
THE RENTING BOOK: A GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE PERFECT RENTAL APARTMENT



Abstract:

In a real estate boom, homebuyers will clamor for almost any house that hits the market. This is great while it lasts, but only homebuyers can help you make informed decisions when the party's over. This guide covers essential factors, including location, budget, amenities, and lease terms, ensuring you find a place that aligns with your lifestyle and needs. It emphasizes prioritizing personal preferences while considering proximity to work, schools, or public transport. Additionally, it provides tips on evaluating apartment layouts, researching neighborhoods, and inspecting properties before signing a lease. Whether you're a first-time renter or looking to upgrade, this comprehensive guide empowers you to confidently choose a home that balances comfort, convenience, and affordability.

Getting Started

Choosing the perfect apartment can feel like a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be. Whether you're a first-time renter or looking to upgrade your current living situation, having a clear plan can make all the difference. Factors such as location, budget, and amenities are key elements to consider when searching for a space that suits your lifestyle. This guide will walk you through the process, providing practical tips and valuable insights to help you make an informed choice. From prioritizing your must-haves to comparing options effectively, we'll cover every step to ensure your apartment search is both efficient and enjoyable. Get ready to find a place you'll truly love to call home!

1. Why Is Location Important When Choosing an Apartment?

First, let's look at why that particular cliché—that the three most important factors when buying property are location, location, and location—became so popular. Most people decide to buy a property based on how much they like the house or apartment, but you are also buying a plot of land when you buy a property. The house currently standing on that land can be renovated or remodeled, but you can't change where the home is situated. This fact is seen most clearly in suburban homes, where the limits of a property are marked out.

However, even if you buy an apartment in a city, you invest in a particular location. A city block can be a "good" or "bad" investment in just the same way as the neighborhood of a house. This means that location is often the single most important driving force behind the value of a property. It's a simple case of supply and demand: Housing supply in great locations is limited by the number of homes in that location.



5 Factors of Location

A good location can mean different things to different people, of course, but there are also objective factors that determine a home's value. Depending on your personal needs and preferences, you may not be able to buy a home with all of these factors. And that's OK. After all, a home is much more than just an investment.

When you are home-hunting, pay attention to nearby amenities. Buyers usually want convenient grocery stores, dry cleaners, and entertainment. Consider trains, roads, and public transportation for transportation, such as bus stops, subway stations, and public bike-share locations. Proximity to amenities will typically improve a home's value.

However, the next time you're shopping for a new property, keep five factors in mind.

1. Centrality

Where you choose to live in a city or town will undoubtedly affect how much you pay for your home. Land is a finite commodity, so cities like San Francisco that are highly developed and don't have much room for additional growth tend to have higher prices than cities with too much room to expand. Some of these communities have many uninhabited homes and areas that have fallen into disrepair.

When sprawling cities experience a population exodus, it's the outlying areas that tend to suffer the most severe declines in property value. This is part of how location impacts the fundamental economic tenet of supply and demand.

2. Neighborhood

The neighborhoods that appeal to you will essentially be a matter of personal choice. However, a truly great neighborhood will have a few critical factors in common: accessibility, appearance, and amenities. Your neighborhood may also dictate the size of the lot on which your house is built.

In terms of accessibility, you should look for a neighborhood near a city's major transit routes, which has more than one entry point. Commuting to and from work is a big part of many people's days, so a house with easy access to roads and public transportation will be more desirable than one tucked away and can only be accessed by one route. Shady trees, quality landscaping, and nearby parks or community spaces tend to be desirable.

You can also judge the neighborhood's popularity based on how long homes in that area stay on the market; if turnover is quick, you're not the only one who thinks this is a desirable place to live.

A great neighborhood should also include essential amenities such as grocery stores, shops, and restaurants. Most people like to frequent places that are convenient. Research the local public schools even if you don't have kids or plan to have them. A reputable public school district can boost an area's home values and figure into the profit you can realize when you want to sell. Also, you'll want to attract the greatest number of potential buyers. Many buyers target neighborhoods with strong public schools.

3. Development

It is not just the present amenities that matter, but future ones as well. Plans for new schools, hospitals, public transportation, and other civic infrastructure can dramatically improve property values in the area.

Commercial development can also improve property values. When you're shopping for a home, try to find out whether any new public, commercial, or residential developments are planned and consider how these additions might affect the desirability of the surrounding areas.

