CALINA
REAL ESTATE

GUIDE 2026

Investing in Dubai from Spain 2026

Process, costs, tax, financing, transfers, viewings, Golden Visa and areas. With sources.

OCTOBER 2026 EDITION

01 · BUYING PROCESS

Buying a flat in Dubai from Spain: the complete 2026 guide

Can a Spanish resident buy a flat in Dubai?

Yes. A resident of Spain can buy a flat in Dubai in their own name, outright (freehold), with their passport and without residency or a company in the Emirates. The purchase is registered with the **Dubai Land Department**, the emirate's land registry, and the title deed comes out in your name the same day. On a resale you add between 2% and 3% in costs on top of the price, not counting the agency commission, and on a resale paid without a mortgage it usually takes four to six weeks from agreeing the price to getting the keys.

That is the short answer. The rest of the guide is what people ask us on the first call: where you can buy, what a flat really costs in each area, what the steps are, what you pay and to whom, and what you have to do in Spain so Hacienda (the Spanish tax agency) holds no surprises.

In which areas can a foreigner buy?

In the **freehold** areas, the ones the emirate has designated for foreigners to buy outright. They cover almost every area an investor cares about: Dubai Marina, Downtown, Business Bay, JVC, Palm Jumeirah, Dubai Hills, Arjan and many more. There the flat is yours with no time limit, and you can rent it out, sell it or leave it to your heirs.

Which area suits you depends on why you are buying. People after rental income tend to look at areas with strong rental demand and a moderate entry price; people after the Golden Visa need to reach AED 2 million invested in residential property; people moving there look at schools, commutes and metro lines. We have it sorted by goal in where to buy in Dubai and, area by area, in the area comparison.

How much does a flat in Dubai cost in 2026?

It depends a lot on the area and the size. To give you a real reference, rather than what listings ask, this is what was paid for the median flat in the sales registered with the Dubai Land Department between January and September 2026:

AREA	1 BEDROOM	2 BEDROOMS
JVC	AED 1,087,000	AED 1,659,000
Arjan	AED 1,177,000	AED 1,650,000
Dubai Marina	AED 1,625,000	AED 3,050,000
Dubai Hills	AED 1,707,000	AED 2,660,000
Business Bay	AED 1,995,000	AED 2,960,000
Downtown Dubai	AED 2,200,000	AED 3,800,000
Palm Jumeirah	AED 3,272,000	AED 5,900,000

This is the median: half the flats sold above it and the other half below. Within the same area, the floor, the views and the building move the price a lot. If you want to go down to the square metre, it is area by area in what a square metre costs in Dubai.

A note if you are thinking about residency: the property investment Golden Visa requires **AED 2 million invested in residential property in Dubai**, in one or more flats. With the table in front of you, you can see that in some areas one flat gets you there and in others you need two.

Finished flat or off-plan?

There are two ways to buy. **A finished home**: you see it, the transfer is done in a day and you can rent it out from the first month. **Off-plan resale**: you buy from an investor the flat they bought off-plan, you pay them what they have already paid and you take over the remaining payments to the developer until handover.

The market is clearly moving towards off-plan: of the roughly 104,000 flat sales registered with the Dubai Land Department between January and September 2026, around three in four were off-plan, between 68% and 79% depending on the month. Being what sells most does not mean it is what suits you. We compare them point by point in finished or off-plan.

What are the steps to buy, from the first call to the keys?

1. **Goal and budget.** Rental income, Golden Visa, living there or diversifying. That decides the area, the size and whether finished or off-plan suits you. If you are going to take a mortgage, the bank pre-approval starts here, not once you have already chosen a flat.
2. **Shortlist.** We only send you flats that make sense for you, each compared with the sales registered in its building and its area. If the asking price does not hold up against the records, we tell you.
3. **Viewing**, in person or by video call. Beforehand you sign Form B, the official RERA contract between the buyer and the agency, and give us your passport: buildings ask for visitor details in advance.
4. **Checks on the flat.** That the title deed is valid and has no blocks or uncancelled mortgage (you can see this in the official Dubai REST app) and that the building's service charges are up to date (Mollak portal).
5. **Written offer**, with proof of how you will pay: a bank pre-approval letter or proof of funds. We do not submit an offer without proof of financing, because the seller will not take it seriously.
6. **Contract.** On a resale, the official **Form F** contract, with the usual 10% deposit. On an off-plan resale, the transfer of the Oqood registration as well.
7. **No objection certificate (NOC)** from the developer, which the seller requests and which confirms they owe nothing.
8. **Signing at the Trustee Office**, an office authorised by the Dubai Land Department. You pay the rest of the price and the Title Deed is issued in your name that same day.
9. **Getting set up:** water and electricity (DEWA), internet, Ejari if you rent it out and, if you want, rental management with beBalmy.

The detail of each step when buying a finished flat is in how to buy a flat that is already built, and for off-plan in buying off-plan in Dubai.

How much does buying cost on top of the price?

Without a mortgage, on a resale and not counting the agency commission, between 2% and 3% of the price. The big item is your share of the Dubai Land Department fee: it is 4% and on a resale it is split, 2% you and 2% the seller. The rest are fixed fees:

ITEM	AMOUNT	PAID TO
Registration fee (transfer)	4% of the price, split: 2% you and 2% the seller	Dubai Land Department
Administrative fees (title deed, plan and services)	≈ AED 520–580	Dubai Land Department
Signing office (Trustee Office)	AED 2,000 or 4,000 + VAT	Trustee authorised by the DLD
Agency commission	We tell you in writing before we start	Calina Real Estate
Mortgage registration, if there is one	0.25% of the loan + ≈ AED 270	Dubai Land Department

An example in round numbers: on a flat of AED 1,500,000, your share of the registration is AED 30,000, the Trustee Office AED 4,000 plus VAT and the administrative fees about AED 540. In total, about AED 34,740 including VAT, plus the agency commission. Work out the costs of your purchase with the exact price, and see the full breakdown in buying costs in Dubai.

After you buy, the fixed yearly cost is the service charges, the building's community fee. RERA approves it per square foot for each building and it varies a lot from one to another, so it is worth checking before you make an offer: it comes straight out of what you keep from the rent.

How long does buying take?

A resale paid without a mortgage normally closes in **four to six weeks** from agreeing the price. What takes longest is the developer's NOC, which depends on the seller having their service charges up to date and on each developer.

With a mortgage you have to add the valuation and the bank's final offer, and the mortgage is registered with the Dubai Land Department on the same day as the transfer. If the seller has a mortgage of their own, their bank has to issue the outstanding debt letter and cancel it before the signing. On an off-plan resale the signing is quick, and what takes time is the construction until handover.

The most reliable way not to drag it out: reach the offer stage with your financing already proven. If you wait until you have a flat to ask for pre-approval, you lose weeks and sometimes the flat.

What do you have to do in Spain?

- **Transfer the funds** from your bank. The money has to arrive in time for the signing date and with its source documented: how to do it at the lowest cost.
- **Prove where the money comes from.** The Emirates require the agency to check your identity and the source of the funds: passport, a recent proof of address and statements or documents for the sale, salary or dividends the money comes from. Have it ready before signing the contract.
- **Declare it**: if you are tax resident in Spain, the rent is taxed in your IRPF (Spanish personal income tax) and, if your properties abroad add up to more than €50,000, they are declared on Form 720

(modelo 720, Spain's overseas assets return). Spain–UAE taxation.

- **Keep every receipt** from the purchase: price, fees and commission make up the acquisition value on the day you sell.
- **Power of attorney**, if you are not going to travel for the signing.

And one people forget: a will valid in the Emirates for the flat. Without it, inheritance gets complicated. It is a job for a lawyer and we refer you to one when the purchase closes.

Can you do it all without travelling?

Yes. We view for you, or with you by live video call, walking through the flat, the building and the street. The signing at the Trustee Office can be done by an attorney with a power of attorney granted in Spain. Many clients travel just once, to see two or three flats already shortlisted, and sign remotely: how to plan that trip.

What mistakes should you avoid?

- **Comparing with the listing rather than the records.** What a portal asks is not what gets paid. Before you make an offer, look at the registered sales in the building.
- **Buying only on the brochure yield.** Nobody can guarantee you a rent or a capital gain. Look at the real rental demand in the area and the building's costs.
- **Going in with a horizon of less than three years.** Between buying and selling costs, selling early makes it hard to get back what you put in, especially in a market that has cooled in 2026.
- **Choosing the owner lightly.** Decide before the contract whether you buy in your name, with your partner or through a company: changing it later is another transfer with its own 4%.
- **Dealing with someone who is not registered.** In Dubai only a licensed agency and brokers with a card can act as intermediaries. You can check it in the Dubai REST app.

02 · BUYING PROCESS

Finished or off-plan property in Dubai: which suits you

Which suits me better, finished or off-plan?

If you want rent from the first month and to see exactly what you are buying, finished property suits you. If you can wait for handover without collecting rent, in exchange for spreading the payment over time, an off-plan resale may fit you. There is no better option in the abstract: there is one that fits your liquidity, your time horizon and what you are buying for.

One clarification before going on, because it changes everything: the off-plan we work with at Calina is **resale**. You are not buying a launch flat from the developer, but from an investor who bought it off-plan and wants to sell before it is handed over. You pay them what they have already paid and you take over the remaining payments to the developer, with handover closer than at a launch.

How do they differ, point by point?

	FINISHED	OFF-PLAN RESALE
What you buy	What you see	An off-plan flat its owner sells before handover
Rent	From the first month	From handover
Payment	All at signing	What has been paid, to the seller; the rest, to the developer according to the plan
Registration	Title Deed in your name on signing day	Oqood in your name; Title Deed at handover
Key permit	Developer NOC (service charges up to date)	Developer NOC (payments up to date and resale allowed)
Costs, not counting agency commission	≈ 2–3% (your 2% to the DLD and fixed fees)	≈ 4% (the DLD's 4%, all yours)
Main risk	Overpaying	Construction delay and price at handover

The Dubai Land Department fee is 4% of the price in both cases, but you do not pay it the same way. On the resale of a finished flat it is split, 2% you and 2% the seller, and this is written into Form F. On off-plan, the transfer is registered in the Oqood and you pay the 4%. The agency commission is not in the table: we tell you in writing before we start. What also changes is when the rest of the money leaves your account.

What is being bought in Dubai in 2026?

Mostly off-plan. Of the roughly 104,000 flat sales registered with the Dubai Land Department between January and September 2026, around three in four were off-plan: between 68% and 79% depending on the month. But the split varies enormously by area, and that tells you where you will find each type of flat:

AREA	FLAT SALES	% OFF-PLAN
Arjan	2,603	63%
JVC	7,661	58%
Dubai Hills Estate	1,564	57%
Business Bay	4,958	50%
Palm Jumeirah	771	34%
Downtown Dubai	1,654	24%
Dubai Marina and JBR	2,281	18%

January to September 2026. In established areas, such as Dubai Marina or Downtown, almost everything that changes hands is finished: if you want off-plan there, there is little to choose from. In areas that are still growing, such as Arjan or JVC, the two exist side by side and you can compare a handed-over flat with one about to be handed over on the same street.

Who is finished property for?

For people who want rent and certainty. You visit it, check finishes and views, see the condition of the building and its service charges and, if it is rented, its history and its contract. With the keys you can rent it out from the first month, long term or as a holiday let.

It suits especially those investing from Spain who want figures with a track record: you know what the building costs each year and what rent is paid in it. Also those who need the title deed now, for example to get a mortgage on a valuation or to apply for the Golden Visa with the Title Deed in hand.

