FREE GUIDE · UPDATED FOR THE 2026 TAX REFORM

The 2026 Cyprus Buyer's Guide

Every step, every cost, every trap — for international buyers.
A home, a holiday place, or an income property.

EU AND NON-EU BUYERS · COSTS & WORKED EXAMPLE · 10 STEPS TO THE TITLE DEED

WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

Cyprus rewrote its rulebook in 2026.

On 1 January 2026, Cyprus passed the most significant property tax reform in a decade: stamp duty was abolished entirely, capital gains exemptions nearly doubled, and the Special Defence Contribution on rental income was scrapped for tax residents. Most guides you will find online were written before any of this.

This guide reflects the rules as they stand in 2026. It walks you through the full journey — from the first research to the title deed in your name — and it is honest about the parts that are harder for a foreign buyer: the language, the paperwork, and knowing which professionals to trust.

It is written for every kind of international buyer. A family relocating. A remote investor who will never set foot in the apartment. Someone buying a place by the sea for the summers. The process is the same — only your decisions differ.

HOW TO USE IT

Read the ten steps first — they apply to everyone. Then read the section that matches your passport: EU citizens have a shorter path; non-EU citizens have one extra government step that is routine but must be planned for. Finish with the cost tables and the worked example, so your budget is realistic before your first viewing.

This guide is general information, not legal or tax advice. Rules change and individual situations differ — always confirm your specific case with an independent lawyer before signing anything. KYMA can introduce you to one.

THE JOURNEY

Ten steps from idea to title deed.

Whatever you are buying and wherever you are from, a clean Cyprus purchase follows the same sequence. Skipping a step is where foreign buyers get hurt.

STEP 01

Define what you are actually buying

A home, a holiday base, or yield — be honest, because it changes everything: location, new-build versus resale, and your tax treatment. Set a total budget including roughly 5–10% on top of the price for fees and taxes.

STEP 02

Research locations and realistic prices

Cyprus is one island with very different markets: Limassol trades at a premium, Larnaca is rising, Paphos is the established expat coast, Nicosia offers domestic yields. Compare asking prices against actual sold prices, not listings.

STEP 03

Get your Cyprus tax number and bank account

You will need a Cypriot tax identification number (TIN) and, in practice, a local bank account for the transaction. Bank onboarding for non-residents involves serious paperwork — proof of income and source of funds. Start this early; it runs in parallel with your search.

STEP 04

Appoint an independent lawyer

Independent means: not the seller's lawyer, not the developer's lawyer. Your lawyer verifies the title deed, checks for mortgages and encumbrances on the property, and drafts or reviews your contract. Legal fees typically run 1.2–2% of the purchase price plus VAT.

STEP 05

View, negotiate, reserve

When you have found the property, a reservation agreement with a deposit (commonly €2,000–€5,000) takes it off the market while due diligence runs. Make the reservation refundable if checks fail — this is negotiable, and a foreign buyer who does not ask will not get it.

STEP 06

Due diligence — the step that protects you

Your lawyer confirms the seller owns what they are selling, that title deeds exist or are obtainable, that there are no hidden mortgages, and that the building has its permits. On new builds: check the developer's track record and whether separate title deeds for units have historically been issued.

STEP 07

Sign the contract of sale

The contract sets the price, the payment schedule (typically a 10–30% deposit on signing), the completion date, and the penalties. Insist on reading a version in a language you understand — the binding text will be reviewed by your lawyer either way.

STEP 08

Deposit the contract at the Land Registry

Your lawyer deposits the signed contract at the Department of Lands and Surveys — within six months of signing. This protects your rights to the specific property even before the title deed transfers. Missing this window is one of the classic foreign-buyer mistakes.

STEP 09

Non-EU buyers only: government permission

Non-EU citizens need approval from the Council of Ministers to acquire property — a routine application made after the contract is signed. See the non-EU section of this guide for exactly how it works.

STEP 10

Pay, transfer, register

On completion you pay the balance, plus VAT (new builds) or Land Registry transfer fees (resales). The title deed is transferred into your name at the Land Registry — from that moment you have the same ownership protection as any Cypriot.

YOUR PASSPORT MATTERS · PART ONE

Buying as an EU citizen.

If you hold an EU (or EEA) passport, Cyprus treats you like a local. This is the short section — and that is the point.

No restrictions

EU citizens buy under the same rules as Cypriot nationals: no government permission, no limit on the number of properties, no limit on land size, no restriction on property type. Apartments, houses, plots, multiple units for rental — all open.

Your practical path

You follow the ten steps with Step 09 removed. The realistic friction points for EU buyers are not legal but practical: opening the bank account (anti-money-laundering checks apply to everyone), reading contracts and correspondence that arrive in Greek, and managing professionals from another country and time zone.

Timelines

A resale with clean title deeds typically completes in around 6–10 weeks from accepted offer to keys. New builds run on the developer's construction schedule; properties needing permits or renovation take correspondingly longer.

Residency note

As an EU citizen you may live in Cyprus freely; if you stay beyond three months you register your residence — a formality. Many EU buyers also weigh Cyprus tax residency (the well-known 60-day and 183-day rules) — worth a conversation with a tax adviser if you plan to spend real time on the island.

YOUR PASSPORT MATTERS · PART TWO

Buying as a non-EU citizen.

UK, US, Swiss, Gulf, and all other non-EU/EEA passports: you can absolutely buy in Cyprus — tens of thousands have. There is one extra government step and a few limits to plan around.

