

How to Buy Your Dream Luxury Home in Miami

Buy your dream luxury home in Miami in only 45 days



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Introduction

Buying a home is an important decision. There are several factors you want to consider before buying a property.

Of course, this is even more important if you are a foreign national looking to buy a house in a foreign country.

However, keep in mind that thousands of foreigners buy properties in the USA every year. With the right kind of assistance, you can easily buy the home of your dreams in Miami.

We, at buyhouseinusa.net, understand the concerns that can arise because of it and that is why we are committed to ensure a smooth and simple process on your property buying experience by offering top-level customer support.

In order to help you, we have created a few tools for you to use:

- The guide that you are reading right now - This guide discusses the factors to consider before buying a home and what you should expect when applying for a loan
- Weekly home listings – Weekly listings of homes in the Florida area
- Personalized home listings – If you send us information about what you are looking for, we will create personalized listings exclusive to you

- Unlimited support – We are here to help you in any way we can. You can call us or email us and we will answer any questions you may have. We are committed to offer you help before, during and after the house buying process.

When you choose us, you will enjoy the following benefits:

- ✓ Help throughout the whole process
- ✓ Advice from professionals who know the real estate and mortgage market
- ✓ Wide selection of homes based on your preferences
- ✓ Different types of home loans

Please keep in mind that we are here to help you in any way we can.

Is This a Good Time to Buy a Home in Miami?

This is one of the most common questions we get everyday. The short answer is YES. This is so for several reasons.

First, home prices in the USA are the lowest we have seen in over five years. In some instances (foreclosures, auctions, etc.) you can buy a home for half of what that same house was sold for three years ago.

Second, it seems like real estate prices have reach the bottom. Home prices are expected to start going up in 2.010. By buying a home now, you are positioning yourself to take advantage of this probable increase in price.

Third, there is a large number of houses for sale. The large supply allows buyers to choose from a large pool of homes. In addition, home sellers are motivated to sell and will be willing to negotiate with you a better selling price.

Fourth, the dollar is at low point when compared to the European euro. If you are a European, you'll find that your euro will go much farther when buying a property with \$US.

Finally, interest rates are at historic lows. Even though foreigners pay a higher rate than American citizens, a foreign national can still expect to get a loan with a rate as low as 6.75%. This is the lowest rate we have ever seen for foreign nationals.

The Real Estate Process

The process of buying a home in the United States is a simple process; a process that thousands of foreigners complete every year.

The typical process may take around thirty days. It depends on your ability to see different houses, choose the one you love, and securing the documentation to get the loan you'll need to buy the property.

The real estate process is a simple and enjoyable one. There are just but a few steps:

- 1- Decide what you want – Please look at “How to Choose a Home” for help on this.
- 2- Let a certified real estate agent know what your preferences are
- 3- Look at the listings that the real estate will prepare for you and decide which homes you would like to visit personally.
- 4- Visit the chosen properties with the real estate agent
- 5- If you find one that you love, we start the mortgage process. If you don't, we select more houses for you to look at, and we keep doing so until you are completely satisfied with the home you choose.

That's basically the whole real estate process. As usual, we'll be guiding you throughout the whole process.

How to Choose a Home

Before choosing a home, you should consider several factors to ensure that you choose the right type of home for your personal situation.

These are some of those factors you should consider.

First, set a realistic budget for the money you are willing to spend in your home. Keep in mind that there are homes for every type of budget. Please, also consider other fees and expenses involved with buying a home in the USA. You'll be able to see these fees in the section titled "Other Real Estate Expenses".

Second, you should consider whether you want a house or an apartment. If you are going to live in the home most of the year, you may want a house. However, if you just want a home with ocean views or you will use it for vacation, you may consider buying an apartment. This is so because there is usually better security in an apartment and it is easier to have an apartment with ocean views.

Third, think about where you would like to buy the property. The United States is a big country with many different types of climates and lifestyles. Florida and California are usually the preferred destination for foreigners because of the weather and the quality of life provided.

