BALA

A BALA CHECKLIST · 2026

THE FIDEICOMISO CHECKLIST

How foreigners legally buy coastal property in Mexico — step by step

Buying near the coast isn't a loophole and it isn't a lease. It's a bank trust, and once you know how it works, it's straightforward. Work through what it is, when you need one, the steps, the costs and who to trust.

01 **What it is & when**

02 **The six steps**

03 **Costs in 2026**

04 **Who to trust**

SECTION 01

WHAT IT IS, AND WHEN YOU NEED ONE

A fideicomiso is a bank trust, not a loophole and not a lease. It's how foreigners legally hold residential property in Mexico's restricted zone.

TRUSTEE	→	THE TRUST	→	BENEFICIARY
A Mexican bank		**Fideicomiso**		**You**
Holds legal title on your behalf		50 years, renewable		Full practical ownership

Know what you're getting

- [ ] **It's a bank trust, not a lease**
  The bank holds legal title. You're named as the beneficiary.
- [ ] **50 years, renewable**
  The property doesn't revert to the bank while the trust is maintained.
- [ ] **Full practical ownership**
  Live in it, rent it out, remodel, sell, or pass it on to the beneficiaries you name.
- [ ] **Name your substitute beneficiaries**
  If you die, they take over with just their ID and your death certificate. No will or probate needed.

Check whether you need one

- [ ] **Within 50 km of the coast? A fideicomiso is required.**
  That includes Playa del Carmen, Tulum, Cancún, Puerto Aventuras and the rest of the Riviera Maya.
- [ ] **Within 100 km of an international border? Also required.**
- [ ] **Outside both zones?**
  You can hold title in your own name, with no trust needed.

The restricted zone comes from Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution.

SECTION 02

SIX STEPS, FROM OFFER TO OWNERSHIP

Tick each one off as it's done. Don't move to the next until the last is confirmed.

1 ☐ **Agree on price and terms, and pay a deposit**

Sign a purchase agreement and pay your deposit into escrow, not directly to the seller.

2 ☐ **Choose your trustee bank**

Banorte, Banbajío, Banca Mifel, Monex, Scotiabank and Actinver all act as trustees. Get written quotes for the setup and annual fees from at least two.

3 ☐ **The bank applies for your SRE permit**

Your bank applies to Mexico's Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores and pays the permit fee when it applies. Ask whether you'll cover it upfront or as part of your closing costs.

4 ☐ **A notario público reviews the transaction**

They verify the title, check for liens and confirm the deal complies with Mexican law.

5 ☐ **Pay the balance and closing costs, and sign**

Pay the rest of the price and the closing costs, including any trust fees not already paid. The deed and trust are then signed and registered. Before you leave, make sure you have:

- ☐ A copy of your registered title
- ☐ The receipt for the acquisition tax
- ☐ The invoice for the purchase
- ☐ Substitute beneficiaries named in the trust

Keep these documents safe. You'll need them when you sell.

6 ☐ **Pay your annual trust fee, every year**

The bank charges a yearly fee to maintain the trust. Pay it on time to keep it in good standing.

6–12 WEEKS

Typical timeline, start to finish

NO RESIDENCY

You don't need a visa or residency to buy

REMOTE

You can close with a power of attorney

SECTION 03

WHAT IT COSTS IN 2026

The one official fee is set in pesos. Bank fees are set by each bank and quoted in dollars.

ITEM	COST	NOTE
SRE permit	**MXN $21,650** approx. US$1,160	Official 2026 federal fee. Paid in pesos, so the USD amount moves with the exchange rate.
One-time setup fee	**US$500–1,000**	Set by each bank. Get a written quote.
Annual trust fee	**US$500–700 / yr**	Set by each bank. Get a written quote and ask whether it includes IVA (16%).
Total closing costs in the restricted zone	**7–10% of purchase price**	Acquisition tax, notary and registration fees

Your budget worksheet

Purchase price	$ _____
Closing costs (7–10% of purchase price)	$ _____
Trust setup fee + SRE permit	$ _____
Total to budget at closing	**$** _____
Annual trust fee, every year after	$ _____ / yr

Before you commit

- [ ] **Get every fee in writing** from your bank and notario.
- [ ] **Confirm what closing costs include**, line by line.

Figures are 2026 estimates. USD conversions use about 18.7 pesos per dollar (October 2026). Confirm current costs with a qualified professional before relying on them.

SECTION 04

WHO TO TRUST, AND WHEN TO WALK AWAY

Your team

- [ ] **A notario público**
  Verifies clear title, checks for liens and formalises the deed. In Mexico, a notario is a licensed lawyer, not a US-style notary.
- [ ] **An established trustee bank**
  Ask for setup and annual fees in writing before you commit.
- [ ] **A licensed realtor**
  Ask for credentials and references from past foreign buyers.
- [ ] **A trusted advisor**
  Someone on your side, not the seller's, who can guide the whole process.

Red flags

- **Ejido land**
  Communal land that can't be sold as private property unless it has been regularised.
- **Unclear title or unpaid liens**
  Your notario should verify both before anything is signed.
- **An unusually low price**
  If it looks too good for the area, find out why.
- **Pressure to send a deposit early**
  Your deposit should go into escrow, never straight to the seller.

BALA shares this checklist as general information only. It is not legal, tax or financial advice, and BALA is not a law firm. Laws, fees and exchange rates change, so do your own research and confirm every step and cost with a notario público, your trustee bank and your own legal adviser before you act. Figures are 2026 estimates.

BUYING NEAR THE COAST?

TALK IT THROUGH BEFORE YOU SIGN

Book a real estate consultation →

buildalifeabroad.com

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