4. Lot Location

You also need to take into consideration where the house is located. If the house you want to buy is right on a busy road or very close to a highway, you can probably get it for a lower price, but it will also be more difficult to sell later.

The same may hold for houses that stand next to or back onto a commercial property, such as a grocery store or gas station, or houses on streets that get an unusual amount of parking traffic and parked cars, such as those near large churches or community centers. Alternatively, a house with a wonderful view or near a body of water is likely to be more valuable, both now and when it comes time to sell it.

Mortgage lending discrimination is illegal. If you think you've been discriminated against based on race, religion, sex, marital status, use of public assistance, national origin, disability, or age, there are steps you can take. One such step is to file a report to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and/or with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

5. The Home You Purchase

There's one aspect of house hunting that tends to surprise people. Let's say you've narrowed your choices to two homes that stand side by side in a great neighborhood. One needs repairs and updates but has a huge lot. The other is in tip-top shape but sits on a lot half the size of the fixer-upper. The prices of the two homes are similar. Which do you choose? In most cases, the house in need of repairs is the better investment.

The reason: your house is a depreciating asset. On the other hand, the lot will maintain its value (or likely appreciate) relative to the house. If you bulldozed both houses, the larger lot would sell for more. So, if you can, choose a bigger, better-shaped, or better-situated lot over a nicer house. A less attractive house can always be updated, added on to, or replaced altogether, but the lot can't change.

Should I Buy a Fixer Upper Home in a Good Neighborhood?

Buying a fixer-upper home in a popular or up-and-coming neighborhood can be a good investment if you have the time and money to improve the home.

How Do I Know If I Am Buying in a Good Neighborhood?

A good neighborhood often has indicators of its stability from well-kept homes and yards, convenience to amenities, low crime rates, public transportation, public schools, and paved roads.

2. Tips for Renting an Apartment



While finding a good deal on an apartment rental has never really been an easy feat in the summertime, this year is proving to be especially difficult.

Thanks to a mix of various economic factors — record-high inflation outpacing slow wage growth, increasing interest rates pricing would-be homebuyers out of the market and apartment landlords making up for expired Covid deals — renting a new place is suddenly a lot less affordable. Just this June, rent prices had their biggest monthly gain since 1986 — that’s over three decades.

Avoid moving between April and September

According to MovingLabor.com, 80% of all moves in the U.S. happen during “peak” moving season, which is defined as occurring from April to September.

Because of the high demand for rentals during this time, especially since the kids are out of school, buildings have less inventory and tend to charge more for available units. It’s a classic case of high demand and low supply boosting prices.

It’s not just a new lease that will cost you more — the prices for moving services are higher during the peak season as well.

Negotiate any add-on fees

When you are ready to apartment hunt come the colder months, be wary of the prices you see. Before you get too excited, make sure you know exactly what the monthly cost of renting will be all in, as some landlords will tack on extra fees per month on top of the base rent price.

These additional fees might include costs for pets, pest control, trash, internet and cable, parking and other amenity fees. Ask landlords beforehand about all the fees the lease would and wouldn't cover, and perhaps try to negotiate any add-on fees as part of your rental agreement.

Offer to sign a longer lease

Although standard lease terms are for 12 months, landlords will typically offer a lower monthly rent price for longer lease terms of 15, 18 or 24 months.

Even if your landlord doesn't offer a discounted rate for longer lease terms upfront, let them know you're willing to stay longer as leverage for a lower rate because they will benefit from less turnover of your unit.

You'll benefit, too, and not only from a possibly lower monthly rent. Locking in a rate today for, say, two years is a smart move — if you plan to stay in the same city — since landlords will likely increase the price once your lease ends and it's time to re-sign.

Benefit from paying your rent

While this last tip might not save you money as a renter immediately, it can have a lasting impact on your finances in the long term. Nowadays, there are financial products that reward renters for paying their monthly rent, so you might as well take advantage of your responsible financial behavior.

For example, gives users points whenever they pay their rent on time, and those points can be redeemed for rewards such as free food, exercise classes, gift cards, travel discounts and other services through apps like TaskRabbit and DoorDash.

3. The Ultimate First Apartment Checklist

Check out our printable, portable first apartment checklist; after that, you'll find a digital version that you can keep on your phone during those all-important shopping trips. With any luck, you'll have your apartment fully stocked before your first lease is up.



Bedroom Essentials

The good news: You may already have many of the bedroom essentials stocked, whether you grab the items from your current bedroom or your college dorm stash. Make sure that you have two sets of sheets, so you can have one in the wash while the fresh set is on your bed.