What you have to watch is the price. With finished property there is no payment plan to soften it: you pay everything at signing, so the comparison with the building's registered sales is what counts. How to buy a finished flat, step by step.

Who is an off-plan resale for?

For people who can wait for handover and prefer to spread the payment. An example with the same flat we use on the off-plan page: a flat of AED 1,000,000 on a 10/50/40 plan, of which the seller has already paid 30%.

- **To the seller**, at signing: what they have already paid, AED 300,000, plus the premium they ask for, if they ask for one.
- **To the Dubai Land Department**, when the transfer is registered in the Oqood: the 4%, AED 40,000, all yours.
- **To the developer**, in milestones during construction: the 30% of the construction stage that remains, AED 300,000.
- **To the developer**, at key handover: the 40%, AED 400,000.

Compared with a finished flat at the same price, the money leaves your account more slowly. In exchange, you collect no rent until handover and you depend on the developer meeting deadlines and

finishes.

Watch the premium. If the seller asks for more than they have paid, that difference is their gain and your extra cost. It is judged the same way as with a finished flat: by comparing it with what has been paid in the same building. The full process is in buying off-plan in Dubai.

How is an off-plan buyer protected?

By the law and by checks. The law: if the regulator cancels the project, the developer refunds everything paid (Dubai Law 19/2017). The checks, before signing:

- The seller's contract with the developer and its **Oqood** registration with the Dubai Land Department.
- The developer's statement of account: how much the seller has paid, how much is left and on what dates.
- The developer's **NOC**, confirming that it allows the resale and that the seller is up to date.
- The expected handover date, the contract's penalties for delay and the developer's delivery record.

And a rule with no exceptions: what remains to be paid is paid to the developer, never to an agency account. How to buy, step by step.

Does anything change if I need a mortgage or the Golden Visa?

Yes, both. The mortgage: the Central Bank of the UAE limits financing on an off-plan to 50% of the value, compared with higher percentages for a finished flat. If you depend on a mortgage, finished is simpler. We explain it in the mortgage for non-residents.

The Golden Visa: both work. You need AED 2 million invested in residential property in Dubai, in one or more flats; if it is off-plan, with the Oqood certificate for the registered contract. Golden Visa, step by step.

And from the point of view of Hacienda in Spain?

If you are tax resident in Spain, the rent from a finished flat is taxed in your IRPF (Spanish personal income tax) from the first month. With an off-plan there is no rent until handover, but if you sell it before then, assigning the contract is a transfer and the gain is taxed in Spain, in the savings income base. And with a flat bought, if your property abroad adds up to more than €50,000, Form 720 (modelo 720, Spain's overseas assets return) applies; with a part-paid off-plan, your adviser checks it. Spain–UAE taxation.

What changes with the 2026 market?

The market has cooled. Flat sales registered with the Dubai Land Department went from 13,569 in January to 9,619 in September, and the city's median price per square metre from AED 19,346 to AED 18,151. It is a mild adjustment in price and a sharp one in pace.

For off-plan resale, that means choosing a developer with a delivery record and not paying a premium the building cannot sustain: with fewer buyers, handover may come in a calmer market than on the day you buy. For finished property, it means there is more room to negotiate than at the start of the year. For both, it means a horizon of less than three years is risky. We go into it in the Dubai market in 2026.

Which questions help you decide?

- Do you need rent now, or can you go two or three years without collecting it?
- Do you have the money today, or does paying in milestones suit you better? If it is in milestones, will you have liquidity on each date in the plan?
- Will you need a mortgage? When?
- Does it matter to you to see the flat finished before buying it, or is the project, the developer and its track record enough?
- Which area do you want to be in? If it is Marina or Downtown, almost everything will be finished.

If you are still unsure with these answers, we go through it with you with specific flats of both types.

03 · COST BREAKDOWN

Costs of buying a flat in Dubai: what you pay on top of the price

How much does buying a flat in Dubai cost on top of the price?

Without a mortgage, buying a resale flat in Dubai costs **between 2% and 3% more than its price, not counting the agency commission**. On a flat of AED 1,000,000 that is about AED 24,740; on one of AED 2,000,000, about AED 44,740. Almost all of it is your share of the Dubai Land Department registration: the fee is 4% and on a resale it is split, 2% you and 2% the seller. The rest are small fixed amounts. The agency commission is separate: we tell you in writing before we start.

This is what you pay, as of October 2026, with the official Dubai Land Department fees:

ITEM	AMOUNT	PAID TO
Registration fee (transfer)	4% of the price, split: 2% you and 2% the seller	Dubai Land Department
Administrative fees (title deed, plan and services)	≈ AED 520–580	Dubai Land Department
Signing office (Trustee Office)	AED 2,000 or 4,000 + VAT	Trustee authorised by the DLD
Agency commission	We tell you in writing before we start	Calina Real Estate
Mortgage registration, if there is one	0.25% of the loan + ≈ AED 270	Dubai Land Department

VAT in the Emirates is 5% and is added to services: the signing office and the commission. The home itself does not pay VAT: the first sale is zero-rated and resales are exempt. The signing office charges AED 2,000 below a price of AED 500,000 and AED 4,000 from there up.

The Dubai Land Department fee is the big entry cost and, for an individual, the only real tax on the transaction in the Emirates. Owning the flat does not pay income tax there; what happens in Spain depends on your tax residence, and we cover it in the taxes on a flat in Dubai if you live in Spain.

Three flats, with the numbers done

This is how the buyer's costs work out on a resale paid without a mortgage, not counting the agency commission, with the signing office including its VAT and AED 540 of administrative fees, the average figure our calculator uses:

ITEM	AED 1,000,000 FLAT	AED 1,500,000 FLAT	AED 2,000,000 FLAT
Your share of the Dubai Land Department registration (2%)	20,000	30,000	40,000
Signing office (4,000 + VAT)	4,200	4,200	4,200

ITEM	AED 1,000,000 FLAT	AED 1,500,000 FLAT	AED 2,000,000 FLAT
Administrative fees	540	540	540
Total costs, excluding the agency commission	**24,740**	**34,740**	**44,740**
As a share of the price	2.5%	2.3%	2.2%

To get your bearings: AED 1,000,000 is roughly what the median flat in JVC cost between January and September 2026, and a little over AED 2,000,000 the median one in Business Bay or Dubai Hills, according to the sales registered with the Dubai Land Department (Calina Real Estate calculation). If you are in that range, your costs will look a lot like one of these columns.

Notice that the percentage drops slightly as the price goes up. Your 2% grows with the price, but the signing office and the administrative fees are fixed, and on an expensive flat they weigh less.

Why does a small flat pay proportionally more?

Because of the fixed amounts. Below AED 500,000 the signing office drops to AED 2,000 + VAT, but even so the fixed costs weigh more on a small price. A studio of AED 450,000 works out like this: AED 9,000 for your share of the registration, 2,100 for the signing office and about 540 in administrative fees. Total: **about AED 11,640, 2.6% of the price**, not counting the agency commission.

It is not a difference that changes a decision, but it is worth keeping in mind if you compare a studio with a one-bedroom flat: the step in costs is not linear.

Who pays the 4%, you or the seller?

Both, half each. On a resale, the Dubai Land Department registration fee is 4% of the price: you pay 2% and the seller 2%. That is why in our figures we only put your 2% in your column.

What matters is that it is in writing. The split is set in the official resale contract, Form F, which is signed with the deposit. That way, on signing day there is nothing to argue about.

Off-plan is different: the contract or the transfer is registered in the Oqood and the buyer pays the 4%. We cover it further down.

When is each thing paid?

1. **On signing Form F**, the 10% deposit, which is part of the price, not a cost.
2. **On signing day at the Trustee Office**, the rest of the price to the seller and the Dubai Land Department fees: your 2% of the registration, the administrative fees and the signing office. It is paid with manager's cheques from an Emirates bank or through a payment service at the office. The Title Deed is issued in your name that same day.
3. **If there is a mortgage**, its registration is paid at the same appointment, and the valuation and the bank's fee beforehand, during approval.

How to get the money there without losing some on the way, we explain in transferring money from Spain to Dubai.

If you buy off-plan

If you buy off-plan directly from the developer, the contract is entered in the Oqood, the provisional register for the project, with its fee: 4% plus AED 20. The developer registers it and there is no split here: you pay the 4%.

On an off-plan resale you buy the flat from someone who bought it off-plan, before handover. You pay the 4% to the Dubai Land Department when the transfer is registered in the Oqood, plus the agency commission. The developer's certificate authorising the transfer (NOC) is paid by the seller. What the seller has already paid, you pay to them; what is left, to the developer, according to the payment plan. The whole process is in buying off-plan in Dubai.

If you buy with a mortgage: what it adds

You add the mortgage registration with the Dubai Land Department: **0.25% of the loan plus about AED 270**. With a loan of AED 1,000,000, for example, that is AED 2,770. On top of that comes the valuation and the bank's fee, which vary from one lender to another.

With a mortgage, the money you need to have yourself is not just the costs: it is the part of the price the bank does not lend, which for a non-resident is usually half. We run the numbers in mortgages in Dubai for non-residents.

What you pay after buying

Buying costs are paid once. These come back every year or every month, and it is worth including them in your sums before making an offer:

- **Service charges.** They depend on the building and are charged per square foot per year. RERA approves them for each community and they vary a lot from one building to another, even within the same area. We give you the building's figure, taken from Mollak, the official system, before making any offer.
- **Water and electricity (DEWA).** A deposit of AED 2,000 for a flat and an activation fee of about AED 130 + VAT. Whoever occupies the flat also pays a housing fee of 5% of the annual rent on the bill.
- **Ejari**, the registration of the tenancy contract if you rent it out: between about AED 178 and 220.
- **Holiday rental**: annual holiday home permit, of about AED 370 for a studio or one-bedroom and 300 for each extra bedroom.

Setting up utilities and the registration, step by step, in DEWA and Ejari. If you do not want to deal with it yourself, we handle rental management with beBalmy.

And what happens with these costs in Spain?

If you are tax resident in Spain, the purchase itself is not taxed there. But keep every receipt: the Dubai Land Department one, the signing office one, the Title Deed one and, if there is one, the mortgage registration. **They form part of the acquisition value**, and when you sell they reduce the gain you pay on in your IRPF (Spanish personal income tax).

Before 31 March of the year after the purchase, Form 720 (modelo 720, Spain's overseas assets return) is due if your properties abroad add up to more than €50,000: it is an information return, not a payment. The whole tax journey, from purchase to sale, is in taxes on a flat in Dubai.

Mistakes that make the purchase more expensive

- **Comparing flats on price alone.** Two flats at the same price can have very different service charges. Over ten years, that weighs more than a discount in the negotiation.
- **Forgetting the exchange rate.** You buy in dirhams and save in euros. The exchange rate and its margin are one more cost, even if they do not appear on any invoice.
- **Not putting the split of the 4% in writing.** On a resale it is half each, 2% and 2%, and it goes in writing in Form F, not on signing day.
- **Working out the mortgage without its costs.** The registration, the valuation and the bank's fee come out of your pocket, not out of the loan.
- **Not keeping the receipts.** In Spain they are worth money on the day you sell.

If you want the numbers for a specific flat, with its building and its service charges, tell us which one and we will prepare them before you make an offer.

04 · SPAIN–UAE TAX

Tax on a Dubai property if you live in Spain: what you actually pay

What tax do you pay on a Dubai property if you live in Spain?

If you are tax resident in Spain, **you pay tax in Spain on your Dubai flat as if it were here**: the rent goes into your IRPF (Spanish personal income tax), if it is empty you declare imputed income, and when you sell it the gain is taxed in the savings income base. The UAE does not tax an individual on rent, on a sale, on wealth or on inheritance, so there is nothing to deduct and you pay the full Spanish tax.

