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REAL ESTATE · ALGARVE

GETTING STARTED

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# First Home in Portugal

First-time foreign buyers in Portugal

## TL;DR

- The "friendly market for foreigners" narrative is a marketing residue. In 2026, a non-resident pays roughly twice the entry tax of a Portuguese first-time buyer on the same property — and the gap is set to widen once Lei 9-A/2026 becomes operational.
- Real all-in entry costs for a non-resident first-time buyer in 2026 land at 9–13% of price, not the 7–8% advertised. On a €500,000 purchase that is €10,000–€25,000 of difference, almost all of it avoidable with planning.
- The 7.5% flat non-resident IMT is law (Lei 9-A/2026, 6 March), the decree was promulgated 12 May 2026, and it is **not yet operational**. Whether you pay it depends on the date your *Escritura* is signed.

**Key 2026 stat:** Foreign buyers took 27.6% of homes sold in Portugal in 2025 — the lowest share in four years, down from a 31% peak in 2023. The "one in three buyers is foreign" line is outdated by two iterations. (Source: INE, 24 March 2026.)

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## Introduction: The Misconception This Guide Replaces

Almost every English-language guide written for the foreign first-time buyer in Portugal opens the same way. Sunshine, English-speaking lawyers, no ownership restrictions, digital registry, EU stability. All technically true. None of it has any bearing on whether you will overpay by €20,000, sign for a property with an unauthorised extension, or discover at the *Escritura* desk that your IMT bill is €15,000 higher than your spreadsheet said.

The friendly-market framing is the most expensive idea in the genre. It produces a buyer who arrives relaxed, defers to the listing agent, accepts the agent's "trusted lawyer", and budgets for taxes that no longer apply. It is also the framing the entire transactional ecosystem in Portugal — listing agents, developer reps, relocation consultants, "free legal review" services — has a structural reason to keep alive. They are paid when you sign.

This guide takes the opposite line. **As a foreign first-time buyer in 2026, you are operating in a market that has been re-priced for residents, with carve-outs that work for you only if you plan for them, and a transaction infrastructure built around sellers.** The job is not to learn what Portugal is like; it is to learn where the money leaks and which two or three decisions you make in the first ninety days determine whether you pay 9% above the headline price or 13%.

The audience for this guide is the buyer in the **€250,000–€750,000 range** looking at a first home in Portugal — typically from the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the US, or Brazil — and looking at Lisbon, Porto, the Algarve, the Silver Coast, or coastal Alentejo. You may be relocating, splitting time, retiring early, or buying a long-hold base. The guide is *not* for pure investors (see *invest-in-the-algarve*), corporate-structure buyers (*buying-as-individual-vs-through-a-company*), or buyers still undecided whether they should buy at all (*when-buying-does-not-make-sense*) — read that last one first if the answer is genuinely open.

What follows: the 2026 numbers, the document set that catches fraud, the cost stack as it really is, the financing reality for a non-resident applicant, and the three errors that account for most foreign-buyer losses.

## I. The 2026 Market — What the Numbers Say

Indicator	Value	Period	Source
National median sale price	€2,076/m <sup>2</sup>	Full year 2025	INE, April 2026
Q4 2025 median	€2,198/m <sup>2</sup>	Q4 2025	INE
Greater Lisbon median	€3,439/m <sup>2</sup>	2025	INE
Algarve median	€3,139/m <sup>2</sup>	2025	INE
Porto Metropolitan Area median	€2,305/m <sup>2</sup>	2025	INE
Lisboa city, Portuguese-domiciled buyer	€4,813/m <sup>2</sup>	2025	INE
Lisboa city, foreign-domiciled buyer	€6,026/m <sup>2</sup>	2025	INE
Foreign share of transactions	27.6%	2025	INE, March 2026
Asking-price index YoY	+10.8%	May 2026	idealista
Euribor 6M (dominant mortgage index)	2.548%	13 May 2026	EMMI / BPstat

Three things worth pulling out:

**The "one in three buyers is foreign" line is wrong.** Foreign share peaked at 31% in 2023 and has fallen for three straight years to 27.6%. Most English-language coverage has not noticed.

