

Housing Guide



The Oracle

2022

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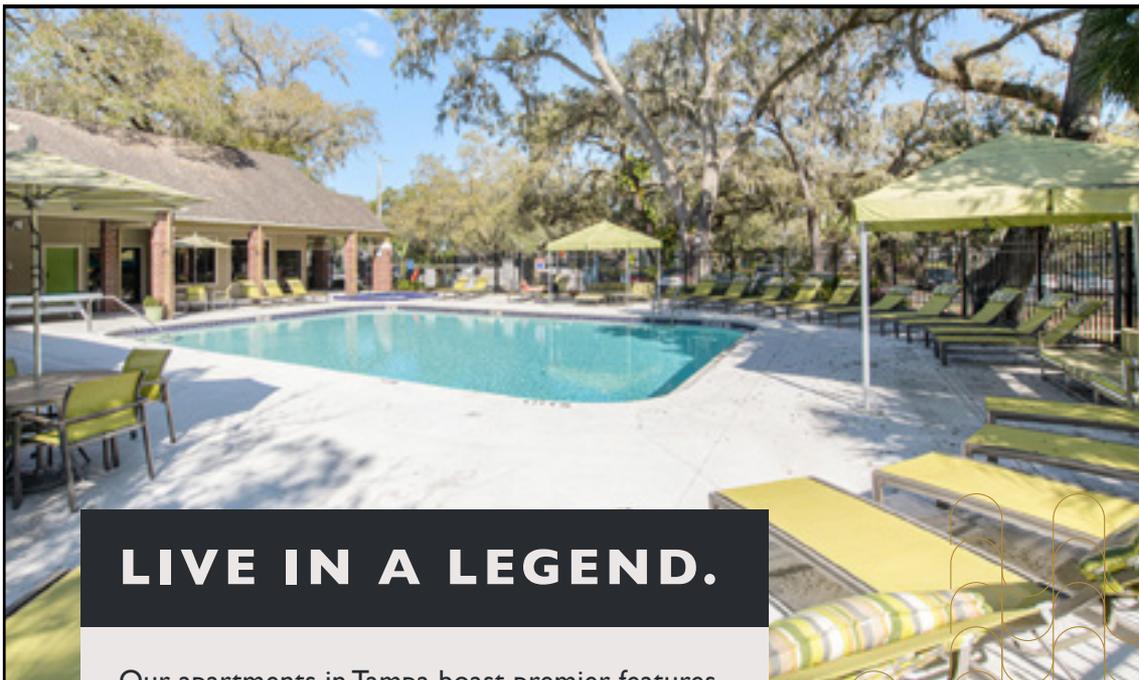
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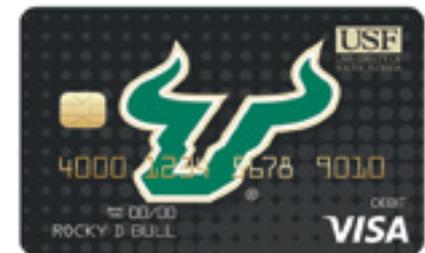
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How to find the best off-campus housing

By Kylie Exline

U L O O P

One of the best feelings is moving out of your tiny dorm room into an apartment of your own. Now, it is not going to be five-star living, but it is definitely better than sneaking in at 3 a.m. attempting to not wake your cranky roommate who is sound asleep 2 yards away from you.

A lot goes into finding your lovely abode. For one, you are sort of going to be living there for a minimum of 365 days so you should probably enjoy being there. Nothing is worse than dreading your time spent in bed.

To discover the best off-campus housing, continue to read below and make sure to follow said advice, or else you just may hate where you live and that is never good.

Do your research

If college has taught you anything, it has been to party and perform well in your classes. This means to do your research. Please, no plagiarizing here. If you want to find the best, then you must do your best.

This entails using Google to your advantage, phone books and actually calling the apartment complexes to find out about rates and such.

Research means knowing what is both right and wrong, such as if the billing is excessive or if pets are even allowed on the property. You never know when you will need a man's best friend. It is always worth finding that almost perfect apartment with your name written all over it. Or at least on the lease.

Ask around



Never sign a lease unprepared to ensure you're happy with your off-campus housing. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/ISTOCK

If you are really interested in finding the best of the best, then you must ask around. This includes, but is not limited to, friends, coworkers, professors and even random people.

Although you should not completely rely on their opinion, it is best to know something about the place and area as opposed to going into it blind. You can find out if the neighbors are mainly college aged, if there are obnoxious parties literally every night and if the management does their job. You would be surprised at how many do not.

