

# Obtain Residency, Citizenship and a Second Passport in Uruguay - by Juan Federico Fischer, Esq.

ESCAPEARTIST.COM SPECIAL REPORTS

**Uruguay is an open country to foreign citizens. Not only to those doing business or buying property, but also to those seeking legal residency.**

Any foreign citizen that meets certain basic requirements may apply for residency. And, if one wishes to, one can subsequently apply for citizenship, and a second passport.

ESCAPEARTIST.COM SPECIAL REPORTS

## Filing for residency

The residency application is done before the Direccion Nacional de Migracion (DNM), Uruguay's immigration authority. The key, when applying, is to make sure that the required documents are presented in due form (with the required stampings and wording) so it is recommended to seek the assistance of an immigration lawyer in order to avoid delays and unnecessary costs.

The process starts with the request for an appointment at the DNM. The request should be made a month ahead of the intended travel date, since slots must usually be reserved with one month's notice. The request is done through a letter to the DNM, usually prepared by an attorney and signed by the applicant, and a copy of the persons passport.

The next step is to gather the documents that are required for the filing. The documents one submits at the DNM must be previously stamped at the Uruguayan consulate in the country where they were issued. This stamping procedure is called "legalization", and all Uruguayan consulates are familiar with it. (Note: "legalization" is not synonymous with "Apostille". Apostilled documents won't be accepted; they need the consulates stamp.) In those countries where there are no Uruguayan consulates, the rule that governs is that of "indirect legalization": legalization through a third country's consulate or in a Uruguayan consulate in a neighboring country.

The easiest way to proceed is to check where the closest Uruguayan consulate is (for a list of Uruguayan consulates, please check the following link, and click on your country:

<http://www.embassyworld.com/embassy/Uruguay/>

Call the consulate, explain to them that you will be sending documents for legalization, and they'll ask you to send the documents, a check for the legalization fee, and a self-addressed stamped envelope for the return of the legalized documents to you. Some Uruguayan consulates waive the legalization fee if the applicant has a lawyer or agent in Uruguay fax a letter to the consulate stating that the legalization is intended for residency purposes.

ESCAPEARTIST.COM SPECIAL REPORTS

## The required documents

The required documents are:

**1. The persons birth certificate.** For those facing difficulties finding their birth certificate, there is a useful online service to obtain the birth certificate: (this service is only available in the U.S.).

<http://www.vitalcheck.com>

**2. The couples marriage certificate**, when the applicants are a married couple.

**3. The Criminal Record** : To prove that one has a clean police record, he or she must present a police certificate from the country of origin and from those countries where one resided in the past five years. In the case of U.S. citizens, the U.S. record is requested in Uruguay, at the local Interpol office, so one needn't worry about obtaining it in the U.S.

**4. Proof of Income.** Once the documents are legalized, one must send them to his/her immigration lawyer for a further stamping at Uruguay's Foreign Ministry, and to be translated into Spanish by a certified interpreter.

### A word on the Proof of Income requirement

The Proof of Income requirement is fulfilled by proving that the person has a steady stream of income of at least USD 6,000 per year (or USD 500 per month). If the applicants are a married couple, only one of the spouses needs to prove an income source.

The proof of income can be proven in a number of ways: a pension, a mutual fund, lease income from an property inside or outside Uruguay, dividends of any nature, salary, or a work contract with a company in Uruguay, to name common examples.



One has to prove that the income is actually received in Uruguay, so it is important to open a bank account in the country, which is easy, and can be done in a day at some banks.

Uruguay's immigration authorities scrutinize this requirement thoroughly, so the key is to prove it correctly, leaving no doubt of the authenticity and permanent or semi-permanent nature of the income source. The actual document that the applicant will submit is a sworn statement by a Uruguayan notary/lawyer, with an authenticated copy of the relevant documents.

It's important to notice that Uruguay does not require that you own property or have investments in the country in order to grant residency. On the other hand, owning property does not eliminate the income requirement.

ESCAPEARTIST.COM SPECIAL REPORTS

## Entering Uruguay

Once the person has collected all the relevant documents, and verified with an immigration lawyer that they are correct, he or she will enter the country.

Uruguay does not require an entry visa for citizens of any OECD country (the U.S., Canada, Japan, Europe, Australia and New Zealand) or from a South American country.