Please see our "About Miami" and "About Florida" sections to find out more about Miami and the state of Florida.

Another factor you want to consider is whether you are going to live all year long in the house. If this is so, you may want to find a home near good public schools where your children can get a good education paid by your real estate taxes.

You also want to consider how big you want the house to be and how many bedrooms and bathrooms you want it to have. Please keep in mind that houses in the USA are usually bigger than the ones found in Europe and Latin America. For example, an average two bedroom, two bathroom in the USA is about 100 square meters.

Also, you want to consider your life style and how it can influence your preferences. For example, if you love the ocean, it makes sense for you to live by a beach. If you like playing golf, a golfing community may be your best choice. If you are married with children, you may desire a quite neighborhood. However, if you are single, you may prefer somewhere close to night clubs.

Finally, you want to consider whether you will be using the home or you will be renting it out. If you are buying it as an investment, you may want to choose a property that has already some tenants on it or in a place where it would be easily rented out.

By taking some time to think about these factors, you will ensure that you buy the type of home that will be the perfect fit for your preferences and lifestyle.

How to Choose a Realtor

Choosing the right real estate agent can make a big difference in how successful you are in finding the right property for you. There are some things you want to look for in your search for a realtor.

First, look for a realtor who has several years of experience in the market where you are looking for the house. It is important that the realtor has a deep knowledge of the areas where you are looking for a house because it helps the realtor find the right property for you.

Also, make sure the realtor is used to working with foreigners. Even if the process is basically the same than for Americans, it is always good to secure the help of someone who knows the biggest concerns of people coming from a different country. A good real estate agent can be the key in helping you to get to know the area better.

In addition, make sure that the realtor is fully licensed and insured. As a matter of fact, it's against the law in the USA for a third party (anyone other than the seller) to show you a home unless this person has a license to do so. This is important because a licensed real estate agent guarantees you knowledge of local laws.

Finally, you may want to ask for references from past clients. By doing so, you may get a good idea of how other people felt about working with that particular real estate agent.

At buyhouseinusa.net, we make sure that all of the agents in our network fulfill these requirements.

About Miami

Miami is widely known as “The Magical City” or “The Door to the Americas” because of its wonderful weather, “Art Deco” architecture, wide variety of neighborhoods, long beaches and people from all over the World.

You can find whatever you want in Miami:

- ✓ Restaurants of every kind
- ✓ Water activities during the whole year
- ✓ Sunny and endless beaches
- ✓ Lively night life
- ✓ Cultural events – opera, theatre, art festivals

In addition, buying a home in Miami has many different benefits such as:

- ✓ Many different areas to choose from (Miami Beach , Coral Gables , Brickell, Key Biscayne, etc.)
- ✓ There is good weather throughout the year
- ✓ Miami is a melting pot of many different cultures
- ✓ Miami ’s general appeal
- ✓ Many professional sport teams
- ✓ Cultural venues - opera, theater, art festivals
- ✓ Restaurants of every type of cuisine

Miami offers a perfect combination where you can work and/or vacation while enjoying all the activities available to you.

Because of the good weather, you can enjoy a wide variety of outdoor activities such as professional sports and water sports as well as enjoy its beautiful beaches, a unique lively night life, and many types of cuisines.

Miami is divided into many different neighborhoods. Each area has its own particular characteristics.

For example, South Beach/Miami Beach has a world-known night life, "Art Deco" buildings, an endless beach, art galleries and the most delicious restaurants.

However, if you prefer a more quiet life on the beach, you can still enjoy the numerous spas, yoga studios and beach boardwalk by choosing an apartment by the beach just north of South Beach.

Coconut Grove is another well-known area. It's a highly stylish area with many parks with views of the bay. It also has numerous restaurants and outdoor activities such as one of the largest art festivals in Florida.

