



How to Move to Spain

Step-by-Step Guide for Americans





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Everything you need to know before starting your relocation from the U.S. to Spain.

Discover:

- The easiest legal pathways for U.S. citizens
- How the relocation process works
- The most common mistakes Americans make
- A checklist to prepare your move

Prepared by
Relocation for Expats

Helping Americans relocate to Spain with clarity, security and expert legal guidance.

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Why Americans Are Moving to Spain

Spain has become one of the top destinations for Americans looking to start a new chapter abroad.

More and more U.S. citizens are choosing Spain not just for travel — but to live, work remotely or retire.

Why Spain stands out:

- Better work-life balance
- Lower cost of living vs major U.S. cities
- High-quality healthcare
- Safe and walkable cities
- Mediterranean lifestyle
- Access to Europe

For many Americans, it's not just a move — it's a lifestyle upgrade.





Can Americans Move to Spain Legally?

Yes — but you must follow a legal immigration process.

You can stay in Spain for up to 90 days as a tourist

- For longer stays, you will need to apply for a residence visa

How the process works

Get professional guidance

The first step is understanding which visa actually fits your situation — not all options apply to every case.

Choose the right visa based on your profile

Your eligibility depends on factors such as income, work situation, and long-term plans.

Submit your application

This can be done either:

- From your local Spanish consulate in the U.S.
- Or from within Spain (depending on the visa type and your situation)

Once approved, you will enter Spain and obtain your residency card (TIE)

Long-term pathway

- 5 years → Permanent Residency
- 10 years → Spanish Citizenship (in most cases)

Visa Options for Americans

Spain offers different visas depending on your situation:

- Remote work → Digital Nomad Visa
- Savings / retirement → Non-Lucrative Visa
- Study → Student Visa
- Employment → Work Visa
- Business → Entrepreneur Visa

The key is choosing the one that fits your income and goals.



Digital Nomad Visa

For Americans working remotely

The Digital Nomad Visa allows non-EU citizens to live in Spain while working remotely for companies or clients based outside the country.

Duration

- Initial residence of up to 3 years
- Renewable for an additional 2 years
- Possibility to transition to long-term residency after 5 years

Key Requirements

- Remote work relationship
- You must work for a company located outside Spain or have international clients as a freelancer.
- Minimum income threshold
- Approximately €2,800–€3,000 per month (This may vary slightly depending on individual circumstances)
- Professional background
- A university degree or at least 3 years of relevant professional experience
- Private health insurance
- Full coverage with an authorized provider in Spain, without co-payments
- Clean criminal record: In both your country of residence and any country where you have lived in recent years

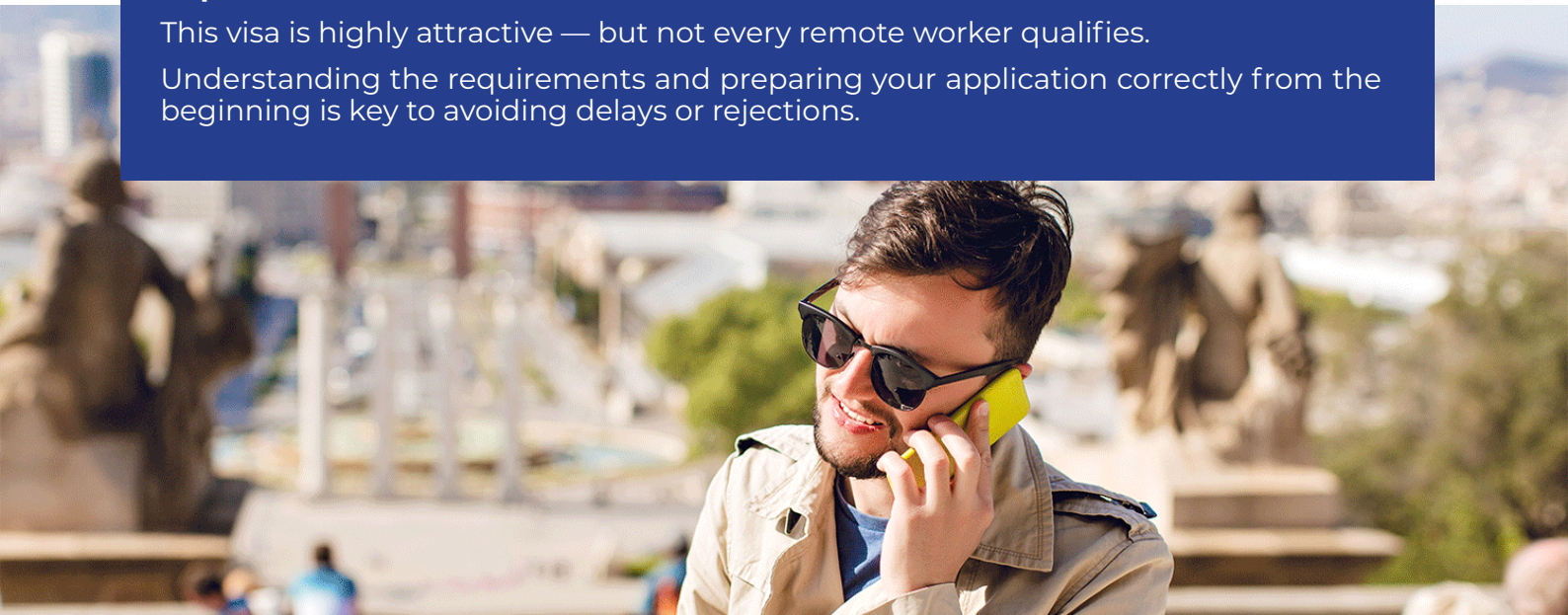
Who is this visa ideal for?