**Foreigners pay a 25% premium per square metre in the capital.** The INE split of Lisboa city shows foreign-domiciled buyers at €6,026/m<sup>2</sup> versus €4,813/m<sup>2</sup> for Portuguese-domiciled buyers on the same statistic. Part of that is mix (foreigners cluster in prime parishes). Part of it is informational — foreigners offer closer to asking, accept the listing agent's appraisal, and rarely walk. The second part is correctable.

**The Golden Visa real-estate route closed in October 2023 and prices did not fall.** €700m–€900m of annual demand disappeared from the upper end of Lisbon and Algarve, and the gap was filled by EU buyers (no visa required), US lifestyle buyers (often cash), and a domestic market that was finally allowed to bid without a foreign-investor floor under it. Anyone planning around a Portuguese price correction has been wrong every year since.

## 2. The Buying Process — Ten Steps, Real Timeline

A financed non-resident transaction runs 10–14 weeks from accepted offer to keys. Cash compresses to 4–6. Off-plan extends to 18–36 months and a separate set of risks (developer covenant, *seguro caução* on deposits, completion guarantees) which this guide does not cover.

Step	What it is	Realistic time
1. NIF	Portuguese tax number; non-EU buyers appoint a fiscal rep at this stage	1–4 weeks
2. Bank account	Required to pay IMT and balance at deed	1–3 weeks
3. Viewings + shortlist	Two trips minimum; current market compresses to 4–8 weeks	4–8 weeks
4. Offer ( <i>proposta</i> )	Written, time-limited, refundable holding deposit €2k–€5k	1 week
5. Due diligence	Lawyer pulls Caderneta, Certidão, Licença de Utilização, energy cert, condominium minutes, AL status	2–4 weeks
6. CPCV	Promissory contract; <i>signal</i> (10–20%) paid; financing clause if mortgaging	1 day to sign, after diligence
7. Mortgage approval	Bank formal offer	4–8 weeks (parallel with steps 4–6)
8. IMT and Stamp Duty	At Finanças, 24–72h before deed; bring proof to notary	1 week
9. <i>Escritura</i>	Deed at notary or <i>Casa Pronta</i> ; balance paid	1 day
10. Registry and IMI update	Land Registry update; IMI record changed	2–4 weeks

The bottleneck, every single time, is step 5. The agent will push you toward step 6 before step 5 is honestly complete. **Hold the line: 21–30 days between offer acceptance and CPCV is the minimum window for real due diligence.** Anything tighter is the seller's timeline, not yours.

### 3. Documentation — What Your Lawyer Must See

Document	Issued by	Why it matters
Caderneta Predial	Finanças	Tax description, VPT, registered owner — must match Certidão
Certidão Permanente do Registo Predial	Conservatória	Legal description, charges, mortgages, easements, ownership chain
Licença de Utilização	Câmara Municipal	Property is legally usable as housing — many rural builds lack one
Certificado Energético	ADENE-registered expert	Rating A+ to F; mandatory; valid 10 years
Ficha Técnica de Habitação	Câmara	Technical specs for builds completed after 30 March 2004
Condominium minutes (3 yrs)	Administração de condomínio	Special levies, disputes, debts
AL registration (if applicable)	RNAL / Turismo de Portugal	Transferability and municipal containment
Certidão de não dívida (seller)	Finanças	Seller has no IMI/IMT arrears
Condominium debt certificate	Administração	No outstanding <i>quotas</i>
PDM extract	Câmara	What can/cannot be built — critical for rural and "ruin" purchases

A seller who cannot produce items 1–5 within 14 days is either disorganised or hiding something. Both lead to the same response: renegotiate the timeline, or walk. The cost of walking from a property at this stage is your holding deposit (€2k–€5k) and your survey fee. The cost of pushing through is open-ended.

### 4. Costs and Taxes — The Real Stack

Total transaction costs for a non-resident first-time buyer in 2026 land at **9–13% of price**, depending on whether the flat 7.5% IMT regime is operational on your *Escritura* date. The 7–8% number that still appears in most foreign-language guides reflects the pre-2026 progressive scale and has not been current for months.

## 4.1 IMT — Imposto Municipal sobre as Transmissões

The transfer tax, paid by the buyer on the higher of declared price or VPT. Brackets indexed +2% for 2026 (Ofício Circulado AT n.º 40129/2026).