Asking means receiving,

or something like that, so you should ask away. Basically, think of anything that may seem of importance to you and where you live. Are there washers and dryers in the unit, amenities, free parking? Someone should have an answer, and this way you can think about whether you would even want to move there.

Visit the area

If you are physically able to visit a potential apartment, then just do it. There are always tours and sometimes accepted walk-ins. Virtual tours are not always

truthful, and this way you can see the entire property and complex firsthand. And maybe even spot some cute neighbors.

To find the best off-campus housing, you can literally jump in your car or take the bus to local areas. You can check out what the apartment is near, if it is remotely close to campus, and if you can walk to work when the weather permits.

Some of the best reasons for living off campus is having more privacy, less rules and being able to hang out with friends after 9 p.m. if they happen to be the opposite sex. By visiting the area,

you can see if there are bars, a gym and maybe even better apartments near the one you are by.

It is not easy to locate a great area to live in and it happens to take some effort. That is why you should definitely do your research, which consists of finding out prices and vital adult things related to money and bills. You should also ask around because you never know what you might find out about an apartment complex. Lastly, visit the area if you have a chance because it will probably be better to view these things in person.

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How to freshen up your apartment for spring



A change of season doesn't only apply to the outdoors – try these six things to diversify your interior look as well. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/ISTOCK

By Elana Goodwin
U LOOP

If you're feeling winter's wrath right now, it may be hard to believe that spring will arrive — but it's actually right around the corner and closer than you think.

Of course, besides spring cleaning, there are other ways you can start prepping for spring and making your college apartment or house feel less wintery. Here are some tips on how to freshen up your home for spring.

1. Change up your decor

Even if your decor isn't particularly wintery, changing it will still help you freshen up your apartment or house for spring. Consider adding some lighter colored artwork or more floral and bright colored photographs to your living space to infuse it with a springlike feeling. If you've still got your Christmas tree and decorations up, take them down or repurpose them in

more non-holiday friendly ways.

2. Green-ify your home

A perfect way to freshen up your student rentals for spring is to bring spring into your home.

Buy yourself some plants, fresh flowers or a few types of herbs to brighten up and add some spring to your apartment or house. Not only will you get your home to look springy, but you'll also bring in the scents of spring — even if it still looks like winter outside.

Be sure to place plants by a window or somewhere they can get sunlight and water them as needed. After all, spring doesn't bring to mind dead plants.

3. Swap your bedding

You may not have more than one set of bedding in your apartment or house but investing in some new bedding for spring isn't too costly — especially if you've already got sheet sets to

match. Colorful, new bedding can really brighten up your room and mood and get you into the spring state of mind.

Your winter bedding — which may be a darker color, heavy or flannel — can be put away under your bed or somewhere in your closet to make way for your fresh spring comforter. Consider buying floral designs or other bright colors that make you think of spring and which will liven up your room for the season.

4. Bring in some new accessories

If you don't want to do an overhaul of your bedding or decor, you can still bring some spring awakening to your apartment or house by bringing in some new accessories. New brightly colored pillows or towels can bring some pop to your home and make it more cheerful and vibrant. You can also put away your heavier throw blankets and bring out lighter ones if you have

them, and add some other fun accents to liven up your rooms.

5. Move around your furniture

After living in one place for a while, sometimes it feels good to turn it on its head. You don't need to get all crazy and swap rooms with your roommate or put the living room in the kitchen, but rearranging some of the furniture in your room can give your place a face-lift and give you a fresh perspective.

Moving things around can also help you open up your living space so your rooms seem less crowded and more open. You may find that your desk is better suited to facing the window for more light or that your living room couch would be better against the wall at an angle to the TV. Whatever way you move around your furniture, you'll be getting into the spring mindset — and as long as you're moving things around, you could do a bit of spring cleaning, too.

6. Declutter your space

You'd be surprised how much airier, cleaner and more springy your apartment or home will feel when there's less clutter around the place. Your kitchen counters don't need to be littered with mail, bills and assorted books, as well as your kitchen appliances. Your cutting board and mixer don't need to be out all the time next to your microwave, toaster and coffee maker.

Organize and put away papers, kitchen items and bathroom toiletries so your counters and rooms seem less cluttered — it'll help you get a head start on your spring cleaning and make your home seem neater.

