



Your Move-in Playbook

A simple, honest guide to finding and renting your first apartment.
Written for students and young professionals moving to a new city.

By Homeie | homeie.in

We put this together from real conversations with people who recently went through this process. Everything here comes from their experiences and the stuff they wished someone had told them earlier.

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Before You Start Looking

Most people jump straight to scrolling through listings. That is the wrong first step. Before you open any app, get these three things sorted: your timeline, your real budget, and what you will not compromise on.

Timeline

Start looking at least 3-4 weeks before your move-in date. If you are relocating from another city, plan a dedicated trip just for apartment hunting. Trying to do this over weekends while juggling work or college does not go well.

The real budget math

Your rent is not your cost. Here is what the move-in actually looks like:

Expense	Typical range
Security deposit	1-2 months rent
First month rent	1 month
Brokerage (if any)	15 days - 1 month rent
Society maintenance	Rs 2,000-8,000/month
Electricity + water	Rs 1,500-6,000/month
Wi-Fi setup	Rs 1,000-1,500 one-time

If your rent is Rs 20,000, your actual move-in cost is closer to Rs 70,000-80,000. Most people do not plan for this. Factor it in early so it does not catch you off guard.

Always get a receipt for your security deposit. Pay via bank transfer or UPI, never cash without a paper trail. This is the single most important thing to protect yourself.

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Picking the Right Area

Choosing the wrong neighbourhood is probably the most expensive mistake you can make. Breaking a lease early usually means losing your deposit. So spend time on this step.



One rule that works everywhere: live within 20-30 minutes of your office or campus. Rush hour traffic in most Indian cities can turn a 5 km drive into a 40 minute ordeal. That extra rent for a closer place saves you real hours every week.

Questions to answer before you pick

- Where is my office or campus? (Pin it on Google Maps first. Everything else follows from this.)
- Do I need public transport access? (If you do not have a vehicle, this is non-negotiable.)
- Do I cook or eat out mostly? (Some areas have way more food options than others.)
- What is my monthly budget including everything, not just rent?

Check Google Maps commute times at the exact time you would commute. A Sunday evening search and a Monday 9 AM search will show you completely different numbers.

03

How Renting Actually Works

The process is roughly the same in most Indian cities. Here is what to expect, without the sugarcoating.

1. You search online

NoBroker, MagicBricks, 99acres, Housing.com. Filter for owner listings where possible. Expect 30-40% of listings to be outdated or misleading. This is normal.

2. You shortlist and visit

Never say yes without visiting. Photos lie. Visit during the day, check the area at night too if you can. See at least 4-5 places before deciding.

3. You negotiate

Almost everything is negotiable: rent, deposit, maintenance, furnishing, lock-in period. The listed price is usually 10-15% higher than what they will accept.

4. You sign the agreement

Get it on proper stamp paper. Read every clause. Do not let anyone rush you. This document is the only thing protecting your money.

5. You move in

Take photos and videos of everything on day one. Every scratch, every stain. This is your proof when it is time to get your deposit back.

From Homeie: This is exactly the process Homeie is trying to fix. We verify apartments in person, give you real data about every unit, and handle the coordination end to end. No broker games.
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The Visit Checklist

You are about to commit a significant chunk of your salary for the next 11-12 months. Spend 20 minutes going through these before saying yes.

- **Water:** Turn on taps in kitchen and bathroom. Ask about supply timings and backup during summer.
- **Power:** Ask if there is generator backup, what it covers, and what it costs per unit.
- **Doors and windows:** Open and close every single one. Check all locks.
- **Walls and ceiling:** Look for cracks, water stains (leakage from above), and paint peeling.
- **Electrical:** Test switches and sockets. Bring your phone charger and plug it in.
- **Plumbing:** Flush toilets. Check under sinks for leaks.
- **Phone signal:** Check reception in every room. Some buildings kill your signal.
- **Lift and parking:** How many lifts work? Is parking covered? Is there a dedicated spot?
- **Security:** Guards, CCTV, visitor process. Talk to the guard, not the landlord, for honest answers.
- **Noise:** Stand quietly for a minute. Traffic? Construction? Nearby temples or mosques?
- **Ventilation:** Open windows. Is there cross-ventilation? This matters a lot in summer.
- **Nearby essentials:** Grocery store, pharmacy, ATM within walking distance?

Visit between 7-9 AM on a weekday. That is when you see real water pressure, real traffic noise, and the real parking situation. Evening visits hide a lot of problems.

05

The Agreement and Red Flags

Most tenants sign agreements without reading them. Then they lose Rs 15,000 to "painting charges" at move-out. Read everything. Push back where it matters.

What to look for in the agreement

- **Lock-in period:** Usually 3-6 months. If you leave before this, you lose your deposit.
- **Rent escalation:** Negotiate to 5% annually. 10% sounds small but compounds fast.
- **Deposit refund:** Get a date in writing. "Within 30 days of move-out" is fair.
- **Repairs:** Minor ones are usually yours. Major ones (plumbing, electrical) should be the landlord's.
- **Notice period:** Should be mutual. If they can ask you to leave in 1 month, you should be able to leave in 1 month too.



- **Painting at move-out:** Try to negotiate this out or cap the amount.

Things that should make you walk away

- "Pay token money before visiting." Legitimate landlords never ask for money before you see the place.
- Listings that look too good to be true. They are bait to get your number.
- "I am the owner" but they cannot show you a bill or document with their name.
- "Someone else is seeing it tomorrow, decide now." Classic pressure move.
- Cash-only deposit with no receipt.
- No proper agreement, just a verbal deal.

Heads up: Never transfer deposit money to a broker. Always pay the landlord directly via bank transfer or UPI. If they will not share the owner's account details, do not proceed.

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Move-in Day and Monthly Costs

Day one essentials

- Take a video walkthrough of the entire flat. Every room, every wall. Timestamp it.
- Photograph any existing damage and send it to your landlord on WhatsApp immediately.
- Note down all meter readings: electricity, water, gas. Photo each one.
- Test every appliance that came with the flat: AC, geyser, washing machine.
- Get Wi-Fi booked. Installation usually takes 2-3 days.
- Complete police verification. Your landlord should initiate this.
- Join the society WhatsApp group. This is where you find electricians, maids, plumber contacts, everything.

What your monthly costs actually look like

Beyond rent, expect to spend an additional Rs 5,000-15,000 per month on electricity, maintenance, water, Wi-Fi, and cooking gas. In summer months, electricity alone can be Rs 4,000-8,000 if you are running ACs. The apartment that costs Rs 20,000 in rent really costs Rs 27,000-35,000 when you add everything up.

Ask the previous tenant what their average electricity and maintenance bills were. Landlords always understate this. Get the real number before you commit.



Rent, without the chaos.

Homeie is a verified rental platform where every apartment is visited in person and evaluated honestly. No middlemen, no fake listings.

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*This guide is free to share. If it helped you,
send it to someone who is also moving. That is the best compliment.*