INTERNATIONAL BUYERS' MARKET ANALYSIS

Property investment on the Costa del Sol.

COSTA DEL SOL

MÁLAGA, SPAIN

3.019 €/m²	**+8,4%**	**42,5%**	**5,5–10%**
Avg. transaction price · Málaga	Price growth 2025	Buyers who are foreign	Gross STR yield range

directimo

Professional advisory for international buyers of property in vacation destinations

Spain at a glance

Macro backdrop · 2025–2026

49,7 M Population (Apr 2026) — record high	**+2,8%** GDP growth 2025 (+2,4% forecast 2026)	**9,9%** Unemployment — below 10% since 2008	**>10 M** Foreign-born residents — a first

Spain closed 2025 as one of the EU's strongest economies and saw 705.000 home sales (+10,4%) year-on-year, the highest number since 2008. Demand is structurally supported by record population growth driven by immigration and by a persistent housing shortage. Foreign buyers reached a new absolute record of 97.300 purchases (13,8% of the market), with Europeans the dominant group. Resale homes accounted for ~79% of all transactions, as new-build supply remains scarce.

Foreign buyers in Spain — national, by nationality (Q4 2025)

Nationality	Share	Nationality	Share
United Kingdom	7,93%	**Romania**	5,45%
Netherlands	6,77%	**Italy**	5,32%
Germany	6,65%	**France**	4,93%
Morocco	5,78%	**Belgium**	4,38%

These are **national** shares across Spain. Málaga province has its own, more international buyer mix (42,5% foreign) — shown on the next page; the two are not in conflict.

Spain remains fully open to international buyers. A proposed 100% transfer tax on non-EU, non-resident buyers (announced January 2025) was never enacted and was dropped from the government's 2026 housing package; it would in any case have applied only to resale homes and never to EU/EEA citizens.

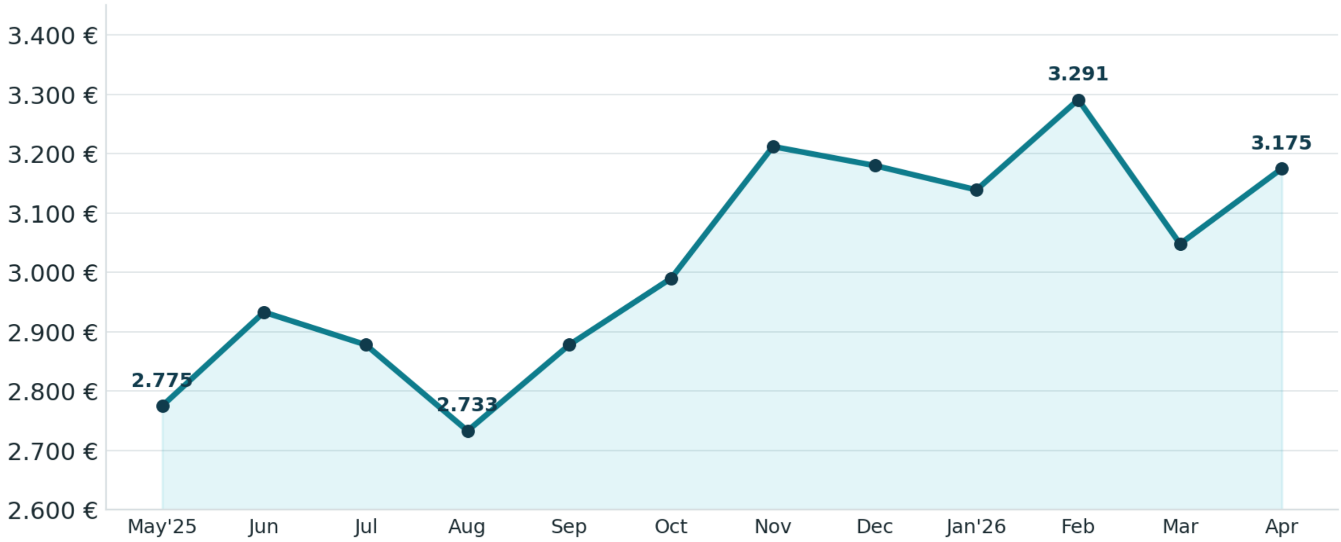
Sources: Notariado, Idealista, Fotocasa, AirDNA, INE. Information only — not investment, legal or tax advice.

Málaga — official market data

Consejo General del Notariado · transaction prices · May 2025 – Apr 2026

3.019 €/m² Avg. transaction price (built area)	**33.279** Sales (last 12 months)	**364.378 €** Average purchase amount	**+8,4%** Price change 2025

Málaga is the standout province of the Spanish coast. Prices registered by notaries — the most realistic figure, reflecting actual deeds rather than asking prices — rose **+8,4% in 2025**, after +13,0% in 2024 and +6,9% in 2023. The 12-month price trajectory is firmly upward:



Buyer & stock profile

Indicator	Value	Indicator	Value
Foreign buyers	**42,51%**	Median buyer age	50 yrs
Individual buyers	**85,95%**	Avg. surface	121 m²
Second-hand homes	**85,42%**	Apartments	76,60%
Years of income to buy	**9,42**	New-build homes	14,58%

Why this matters for international buyers

42,5% of all Málaga buyers are foreign — among the highest shares in Spain — confirming structural, non-speculative international demand. The largest foreign communities by purchases are the **UK (13,4%), Netherlands (11,4%), Poland (7,0%), Sweden (6,8%) and Germany (6,3%)**. A median buyer age of 50 and 86% individual (non-corporate) buyers point to lifestyle and second-home demand rather than institutional flows.

