



Student Union
Ben-Gurion University



Guide to
*Apartment
Searching*

How do you search for an apartment?

Searching for an apartment can be exhausting... This guide will provide you with all the information needed for searching an apartment in the easiest and most useful way.

Where do you start?

Here are some of the main ways in which you can search for an apartment in Beer Sheva:

» Internet and Social Media

Lots of Facebook pages are devoted to students looking for an apartment. The Union's International Affairs Office has opened up a Facebook page named "Be'er Sheva Apartments/Roommates/Sublets" where landlords and other students may post their apartments / their need for one and all in English. Websites such as Yad2 can come in handy as well.

» Notice boards

Open your eyes! Throughout the summer, landlords advertise apartments on boards and even on the apartments facades themselves. We recommend taking a stroll and looking out for some treasures.

» Real estate agent

A real estate agent is a possibility, but an expensive one. Use this option only if all of the other possibilities have been exhausted. We recommend you to not give up and start searching for an apartment ahead of time.

Remember:

* The landlord is not only interested in money. Factors such as quiet/tidy/responsible roommates and a possibility to remain in the apartment for more than one year will interest them as well. Remember this when negotiating the deal.

* Ask questions! Is the furniture included in the monthly rent? What is the normal monthly rent in the area? Has the apartment been renovated? Who are the neighbors? How far is it from the University? Many factors may help you in the negotiation and lower the cost.

Accommodation Options in Beer Sheva

» Students' Dorms

The University offers approximately 1800 accommodations, while approximately 170 are reserved for married couples. The dormitories are located next to the campus in Dalet and Gimmel neighborhoods. The bedrooms are furnished and the kitchen is fully equipped with electrical appliances. It is possible to connect to a Wi-Fi network for a low-cost price. In addition, at the dormitories you will find various activities, a club, a mini-market, study rooms, computers and more. For further information check out the University's website -

<http://in.bgu.ac.il/Dekanat/en/Pages/dorms.aspx>

What should you check for in the apartment?

Furniture – Does the furniture belong to the landlord or to the previous tenants? Will the landlord pay for any missing furniture? (Try to convince him to do so)

» Pipeline

You should check for any recent leaks or explosion and signs of mold or humidity in the walls. It is also important to check the water pressure in the taps and toilets.

» Bills

Clarify with the previous tenants what the current bill average is – Water, electricity, gas and Arnona (Municipality tax)

» Boiler

It is very hot in Beer Sheva, and during the summer it is even boiling! Using a solar energy will save up electricity, even during the winter, so you better check the boiler's condition.

» Renovation

Is the landlord planning to renovate the apartment before you move in? Don't be shy and demand that the walls = be painted, the holes sealed and any other basic repair which will guarantee a pleasant apartment.

» Electricity

Check that there are sufficient electric outlets and that they are undamaged. You should also ask the previous tenants if there were any problems with the electricity in the past year.



» Bars

In ground / low floor apartments you should verify that all of the windows have bars.

» Noise

It can be a bummer to live in an apartment that is located on a busy street, especially during exam period. You should visit the apartment during rush hours and check the street's noise volume.

» Staircase

Even if you don't live in a luxury building, you should verify if there is light in the staircase and that the building committee is active and the building is cleaned on a regular basis.

» Neighbors

You should ask the previous tenants why are they leaving and if there were any problems with the neighbors. Usually, this kind of information won't be provided by the landlord.

» Proximity to Public Transportation

Some apartments are very close to a train/bus station or stop. You should check if the noise would be a nuisance (although they don't run late at night).

» Cellphone reception

A minor thing you can miss but a very important one! Take a tour in the apartment and verify that your cellphone has connection.



» The lease

The lease is a legal document which documents the agreement between the landlord and the tenant. It is very important to read it well and document any detail or agreement you have made, don't trust oral agreements. Standard leases can be found in the internet.

Important Issues

» Repairs

The landlord should be responsible to all the necessary repairs needed, as long as it wasn't made by an unreasonable use on your part. Let your landlord know about any malfunctions such as – A sewer clog / electricity / broken taps and more and agree on a time span to have it fixed.