The idea that puts everything in order: **your tax is not decided by where the flat is, but by where you live**. Dubai's tax advantage is for people who live there. For someone who is still resident in Spain, Dubai is a good investment for other reasons, not for tax. Be wary of anyone who tells you "0% tax" without first asking where you are resident.

What do you pay in the UAE for owning a flat?

For an individual investing in residential property, in the UAE:

ITEM	IN THE UAE (INDIVIDUAL)
Rental income	0%. There is no personal income tax
Gain on sale	0%. A sale by an individual is not taxed
Wealth and inheritance	0%. There is no wealth tax and no inheritance tax
Corporate Tax	Does not apply: renting out or selling residential property without a commercial licence is not a business activity (Cabinet Decision 49/2023)

What you do pay are fees and costs, not taxes on income: the Dubai Land Department registration fee when you buy (on a resale, 4% split between buyer and seller), which is the only real tax in the transaction; service charges; registering the tenancy contract with Ejari; and the municipal fee of 5% of the annual rent, paid by whoever lives in the flat on their DEWA bill. Residential property does not carry VAT either: the first supply is zero-rated and residential resales and rentals are exempt. Offices and shops, on the other hand, do carry 5%. The purchase figures are in the costs of buying a flat in Dubai.

Are you tax resident in Spain? The Golden Visa does not change it

You are tax resident in Spain, and you are taxed here on everything you earn worldwide, if any one of these three conditions is met (article 9 of the IRPF law):

- You spend **more than 183 days a year** in Spain.
- Spain is home to the **main base of your activities or economic interests**.
- Your spouse, if you are not legally separated, and your minor children **live in Spain**: then you are presumed to as well.

The Golden Visa does not change your tax residence. Investing AED 2 million in residential property in Dubai entitles you to a UAE residence permit, which is an immigration status, not a tax one. You can hold the Golden Visa and still be tax resident in Spain. Anyone who says "buy, and with the Golden Visa you stop paying tax in Spain" is wrong.

Genuinely moving your tax residence to the UAE is a separate project: a UAE tax residence certificate, a real break with Spain, an analysis of the treaty and, if you have significant wealth in shares, a review of the exit tax. It can be done, but it is not a side effect of buying a flat.

The double tax treaty: why it does not save you from paying

Spain and the UAE have a treaty to avoid double taxation, in force since 2 April 2007. It says that rent from, and the sale of, property located in the UAE *may* be taxed there (articles 6 and 13). "May" does not mean "only there": Spain keeps the right to tax its resident.

Double taxation is avoided through a **credit** (article 22): Spain deducts whatever you have paid in the UAE. Since an individual pays nothing there on their flat, the credit is zero and you pay the full Spanish tax.

Nor does it count as a tax haven. The UAE is not on Spain's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions (Order HFP/115/2023, nor in its update, Order HAC/649/2026, in force since 28 June 2026). That spares you the stricter tax haven rules, but it does not exempt you from declaring. And Hacienda (the Spanish tax agency) finds out: the UAE exchanges financial information automatically (the CRS standard) and the treaty also allows information to be requested case by case.

Your flat, stage by stage: what you pay in Spain

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS IN SPAIN
Purchase	Not taxed. Form 720 (modelo 720, Spain's overseas assets return), for information only, if your property abroad is worth more than €50,000
Empty or for your own use	Imputed income in your IRPF: 1.1% of 50% of the purchase value
Rented out	Income from real estate (rendimiento del capital inmobiliario): income minus expenses, at your IRPF rate
Sale	Capital gain in the savings income base, from 19% to 30%, calculated in euros
Resale of an off-plan	Assigning the contract before handover is a sale: a gain or loss in your IRPF
Wealth	Counts towards Wealth Tax (Impuesto sobre el Patrimonio) and the Solidarity Tax if you exceed their thresholds
Inheritance	Inheritance Tax (Impuesto sobre Sucesiones) in Spain if the heir is resident in Spain

Below is each stage in detail.

If you rent it out: how the rent is taxed in your IRPF

It is **income from real estate** (rendimiento del capital inmobiliario) and goes into the general income base of the IRPF. You declare the year's income minus deductible expenses, and that net figure is taxed at your marginal rate.

That is why the same flat pays a different amount depending on who owns it: the net figure is added to your salary or your other income, and it is not the same for someone on a low income as for someone already in the top band. Which of your flat's expenses are deductible in your case is for your adviser to check; if you need one, we put you in touch with a lawyer who specialises in Spain–UAE taxation.

Keep a clean record of income and expenses from the first month. If we manage the flat with beBalmy, the monthly report gives you exactly that: what was collected, what was paid and the transfer of the net amount.

If you do not rent it out

If it is a second home that you use yourself or it is empty, you do not escape IRPF: you declare imputed income (article 85 of the IRPF law). Since a flat in Dubai has no cadastral value, the imputed income is **1.1% of 50% of the purchase value**.

When you sell: how the gain is taxed

The gain goes into the savings income base, on the 2026 scale (Law 7/2024): in bands, at **19, 21, 23, 27 and 30%**. It is not taxed in the UAE, so it is paid in full in Spain.

Two things that change the figure:

- **It is calculated in euros.** You bought and sell in dirhams, but Hacienda looks at the gain in euros, so the exchange rate between the purchase and the sale also counts: it can add or subtract.
- **Costs are added to the purchase value.** Your share of the Dubai Land Department fee, the signing office, the Title Deed and the mortgage registration form part of the purchase value and reduce the gain. Keep every receipt from day one.

If you resell an off-plan before handover, that is taxed too. Assigning your purchase contract to another buyer is a transfer: the difference between what you receive and what you had paid is a gain or loss in your IRPF, just as if you were selling the finished flat. How that kind of sale works is in buying off-plan in Dubai.

Form 720, Wealth Tax and the Large Fortunes Tax

Form 720. If your property abroad adds up to more than €50,000, it is declared before 31 March of the year after the purchase. It is an information return, not a tax: you pay nothing for filing it, but it is an obligation.

Wealth Tax (Impuesto sobre el Patrimonio). It taxes your worldwide net wealth at 31 December, and your Dubai flat counts. The national tax-free allowance is €700,000, plus your main home up to €300,000; some comunidades autónomas (regions) reduce it, and rates and reliefs are set by each region. You have to file it if you end up with tax to pay or if your assets exceed €2 million, and it is filed alongside your income tax return. Since the Dubai flat has no cadastral value, it is valued at the higher of what you paid and the value Hacienda verifies.

Solidarity Tax on Large Fortunes (Impuesto de Solidaridad de las Grandes Fortunas). From €3 million of net wealth, with the same allowances: 1.7% between €3 million and €5.35 million, 2.1% between €5.35 million and €10.7 million and 3.5% above that, less whatever you have paid in Wealth Tax. It is filed in July (modelo 718). It was created as a temporary tax and has been extended with no end date.

A case with no clear guidance: an off-plan that is part-paid. The law values properties under construction at the amount invested at 31 December, but Hacienda has not ruled on the off-plan buyer. With large estates, it is looked at case by case.

And if your children inherit?

There is no inheritance tax in the UAE. There is in Spain: if the heir is resident in Spain, they pay Inheritance Tax (Impuesto sobre Sucesiones) on everything they inherit, wherever it is.

And there is a part that is not about tax but matters just as much: **the flat needs a will that is valid in the UAE**. The best time to deal with it is when you buy.

In your own name or through a company?

For the vast majority of buyers, **in your own name is the simplest**: 0% in the UAE and no tax obligations there, with no registration and no annual return. You pay in Spain as we have seen, and that is it.

A UAE company pays Corporate Tax: 0% on profit up to AED 375,000 and 9% on the excess, with accounts and an annual return. A free zone company is not an automatic 0%: income from residential property is, as a rule, taxed at 9%. And a Spanish SL (limited company) cannot buy directly: it needs a vehicle incorporated in the UAE that appears as the owner at the Dubai Land Department.

If you are resident in Spain, a company is not a shortcut. If it has no real substance there (at the very least, one full-time employee managing the properties and decisions taken in the UAE), Hacienda can disregard it and attribute the income to you, or treat it as resident in Spain because it is run from here. With one or two flats, it rarely pays off.

If you still want a company, **decide before you reserve**. Changing the owner afterwards is usually a new sale, with the Dubai Land Department's 4% all over again.

What you hear that is not true

WHAT YOU HEAR	WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS
"You don't pay tax in Dubai"	Nearly true for people who live there. If you are resident in Spain, you are taxed here on everything
"With the Golden Visa you stop paying tax in Spain"	False. It is a residence permit, it does not change your tax residence
"With a UAE company I don't pay tax in Spain"	Without substance, Hacienda can disregard the company or treat it as resident in Spain
"Free zone, 0%"	Property income of a free zone company is, as a rule, taxed at 9%
"Hacienda won't find out"	The UAE exchanges financial information automatically with Spain

The questions we will ask you, and your figure

Before talking about tax we will ask you five things, because they change the answer: where you are tax resident, whether you are buying in your own name or through a company, whether it is a home or a commercial unit, whether you plan to resell an off-plan before handover and where the money is coming from. If your case involves a company, a change of residence, a sale with a large gain or an inheritance, we put you in touch with a lawyer who specialises in Spain–UAE taxation.

With our tax estimator you can work out a rough figure for what your rent means at your marginal rate. And if you want to go through it with a specific flat in front of you, book a video call.

05 · FINANCING

Dubai mortgage for non-residents: how much banks lend and what they ask for

Can a non-resident get a mortgage in Dubai?

Yes. You can buy with a mortgage in Dubai without living there, but with less financing than a resident: in practice, **around 50% of the value**, sometimes a little more depending on the bank and your profile. The rest of the price, plus the purchase costs, comes from your own funds. On a flat of AED 1,000,000 that means having about AED 526,000 to hand, plus the agency commission, the valuation and the bank's fee.

The mortgage has to come from a bank licensed by the Central Bank of the UAE: a Spanish bank cannot do it. And the term ends at 65. With those three pieces (how much they lend, who can lend and until when) you already know whether a mortgage fits your purchase.

How much they lend: the Central Bank caps

The Central Bank of the UAE sets caps on lending. For a foreigner:

TYPE OF PURCHASE	MAXIMUM FINANCING
Investment property (finished)	60% of the value
Off-plan	50% of the value
Maximum term	25 years
Age when the loan is paid off	65

These are maximums, not what you will get. There is no separate rule for non-residents: each bank decides within those caps, and for someone who neither lives nor earns in the UAE they tend to stay lower, around 50–60%. A resident buying their first home to live in can go higher; if you move to Dubai, the numbers change.

How much you have to put in: two examples

A resale with 50% financing, with the buyer's purchase costs from the Dubai Land Department table (not counting the agency commission) and the mortgage registration (0.25% of the loan + AED 270):

ITEM	FLAT OF AED 1,000,000	FLAT OF AED 2,000,000
Bank loan (50%)	500,000	1,000,000
Your share of the price	500,000	1,000,000
Purchase costs (your 2% to the Dubai Land Department, signing office with VAT and fees)	24,740	44,740
Mortgage registration	1,520	2,770

ITEM	FLAT OF AED 1,000,000	FLAT OF AED 2,000,000
What you put in	**526,260**	**1,047,510**

On top of that, add the agency commission and the bank's valuation and arrangement fee, which vary by lender. If the bank lends you 60% on the AED 2,000,000 flat, the loan goes up to AED 1,200,000, the registration to AED 3,270 and what you put in comes down to about AED 848,010.