Costa del Sol — choosing your zone

A guide to the coast's micro-markets, west to east

The Costa del Sol is not one market but a chain of distinct towns, each with its own price level, buyer and rental profile. The maps that follow trace the coast from the luxury **west**, through the value-led **centre**, to the emerging **east** (the Axarquía); figures are May 2026 asking prices and gross short-term-rental yields from the sections that follow.

The Málaga coastline at a glance — Gibraltar and Sotogrande in the west to Nerja and the Axarquía in the east.

The four maps in this guide zoom into each stretch in turn: the luxury **West** around Marbella and Benahavís; the fast-appreciating **Far west** of Estepona, Casares and Manilva; the high-yield **Centre** from Mijas to Málaga city; and the value-led **East** from Rincón de la Victoria to Nerja.

> **Costa del Sol climate at a glance**
>
> ~320 days of sun a year · summer ~30°C / ~22°C day/night (August) · winter ~17°C / ~8°C day/night (January), mild by day even in winter · sea ~23°C (Aug) to ~15°C (Feb). A mild Mediterranean climate with several microclimates, among the mildest winters in Europe.

West — Marbella & Benahavís

Marbella · 5.581 €/m²
Spain's most prestigious resort - a 27 km coastline from Nueva Andalucía to Elviria, with the Golden Mile (Puente Romano, Marbella Club) as its ultra-luxury core. *Best for luxury living, trophy assets and family relocation with strong capital growth.*

San Pedro de Alcántara · 4.652 €/m² · west Marbella
Marbella's western residential town - a genuine year-round community with a revamped beachfront boulevard and access to the New Golden Mile. more affordable than the Marbella core. *Best for everyday living and value within the Marbella name.*

Nueva Andalucía · 6.023 €/m² · behind Puerto Banús
The 'Golf Valley' behind Puerto Banús - a sought-after residential bowl of golf courses, family villas and apartments, minutes from the marina and Marbella's prime leisure scene.
Best for golf, family life and rental demand.

Elviria / Marbella East · 4.512 €/m² · beachside east
The leafy eastern stretch of Marbella - Elviria, Las Chapas, Los Monteros and Cabopino - with some of the coast's best beaches, year-round beachfront restaurants and luxury beach clubs such as Nikki Beach Marbella and La Cabane by Dolce&Gabbana.
Best for beachside family living with strong holiday-let demand.

Benahavís · 5.389 €/m²
The hills above Marbella: gated golf estates La Zagaleta, La Quinta and Los Flamingos, among the most exclusive addresses in southern Europe. Villa-dominated. *Best for privacy, legacy investment and luxury golf living.*

Far west — Estepona, Casares, Manilva & Sotogrande

Estepona · 4.307 €/m² · +11,6%
The "Garden of the Costa del Sol": a colourful old town plus the fast-growing New Golden Mile of new-build resorts toward Puerto Banús. *Best for value with strong capital growth and new-build product.*

New Golden Mile · 4.191 €/m² · Estepona-San Pedro coast
The coastal strip of new-build resorts, beach clubs and golf running from Estepona toward San Pedro and Puerto Banús - the coast's main pipeline of modern branded developments. *Best for new-build product with strong capital growth.*

Finca Cortesín · Casares coast
An ultra-prime resort enclave on the Casares coast - a five-star hotel, championship golf (a former Solheim Cup and Volvo Masters venue) and exclusive villas and branded residences. *Best for trophy resort living and golf at the western end of the coast.*

Casares · 3.611 €/m² · +12,1%
Emerging coastal-and-village premium: the white hilltop town inland and a growing resort coast, with double-digit price growth. *Best for a relaxed pace with capital-growth upside.*

Manilva · 3.091 €/m² · +16,0%
The affordable western frontier beside Sotogrande, with double-digit price growth. *Best for entry-price coastal buyers seeking emerging-market upside.*

Sotogrande (Cádiz) · 3.789 €/m²
A premium gated resort of polo, marina and golf just west of Manilva - technically in Cádiz province. *Best for exclusive, resort-style living.*

Centre — Mijas to Málaga city

Mijas · 3.733 €/m² · +12,9%
Blends coastal Mijas Costa (La Cala) with the inland white village - two very different sub-markets under one name. *Best for active living plus rental income and growth.*

Fuengirola · 4.509 €/m²
A dense, lively resort town with the Higuerón developments and very strong rental demand. *Best for rental income and modern coastal living - note new STR-licence limits.*

Benalmádena · 4.122 €/m²
Beaches, the Puerto Marina and family attractions. *Best for family living and steady rental.*

Torremolinos · 4.032 €/m² · +12,7%
The classic, regenerating beach-tourism hub with high short-stay demand and one of Spain's most established LGBTQ+-friendly scenes (La Nogalera). *Best for rental yield and a vibrant beach lifestyle.*

Málaga city · 3.755 €/m²
The cultural capital (Picasso, Pompidou, Soho) and airport hub - the coast's highest rental yield, but the strictest licensing. *Best for urban yield and culture, licence permitting.*

East — Axarquía · Rincón de la Victoria to Nerja

Rincón de la Victoria · 3.422 €/m² · +12,6%
Málaga city's eastern beach suburb (El Cantal, La Cala del Moral), 15 minutes from the capital - a relaxed, year-round local town rather than a tourist resort. *Best for value coastal living within reach of the city, at the east's highest rental yield.*

Torre del Mar / Vélez-Málaga · 3.371 €/m² (coast) · +14,6%
The commercial hub of the Axarquía: Torre del Mar's wide promenade and beaches on the coast, with Vélez-Málaga town just inland from the coast, where homes are cheaper (1.960 €/m²). *Best for everyday-life coastal value with a genuine local feel.*