- Mattress
- Bed frame
- Mattress protector
- Sheets
- Spare sheet set

Kitchen Must-Haves

Stocking your kitchen well can be a big up-front expenditure, but it'll save you money when you make it easier to cook at home. You don't have to splurge on the highest end versions of any items—a basic set of glasses or plates can serve you well for years.

- Medium pot

- Large pot
- Small skillet
- Medium skillet
- Large skillet

Bathroom Essentials

Getting the right gear for your first apartment's bathroom can help make it a relaxing place for self-care. It's worth investing in plush bath towels—and organizers to help you store all of your products.

- Bath towel set
- Bath mat
- Shower organizer
- Drain cover

Living Room Necessities

You may end up spending a bit more in your living room, where a lot of big-ticket items like sofas, TVs, and other furnishings live. If your budget is tight, many furnishings can be found second-hand to help you get your first apartment furnished in style.

- Bookshelf
- Couch/chair
- Coffee table
- Coasters

Don't rush

Fight the urge to rush to get everything at once. It's true that sleeping on the floor in an empty apartment isn't fun, but it's better than spending money on items you don't actually like.

Think ahead

Your first apartment likely won't be your "forever home," but some of the pieces you buy while you're there could easily translate to a new space. A good-quality futon that's the focal point of your studio apartment living room/bedroom could eventually be a space saver in your future guest bedroom, while a splurge-y stand mixer could last you for decades.

Get creative to stretch your budget

The classic "wooden boards and milk crates" bookshelf has been a time-honored first apartment hack. But there are plenty of other ways to save money on furnishing your apartment. Look for items on sale, shop at budget-friendly stores; check out Buy Nothing groups, garage sales, and Freecycle options near you; or head to your local thrift shop for bargains.

4. What Amenities Should You Look for in an Apartment?

When looking for an apartment, people usually search for rental options based on location, the number of bedrooms, monthly rent, and amenities. Popular amenities include a fitness center, pool, play space for children, community room, and parking garage. A pet-friendly building or community is another must-have for some, while laundry and strong wifi connectivity are just as important.



What Are Apartment Amenities?

Apartment amenities are the nonessential features of an apartment that make life easier, more enjoyable, or more productive. These are not items like running water or heat in the winter that

you should have everywhere but are certain perks a building may offer that make them more appealing than other options comparable in size, price, or quality.

Amenities are additional features or comforts inside a property or building that will add extra value to residents and their experience of the facility. While an apartment with a stove is essential, having an event space in the building with a catering kitchen capable of hosting parties and large gatherings would be an amenity.

Are Apartment Amenities Free?

While some amenities are built into the rent, at some properties, residents will be asked to pay an amenity fee separate from rent for access to the facilities, such as a gym or a rooftop balcony.

While you may opt out of the fee if you don't plan to use the amenities, an amenity fee, facility fee, or common charges are something to consider as an additional monthly expense. Ask about any fees at the lease signing and confirm what they are or if they're optional.

Common Apartment Amenities

Apartment Amenities

Air conditioning: Understand whether the rental offers central air, in-window units, or neither. Some apartments, like historic buildings, may have ordinances against in-window units.

Deck, patio, or private balcony: These features extend the living space outdoors.

Dishwasher: Washing dishes by hand is time-consuming and can waste water. Energy-efficient dishwashers use less water per cycle than hand-washing, a boon for the environment.

Deck, patio, or private balcony: These features extend the living space outdoors.

Dishwasher: Washing dishes by hand is time-consuming and can waste water. Energy-efficient dishwashers use less water per cycle than hand-washing, a boon for the environment.

Fireplace: Fireplaces look nice, add ambiance to a room, and can reduce energy costs from your heating bill. Confirm whether you will be allowed to use the fireplace while renting.

Benefits of Amenities for Renters and Owners

When you hunt for an apartment, prioritize the most relevant amenities to your lifestyle. Consider what will make living in this new space (for months or even years) more pleasant and what isn't worth the extra rent or facility fees. If you love working out, a gym in the building would be a significant asset. If a weekend swim is more appealing, look for a rooftop pool.

Things That Made My New Rented Apartment Feel More Homey

We all have different things that we associate with home, from people and pets to a fully stocked refrigerator, but here are the things I would recommend.



