

# Buyers Guide MLH

*At Marbella Luxury Homes, we know that buying a property isn't just about finding a beautiful villa and signing the dotted line. It's about making the right investment, navigating legal steps with ease, and feeling confident every step of the way.*

*That's why we've created this buyer's guide—to help you understand the process, avoid surprises, and enjoy a seamless journey to owning your dream home in Marbella.*

## 01: Start with Smart Research

Buying a home in Marbella is more than just a transaction—it's a life decision. And like any smart investment, the key to success is preparation. That starts with knowing the market and, just as importantly, choosing the right team to guide you through it.

In today's digital world, much of your early research can (and should) begin online. Whether you're based abroad or already living in Spain, browsing properties and reading up on the Marbella market is a great way to get familiar with the landscape before diving in.

One thing that makes Marbella unique? Most agencies have access to the same property listings, thanks to a shared database. So what really sets your experience apart is *who* you choose to work with.

While it's okay to speak with a few agents early on, narrowing it down to the right partner is essential. You want someone who not only understands the market, but also understands *you*—your style, your needs, and your vision for life here.

At Marbella Luxury Homes, our clients choose us because they trust us. We combine deep market knowledge with a tailored, no-pressure approach, ensuring your experience feels smooth, informed, and genuinely enjoyable from day one.

## Questions & Answers: What You Should Know Before Buying in Marbella

### **Is Marbella a good place to live?**

Yes—Marbella is widely regarded as one of the best places to live in Europe, not just to visit. Its appeal goes far beyond tourism: it's known for its fantastic year-round climate, relaxed coastal lifestyle, and excellent infrastructure. Whether you're a retiree looking for tranquility, a family searching for safety and quality of life, or a remote worker chasing the sun, Marbella ticks a lot of boxes.

It's also home to a multicultural community, modern healthcare, international schools, and endless outdoor activities—from golf and hiking to fine dining and beach clubs. Marbella Luxury Homes has helped clients from all over the world find their perfect home here, and many say they wish they had made the move sooner.

### **Is Marbella expensive when it comes to buying property?**

Marbella is known for its luxury real estate, and yes, some areas come with a high price tag. Prime locations like **La Zagaleta**, **The Golden Mile**, **Sierra Blanca**, and **Los Monteros** feature some of the most prestigious and expensive homes in Spain—often in the millions.

That said, Marbella offers a range of neighborhoods with different pricing. Areas like **Nueva Andalucía**, **San Pedro de Alcántara**, and parts of **Guadalmina** offer more accessible options without compromising on quality of life.

At Marbella Luxury Homes, we work with all kinds of budgets and always aim to match our clients with properties that make both emotional and financial sense.

### **Do I really need a real estate agent to buy property in Marbella?**

Technically, you can buy a property on your own—but in practice, a professional agent can make a world of difference, especially in a unique market like Marbella.

Here's why working with an agent is beneficial:

- **They streamline the process.** An agent filters options, books viewings, and saves you countless hours of online browsing.
- **They provide objective insight.** A good agent will point out red flags you might overlook when emotionally invested in a property.
- **They help assess long-term value.** Whether you're buying for lifestyle or investment, agents can help you see the bigger picture.
- **They know the area inside out.** From local amenities to future developments, agents give you context you won't find in listings.
- **They come with a network.** Need a lawyer, mortgage advisor, or interior designer? A well-connected agent will save you time and effort.
- **They negotiate on your behalf.** This is where agents really earn their stripes—protecting your interests and securing the best possible deal.

At **Marbella Luxury Homes**, we focus on more than just closing a sale. We act as your local partner, guiding you with honesty, local expertise, and personalized service from first viewing to final signature.

## **02. Visit Marbella & Organise Your Property Viewings**

Once your research is complete and you've aligned with a trusted agent, it's time to visit Marbella and experience the market firsthand. Whether you're already in town or planning your first trip, property viewings are a key part of the buying journey. Here are our practical tips to help you make the most of it:

### **Viewing Tips for a Smooth Experience:**

**1. Pre-select your favourites.**

Before arriving, work with your agent to narrow down a list of properties that match your criteria. This saves time and creates a focused viewing schedule.

**2. Let your agent take the lead.**

At this stage, you should have chosen a real estate agency you feel confident in. Allow them to coordinate a full day (or days) of viewings so you can explore different areas and home types without logistical stress.