Torrox · 3.123 €/m² · +12,4%
Marketed as the “best climate in Europe”, split between Torrox Costa - beaches and a large established German community - and the inland village. *Best for entry-price coastal buyers and dependable year-round rental demand.*

Nerja · 3.860 €/m² · +8,1%
The Axarquía's flagship resort - the Balcón de Europa, the Nerja and Maro caves and a string of cliff coves; the most mature international market east of Málaga. *Best for proven holiday-let demand and a premium coastal lifestyle.*

Frigiliana · 3.337 €/m² · +5,2%
The white hilltop village above Nerja, regularly ranked among Spain's prettiest - character homes and views, no beachfront of its own. *Best for charm, capital preservation and boutique rentals.*

> Inland, the Axarquía's mountain villages - Cómpeta, Sayalonga, Canillas de Aceituno - are appreciating fast off a low base (Cómpeta **+26,1%** year-on-year, on thin volumes) for buyers seeking authenticity and price over the beach.

Where should you buy?

Matching the coast's micro-markets to your objective

The zone detail that follows runs west to east. This page distils it into a single decision view: pick your primary objective, then read the best-fit zones, the rationale, and what we check before you commit. Figures cross-refer to the price and yield tables later in the report.

Your objective	Best-fit zones	Why	Watch out for
Rental yield (STR)	Málaga city, Rincón de la Victoria, Torrox, Mijas, Nerja	Highest gross STR yields on the coast (7,2–10,1%)	Licence feasibility (Málaga city-wide freeze); seasonality
Capital growth	Estepona, Manilva, Casares, Mijas, Torremolinos	Double-digit annual price growth (+11,6% to +16,0%)	Weak off-plan resale comparables; paying for "future growth"
Luxury / preservation	Marbella, Benahavís, Golden Mile, Nueva Andalucía	Premium liquidity, trophy assets, deep resale at the top	High entry (≈5.400–5.600 €/m²); narrow pool at the very top
Family / lifestyle	Marbella East (Elviria), Benalmádena, San Pedro, La Cala de Mijas, Nerja	Beaches, international schools, year-round community	More moderate yields than a pure STR play
Budget entry	Manilva, Torrox, Vélez-Málaga (inland), Axarquía villages	Lowest €/m² (≈1.960–3.120), emerging-market upside	Liquidity / seasonality; rural legality (AFO) inland

Liquidity at exit - who can you resell to?

Very liquid: Marbella, Estepona, Málaga city, Mijas, Benalmádena, Fuengirola. **Liquid but more price-sensitive:** Torremolinos, Nerja, Rincón. **Thinner buyer pool / lower liquidity:** Casares, Manilva, Frigiliana, inland Axarquía. **Trophy / niche:** Benahavís, La Zagaleta, Finca Cortesín, Sotogrande. A strong asset is not only one that rents well, but one that can be resold to a broad buyer base.

Lifestyle, infrastructure & connectivity

What underpins year-round — not just summer — demand

For relocating and second-home buyers, practical infrastructure decides as much as price - and it sustains demand outside the summer peak. The coast is unusually well equipped: **40+ international schools** (British, IB, German, Scandinavian) around Marbella, Estepona, Mijas Costa, Benalmádena and Sotogrande; a dense private-hospital network (Quirón, HC Marbella, Vithas/ Xanit, Hospiten); **70+ golf courses** - the largest concentration in continental Europe; and a dozen-plus marinas. Málaga airport (**Spain's 4th largest, ~26,8M passengers in 2025**) has **162 direct destinations** operated by 64 airlines, including European and North American routes; the AVE reaches Madrid in **~2h30**; Sierra Nevada skiing is **under 2 hours**; and the coast enjoys **~320 days of sun a year**.

Zone	Airport	Year-round	Int'l schools	Golf	Beach	Best for
Málaga city	~10–15 min	High	Med-high	Low	Medium	Urban yield & culture
Benalmádena	~20 min	High	High	Medium	High	Family & steady rental
Fuengirola	~25 min	High	High	Medium	High	Rental income
Mijas (Costa)	~25–35 min	High	High	High	High	Yield & lifestyle
Marbella	~40–50 min	High	High	High	High	Luxury & family
Estepona	~50–60 min	Med-high	High	High	High	Growth & new-build
Nerja	~50–60 min	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Holiday-let & lifestyle

LIFESTYLE DEPTH

Michelin-level dining anchors the scene - **Michelin-starred restaurants such as Skina and El Lago**, plus Edge at El Fuerte led by chef Paco Pérez - with 2026 openings La Petite Maison (Puente Romano), TATEL (Golden Mile) and Sabine Beach. A wave of **five-star hotels** is underway: Waldorf Astoria at Higuerón, Four Seasons (Rio Real), W Marbella, Conrad Costa del Sol (Casares) and Kimpton Los Monteros, with the historic Don Carlos reopened. Summer brings the Starlite festival, and the golf calendar is marquee - LIV Golf Andalucía at Valderrama and the Andalucía Costa del Sol Open de España at La Cala (Nov 2026).

Connectivity & structural demand

Málaga airport is expanding terminal capacity (AENA) and is a test site for one of Spain's first eVTOL air-taxi corridors — the EU-funded OperA project, with first Málaga–Granada demonstration flights in late 2025 and a potential ~15–20-minute Málaga–Marbella link targeted around 2030, subject to technology and regulatory approval. Structurally, Spain passed **10 million foreign-born residents for the first time** (1 Jan 2026, INE — 20,3% of the population), the demographic engine behind year-round, internationally-driven demand.

Airport times are indicative off-peak driving times; qualitative ratings reflect relative strength within the province. Sources: INE; AENA; project OperA; Panorama Marbella; Olive Press / Andalucía.com.

