Lisa Real Estate
SOUTH FLORIDA

Your free guide to buying in South Florida

Buyer's Guide

A clear, step-by-step guide to buying a home in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

Questions? Talk to Lisa.

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Serving Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties

Welcome

Buying a Home in South Florida

Whether it is your first home, a move up, a seasonal residence or a relocation, buying in South Florida comes with its own considerations — from flood zones and insurance to condo associations. This guide walks you through each step so you know what to expect, and where Lisa can help.

The buying process at a glance

01

Consultation

We talk through your goals, timeline, budget and the lifestyle you want — beach, golf, schools, commute, condo or single-family. No pressure and no obligation.

02

Get pre-approved

A lender reviews your income, credit and assets and tells you how much you can borrow. A pre-approval letter makes your offer stronger and keeps your search focused.

03

Search and tour homes

Lisa sets up listing alerts around your must-haves, arranges private showings (in person or by video) and shares local insight on each neighborhood.

04

Make an offer

We review recent comparable sales and agree on price, deposit, financing terms, inspection period and closing date before submitting a strong, clean offer.

05

Inspections and due diligence

During the inspection period you have the home inspected, review insurance quotes, HOA or condo documents and the flood zone, and decide how to proceed.

06

Appraisal and loan approval

Your lender orders an appraisal and finalizes your loan. Respond quickly to any document requests to keep things on schedule.

07

Final walkthrough and closing

You confirm the home is in the agreed condition, sign your documents with the title company or closing attorney, and receive the keys.

Your budget: more than the price

When planning what you can afford, look beyond the purchase price and the mortgage payment:

- **Down payment** — depends on your loan type; your lender will confirm the minimum.
- **Deposit (earnest money)** — paid shortly after your offer is accepted and held in escrow; it is credited toward your purchase at closing.
- **Closing costs** — can include lender fees, title insurance, recording fees, Florida taxes on the mortgage, prepaid interest and escrow for taxes and insurance. Who pays which title costs varies by county.
- **Inspections** — general home inspection, plus four-point and wind mitigation inspections that insurers often request, and others if needed (termite, pool, sewer, roof).
- **Homeowner's insurance** — get quotes early. Roof age, wind mitigation features and location can make a big difference.
- **Flood insurance** — may be required by your lender in certain flood zones, and is worth considering even where it is not.
- **HOA / condo fees** — plus any special assessments that are approved or under discussion.
- **Property taxes** — based on the new assessed value after you buy, not necessarily what the seller pays now.

South Florida things to know

Flood zones and elevation

Check the property's flood zone and ask whether an elevation certificate is available. Both affect flood insurance cost and whether it is required.

Condos and HOAs

Ask for the association's budget, reserves, rules (rentals, pets, parking, renovations), meeting minutes and any recent structural or milestone inspections. Many associations also require an application and approval before closing — build that into your timeline.

Insurance first

Insurance availability and cost can vary widely. Getting quotes during your inspection period helps avoid surprises late in the process.

Wire fraud

Always confirm wiring instructions by phone with your title company or attorney using a number you know is genuine. Never rely on wiring instructions received only by email.

Buyer checklist

- [ ] Book your consultation with Lisa
- [ ] Speak with a lender and get pre-approved
- [ ] List your must-haves and nice-to-haves
- [ ] Gather pay stubs, tax returns and bank statements
- [ ] Tour homes and compare neighborhoods
- [ ] Make your offer and pay your deposit on time
- [ ] Schedule inspections and get insurance quotes
- [ ] Review HOA / condo documents and submit any application
- [ ] Lock your rate and finalize your loan
- [ ] Do the final walkthrough and close
- [ ] Apply for your Florida homestead exemption if this is your primary residence (deadline: March 1)

Questions buyers often ask

How long does it take to buy a home? Once under contract, many purchases close in roughly 30–45 days with a mortgage, and faster with cash. The search itself depends on the market and your criteria.

Do I pay for a buyer's agent? How your agent is paid is agreed in writing before you tour homes. Lisa will explain the options clearly at your consultation.

Can I buy from out of state? Yes. Video tours, electronic signatures and remote closings make it possible to buy while you are still relocating.

Ready to start your search?

Book a free, no-obligation consultation and Lisa will help you plan your next move in South Florida.

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This guide is for general information only and is not legal, tax, insurance or financial advice. Customs, costs and timelines vary by county, property and contract. Please consult the appropriate professionals about your situation. Office: 5550 Glades Road, Suite 101, Boca Raton, FL 33431.