**3. Stick to 5–6 viewings per day.**

Viewing too many homes in one day can be overwhelming and counterproductive. If your time in Marbella is limited, a maximum of 8–10 viewings may be possible—but keep your energy and clarity in mind.

**4. Explore the surroundings.**

Don't just focus on the home—take a walk or drive around the neighbourhood. Think about what's important to you: proximity to schools, beach access, public transport, or a quiet gated community.

**5. Revisit at night.**

If you're seriously considering a property, visit again in the evening. Lighting, noise, and ambience can change dramatically after dark.

**6. Be honest with your feedback.**

Share your thoughts openly with your agent after each visit. This helps refine the search and avoids wasting time on properties that don't align with your needs.

**7. Expect last-minute changes.**

Property viewings can sometimes shift. Perhaps a property doesn't look as expected, or you have a change of heart about your priorities. A responsive agent—like the team at Marbella Luxury Homes—can quickly adapt and suggest alternatives to keep things moving smoothly.

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## 03. Plan Ahead with Documents & Essentials

While house-hunting is the exciting part, making sure you have the right paperwork in place is essential to avoid delays and seize opportunities when they arise. Marbella's real estate process is efficient—but only if you're well-prepared.

Here's what you'll need:

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### **Get Your N.I.E. Number (Número de Identidad de Extranjero)**

This is your unique tax ID number in Spain, required for almost everything: purchasing property, setting up utilities, opening a bank account, and more.

You can apply for an N.I.E. through:

- A **Spanish Consulate** in your home country
- A **local police station** in Spain
- A licensed legal representative (called a *gestor*)

### Required Documents for Andalucía:

- **EU citizens:** ID page of your passport + photocopy
  - **Non-EU citizens:** Complete passport copy, two ID photos, and the EX-15 form (twice)
  - A **valid reason** for applying (i.e. purchasing a home)
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### Open a Spanish Bank Account

After securing your N.I.E., the next step is to open a Spanish bank account. You'll need this to handle the financial side of the transaction, such as making deposits or issuing a **banker's draft**—a common method of payment for property in Spain.

#### Documents you'll typically need:

- N.I.E. number
- Passport or national ID
- Proof of income / tax declaration
- Proof of address (utility bill or rental contract)
- Possibly a *Certificado de No Residente*

*Note:* Some banks may require translations or Apostille stamps on foreign documents. Also, keep an eye on fees for international transfers and account maintenance.

We often guide our clients through this process, and can recommend banks experienced in working with international buyers.

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### Hire a Solicitor and Tax Advisor Early

We can't stress this enough—engage with a qualified lawyer and tax consultant before making any offers. Your solicitor will handle due diligence, ensure the property is legally sound, and manage contracts and negotiations on your behalf. A tax advisor will help you understand the fiscal responsibilities tied to your purchase and future ownership.

If you don't speak Spanish, look for professionals fluent in your language—Marbella is home to many multilingual legal experts, and at **Marbella Luxury Homes**, we work alongside some of the most reputable firms in town.

💡 *Pro tip:* Many buyers miss out on exceptional opportunities because their documents or finances weren't in order in time. If you're serious about buying, start preparing now—even before your first viewing.

### Can foreigners open a bank account in Spain?

Yes, foreigners **can open a Spanish bank account**, but there are specific requirements. The first step is obtaining your **N.I.E. number** (Número de Identidad de Extranjero), which is essential for most official processes in Spain—including banking.

Once you have your N.I.E., banks will typically request:

- Proof of identity (passport or EU ID)
- Proof of funds or tax declarations
- Additional documentation as requested by the institution

Several banks in Spain are well-adapted to work with international clients—**Sabadell**, **CaixaBank**, **Santander**, **Bankinter**, and others regularly assist foreigners in setting up accounts. Some, like **BBVA**, may also require a *Certificado de No Residente* (non-residency certificate), which you can obtain through a police station.

At **Marbella Luxury Homes**, we often assist our clients through this step, connecting them with banks that offer **multilingual service and streamlined processes for international buyers**. With **agents fluent in 15 languages**, we ensure you won't face language barriers at any stage.

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### Should I buy a new home before selling my current one?

There's no one-size-fits-all answer—it depends on your financial flexibility and personal timeline. Here's a quick breakdown of the **pros and cons**:

#### ✓ **Buying before selling:**

- You'll have a new home ready to move into, avoiding temporary rentals or staying with family.
- You can transfer belongings directly, saving on storage or double-moving costs.

