

Visas in Spain

Find out about the different types of visa needed to travel to or reside in Spain...

A visa allows a person to travel to or reside in a country.

EU members: Citizens of EU member states that belong to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and/or the European Economic Area (EEA) are entitled to travel to Spain without a visa.

Non-EU members: Foreign nationals wishing to enter Spain for no more than 90 days in a period of 180 days must hold a short-stay visa unless they are citizens of a country that is exempt from this rule. This visa does not grant permission for the holder to work.

Currently citizens of the USA, Australia and New Zealand do not need a tourist visa to enter Spain (South Africans do) however if the intention is to stay, a national visa is required, which must be obtained from the Spanish Embassy in the country of residence.

Types of visas for non-EU nationals

For entry into Spain there are three types of visa depending on the reason for entry:

1. Airport Transit Visa (*Visados de transito aeroportuario*): Allows the holder to cross the international transit zone of a Spanish airport.
2. Short Stay Visa/Schengen Visa (*Visados de corta duracion*): Allows the holder to stay in Spain or travel within the Schengen zone for up to 90 days within a 180 day. Holders may not gain employment.
3. National Visa (*Visados Nacionales*): Allows the holder to reside, work, study or conduct research within Spain.

The transit visa legalises the stay of a person in Spain while they are waiting to travel to another country. The short-stay visa is for holidaymakers and tourists. Its validity period is rarely for more than six months and prohibits business or employment activity.

There are various types of national visas which allow for one or more of the following circumstances:

- *Work Visa (Visado de trabajo y residencia)*: Allows the holder to work and reside
- *Student Visa (Visado de estudios)*: Valid for the duration of an educational course, training programme, research or study
- *Diplomatic Visa (Visado de cortesía)*: Applies to government officials, medical visits, arts-related activities and humanitarian visits
- *Residence Visa (Visado de residencia)*: For those wishing to live in Spain not for work but for reasons such as family reunification or retirement

There are no work permit or visa restrictions for those wishing to work in Spain on a voluntary basis.

Spain does not currently have any working holiday agreements with other countries.

If the visa application is successful, the person must collect the visa within one month from the approval date from the office where the application was made. This period is extended to two months if the visa is for family reunification or study purposes.