Costa del Sol — prices by municipality

Idealista asking prices · built area · May 2026

The table below shows current asking prices per municipality, west to east. Western Costa del Sol (Marbella, Benahavís) leads the province; mid-tier coastal towns are appreciating fastest — Mijas, Torremolinos, Manilva and several eastern Axarquía towns are all double-digit year-on-year.

Municipality	€/m² (May 2026)	Annual variation
Marbella	5.581	+8,1%
Benahavís	5.389	+9,0%
Fuengirola	4.509	+8,9%
Estepona	4.307	+11,6%
Benalmádena	4.122	+8,9%
Torremolinos	4.032	+12,7%
Nerja	3.860	+8,1%
Sotogrande (Cádiz)	3.789	+12,6%
Málaga capital	3.755	+9,6%
Mijas	3.733	+12,9%
Casares	3.611	+12,1%
Rincón de la Victoria	3.422	+12,6%
Torre del Mar	3.371	+14,6%
Frigiliana	3.337	+5,2%
Torrox	3.123	+12,4%
Manilva	3.091	+16,0%
Vélez-Málaga (inland)	1.960	+13,9%

Sotogrande is in Cádiz province. Vélez-Málaga shows the inland-town figure; the coastal Torre del Mar nucleus of the same municipality asks ~3.371 €/m². Province average (Idealista): 4.158 €/m², +11,8% year-on-year.

READING THE PRICE: BUILT VS USABLE, ASKING VS TRANSACTION

Built area (m² construido) - the standard quoted everywhere above - includes interior walls and a share of common areas; terraces count only partially. Usable area (m² útil), the real living space, is typically 80-90% of built, so a "90 m² built" apartment offers ~75-81 m² usable, and prices on a usable basis run ~10-20% higher.

Separately, these are asking prices. The notary transaction average is lower than the portal average (3,019 vs 4,158 €/m² province-wide). Treat the gap mainly as a mix-and-timing effect, not as a negotiable discount: notarial data includes all completions, cheaper stock inland from the coast and off-plan prices agreed 1-2 years earlier, while portals over-represent active, duplicated and often higher-priced coastal listings. We therefore use asking prices when sizing acquisitions and yields: they are the best proxy for the live inventory a buyer can actually bid on. Purchase taxes and fees are then modelled separately on top of the agreed price.

The prime & luxury segment

Marbella & the Golden Triangle — independent benchmarks

The province figures earlier in this report are weighted by mid-market volume. Marbella and the Golden Triangle (Marbella, Estepona, Benahavís) run on their own dynamics — and three independent sources, Panorama, Knight Frank and Engel & Völkers, converge on the same 2026 read: a consolidation phase, with firm prime prices on scarce supply.

€4.228/m²
Marbella real transaction price, 12 mo to Sept 2025 (+12,6%) — Notarial Portal

+8,1%
Marbella prime growth 2025 vs 3,2% global luxury avg — Knight Frank PIRI

8.540
Golden Triangle sales 2025 (Marbella 51,3%); Q1'26 −35,6% q/q, prices stable — KF / DM

63%
foreign buyers in Marbella; <10% of >€2M use a mortgage — Notarial Portal

Marbella micro-market · real transaction prices (Notarial Portal)	€/m²
Golden Mile & Nagüeles	~5.753
Nueva Andalucía & Puerto Banús	~4.225
Puente Romano beachfront (record)	up to ~30.000

Average Marbella sale price €711.138 vs €210.361 nationally (~3×).

Supply is the binding constraint

Engel & Völkers reports roughly **80.000 interested luxury buyers against ~8.000 listings** (~10:1), with 70–90% of prime-coastal buyers foreign and up to 84–95% paying cash in western Marbella. A buyer-side read (Drumelia) frames 2025 as normalisation — demand intact but more cautious, with longer decisions, lower offers and harder negotiation — precisely where independent advice adds value.

Branded residences — Marbella leads Europe

More than a dozen projects underway; Knight Frank puts the price premium at **25–35%** over comparable non-branded homes. Flagships: Four Seasons (Rio Real), W Marbella (Las Chapas), St Regis Residences (Finca Cortesín), Waldorf Astoria (Higuerón), Karl Lagerfeld Villas, Marbella Design Hills by Dolce & Gabbana.

Macro forecasts (third-party, national — not Directimo's): BBVA Research projects Spanish house prices +12% in 2026 (raised from 10,2%; ~800.000-home deficit), CaixaBank ~6,3%; Costa del Sol forecasts cluster at 5–9%. National figures run ahead of the prime segment's more measured pace.

What can you buy for your budget?

Benchmark budgets by sub-zone · new-build & resale

For an international buyer, €/m² is abstract. The benchmarks below translate budget into product and sub-zone. Apartment figures are for a **2-bedroom**; a third bedroom adds ~20-30% and a prime view or frontline location ~30-50% within the same area. New-build carries **VAT (10%) + AJD (1.2%)**; resale carries **ITP (7%)**. On top of the price, budget ~13-14% in taxes & fees for new-build and ~9.5-10.5% for resale.