The lesson from both examples: with a mortgage, **the purchase costs are not financed**. They come entirely out of your pocket: on a flat of AED 2,000,000, about AED 44,740 plus the agency commission. You can work out your exact figure with the costs calculator.

Over what term, and why your age matters

The maximum term is 25 years, but the loan has to be paid off by 65. If you are 40, you can go to 25 years; at 45, to 20; at 55, only to 10. With fewer years, the monthly payment rises a lot for the same loan, and the bank measures that payment against your income.

That is why, past a certain age, many buyers prefer to borrow less or not at all. It is a numbers decision: compare what the loan costs you with what the flat will bring in. We are not going to promise you that the rent will pay the mortgage; we show you what has been rented in the building and you do the sums with data.

What about a Spanish bank?

A Spanish bank cannot register a mortgage on a flat in Dubai. The emirate's mortgage law (Law 14/2008, article 4) only accepts those from institutions licensed by the Central Bank of the UAE and registered with the Dubai Land Department.

The alternative in Spain is to borrow here against other security: a loan secured on a property you already own in Spain, or a personal loan. You then buy in Dubai in cash, with no UAE bank valuation and no mortgage registration, but with a debt in euros that you repay from your income here. Each option has its cost: compare the two over the same term before you decide.

Which documents they ask for

- Passport.
- Bank statements for the last six months.
- Proof of income (payslips, income tax return or your company's accounts).
- Risk report (CIRBE, the Bank of Spain's credit register) or credit history from your country.

If you are self-employed or paid by your own company, expect to be asked for more: the company's accounts and your tax returns for several years. Having it ready before you start looking at flats saves you weeks.

How the mortgage fits into the purchase, step by step

1. **Pre-approval** before making an offer. You know how much they will lend you and you negotiate with that figure, not with a guess.

2. **Offer and Form F**, the resale contract, with the 10% deposit. It is worth having the contract state that the purchase depends on the mortgage.
3. **Valuation** by the bank. If it values below the price, the loan is calculated on the valuation and you put in the difference.
4. **Final approval** and the bank's offer letter.
5. **Signing at the Trustee Office**: the bank pays its part, you pay yours, and the purchase and the mortgage are registered at the same time.

A cash resale normally closes in four to six weeks from agreeing the price. With a mortgage, add the bank's approval and valuation.

What it adds to the purchase

Mortgage registration with the Dubai Land Department (0.25% of the loan + about AED 270), and the bank's valuation and arrangement fee. Interest rates and fees change every month, so we do not give you figures that go out of date: we put you in touch with banks and mortgage advisers who work with non-residents and you compare real offers.

A detail that is not in the offer: the loan is in dirhams and your income is in euros. The monthly payment will cost you more or fewer euros as the euro–dirham rate moves. It is not a reason not to take one, but it is a reason not to stretch it to the limit.

Off-plan: the payment plan as financing

On off-plan the bank cap is 50%, and you almost never need to go that far: many developers collect in milestones during construction and even after handover. For many buyers that payment plan does the job of a mortgage, with no bank, no valuation and no interest. What you pay in milestones is spread over time. See projects and payment plans.

Does a mortgaged purchase count for the Golden Visa?

Yes, it can. The ten-year Golden Visa for property investment requires residential property in Dubai worth AED 2 million, and the Dubai Land Department accepts it being mortgaged. What it then asks for is a **letter from the bank**: stating that it has no objection to you applying for residence with that flat, and showing how much you have paid and what is left on the loan. The UAE press (Gulf News, Khaleej Times, The National) says the same: a mortgaged flat qualifies.

What is not clear is **how much you need to have paid**. The Dubai Land Department page refers to a bank letter showing AED 2 million paid. The press does not agree: The National reported at the end of 2024 a minimum payment of 50% or a bank guarantee for the rest, and Gulf News published in 2026 that it is enough for the flat to be worth AED 2 million. Since the sources do not say the same thing, we confirm it with the Dubai Land Department for your case before you sign.

If the Golden Visa is the goal, say so from the start: it changes how much it makes sense to borrow. More detail in Golden Visa.

And in Spain: keep the receipts

If you are tax resident in Spain, the mortgage registration with the Dubai Land Department is added to the purchase value when you sell, like the rest of the purchase costs: keep the receipt. If you rent the

flat out, the rent is taxed in your IRPF (Spanish personal income tax), income minus deductible expenses; which mortgage costs count in your case is for your adviser to check. We explain it in the tax on a Dubai flat.

Transferring money from Spain to Dubai to buy a flat: safely and at the lowest cost

What is the best way to send the money to Dubai?

To buy a flat, the money leaves your bank in Spain by **international transfer (SWIFT)** or through a **payment institution specialising in foreign exchange**, regulated in the European Union. Both are safe. The difference is the cost, and the big cost is hardly ever the fee: it is the **euro to dirham exchange rate** you are given. Always compare how many dirhams arrive, not how much you are charged.

And as important as the how is the to whom: the money for a purchase in Dubai goes to the seller, the developer or the signing office, depending on the case. Never to a personal account or to the agency's. We do not touch the money for your purchase.

Where the money goes

- **Resale:** the 10% deposit when you sign Form F and, on signing day, the rest of the price in **manager's cheques** from a UAE bank, handed over at the Trustee Office. To have them issued you need the money in an account there or a payment service to the office.
- **Off-plan resale:** what has already been paid, to the seller; the remaining payments, to the **developer**, according to the payment plan in your contract.
- **Dubai Land Department fees and signing office:** paid at the Trustee Office appointment.

Before you send anything, be clear on who each payment goes to and on what date. What is paid at each point, with amounts, is in the costs of buying a flat in Dubai.

Bank or payment institution: the two routes

Transfer from your bank (SWIFT). This is the usual route for large amounts and the one most people already know. It charges a fee, sometimes with a minimum, and a charge for the SWIFT payment, and applies its own exchange rate, which tends to be far from the real rate.

Payment institution specialising in foreign exchange. Regulated in the European Union, it usually applies an exchange rate much closer to the real one and tells you before sending how many dirhams will arrive.

There is no single answer. Ask both for the same transfer, on the same day, and compare the total in dirhams that reaches the destination. That is the only figure that matters.

The cost you do not see: the euro to dirham exchange

The dirham is pegged to the dollar, so the euro–dirham rate moves in step with the euro–dollar. When you send euros, someone converts them into dirhams, and in that conversion they take a margin: the difference between the real market rate and the rate they give you. It does not appear as a fee on any statement, but you pay it.

That margin varies a lot from one institution to another, and on a property purchase, with amounts this large, it can easily cost more than all the fees put together. That is why the useful question for the bank

is not "how much do you charge?", but "how many dirhams arrive if I send this amount today?".

The exchange risk between reservation and signing

The price of the flat is in dirhams. Your savings are in euros. Between the day you agree the price and the day you pay, weeks go by, and with an off-plan, years. If the euro falls against the dirham in that time, the same flat costs you more euros; if it rises, fewer.

Ways to manage it, without trying to guess the market:

- **Convert when you agree the price.** You convert what you will need into dirhams and forget about the exchange rate. It is the simplest option on a resale.
- **Convert in stages.** On an off-plan with milestone payments, you convert what each milestone needs when it is due, and the risk is spread over time.
- **Ask about fixing the rate forward.** Some institutions let you fix today the rate for a future payment. Ask about the conditions before you commit.

The exchange rate also counts in Spain: if you are tax resident here, the gain when you sell is calculated in euros, so the rate at purchase and the rate at sale both go into the sum. We explain it in the tax on a Dubai flat.

OUR, SHA or BEN: who pays the charges

When you order the transfer you choose who pays the charges of the banks involved. With **OUR** you pay them all and the exact amount arrives: it is the option for payments that must match to the dirham, such as a deposit or a construction milestone. With **SHA** each bank takes its own and a little less may arrive. With **BEN** the recipient pays them all, and it is the one that suits you least for an amount that has to arrive exact.

If a payment arrives short by a few dirhams, the payment is incomplete and you have to send the difference, with its own cost. For purchase payments, OUR.

The paperwork: source of funds

In the UAE, estate agencies, developers and banks are required by anti-money laundering law to check who you are and where the money comes from. They will ask you, and that is a good sign: anyone who does not ask is not doing their job properly. Have to hand:

- A valid passport.
- The purchase contract (Form F or the developer's contract).
- Statements or proof of the source: the sale of a property, savings, dividends, an inheritance.

Cash complicates everything: cash payments above a threshold are reported to the authorities. To buy, use a transfer.

In Spain, below €1 million, you only have to declare transactions with other countries to the Banco de España (Bank of Spain) if it asks you to.

Step by step, with dates

1. **Before making an offer:** choose the route (bank or payment institution), open your account and prepare the proof of source of funds. Opening the account can take a few days.
2. **When you agree the price:** decide when you are going to convert the euros into dirhams.
3. **Deposit:** send a small test transfer and, once it arrives, the deposit transfer.
4. **Before signing:** the rest of the price and the fees, with enough margin for it to be available in the UAE the day before the Trustee Office appointment.
5. **Afterwards:** keep the proof of every transfer.

To avoid surprises

- Make a small test transfer before the big one.
- Check the destination IBAN in the contract, never just by email. If you get an email changing the payment details, phone before you send anything: it is the most common fraud in property sales.
- If the payment has a deadline (a construction milestone), send it with margin: a SWIFT transfer takes one to three working days.
- Tell your bank you are going to send a large amount abroad. A transfer blocked for security the day before signing makes for a bad day.
- Keep all the proof: your adviser will ask for it for your IRPF (Spanish personal income tax) and Form 720 (modelo 720, Spain's overseas assets return), and it is the evidence of the purchase value when you sell.

If it is your first time, book a video call and we go through it with you before you send anything.

07 · VIEWINGS AND TRAVEL

Travelling to Dubai to view flats: how to plan the visit to buy

Do you need to travel to Dubai to buy a flat?

You do not need to, but many buyers prefer to go once. If you travel, make it a short trip, three or four days, to see two or three flats we have already shortlisted with you by video call, with your financing ready so you can make an offer there and then. The final signing at the Trustee Office does not force you to go back: an attorney can do it with a power of attorney granted in Spain.

What does not work is the opposite: flying with no shortlist, seeing twenty flats in two days and coming back undecided. This guide is how we organise it so the trip serves to buy, not for property sightseeing.

What do you need to do before buying the ticket?

Three things, in this order:

1. **A video call to pin down the goal.** Rental income, Golden Visa, living there or diversifying; budget, timeframe and who decides. That gives the area and the type of flat. Book a 30-minute video call during Spanish office hours.
2. **The shortlist, by live video call.** We walk through each candidate with the phone: the flat, the building, the views and the street. Each one comes with its comparison of the sales registered with the Dubai Land Department in its building and its area. You board the plane with two or three flats, not twenty.
3. **Financing, ready.** If you are buying with a mortgage, ask for the bank pre-approval before you fly: it is a letter with the maximum amount and an expiry date, and without it you cannot make an offer. If you pay cash, have the proof of funds to hand. It is the difference between coming back with a flat reserved and coming back with a list.

And a few days before the trip, send us a copy of your passport. Buildings ask for visitor details in advance, and before the first viewing you sign Form B, the official RERA contract between the buyer and the agency.

How many days do you need and how do you split them?