- Remote employees working for international companies
- Freelancers with clients outside Spain
- Professionals seeking to relocate while maintaining their current income

Important to know

This visa is highly attractive — but not every remote worker qualifies.

Understanding the requirements and preparing your application correctly from the beginning is key to avoiding delays or rejections.



Non-Lucrative Visa

For retirees or individuals with passive income

The Non-Lucrative Visa allows non-EU citizens to live in Spain without engaging in any professional or economic activity within the country. It is one of the most common pathways for those seeking a lifestyle relocation to Spain.

Duration

- Initial residence of 1 year
- First and second renewals: 2 years each
- After 5 years, you may apply for long-term residency

Key Requirements

- Sufficient financial means: Minimum of 400% of the IPREM. Additional amounts apply for dependents)
- Passive income or savings: Income must come from sources such as investments, pensions, or savings — not employment in Spain
- Private health insurance: Full coverage in Spain, without co-payments
- No work in Spain
- Clean criminal record: In your country of residence and any country where you have lived in recent years

Who is this visa ideal for?

- Retirees planning to live in Spain
- Individuals with passive income or strong savings
- Applicants seeking a long-term lifestyle change without working locally



Important to know

This visa offers a stable path to residency — but financial requirements must be clearly demonstrated and properly documented.

A well-prepared application is essential to ensure approval and avoid delays.

Work, Study & Entrepreneur Visas



Highly Qualified Professional

Duration: Up to 3 years, or aligned with the duration of the contract.

Requirements:

- Work contract
- Salary €50K+ per year
- Degree/experience



Student Visa

Duration: Length of studies

Requirements:

- 100% of the IPREM, approx. €7,200 per year

Benefits:

- Work up to 30h/week
- Can transition to work visa



Entrepreneur Visa

Duration: Up to 3 years

Requirements:

- Business plan
- Financial resources (€30,250 in your bank account)
- Innovative project
- Designed for founders and startups.

Requirements for Americans

Most visas require:

- U.S. passport
- Clear Criminal record certificate
- Proof of income
- Health insurance
- Application forms

Important:

Apostille required

Official Spanish translations



How Residency Works

There are two main pathways to apply for residency, depending on your situation and the type of visa:

1. Applying from the United States (most common)

This is the standard process for most applicants.

- You submit your visa application through your local Spanish consulate
- Once approved, you enter Spain with your visa
- You then complete the process by obtaining your residency card (TIE)

2. Applying from within Spain (in specific cases)

Some visa types allow you to apply directly from Spain.

- This option depends on your legal status and the visa category
- It can be more flexible, but requires careful planning and correct timing

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Applying for residency without proper guidance can lead to delays or rejections.

The most frequent issues include:

- Choosing the wrong visa for your situation
- Incomplete or incorrect documentation
- Financial requirements not properly demonstrated
- Unrealistic expectations about timelines or eligibility
- Starting the process without professional guidance

Important

Every case is different — understanding your options from the beginning is key to a smooth and successful process.



Moving Checklist

- Passport
- Clear Criminal record
- Apostille
- Insurance
- Proof of income
- Visa forms
- Housing plan
- Savings buffer



Ready to Move to Spain?

Relocating from the U.S. to Spain can feel complex — but with the right guidance, it becomes simple.

At Relocation for Expats, we help Americans:

- Choose the right visa
- Prepare documents
- Navigate the legal process
- Relocate with confidence

Book your consultation today and get clarity for your move.

Your journey to Spain starts with a single conversation.

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