

The No-Nonsense Guide to

BUYING A HOUSE

WITHOUT

REGRETS



+
GUIDEBOOK



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INTRODUCTION

Buying a house is a lot like dating. At first, everything looks perfect, but if you don't pay attention to the red flags, you might end up stuck with something that drains your finances and sanity. A beautifully staged home might steal your heart, but hidden issues could burn a hole in your wallet.

To help you avoid costly mistakes, here's a detailed checklist of things you **must** check before saying, "I do" to a house.



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Before you get swept away by a charming house, step back and assess its surroundings. The dream home loses its appeal quickly if it's inconveniently located or in a problematic area.

Retail & Transport:

Make sure essential amenities like grocery stores, pharmacies, and public transportation hubs are within a 5-6 km radius. Being too far from essentials can make daily life frustrating.

Neighborhood Vibe:

Take a stroll or drive around. Does it feel welcoming? Are streets clean and well-maintained? Check for noisy intersections, rowdy neighbors, or other signs of a problematic area.

Potential Deal Breakers:

Is the house near a T-junction (bad feng shui and resale concerns)? A train line (constant noise)? A cemetery (spooky or peaceful, depending on your views)? A high-voltage power line (possible health concerns and aesthetic issues)? These can all affect resale value and livability.



STRUCTURAL & FUNCTIONAL CHECKS

Buying a home without checking its bones is like marrying someone after only seeing their dating profile. Here's what to look for:

Backyard Slope & Drainage:

If the backyard has a negative slope (meaning water runs towards the house instead of away), you could face serious flooding issues. If there's no proper drainage or gutter system in place, water damage is inevitable.

Roof Condition:

Look for missing shingles, sagging spots, or signs of wear. Replacing a roof can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

Air Conditioning System:

A broken AC during summer is a nightmare. Check its age, maintenance history, and whether it's still cooling effectively.

Windows & Condensation:

If you see condensation trapped inside double-pane windows, that's a red flag for failing seals. It usually means the frames will need replacing soon.



Ceilings & Thermal Camera Test:

Using a thermal camera can help spot unusual temperature differences. If some ceiling areas are noticeably warmer or colder, it could indicate insulation issues, moisture problems, or even hidden leaks.

Appliance Functionality:

Don't just assume the oven, fridge, or washer works—turn them on and check.

Garage Access:

An interior door to the garage is a small but crucial convenience. Carrying groceries through the front door in the rain isn't fun.

Furnace & Electrical Panel:

Older furnaces can be inefficient and costly to replace. The electrical panel should be updated and meet modern safety standards. Faulty or outdated electrical systems can be expensive and dangerous.

Basement & Foundation Cracks:

Use a thermal camera to detect hidden foundation cracks, which could lead to major structural issues later.

Vents & Dust Build-Up:

Dusty return vents suggest the furnace filter wasn't changed regularly, which could mean poor air quality and system inefficiency.



RENOVATION REALITY CHECK

Unless you're buying a brand-new home, chances are you'll want to make some updates. Estimate the costs early so there are no financial surprises.

Flooring:

If the carpet looks like it's from the 90s or the hardwood is deeply scratched, factor in replacement costs.

Kitchen:

The heart of the home. Does it need a full remodel or just a few updates? A new kitchen can be pricey, so budget accordingly.

Basement Suite Potential:

Thinking of renting out the basement? Check zoning regulations, separate entrances, and potential construction costs.

School Catchment Area:

Just because a school is nearby doesn't mean your child can attend it. Look up the catchment zone and check the school's rating.



SNEAKY NEGOTIATION TACTICS

Rental Appliances:

Some homes come with rental furnaces or water heaters. These contracts can be costly. Use this to negotiate a price reduction.

Local Grocery Store Test:

Visit a nearby grocery store. Do you feel comfortable with the crowd? It's an easy way to get a feel for the neighborhood.

Daycares & Montessori Schools:

If you have kids or plan to, check nearby daycare availability. Some good ones have waitlists lasting months.

Talk to Neighbors:

If you see someone outside, strike up a conversation. They'll often share insights on the area's pros and cons.



HIDDEN PITFALLS

Illegal Basement Units:

Some sellers build illegal rental units that have been flagged by the city. Always check for outstanding notices.

Pool Liner Age:

Pool liners last around 25 years. Ask for a warranty certificate.

Permits for Structural Changes:

If you see major renovations or new electrical work, confirm that the seller has the proper permits and safety certificates.

Metal Roofs & Ice Splinters:

A metal roof is great, but if it lacks ice splinters, melting snow can slide off and damage the gutters—an expensive fix.

Natural Light:

Don't be fooled by artificial lighting. Turn off all lights during a showing to see how much natural light the house gets.

TV vs. Couch Placement:

Poor layouts can make it difficult to set up your furniture properly. Visualize where everything will go.



Renovation Costs:

Always keep an estimate running for how much you'll need to spend on updates.

Electrical & Plumbing:

Does the house have aluminum wiring? It may need to be pigtailed. Does it have Kitec plumbing? You might want to reconsider.

Power of Sale:

If the property is a power of sale, read through all clauses carefully. You don't want to be stuck with years of unpaid bills and taxes from the previous owner.

Estate Sale:

If it's an estate sale, ensure that probate has been completed before proceeding with the purchase.

Tenanted Properties:

If the house is tenanted, include a clause for vacant possession and ensure a signed N11 (preferred) or N12 form is provided within 10 days of offer acceptance. Otherwise, you could inherit tenants you don't want.



BUYING A CONDO? READ THIS FIRST

Buying a condo comes with extra considerations that can significantly impact your finances and lifestyle.

Status Certificate Review:

Have a lawyer review this document to understand the condo's financial health and rules.

Special Assessments:

If the condo board is planning a major project (roof replacement, exterior upgrades, etc.), you might face unexpected costs.

Reserve Fund:

A low reserve fund means future maintenance costs could be passed onto owners.

Illegal Developments:

Some owners make unauthorized modifications to their units. If it's against condo rules, you might be forced to undo it.



CONCLUSION

Buying a house is an exciting but expensive adventure. A staged home might look perfect, but the real test is in the details. Take your time, do your due diligence, and don't be afraid to ask tough questions. The more informed you are, the less likely you'll be stuck with costly surprises.

But why navigate this journey alone? At **BricksNDreams**, we believe real estate should be a fairytale, not a financial nightmare. We are committed to helping you find a home that matches your dreams and your budget, all while ensuring transparency and protection at every step.

Let's make your real estate story a happily ever after.
Reach out to BricksNDreams today!

freedom through real estate.



CONTACT US

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TOP 10 TEAMS IN CANADA (BY VOLUME)



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