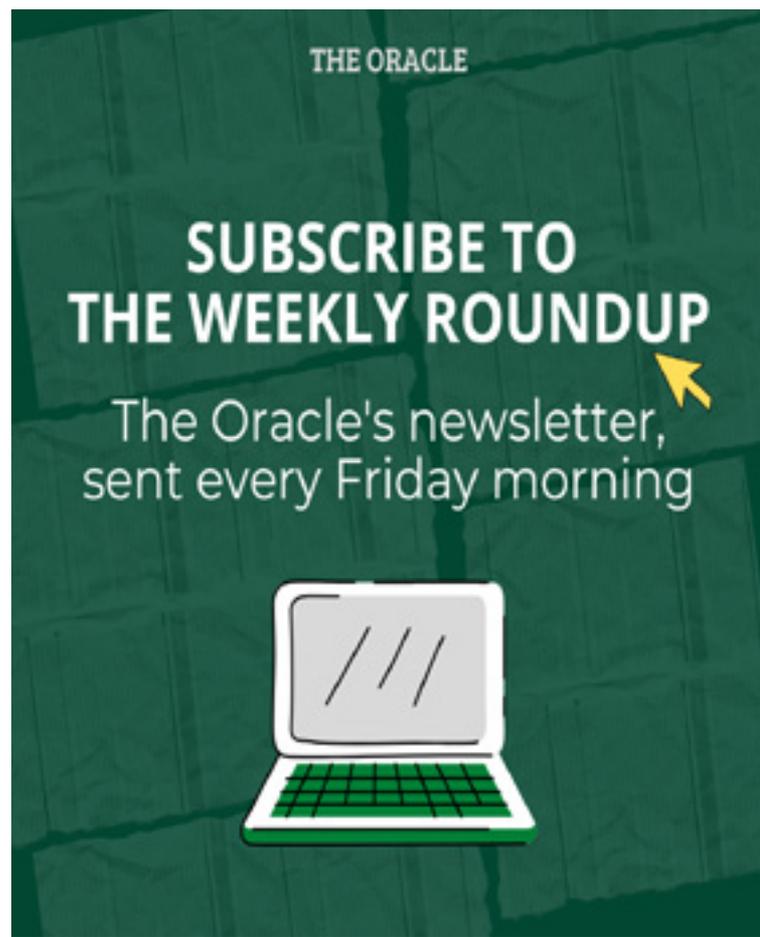
Use these six tips to start freshening up your college student apartments or houses for spring — because no winter lasts forever and it's never too early to start getting into a springy mood and mindset.



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Things to consider for your housing amenities priority list

By Francine Fluetsch
U LOOP

Living off campus can be really expensive.

In order to make sure your money will be worth it, you and your housemates should compile a list of priority amenities that you would be willing to pay a bit extra for if the place you are looking at contains these specific things.

You don't want to get too picky, as you will never find something that meets all of your needs and is still in your price range, but if an apartment or house hits a few of your wants, you can justify paying the price a little more.

Here are a few ideas to get you started about priority aspects that can bump up the value of a housing option.

Close to campus

This option will score high on your list especially if you don't have a car. Being close to campus means you can save money and easily walk to and from your place.

This is great for when you have early or late classes, because you won't have to get to a bus stop freakishly early or wait a long time after your class is out. You can simply walk or bike home.

Built-in washer and dryer

Consider going over your budget for a place that has a washer and dryer. Make sure to look this up carefully. Some places say they have a washer and dryer hook-up, which means you would have to buy your own machines.

Obviously that would be a lot of money, so picking a place that already has them would be your best bet. This will let you do

laundry during a busy day, or when you just want to have a lazy Sunday and don't want to go anywhere.

You won't have to worry about anyone stealing your clothes out of a community washer, and won't have to save up any quarters or stay at a Laundromat.

Assigned parking

If you have a car, assigned parking by your place can be another thing that would really come in handy. After a long day at school, the last thing you want to do is drive around aimlessly looking for a parking spot. Some places allow each car to have assigned parking, and then have some free for all guest parking,

which is really nice when you have family come visit or when you have to move in.

Your own room

Sharing space is something everyone hates. After you've had to endure it in the dorms, the last thing you want to do is share your space when you move off campus. Having your own room means you can have a big bed, have your own space to relax and freedom to live how you like in your own section of the house.

Even if your single rooms are small, it will just be you in there so it won't matter all that much. You will appreciate being able to go to sleep when you want, staying up doing homework as

late as you have to and having friends over when you want.

