



British Embassy Madrid

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What are the rules for UK nationals resident in Spain when travelling to other Schengen countries?

If a UK national is resident in Spain, *irrespective of whether they have 'temporary' or 'permanent' residence*, they are entitled to spend up to 90 days in any 180-day period on a visit to other countries in the Schengen Area without the need for a visa. This is because, although they are beneficiaries of the Withdrawal Agreement in Spain, UK nationals do not have a right of freedom of movement in the EU now the transition period has ended.

If a UK national wishes to go to another member state for less than 90/180 days but intends to work, they will need to check whether they need to apply for a visa before travelling, as paid work is generally not one of the activities included under the visa-free travel rules.

When travelling within the Schengen Area, in general there are no internal border checks. However, these can be put in place in exceptional circumstances (e.g. covid) and it is up to the individual to count and ensure they adhere to the rules. If a UK national was ever challenged by the authorities in another member state, they would be expected to be able to demonstrate they are complying with the rules.

A UK national who is a beneficiary of the Withdrawal Agreement does not, however, need any additional validity on their passport to travel around the Schengen Area (as is the case for those visiting from the UK). If they were checked, they would just need to show evidence of their WA status. So, we advise all UK nationals resident in Spain to *travel with both their valid passport and their residence document when visiting other member states*.

How long can UK nationals resident in Spain spend outside the country?

The 90/180 day rule is not to be confused with permitted absences, *which are different for temporary and permanent residents*. A WA beneficiary who has been resident less than 5 years can generally spend up to 6 months away from Spain without the absence affecting their residence rights. A permanent resident could spend up to 5 years away from Spain without the absence affecting their residence rights. But to spend either period of absence in another EU/Schengen country, would require a visa, as it would be longer than the 90/180 day rule set out above.