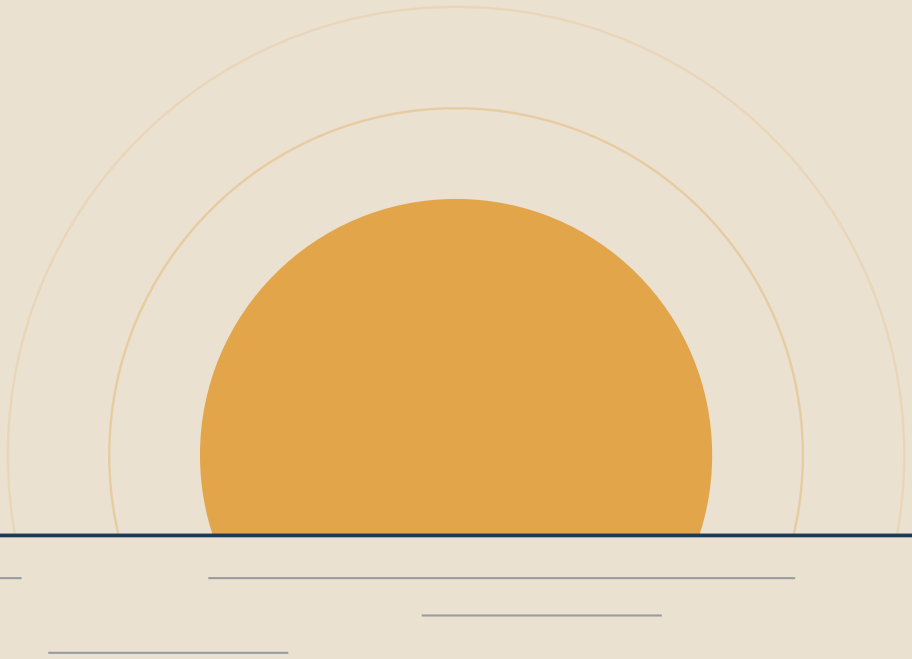
Mamavela

Having a Baby in Spain as an Expat

Public or private care, the birth and childcare benefit, registering the birth, padrón, NIE and your baby's residence.



Free sample

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Before you begin

Congratulations. Whether you moved to Spain for work, for love, for the sun or for a quieter life, you are now about to have a baby in a country whose language, paperwork and habits you are still learning. That is a lot to carry at once, and it is completely normal to feel both excited and a little lost.

Spain has a public health system that looks after pregnant women carefully, a generous birth and childcare leave that both parents can take, and a Civil Registry that is now largely electronic. It also has seventeen autonomous communities (comunidades autónomas) that run their own health services, a set of immigration rules that decide your baby's residence, and several offices that do not talk to each other as much as you would hope. Very little of it is written in English.

This guide puts the whole journey in one place, in English, in the order you will need it: from the day you see a positive test to the day your baby holds a Spanish residence card or your home country's passport.

It is built on three promises.

First, every figure is checked. When this guide says that each parent is entitled to nineteen weeks of birth and childcare leave, that a hospital must send your baby's birth to the Civil Registry within seventy-two hours, or that you have six months to apply for your baby's residence authorisation, the rule was read on the official page, usually the Spanish Social Security website (seg-social.es) or the consolidated text of the law in the Boletín Oficial del Estado (boe.es), on 13 October 2026. Every page is listed in the bibliography with its address. Rules change: when a detail matters to you, open the page and check it again.

Second, nothing is guessed. Where an official page did not give a figure, this guide does not invent one. You will not find an average price for a private birth in Madrid, because no official source publishes one. You will find the questions to ask so that you get a real figure in writing.

Third, your situation is not an afterthought. Expats in Spain are employees, freelancers (autónomos), students, retirees, digital workers, partners of Spaniards, EU citizens and non-EU citizens. Chapter 9 is written for the situations the standard explanations skip: unmarried parents, two mothers, parenting alone, being self-employed, or holding a residence permit that is not linked to work.

