

Find an Experienced Real Estate Agent

Buying a first home is a complex process. An experienced real estate agent will assist you all through the search, comparable homes sold, making an offer, inspection, repair, and appraisal processes, as well as help you find the best value, neighborhood, and quality for your budget and requirements.

The seller's real estate broker pays your broker or agent out of the loan proceeds. If you don't use your own agent, the seller's broker keeps the commission, so you might as well avail yourself of professional advice. Your real estate broker or agent works in your best interest.

Don't expect perfection

There's no perfect home. You may want all the latest amenities of a new home, but even new homes come at a price, perhaps longer commutes and bigger price tags. Many sellers don't repaint or re-carpet prior to selling, so if you're shopping for an older home, expect to do some cosmetic work.

Homes that need updating are priced below homes that are up to the minute and move-in ready. That could be to your financial advantage, so try to look beyond outdated fixtures and focus instead on the floorplan and dimensions. Ignore the seller's tastes and imagine each room clean and clear of clutter and with your own things in them.

Most cosmetic changes are relatively inexpensive, and you can even pay for them with your mortgage loan, in some cases. Talk to your lender.

Think long-term investment

Buying a home can be a wise financial investment, if you buy right and hold your home for long-term gain. Because of closing and moving costs, it's nearly impossible to buy a home and sell it immediately for a large gain, but it is possible to sell after a couple of years with no capital gains tax, should you make a profit.

According to the National Association of REALTORS®, home equity growth beats inflation by about one to two percent annually, not to mention government subsidies for home ownership in the form of tax relief and other incentives.

However, if you look at owning a home strictly as an investment, you'll miss many pleasures.