Three or four days are enough if the shortlist is done:

- **Day 1: the areas.** Arrival and a walk round the candidate areas at the times you would live or rent there: the morning traffic, the evening atmosphere, the metro, the supermarket, the beach or the park.
- **Day 2: the flats.** Viewings of the shortlisted flats, checking the building, the common areas and the service charges. If any is rented, we look at the contract and its Ejari.
- **Day 3: the offer.** If one fits, a written offer with proven financing. If there is agreement, the contract (Form F) is signed and the deposit paid, normally 10%.
- **Day 4, optional: the bank.** If you are buying with a mortgage or want to open an account, and then home.

Dubai is about seven hours by direct flight from Madrid or Barcelona. Spanish citizens enter without a prior visa for short tourist stays.

What should you look at on each viewing?

A proper viewing looks at more than the living room. What we check with you:

- **The flat:** orientation and light at different times, noise from the street or the motorway, air conditioning, kitchen and bathrooms, storage, parking space.
- **The building:** lifts and waiting times, pool and gym, cleanliness, who lives there and how much holiday rental traffic there is.
- **The building's numbers:** the service charges approved by RERA, which are checked in the official Mollak system, and what similar flats in the same building have sold for.
- **The paperwork:** that the title deed is valid and has no blocks, which is checked in the official Dubai REST app with the Title Deed number.

If you are looking at an off-plan resale, the viewing is of the site or the show flat, and what you review is the seller's statement of account with the developer, the handover date and the developer's track record. We explain it in buying off-plan.

What should you ask during the trip?

- Why is the owner selling and how long has it been on the market?
- What have the latest similar flats in the building sold for, according to the records?
- How much are the service charges a year, and are they up to date?
- If it is rented, until when, for how much, and can we see the Ejari?
- Does it have a mortgage? If it does, the seller's bank has to cancel it before the transfer.
- What transfer date is realistic, allowing for the developer's NOC?

When is the best time to go?

From October to April the weather helps and you can view at any time of day. In summer you can still view, but viewings are bunched at the start and end of the day and walking round the areas is harder.

More than the season, what matters is arriving with the shortlist done. A trip in July with three shortlisted flats achieves more than one in January with no plan.

Do you have to go back to sign?

No. The transfer signing at the Trustee Office usually comes a few weeks after the contract, once the seller has the developer's NOC: on a resale paid without a mortgage, four to six weeks from agreeing the price. If you cannot be there on that date, an attorney signs.

The power of attorney is granted before a notary in Spain, legalised for use in the Emirates and translated into Arabic. It is worth getting it under way as soon as there is a contract, so it is not what delays the signing. We tell you the exact route for your case and coordinate it with the notary's office.

What happens with the money while you are there?

Nothing is paid in cash. The contract deposit is usually a security cheque held in custody until the transfer, and the rest of the price is handed over on signing day at the Trustee Office, in manager's cheques. The Emirates also require your identity and the source of the funds to be checked before the contract, so have the documents ready: passport, recent proof of address and where the money comes from.

The transfer from Spain, with time for it to arrive before the signing: how to transfer money from Spain to Dubai.

Which mistakes waste the trip?

- **Going without pre-approval or proof of funds.** You find the flat and cannot make an offer.
- **Trying to see everything.** More than three or four flats a day blur together in your head.
- **Deciding on the show flat or the listing photos**, without looking at the building and its numbers.
- **Not getting the power of attorney under way.** Then you have to go back or delay the signing.

What if you are already in Dubai for another reason?

Let us know a few days ahead: we put together the viewing schedule to fit your trip, with the same prior shortlist by video call. And if in the end you would rather not travel, the whole purchase can be done remotely: buying a flat in Dubai from Spain.

08 · BUYING PROCESS

Buying off-plan in Dubai: payment plans, Oqood registration and what happens if construction is delayed

How do you buy an off-plan property in Dubai?

This is how you buy an off-plan resale: the seller, who bought from the developer and has not yet received the flat, gets the developer's **NOC**; you both sign the sale agreement; you pay the seller what they have already paid (plus their premium, if they ask for one); the flat's provisional registration, the **Oqood**, is transferred to your name at the Dubai Land Department with 4% of the price; and from that day you take over the payments still owed to the developer, on the same dates in the plan, until handover.

That is what we work with at Calina: **resale** off-plan, not a developer's launch. The difference matters. You buy a flat with construction already well along and handover closer, with a payment history you can check and a price you can compare with what people are paying in the same building.

What is the Oqood?

The Oqood is the provisional register the Dubai Land Department keeps for properties under construction. It works like the title deed of a flat that does not exist yet: it records who the buyer of each unit is, with their contract with the developer. The developer registers it when it sells off-plan, with a fee of 4% plus AED 20.

When you buy an off-plan resale, with the developer's NOC, the seller's Oqood is transferred to your name and at that point you pay the 4% to the Dubai Land Department. At handover, the Oqood becomes your **Title Deed**, the final deed. The Oqood certificate is also the document you will be asked for if you want to apply for the Golden Visa with an off-plan property: you need AED 2 million invested in residential property in Dubai.

What do I pay the seller and what do I pay the developer?

You pay two things to two different parties. To the seller, what they have already paid the developer, plus the premium if they ask for one. To the developer, the payments still due under the original plan, on the same dates. An example, the same one as on the off-plan page: an AED 1,000,000 flat on a 10/50/40 plan, of which the seller has already paid 30%.

ITEM	%	AED
To the seller: what they have already paid (signing and first construction milestones)	30%	300,000
To the developer: the rest of construction, by milestones	30%	300,000
To the developer: on handover of the keys	40%	400,000
Dubai Land Department, when the transfer is registered in the Oqood (you pay it)	4%	40,000

If the seller asks for a premium, it is added to what you pay them. That premium is what you need to look at very closely: we show you the registered sales in the building so you know whether it is

reasonable. The seller pays for the NOC. The agency commission is not in the example: we tell you in writing before we start.

And one rule with no exceptions: the remaining payments go to the developer, into the accounts set out in its contract. Never to an account belonging to the agency or to an intermediary.

What are the steps in an off-plan resale?

1. **We check what you are buying.** The seller's contract with the developer, their Oqood certificate and their statement of account: how much they have paid, how much is left and on what dates. The seller requests it from the developer before putting the flat on the market, so there are no surprises.
2. **We check that it can be resold.** Every developer requires the seller to have paid a minimum share of the price before it issues the NOC: it is usually between 30 and 40%, but it is set by the contract and confirmed with the developer in each case. If the seller has not reached it, you have to wait for the next payment.
3. **Offer and sale agreement.** You agree on price and premium, and sign the sale agreement (Form F), with the transfer date. Before that, the agency checks your identity and the source of your funds.
4. **Developer's NOC.** With the sale agreement signed, the seller formally requests the no objection certificate, with your passport and your contract. The developer confirms that it allows the resale and that the seller is up to date with payments. No NOC, no transfer.
5. **Oqood transfer.** At the Dubai Land Department, the Oqood is transferred to your name. That day you pay the seller what you agreed and the 4% to the register.
6. **You take over the plan.** The outstanding payments go to the developer, on their dates.
7. **Handover and Title Deed.** Technical inspection, keys and final deed.

What do payment plans look like?

PLAN	HOW IT IS PAID
10/50/40	10% on signing, 50% during construction by milestones, 40% on handover
60/40	60% during construction, 40% on handover
Post-handover	Part of the price after handover, in instalments over one to three years

Each developer sets its plans in its contract. In a resale you do not choose the plan: you inherit the seller's, at whatever point it has reached. That is why, before you sign, we give you the payment schedule with dates and amounts and match it against the cash you really have. The thing that does the most damage in an off-plan purchase is reaching a milestone without the money.

If you are thinking of a mortgage, bear in mind that the Central Bank of the UAE limits financing on an off-plan property to 50% of its value. We explain it in the mortgage for non-residents.

How big a share of the market is off-plan?

A big one. Of the roughly 104,000 flat sales registered with the Dubai Land Department between January and September 2026, around three in four were off-plan, between 68% and 79% depending on the month. In areas that are still growing, such as Arjan (63%) or JVC (58%), it is more than half of what sells; in Dubai Marina and JBR, only 18%.

The fact that it is what sells most can be read two ways if you are buying a resale. The good one: there is plenty to choose from, and there are sellers who want out before handover. The one to watch: when handover comes, the same building will have lots of new flats looking for a tenant or a buyer at the same time. That is why the specific building matters so much, not just the area. We compare the two options in ready or off-plan.

What happens if the project is cancelled or delayed?

If the regulator cancels the project, the developer must refund **everything paid** (Dubai Law 19/2017). Handover delays, on the other hand, are governed by the contract: that is why we review the expected date, the delay penalties and the developer's delivery record before you sign.

Watch out for the opposite case: if you are the one who stops paying, the law allows the developer to keep part of what has been paid, depending on how much has been built:

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS	THE DEVELOPER MAY RETAIN
60% or more	up to 40%
Less than 60%	up to 25%
Not started	up to 30%

In a resale, construction is already well along, so there is more at stake if you miss a payment. Another reason to match the schedule against your cash before you sign.

What should you check before signing?

- **The seller's Oqood**, and that their name matches the developer's contract.
- **The statement of account** issued by the developer, not a screenshot from the seller: paid, outstanding and dates.
- **That resale is allowed**, and the minimum paid that the developer requires before issuing the NOC.
- **The expected handover date** and the contract's penalties if it slips.
- **The developer's track record**: whether it delivers on time and with the finishes it promised.
- **The premium**, compared with the registered sales in the same building.
- **Your cash** for each remaining milestone, including the payment on handover.

What is handover like?

When the developer finishes, it notifies you to pay whatever is left of the plan and take the flat. Before the keys, the flat is checked point by point and the developer is made to repair whatever is wrong: the technical inspection (snagging). The developer is liable for one year on the installations and ten on the structure.

With handover, the Oqood becomes your Title Deed. Then come water and electricity and, if you rent it out, the Ejari: how it works. If you like, we take care of rental management with beBalmy from day one.

What do I need to bear in mind in Spain?

If you are tax resident in Spain, while the flat is under construction there is no rental income to declare. If you sell it before handover, assigning the contract is a transfer and the gain is taxed in your IRPF (Spanish personal income tax), in the savings income band. How to declare a part-paid off-plan property (Form 720, the modelo 720 overseas assets return; Wealth Tax, the Impuesto sobre el Patrimonio) is something your adviser should review, because there is no single clear answer for every case. And keep every receipt for each payment to the developer: they are your acquisition cost. Spain–UAE taxation.

09 · AFTER YOU BUY

Snagging: the technical inspection before you take handover of your flat in Dubai

What is snagging and why is it done before you accept the keys?

Snagging is the technical inspection of the flat before you accept handover. It is checked room by room, everything that is not right is logged with a photo, and the developer is asked to repair it **before** you sign the handover certificate and collect the keys. If you bought off-plan, it is the last moment when you have full leverage to insist.

The reason is simple. Until you have accepted the flat, fixing it is part of the developer's obligation to hand it over in good condition. Once you have signed for it, every defect becomes a warranty claim: you have to prove it was there from the start, wait your turn with after-sales and, often, arrange the technician's visit with a tenant living there. Whatever is not logged on handover day costs much more to claim afterwards.

A snag is a small defect: a cracked tile, a socket with no power, a door that catches, a badly sealed joint. They are hardly ever serious, but in a flat you plan to rent out from the first month, each one is a tenant complaint, a bad review or a week without income.

When is the inspection done?

It depends on how you buy.

- **Off-plan, when construction finishes.** When the developer announces handover, it invites you to inspect the flat before giving you the keys. That is when snagging happens. The exact order (final payment, inspection, handover) is set by your contract with the developer, so it is worth reading it before the notice arrives. If you bought off-plan, this guide explains how payments and the Oqood registration work up to that day.
- **Developer's ready stock.** The flat is finished but nobody has lived in it. It is inspected just like an off-plan flat, before signing and handover.
- **Resale.** It is inspected before you commit: at the latest, before you sign Form F. Whatever is wrong is negotiated into the price or fixed by the seller before the transfer.

