

Can Digital Nomads find a permanent home on the Coast?

08/08/2023

Spanish Tit-Bits



It's very much the "in" word of the moment. The term Digital Nomad conjures up images of a lone traveller, laptop bag slung over the shoulder, intrepidly venturing into "Brave New Markets". He or she might even be considered as a part of the "Gig Economy", though to be honest that particular term is soooo 2020.

In the tangled aftermath of Brexit, which has meant that British Nationals have to fulfil certain criteria Spain, the Digital Nomad scheme appears a relatively straightforward way to live and work in Spain. Lawyers report that thousands of freelancers, founders, remote workers and entrepreneurs from around the world about the visa, including many from the UK, have contacted them

Behind the trendy buzzwords and romantic imagery, however, what is the reality of becoming a Digital Nomad?

According to the Spanish Government, the visa is for any foreigner planning to live in Spain as a resident, working remotely for a company or an employer (or self-employed) based outside the country, and exclusively using "computer telematics and telecommunication media and systems". So sorry but you cannot be a Digital Nomad Construction Worker.

For the self-employed, things, as always, are a little more complicated. You have to demonstrate that you can carry out

your work remotely and that you have done so for at least a year already. Which means that you – using our construction worker scenario again – cannot suddenly have a career change, reinvent yourself as a graphic designer, and qualify for a Digital Nomad visa. In addition the applicant has to have a an undergraduate or postgraduate degree from a recognised university, college or business School, or have at least three years of work experience in his/her current field of activity.

You are allowed, however, to work for a Spanish company, as long as the work does not exceed 20% of your total professional activity.

On the plus side, the visa allows you to stay in Spain for up to five years, and this also applies to your spouse and any dependent children. As well as this, the holder will be eligible for a reduced rate of non-resident income tax during their stay, with a tax rate of 15% for four years, instead of the usual rate of 25%.

One of the Spanish government's main aims in introducing the Digital Nomad visa is to make Spain an attractive destination for global talent across a range of industries. In theory, it will make it easier to start a company in Spain by streamlining the process and paperwork involved in setting up a business, and will reduce the tax burden on companies and entrepreneurs.

Marbella has been actively promoting itself as an idea destination for hi-tech entrepreneurs and workers looking to enjoy an enviable lifestyle. The seismic shake up of the business world that coincided with Covid also prompted many to seriously consider the value of remote working and an enhanced quality of life.

Marbella has seen an increased number of start-ups, newly created technological businesses and the multinational firms that have decided to relocate. As well as the as good weather, Marbella now offers direct connections with main European airports, some of the best-ranked international schools in the country accommodation and services of the highest quality.

At the recent opening of The Pool international business centre, Mayor Ángeles Muñoz, highlighted that Marbella was “synonymous with progress and innovation” and that the town wanted to be a “major player for international digital nomads”.

With the already huge demand, one thing, however, is certain. The Digital Nomads are coming...