

10

things to watch for when buying a house



1. Recognize a roof in need of repair

Before you ever set foot inside, check out what's happening on top. Does the roof look relatively new, or is it worn or caving in? If there are problems with the roof, it could end up costing you in higher insurance rates or outright replacement.

2. Don't judge a room by its paint job

When you step inside your prospective abode, focus on the structural stuff—windows, insulation, electrical wiring, the condition of the walls and foundation—and tune out the aesthetics like paint and decor.



3. Take its temperature

Heating and cooling systems are expensive to fix and replace, and inefficient ones can eat away at your utility bills. Make sure the furnace is up to date and in good repair.

4. Decide on your deal breakers

Think about the purpose of your home and the requirements for your lifestyle. Make a list of must-haves and prioritize the nice-to-haves to help you in your decision.



5. Plumbing: What lies beneath

When you're poking around a new kitchen, don't stop at eye level—get underneath the sink and examine those pipes. Check for leaks, water damage, and mold.

6. Check out the land

Is the house in an area prone to flooding or wildfires? Is the driveway shared with another property? If there are fences, have they been built and positioned properly? How's the neighborhood? Don't ignore the home's surroundings.



7. Smell the roses (and more)

Do you smell sewage, gas, or anything equally unpleasant? You may want to ask a plumbing company to send a camera through the pipes to detect any breaks or blockages, especially in an older home. Also worth noting: pet odors, cigarettes, and mildew.

8. Invest in a well-insulated house

Above all else, your home should be comfortable. Check the attic, water pipes, and heating ducts to make sure they're properly insulated. This can reduce heating and cooling costs and keep you comfortable in summer and winter. Double-paned windows can also save you money down the road. Plus, they help soundproof your place from outside noise.



9. Get your hands on everything

Literally. Turn on every faucet and light switch, open every window and door, flush the toilets, even taste the water.

10. Have a home inspection done

Enlist a professional to ensure the foundation is solid and the wiring is up to code. Home inspectors can even check for lead paint and wood-eating pests. Almost every house has a defect, but it's best to know before you buy so you can negotiate your price and prepare for any necessary repair costs that may arise.



BONUS TIP!

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