Another beautiful place in Miami is the Coral Gables area. It's one of the most elegant and oldest areas with many boutique stores, walking boulevards and architecture with Spanish and Italian influence. It has several high quality malls as well as golf courses.

Coral Gables is known for its quiet streets and upscale houses. It is a very well located since it is very central. The University of Miami is located in Coral Gables.

Brickell is one of the most important areas in the city. This area is known as the financial center for Latin America because of the many Latin banks represented in this neighborhood.

In Brickell, you'll enjoy many beautiful and modern buildings with views of the bay and Key Biscayne. Brickell is next to downtown and close to everywhere else. It also offers numerous restaurants.

Key Biscayne is a beautiful island right outside of Brickell. Key Biscayne is home to some of the most important golf and tennis tournaments in the world. It has many high quality condos and single-family homes with spectacular ocean views. Richard Nixon used to have his winter home here.

Key Biscayne may be ideal for families with younger children since it offers the chance to enjoy the benefits of living in a small town while being just minutes from downtown Miami.

Because of its Geographic situation, Miami is a key point for American, and European and Latin America. Miami's airport is one of the biggest in the USA and offers frequent flies to many different destinations.

The city of Miami also has a maritime port with cruises leaving daily to the Caribbean. In reality, Miami is also known as "The Cruise Capital of the World."

About Florida

Florida is the top preferred destination for Europeans and Latin Americans. This is so because of its warm climate, proximity to Europe and Latin America and the large offer of activities available to you.

Depending on your preferences, you may choose one area over another. For example, the golf coast is known for its quiet lifestyle, and cheaper real estate prices.

The Atlantic coast also offers a lot of variety. Even though Miami is the obvious choice for most people, there are many other areas that may interest you. For example, the Boca Raton and West Palm areas offer upscale living while enjoy the wonderful South Florida weather.

Introduction to Mortgages

Obtaining a mortgage in the USA for a U.S. citizen or foreign national is a relatively simple process as it is shown by the thousands of mortgages that are closed every single year. As a matter of fact, all major lenders have mortgage programs specially designed for the luxury home market.

The mortgage process tends to take around 21 to 30 days from the day the required documentation is presented. Please see the "Required Documentation" section for more information about the needed forms. Of course, when you decide to do the process with us, we guide you through the whole process.

In addition, you can take advantage right now of some of the lowest rates ever seen.

The average loan for foreign nationals has these characteristics:

- ✓ 30% down payment
- ✓ Rates starting at around 6%

- ✓ Most loans are 5-year adjustable loans

It is important for you to realize that in general, there are no fixed-rate mortgages available to foreign nationals. The most common type of mortgage offered to foreigners is a 30 year amortized mortgage with the first three or five years having a fixed rate.

How to Choose a Mortgage Lender

Choosing the right mortgage lender can have an important impact on how your transaction goes. Choosing the wrong type of Mortgage Company can end up costing you thousands of dollars at the time of closing and what is worst, tenths of thousands over the lifetime of your loan.

Here are some of the things you may want to consider when choosing a mortgage lender:

1. A local Presence - The truth is that you can easily apply and get a home loan online without ever having to see anybody face-to-face. However, when dealing with one of the most important financial decisions you'll ever make, doesn't it just make sense to know that if a problem arises you'll be able to visit the people in person and solve whichever misunderstanding there is?

Also, by being able to get to the mortgage company, you'll be able to get a better feeling for how the lender works and how comfortable you feel working with the people involved in the lending institution.

Besides, a good local mortgage lender will be more concerned about its reputation and will worry about doing a good job for its customer since most of them operate from referrals.

2. Provides with Important Documentation Up Front - Will your loan adviser provide you with the "good faith estimate" of the loan costs up front? A good faith estimate lets you know what fees are charged. Be wary of any mortgage lender that refuses to give you a good faith estimate up front.

3. Offer Different Options – A good mortgage lender should provide you with different alternatives such as different duration and different down payments.