Cleaning everything

Even when the previous tenants have left the place in good condition, wiping down kitchen and bathroom surfaces, removing dust on shelves and baseboards, and vacuuming thoroughly all make it feel more like a fresh slate. I had lots of help from family, and we cleaned the kitchen from top to bottom, mainly just cleaning with vinegar and surface cleaner to leave things feeling fresh.

Banishing blank walls

I have only been in the apartment for a couple of weeks, but as soon as the IKEA Billy bookcases were up in the living room, it instantly felt more like home. The piles of flattened moving boxes in the entryway and general disorder elsewhere didn't matter so much with the creased spines of French literature and Marian Keyes beach reads on display.

Inviting friends and family over

Whether it be a housewarming party or a cup of tea with a friend, inviting people into your new space makes a huge difference. 'Having friends over for a meal, movie night, or game night can instantly make the new house or apartment feel like home,' agrees renovating expert Mark Buskuhl from Ninebird Properties in Dallas, Texas. 'Plus, it's a great way to create new memories in the space and get used to entertaining guests in this environment.'

Fresh flowers and candles

When making a house look cozy, you can't go wrong with some fresh flowers and foliage in your favorite vase and a flickering candle.

'Candles are a must when trying to make a new home feel more homey,' says Chiana Dickson, Homes & Gardens' junior writer. 'When I first moved in, my new house smelt musty after being shut up unoccupied for months, so a good scented candle (I love any DW Home scented candle, such as the Snickerdoodle candle, available at Walmart) helped create a signature scent in my space that made it feel more lived in from the get-go.'

How To Prepare for Your Next Big Move

Compare written in-home estimates.

Movers have to come to your home to give you a truly reliable estimate, so skip estimates over the phone or internet. Get at least three in-home estimates and compare the prices. Usually, two of the estimates will be close in price, while one will be very high or low. Choose one of the median prices.

Don't save packing for the last minute.

When you procrastinate on packing, you're more likely to pack things you don't need. Start a few weeks in advance, and create a separate box for items you no longer use. Sell these items at a yard sale or donate them to charity.

Stock up on packing materials.

You'll need cardboard boxes, bubble wrap, packing peanuts, newsprint, packing tape and markers. You can likely get some of these items for free from local businesses; most stores throw away boxes after they unload the contents.



Pack with materials you already have.

For an eco-friendly and less expensive move, fill up your suitcases and plastic containers before packing cardboard boxes. Rather than bubble wrap or paper, use towels, pillowcases and other soft materials to wrap breakable items.

Keep a moving inventory.

Label each box you pack with a number and the room where they belong. Then make a detailed list of each box's contents so you can make sure everything arrives safely.

Get the children involved.

Let the kids make a smooth transition into their new home by keeping them informed and getting them involved in the moving process. If they are old enough, have them pack their own rooms and decorate their boxes.

Prepare a "load-last" box.

Save one box for all items you'll want easy access to once you get to your new abode, like toiletries, medications, and sheets. Label this box "load last."

Take care of pets and plants.

Make sure both get plenty of water and don't get too hot or cold. Pack your plants in open boxes and pad the sides with newspaper. Dogs should ride in the front seat with a window cracked so they don't get carsick.

Prep your new home before moving furniture in. It's easier to clean and paint the home while it's empty, so take care of this step before moving your belongings in.

Don't be overwhelmed by all those boxes.

Once moving day is over and you're finally in your new home, unpacking can seem daunting. Tackle one room at a time, starting with the kitchen, which is the hub of most homes. Little by little, you'll get yourself settled into your new home.



Tips For Moving Into An Apartment Building With No Elevator

Not every apartment building has an elevator and if you are planning a move to such a space, relocation is challenging as you only have the stairs to take your belongings to the unit. You need to have a proper plan to avoid stress, injury and anxiety while moving into an apartment

building without a lift. Hire professional removalists in Brisbane with years of experience and the expertise to pack and move things to apartments. However, some people may choose to manage the relocation themselves. Whatever you decide to do, here are tips to move into an apartment in a building without an elevator. Have a look.

Move On a Weekday

Commonly weekdays are the preferred time for moving, but to have a seamless apartment moving day, schedule the removalists to arrive on a weekday. This way, you avoid people traffic in stairs. Additionally, most of your neighbours will be at work and you can move your property contents without disturbing anyone. Also, you can arrange parking with ease for your hired removalists in Brisbane from Monday to Friday.

