

Or VeShalom and Your Link to Spain

Do you have Sephardic (Spanish Jewish) heritage? Are you interested in acquiring Spanish citizenship? If so, Or VeShalom can orient you in this process.

Please note that the program ends on October 1, 2018, so it's best to get started right away!

A summary of the steps is as follows:

1. Obtain a certificate of Sephardic heritage. Be able to clearly prove Sephardic ancestry or familial connection to an established Sephardic community. As a general rule, individuals of any religion with a Converso Jewish heritage will need to provide genealogical evidence, while Jewish individuals can provide genealogical evidence and/or show their connection to a Sephardic community.
2. Pass an intermediate Spanish language exam (called the DELE A-2) and a Spanish civics and culture exam (called CCES) at an Instituto Cervantes, located in Albuquerque, Boston, Chicago, New York, Miami, or Seattle.
3. Pass a FBI and your residence state-level criminal background check
4. Show a special connection to Spain
5. Travel to Spain

If you have proof of connection to a clearly Sephardic relative or ancestor, and would like a certificate certifying your Sephardic heritage from Or VeShalom, here is a brief orientation.

For Non-Members: Fill out the Application For Sephardic Origin Certificate Form (attached)

1. **Write your Letter of Justification:** Please write a summary of your genealogical or communal proof, ending with the following line: "I hereby certify that this information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge."
2. **Application Fee and Form:** There is a \$36 fee to start the application process, which you can pay via credit card by calling the Congregation Or VeShalom office at 404-633-1737. Once you pay the fee, please email your letter of Justification along with a completed Congregation Or VeShalom application and any relevant supporting documents to office@orveshalom.org.
3. **Processing Fee:** Upon verification of your justification letter, Congregation Or VeShalom will e-mail you an invoice for the \$180 processing fee if your application is accepted. If it is not, Or VeShalom will do its best to advise you of needed changes, and you will not have to pay the application fee again

Summary of Costs for Certificate of Sephardic Origin for non members of Or VeShalom:

\$36 to apply for the certificate. This covers the costs of analyzing your evidence.

\$180 processing fee for a notarized certificate in English and Spanish, and complete with an apostille from the Georgia Secretary of State's office.

Total cost = \$216

The total cost above includes a donation to the Congregation Or VeShalom of Atlanta. This certificate will certify your Sephardic heritage, and also provide one of the two necessary “special connections” to Spain.

An Overview of the Process of Becoming a Citizen of Spain as an Adult US National

Obtaining a certificate of Sephardic origin is just one part of applying for citizenship in Spain. The following information is a summary of the process.

Documents Needed

Every document must be separately digitized in its own pdf file, with the original paper copies also presented in Spain in front of the Notario

Certificate of Sephardic Heritage issued by Or VeShalom with translation into Spanish and apostille and/or a certificate issued by the Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain (Federacion Comunidades Judias de Espana – FCJE.org). Please note that the FCJE certificate is available for Jewish applicants and any non Jewish applicants who may clearly prove their Sephardic genealogical ancestry.

US Passport - all pages digitized (It is best to scan four passport pages on each 8x11 sheet)

Birth Certificate with an apostille from the Secretary of State’s office where issued, translated into Spanish by a translator certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Government

Marriage Certificate – with official translation and apostille, if applicable

Two Special Links to Spain - applicants need to show a connection to Spain, be it evidence of a trip to Spain, a Spanish bank account, contribution to a Spanish non-profit organization with a letter signed by its president and secretary (such as an additional donation to OVS), a certificate of taking classes at the Instituto Cervantes, formally studying Spanish literature, culture, or history, living or studying in Spain, or being able to speak Judeo-Spanish (Ladino, Hakeia).

FBI Criminal Background Check with an apostille issued from the Secretary of State’s office in Washington, D.C. or Virginia, and translated into Spanish by a translator certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Government. Please note that this is time sensitive, and is only valid for six months.

State Criminal Background Check with an apostille issued from the Secretary of State's office in your state, and translated into Spanish by a translator certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Government. Please note that this is also time sensitive, and only valid for six months.

Certificate of passing the CCES exam - Spanish civics and culture exam given at the Instituto Cervantes

Certificate of passing the DELE A-2 exam - Spanish language exam given at the Instituto Cervantes

Payment of 100 Euro filing fee along with Form 790-026 at any Spanish bank prior to signing your acta de notoriedad at the Notario's office in Spain.

Process to Becoming a Spanish Citizen

Once applicants have gathered all documents, they should hire a Spanish immigration attorney to help prepare the case. There are thousands of attorneys capable of petitioning for citizenship in Spain. However, Or VeShalom works closely with Senor Luis Portero de la Torre, who helped promulgate the Spanish law of return in 2015. He works in Malaga, and his email address is: nacionalidad.sefarad@gmail.com. We strongly recommend him.

After all relevant documents are prepared electronically, the applicant's lawyer will upload them to the Ministry of Justice's website and wait for a date to sign the Acta de Notoriedad in front of the Notario in Spain. At that time, the Notario may ask for additional proof or more documents showing a special connection to Spain and Sephardic origin. Be sure to bring all original documents to this meeting, and it may be wise to prepare additional proof, just in case it is requested. An applicant's lawyer should provide assistance at all times during the meeting in the Notario's office.

At this point, the Spanish government will consider the application and if approved, applicants can travel to a Spanish consulate in the US to apply for their new passport. They must travel to a consulate within a year or else the application is forfeit, and must bring a new and updated FBI and state criminal background check with them that has an official translation and apostille attached. At that point, they will swear allegiance to the Spanish King and obedience to the Spanish Constitution and Laws. Lastly, new citizens will pay the processing fee for the issuance of a Spanish passport.

Applicants do not need to renounce other nationalities.