> **This guide informs; it does not replace professional advice.**
>
> Your matrona (midwife), your doctor and your obstetrician know your pregnancy. The Instituto Nacional de la Seguridad Social (INSS), the Civil Registry, the immigration office (Oficina de Extranjería) and your own country's consulate are the only bodies that can decide your own case. Use this guide to understand the system and to ask the right questions, then confirm your situation with them. In an emergency in Spain, call 112.

How to use this guide

You do not need to read it in order.

- **Just found out you are pregnant?** Read Chapters 1, 2 and 3, then copy the dates from the checklist in Chapter 10 into your calendar.
- **Worried about health cover?** Chapter 2 explains who is covered by the public system and what to do if you are not.
- **Planning time off work?** Chapter 5 covers the birth and childcare benefit for both parents, the breastfeeding hour and your protection against dismissal.
- **About to give birth?** Chapters 4, 6 and 7 cover the hospital, the birth registration and your baby's residence papers.
- **The partner?** Chapter 9 has a section written for you, and the leave rules in Chapter 5 apply to you too.

All amounts are in euros. "As of October 2026" means the rule was checked on 13 October 2026. Spanish words are in italics the first time they appear, and all of them are in the glossary in Chapter 12.

Chapter 1. How the Spanish system fits together

Before the details, here is the map. Almost every confusion expat parents run into in Spain comes from mixing up these six systems.

What	Who runs it	Where you deal with it
Your health care (pregnancy visits, scans, birth, your baby's paediatrician)	The health service of your autonomous community, inside the national health system (Sistema Nacional de Salud, SNS)	Your centro de salud (local health centre) and the hospital of your area
Your right to public health care	The State recognises the right; your community issues the health card (tarjeta sanitaria)	The INSS or your community's health service, depending on your case
Paid leave for both parents (birth and childcare benefit)	The Social Security, through the INSS	The Social Security electronic office or an INSS office
The right to take leave and keep your job	The Workers' Statute (Estatuto de los Trabajadores) and your collective agreement	Your employer and HR department
Registering your baby's birth	The Civil Registry (Registro Civil), under the Ministry of Justice	Usually from the hospital itself, electronically
Your baby's residence and documents	Immigration law and the police (for the card)	The Oficina de Extranjería and the National Police

There is also your town hall (ayuntamiento), which keeps the municipal register (padrón), and your home country's consulate, which handles your baby's nationality and passport.

Three things that surprise expats

1. Being born in Spain does not usually make your baby Spanish. Spain does not grant nationality simply because a baby is born on its territory. A baby born in Spain to two foreign parents is, in most cases, a foreign national who needs a passport from a parent's country and a Spanish residence authorisation. There are exceptions, set out in article 17 of the Civil Code, and a shortened route later on. Chapter 8 explains both.

2. Your baby needs residence papers, with a deadline. If you are non-EU residents, the immigration regulation in force since 20 May 2025 gives you six months from the birth to apply for your baby's residence authorisation. Many parents only find this out when they try to travel. Chapter 7 walks you through it.

3. Leave belongs to each parent, and it is the same length for both. Spain merged maternity and paternity leave into a single "birth and childcare" leave (nacimiento y cuidado de menor). As of

October 2026, each parent has nineteen weeks, and the first six weeks after the birth are compulsory and full-time for both. The weeks are individual: one parent cannot give them to the other. Chapter 5 has every detail.

Your health care depends on your community

The national rules are set in Madrid, but health care is delivered by each autonomous community: the Servicio Madrileño de Salud in Madrid, the Institut Català de la Salut in Catalonia, the Servicio Andaluz de Salud in Andalusia, the Conselleria de Sanitat in the Valencian Community, and so on. That is why your health card may have a different name (in the Valencian Community you will hear about the SIP card, in Catalonia about the TSI), why the booklet that follows your pregnancy (cartilla de embarazo or documento de salud de la embarazada) looks different from region to region, and why the exact calendar of your visits may differ slightly from a friend's in another city. The principles in this guide apply everywhere; the practical details are always worth confirming with your own centro de salud.

End of the sample

Thank you for reading this far. We hope these first pages already feel useful, and that you can see how the rest of the book is built: clear steps, pages to fill in, sources you can check.

The full book has 46 pages.

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