**Residents, *habitação própria e permanente* (HPP), mainland:**

Price (€)	Marginal rate	Deduction (€)
Up to 106,346	0%	—
106,346 – 145,470	2%	2,126.92
145,470 – 198,347	5%	6,491.02
198,347 – 330,539	7%	10,457.96
330,539 – 660,982	8%	13,763.35
660,982 – 1,150,853	6% (flat)	—
Above 1,150,853	7.5% (flat)	—

**Residents, non-HPP (secondary residence), mainland:** same structure, no first-bracket exemption, slightly different deductions. Top brackets are 6% flat (€633,931–€1,150,853) and 7.5% flat above €1,150,853.

The **HPP exemption first bracket is €106,346** for 2026 (up from €104,261 in 2025). Several competitor guides still cite the old figure.

## 4.2 The non-resident flat 7.5% IMT — what the press got wrong

**Status (15 May 2026):** approved as *Lei n.º 9-A/2026, de 6 de março*. The complementary *decreto-lei autorizado* with operational rules was **promulgated 12 May 2026** and must be published in *Diário da República* by **2 September 2026**. Until DR publication, **the flat 7.5% regime is not yet operational** — deeds signed today still apply the existing progressive scale.

When operational, the regime imposes **a flat 7.5% IMT on any non-resident acquisition of urban residential property, regardless of price**, with five carve-outs:

1. Buyer is already a Portuguese tax resident at acquisition.
2. Buyer becomes Portuguese tax resident within **2 years** of acquisition (IMT refund on application).
3. Buyer is a Portuguese emigrant acquiring housing in Portugal (operational definition pending the DL).
4. Property is let at "renda moderada" ( $\leq$  €2,300/month) within **6 months** of acquisition, for at least **36 months** within the first 5 years.
5. Buyer in official Portuguese state service abroad.

Two operational consequences:

- If you can credibly commit to becoming tax resident within 24 months, you can sign now under either regime and reclaim later. The HPP roll-over and primary-residence brackets apply either on entry or on refund.
- If you are buying purely as a non-resident second home, the difference between signing in July 2026 (DL likely published) and June 2026 (still old scale) is material. Track the DR publication date and time the *Escritura* accordingly.

The brand name "Construir Portugal" you may have seen in the press is the political label of the September 2025 government package; the legal instrument is Lei 9-A/2026. The popular framing that the law "introduces" 7.5% is also wrong — 7.5% already existed as the top marginal HPP rate above €1,150,853. What the law does is apply it *flat*, to *all* non-resident acquisitions, with the carve-outs above.

### 4.3 Worked examples (mainland, post-DL publication)

Scenario	Price	IMT	Stamp Duty (0.8%)	Notary + Reg	Lawyer (~1.2%+VAT)	Total entry
Resident, HPP	€300,000	€9,541	€2,400	€1,200	€4,428	~€17,569 (5.9%)
Resident, secondary	€300,000	€13,800	€2,400	€1,200	€4,428	~€21,828 (7.3%)
<b>Non-resident, flat 7.5%</b>	<b>€300,000</b>	<b>€22,500</b>	<b>€2,400</b>	<b>€1,200</b>	<b>€4,428</b>	<b>~€30,528 (10.2%)</b>
Non-resident, flat 7.5%	€500,000	€37,500	€4,000	€1,500	€7,380	~€50,380 (10.1%)
Non-resident, flat 7.5%	€750,000	€56,250	€6,000	€1,500	€11,070	~€74,820 (10.0%)
Non-resident, transitional (old scale, €750k secondary)	€750,000	~€48,750	€6,000	€1,500	€11,070	~€67,320 (9.0%)

The flat 7.5% adds roughly €7,500 on a €750k purchase versus the pre-existing top-bracket scale, €13,000+ on a €500k purchase, and €8,700 on a €300k second home. Material at every price point this guide addresses.

### 4.4 IMT Jovem — under-35 first-time HPP buyer

Total exemption from IMT *and* Stamp Duty up to **€330,539**. Partial exemption from €330,539 to **€660,982**: only the portion above €330,539 is taxed at the 8% HPP marginal rate. Above €660,982 the benefit ends entirely. Eligibility: buyer ≤35; first acquisition of HPP; not owner of another dwelling

in the previous 3 years; not a tax dependant in the year of acquisition. Also exempts registration fees on first acquisition and the matching mortgage.

The **€405,073 / €810,028** ceilings you may see in competitor guides are **wrong** — those figures are a stale draft or a confused inflation adjustment. The Portal das Finanças and Lei 9-A/2026 confirm €330,539 / €660,982.