NEW-BUILD APARTMENTS · 2-BED BENCHMARK

€300k-400k	Fuengirola · Benalmádena (hills) · Mijas (inland) · Estepona West · Casares · Manilva · Costa del Sol East (Axarquía)
€400k-500k	Málaga city · Torremolinos · Benalmádena Costa · La Cala de Mijas · San Pedro (pueblo) · Estepona East / town
€500k-1M	Málaga centre · Marbella East · Nueva Andalucía · San Pedro de Alcántara · Benahavís · Finca Cortesín · Sotogrande
€1M-3M+	First-line beach · Marbella Golden Mile · Marbella East beachside

NEW-BUILD TOWNHOUSES & VILLAS

€500k-1.5M	Mijas (inland) · Benalmádena (hills) · Manilva · Casares · Costa del Sol East · Estepona (East / West)
€1.5M-3M	Benahavís · Marbella West · Marbella East · Mijas Costa · Finca Cortesín · New Golden Mile
€3M-5M+	Golden Mile · La Zagaleta · Sierra Blanca · Los Monteros · Cascada de Camoján · first-line beach

RESALE APARTMENTS & HOUSES TO REFORM

€300k-400k	Resale apartments	Benalmádena Costa · Mijas Costa · Estepona East
€400k-500k	Resale apartments	La Cala de Mijas · Marbella East · Nueva Andalucía · San Pedro de Alcántara · New Golden Mile · Benahavís · Sotogrande
€500k-1M	Resale apartments	Golden Mile resales · penthouses · beachside prime · frontline beach
€1M-2M	Houses to reform	Beachside · Marbella East · Nueva Andalucía · San Pedro de Alcántara · New Golden Mile · Benahavís

Directimo benchmarks; cross-refer to the municipality asking prices on the previous page. Directimo confirms whether a specific property is fairly priced against local comparables before you offer.

Sources: Notariado, Idealista, Fotocasa, AirDNA, INE. Information only — not investment, legal or tax advice.

Short-term rental investment yields

AirDNA / Airbnb-style apartment revenue ÷ asking-price benchmark · June 2026

Gross yield = annual short-term-rental revenue per apartment (AirDNA, using Airbnb/VRBO-style platform data) divided by an asking-price benchmark: asking €/m² × 90 m² built, excluding purchase taxes and fees. Net op. yield applies an assumed ~50% operating-cost load and is shown before income tax, financing and the buyer's personal tax position. Asking prices are used deliberately because live investment opportunities are sourced from asking-price inventory; this makes the denominator conservative versus historical deed prices. Purchase taxes and fees are not included in the table denominator and should be modelled separately when calculating total cash deployed.

Zone	AirDNA rev.	€/m²	Asking benchmark (90 m²)	Gross	Net op.	Listings y/y
Málaga capital	34.071 €	3.755	337.950 €	10,1%	5,0%	+0,5%
Sotogrande (Cádiz)	28.131 €	3.789	341.010 €	8,2%	4,1%	-17,9%
Rincón de la Victoria	23.756 €	3.422	307.980 €	7,7%	3,9%	-11,6%
Torrox	20.993 €	3.123	281.070 €	7,5%	3,7%	-12,3%
Mijas	24.622 €	3.733	335.970 €	7,3%	3,7%	-10,0%
Nerja	24.876 €	3.860	347.400 €	7,2%	3,6%	-7,7%
Estepona	27.694 €	4.307	387.630 €	7,1%	3,6%	+1,8%
Torremolinos	25.790 €	4.032	362.880 €	7,1%	3,6%	-3,7%
Manilva	19.196 €	3.091	278.190 €	6,9%	3,5%	-22,9%
Casares	22.259 €	3.611	324.990 €	6,8%	3,4%	-27,6%
Frigiliana	20.380 €	3.337	300.330 €	6,8%	3,4%	-7,9%
Marbella	33.540 €	5.581	502.290 €	6,7%	3,3%	-10,1%
Fuengirola	27.118 €	4.509	405.810 €	6,7%	3,3%	-3,2%
Torre del Mar / Vélez-Málaga	19.974 €	3.371	303.390 €	6,6%	3,3%	-9,8%
Benalmádena	24.167 €	4.122	370.980 €	6,5%	3,3%	-5,5%
Benahavís	26.733 €	5.389	485.010 €	5,5%	2,8%	-14,3%

Net op. yield is before IRNR/income tax, mortgage costs and personal tax position. Operating costs include management, cleaning/turnover, platform/marketing costs, utilities, maintenance, repairs and local recurring charges where applicable.

Three things to know before chasing the headline yield

1 · Top yield ≠ obtainable licence. Málaga city tops the table on paper but has the strictest rules — a city-wide moratorium on new tourist-rental licences (since Aug 2025, via the PGOU), beyond an earlier freeze in 43 saturated districts. A high theoretical yield is not a licence you can get.

2 · Supply is contracting. Active listings fell across almost every market (−8% to −28% y/y), including the entire eastern Axarquía, as the 2025 rules took hold — fewer competing units supports occupancy and values.

3 · Some zones need a caveat. Sotogrande sits in Cádiz (its figure covers all of San Roque); Mijas blends Mijas Costa with the inland village; Torre del Mar / Vélez-Málaga blends a busy coast with a cheaper inland town — different price and yield profiles within one name.

Which rental strategy?

Short, mid and long-term compared

Rental type	Gross	Net	Demand	Tourist licence	Flexibility
Short-term (tourist)	5,5–10,1%	2,8–5,0%	Very high, seasonal	Required (VFT registration); new licences frozen/limited in Málaga, Fuengirola, Manilva	High
Mid-term (2–12 mo.)	5–7%	3–4,5%	High, steady (nomads, relocations)	Not required	Good
Long-term (12+ mo.)	4–6%	2,5–4%	Very high	Not required	Low

Short-term = this report's AirDNA gross yields on an asking-price benchmark. Net operating yield applies an assumed ~50% operating-cost load and excludes income tax, financing and personal tax position. Mid- and long-term are indicative coast-wide ranges. Long-term has the lowest running costs but the least flexibility to raise rents: annual rent rises on a main-residence lease are capped by the official national index (IRAV), by design at or below inflation - around 2.4-2.5% in 2026 - however fast market rents climb. Tourist and seasonal (mid-term) lets are not subject to this cap. Directimo validates the achievable yield for each municipality against live data before you commit.