#### ⊖ **Risks:**

- You may end up carrying **two mortgages** if your existing home takes time to sell.
- It could create financial strain if your funds are tied up in the unsold property.

#### ✓ **Selling before buying:**

- Frees up funds and avoids the stress of dual mortgage payments.
- Gives you more **negotiating power** when buying, especially if you're a cash buyer.

#### ⊖ **Considerations:**

- You may need temporary accommodation while house-hunting.
- The pressure of needing to find the "perfect property" quickly could limit your options.

At **Marbella Luxury Homes**, we help clients weigh these decisions based on their unique circumstances, offering personalised timelines and flexible strategies—again, in a language they're most comfortable with

## 04. Navigating the Negotiation Phase in Marbella

Once you've found a property that feels like home, it's time to move into the **negotiation stage**—a critical part of the buying journey, especially when dealing with a **private seller**. Here's how to approach it strategically and effectively:

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## Making a Serious Offer

When you're ready to make an offer, always do so **in writing**, usually in the form of an **offer letter** submitted through your real estate agent. This document should clearly outline:

- Your **offered price**
- **Proposed payment terms**
- **Expected deadlines**
- Any **inclusions**, such as furniture, appliances, or fixtures

A clear, professional offer conveys seriousness and helps establish a strong starting point. Keep in mind: the more solid and realistic your offer appears, the better your chances of securing a favorable deal.

*Pro tip:* Clarify from the beginning **what's included in the sale**—this avoids surprises later in the process.

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## Agent vs. Direct Negotiation

While some buyers prefer sitting down face-to-face with the seller, we've found that direct negotiations often become **emotional and unpredictable**. Negotiating **through your agent**, on the other hand, provides a **structured, objective, and strategic process**.

At **Marbella Luxury Homes**, our multilingual agents are trained in negotiation techniques and understand how to protect your interests—ensuring that the deal is not only fair but also aligned with your goals. With specialists covering **15 different languages**, we make sure nothing is lost in translation, especially in critical discussions.

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## Including Special Conditions

If you have any **specific requirements or conditions**—such as timing flexibility, repairs, or legal clauses—these must be clearly stated in the **initial offer**. Transparency upfront helps avoid complications later and ensures all parties are aligned from the start.

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## Request a Technical Due Diligence

Whether before or during the offer phase, you have the option to request a **technical due diligence report**. This thorough inspection gives you insights into both the **cosmetic and structural condition** of the property.

A full review may include:

- Surface issues like **cracks, humidity, or poor ventilation**
- Structural or utility concerns with **plumbing, electrics, gas, or boiler systems**
- An overall assessment of the property's safety and functionality

These findings can **directly impact your offer** or even become negotiating tools should any major concerns arise.

## Questions & Answers

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### What's the best way to make an offer on a property?

The most effective way to make an offer is to **put it in writing**—usually through your real estate agent. A written offer should be clear, reasonable, and well-structured, including details like the price, terms, and any specific conditions. The more professional and serious your proposal appears, the more likely it is to be taken seriously by the seller.

That said, **face-to-face negotiations** can sometimes work, especially if both parties are comfortable with open discussion. However, based on our experience, the **most successful outcomes tend to come through agent-led negotiations**. At Marbella Luxury Homes, our multilingual agents bring experience and strategy to the table—helping you communicate your offer effectively and navigate counteroffers with confidence.

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### How many properties should I view before making an offer?

There's no magic number. The number of viewings you should do depends on several factors, such as:

- The **specific niche or segment** of the market you're interested in (e.g. beachfront villas vs. modern golf homes)
- Whether it's your **first time buying in Marbella**, or you're already familiar with the area
- Your **flexibility on location**—are you open to exploring different neighbourhoods, or is your search more focused?

The main goal is to **understand the market and compare value**. Sometimes buyers find their perfect match quickly, while others prefer to explore more options before making a decision. Either way, keeping an **open mind** and listening to your agent's insights can be incredibly helpful during this stage.

And with Marbella Luxury Homes offering **agents fluent in 15 different languages**, you'll always feel understood and well-guided—no matter where you're from.

## 5. Signing Contracts: The Final Steps to Your Marbella Home

Once your offer is accepted, the legal process begins. In Marbella, property purchases typically involve three key documents:

1. **Reservation Contract** (*Documento de Reserva*)
2. **Private Purchase Contract** (with 10% deposit)
3. **Title Deed** (*Escriatura Pública*), signed at the Notary.

