (Duolingo, online classes)

9 MONTHS BEFORE

Gather documents

- Apply for FBI / DBS / police criminal record check
- Get apostille on criminal record and any required documents
- Order sworn translations (traducción jurada) into Spanish
- Update passport (must have 1+ year validity)

6 MONTHS BEFORE

Visa & insurance

- Book consulate appointment
- Buy Spanish private health insurance (no co-pay)
- Get medical certificate from your doctor
- Prepare 12 months of bank statements and proof of income

3 MONTHS BEFORE

Logistics

- Submit visa application
- Book moving company / shipping container
- Start tying up rentals, subscriptions and utilities at home
- Tell your bank you're moving abroad

1 MONTH BEFORE

Practical setup

- Open a Spanish non-resident bank account (Wise / N26 / Revolut work online)
- Book your first month accommodation (Airbnb or short-term let)
- Get pet's EU Pet Passport + microchip + rabies if applicable
- Pack and ship belongings

FIRST WEEK IN SPAIN

Arrive and register

- Get your NIE if you don't have one
- Register at the town hall (empadronamiento)
- Book TIE appointment at the police station
- Buy a Spanish SIM card

FIRST MONTH IN SPAIN

Settle in

- Pick up your TIE card
- Register with social security
- Sign up at your local health centre — get a SIP card
- Open a resident bank account
- Find a long-term rental or schedule property viewings

FIRST YEAR IN SPAIN

Fully integrate

- File first Spanish tax return (April–June)
- Apply for a Spanish driving licence if non-EU
- Enrol kids in school (if applicable)
- Join local clubs and communities, keep learning Spanish

Documents you'll need

Any non-Spanish official document needs an **apostille** (Hague Convention) and an official **sworn translation** (traducción jurada) into Spanish.

- Valid passport (1+ year remaining)
- Birth certificate (apostilled + sworn translation)
- Marriage certificate if applicable (apostilled + translated)
- Police / criminal record check (apostilled + translated)
- Medical certificate (Spanish-format wording)
- 12 months of bank statements
- Proof of income / pension / remote employment
- Private health insurance policy (no co-pay)
- Proof of accommodation in Spain
- Passport photos (multiple)

First-year budget guide

Indicative one-off costs for a couple relocating from the UK / EU / US to the Costa Blanca.

Item	Estimate
Visa fees (consulate + apostilles + translations)	€500 – €1,500
Private health insurance (annual, per person)	€700 – €1,400
First month rent + deposit	€2,000 – €4,500
Shipping a household (Europe)	€2,000 – €6,000
NIE / TIE fees + photos	€50 – €100
Initial bank + admin buffer	€500
Recommended cash buffer for first 3 months	€5,000 – €10,000

Need help? Our local team handles visas, NIE, healthcare, housing and more — one friendly contact for your whole relocation. Get in touch at lacitycostablanca.com/contact.

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