In the first two cases there are usually two visits: the full inspection and, when the developer says it has been fixed, a second check of the list, point by point. Nothing is closed just because an email says so.

What gets checked in a snagging inspection?

We check more than 100 points, with a photo and location for each issue. These are the groups and how each one is checked:

- **Finishes:** floors (cracked, hollow or uneven tiles), walls and ceilings (cracks, stains, paint), skirting boards, and joints and sealing in bathrooms and kitchen. They are checked with raking light, which is how the defects that ceiling lights hide show up.
- **Plumbing:** pressure and flow at every tap, hot water, drains with the water running for a while, leaks under basins and the kitchen sink, cisterns and sanitaryware. A slow drain on handover day is a

blockage in the first month of the tenancy.

- **Electrics:** every socket with a tester, switches, light points and the consumer unit, with each circuit labelled.
- **Air conditioning:** the AC in every room switched on long enough to see whether it really cools, thermostats, grilles and the condensate drain. In Dubai it is the system that works hardest and the one that gives tenants the most trouble.
- **External doors and windows:** windows and balcony doors (locks, tracks, seals and weathertightness). Dust and sand get in wherever the sealing fails.
- **Internal joinery:** doors that catch or do not close, wardrobes, handles, hinges and locks.
- **Kitchen and appliances** included: that the ones listed in the contract are there and that they all work.
- **Balcony and terrace:** fall and drainage, railings, flooring.
- **Common areas and access:** the condition of the landing, and that you are given access cards, garage remotes and a parking space if you bought one.

What defects turn up at handover?

No two handovers are the same, but the defects fall into the same families. So you know what to look for if you are in the flat yourself:

- Incomplete silicone sealing in showers, baths and worktops.
- Floor or wall tiles that sound hollow when you tap them.
- Sockets with no power or switches that do not control the light they should.
- Air conditioning that runs but does not cool a room properly, or that drips.
- Doors that catch on the floor or do not fit the frame.
- Construction leftovers: paint on glass and frames, scratches on worktops and on window profiles.
- Windows that do not close fully or let air through.
- Appliances that are missing or are not the ones listed in the contract.

None of them looks serious on the visit. With the flat let, each one is a call from the tenant and a technician's visit that you pay for or have to chase under warranty.

How do you make the developer fix it?

1. **Written report.** Each issue numbered, with a photo, the room and a description. It is the document handed to the developer and the one used later to check.
2. **Formal submission.** It is sent through the channel the developer sets for handover, so the date is on record.
3. **Repair and second check.** When the developer says it has been fixed, we go back to the flat with the list and check it point by point. Anything still wrong goes back on the list.
4. **Handover certificate.** Any minor items still outstanding are written into the certificate before it is signed. A defect that is not on any piece of paper is, as far as the developer is concerned, a defect that never existed.

The most expensive mistake is accepting the keys on the strength of "we'll fix that next week". Maybe they will. But if it is not in writing, next week is when the claim starts.

What warranties do you have after handover?

Snagging does not replace the legal warranties; it puts on record how the flat was handed over to you. After handover, the developer is liable:

- For **one year** on the installations: electrics, plumbing and drainage.
- For **ten years** on structural defects, under the UAE Civil Code (art. 880) and Dubai Law 6/2019 on jointly owned property.

If a defect appears within that year, you claim against the developer with photos and the date. This is where the handover report is useful again: it shows that the fault was not there, or that it had already been flagged.

What if you buy a resale flat?

In a resale there is no developer to ask to fix anything: the seller hands the flat over as it is. That is why the inspection is done before you commit, and its findings become part of the negotiation. If something is wrong, either it comes off the price or the seller repairs it before signing at the Trustee Office.

Besides the flat itself, in a resale we look at what you cannot see on the viewing: that the deed and the seller are in order in the Dubai REST app, and that the service charges are paid (checked in Mollak, the Dubai Land Department's system for owners' associations). A service charge debt blocks the developer's no-dues certificate and, with it, the transfer. The full process is in how to buy a ready property.

If the flat is let and you buy it with the tenant in place, the visit is usually shorter. We check what we can and ask for the tenancy contract registered in the Ejari.

What changes if you live in Spain?

You do not have to get on a plane for handover. We carry out the inspection for you, send you the report with photos so you can see it before it goes to the developer, submit it and check again when they say it has been fixed. All you do is approve the final report.

What is worth sorting out in good time is who collects the keys and signs the certificate on your behalf. If you are not going to be there, you need an authorisation or a power of attorney: we tell you which one your building's developer asks for.

And think about what comes next. With the keys in hand, the setup begins: water and electricity with DEWA, internet and, if you are going to let it, the Ejari or the holiday home permit. We cover it in DEWA, internet and Ejari.

The most costly mistakes at handover

- **Signing the certificate without inspecting.** It means giving up the strongest position you will ever have.
- **Inspecting in a hurry and without a method.** A quick walk-round finds the obvious things and misses the drains, the AC and the sealing.

- **Accepting verbal promises.** Everything outstanding, in writing and with a photo.
- **Not checking again.** An "it's fixed" is verified in the flat, not in an email.
- **Letting the flat before the list is closed.** With a tenant in, every repair is twice as hard to arrange.

10 · AFTER YOU BUY

DEWA, internet and Ejari: getting your flat ready to let in Dubai

What do you need to do to get the flat ready to let?

Three things: electricity and water with **DEWA**, **internet** and the tenancy registration. If you let by the year, that registration is the **Ejari**, and electricity and water go into the tenant's name. If you let by the night, there is no Ejari: you need the **holiday home permit** and the DEWA account stays in your name.

That is the crossover that most confuses people buying from Spain. The order, and whose name each thing is in, depend on how you are going to use the flat:

	LONG-TERM LET	HOLIDAY LET OR EMPTY
Tenancy registration	Ejari, within 30 days of signing	Holiday home permit, annual
DEWA in the name of	The tenant, after the Ejari	You, as owner
Internet	The tenant signs up	You, or whoever manages it

What is DEWA and how much does connection cost?

DEWA is Dubai's public water and electricity company. Every flat has a **premises number** (the DEWA Premises Number), shown on a metal plate at the entrance or on the door. Write it down the day you get the keys: you will need it to connect the supply and for the Ejari.

Connection requires a **refundable deposit of AED 2,000** for a flat (4,000 for a villa) and some connection charges, around AED 130 + VAT in the most common case. Once paid, the supply is normally activated within about 24 hours.

The DEWA bill also includes the municipality's **housing fee**: 5% of the annual rent, paid by whoever occupies the flat. So on a long-term let, the tenant pays it.

What if the flat is empty or going to be a holiday let?

Then the DEWA connection is yours. It is done as a "move-in" on the DEWA website or app with the Title Deed and your passport, and you pay the deposit. It is the first thing you do when you get the keys, because without power you cannot even test the air conditioning in the handover inspection.

If a long-term tenant moves in later, the account passes to them: you close yours and get your deposit back, and the tenant opens their own with their Ejari.

How do you get internet?

Dubai has two operators, **du** and **e&** (formerly Etisalat), and most buildings are only served by one of them. Before signing up, ask the building management which one it is. On a long-term let, the tenant signs up in their own name, with their Emirates ID. If the flat is going to be a holiday let or you will use it yourself, the line goes in your name or in the name of whoever manages it for you.

What is the Ejari and why does it matter?

The Ejari is the Dubai Land Department system where tenancy contracts are registered. It is compulsory for long-term lets and must be done within **30 days** of signing the contract. Without an Ejari, the tenant cannot connect electricity, water or internet in their own name, or renew their visa.

For you, as the owner, the Ejari is what makes the contract valid: it fixes the rent, the term and the conditions under which any dispute is settled, and it is the basis for renewals. Permitted rent increases are calculated using the Dubai Land Department's official rental index.

How do you register the Ejari, step by step?

1. **Signed contract.** The RERA unified tenancy contract is used, signed by both parties, with the rent, the number of cheques and the deposit.
2. **Property documents:** Title Deed, the owner's passport or Emirates ID and the DEWA premises number.
3. **Tenant documents:** valid passport, residence visa and Emirates ID (both sides), plus a UAE phone number (+971) and an email address.
4. **Registration.** In the Dubai REST app or the Dubai Land Department portal (Ejari, register contract) or, in person, at an authorised centre. The fee is around AED 180–220.
5. **Certificate.** Through the app it is issued instantly, as a PDF, with a contract number and QR code.
6. **Tenant's DEWA.** Once the Ejari is approved, DEWA notifies the tenant by email and SMS with the link to pay their deposit and connection. If the notice does not arrive, it can be requested manually on the DEWA website with the Ejari number and the premises number.

How is rent collected on a long-term let in Dubai?

With **post-dated cheques**: on signing, the tenant hands over all the cheques for the year, each with its cash-in date. What you need to check is that the number of cheques, the dates, the amounts (in figures and in words) and the signatures match the contract schedule exactly. A badly written cheque is a month you do not get paid on time.

The tenant also leaves a **security deposit**: usually 5% of the annual rent if the flat is unfurnished and 10% if it is furnished.

What is signed when you hand the keys to the tenant?

Before handing over the keys, two things are confirmed: that the tenant has paid the DEWA deposit and that all the cheques are there. Then you go round the flat with them and sign a **move-in report** with photos or video of the condition of each room, the meter readings and the condition of furniture and appliances. That is what gets compared on the day they leave, to decide whether the deposit is returned.

Finally, the key handover sheet: keys, access cards, garage remotes and common area cards, each item counted.

Can service charges block the connection?

Yes. If the owner owes service charges, the building management can deny the tenant access or the activation of services. That is why, before signing with a tenant, we check in **Mollak**, the Dubai Land

Department's system for owners' associations, that everything is up to date. If there is a debt, it is settled first with the company that manages the building.

What changes if you let by the night?

There is no Ejari, because there is no tenant on an annual contract. What you need is the **holiday home permit** from Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, which is issued per flat and renewed every year, and you must charge each guest the **Tourism Dirham**: AED 10 per occupied bedroom per night in the standard category. DEWA and internet stay in your name and you pay for them.

If you have not yet decided between the two ways of letting, holiday or long-term let sets out what changes in permits, costs and work. Holiday lets are managed by beBalmy, the group company.

What changes if you live in Spain?

Almost everything can be done without being there. DEWA, the Ejari and signing up for internet are online procedures, and what needs someone in person (handing over the keys, the move-in report with the tenant) we do on your behalf. As a non-resident owner you do not have an Emirates ID: your passport and the Title Deed are enough.

What does not change is Hacienda (the Spanish tax agency). If you are tax resident in Spain, the rent from your Dubai flat is taxed in your IRPF (Spanish personal income tax) even though no tax is paid on it in the Emirates. We explain it in Spain–UAE taxation.

Can you do it for me?

Yes. As part of our utilities connection and registration service we take care of DEWA, internet, the Ejari or the holiday home permit and hand you the flat ready to let. If you also want us to find and manage the tenant, that is long-term let management.

11 · AFTER YOU BUY

Buying in Dubai to let: holiday let or long-term let

Holiday let or long-term let? The short answer

It depends on the flat and on what you want from it. A **long-term let** is a tenant on an annual contract registered in the Ejari: stable rent, collected in advance by cheque, and little work. A **holiday let** means stays by the night: more gross income in good areas and seasons, but also more costs, an annual permit, day-to-day management and good months and bad months.