At **Marbella Luxury Homes**, our international team—fluent in **15 languages**—guides you through each step, ensuring clarity and confidence in every signature.



## 1. Reservation Contract: Securing Your Dream Property

To take a property off the market, buyers sign a *Reservation Contract* and pay a fee (typically **€5,000–€20,000** or **1% of the price**). This deposit is deducted from the final price if you proceed.

- **Important:** Unless otherwise agreed, withdrawing means forfeiting the deposit.
- **MLH Advantage:** We negotiate flexible terms for our clients, such as *due-diligence clauses* to protect your interests.

## 2. Private Contract: The 10% Deposit

After reservation, you'll sign a binding contract and pay **10% of the purchase price** (including your reservation fee). In rare cases, high-value purchases skip straight to this stage.

### Types of 10% Contracts in Spain

- **Penitential Deposit Contract** (*Arras Penitenciales*):
  - *Seller backs out?* They repay you **double the deposit**.
  - *Buyer withdraws?* The deposit is lost.
- **Private Purchase Contract** (*Contrato Privado de Compraventa*):
  - Legally binds both parties. Rarely used due to strict enforcement.
- **Purchase Option Contract** (*Opción de Compra*):
  - The seller *cannot* withdraw; only the buyer may forfeit the deposit.

**Note:** Contracts are defined by their clauses—not their titles. Our **multilingual legal partners** review all terms to safeguard your investment.

## 3. Financing Your Marbella Home

Spanish mortgages for international buyers typically offer:

- **50% loan-to-value** (max)
- **15–25-year terms**
- **0.25–0.5% early repayment fee**
- Requires proof of income, life insurance, and property coverage.

**Tip:** Begin the process early—approval can take **up to 2 months**.

## 4. Completion: The Keys to Your Luxury Lifestyle

At the Notary, buyers, sellers, and lenders (if applicable) sign the **Title Deed** (*Escritura*).

- **Payment:** Made via bank cheque for security.
- **Registration:** The deed is filed with the Land Registry (takes **~3 months**).
- **Next Steps:** Transfer utilities (water, electricity, HOA) to your name.

**Why MLH?** From contract review to closing, our team eliminates language barriers and simplifies the process—so you focus on the joy of ownership.



## Questions & Answers

### 1. What happens after I complete my property purchase?

The moment you sign the *Escritura Pública* (Title Deed) at the Notary, legal ownership transfers to you immediately. You'll receive the keys and full responsibility for the property.

- **Registration:** The deed is sent to the Land Registry (typically takes **2-3 months**).
- **Next Steps:**
  - Transfer utilities (electricity, water, community fees) to your name
  - Receive original deeds and transaction invoices once registered
  - Consider property management services (*available through MLH*)

*MLH Tip:* Our concierge team can handle all post-purchase admin in your preferred language.

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### 2. What is a Reservation Contract in Spain?

A *Documento de Reserva* temporarily removes the property from the market (usually **7-30 days**) upon payment of a reservation fee (**€5,000-€20,000** or **1% of price**).

- **If you proceed:** Fee deducts from purchase price
- **If you withdraw:** Fee is forfeited (*unless special clauses apply*)
- **MLH Advantage:** We negotiate favorable terms, including due-diligence exit clauses

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### 3. What if the seller withdraws after I pay the reservation?

Standard contracts require the seller to refund **double your deposit**. However:

- Reservation fees are relatively small
- We recommend advancing quickly to the **10% private contract** for stronger protection

*Did You Know?* Our legal team reviews all contracts in **15 languages** to safeguard your interests.

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### 4. When must the seller vacate the property?

By default, possession transfers at Notary signing. However:

- Sellers may request a **grace period** (must be agreed in writing)
- For luxury properties, we often arrange **staged handovers** for art/furniture removal

*MLH Service:* We mediate move-out timelines to ensure smooth transitions.

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## 5. What are current mortgage terms in Spain?

Type	Fixed Rate	Variable Rate
Rate	1.5-2.5%	EURIBOR + 1%*
Term	Up to 25 yrs	Up to 25 yrs
Max LTV	50-70%**	50-70%**

\*Example: EURIBOR 0.2% + 1% bank margin = 1.2% (adjusted annually)

\*\*Lower for non-residents

### Key Considerations:

- **Fixed rates** offer stability amid market fluctuations
- Banks require **life insurance** and often **property coverage**
- Early repayment fees: **0.25-0.5%**

*MLH Partners:* We connect you with English-speaking mortgage advisors for competitive terms.

