

## Chapter 8 - The Spanish Life

For such a laid back country, Spain has an awful amount of bureaucracy but it is a necessary evil and the Spanish people suffer with it as much as immigrants. To enjoy your new life to the full you must make sure that you are completely legal in Spain, that you have the appropriate visa and permits, and that you are also covered for health. This section will give you an overview on working in Spain, healthcare, the school system, bureaucracy in Spain, taxes and the good things like the cost of living and food.



### **Bureaucracy – NIE, Padron and Certificado de Registro (Residencia)**

#### **NIE number - Numero Identificacion Extranjeros**

If you are living in Spain, you will need and want to get your personal NIE ( = Numero Identificacion Extranjeros) number. This number (Foreigners Identification Number) is issued by your local Oficina de Extranjeros (Office of Foreigners) which is usually at your area police station (Policia Local). By law, all foreigners buying property or residing in Spain, must register with the authorities and obtain an NIE number or Numero Identificacion de Extranjeros. You will need this number for lots of things – buying a property, buying a car, registering for utility accounts and opening bank accounts, all sorts of things.

The procedure for getting an NIE number is quite simple. You need to visit your local Oficina de Extranjeros with your passport, a photocopy of your passport and two passport sized photos. At the office you will fill in an application form and then you may have to wait for a few weeks for your number to be allocated. You will have to collect your number in person, taking your passport along with you for ID purposes. Ask your neighbours or other expats what the procedure for getting an NIE is like in your area - it is not unusual to have to queue up outside the office before it even opens because they only deal with a certain amount of NIE numbers a day.

Once you have your NIE number, you will need to carry a copy around with you. It is best to make a few copies of your NIE number and keep the original in a safe place such as a safe or filing cabinet - it is highly important for life in Spain.