Short-term rental carries the highest estimated yield but also the highest regulatory risk and the hardest-to-obtain licence post-2025; if a property cannot secure or keep its VFT, mid- and long-term remain solid fallbacks.

Málaga city — the mid-term pivot

Málaga city shows the coast's highest gross STR yield (~10,1%), but its city-wide VUT moratorium caps new tourist licences. As the city grows as a tech hub — Google's Safety Engineering Center, Vodafone's European R&D hub and the PTA technology park draw relocating professionals — many investors shift toward mid-term lets (2–12 months) for corporate and digital-nomad tenants: these need no tourist licence, sidestep the moratorium, and support low vacancy at premium monthly rates.

MATCHING STRATEGY TO YOUR GOAL

Short-term suits owners chasing the highest yield who can secure and keep a VFT, and who accept active management and regulatory risk. Mid-term (2-12 months) needs no licence and captures growing digital-nomad and relocation demand - steady income, far less turnover, and no exposure to tourist-licence freezes. Long-term is the most hands-off and lowest-cost, trading rent-growth flexibility (rent rises capped by IRAV) for stability and near-zero vacancy. Directimo models the realistic net yield of each option for your specific property and municipality before you commit.

Short-term rental: licence risk & due diligence

Where a tourist licence is hardest to obtain — and what we verify first

The yield in the table only matters if the property can legally be rented short term. That means a valid regional tourist registration (VFT/VUT with the Junta de Andalucía), plus compliance with the building community rules and the municipality. Since 2025, restrictions vary significantly by town: the same gross yield can be realistic in one municipality and hard to operate in another. Two buyer-relevant updates help frame the risk: an existing VFT can transfer with the property, provided ownership is notified and the unit remains compliant; and the Supreme Court has partially annulled the national single-registration procedure under RD 1312/2024. In practice, the decisive checks remain the Andalusian VFT/RTA registration, community statutes and local restrictions.

MARKET ALERT · MAY 2026
The Supreme Court (STS 620/2026, 19 May 2026) partially annulled RD 1312/2024, removing the national single-registration number once required to advertise a short-term rental online. For international buyers this removes one layer of central bureaucracy: what now decides viability is the Andalusian VFT/RTA registration plus municipal and community rules. The *ventanilla única* - the digital single window for platform data/reporting - should still be treated as relevant where data obligations remain in force.

Zone	Status (2025–2026)	Risk	Check before offering
Málaga city	City-wide moratorium on new VUT licences since Aug 2025 (≈3 yrs, via PGOU), beyond the earlier freeze in 43 saturated districts (>8%)	High	Existing registered VFT (transfers on sale); apartment-turístico route
Mijas	Among the province's most saturated (~10,000+ VUT) and now contracting; community statutes decisive	Med-high	Community statutes; any municipal limit
Benalmádena	Largest proportional decline in the province; new licences often blocked by community statutes	Med-high	Community statutes (inscription date); building approval
Fuengirola	New-licence limits; higher tourist-waste fee; IBI discount scrapped for holiday flats	High	Municipal rules; community approval
Manilva	3-year moratorium on new STR licences already in force; high saturation (~2.400 VFT)	High	Confirm moratorium scope with the ayuntamiento
Marbella	Ordinance bans converting commercial / ground-floor premises to tourist flats; community statutes decide	Medium	Statutes; building type
Estepona	Still relatively attractive for new licences	Medium	Building / community approval
Eastern Axarquía	More flexible — stock still growing in Nerja, Torrox, Frigiliana — but verify	Med-low	Rural/coastal legality; community rules

Before buying for short-term rental, we verify

- ✓ The building permits tourist use
- ✓ Community statutes don't prohibit STR — and the inscription date of any prohibition
- ✓ For a new activity in an apartment block, 3/5 (60%) owner approval is obtainable
- ✓ An existing VFT is valid and registered — it transfers with the property on sale
- ✓ Regional VFT/RTA registration in place (the national number is no longer required)
- ✓ The property is not inside a municipal moratorium / saturated zone
- ✓ Occupancy, access and first-occupation-licence issues
- ✓ Any municipal waste-tax surcharge on holiday flats
- ✓ Full legality if rural / AFO / outside urban land

Key 2025–2026 change: an existing licence transfers with the property on sale (it attaches to the property, not the owner — DGSJFP ruling, July 2025); the buyer notifies the change of ownership and needs no fresh community vote. Starting a *new* tourist activity in an apartment building still needs prior 3/5 owner approval (reformed Ley de Propiedad Horizontal, Organic Law 1/2025).

The buying process

Buying from abroad, step by step — with your Directimo advisor

Buying in Spain as a non-resident is straightforward when the sequence and the costs are clear in advance. A typical purchase runs through seven stages:

1. **Define & shortlist.** Set budget, location and must-haves with your advisor and receive a curated shortlist of vetted properties — viewed in person or remotely by video.
2. **NIE & bank account.** Obtain your Spanish foreigner tax number (NIE) and open a local bank account; both are needed to transact and to pay taxes.
3. **Reservation & deposit.** Sign a reservation contract and pay a holding deposit (~€6.000–10.000) to take the property off the market. On a resale the deposit then builds to ~10% at the private contract; on a new-build / off-plan, reservation plus staged payments typically reach ~20–30% before completion.
4. **Due diligence & private contract.** Your independent lawyer verifies title, debts, licences and planning before you sign the private purchase contract (contrato de arras).
5. **Mortgage (if financing).** The bank runs a valuation and approves the loan; budget for mortgage set-up costs and the stamp duty on the mortgage deed.
6. **Completion & title deed.** Sign the escritura before a notary, pay the balance, taxes and fees, and receive the keys — ownership transfers at this moment.
7. **After completion.** The deed is registered and utilities and IBI are set up in your name. For holiday lets, your buyer agent and lawyer verify licence feasibility, coordinate the transfer or application where legally possible, and model a mid-/long-term fallback if STR is not viable.

