

Touring an Open House Like a Pro

What to Look For, What to Ask and What to Ignore

Open houses can be exciting — you're inside someone's home, imagining your life there. But behind the fresh cookies and scented candles is a serious opportunity: the chance to evaluate a property up close. A smart buyer uses open houses to gather clues, spot red flags and ask the right questions.

PAY ATTENTION TO MORE THAN STAGING

It's easy to be distracted by decor, but your focus should be on the structure and layout. Look beyond fresh paint or trendy furniture and assess things like:

- Floor plan and natural light
- Closet and storage space
- Condition of floors, windows and trim
- Signs of water damage or poor repairs

Open and close cabinets, test doors and peek behind curtains — politely, of course. Staging can mask flaws, so be thorough but respectful.

Listen while you walk through. Do you hear street noise? Barking dogs? A loud HVAC system? These are details you can't catch online.

Ask about recent updates and who did the work. Were

permits pulled? Was the roof or HVAC system replaced? If the listing mentions upgrades, find out what exactly was done — and when.

Also ask about the age of major systems, utility costs, HOA rules (if applicable) and how long the home has been

on the market. An experienced agent hosting the open house should have answers or be willing to follow up.

TAKE NOTES AND PHOTOS

You may see several homes in a single weekend. Use your

phone to jot down notes or snap photos — just ask first. Document what you liked and didn't like so you can compare later with a clear head.

Finally, take a look around the neighborhood. Are the yards well kept? Is there street parking? Does the area feel

safe and quiet?

With the right mindset, an open house becomes more than a walk-through — it's a valuable research trip. Keep your eyes open, your questions ready and your decision-making grounded in what really matters.



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REAL ESTATE 101



HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

Don’t Go Just to Look — Go to Learn

Use open houses to gather useful information, even if the home isn’t perfect. You can learn about the neighborhood, market trends and how homes are priced and presented.

Open House: An open house is a scheduled time when a home for sale is available for the public to tour without an appointment. It allows potential buyers to view the property in person and ask questions.

AD SPACE