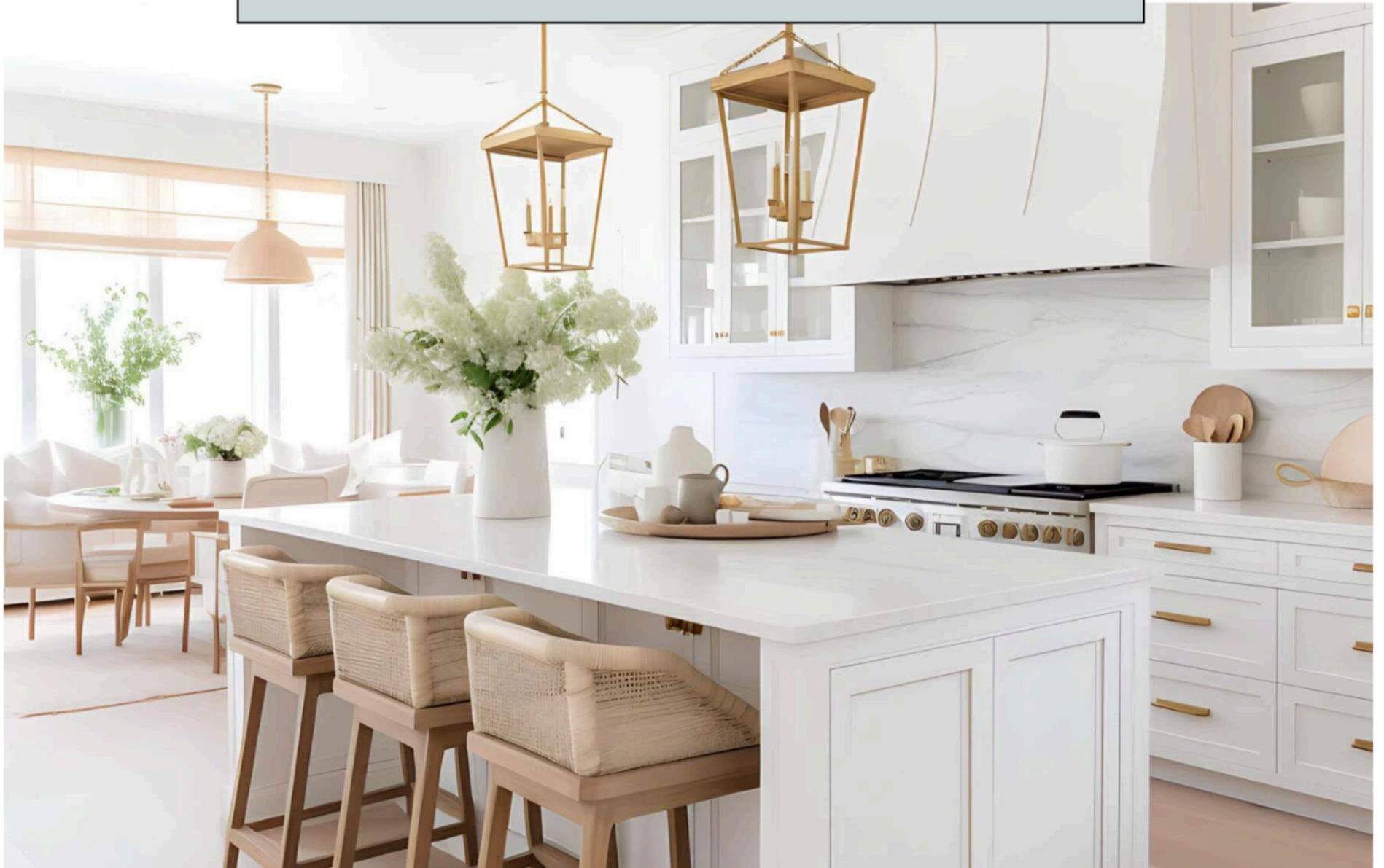


# GUIDE TO WISE HOME BUYING

CONFIDENCE IN EVERY MOVE.



THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO HELP YOU FEEL INFORMED, PREPARED, AND CONFIDENT AS YOU BUY A HOME. IT'S WRITTEN FOR YOU TO READ ON YOUR OWN, AND IT ALSO WORKS AS A "WALK-THROUGH" TOOL WE CAN USE TOGETHER. SAVE IT AND REFER BACK TO IT THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS.

IMPORTANT NOTE: REAL ESTATE PRACTICES, FORMS, AND DEADLINES CAN VARY BY LOCATION AND TRANSACTION TYPE. THIS GUIDE IS EDUCATIONAL, NOT LEGAL ADVICE. WHEN SOMETHING IS STATE- OR CONTRACT-SPECIFIC, WE'LL EXPLAIN IT CLEARLY AND CONFIRM IT IN WRITING.