4. Access to Many Different Programs - Many mortgage companies have only access to one source of funds. If this is the case, your mortgage broker would have to "fit" your situation to a prefabricated loan program. When you look for the right mortgage lender, make sure that the brokers have access to many different types of sources with many different programs that can be tailored to your specific needs.

5. Great Quality Service – Visit the mortgage lender and get a feeling for how they work. If you have any doubts, you may want to ask for referrals.

If you want to do further research on your mortgage lender, you can always call the Better Business Bureau or The Chamber of Commerce of the city where the company is located. These organizations should be able to tell you if the mortgage lender is a company in good standing.

By using a reputable mortgage lender, you will know for sure what to expect the day of closing and will avoid an unexpected "surprises."

Letting us help you with your mortgage has many benefits:

- ✓ We guide you through the whole process
- ✓ Some of the lowest historic rates
- ✓ More than 20 years of experience helping foreign nationals

- ✓ Access to many different programs with the chance to personalized them to your personal circumstances
- ✓ We prepare the "mortgage package" so that the loan is immediately approved
- ✓ We provide you with the documentation that you will need

Real Estate Expenses

As in any other country, buying a home in the USA has some expenses that you may want to consider. These expenses are separated into two main categories: One time expenses (related to the purchase of the property) and ongoing expenses (related to the maintenance of the property)

One time expenses are usually the fees charged in buying the property and obtaining the loan. Some of these fees are appraisal fees, title fees, and local fees. Closing fees generally represent between 3 and 4% of the value of the home.

Ongoing expenses are the fees associated with owning a home. The most obvious expense is the mortgage. However, you need to be aware of a few other fees. For example, you need to pay real estate taxes. Real estate taxes vary by location but tend to be around 2% of the value of the property. This fee is charged annually.

In addition, you will have to pay a maintenance fee if you are living in an apartment. The cost of the maintenance fee has to do with the quality of the building, and the security and amenities provided. Maintenance fees also include the required insurance for the outside of the buildings.

If you buy a house, the mortgage company will usually request that you get insurance for the house's structure to protect themselves in case of a natural disaster.

It is important for you to know that banks required six months of reserves. These reserves should cover the mortgage payment, real estate taxes, insurance and maintenance.

Of course, we will offer you all of these costs upfront so that you can make a more educated decision.

The Mortgage Process

The process to get a home loan as a foreigner is similar to the one followed by an American citizen or resident.

The mortgage process has six basic steps:

1- We talk – in person or by phone – and we learn of your personal situation and what you want for your loan. We then show you a few different alternatives and you choose the one you prefer. Once you choose the best option, we help you fill out a mortgage application.

2- You send us the required documentation (see "Required Documentation")

3- We prepare a mortgage package to send to the underwriter – the individual who authorizes the loan. We'll ask for an appraisal of the property to find the value of the home. We also ask for a title report to ensure that you will get a clear title of the property without any legal issues.

4- We send the complete documentation to the underwriter who ensures that the information provide is accurate. The underwriter will normally contact your employer to verify employment and wages or your accountant –if you are a business owner.

5- Once the underwriter approves the loan, you will receive a letter with the precise conditions of the loan and the closing date. As soon as we receive the letter, we send the entire package to the title company so that it can organize the closing of the loan.

6- You sign on the loan and get the keys of your new home
Needless to say, we will assist you during the entire application process.

As mentioned earlier on, the whole process takes about 30 days once we receive the necessary documentation.

Obviously, we'll guide you through the whole process to ensure a smooth transaction.