It also helps you get along better with who you have to live with, since you won't be on top of each other 24/7, so there are lots of positives to having your own room.

Dishwasher

This might be lower on your list, but it really can be a perk, especially if you are worried about splitting up the chores. A dishwasher can really save time and keep your space looking clean. Dishes pile up faster than you think without a dishwasher, especially if you live with multiple people. Having a dishwasher also means you have

a built-in disposal in your sink, which will really help you out.

When you don't have a disposal, you have to make sure nothing, and I mean nothing, falls down the sink, or else you have to scrape it out and it's nasty. A disposal will help you quickly take care of leftover food bits on your plate, and the dishwasher will do the rest of the work. The only thing you will have to fight over will be who has to unload it, and who has to buy more dishwasher liquid.

These are just a few ideas, but think about the things that you would love to have in a place, and narrow it down to one or two and consider that with the price of the place. It will really help you out in deciding.



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5 tips for coordinating housing essentials with roommates

By Christine Ascher
U LOOP

Moving into new housing requires a lot of planning and coordination. In addition to your own packing and organizing, you'll also have to purchase the necessary items for an apartment or a house along with your roommates.

When you're moving in with several people, it can sometimes be difficult to stay organized in terms of making sure you have everything you need. To stay on top of things and to make sure that you and your roommates get all of the essential items for your new living space, try out some of the following tips.

1. Start before you move in

Considering you'll probably have a lot to do already when moving into new housing, between packing and coordinating the move itself, it'll be better for both you and your roommates if you can start planning for and purchasing some of your housing essentials before your move-in date.

Reach out to your roommates a couple weeks before you move in to get the ball rolling. It's a good idea to start off by asking if any of your roommates already have certain items that you'll need, to avoid purchasing anything unnecessarily. Make a list of what you already have between you and your roommates, and share it with everyone so they know what still needs to be purchased.

2. Make a list

Once you've determined what housing essentials you already have, the best place to start figuring out what you still need is by making a list with



Follow these tips to ensure a smooth and easy transition to living with roommates. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/ISTOCK

your roommates. Try to think of everything that you'll need, such as silverware, cleaning supplies and larger items like a TV or vacuum. It's a good idea to divide your list up into sections to help you think of everything.

For instance, try to come up with all of the kitchen utensils that you want to purchase first, before you move on to cleaning supplies. If this is going to be your first time living in an apartment or house, rather than a dorm, ask your parents or some older students if they can think of any essentials that tend to be forgotten when moving into a new place; a silverware organizer or paper towel holder are some common examples. Once you have a list of everything you'll

need, you'll be able to check off the items as you go, ensuring that you don't forget anything.

3. Determine the items you can switch off buying

After you've created a list of all of the essentials that you and your roommates want to purchase, go through and take note of the items that you'll need to re-buy throughout the year, such as paper towels and dish soap.

Rather than splitting the cost of these items every time you buy them, it's easier if you and your roommates take turns purchasing them. If you can, divide these items up evenly between you and your roommates, then rotate who

buys what throughout the year. It can become hard to remember whose turn it is to buy certain items, so to keep things simple, find a place to write down who purchased what and who is responsible for replacing them next.

4. Divide up items based on cost

For items that only need to be purchased once, pay attention to the price. To avoid a potential source of conflict with your roommates, try to keep the amount that each person spends buying essentials relatively even.

Make sure everyone keeps their receipts when you shop for your apartment or house, so you

can go back later and check if you've spent an equal amount. It also helps if you go shopping together, so that you can check prices you shop and make sure they more or less even up before you leave the store.

5. Buy the items you'll want to keep

For some items, depending on your preferences and those of your roommates, you may want to purchase them on your own so you don't have to worry about dividing them up when you move out.

For instance, if you know that you'll want to keep the coffee maker that you bought for your apartment after you move out, you may be better off paying for it yourself right from the beginning, so there are no questions as to who it belongs to at the end of the year. This strategy works best if you and each of your roommates know that you'll want to keep certain items at the end of the school year, so everyone can buy something and share. Otherwise, you might end up with only one person buying a bunch of expensive items, and not being comfortable with everyone else using them.

Living in a house or an apartment will definitely require more supplies, utensils and other housing essentials than you would expect for a dorm, which will, in turn, require a lot of coordination between you and your roommates to make sure that you get everything you need. As long as you stay organized and everyone pitches in, you'll be off to a great start to the school year.



