ONE
PROPERTY
GROUP



Buying a home on the Costa del Sol

How the purchase works, what it costs, and what we do at each stage.

2026 edition

Welcome

We advise and represent international property buyers on the Costa del Sol

This guide explains how buying a home in Spain works, what it costs, and what we do at each stage.

Our fee is paid by the seller or developer
Our advice belongs to you

The price you pay is the same either way.

A note from Oliver

I grew up on this coast and have spent over 10 years helping people buy here. Developers have sales teams and sellers have agents. Too often, the buyer is the only one without someone on their side.

That's why I started One Property Group. We work for the buyer, and we're open about how. You'll always know who pays us, what we honestly think of a home, and what we'd want you to know before you commit.

This guide is part of that. Read it at your own pace, and send me any questions it doesn't answer.

Oliver Hornby - Property Consultant

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From the first call to the keys

1 We listen properly

How you will use the place, when you can travel, what matters and what does not.

2 We shortlist

Four or five homes that genuinely fit, with our honest view of each, including what we would want you to know before you commit.

3 We show you round

We drive, we arrange the appointments, we are with you the whole time.

4 We see it through

Negotiation, lawyer, notary, keys. And we are still here afterwards, because we live here too.

Why buyers use us

We work for the buyer, not the seller

The developer's sales agent represents the developer. We represent you.

It costs you nothing

Our fee is paid by the seller or developer. The price you pay is exactly the same whether you use us or not.

We see the whole market

We have no stock of our own to promote, so we can tell you when something is poor value or when the one down the road is a better fit.

We're your team on the ground

While you're at home, we're here. We send you progress photos, let suppliers in before you arrive, and help arrange anything you need.

Five things to sort early

None of these take long, but each can hold up a purchase if it's left to the last minute. Your lawyer can handle most of them for you.

Your NIE number

The NIE (número de identidad de extranjero) is the tax identification number every foreign buyer needs. You can't purchase a property without one. Your lawyer can usually apply for it on your behalf.

A Spanish bank account

You'll use it to pay the taxes and, later, the running costs of the home. It can usually be opened remotely. Expect the bank to ask where the purchase money comes from. This is a standard anti-money-laundering check.

Finance, if you need it

Spanish banks usually lend non-residents a smaller share of the price than they would at home. If you're financing, speak to a mortgage broker before you reserve, so you know what's realistic. We can introduce one.

An independent lawyer

Your lawyer acts only for you. They check the property's legal status, review the contracts and handle the paperwork. We'll introduce English-speaking lawyers we trust. You choose, and you pay them directly.

Power of attorney

Most of our clients give their lawyer a limited power of attorney, so the lawyer can act on their behalf while they're at home. It's signed in front of a notary, either in Spain or in your own country with an apostille, an international stamp that makes it valid here.

The purchase, step by step

Every purchase follows the same three legal steps.

1 Reservation

You pay a reservation deposit and sign a reservation agreement. This takes the home off the market at the agreed price. Your lawyer then starts the due diligence and guides you through the developer's anti-money laundering checks.

2 Private purchase contract

A few weeks after reserving, you sign the "Private Purchase Contract". From this point both sides are committed to the sale, and you pay the next part of the price. How much depends on the home.

Newly built home. You pay 30% to 40% of the price in total, including the reservation. Some developers let you spread this across construction in two or three stage payments. Every payment is protected by a bank guarantee (see page 8).

Previously owned home. You pay 10% of the price in total, including the reservation.

3 Completion

Completion takes place at a notary’s office. The balance is paid, the title deed (escritura) is signed and the keys are handed over.

What it costs to buy

On top of the purchase price, allow for taxes and fees. As a guide, budget around 13% of the price for a newly built home, and around 9% for one that has been owned before.

The tax depends on whether you're the first owner

If the home is newly built and you're buying it from the developer, you pay IVA, which is Spanish VAT. If someone has owned it before, you pay ITP, the property transfer tax, instead. You never pay both.

Newly built home

IVA (VAT)	10%
AJD (stamp duty)	1.2%
Lawyer	about 1%
Notary	about €1,000
Land Registry	about €500
Total	**around 13%**

Owned before

ITP (transfer tax)	7%
Lawyer	about 1%
Notary	about €1,000
Land Registry	about €500
Power of attorney	about €120
Total	**around 9%**

When it's paid

On a newly built home, IVA is added to each payment you make, including the deposit. The other taxes and fees are paid at or shortly after completion.

With a mortgage

Allow for the bank's valuation and arrangement costs as well.

A worked example at €750,000

The same price, both ways. These are estimates, and your lawyer will confirm the figures for your purchase.