Financing as a non-resident

Max loan-to-value ~70% (vs ~80% for residents) · debt-to-income cap ~35% of net income · term up to ~20 years · a mortgage broker (paid by the buyer, ~1.21% incl. VAT) can help obtain competitive lending terms · budget for the bank valuation and the stamp duty (AJD) on the mortgage deed.

Leverage — a conservative note

Financing is optional and amplifies both returns and risk. On non-resident terms (~70% LTV, ~20-year term), borrowing improves cash-on-cash return only when a property's net operating yield exceeds the all-in cost of the mortgage — and it magnifies losses just as readily if rates rise, rents soften or the home sits empty. Directimo models every purchase unlevered first; any financing scenario is shown as a sensitivity, never a projection.

Buying new-build / off-plan

10-year structural guarantee (mandatory) on new construction · off-plan stage payments are protected by a mandatory bank guarantee or insurance policy the developer must hold, and are best routed through your lawyer's client account · after handover, a 1-year warranty for finish defects and 3-year for damp or infiltration.

How Directimo fits in

As a dedicated buyer's advisory, Directimo represents you — not the seller — through every stage above: sourcing and comparing properties, coordinating the lawyer, notary and bank, and handling the licence and registration paperwork, remotely end-to-end.

Sources: Notariado, Idealista, Fotocasa, AirDNA, INE. Information only — not investment, legal or tax advice.

Regulatory & tax update

What changed in 2025–2026

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

National single-registration procedure — partially annulled. The Supreme Court partially annulled RD 1312/2024's national single-registration procedure and the requirement to obtain a national registration number to advertise short-term rentals online (Tribunal Supremo, STS 620/2026, 19 May 2026). What remains for Andalusia buyers: regional VFT/RTA registration, municipal restrictions, community rules, traveller reporting and platform/data obligations to the extent not annulled. In practice, two local layers still decide viability: the Andalusian tourist registration and the municipality/ community regime.

Licences now transfer with the property. An existing tourist licence transfers on sale — it attaches to the property, not the owner (DGSJFP ruling, July 2025); the buyer simply notifies the change of ownership, with no fresh community vote. Starting a *new* tourist activity in an apartment building still needs prior approval from 3/5 (60%) of owners (reformed Ley de Propiedad Horizontal, Organic Law 1/2025).

Local restrictions. Málaga: a city-wide moratorium on new VUT licences since Aug 2025 (≈3 years, to ~Aug 2028, via PGOU), beyond the earlier freeze in 43 saturated districts. Manilva: a 3-year moratorium on new STR licences in force. Fuengirola: new-licence limits, higher tourist-property waste fees, and the IBI discount scrapped for holiday flats. Mijas and Benalmádena show the province's largest declines in registered stock, with community statutes increasingly decisive.

BUYING & OWNERSHIP

Golden Visa abolished (3 April 2025). Property-linked residency is no longer available; the impact on overall demand is limited, as such purchases were a small share of the market.

Anti-squatting reform (Organic Law 1/2025). Introduced fast-track procedures intended to speed up the eviction of illegal occupiers in clear-cut cases; actual timelines depend on circumstances, and legal advice is required.

100% non-EU buyer tax — proposed, never enacted. Announced January 2025, never debated in Congress and dropped from the 2026 housing package. EU/EEA buyers were never in scope.

HEADLINE TAXES & COSTS (COSTA DEL SOL)

Item	Rate / amount
Transfer tax (ITP) — resale, Andalusia	7%
New-build — VAT + stamp duty (AJD)	10% + 1.2%
Rental income tax — EU/EEA · non-EU	19% · 24%
Imputed income tax — non-resident, not rented	~0,15% of purchase price / yr (see note)
Annual property tax (IBI)	~0,25% of property value / year
Wealth tax — Andalusia	0% (100% relief); Solidarity Tax above €3 M
Inheritance — Andalusia (close family)	up to 99% relief
Lawyer fee (buyer)	~1,21% incl. VAT

What a buyer pays upfront - on top of the price. Resale: ITP 7% + notary & registry ~0.7% + lawyer ~1.21% -> approx. +9.5-10.5%. New-build: VAT 10% + AJD 1.2% + notary, registry & lawyer ~2% -> approx. +13-14%. On standard listed sales the estate-agent commission is paid by the seller, so there is no buyer fee; for off-market, presales/off-plan or special mandates, any Directimo buyer-advisory fee is agreed upfront. On a €350,000 resale, taxes & fees come to ~€33,000-37,000.

What it costs to hold — worked example. A 2-bed apartment, mid-upper segment, ~€400.000: community fees €1.200–1.800/yr · electricity ~€25–35/mo (held mostly empty, used under 6 months a year) · water ~€20/mo · waste tax ~€150/yr · IBI ~0,25% → ~€1.000/yr · insurance ~€300/yr → roughly €3.200–4.000/yr to hold (~0,8–1,0% of value).

Luxury buyers — Solidarity Tax. Andalusia waives regional Wealth Tax in full, but the national Solidarity Tax on large fortunes still applies to net assets above €3 M — so on high-value trophy assets (Golden Mile, Benahavís estates) it partially offsets the regional relief. Specialist tax planning is advisable before a high-value purchase.

Non-resident taxes, explained

Tax residence, imputed income tax on unrented homes, and how recurring costs are estimated

Will you become a Spanish tax resident?