Upon entering Uruguay, the person will be granted a tourist permit, to stay for 90 days (this period can be extended for another 90 days through a written request to the immigration authority).

Before that period expires, the person will formally file the request for residency at the DNM, on the pre-arranged date. From the moment a person applies for residency, he or she may stay in Uruguay indefinitely, and even request a temporary national identification ("cedula de identidad").

### Other requirements that must be fulfilled once the applicant is in Uruguay

Besides the four documents that one must bring from abroad (three, in the case of U.S. citizens, who obtain their criminal record at the Interpol office in Uruguay), one has other requirements to meet, inside Uruguay:

- 1. The Health Certificate:** This is a health certificate issued by the Uruguayan Health Ministry or one of a few authorized private clinics. A basic medical test must be completed, and an immigration lawyer will set up the appointment for the applicant. The applicant must bring his or her record of the last tetanus vaccine (if impossible, the clinic will simply give the applicant a tetanus shot).
- 2. The Interpol record (for U.S. citizens).** The immigration lawyer assisting the applicant will help request this.
- 3. Original passport.**
- 4. The entry card obtained upon entering Uruguay.**
- 5. Four passport-size pictures.**

ESCAPEARTIST.COM SPECIAL REPORTS

## Obtaining residency

After filing for residency, the applicant does not need to stay in Uruguay, but should enter the country once, before the granting of the residency, or at least once a year.

The DNM may, at some point in the process, request that the applicant update the income proof information. They'll notify the applicant at his or her registered address in the filing (usually the lawyers offices).

On average, six to twelve months after the initial filing, residency is granted.

Resident status will be lost if, after obtaining it, one does not enter the country at all for three years.

### National Identification

Once residency is granted, the applicant receives the definitive national identification ("cedula de identidad"). During the process, the applicant may get a temporary one.



## Bringing ones personal belongings

One of the benefits of filing for residency is that it authorizes the applicant to bring ones household goods and personal belongings into the country, duty free. Household goods do not include a car.

### The application can be done in two instances:

This first option is as soon as the person files for residency. In this case, one doesn't have to wait until residency is granted. One files for residency, posts a bond with the Uruguayan customs authority (the bond can be obtained at a bank or insurance company in Uruguay), and the ships can then be shipped. After the residency is obtained, the bond is canceled.

The alternative path is to enter the goods after residency has been granted. This is possible, but requires extra documentation, and is not recommendable.

To proceed with the shipping of goods, it's key to have your shipping agent contact your Uruguayan immigration lawyer, who will verify that the list of assets is duly stamped by the Uruguayan consulate from the country of shipment, and that the list includes items that are reasonably understood as being household goods.

ESCAPEARTIST.COM SPECIAL REPORTS

### After Residency: Citizenship

After five years of having filed for residency (three in the case of families) one can apply for citizenship. This is done at Uruguay's "Electoral Court", and the requirement is that one have Uruguayan residency. To obtain citizenship there is no specific time requirement, although it is recommended to have had a permanent connection with the country (a domicile, a property, activity, etc.) and no absence for more than six straight months, for three/five years (this is proven with documents and witnesses). The citizenship application process is brief.

Uruguay allows multiple citizenship's, and the key benefit of citizenship is a Uruguayan passport, which allows for visa-free travel to all of Latin America and several European countries.

A special law, 16,340, that applies to people who are officially retired (with a pension), and income of over USD 18,000 per year guarantees a Uruguayan passport more rapidly. For those who apply for residency under this law, a passport is granted after a year to eighteen months (the time the process usually takes), once residency has been obtained. But the hurdles and requirements are higher: income must be at least USD 18,000 per year (instead of USD 6,000), and one must also own a property in Uruguay valued at USD 100,000 or more. This law also allows one to bring a car tax free, but this is not recommended, since bureaucratic delays can make the process very expensive.

**Go to page two of this report: Residency - Citizenship - Taxes - Offshore Companies & Banking - plus contact the details for the author:**

[http://www.escapeartist.com/Special\\_Reports/Residency-Uruguay/](http://www.escapeartist.com/Special_Reports/Residency-Uruguay/)

ESCAPEARTIST.COM SPECIAL REPORTS

© Copyright EscapeArtist Inc. All Rights Reserved