#### 4.5 Other entry costs

- **Stamp Duty (Imposto do Selo):** 0.8% on price; 0.6% on mortgage principal (5+ year loans).
- **Notary, deed, registry:** €700–€1,500 at *Casa Pronta*, €1,000–€1,800 at a private notary.
- **Lawyer:** 1–1.5% of price + 23% VAT, minimum €2,500–€3,500.
- **Bank valuation:** €250–€450.
- **Sworn translator (deed):** €150–€350 if Portuguese is weak.
- **Fiscal representation (non-EU):** €150–€400/year ongoing.

#### 4.6 Recurring costs (annual)

- **IMI:** 0.3%–0.45% of VPT (urban); 0.8% (rural). Lisbon 0.3%, Porto 0.324%; Algarve municipalities vary by câmara.
- **AIMI:** starts above €600,000 individual VPT (€1.2M joint). Bands 0.7% / 1.0% / 1.5%. Most first-home buyers in the €250k–€750k range never trigger AIMI on a single property.
- **Condominium:** €40–€300/month typical apartment; €100–€700/month pool/resort communities.
- **Building insurance:** €150–€400/year typical apartment, more for villas.

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## 5. Financing — Non-Resident Reality

Yes, a non-resident can get a Portuguese mortgage. No, the terms are not what residents get, and no, the headline rate is not what you will pay.

## 5.1 Typical 2026 terms

Parameter	Resident	Non-resident
Maximum LTV	90% (HPP) / 80% (secondary)	60–75% (market practice; not a statutory cap)
Maximum term	40 years (age cap typically 75 at end)	30 years
Spread on Euribor	0.5–1.2 pp	1.0–1.5 pp
DSTI ceiling	50% (BdP macro-prudential)	banks typically apply 30–35%
BdP stress test	Index + 3 pp	Index + 3 pp (under review for 2026 increase)

### Euribor fixings — 13 May 2026 (EMMI / BPstat):

- **3M: 2.283%**
- **6M: 2.548%** — dominant index in Portuguese variable HPP stock (39.4% of HPP variable contracts per BdP March 2026)
- **12M: 2.860%**

Quote any Euribor number with an "as of" date — these fixings move weekly. The 6M is what most banks will index your contract to.

**Indicative all-in rate for a non-resident, 6M index + 1.2 pp spread:** ~3.75% as of mid-May 2026. Add 0.4–0.6 pp if your profile is non-EUR income or self-employed.

## 5.2 What to insist on, in this order

1. **Decision in Principle (DIP) before any offer.** Costs nothing. Tells you which banks will lend at what LTV before you have any emotional commitment.
2. **Three banks, written competing offers.** Spreads vary 0.3–0.5 pp between institutions for the same buyer. The €30,000–€40,000 lifetime difference is normal.
3. **Financing clause in the CPCV.** Without it, a mortgage refusal makes *you* the defaulting party and the *signal* (typically 10%) is forfeit.
4. **Stress-test yourself at index + 3 pp.** If a 5.5%+ rate would break you, the bank's lower headline rate is irrelevant — you should not borrow that amount.
5. **Life-insurance policy you control.** Banks bundle in-house policies that are rarely the cheapest; check whether you can substitute compliant external cover.

## 5.3 Documents the bank will want

Passport, NIF, proof of address, last 3 payslips or 2 years' tax returns, last 6 months of bank statements, home-country tax certificate (HMRC SA302 / *avis d'imposition* / IRS 1040), credit report, FATCA/CRS forms.

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## 6. Legal — The Three Errors That Account for Most Foreign-Buyer Losses

### 6.1 Using the agent's "trusted lawyer"

Portuguese law allows it. The conflict of interest is structural: the agent has repeat business with the lawyer; you have one transaction. Hire your own, verify the licence on **oa.pt**, get a written engagement letter with scope and fees before paying. Buyer-side independent legal representation is the single highest-ROI line item in this entire guide. A €3,500 lawyer who finds an unauthorised extension before CPCV has just saved you a problem that would have cost €30,000–€80,000 to legalise after the deed.

### 6.2 Signing the CPCV before due diligence

Once you sign and pay the *signal* you are committed: walk without cause and you forfeit it; the seller walks and they owe you double. The CPCV must come *after* the full document set, the survey (for older properties), and the bank's preliminary valuation. Anything else is paying 10% to find out what you should have already known.