» Payments

Notice that falling back on one payment or a returned check will not be a cause to cancel the lease. If this is part of the lease, add a reservation clause which requires the landlord to let you know if there are problems with an option to settle the debt.

» Guarantees

Anything related to a promissory note / Bank guarantee / open checks will be detailed further on. In some of the leases the landlord requires a deposit.



» Lease payment

It is customary to pay the lease with 12 postdated check spread through 12 months. The landlord will deposit the checks on the mentioned date. In some of the leases it is agreed between both sides that the landlord will deposit the checks every three months.

» Insurance

Usually, the landlord insures the apartment against any damage which may be caused from fire, flooding, etc. Usually, the insurance includes a third participant, which is used in cases where the damage is caused by the tenant. Not a lot of people know that the insurance company has the "subrogation right" which is the possibility to sue us, the tenants, because of the damage that has been caused to the apartment by us. It is recommended to issue an appendix to the insurance policy so that the policy will include the tenant or at least will cancel the "subrogation right".

» Changes

Any handwritten change on the lease form will be signed with the landlord and the tenant 's initials.

» Alternative tenant

Make sure that there is a possibility to find an alternative tenant in case one of the other tenants leave the apartment.

» Existing furniture

Mention the landlord's furniture in the lease.



» Lease extension

You should mention in the lease a clause which enables you to extend the lease for an extra year under the same conditions.

Promissory note, Bank guarantee and Open checks

The landlord needs legal and legitimate ways to insure that one day you will not leave the apartment after having completely destroyed it. Usually, one of the following insurances are needed:

» Deposit

A cash deposit which should be mentioned in the lease. Don't forget to collect it at the end of the lease.

» Promissory note

The recommended method. The note is actually your commitment to pay a fixed sum in case you have breached the lease. The landlord will hold on to the lease and may use it in court, where you will be able to appeal. In some cases, you need a guarantor to sign as well but this will depend on the landlord's conditions. The form can be found online, please make sure to follow the instructions and remember to demand a receipt.

» Bank guarantee

This is a guarantee for the landlord. The money remains in the tenant's account but is linked to the guarantee which means that you cannot use it.



You should remember that...

- * People search for an apartment during the summer and Beer Sheva is well known to be very hot during July and August. When you walk around the apartments don't forget to wear a hat, to take a bottle of water and to have lots of energy. You are invited to stop at the Student Center for some shade and relaxation!
- * **Close to the University** = Expensive. Usually, as the apartment is closer to the university the rent is higher. The difference can reach 100-200 NIS and even more. The "Beit" neighborhood is an exception since it offers apartments in good conditions in a nice surrounding but it is further away from the University.
- * **Furniture** – Don't hurry up and purchase furniture. Sites such as Agora, Yad2 and others offer second hand furniture for free. Also, it is a good idea to walk around the city to see if people threw away pieces of furniture that you can refurbish and use.
- * It is important to choose the right roommates, decide ahead of time if you are looking for a male or female student and decide on some criteria which will help you find the perfect roommate (cleanliness, with/without animals, smoking etc.)

Some tips for when you move in

When you move in, write down the electricity gas and water counters number. In addition, call the electricity, gas and water companies and the municipality and ask them to close the account one day before you move in, this way you won't need to settle the account with the previous tenants. Furthermore, you should check out with the municipality if the apartment has any debts that haven't been settled.



The prices will continue to rise if we don't rent in a smart way

>> Bargain

More than 20,000 students live in Beer Sheva! The power is in our hands so don't be afraid to bargain. Don't agree to overpriced rents! A good lease is a lease which is fair to both sides therefore it is in the landlords' interests to adjust themselves to us, the students, a major group of potential tenants.

>> Compare

Most of the good apartments are being advertised during August. Wait patiently, compare prices and don't give up on a price comparison which will help you find the perfect apartment for you.

>> Gain

Smart consumerism will enable moderate prices to come back. The rise in prices throughout the past years is disturbing and irritating, don't compromise!





The Office of International Affairs of the Student Union is always here for you!

We're happy to help in any way we can so don't hesitate to visit us during office hours or contact us by mail:

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Happy apartment searching!

