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Fancy working from home in the sun? Make the most of a new Spanish visa, says *Liz Rowlinson*

Fed up with another stint of working from home staring at a leaden sky? Consider the possibility that in a few months you could be working from a sunny terrace or shaded plaza café in Spain.

At the close of last year the Spanish parliament approved the country's proposed digital nomad visa. It will mean that those from non-European Economic Area countries, including the UK, can apply to live and work in Spain, in a fast-track process with tax advantages.

With a great climate, an affordable cost of living and widespread 5G coverage, the country is a popular destination for digital nomads with EU passports (who don't need a visa), and many cities have sociable co-working communities.

Full details of the visa have not yet been released, but visa companies report strong interest from non-EU citizens keen to spend the summer in Spain. Lucia Lagunas Reyes, a

CAN'T WAIT FOR THE DIGITAL NOMAD VISA? TRY THIS...

Britons desperate for residency (without buying a property to qualify for a golden visa) might consider a one-year Non-Lucrative Visa (NLV). The hitch with this type of visa, though, is that you cannot work. Some Brits take a year on this, treating it as a "midlife gap year", then apply for a self-employment visa when their NLV is up for renewal.

Once you are settled in Spain it's easier to get your business plan approved for this. Unlike the golden visa, the NLV is applied for at Spanish consulates in the UK and you'll need to show proof of a monthly income of at least €2,316, take out private medical insurance and pay about €1,000 per person in admin, legal and translation fees. Legal companies in Spain will help with the process (for a fee, of course).

solicitor in Barcelona at MySpainVisa.com, says: "We have a waiting list of 200 people ready to apply, especially British, American, Canadian, Australian and Chinese citizens."

While other tempting destinations such as Barbados, Greece and Croatia have rolled out their digital nomad schemes, remote workers impatient to move to Spain have applied for the country's golden visa: if you can make the €500,000 investment in a property, Reyes says, "you are allowed to live and work in Spain with it".

So where best to plan your summer of remote working? While the capital, Madrid, might be an obvious choice, a lack of beaches and higher property prices mean that it is not top of the digital nomad's list. Vying with Madrid for the best start-up ecosystem in Spain is Barcelona, which has beaches galore and skiing only two hours away. Poblenou, its innovation district, has helped to attract digital nomads from around the



Park Güell in Barcelona. The city is vying with Madrid to attract remote workers



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This light-filled two-bedroom apartment close to the centre of Valencia and the beach is available for €180,000 through Valencia-Property.com



Savills is offering this three-bedroom, three-bathroom apartment full of period features, in Poble Sec, Barcelona, for €625,000



On the first floor of a typical Old Town building in Palma, Mallorca, this apartment is available through Engel & Völkers at €595,000

world, be they architects, online tutors or bloggers.

“They like the cutting-edge business innovation here but at the same time the laid-back Mediterranean lifestyle,” says Dimitri Zoffoli, a co-founder of La Vaca Coworking in Poble Sec, which offers yoga, boot camps and beach volleyball to help workers to connect with like-minded people.

Next to Montjuic hill, Poble Sec is a lively neighbourhood that retains the village feel of the old barrio and is more affordable than Eixample or Zona Alta, according to Savills. The estate agency is selling a three-bedroom apartment there for €625,000, or you can rent a one-bedroom flat for €1,100 a month.

With more sunshine and

lower property prices than Barcelona, the coastal city of Valencia has a fast-growing digital nomad community. The fashionable district of Ruzafa is full of co-working spaces and hipster cafés, although colourful fishermen’s houses by the beach at El Cabanyal attract young professionals too. In the city centre you can rent an apartment for €800 to €900 a month and find a tasty *menú del día* for €10.

“I’ve got a buyer from London who can work from anywhere and is waiting for the nomad visa,” says Graham Hunt of the estate agency Valencia Property. “He’s planning to spend up to €250,000 on an apartment.”

You can live there for less too. In the village of Naquera,

about 20 minutes outside the city in the Sierra Calderona Nature Park – heaven for hikers and mountain bikers – you can buy a two-bedroom apartment with pool access for €100,000. And there’s no need to worry about patchy rural internet: the village has its own fibre optic company.

If you want to meet a few other British expats, Seville may be a good bet. In the vibrant city’s Arcadia Coworking community 70 per cent of users are from overseas, including some from the UK and Germany. “It’s almost easier to listen to a conversation in English than in Spanish here – we love the international atmosphere,” says its co-founder Víctor Vázquez Hernández.

With a small glass of beer, or *caña*, costing €1.50 at the Plaza de El Salvador in the centre, the cost of living is low, and you can escape to the beach in just over an hour. You can find a one-bedroom flat to rent for €800 to €1,000 a month in the centre, or there’s a brand-new one for sale at €269,000 through Lucas Fox.

For island living, Las Palmas, the capital of Gran Canaria, has become a digital nomad magnet as well as being the hub of the LGBT community in the Canary Islands. It is possibly the most affordable place for winter sun remote working: you can buy an apartment 150m from the beach for €135,000 (gilmar.es).

If you can afford the higher

cost of living than in mainland Spain, it is worth considering the Mallorcan capital, Palma. You can tap into co-working spaces such as the Sunshine Embassy, described by one member as offering “the community of Silicon Valley on a beautiful island”, or just enjoy mountain biking in the Tramuntana mountains, and beach and sailing clubs.

“In the past few months we’ve seen many move their business digital and prioritise living quality. Digital Nomads, freelance artists and all imaginable entrepreneurs are thriving here,” says Hans Lenz, the managing director of Engel & Völkers for southwest Mallorca. The estate agency is selling one-bedroom apartments from €145,000.