### 6.3 Confusing *urbano* with *rústico*

A *terreno rústico* is generally not buildable as housing. A ruin without a *licença de utilização* may be impossible to legalise, finance, insure, or resell. Always pull the PDM (Plano Diretor Municipal) extract from the Câmara before buying rural land or a "ruin to renovate" — it tells you what (if anything) you can build, in what footprint, at what height.

### 6.4 Common red flags

- Seller cannot produce Caderneta + Certidão + Licença de Utilização + Certificado Energético within 14 days.
- Agent pressures you to sign CPCV before due diligence completes.
- Off-plan developer asks for >30% of price at CPCV without a *seguro caução* (bank guarantee on deposits).
- Open *processo* at the Câmara (planning issue, fine, demolition order).
- Mismatched names between seller's ID and Certidão.
- "Off-market, cash only, must close in 10 days."

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## 7. Negotiation — Where Foreign Buyers Overpay

### 7.1 Reference discount-to-asking, 2026

- National asking-to-sale gap (average): ~6%.

- **Lisbon centre:** 8–15% on stock listed 4+ months; 0% on fresh well-priced listings.
- **Algarve coast:** 5–10% typical; tighter in Lagos and the Golden Triangle.
- **Faro city:** ~10%.
- **Silver Coast / Alentejo interior:** 10–15% common.

The foreigner premium baked into INE's Lisboa numbers isn't a tax. It's a behavioural pattern: foreign buyers anchor on the listing price, accept the seller's-agent appraisal, rarely use a buyer-side advisor, and rarely walk. Each of those is correctable in two phone calls.

## 7.2 What's negotiable besides price

- **Furniture and appliances** — itemise in the CPCV with photos. Verbal inclusions evaporate.
- **Completion date** — your leverage if the seller wants speed.
- **Repair credits** rather than seller-managed pre-deed repairs — quality control is impossible at distance.
- **Apartment extras:** parking spot, storage room, garage with separate matricial article — confirm they are titled, not assumed.
- **Closing-cost edge cases** — default split: buyer pays IMT + selo + notary + registry; seller pays CGT + agency.

## 7.3 What makes an offer credible

Written, time-boxed (5–7 days), with proof of funds or DIP attached, and explicitly subject to: (a) successful due diligence within X days, (b) CPCV within Y days, (c) deed within Z days, (d) mortgage approval if applicable. A conditional written offer beats a verbal "we'll do €X" every time — verbal offers are used to anchor the seller, not to commit you.

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# 8. The First-Time-Buyer Failure Modes

1. **Signing CPCV before due diligence completes.** Mitigation: 21–30 days minimum between offer and CPCV.
2. **Using the agent's lawyer.** Mitigation: hire your own; ideally via personal referral, not a Google search.
3. **Underbudgeting non-resident IMT.** A 2024 calculator on a 2026 €500k purchase understates IMT by ~€13,000.
4. **Forgetting the 2-year residency carve-out.** If you'll relocate within 24 months you can reclaim the flat-rate excess. Plan for it; document intent.
5. **Not budgeting soft costs.** Lawyer + translation + fiscal rep + bank fees add 1.5–2.5% on top of headline taxes.
6. **Underestimating renovation.** Algarve and Lisbon 2026 full-renovation: €1,200–€2,200/m<sup>2</sup>, more for protected façades. Get two written quotes *before* CPCV.

7. **Buying assuming AL where AL is restricted.** Many municipalities are *zonas de contenção*. Confirm transferability and current containment in writing.
  8. **Accepting stale Caderneta or Certidão.** Both are valid 6 months; demand issuance within 30 days of CPCV.
  9. **Paying outside the deed.** "Black money" deals expose you to criminal liability and inflate your future capital gain. Never agree.
  10. **Skipping the survey.** Portugal does not require one. For anything 30+ years old, especially in Lisbon, Porto, or rural Algarve, an independent engineering survey (€350–€900) is the cheapest insurance you will buy in this transaction.
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## 9. After the Purchase

### 9.1 First 30 days

- Utilities transferred (water, electricity, gas, internet) — usually online with *Escritura* + NIF.
- Finanças notified of new owner (lawyer or notary handles).
- Building insurance active from deed date.
- Condominium notified, new *quota* schedule issued.