**simpler**◦realestate

# *How to Use This Guide:*

Use this guide in three ways:

**Before we start:** understand the big picture, financing basics, and what to expect.

**While we shop:** learn how to evaluate homes, spot red flags early, and compare options fairly.

**Once you're under contract:** follow the Contract-to-Close timeline so deadlines don't sneak up on you.

## **OUR APPROACH: CONFIDENCE IN EVERY MOVE**

Buying a home is emotional and high-stakes. Our job is to bring calm and clarity to a process that can feel chaotic. We do that by combining human guidance (education, negotiation, coordination) with simple technology that keeps communication and deadlines organized.

## **HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US**

- Fast responses and proactive updates.
- Clear explanations in plain language.
- Preparation that reduces surprises.
- A step-by-step plan with next actions (for you and for us).
- Confidentiality and professional advocacy aligned with your goals.

# *The Home Buying Time Line*

*Most purchases follow the same rhythm. The details change, but the structure stays consistent.*

## ***Get Ready***

Financing, goals, budget, and a clear plan



## ***Search & Tour***

See homes efficiently & compare them fairly



## ***Offer & Negotiation***

Write a strong offer that fits your goals & the market



## ***Under Contract (Due Diligence)***

Inspections, appraisal, title, and loan approval



## ***Final Walk-Through & Closing***

Confirm condition & complete the purchase



## ***After Closing***

Move-in support, vendor help, and long-term follow-up



# Get Ready: Goals, Budget, & Team

The best home purchases start with clarity. Before we tour homes, we want three things to be true: (1) you know what you want and why, (2) you understand your budget, and (3) you have a plan for timing.

## FINANCING: WHY PRE-APPROVAL MATTERS

A strong pre-approval helps in three ways: it sets a realistic price range, it strengthens your offer, and it reduces delays later. A pre-approval is more than a quick online estimate—it typically involves a lender reviewing your income, assets, and credit.

### A good lender conversation should cover:

- Loan type options (conventional, FHA, VA, etc.) and what fits your situation.
- Estimated down payment, closing costs, and monthly payment range.
- Timeline expectations: how quickly the lender can close and what documentation you'll need.
- A plan for the appraisal and underwriting process.
- Communication norms—who updates whom, and how often.

## BUDGET: MORE THAN THE PURCHASE PRICE

Your comfort zone is not just the sale price. We'll also consider: down payment, closing costs, inspection costs, moving costs, repairs, furniture, utilities, and ongoing maintenance. A wise plan leaves breathing room.

## YOUR HOME CRITERIA: MUST-HAVES VS. DEAL-BREAKER

We'll build a short, clear set of criteria to guide the search. This reduces decision fatigue and keeps tours efficient.

### A SIMPLE WAY TO STRUCTURE IT:

- Must-haves: non-negotiables (location, school boundary, number of bedrooms, accessibility needs, etc.).
- Strong preferences: things you want, but can compromise on if the right home appears.
- Deal-breakers: items that make the home a “no” immediately (HOA restriction, busy road, steep stairs, etc.).
- Timeline: when you want to move and what constraints (lease end, job start, school calendar).





# Search & Tour Homes

## HOW TO EVALUATE SMARTLY



Tours are about more than “Do we like it?” They’re about learning: does the home fit your lifestyle, does it function well, and are there issues that could change your comfort level or your budget.

### HOW WE KEEP SHOWINGS EFFICIENT

We’ll group tours by location, confirm access instructions, and pre-screen properties using photos, maps, and disclosures when available. The goal is to avoid wasted trips and keep you focused on the best options.

### A SIMPLE TOURING METHOD

#### Macro → Micro

We’ll start big-picture and then narrow down. This keeps the tour organized and helps you compare homes fairly.

**Outside first:** neighborhood feel, traffic/noise, exterior condition, and first impression.

**Layout next:** how the home lives (flow, room placement, light, storage).

**Details last:** floors/walls/ceilings, windows/doors, visible mechanical areas, signs of moisture or odors.

**Notes as we go:** pros/cons and questions to answer later (we don’t guess)

### HOW TO COMPARE HOMES WITHOUT OVERWHELM

After each showing, we’ll do a quick debrief (usually in the car). A simple 1–10 rating plus a few bullet-point reasons helps you remember how each home truly felt. It also helps you narrow options quickly.

### WHAT WE DO (AND DON’T DO) DURING SHOWINGS

We make careful observations, but we are not inspectors. If something looks concerning, we’ll flag it as an item to investigate during inspections. Our job is to help you spot possible deal-breakers early and ask the right follow-up questions.



# Price vs. Value

## HOW SMART BUYERS DECIDE

LIST PRICE IS AN ASKING PRICE. VALUE IS WHAT THE HOME IS WORTH IN THE MARKET AND WORTH TO YOU. A WISE BUYER COMBINES BOTH: MARKET EVIDENCE AND PERSONAL PRIORITIES.