## WHY CHOOSE MARBELLA LUXURY HOMES?

- ☐ **15-language support** for seamless communication
- ☐ White-glove contract negotiation
- ☐ Concierge services from purchase through ownership

## 6: Essential Steps After Purchasing Your Marbella Property

Once your property purchase is complete, there are several important administrative and financial considerations to address.

### 1. Registering Your Property

After signing the title deed (*Escritura Pública*), the property must be registered at the local Land Registry (*Registro de la Propiedad*). This process typically takes **2-3 months**.

#### Required Documentation:

- NIE (Spanish tax identification number)
- Copy of passport (notarized if required)
- Proof of ITP (Transfer Tax) payment
- Seller's latest IBI (Property Tax) receipt

Your lawyer can handle this process, but you should also:

- ✓ Update all utility bills (electricity, water, community fees) to your name
- ✓ Verify community fee payments if applicable

### 2. Ongoing Property Expenses

### A. Property-Related Costs

- **Maintenance Fees:** Vary by property type (e.g., villas with pools/gardens cost more than apartments).
- **Community Fees (*Cuota de Comunidad*):** Mandatory for properties in shared developments. Fees cover common area upkeep and services (€500–€5,000+ annually).
- **IBI (*Impuesto sobre Bienes Inmuebles*):** Annual municipal tax (0.4%–1.1% of *valor catastral*). Typically €200–€1,500/year.
- **Garbage Tax (*Tasa de Basura*):** Municipal waste collection fee (~€300/year).

### B. Taxes for Homeowners

- **Wealth Tax (*Impuesto sobre Patrimonio*):** Progressive tax (0.2%–2.5%) on worldwide assets if resident, or Spanish assets if non-resident. **€700,000 allowance per person.**
- **Non-Resident Income Tax (*IRNR*):**
  - **Unrented property:** 25% of 2% of *valor catastral* (e.g., €3,500 on a €700,000 home).
  - **Rented property:** 25% flat tax on rental income (or lower if covered by a double-taxation treaty).

### 3. Golden Visa Opportunity (For Non-EU Buyers)

A €500,000+ property investment in Spain grants:

- ✓ **Residency for 2 years** (renewable)
- ✓ **Schengen Zone travel freedom**
- ✓ **No minimum stay requirement**

#### Key Conditions:

- Investment must be mortgage-free (liabilities cannot reduce the €500k threshold).
- Applicants must prove financial stability and pass a background check.

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### Final Recommendations

- **Tax Planning:** Consult an advisor to optimize liabilities, especially if renting or splitting time between countries.
- **Utility Transfers:** Ensure all contracts (electricity, internet, etc.) are updated promptly.
- **Property Management:** Consider professional services if you're not a full-time resident.

For detailed tax guidance, refer to our **[Purchase Taxes Guide]** or consult your legal representative.

*(Note: MLH's multilingual team can assist with referrals for tax advisors and utility setups upon request.)*

## 07: Helpful tools to aid you in the purchase process

[Marbella Market Watch](#)

[Mortgage Calculator](#)

[Purchase Costs Calculator](#)

## 08: Final Thoughts – Your Marbella Property Journey

Purchasing a home in Marbella is an exciting but complex process, requiring careful planning and expert guidance. From legal contracts to taxes and registration, each step demands attention to detail.

### **Why Professional Guidance Matters**

A knowledgeable real estate advisor simplifies the journey by:

- ✓ **Clarifying each stage** of the purchase process
- ✓ **Connecting you with trusted lawyers, tax specialists, and mortgage brokers**
- ✓ **Negotiating the best terms** on your behalf
- ✓ **Providing local insights** on neighborhoods, pricing, and market trends

At **Marbella Luxury Homes**, we combine decades of experience with a personalized approach, ensuring your transition into Marbella life is seamless. Our clients—whether investors, retirees, or second-home buyers—rely on us not just as agents, but as long-term partners in their property journey.

### **Your Next Steps**

- **Define your priorities** (budget, location, property type)
- **Secure financing** (if needed)
- **Work with a specialist** who understands your needs

When you're ready to begin—or simply have questions—we're here to help.