### 9.2 Annual obligations

- IMI (1–3 instalments May–November).
- AIMI if VPT > €600,000 (September).
- IRS filing if you become tax resident (deadline 30 June for the prior year).
- Fiscal representative renewal (non-EU non-residents).

### 9.3 Residency pathways (buying a home is not the right to live here)

- **EU/EEA:** automatic right of residence.
- **D7 (passive income / retirement):** minimum reference €920/month per applicant (= 2026 RMMG); consulate discretion applies.
- **D8 (digital nomad / remote worker):** €3,680/month (4× RMMG).
- **D2:** entrepreneurs.
- **Golden Visa:** real-estate route closed October 2023; investment-fund, R&D, cultural-donation, and job-creation routes remain.
- **IFICI ("NHR 2.0"):** 20% flat IRS on qualifying Portuguese employment/self-employment income; exemption on most foreign-source income. **Foreign pensions are NOT exempt** under IFICI — they are taxed at standard progressive IRS up to 48%. The old NHR's 10% pension regime is gone. 10-year duration; application by 15 January of the year after becoming tax resident.

## 9.4 Capital gains when you sell

- **Resident, primary residence:** gain exempt if reinvested in another HPP within 24 months prior or 36 months after sale (EU/EEA). Lei 9-A/2026 extended this to reinvestment in residential property let at moderate rent.
- **Resident, secondary home:** 50% of gain taxed at progressive IRS rates.
- **Non-resident (whether EU or non-EU):** since the 2023 OE reform following the ECJ *Hollmann* line of cases, **50% of the gain is taxed at the same progressive IRS scale as residents**, with worldwide income used only to determine the marginal rate. The previous flat 28% on 100% of the gain remains nominally available but is almost never the better choice. Guides that still say "non-EU non-residents cannot elect resident treatment" are wrong by three years.

Keep every renovation invoice. Each one raises the *valor de aquisição* and lowers your taxable gain.

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## 10. Region Snapshot — 2026 Medians, Non-Luxury Stock

Region	Typical buyer	€/m <sup>2</sup> range	Watch-outs
Lisbon city	Younger urban / remote workers	€4,800– €6,900	Yields below 4%; AL containment in central parishes
Lisbon suburbs (Cascais, Sintra, Oeiras)	Families, returning Portuguese	€3,800– €5,500	Traffic; best stock rarely on portals
Porto city	Lifestyle + investors	€3,900– €4,300	Cooler/wetter winters; smaller airport
Algarve central (Albufeira, Loulé, Vilamoura)	Holiday / retirement	€3,500– €5,500	Tourist seasonality; AL rules tightening
Algarve west (Lagos, Sagres, Aljezur)	Lifestyle / younger relocators	€4,000– €5,500	Limited stock; fastest price growth in country
Algarve east (Tavira, V.R.S.António)	Quieter retirees	€2,800– €4,500	Less English-speaking infrastructure
Faro city	Year-round, cost-conscious	€2,400– €4,000	Best Algarve value; some pockets industrial
Silver Coast (Óbidos, Nazaré, Peniche)	Surfers, budget lifestyle	€2,000– €2,800	Some localities very seasonal
Alentejo coast (Comporta, Melides)	High-end design crowd	€4,000– €8,000+	Thin liquidity
Alentejo interior (Évora, Beja)	Quintas, slow-life buyers	€1,200– €2,000	Hot summers; rural land complications
Madeira (Funchal)	Remote workers, retirees	€2,300– €3,200	Steep terrain; limited stock

The Algarve sub-regions are not interchangeable. *Where-to-buy-in-the-algarve* has the matchmaker breakdown if the Algarve is on your shortlist.

## II. Action Checklist

### Before you offer

- NIF obtained; fiscal rep appointed if non-EU
- Portuguese bank account opened
- Independent lawyer engaged (not the agent's)
- DIP from at least one bank (if financing)

- Budget for 9–13% above price as non-resident
- Region benchmarked against INE/idealista data
- At least one in-person viewing trip done

### Between offer and CPCV

- Caderneta + Certidão (both ≤30 days old)
- Licença de Utilização verified
- Certificado Energético current and address-matched
- Ficha Técnica (post-2004)
- 3 years of condominium minutes reviewed
- No IMI / condominium / utility debt confirmed in writing
- AL status confirmed if relevant
- Engineering survey commissioned (older properties)
- Mortgage application submitted; financing clause drafted