### OUR VALUE FRAMEWORK (SIMPLE & PRACTICAL)

When we discuss value, we look at five practical factors – The 5 Factors of Value. You don't have to memorize them—this is just a helpful way to think clearly.

- Location:** Where it sits, what surrounds it, convenience, noise, and long-term desirability.
- Condition:** Maintenance, updates, and visible wear or deferred repairs.
- Functionality:** Layout, room placement, usability, storage, parking, and how it fits your daily life.
- Comparable Sales:** What similar homes have actually sold for (not just what's listed).
- Motivation:** Your timeline and priorities, and the seller's situation when we can learn it responsibly.

### WHY PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT CAN MISLEAD

Price per square foot is easy to calculate, but it often ignores condition, layout, lot value, and micro-location differences. It can be a quick reference point, but it should not be the primary way you decide value.

### MARKET PACE: ABSORPTION RATE

Absorption rate is a way to estimate how quickly homes like this are selling. Think of it as “months of inventory.” Lower months of inventory usually means a faster, more competitive market; higher months may indicate more buyer leverage.

We use market pace alongside comparable sales to choose an offer strategy that fits today's conditions, not last season's headlines.



# Price vs. Value

## HOW SMART BUYERS DECIDE

### WRITING A STRONG OFFER (IT'S MORE THAN PRICE)

A strong offer matches the seller's needs while protecting you. Price matters, but terms and timing matter too. Our job is to help you write an offer that is competitive without taking unnecessary risk.

### COMMON OFFER COMPONENTS

- Price & Earnest Money:** shows seriousness and becomes part of the transaction funds.
- Closing date:** a clear target date helps everyone plan.
- Financing terms:** loan type, down payment, and key deadlines
- Inspection period:** your window to investigate and negotiate repairs or credits.
- Appraisal considerations:** what happens if the appraisal is lower than expected.
- Inclusions/exclusions:** what stays (appliances, fixtures) and what does not.
- Possession timing:** when you actually get the keys and the right to occupy
- Deadlines:** response/expiration times and deliverables (earnest money, loan application, etc.).

### MULTIPLE OFFER SITUATIONS

In competitive situations, we'll create a plan before you fall in love with a home. That plan may include: strong terms, clean timelines, and a clear strategy for how far you're willing to go—without abandoning your comfort level.

We also protect your confidentiality. We avoid sharing your urgency, budget ceiling, or personal details that could weaken your position.

# Under Contract

## *Your Contract-to-Close Roadmap*

Once your offer is accepted, the pace picks up. This is where organization matters most. We use a consistent Contract-to-Close checklist to track deadlines, coordinate the parties, and keep you informed.

### *Immediately After Acceptance*

In the first few days, we focus on clean setup—so the rest of the transaction runs smoothly.

- Confirm the contract is complete: signatures, dates, initials, and any addenda.
- Share a simple deadline summary with you (what's due and when).
- Coordinate earnest money delivery (if applicable) and confirm receipt.
- Introduce the key parties (lender, title/closing, and other professionals as needed).
- Confirm your loan application timeline and required documents.
- Schedule inspections promptly so you don't run out of time.
- Confirm how and when the appraisal will be ordered.
- If the home has an HOA/condo association, request key documents early.

### *Your Due Diligence Window (Inspections and Investigation)*

Due diligence is your opportunity to learn what you're buying. Inspections don't "pass" or "fail" a home—they help you make an informed decision.

Common due diligence items may include:

- General home inspection (recommended for most purchases).
- Specialty inspections if indicated (roof, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, sewer/septic, pests, radon, etc.).
- Review of seller disclosures and any prior repair documentation.
- HOA/condo document review (rules, budgets, reserves, restrictions, special assessments).
- Survey or boundary review if needed for fences, additions, or land questions.

After inspections, we'll help you decide the next step: proceed as-is, negotiate repairs/credits, or (if allowed) terminate based on contract terms. We'll keep the tone professional and the requests reasonable and well-documented.

## ***Appraisal & Loan Approval***

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If you're financing, the lender will typically order an appraisal. The appraisal is primarily for the lender—it's their check that the home supports the loan amount.

- If the appraisal comes in lower than expected, options may include:
- Renegotiate price or terms (if the contract and situation allow).
- Bring additional funds to closing (if you choose and it fits your budget).
- Challenge the appraisal with better comparable data (where appropriate).
- Terminate if allowed by the contract and timelines.

## ***Title, Survey, and "Clean Transfer"***

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A big part of closing is ensuring you receive clear ownership. A title search helps identify issues like liens or ownership questions. A survey (when needed) helps confirm boundaries and improvements.