Required Documentation

The following is a general listing of documents needed in order to request mortgage financing with our firm:

- 1.** Two (2) Personal Bank Reference letters with reference to the manner in which you handle your accounts. These letters must state the average balance of the accounts and the date the accounts were

opened. This applies if you maintain banking relationships with more than one banking institution. **(See Example attached)**

2. One (1) letter (if possible in English) stating your income in **US dollars** for the last two calendar years and for the current year. This letter must be signed by an Accountant licensed your country of origin. We need a photocopy of the license or the professional accreditation of the Accountant who signs the letter, his local address and telephone number. The letter must be written on said Accountant's letterhead. **(See Example attached)**
3. Proof of Business in Country of origin. (Example – Company Website, Yellow Pages in your country with business listing).
4. Proof of Address of current residence. (Example – Utility Bill, Telephone Bill).
5. Four (4) personal Credit reference letters. **(See Example attached)**
6. Personal Bank Statements for the most recent three months for all accounts—be sure to include all pages for all accounts. The funds to be used for the purchase must be deposited in a bank account that bears the name of the buyer.
7. You must provide Identification, as follows:

Your Situation:	Requirements:
Foreigner who does NOT live in USA	Visa and Passport
Foreigner working in	Work Visa and Driver's License

USA	
U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident	Passport, Resident Green Card and Driver's License

8. A legible copy of the Purchase and Sale Agreement with all pages signed and copies of the cancelled checks for all deposits.

9. A check for the sum of \$1,750.00.00 payable to Global Bankers Trust. This deposit will be used to cover the first inspections, appraisals, International Credit Report, Translations, etc. A credit for the balance will be effected at closing

Example - Bank Reference

Note: You must send two separate references

Date: _____

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

We are pleased to advise you that Mr. /Mrs. _____ has maintained a personal relationship with this company since _____. Mr. Mrs. _____ maintains the following accounts with our institution:

<u>Type of Acct</u>	<u>Current Balance</u>	<u>Average Balance for 90 days</u>
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These accounts are presently, and have always been, maintained in a satisfactory manner.

If you should need any additional information, please contact the undersigned.

Cordially,
Signature _____
Name
Title
Address
Telephone
Fax

*** Important - This letter must be on the company's letterhead and refer to a banking relationship of at least 12 months duration ***

Example - Income Letter

Date: _____

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This letter is provided on behalf of Mr. / Mrs. _____ and confirms that Mr. / Mrs. _____ is the (title) of (Name of Business) and owns (percentage of business) since _____.

This companies business is derived from _____. Mr. / Mrs. _____ has/have been working in the industry since _____. I have been the accountant for Mr. /Mrs. _____ and can attest to the following:

Yearly Personal Income for 2007 - \$ _____ (in US Dollars)

Yearly Personal Income for 2008 - \$ _____ (in US Dollars)

ESTIMATED INCOME UP TO CURRENT MONTH IN 2009: _\$ _____ (IN US DOLLARS _____)

I also confirm that (Name of Business) is in the (Nature of Business) and is presently in good standing.

I would also advise you that Mr. /Mrs. _____ may use the funds in the company accounts without affecting the normal daily financial operations of the company.

If you require any additional information, please call our offices at your convenience.

Cordially,

Signature
Name
Title, Address, Telephone and Fax

***** Important - This letter must be written on the company letterhead
or on the accountant's letterhead *****

Example - Commercial Reference Letter

Date: _____

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

We are pleased to advise you that Mr. /Mrs. _____ has been a client of this institution since _____(date).

Mr. / Mrs. _____ has an account with our company for the purpose of (type of account: i.e. credit card, installment loan, personal, ect.) which has / had a monthly payment of _____ and a high credit balance _____. This account is presently handled in a satisfactory manner.

If I may be of assistance or for any further information or clarifications, please contact the undersigned.

Cordially,
Signature _____
Name
Title
Address
Telephone
Fax

*** Important - This letter must be written in company letterhead ***

Conclusion

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for given us the chance to help you in the process of buying a home in the United States and for taking the time to read this guide.

Please remember that we help dozens of people just like you every single month, and are committed to assist you in every way we can.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please call us at +1(786) 361-5368, or email us at luxuryhomesinmiami@gmail.com .

You can really own your American dream home in 45 days. . . Let's us show you how.