### CPCV

- Financing clause included
- Furniture and inclusions itemised with photos
- Completion date and venue agreed
- *Sinal* paid by traceable bank transfer

### Pre-Escritura

- IMT paid; receipt in your name; regime confirmed (flat 7.5% vs old scale based on DR publication date)
- Stamp Duty paid
- Translator booked if needed
- Final reading of *Escritura* by your lawyer

### Post-Escritura

- Land Registry update confirmed
- Finanças updated
- Utilities switched
- Building insurance in place from deed date
- All originals stored safely
- Renovation invoices archived for future CGT

# Conclusion

If you take one thing from this guide: **as a non-resident foreign first-time buyer in 2026, your real entry cost is 9–13% of price, not the 7–8% the marketing materials still quote, and the 7.5% flat IMT regime is operational from a date that is still moving as this is being written.** That single number — and your plan around its five carve-outs — is what separates the informed buyer from the buyer who finds out at the *Escritura* desk that they are €15,000 short.

The corrective is cheap. Two to four percent of price, spread across an independent lawyer, an engineering survey, a fiscal representative, a sworn translator, and three weeks of patience between offer and CPCV, eliminates roughly 90% of the loss vectors that produce the horror stories on expat forums. The bad news: almost the entire ecosystem you will encounter — listing agents, developer reps, "free legal review" — has a structural interest in compressing that timeline.

This is a decision you will make in the next ninety days, not someday. Hold the line on diligence. Verify the regime applicable to your *Escritura* date. Use the 2-year residency carve-out if you can credibly hit it. Treat the listing agent as the seller's agent, because legally and economically that is exactly what they are. The Portuguese first-home market in 2026 still works — for buyers who treat it as a negotiation, not a welcome.

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## Related reading

- [Taxes and Costs of Buying Property in Portugal](#) — full IMT / IMI / AIMI / Stamp Duty / VAT reference; cross-check every number in §4 here.
- [How to Get a Mortgage in Portugal Using Foreign Income](#) — DIP process, bank-by-bank reality, FX risk, stress-testing.
- [Where to Buy in the Algarve](#) — sub-region matchmaker if the Algarve is on your shortlist.
- [Risk-Averse Buyer Guide](#) — seven risk categories priced; the natural next read after this one.
- [Mistakes to Avoid When Buying Property in Portugal](#) — anonymised case studies; the failure modes catalogued.

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## How 2nd Haus can help

2nd Haus runs **buyer-side advisory for foreign first-home buyers** in Portugal — independent of any listing agent or developer. Typical first-home engagements: a fixed-fee buyer audit (region brief, price benchmarking, document review on shortlisted properties), and a transactional package covering the full sequence from offer through *Escritura*. We are commercially honest: we are paid by buyers, not sellers, and we decline engagements we do not think will produce a good outcome. A 30-minute call to see whether your purchase pencils out before you commit is free.

# Sources

## Primary sources

- Lei n.º 9-A/2026, de 6 de março — Diário da República
- Portal das Finanças — IMT Jovem
- Portal das Finanças — IFICI FAQ
- Banco de Portugal — LTV, DSTI and maturity limits
- BPstat — Euribor por prazo
- DL 76/2024 — Diário da República
- INE — Estatísticas de Preços da Habitação ao Nível Local
- PwC — IMT novas tabelas práticas 2026
- PwC — Património no OE 2026
- Vistos.MNE.gov.pt — National visas, means of subsistence

## Further reading

- Idealista — IMT 7,5% para não residentes (02-12-2025)
- ECO — Seguro promulga choque fiscal habitação (12-05-2026)
- Idealista — OE 2026 habitação aprovada (28-11-2025)
- EY — Fim do RNH e introdução do IFICI
- Cuatrecasas — Reduced VAT and tax benefits for housing

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*Last updated: 15 May 2026. Verified against CANONICAL\_FACTS.md 2026-05-15. This guide reflects publicly available information as of that date and does not constitute legal, tax, or investment advice. Tax rules, mortgage terms, and regional prices change frequently — verify current numbers with a Portuguese lawyer or tax adviser before committing. Refreshed quarterly.*

## Want a buyer-side advisor on your specific case?

2nd Haus is a buyer-side real-estate consultancy specialised in the Algarve. We will tell you not to buy if that is the honest answer.

[Talk to 2nd Haus](#)

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