The important thing, if you have not bought yet, is that this decision comes **before** you choose the flat, not after. A furnished studio by the sea and a two-bedroom flat in a residential neighbourhood are two different investments, and each fits one way of letting better. This guide is written for exactly that: what changes between one and the other, what you will be asked for and what to ask before you make an offer.

What changes between them day to day?

	LONG-TERM LET	HOLIDAY LET
Contract	Annual, registered in the Ejari	Per stay, with each guest
Permit	Not needed	Holiday home, renewed every year
Payment	The year's cheques handed over on signing	Per booking, on each platform
Electricity, water and internet	Paid by the tenant	Paid by you
Furniture	Optional	Essential
Day-to-day work	Little: issues and renewal	Pricing, check-ins, cleaning, guests
Income	Stable	Higher in a good area, varies by month

In short: a long-term let sells peace of mind and a holiday let sells potential. A holiday let only pays off if the extra income comfortably covers the costs and the work it adds.

What permits and registrations do you need?

For a long-term let, registering the contract in the **Ejari**, the Dubai Land Department system, within 30 days of signing. It costs around AED 180–220. Without it, the tenant cannot connect electricity and water in their own name. We go through it step by step in DEWA, internet and Ejari.

For a holiday let, three things:

- **Holiday home permit** from Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, for the whole flat and renewable every year. As a guide, it costs around AED 370 for a studio or one-bedroom flat, plus about AED 300 for each additional bedroom.

- **Tourism Dirham**: charged to the guest and paid over to the authorities. It is AED 10 per occupied bedroom per night in the standard category and AED 15 in deluxe.
- **Safety equipment and insurance** for the flat, both required for the permit.

Which costs are yours in each case?

Some costs you always pay, however you let:

- **Service charges**, which in Dubai are charged per square foot per year and vary a lot from one building to another. Before buying they are checked, along with any debts, in Mollak, the official system for owners' associations.
- **Maintenance** of the flat and its equipment, especially the air conditioning.

And others that only appear with a holiday let: electricity, water, internet and TV (on a long-term let they are in the tenant's name), the annual permit, furniture and replacing it, cleaning and bed linen between stays, the booking platforms' commissions and the fee of whoever manages it. That is why a holiday let's gross income is misleading if you compare it with the rent on an annual contract: you have to compare net figures.

With our rental yield calculator you can put the two options side by side with your flat's numbers.

Which flat should you buy for each option?

Holiday lets usually work best in **studios and one- or two-bedroom flats** near the sea or Downtown, well furnished and in buildings with amenities. Long-term lets suit **family flats** better, in residential neighbourhoods, and buyers who put predictable income first.

To put the budget in context, this is the median paid for a one-bedroom flat in sales registered with the Dubai Land Department from January to September 2026 (Calina Real Estate calculation):

AREA	ONE-BEDROOM FLAT	FLOOR AREA
JVC	AED 1,087,459	73 m²
Arjan	AED 1,176,832	71 m²
Dubai Marina	AED 1,625,000	77 m²
Dubai Hills	AED 1,706,894	68 m²
Business Bay	AED 1,995,000	77 m²
Downtown	AED 2,200,000	81 m²
Palm Jumeirah	AED 3,271,996	103 m²

These are medians of registered prices, not asking prices: within each area, the floor, the views and the building move the figure a lot. The detail by area is in the price per square metre in Dubai and the comparison of neighbourhoods in where to buy in Dubai.

A tip for choosing: a flat's rent does not rise at the same pace as its price. In the expensive areas, the result depends more on charging well for each night; in the entry-level ones, an annual contract usually gives a more reasonable rent on what you invested. Before making an offer, look up the area's rent in the

Dubai Land Department's official rental index, just as you look up what has been paid for flats like that one.

What is the holiday let market like in 2026?

With our own data. In the flats beBalmy manages in Dubai (beBalmy is the group's holiday let company), the average stay in 2026 was about 17 nights: lots of guests staying for weeks, not just weekends. That is why it makes sense to run the numbers with cautious assumptions on occupancy and nightly rate, not with the odd nights of high season.

For anyone buying now, the takeaway is caution: you should not buy a holiday let on the numbers of its best year. Run the numbers for a normal year and for a weak one, and make sure the flat holds up in both. If it only works in the good one, that flat is a long-term let.

What to ask before making an offer if you are buying to let

- **Does the building allow holiday lets?** Ask the management before buying, not after.
- **How much are the service charges and are they paid?** In Mollak. A debt blocks the transfer and, once the flat is let, it can block the tenant's access.
- **Is it let at the moment?** If it has a tenant with a valid Ejari, you buy with that contract: rent from the first month, but you will not be able to switch it to a holiday let until it ends.
- **Is it sold furnished?** For a holiday let, the furniture is a separate investment if it is not included.
- **Which internet operator serves the building?** Only one of the two, du or e&, in most buildings.
- **Who is going to manage it?** From Spain, a holiday let without a manager is not workable: somebody has to open the door.

What changes if you live in Spain?

Two things. The first is distance: an annual contract is easy to handle from Spain; a holiday let needs someone in Dubai every day.

The second is Hacienda (the Spanish tax agency). If you are tax resident in Spain, the rent is taxed in your IRPF (Spanish personal income tax) whether it is a holiday let or a long-term let, because the Emirates do not tax individuals' rental income. In both cases it is income minus deductible expenses, at your marginal rate. We explain it in Spain–UAE taxation and each case should be reviewed by your adviser.

Who manages it?

At Calina we handle long-term lets: we find the tenant, vet them, register the Ejari and take care of rent collection and renewal. Holiday lets are managed by beBalmy, the group company specialised in holiday lets in Dubai and in Spain: permit, listing, nightly pricing, check-ins, cleaning and maintenance, with a report every month. Both options are explained in managing your property.

Where to buy in Dubai for what you want: city centre, beach or emerging areas

Where is it best to buy in Dubai?

It depends on why you are buying. If you want a steady rental income and to be able to sell without waiting, start with the centre: Downtown, Business Bay or Dubai Marina. If you want holiday lets or a flat by the sea, Dubai Marina and JBR or Palm Jumeirah. If you want to get in with less money, JVC or Arjan. And if you are going to live there with your family, Dubai Hills.

The area sets the starting price. In 2026 a flat sold for a median of AED 15,731 per square metre in JVC and AED 36,211 in Palm Jumeirah, more than double, according to the sales registered with the Dubai Land Department between January and September (Calina Real Estate calculation). But the area does not decide everything: within each one, the building, the floor and whether the flat is handed over or off-plan move the price as much as the neighbourhood does.

In this guide you have what was really paid in each area, what each one offers, which area your budget gets you and the mistakes we see most often when choosing.

What does each area really cost?

These are the medians of the flat sales registered with the Dubai Land Department from January to September 2026. It is what the buyer signed for, not the asking price in the listing. The median is the flat in the middle: half sold above it and the other half below.

AREA	PRICE PER M²	MEDIAN FLAT
Jumeirah Village Circle (JVC)	AED 15,731	AED 1,000,576
Arjan	AED 17,091	AED 953,250
Dubai Marina and JBR	AED 22,940	AED 2,350,000
Dubai Hills Estate	AED 25,582	AED 2,200,000
Business Bay	AED 26,505	AED 2,247,072
Downtown Dubai	AED 30,450	AED 3,100,000
Palm Jumeirah	AED 36,211	AED 5,500,000

Flat sales registered with the Dubai Land Department, January–September 2026, medians: Calina Real Estate calculation. Dubai Marina and JBR are shown together because the register records them in the same area. Dubai Hills includes the official MBR City area.

Two warnings for reading the table. First: listing portals advertise in square feet. A square metre is 10.76 square feet, so Dubai Marina and JBR's AED 22,940/m² is about AED 2,130/ft². Second: price per m² and flat price do not rank the same way. Arjan has a dearer square metre than JVC and, even so, the cheapest median flat, because more small units are sold there. The square metre tells you the level of

the area; the median flat, whether your budget reaches it. We explain it with more areas in how much a square metre costs in Dubai by area.

What do Downtown, Business Bay and Dubai Marina offer?

These are the established areas. They are almost finished, they have the metro and the steadiest rental demand in the city. What sells there is mostly resale and handed-over flats: in Dubai Marina and JBR only 18% of the sales registered in 2026 were off-plan, and in Downtown 24%. You buy something you can see, measure and rent out from the first month.

- **Downtown Dubai**: the Burj Khalifa, Dubai Mall and the Opera. The dearest square metre of the three (AED 30,450) and a median flat of AED 3,100,000. Here buyers look more at resale than at rental income. The median price per square metre has fallen over the year, so there is room to negotiate. Downtown area guide.
- **Business Bay**: towers along the Dubai Water Canal, right next to Downtown. AED 26,505/m² and a median flat of AED 2,247,072, with 4,958 registered sales, more than Downtown and Marina put together. The typical tenant works in Downtown or the DIFC. There is a lot of supply and half of what sells is off-plan, so the building and the views make the difference. Business Bay area guide.
- **Dubai Marina**: a canal surrounded by towers, with a waterfront promenade, metro and tram, next to the beach. AED 22,940/m² and a median flat of AED 2,350,000 (with JBR). It draws young professionals, couples and tourists, and it is one of the easiest areas to resell in. Dubai Marina area guide.

If you are torn between the centre and a cheaper entry-level area, we put the numbers side by side in Business Bay or Arjan and in Dubai Marina or JVC.

Is it worth paying for a beachfront flat?

It is worth it if you are going to do holiday lets or use the flat yourself. As a pure rental investment it is expensive: you pay a lot per square metre and the rent does not rise in the same proportion.

Palm Jumeirah is the dearest of the areas we track: AED 36,211/m² and a median flat of AED 5,500,000. A one-bedroom flat sold for a median of AED 3,271,996, at 103 m². It is also the area with the fewest transactions (771 in nine months) and the one that has moved the most: the median price per square metre went from AED 40,413 in the first quarter to AED 29,903 in the third. Part of that drop is that different flats were sold, but it says one thing clearly: on the seafront, the price is negotiable.

Dubai Marina and JBR is the beach with the most liquidity: over 2,200 registered sales in the year and a price per square metre (AED 22,940) that is less than two thirds of Palm's. The register does not separate JBR from Dubai Marina, so we have no figure of our own for JBR. If you are after holiday lets, the tourists are here all year round.

Before you decide, look at what a holiday flat really earns, with its occupancy and its costs: holiday lets in Dubai.

And the emerging areas: JVC, Arjan or Dubai Hills?

These are growing neighbourhoods, with a lot of new construction. You get in with less money and the rent weighs more against the price, in exchange for more competition from new flats and less resale history.

- **JVC (Jumeirah Village Circle)**: an inland residential community with parks. Of the areas we track, it is the one with the most registered sales in 2026 (7,661) and the cheapest per square metre: AED 15,731. A one-bedroom flat sold for a median of AED 1,087,459. No metro: you live by car. Quality varies a lot from one building to another. JVC area guide.
- **Arjan**: a residential neighbourhood near Dubai Hills and the Miracle Garden. AED 17,091/m², a median flat of AED 953,250 and the highest share of off-plan sales of the seven: 63%. If you buy here, you will most likely be buying something that has not been handed over yet.
- **Dubai Hills Estate**: the most family-oriented of the three. It is no longer cheap: AED 25,582/m², almost as much as Business Bay, with a median flat of AED 2,200,000. 57% of what sold was off-plan.

Buying off-plan in these areas has its own rules: payments by milestones, Oqood registration and a handover that can be delayed. We explain it in buying off-plan in Dubai and compare the two routes in ready or off-plan property.