You are generally a Spanish tax resident if **any one** of these applies (not cumulative): you spend more than 183 days in Spain in a calendar year; your main economic interests (employment, main income source) are in Spain; or your spouse and dependent children habitually reside in Spain. Below these thresholds, a second-home owner is normally taxed only as a non-resident (rental income 19% EU/EEA, 24% non-EU). Residency affects your worldwide income — confirm with a Spanish tax adviser.

Imputed income tax for unrented homes

Own a Spanish property as a non-resident and leave it empty, and you still owe an annual imputed-income tax (IRNR, Modelo 210) on a notional rental value - even with zero income. It is small: against the purchase price you will actually know, it works out to roughly **0.15% of the purchase price per year** (about €600/yr on a €400,000 home), depending on your residence and when the cadastral value was last revised. Filed once a year, it is a frequent surprise for second-home owners. If you rent the property out instead, you pay tax on the actual rent for those days, and the imputed tax applies only to the days it sat empty.

How we estimate IBI and imputed income tax

Both are set by law on a property's cadastral value, not its market price - and as a buyer you will not know the cadastral value until you own the home. So both are expressed as a share of the purchase price you do know, on the same basis: **IBI ≈ 0.25%** and **imputed income ≈ 0.15%** of the purchase price per year, assuming the cadastral value is roughly half of market (a typical coastal ratio). Underneath, IBI is the municipal rate (~0.4-0.6%) on cadastral value, and the imputed tax is 1.1% (cadastral revised in the last 10 years) or 2% (older) of cadastral value, taxed at 19% (EU/EEA) or 24% (non-EU). Directimo confirms the exact cadastral value and municipal rate for each property before you commit.

Key takeaways

The investment case for Costa del Sol · Málaga

1. **Málaga is Spain's standout Mediterranean coastal market by international demand and price momentum.** Transaction prices rose +8,4% in 2025 and sit at record highs, with the province averaging 3.019 €/m², western towns above 5.000 €/m² and the eastern Axarquía offering the coast's best value.
2. **International demand is structural, not speculative.** 42,5% of buyers are foreign — led by the UK, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Germany — with a median age of 50 and overwhelmingly individual (86%) purchasers.
3. **Estimated STR yields remain attractive - but only where the licence is obtainable and transferable.** Gross STR yields of ~5.5-10% (conservative asking-price basis); the eastern Axarquía now ranks among the top five on yield at half the western entry price. Net operating yields, before income tax and financing, remain in the ~2.8-5.0% range under the report's cost assumption.
4. **Regulation is tightening supply — and rewarding the prepared.** Listings are down 8–28% as community-approval rules and municipal licence freezes bite. Scarcity supports values, but acquisition now requires careful due diligence on licences and community statutes.
5. **No nationality surcharge is in force.** EU/EEA buyers face no proposed surcharge; non-EU buyers should monitor policy risk. The 100% non-EU tax was never enacted, and Andalusia's tax regime (no wealth tax, deep inheritance relief) remains among Spain's most favourable.

Data sources & methodology

What each figure is based on — and as of when

Every figure in this report is tied to an official, primary, or specialist market-data source. Asking prices and transaction prices answer different questions and are kept distinct throughout.

— **Transaction prices & buyer profile** — Consejo General del Notariado (registered deeds) and Colegio de Registradores / Registradores de la Propiedad, Málaga province, May 2025 – Apr 2026. Province average 3.019 €/m².

— **Asking prices (€/m², built area)** — Idealista, May 2026. Province average 4.158 €/m².

— Short-term-rental revenue & active listings — AirDNA / Airbnb-style platform data (apartments), June 2026.

— **Supplementary asking-price data** — Fotocasa.

— **Macro & population** — INE (population, GDP, employment), 2025–2026.

— **Regulation & tax (as of June 2026)** — Andalusia VFT/VUT regime (Decreto 28/2016, amended by Decreto 31/2024); municipal moratoria, incl. Málaga city-wide since Aug 2025. Existing tourist licences transfer with the property on sale (DGSJFP ruling, Jul 2025). National single-registration procedure — RD 1312/2024 partially annulled by the Supreme Court (STS 620/2026, 19 May 2026, Rec. 143/2025; ECLI:ES:TS:2026:2148). Regional VFT/RTA registration, municipal rules, community rules and non-annulled data/reporting obligations remain relevant. Organic Law 1/2025 (anti-squatting); Golden Visa abolished (Apr 2025); IRAV reference index 2026.

— **Prime-segment & lifestyle context** — Panorama Marbella Market Report 2026; Spain's Notarial Statistics Portal; Knight Frank Wealth Report 2026 (PIRI); Engel & Völkers 2026; DM Properties | Knight Frank; BBVA Research, CaixaBank, Tinsa (2026 forecasts).

How the yields are built

Gross STR yield = annual AirDNA apartment revenue (Airbnb/VRBO-style short-stay data) ÷ asking-price benchmark, calculated as asking €/m² × 90 m² built and excluding purchase taxes and fees. Net operating yield is pre-income-tax and unlevered, applying an assumed ~50% operating-cost load: management, cleaning/turnover, platform and marketing costs, utilities, repairs, maintenance and local recurring charges where applicable. Asking prices are used deliberately because live opportunities are sourced from portal inventory; taxes and fees are modelled separately when calculating total buyer cash deployed.

Built vs usable: usable area ≈ 80-90% of built. IBI ≈ 0.25% and imputed income ≈ 0.15% of purchase price per year, assuming cadastral value ≈ half of market (a typical coastal ratio); underneath, both are set on the cadastral value, confirmed per property before purchase.

All figures are market data for orientation only — not investment, legal or tax advice.