Newly built home

IVA, 10%	€75,000
AJD, 1.2%	€9,000
Lawyer, 1%	€9,075
Notary	€1,000
Land Registry	€500
Costs, 12.6%	**€94,575**

Total to budget

€844,575

Owned before

ITP, 7%	€52,500
Lawyer, 1%	€9,075
Notary	€1,000
Land Registry	€500
Costs, 8.4%	**€63,075**

Total to budget

€813,075

New build payment schedule

At reservation Reservation deposit, including IVA	€11,000
At the private purchase contract 30% of the price plus IVA, less the reservation	€236,500
At completion The remaining 70% of the price plus IVA	€577,500
At or shortly after completion AJD, lawyer, notary and Land Registry	€19,575
Total	**€844,575**

Payment schedules vary between developments. The total stays the same, only the timing changes.

Buying a home that's still being built

Many of the homes available are purchased before they're built. Buying early often means a better choice of homes within a development and more time to pay. It also comes with a few protections worth understanding.

Your payments are guaranteed

Spanish law requires the developer to protect every payment you make before completion, with a bank guarantee or insurance policy in your name. If the home isn't finished, or can't legally be lived in, you're entitled to your money back with interest. Your lawyer checks a guarantee is in place prior to any payment.

Completion dates

Dates depend on the build and the licence. Allow for some movement, and ask us what we know about the developer's record on delivering on time.

The occupancy licence

Before completion, the town hall has to confirm the home can legally be lived in. This is the licence of first occupation, or the equivalent declaration. Your lawyer checks it's in place before you complete.

Snagging

Snagging happens after completion, once the electricity and water are connected, and before being furnished. Your lawyer will help arrange the connections. You, or someone on your behalf, then inspect the home and list anything unfinished or faulty. The developer is obliged to fix all agreed items on the snagging list. We can arrange the inspection if you can't be here.

After you move in

The developer stays responsible for defects: one year for finishes, three years for anything that affects how the home works, and ten years for the structure.

How long it takes, and what comes after

Timelines

A finished home

Usually six to ten weeks from reservation to keys, a little longer with a mortgage.

Off plan

From a few months to two years or more, depending on how advanced the construction is when you buy.

Running costs

IBI

The annual property tax (similar to council tax), paid to the town hall. It's based on the property's official cadastral value, not the price you paid.

Rubbish collection

A separate, smaller annual charge in most towns.

Community fees

Paid to the community of owners for the upkeep of shared areas like gardens, pools and security.

Insurance and utilities

Home insurance, electricity, water and internet, set up in your name after completion.

Tax as a non-resident

Non-resident owners file an annual Spanish tax return on the property, even if it isn't rented out. The amount is usually modest, and a local tax adviser (gestor) or your lawyer can file it for you.

The terms you'll hear

AJD	Stamp duty on a newly built home, 1.2% in Andalucia.
Apostille	An international stamp that makes a document signed abroad valid in Spain.
Arras	A deposit contract. If the buyer withdraws, they lose the deposit. If the seller withdraws, they return it twice over.
Cadastral value	The official value of a property, used to calculate IBI. Usually well below the market price.
Community of owners	The owners in a development, who share and manage its common areas.
Escritura	The title deed, signed at the notary on completion.
IBI	The annual property tax paid to the town hall.
ITP	The transfer tax on a home that has been owned before, 7% in Andalucia.
IVA	Spanish VAT. 10% on a newly built home.
Licence of first occupation	Confirmation that a newly built home can legally be lived in.
NIE	The tax identification number every foreign buyer needs.
Nota simple	A Land Registry extract showing who owns a property and whether any debts are registered against it.
Notary	A public official who oversees the signing of the deed and checks it's done correctly.
Power of attorney	A document that lets someone, usually your lawyer, act on your behalf.

Questions buyers ask

Do I need to be in Spain to buy?

No. Many clients visit once to view, then complete from home by giving their lawyer power of attorney. Some buy without visiting at all, using video viewings.

What does your service cost me?

Nothing. Our fee is paid by the seller or developer. The price you pay is the same either way.

Does buying a home give me Spanish residence?

Not on its own. Spain's golden visa, which linked residence to buying property, closed in April 2025. EU, EEA and Swiss citizens don't need one: you can live here freely, and register as a resident if you stay more than three months. Others, including UK citizens, need a visa to live here, and your lawyer can advise on which best fits your circumstances.

What if the developer doesn't finish?

Your payments are covered by the bank guarantee or insurance described on page 8, so in this unlikely situation you'd be entitled to your money back with interest.

Can I rent the home out?

Long term lets yes, but short-term holiday lets have to be registered, and some towns and communities restrict them. If rental income matters to you, tell us early and we'll check what applies to each home on your shortlist.

How long can I stay each year?

EU, EEA and Swiss citizens can stay as long as they like. UK citizens and many other non-EU nationals can spend up to 90 days in any 180 in the Schengen area without a visa, and owning a home here doesn't change that.

How should I move the money?

On a transfer this size, a currency specialist usually offers a significantly better rate than a high-street bank. Keep a paper trail of where the money came from, as the bank and notary will ask.



When you're ready to look

Tell us what you're looking for and we'll send a shortlist of what genuinely fits within 24 hours.

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This guide is general information, not legal or tax advice. Figures are estimates for Andalucia in 2026, and your lawyer will confirm them for your purchase. One Property Group is a trading name of Hornby Investments Spain SL.

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