

INVESTING IN EMERGING MARKETS · GUIDE 01

Colombia Real Estate Investment Guide

The buying process end to end, city-by-city notes, and the 2026 investor-visa math.

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The Buying Process, Step by Step

Colombia places almost no restrictions on foreign property ownership. The friction is procedural, not legal — here's the process in order.

- **1. Get a Colombian tax ID (NIT / RUT).** Needed before you can register a purchase — obtainable with just a passport if you're not yet a resident.
- **2. Sign a promesa de compraventa.** A binding preliminary contract locking in price and closing date. Backing out after signing typically forfeits your deposit (arras).
- **3. Pull a Certificado de Tradición y Libertad.** Shows full ownership history, liens, and disputes. Never skip this or rely on the seller's summary.
- **4. Register the transfer as foreign investment** with the Banco de la República if funds are wired from abroad.
- **5. Sign the Escritura Pública** before a Colombian notary — the actual deed of sale.
- **6. Register the deed** with the Oficina de Registro de Instrumentos Públicos. Title doesn't transfer until this step completes — a signed deed alone isn't ownership.

ON THE GROUND — Registration gap

A signed escritura feels like the finish line, but title doesn't transfer until step 6 registers — which can take days to weeks depending on the local registry's backlog.

Costs Beyond the Purchase Price

Budget for notary fees, registration fees, a transfer tax (roughly 1% of value, rates vary locally), and a local lawyer — non-negotiable on a purchase this size regardless of your Spanish fluency.

City-by-City Notes

Medellín — strongest foreign demand and short-term rental market; El Poblado and Laureles carry a foreign-demand premium that Envigado and Belén don't, for comparable square footage.

Bogotá — Colombia's economic center; more corporate and local-professional tenants, thinner headline yields, more stable tenant base than a foreigner-facing short-term market.

Cartagena — tourism and vacation-rental driven; highest headline yields in the walled city, but the thinnest resale liquidity of the three.

ON THE GROUND — Liquidity

Medellín and Bogotá both have deeper resale markets than Cartagena, where the buyer pool for walled-city property is narrower and more tourism-dependent.

The 2026 Investor-Visa Math

The Property Investor Visa (M-10) requires a real estate purchase valued at 350x Colombia's SMMLV (minimum wage). With the 2026 SMMLV at COP 1,750,905, that's **COP 612,816,750 — roughly \$153,000–\$165,000 USD** depending on the exchange rate at conversion.

Only the value stated on the deed counts toward this threshold — declaring a lower price to save on transfer tax also disqualifies the purchase from the visa math, on top of being tax evasion.

ON THE GROUND — Budget above the minimum

Because this threshold resets every January with the minimum wage, a purchase that just clears the bar this year can fall short at renewal. Most immigration attorneys recommend budgeting meaningfully above the stated minimum.

Common Mistakes

- Not pulling a fresh title certificate right before closing — liens can attach between your first check and signing.
- Declaring a lower price on the deed than what actually changed hands.
- Skipping a local lawyer to save a few hundred dollars on a six-figure purchase.

DISCLAIMER

This guide is general, educational information — not financial, legal, tax, or immigration advice. Figures, thresholds, and costs are current as of publication (2026) and change; Colombia's investor-visa thresholds specifically are pegged to the annual minimum wage (SMMLV), which resets every January. Verify current requirements with a licensed Colombian attorney, accountant, or immigration professional before acting. This site does not recommend any specific property, business, or investment. Some links in this guide are affiliate links — see investinginemergingmarkets.com/disclaimer.html for details.