Plan Everything with The Removalists

Before booking removalists in Brisbane, inform them you live in an apartment and share the guidelines for maintaining decorum in the complex. Schedule a pre-move survey to ask any questions and help the professionals to know the floor, facilities, stairs count estimate, and other important information. It will enable them to devise an action plan and keep necessary moving equipment on hand for smooth removals.



Reduce Your Packing & Moving Load

When moving out of an apartment, get rid of everything that doesn't serve a purpose, especially if you move into another unit. Space quickly becomes an issue in a unit, which is why you should declutter or downsize only to take things you need. Also, reducing your packing and moving load is suitable for you and your hired removalists in Brisbane, as there are fewer items to handle and transport. Depending on the condition and usefulness of your belongings, choose to keep, discard, donate or resell them.

Disassemble Furniture Before Packing

Make sure to dismantle large and bulky furniture items like beds, couches, dining tables etc. before packing. Taking assembled furniture up multiple flight of stairs is challenging as pivoting is impossible in some cases during a DIY move. If the stairs are narrow which is usually the case in most apartment building.

Rent Moving Equipment & Use Safe Lifting Techniques

If you are moving yourself, rent moving equipment like a dolly, straps, harnesses, shoulder dolly and other items that will smoothen the process. Additionally, prevent injury by using the following safe lifting techniques.

- Wear the right shoes and keep your feet grounded while lifting bulky items.
- Also, lift things with strength of your legs and stomach rather than your arms.
- Bend your knees and keep your back tight.
- Use furniture sliders to shift heavy items rather than lift them while moving.

Keep Children/Pets Out of Harm's Way

When your hired removalists in Brisbane arrive on the moving day, keep your children and pets away from hallways, entry points and passageways. Children and pets can hamper the operations of the professionals plus, it is dangerous for them to be near heavy furniture, bulky appliance and big boxes being carried by removalists. On the moving day, make your children or pets safe in a room with food, drinks, toys, and items of comfort. Hang a do not disturb sign on the door and check on them routinely to ensure they are fine. Alternately, you can send your pet or child to the care of a family member or a trusted friend for a few days.

Pack An Essentials Bag

A moving essentials bag is crucial to have everything you would need during travel and upon arrival at your new home. Your essential bag should contain snacks, water, medicines, toiletries, change of clothes, towel, wipes, charger, keys, and anything important. While packing the bag

for your small children or pets, don't forget their feeding utensils, toys, comfort blankets, binkies, food etc.

Reserve Parking Space for Moving Truck

Whether you rent a moving truck or book professional removalists in Brisbane, reserve a parking space to avoid delays or inconvenience. Talk to your apartment complex manager or property owner and get the required permit to park the vehicle. Specify the date, estimated arrival time of the moving truck and reservation duration to prevent confusion on the moving day.

Conclusion:

when choosing the perfect apartment is to prioritize your needs, budget, and lifestyle. Start by assessing essential factors such as location, amenities, size, and lease terms. Consider your long-term goals, such as proximity to work, public transport, schools, or social activities, as well as the apartment's overall condition and upkeep. It's also crucial to factor in costs beyond rent, such as utilities, maintenance fees, and potential hidden expenses. Take time to visit multiple properties and ask questions to ensure the apartment aligns with your lifestyle. By being thorough and realistic about your requirements, you can confidently make an informed decision that offers comfort, convenience, and value.

References:

Why Is Location Important When Choosing an Apartment? | Retrieved 9 June 2023, From, <https://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0410/the-5-factors-of-a-good-location.aspx>

Tips for Renting an Apartment | | Retrieved 1 April 2024, From, <https://www.cnbc.com/select/tips-for-renting-an-apartment-without-going-broke/>

The Ultimate First Apartment Checklist | Retrieved 5 Sep 2024, From, <https://www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/first-apartment-checklist>

What Amenities Should You Look for in an Apartment? | Retrieved 30 Sep 2024, From, <https://www.thespruce.com/what-are-apartment-amenities-155950>

Things That Made My New Rented Apartment Feel More Homey | Retrieved 15 Aug 2023, From, <https://www.homesandgardens.com/solved/things-that-made-my-new-apartment-feel-more-homey>

How To Prepare for Your Next Big Move | | Retrieved 15 Aug 2023, From, <https://www.hgtv.com/lifestyle/real-estate/10-tips-for-your-next-move>

Tips for Moving Into an Apartment Building With No Elevator | Retrieved 4Sep, 2024, From,

<https://www.betterremovalistsbrisbane.com.au/tips-for-moving-into-an-apartment-building-with-no-elevator/>