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The dos and don'ts of choosing college housing

By Brittany Hawes
U LOOP

When it comes to choosing college housing, there are many factors you need to consider before you make a final decision and sign the lease. You might think that as long as the price is OK and you get your own private bathroom, things will be fine. In some rare cases, this might turn out to be true. However, you could save yourself a lot of regrets and stress later in the semester by taking into consideration these other aspects when choosing college housing.

The price may be tempting and the offer of reduced rent for same-day signing might make you want to sign the lease right away, but hold off. Don't rush. Choosing college housing shouldn't be a decision made while you're in a hurry. Your decision will definitely have an effect on your college experience, so don't take it lightly.

So, when it comes to choosing college housing, what should you take into consideration to make sure you're moving into the housing that's right for you? Better yet, what are some things that you really shouldn't be thinking about when you're on the hunt for a new home?

The dos of choosing college housing

1. Think of how much you'll be able to spend on rent

The amount of money you have to spend on rent will narrow down your housing choices, so this should be one of the first things you consider when choosing college housing.

When you think of rent, it's important to not just think of how much you're going to have

to pay for the rent, but also what your other expenses during the semester will be. This will help you get a more realistic idea of how much money you'll have left that will be able to be used on your monthly rent payment.

Here are a few examples of things you might have to pay for during the semester: tuition, groceries, utilities, gas, pet expenses (if you own a pet) and health insurance.

Once you create a budget that reflects any potential expenses, you'll be able to see more clearly how much money you can put towards rent. You might be surprised to find that you can afford to stay closer to campus or get your own private balcony!

2. Distance from campus

How close do you want to be to campus? Some students prefer to be as close to campus as possible so they'll still feel "connected" to the school. Other students prefer the privacy and quiet that comes with living a bit farther away from campus.

Think about your mode of transportation. If you have a vehicle, living far from campus is a viable option for you. Without a car, getting to campus from a home that's over ten miles away will be difficult.

If you're the type of person who enjoys solitude and prefers silence when you're studying, choosing college housing that isn't close to campus will be ideal for you. You'll be spared the hoots and hollers of aspiring frat boys prowling the campus and girls who like to yell out your school's team name at the drop of a dime. But if you like to be where all the action is and be a short distance away from the school that you worked so hard to get to, then you should begin



Moving off campus can be filled with unknowns, so always ensure you do your research before you make a decision on where to live. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/ISTOCK

your housing search at places nearby campus.

Don't forget that housing closer to campus is going to be more expensive when compared to housing farther away.

The don'ts of choosing college housing

1. Make a hasty decision

Making a hasty decision usually equates to making a bad decision. Don't wait until the last minute to find good college housing. To spare themselves stress, students typically begin signing for their new place many months in advance of the move-in date. Beat the crowd of stragglers by giving yourself plenty of time to find a home that you're going to love living in. That way, you won't feel like you have to make

a decision every time you tour a house or apartment complex.

If you can't make it to your college's town that far in advance to begin looking at houses, you can start your search online instead. Sites like Uloop.com offer students listings of available college housing in all parts of the U.S. You can view pictures of the property, find out details, speak with the landlord and plan a tour for later, all online.

2. Go with the cheapest place you can find

Every college student wants to find ways to save money, but there are some things that you really shouldn't skimp on, and one of those things is your home. You'll be living in the home you choose for the next year or so, if things go according to plan.

You don't want to be tight-fisted with your money and wind up in a house that has all sorts of problems.

Instead, find college housing that's affordable and comfortable. It might take a lot of research and budgeting, but if you can find a home you love, it will be worth it.

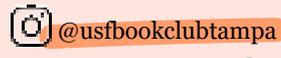
I do know how it is to not have much money to put towards rent every month and you might be in a situation where you have no other choice but to look for the cheapest option. If that cheapest option has health violations, is in a sketchy area, or is just too far from campus, you might have to consider cutting back on other expenses to afford a place where you'll feel safe, comfortable, and happy.

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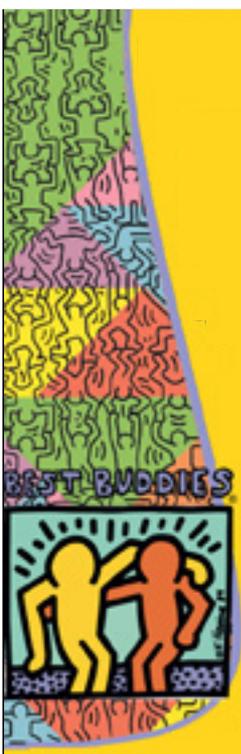


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