



Street in Valldemossa village, Mallorca, Spain

# An Overview of the Process of Becoming a Citizen of Spain as an Adult US National

Obtaining a certificate of Sephardic origin is just one part of applying for citizenship in Spain. The following information is a summary of the process.

## Documents Needed

*Every document must be separately digitized in its own pdf file, with the original paper copies also presented in Spain in front of the Notario*

**Passport** – all pages digitized (It is best to scan four

passport pages on each 8×11 sheet) Be sure that it does not expire before 2020 at the earliest.

**Certificate of Sephardic Heritage** Certificate of Sephardic Heritage issued by Jewish Federation of New Mexico. (It comes with a translation into Spanish and an apostille). It is strongly recommended that you also obtain a second certificate from the Federacion Comunidades Judias de Espana, FCJE.org.

**Birth Certificate** with an apostille from the Secretary of State's office where issued, translated into Spanish by a translator certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Government

**Marriage Certificate** – with official translation and apostille, if applicable

**Two Special Links to Spain** – applicants need to show a connection to Spain, be it evidence of a trip to Spain of at least three months, a Spanish bank account, contribution to a Spanish non-profit organization with a letter signed by its president and secretary, a certificate of taking classes at the Instituto Cervantes, formally studying Spanish literature, culture, or history, living or studying in Spain, or being able to speak Judeo-Spanish (Ladino, Hatedkia). Applicants who receive a Certificate of Sephardic Origin from the Jewish Federation of New Mexico only have to show one link to Spain, as part of the application fee covers donations to two organizations that further Sephardic traditions in New Mexico.

**FBI Criminal Background Check** with an apostille issued from the Secretary of State's office in Washington, D.C. or Virginia, and translated into Spanish by a translator certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Government. Please note that this is time sensitive, and is only valid for six months. Please note that it is only valid for six months.

**State Criminal Background Check** in the state where you

currently reside. It must have an apostille issued from the Secretary of State's office in your state, and be translated into Spanish by a translator certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Government. Please note that this is also time sensitive, and only valid for six months.

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**Certificate of passing the CCSE exam** – Spanish civics and culture exam given at the Instituto Cervantes – for applicants between ages 18-70.

**Certificate of passing the DELE A-2 exam** – Spanish language exam given at the Instituto Cervantes – for applicants between ages 18-70.

**Payment of 100 Euro filing fee** along with Form 790-026 at any Spanish bank prior to signing your acta de notoriedad at the Notario's office in Spain.

### **Process to Becoming a Spanish Citizen**

Once applicants have gathered all documents, they should hire a Spanish immigration attorney to help prepare the case. There are thousands of attorneys capable of petitioning for citizenship in Spain. However, the Jewish Federation of New Mexico works closely with Senor **Luis Portero de la Torre**, who helped promulgate the Spanish law of return in 2015. He works in Malaga. His assistant for US applicants is Isabel Rivas Torres, [isabel@luisportero.com](mailto:isabel@luisportero.com). Their office number is: **+34 952 919 275**. It is best to use Spanish when speaking with the office staff, though for Luis, you can use English as he is perfectly bilingual. Please be persistent when trying to reach their office.

After all relevant documents are prepared electronically, the applicant's lawyer will upload them to the Ministry of Justice's website and wait for a date to sign the Acta de Notoriedad in front of the Notario in Spain. At that time, the

Notario may ask for additional proof or more documents showing a special connection to Spain and Sephardic origin. Be sure to bring all original documents to this meeting, and it may be wise to prepare additional proof, just in case it is requested. An applicant's lawyer should provide assistance at all times during the meeting in the Notario's office.

At this point, the Spanish government will consider the application and if approved, applicants can travel to a Spanish consulate in the US to apply for their new passport. They must travel to a consulate within a year or else the application is forfeit, and must bring a new and updated FBI and state criminal background check with them that has an official translation and apostille attached. At that point, they will swear allegiance to the Spanish King and obedience to the Spanish Constitution and Laws. Lastly, new citizens will pay the processing fee for the issuance of a Spanish passport.

Applicants do not need to renounce other nationalities.