The permission: Council of Ministers approval

Under Cyprus law (Cap. 109), non-EU buyers need a permit to acquire immovable property — universally called the Council of Ministers approval. In practice it is a routine formality: the application (Form Comm. 145) is submitted to the District Office where the property sits, after your contract of sale is signed. There is no government fee, refusals of good-faith applicants are rare, and approval typically takes two to three months.

Crucially, the process does not freeze your purchase: you sign the contract, deposit it at the Land Registry, and even take possession — the approval is needed before the title deed can be transferred into your name at the end.

What you are allowed to buy

Permission is generally granted for one residential property — an apartment, a house, or a plot of land up to about 4,014 m² (three donums) for building a single residence. In some cases the Ministry of Interior has approved a second unit or a residence combined with commercial premises — but plan around the one-property rule, not the exception. Buying through a company or with a spouse changes the arithmetic; structure this with your lawyer before you commit, not after.

Watch in 2026: tighter rules in parliament

Cyprus is debating legislation to tighten non-EU purchases: proposed bans on foreign acquisition of agricultural and forest land, and of property near the Green Line and critical infrastructure such as ports, airports and military areas — while ordinary homes and shops would remain permitted, and small residential purchases may even be exempted from the permission requirement. As this guide goes out, the bill has not become law: the current rules apply and permissions are being granted normally. Two practical takeaways — have your lawyer confirm the law's status when you buy, and if the current framework suits your plans, acting sooner rather than later is prudent.

Residency is separate from ownership

Owning property does not by itself grant the right to live in Cyprus. As a visitor you have the standard 90-in-180-days allowance. If you want more, Cyprus offers a permanent residency-by-investment route for property purchases of €300,000 plus VAT (new builds, conditions attached), and other permit categories exist. If residency is part of your plan, design the purchase around it from day one — the €300k route has specific requirements the property must meet.

THE MONEY

What it really costs in 2026.

Two different tax regimes apply depending on what you buy. You pay one or the other — never both:

Cost	When it applies	2026 rate
Stamp duty	Abolished for contracts signed from 1 Jan 2026	€0
VAT	New builds / first sales from developers. Reduced rate possible for a qualifying primary residence (conditions on size and value apply)	19% / 5%
Land Registry transfer fees	Resales where no VAT was paid. Progressive: 3% to €85k, 5% to €170k, 8% above — currently halved for resales. Waived entirely when VAT applies	eff. 1.5–4%
Legal fees	Always — your independent lawyer	1.2–2% + VAT
Survey / valuation	Recommended on every resale	€300–600
Agent commission	Customarily paid by the seller in Cyprus	usually €0 for you

A worked example

€250,000 resale apartment in Larnaca, bought by a foreign individual in 2026:

Item		Amount
Property price		€250,000
Stamp duty	abolished 2026	€0
Transfer fees	resale rate, 50% reduction applied	€6,600
Independent lawyer	approx. 1.5% + VAT	€4,460
Survey & valuation		€400
Total side costs	≈ 4.6% on top of the price	≈ €11,500

A new build works differently: VAT (19%, or 5% if you qualify for the reduced primary-residence rate) replaces the transfer fees. And good news for landlords: from 2026 the Special Defence Contribution on rental income is abolished for Cyprus tax residents — rental yields just got cleaner.

WHERE FOREIGN BUYERS GET HURT

Seven traps — and how to step around them.

TRAP 01

Buying without title deeds

Cyprus has a known legacy of properties — especially older developments — where separate title deeds were never issued. Your protection: make the deed situation the first due-diligence question, and let your lawyer structure the contract around it or walk away.

TRAP 02

Missing the six-month deposit window

A signed contract not deposited at the Land Registry within six months loses its specific-performance protection. It is a one-day task for your lawyer — confirm in writing that it was done.

TRAP 03

Using the seller's or developer's lawyer

It feels convenient and saves nothing. Independent representation is the single highest-value euro you will spend in the entire purchase.

TRAP 04

Assuming the reduced 5% VAT applies to you

The reduced rate is for a qualifying primary residence, with strict conditions on size and value, granted on application — not automatic. Budget at 19% until your lawyer confirms you qualify.

TRAP 05

Underestimating bank onboarding

Opening a Cypriot account as a non-resident means weeks of source-of-funds documentation. Start at the beginning of your search, not the week before completion.

TRAP 06

Signing what you cannot read

Contracts, permits, and utility paperwork run in Greek. Translations offered by the counterparty are summaries, not guarantees. Have your own side read the original.

TRAP 07

Believing the listing photos from 3,000 km away

Remote buying works — but never unverified. Independent viewing, independent survey, independent valuation. If you cannot fly in, someone who answers to you should.

WHO WROTE THIS

KYMA — the journey, done for you.

KYMA is a Cyprus property consultancy for international buyers. We are not agents and we are not lawyers — we are the one point of contact who runs your whole journey, bringing in the licensed local professionals who do the regulated work, briefing them, and managing them as one team. In your language, on your schedule.

Before we advised anyone, we did it ourselves: bought and renovated our own beach apartment in Pervolia, minutes from Larnaca airport — extension, insulation, solar, permits, contractors and utility paperwork, all handled in Greek, then launched as a working rental. Every stage we offer, we have personally paid for and lived with.

Take the full journey — or just the stage you need

Research & strategy · Acquisition (including bank, financing, Land Registry) · Design & permits · Renovation · Rental & management. Every stage stands alone.

Ready to talk about your purchase?

Book a free 30-minute intro call — bring your questions, leave with a realistic plan and honest numbers.

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