NOA

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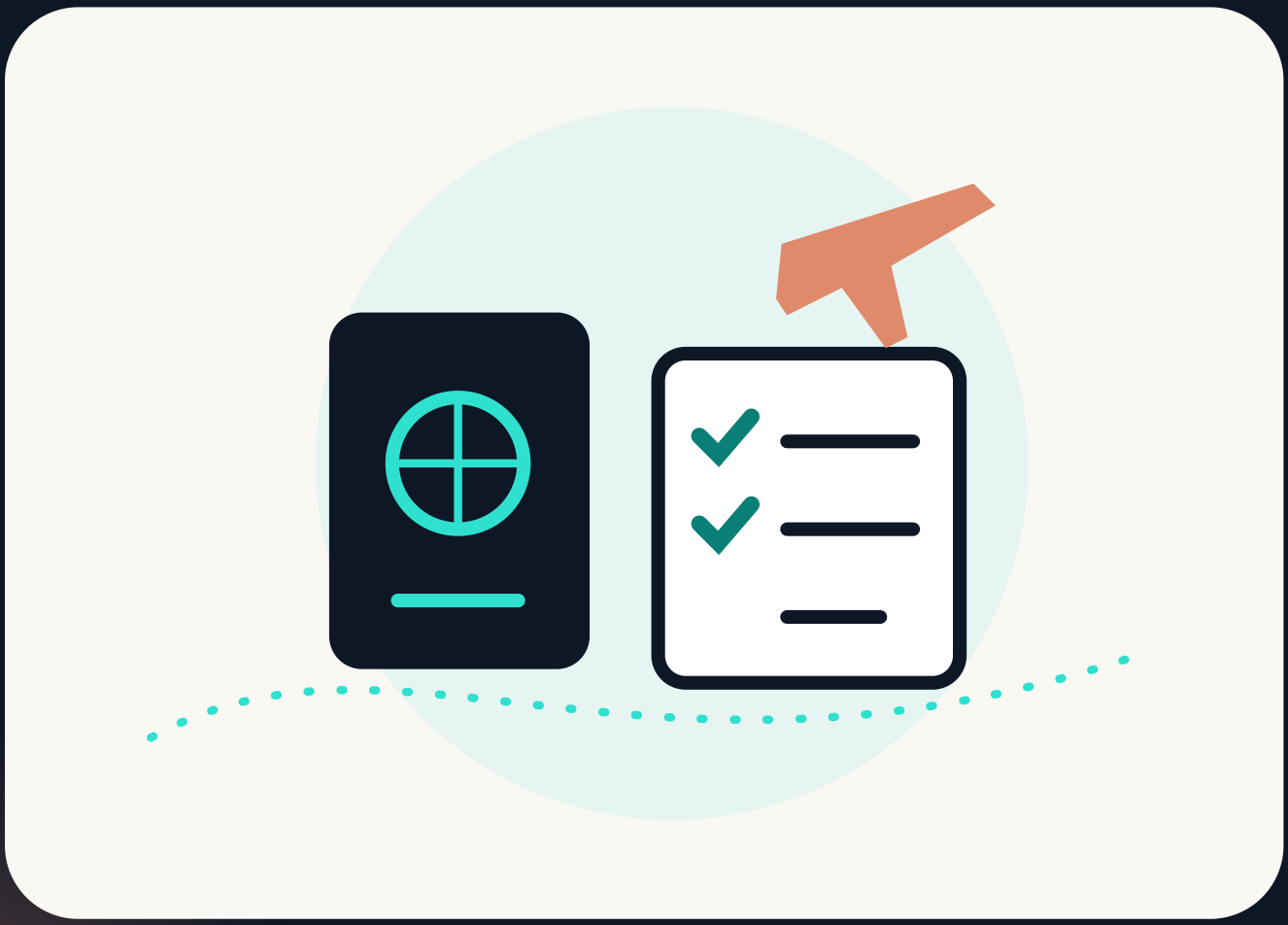
MADRID GUIDE · 01

Preparing your arrival

Your experience starts before you land. Good preparation saves you a lot of trouble.



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How to read the labels: Official information from a public administration. Checked by NOA checked in several sources, not official. Students' experience advice from the community.

3 to 6 months before

- **Student visa** (if you're from outside the EU): ask at the Spanish consulate in your country. It can take a long time.
- **Academic documents:** check whether you need sworn translations or an apostille.
- **Health insurance** (non-EU) or **European Health Insurance Card** (EU).
- **Budget:** add up rent, deposit, food, transport and free time. Remember the costs when you arrive (deposit, first month, materials).

One month before

- **Housing:** at least for the first weeks, booked and confirmed with a contract or reservation (see "Finding a home").
- **Talk to your university:** welcome dates, the documents you'll need and whether they help with paperwork.
- **Organise your documents:** originals and digital copies in the cloud.

The last week

- **Arrival plan:** how you'll get from the airport to your accommodation, and at what time.
- **Money:** a card that works in Spain and some cash for the first days.
- **Emergency contact** on your phone, and your accommodation address saved offline.
- **Expectations:** the first weeks will have tired and doubtful moments. That's normal, and it passes.

What to pack (the things people forget)

- Copies of all your documents.
- Your usual medication with its prescription or medical report (in Spanish or English if possible).
- A plug adapter if your devices don't use European plugs.
- Warm clothes: Madrid winters are dry and cold, especially at night.

If you're family

This is when you can help the most: checking documents, working out the budget together and agreeing how you'll keep in touch (how often and on which app). Agreeing beforehand avoids tension later and respects their independence.

Checklist

- [ ] Visa (non-EU)
- [ ] Health insurance or European Health Insurance Card
- [ ] First accommodation confirmed in writing
- [ ] Original documents + digital copies
- [ ] Route from the airport planned
- [ ] Agreement with family on keeping in touch

This guide is for guidance only and is updated often. For legal procedures, always check the official source or your university. NOA does not replace legal or medical advice.
Last reviewed: 25/11/2026 · Is something missing from this guide? Tell us your question or your experience. **noamadrid.com**