Which area does your budget get you?

The most useful way to use the data is the other way round: start from what you have and see where it gets you. These are the registered medians for a one-bedroom flat in 2026, a common size for renting out:

AREA	1 BEDROOM (MEDIAN)	MEDIAN SIZE
JVC	AED 1,087,459	73 m²
Arjan	AED 1,176,832	71 m²
Dubai Marina	AED 1,625,000	77 m²
Dubai Hills Estate	AED 1,706,894	68 m²
Business Bay	AED 1,995,000	77 m²
Downtown Dubai	AED 2,200,000	81 m²
Palm Jumeirah	AED 3,271,996	103 m²

Read in bands: with a little over a million dirhams you get a one-bedroom in JVC or Arjan. With 1.6–2 million, in Dubai Marina, Dubai Hills or Business Bay. Downtown asks for 2.2 million and the Palm seafront for more than 3. Add between 2% and 3% in buying costs to any figure for a resale without a mortgage: your 2% to the Dubai Land Department (the seller pays the other 2%), the signing office and the administrative fees. The agency commission is on top. Work out the costs of your purchase.

A case we see a lot: an investor with AED 1.7 million is torn between a one-bedroom in Dubai Marina and a two-bedroom in JVC, which in 2026 sold for a median of AED 1,658,515 at 115 m². Same money, two different investments: in Marina, an area with tourists and quick resale; in JVC, more space and more family tenants. There is no good one and bad one; there is the one that fits your plan.

If you are thinking about the Golden Visa, the threshold is AED 2 million invested in residential property in Dubai, in one or several units. A one-bedroom in Downtown already exceeds it; so do two one-bedroom flats in JVC added together. If it is off-plan, you need the Oqood certificate of the registered contract.

Which area fits your goal?

IF YOU ARE AFTER…	START WITH
Steady rental income and being able to resell soon	Downtown, Business Bay or Dubai Marina
Holiday lets or your own use by the sea	Dubai Marina and JBR, or Palm Jumeirah
Getting in at a lower price	JVC or Arjan
Living there with your family	Dubai Hills or JVC
Golden Visa (AED 2 million)	One unit in the centre or on the beach, or several added together

On yield: we calculate it from the flat rental contracts registered with the Dubai Land Department on 27 October 2026, against the price per square metre registered between July and September. It comes out at a gross yield of around 6.4% in JVC, 6.3% in Downtown, 6% in Arjan, 5.8% in Business Bay, 5.6% in Dubai Marina and JBR and 5.5% in Dubai Hills; in Palm Jumeirah there are too few contracts to give a figure. It is a single day of contracts and before costs: take it as an order of magnitude, not a promise. We will update it every month. Your flat's yield comes from its real rent and its costs: work it out here.

What mistakes do we see when people choose an area?

- **Choosing by the brochure yield.** The highest figure is usually for a new flat, off-plan and at launch price. Always ask what price it is calculated on and with what rent.
- **Comparing the asking price with the registered one.** What a listing asks is almost always above what gets signed. Compare with the building's registered sales, not with other listings.
- **Buying a studio as an investment.** It is the cheapest way in, but there is a lot of supply, a lot of competition for tenants and it is harder to resell. With a one-bedroom, the price difference usually pays off.
- **Forgetting the service charges.** They are paid every year per square metre and vary a lot from one building to another. Ask for the building's figure before you make an offer.
- **Looking only at the area and not at the building.** In JVC, Arjan or Business Bay, very good towers stand next to others that are not. The developer, the state of the building's community and the floor weigh as much as the neighbourhood.
- **Buying with a short horizon.** With less than three years ahead, the risk of selling for less than you paid is higher, especially in a year like 2026.

What changes if you buy from Spain?

When it comes to choosing an area, less than it seems. What does change is how you manage it.

- **You will be letting from a distance.** A flat in an established area, with a long-term tenant, is less work than a holiday let. If you choose holiday lets, you need someone there: we handle the management with beBalmy.
- **You will visit rarely.** Many clients travel just once, to see two or three flats already shortlisted in one or two areas. How to organise that trip.

- **You will declare in Spain.** If you are tax resident in Spain, the rent is taxed under your IRPF (Spanish personal income tax), whatever the area. Spain–UAE taxation.

Our job is to compare each flat with what was really paid in its building and its area, and to tell you no when the numbers do not add up. See the portfolio or tell us what you are looking for.

13 · AREAS AND MARKET

Is it a good time to buy in Dubai? The market in 2026, with data

Is it a good time to buy in Dubai?

It depends on your horizon. In 2026 the market has cooled: fewer flats sell each month and the price per square metre is adjusting little by little. For anyone buying calmly and planning to keep the flat for more than three years, that means more room to negotiate than a year ago. For anyone planning to sell soon, it means more risk of doing so for less than they paid.

The data are clear. Between January and September 2026, 104,270 flat sales were registered with the Dubai Land Department. In January there were 13,569; in September, 9,619, almost 30% fewer. The median price per square metre went from AED 19,346 to 18,151 over the same period, an adjustment of around 6%. The market has not collapsed; it has lost pace.

Flat sales registered with the Dubai Land Department, monthly medians: Calina Real Estate calculation.

What has happened month by month?

MONTH OF 2026	FLAT SALES	PRICE PER M² (MEDIAN)
January	13,569	AED 19,346
February	13,798	AED 18,978
March	11,070	AED 19,056
April	11,963	AED 20,052
May	9,097	AED 17,841
June	12,176	AED 18,435
July	12,526	AED 18,384
August	10,452	AED 18,318
September	9,619	AED 18,151

Flats across all of Dubai registered with the Dubai Land Department, 2026: Calina Real Estate calculation.

By quarter it is easier to see: 38,437 sales in the first, 33,236 in the second and 32,597 in the third. The blow came in spring and since then volume has stayed at a lower level.

Be careful when reading the price month by month. Different flats sell each month: if large flats or flats in expensive areas weigh more in a given month, the median rises even though no flat has gone up. That is why April marks the high of the year and May the low without the market having made those jumps. The underlying trend is the one at the ends: a little over AED 19,000/m² at the start of the year, a little over 18,000 at the end of the summer.

What changed in February?

On 28 February 2026 Iran attacked several Gulf countries. Since then, for the first time in years, fewer flats are selling in Dubai and prices have stopped rising. In the register it shows in March, when flat sales fall from almost 13,800 to just over 11,000, and above all in May, the worst month of the year, with 9,097.

It is not a market at a standstill. More than 9,000 flat sales are still registered every month, and the price per metre has adjusted much less than the volume. What has changed is who is in a hurry: a year ago it was the buyer; now, in many deals, it is the seller.

If you are counting on holiday lets, do the sums with cautious assumptions. In the flats managed in Dubai by beBalmy, the group's holiday-let company, the average stay in 2026 was about 17 nights: lots of guests staying for weeks, not just weekends. Holiday lets in Dubai.

Why is so much sold off-plan?

Because it is what is for sale and because it is paid in instalments. Between 68% and 79% of the flat sales registered each month of 2026 were off-plan; in September, 71%. Three in four flats sold in Dubai have not been built yet.

It varies a lot by area. In the established ones almost everything is resale: only 18% was off-plan in Dubai Marina and JBR and 24% in Downtown. In the emerging ones it is the other way round: 58% in JVC, 57% in Dubai Hills and 63% in Arjan.

For you, the consequence is twofold. In a cooler market, the developer and its track record matter more than the launch price: a delayed handover or a neighbourhood with too many handovers at once shows more now. And anyone who bought off-plan two years ago and wants to get out before handover finds it harder to sell, which opens up opportunities in off-plan resales at a better price. How buying off-plan works.

Are prices falling in every area?

Not equally. This is the median registered price per square metre in the first quarter (January–March) and the third quarter (July–September) of 2026:

AREA	Q1	Q3
JVC	AED 16,001	AED 15,120
Arjan	AED 16,985	AED 16,718
Dubai Marina and JBR	AED 23,585	AED 21,490
Dubai Hills Estate	AED 26,143	AED 24,364
Business Bay	AED 28,169	AED 22,549
Downtown Dubai	AED 31,966	AED 27,831
Palm Jumeirah	AED 40,413	AED 29,903

Flat sales registered with the Dubai Land Department, quarterly medians: Calina Real Estate calculation. A quarter's median mixes different flats: it is a trend, not capital growth.

The pattern is clear: the expensive areas have adjusted more than the cheap ones. Arjan and JVC have barely moved; Business Bay, Downtown and Palm Jumeirah, much more. Part of those falls is that different flats sold in the summer, but in the expensive areas there is more room to negotiate today than in the entry-level ones. You have each area, with its median flat, in how much a square metre costs in Dubai by area and in where to buy in Dubai.

What does it mean for you if you buy from Spain?

- **Negotiate with data.** In resale there is more room than a year ago, especially in the expensive areas. Come to the offer with the building's registered sales, not with the price of other listings.
- **Off-plan, the developer before the discount.** An attractive launch price does not make up for a two-year delay.
- **Work out the yield with cautious assumptions.** With the rents registered with the Dubai Land Department, the gross yield by area is around 5.5–6.4% before costs, and holiday lets have dropped. If the numbers only work with the occupancy of the best year, they do not work. Work it out with your numbers.
- **The horizon rules.** With less than three years ahead, the risk of selling for less than you paid is higher. This is not a market for getting in and out.
- **Count the costs.** On a resale without a mortgage, between 2% and 3% of the price, plus the agency commission. The full breakdown.

Nobody can tell you what the price will do next year, and be wary of anyone who claims they can. What you can do is buy well: a flat in an area with real demand, at a price in line with what is registered and with a plan that holds up if the market takes a while to rise again.

And if you already own a flat in Dubai and are thinking of selling?

With fewer buyers, the asking price matters more than ever. A flat listed above what is registered in its building sits for weeks without viewings and ends up selling for less. If you are thinking of selling, start by finding out what has been paid in your tower in recent months. How to sell your flat in Dubai from Spain or ask us for a valuation.

Where can I follow the market?

You can look at the registered sales yourself in the Dubai Land Department open data or on DXB Interact, which plots them by area and building. And every quarter we publish a market report: the Q3 2026 report.

Golden Visa through property

- AED 2 million in one or more properties in your name.
- Ten years, renewable, for you, your spouse, children and parents.
- Official fees: AED 9,884.75 for the main applicant; AED 5,774.50 per family member; AED 318.75 for the family file.
- Processing at the Land Department, medical test and Emirates ID: 7–10 working days.
- Off-plan: you need the Oqood certificate (the contract registered with the Land Department). It also works with a mortgage, with a letter from the bank saying it does not object to the residence and stating what has been paid and what remains; how much has to be paid, we confirm with the Land Department before you buy.

15 · BEFORE YOU SIGN

Checklist

- Goal, horizon (ideally more than 3 years) and a budget that includes costs (2–3% on a resale, ≈ 4% off-plan, excluding agency commission).
- Price compared with the sales registered in the building.
- The building's service charges (official index) and rental history.
- The agency's ORN with RERA (Dubai REST app).
- Off-plan: registered project, developer NOC, delivery track record, handover date and penalties.
- Funds: a test transfer, the destination IBAN checked against the contract, proof of source of funds.
- Power of attorney if you will not sign in person.
- In Spain: IRPF on the rent, and Form 720 if you go over €50,000; talk to your adviser.
- Handover: technical inspection (snagging), DEWA, internet, Ejari or holiday-home permit.

Guidance as of October 2026, with the sources cited in each guide on calinarealestate.com. This is not tax or legal advice.

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