



10 things You Should Know About Berkeley Housing

Berkeley International Office



1. Do yourself a favor and look the areas up in Google Maps

If you don't drive, try to find a place with convenient public transportation. Knowing the distance to school helps you build an idea in gauging the housing budget, commute time, neighborhood safety, local grocery stores and restaurants.



2. Keep a move-in item list

Rates vary depending on whether or not a place comes furnished (with furniture). You may save money by picking an unfurnished place, but it is a good idea to add up the total costs of all the furniture you would need to buy if you were going to furnish it yourself and compare. You can always poke around on [Facebook Housing groups](#) where you could pick up more affordable items secondhand.



3. Find more information through Cal Rentals

Car Rentals is a one-stop rental resource for the UC Berkeley community. Their user-friendly and customizable search engine helps you find the perfect home, plus they confirm all listings, so you don't have to worry. Currently they offer two months free listing service for registered and newly admitted Cal students. Log in at: <https://housing.berkeley.edu/calrentals> for more info.



4. Looking with friends

There is not a lot of local housing with more than 2 or 3 bedrooms, but having a roommate or two helps reduce rent costs. Plus the area is very competitive and it can be hard to get a place. While having roommates is good for cost-savings, make sure to have a thorough discussion ahead of time about who's signing the lease, how you will split utility bills, and household chores to avoid conflict.



5. What to expect on your utility bills

Most students should expect to pay monthly bills for gas and electricity, wifi, and other utilities (property management fee, garbage, etc.), however, some landlords/agencies will cover water and garbage fees for you. Be sure to check what is included in your rent before signing a lease. The average amount varies depending on the seasons and the property; usually it should be around \$30-\$50/month and \$50-\$60/month in winter.



6. Visit local agencies

This is probably the most convenient way to find housing if you have a group of roommates already or want to secure a place right away. Agencies are professionals working with trusted properties. Although there are costs involved, it saves a lot of time. Check [Yelp.com](#) for reviews of local agencies so that you can compare.



7. Join Facebook housing groups

There are a few Facebook off-campus housing groups in which current tenants (usually Berkeley students) post ads to look for new roommates or seekers post a short statement about themselves and their housing needs. You can reach out to people to get an idea of rent rates in different areas. [UC Berkeley off-campus Facebook Housing Group Page](#)



8. Schedule a viewing with landlord/agent/tenant

Before you commit and pay a deposit, be sure to schedule a viewing of the place and conduct a walk-through. If you are unable to do so, ask a friend to do so in your place. Note any damages or lack of cleanliness. Confirm the state of the place before moving in with your landlord/agent in writing, and remember to take pictures.



9. Consider buying renter's insurance

This is strongly recommended. Renter's insurance protects a tenant's personal property in case of incidents like fire, theft, or vandalism.



10. Know tenant laws

You have several rights as a renter in Berkeley. For example, a landlord must have at least one of eleven legal options to evict you. Your landlord wanting to sell the property, not liking you, or wanting to get higher rent from another tenant are not sufficient reasons for eviction. Visit <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/rent/> or call (510)981-7368 for more information.