

Getting Your NIE: US Consulate vs Applying in Spain

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nie-spain-us-consulate

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Free guide to getting a Spanish NIE as an American: when you need one, applying at a US consulate, applying at a Spanish police office, using a representative or FastNIE, and NIE vs TIE.

Read the live guide: <https://www.ourmixedpov.com/guides/nie-spain-us-consulate>

IMPORTANT**Important: this is not professional advice**

This guide is what worked for us and the people we've helped - it is **not legal advice**, and we are not legal professionals. Rules change, every situation is different, and the cost of getting it wrong (denied visas, double taxation, fines, missed deadlines) is real.

Before you act on anything here, speak with a qualified legal professional - an immigration lawyer (abogado de extranjería), a cross-border tax accountant, or a licensed gestor - who can review your specific facts. Use this guide to know what questions to ask, not as a substitute for paid advice.

6 SECTIONS

The guide

SECTION 1

Start here: what an NIE is (and isn't)

The **Número de Identidad de Extranjero (NIE)** is a lifelong personal number assigned to foreigners with economic, professional or social dealings in Spain. It starts with X, Y or Z, followed by seven digits and a letter. It is not a residence permit and does not let you live or work in Spain.

Moving with a visa? Your NIE is assigned with your residence visa and appears on it; your **TIE** card (residence card) later shows the same number. Don't apply separately - see our [TIE appointment guide](#).

Not moving, but buying property, inheriting, opening a non-resident account, forming a company or signing a contract? You need a **certificado de NIE**, requested with form **EX-15**. That is the process this guide covers.

An NIE is personal: each spouse needs their own. You only ever get one; if you have lost the certificate, request a copy rather than a new number.

SECTION 2

Route 1 - Apply at a Spanish consulate in the US

Spanish consulates in the US accept NIE applications from people living in their jurisdiction. You generally provide: **form EX-15** (completed, signed), **passport and copy**, **proof of the reason you need the NIE** (e.g. purchase agreement, inheritance documents, bank letter), the **consular fee**, and sometimes a prepaid return envelope. Check your consulate's page on the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs site](#).

The consulate forwards the request to Spain and returns the certificate when issued. Expect **several weeks**, sometimes longer, and appointment waits in busy cities.

Best for: people who can't travel soon, need the NIE before arriving, and have a clear documented reason.

SECTION 3

Route 2 - Apply in person in Spain

Book a **cita previa** for **POLICÍA - ASIGNACIÓN DE NIE** in the province where you are on the [official appointment system](#). Appointments can be scarce in Madrid, Barcelona, Málaga and Alicante; check early mornings and nearby towns in the same province.

Pay the fee using **Modelo 790 code 012** from the [National Police fee portal](#) (the NIE certificate fee is roughly ?12 - confirm the current amount) and pay it at a bank before the appointment.

Bring **EX-15**, passport plus copy, proof of reason, the paid 790-012, and sometimes proof of address in Spain. Many offices issue the certificate the same day or within days.

Best for: people already in Spain on a short visit, especially if a notary date is fixed and a local appointment is available.

SECTION 4

Route 3 - Use a representative or FastNIE

You can authorise someone in Spain to apply for you with a **power of attorney** (poder). If signed in the US, it usually has to be **notarised and apostilled**. Lawyers, gestors and specialist services offer this.

[FastNIE](https://fastnie.com/) is one such private service aimed at people abroad. It prepares a power of attorney, arranges remote notarisation and apostille, and has its representatives request the NIE in Spain, then emails the certificate. It advertises plans with delivery from seven days and a money-back guarantee - check its current prices, timelines and terms on its site before paying.

Best for: people who can't get a consulate appointment, can't travel, or are on a tight property or inheritance deadline. Compare the total cost (service + notary + apostille) with the consulate route and keep copies of everything you sign.

Whoever applies, the official fee is the same; services charge for convenience and speed. Never pay anyone who asks for your passport original or promises a residence permit with an NIE.

SECTION 5

Which route should you choose?

Moving on a visa: none - your NIE comes with the visa. **Need it in months, not weeks, and in the US:** consulate. **Visiting Spain and can get a cita:** police office in Spain. **Deadline soon or no appointments:** representative or a service like FastNIE.

Cost runs from the official fee only (in Spain) to a few hundred dollars (consulate fees, couriers or a service). Time runs from same day (lucky in-person appointment) to two months (consulate in a busy period).

SECTION 6

After you get it: next steps

Keep the PDF/paper certificate safe - banks, notaries and the tax agency ask for it. Your NIE is also your Spanish tax ID (NIF) as an individual.

Opening an account? See [Opening a Spanish Bank Account](#). Buying? Read [Buying Property in Spain as an American](#).

Once resident, get a [digital certificate](#) with your NIE, keep your [vida laboral](#) and Social Security records in order, and check the [new-certificate services checklist](#) if your details change.

0 ENTRIES

Latest updates

No live updates recorded for this guide yet.

0 CLAIMS REVIEWED

Fact check

No validations recorded.

4 REFERENCES

Verified sources

Cita previa - Extranjería

<https://icp.administracionelectronica.gob.es/icpplus/index.html>

Policía - Modelo 790 código 012

https://sede.policia.gob.es/Tasa790_012/

Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Consular services

<https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/ServiciosAlCiudadano/Paginas/Visados.aspx>

FastNIE

<https://fastnie.com/>

ABOUT THIS BRIEF

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