## ***Two Weeks Before Closing***

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We confirm that the transaction is on track and tighten up the details.

- Check progress with the lender and title/closing team.
- Confirm final closing date, time, and location.
- Confirm any remaining lender conditions or documentation needs.
- Make sure contract obligations are being met (repairs, receipts, access, etc.).

## ***One Week Before Closing***

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This is when we aim to eliminate last-minute surprises.

- Schedule and complete the final walk-through (typically close to closing).
- Confirm the closing appointment details and what you need to bring (ID, certified funds if required).
- Plan utilities: start/transfer service and set up internet if needed.
- Review any final instructions and confirm possession timing.
- Wire fraud safety: verify instructions by phone using known contact information (never rely on emailed changes).



# Closing Day



## WHAT TO EXPECT:

Closing is usually straightforward when we do the earlier steps well. You'll sign the final documents, funds will be handled through the closing process, and ownership will transfer. We'll make sure you understand what you're signing and what happens next.

### *Typical Closing Day Checklist*

1. Bring a valid ID for all signers.
2. Know your required funds and how they will be delivered (your closing team will explain).
3. Confirm possession timing (when you receive keys).
4. Ask questions—this is your purchase and you deserve clarity.

## AFTER CLOSING: MOVE-IN, SUPPORT, AND “CLIENT FOR LIFE” CARE:

Our relationship doesn't end at closing. We want you to feel supported as you settle in.

### *After Closing, We Typically Help With*

1. A quick check-in within the first week to ensure everything is going smoothly.
2. Vendor recommendations (handyperson, HVAC, plumber, electrician, cleaners, etc.).
3. Help understanding important documents you received at closing.
4. A simple market update plan so you can track your home value over time.
5. Long-term follow-up and value-add check-ins (you're not just a transaction to us).



# Frequently Asked Questions

YOU MAY BE WONDERING ABOUT SOME THINGS

- How long does it take to buy a home?***  
It varies. Some buyers find a home quickly and close within a few weeks. Others take longer to find the right fit. Once you are under contract, the closing timeline depends on the contract terms, financing type, and inspection/appraisal timing.
- Do I need to be pre-approved before I tour homes?***  
You can tour without a pre-approval, but you'll have stronger options—and move faster—when you have financing clarified. In competitive markets, a pre-approval is often essential before making an offer.
- What if I find issues during inspection?***  
Most homes have issues. The key is understanding severity, cost, and risk. We'll help you decide whether to proceed as-is, request repairs or credits, or (if allowed) terminate within your due diligence rights.
- Can I back out after my offer is accepted***  
That depends on the contract and your deadlines. Many contracts include contingencies that allow termination within certain timeframes. We will explain your options clearly and help you make a confident decision.
- How do we decide what to offer?***  
We combine comparable sales data, your priorities, current market pace, and the home's condition/functionality to recommend a strategy. Ultimately, you choose what you're comfortable paying.
- What is earnest money?***  
Earnest money is a deposit that shows good faith. It is typically applied to your purchase at closing. Whether it is refundable depends on the contract terms and timelines.
- Should I buy a home warranty?***  
A home warranty can be helpful in some cases, especially for older systems, but it's not a substitute for inspection. We'll talk through pros/cons and what is covered.
- What about wire fraud?***  
Wire fraud is real and increasing. Always verify wiring instructions by calling a trusted number you already have. Never rely on last-minute emailed changes.



# KEY TERMS

## PLAIN LANGUAGE

### COMPARABLE MARKET ANALYSIS

A PROFESSIONAL OPINION OF VALUE BASED ON COMPARABLE SALES AND A PROPERTY'S FEATURES AND CONDITION

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### CONTINGENCY

A CONDITION THAT MUST BE MET FOR THE CONTRACT TO CONTINUE (EXAMPLES: FINANCING, INSPECTION).

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### DUE DILIGENCE

YOUR INVESTIGATION PERIOD—INSPECTIONS, DOCUMENT REVIEW, AND VERIFICATION.

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### EARNEST MONEY

A DEPOSIT THAT SHOWS GOOD FAITH AND IS CREDITED TOWARD YOUR PURCHASE AT CLOSING.

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### APPRAISAL

AN OPINION OF VALUE ORDERED BY THE LENDER TO HELP CONFIRM THE LOAN AMOUNT IS SUPPORTED.

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### TITLE

THE LEGAL OWNERSHIP RECORD. THE TITLE PROCESS HELPS ENSURE OWNERSHIP CAN TRANSFER CLEANLY.

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### FINAL WALK – THROUGH

A LAST CHECK OF THE HOME'S CONDITION BEFORE CLOSING (OFTEN CLOSE TO CLOSING DAY).

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### POSSESSION

WHEN YOU GET THE KEYS AND THE LEGAL RIGHT TO OCCUPY THE HOME.

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