

Renting an Apartment in Ankara

An Expat Guide

A Practical Due-Diligence and Move-In Checklist

A practical guide, not legal advice. This resource is designed to help foreign renters ask informed questions, document an apartment carefully, and recognize warning signs before money changes hands.

Renting an apartment in Ankara can be exciting, but the process may also be complex for people who are new to Türkiye or who do not speak Turkish fluently. Renters may need to evaluate the property while also understanding landlords, real estate agents, deposits, utilities, notaries, address registration, and immigration requirements.

This guide provides a structured due-diligence checklist for foreign renters before viewing an apartment, transferring money, signing a lease, or moving in.

Important: I am not a Turkish attorney, immigration adviser, or real estate professional. Laws, immigration procedures, and documentation requirements can change. Always verify current requirements with the appropriate Turkish authorities or a qualified independent professional before relying on this guide.

Before You Start Apartment Hunting

1. Know Your Non-Negotiables

Before looking at apartments, make a list of what you actually need. Consider:

- Furnished or unfurnished?
- Maximum monthly rent?
- Neighborhood?
- Public transportation access?
- Elevator?
- Heating system?

Building age?

Pet-friendly?

Balcony?

Parking?

Air conditioning?

Internet availability?

Minimum lease period?

Number of bathrooms?

Decide what is essential before you fall in love with a gorgeous living room and suddenly convince yourself that climbing six flights of stairs every day builds character.

Ankara already provides enough hills for character development.

When You View the Apartment

2. Don't Just Look. Test.

A beautifully staged apartment can still have serious problems. Actually test things.

Kitchen

Turn on every stovetop burner.

Check the oven.

Open the refrigerator and freezer.

Look at shelves, drawers, seals, and hinges.

Run the faucets.

Check underneath the sink for leaks.

Inspect cabinets for water damage.

Check electrical outlets.

Bathroom

Run the shower.

Check water pressure and hot water.

Flush the toilet and inspect around it for leaks.

Examine the shower doors carefully.

Check drainage.

Look for mold and water damage.

Check ventilation.

Windows and Doors

- Open and close every window and door.
- Check locks, handles, and seals.
- Test balcony doors and window closures.
- Operate shutters or blinds.

Furnished Apartments

- Sit on furniture.
 - Open drawers and check handles.
 - Look inside wardrobes.
 - Inspect mattresses.
 - Test appliances.
 - Document existing damage.
- Do not assume that “furnished” means everything works.

Before Paying Anything

3. Understand Exactly What Every Payment Is For

Before transferring money, get a written breakdown of:

- Monthly rent
- Deposit
- Real estate agent commission
- Building dues or aidat
- Utilities
- Any prepaid rent
- Any additional fees

Ask for receipts or written proof of every payment. If you are asked to pay several months—or an entire year—upfront, slow down and make sure the documentation protecting you is completely in order before transferring the money.

Negotiating the Rent and Deposit

Compare First, Then Negotiate

An advertised price is not always the final price. Negotiation may be possible, particularly when the renter can support the request with current, comparable listings from the same neighborhood.

Some landlords initially request a deposit equal to two months' rent. Depending on the apartment, demand, payment terms, and the landlord's priorities, a renter may be able to negotiate the deposit to approximately one to one-and-a-half months' rent. Likewise, an offer that is TRY 2,500–5,000 below the advertised monthly rent may sometimes be accepted. These figures are practical negotiating ranges, not guarantees; market conditions and individual circumstances vary.

Build a Fair Comparison

Before making an offer, compare several recently advertised apartments in the same neighborhood and price range. Check whether they are genuinely comparable in:

- Size and number of rooms
- Furnished or unfurnished status
- Building age and condition
- Floor, elevator access, and accessibility
- Heating system and expected utility costs
- Renovation quality and appliance condition
- Balcony, parking, security, and other amenities
- Proximity to transportation, shops, schools, and services

Use the comparison in both directions. It can support a lower offer when similar apartments cost less, but it should also test whether the apartment under consideration offers features and conditions that are competitive with other homes at the same price in the same neighborhood.

Negotiation tip: Make a specific, respectful offer and explain the comparison behind it. Confirm the final rent, deposit, payment schedule, and every negotiated concession in the written lease before paying or signing.

The Lease

4. Never Sign a Document You Don't Understand

A lease and its attachments should be fully understood before they are signed. Verbal explanations are not a substitute for independently reviewing the actual documents.

If you do not read Turkish comfortably, obtain an independent translation of important documents before signing them. You can also request that a translation in English follows beneath each Turkish section.

Important distinction: A Turkish-language private lease is not automatically unlawful merely because one party does not speak Turkish. However, no renter should sign terms they cannot understand. Ask the landlord or real estate agent to arrange a complete English translation before signing, and agree in advance—preferably in writing—who will arrange and pay for it. Do not assume the agent is legally responsible for the translation unless that responsibility has been expressly agreed.

Notarization is different. Article 74 of Türkiye’s Notary Law states that a sworn interpreter is to be present when a person involved in a notarial transaction does not know Turkish. Arriving with an already signed Turkish-only lease does not necessarily avoid that requirement. Some notaries reportedly accept a properly prepared bilingual lease—with the English translation placed directly beneath each corresponding Turkish section—and proceed without requiring a separate interpreter. This is a reported practice, not a guaranteed rule, and the chosen notary should confirm it in advance.

To avoid an expensive and time-consuming surprise, contact the chosen notary before the appointment. Ask whether the bilingual format is acceptable, which version of the lease to bring, whether a recognized sworn interpreter must attend, who else must be present, and for an estimate of all interpreter, translation, notarization, tax, and document charges. The notary may still require an approved interpreter or charge applicable translation and document-processing fees.

Do not depend solely on the landlord or the landlord’s relative.

Do not depend solely on the real estate agent.

Do not depend solely on a friend accompanying you.

Do not accept someone else’s verbal summary as a substitute for reading the document.

For a notarial transaction, review [Türkiye’s Notary Law](#) and ask the notary what interpreter support is required if you do not know Turkish.

Ask questions until you understand exactly what the document says. “I don’t understand this yet” is a perfectly legitimate reason for not signing the lease.

Foreigners: Your Lease Is More Than a Lease

5. Think About Your Residence Permit Before Signing

For foreigners, apartment documentation can affect immigration and address-registration records. Before signing, confirm whether the documents you will receive satisfy the requirements for your particular residence-permit and address-registration situation.

Official Migration Management guidance states that address information must remain correct and complete, and that any changes during a residence-permit period must be reported within 20 working days. See [General Information: Address of Stay in Türkiye](#).

Current application guidance may require a notarized rental agreement containing the lessor's information when the applicant is renting. Check the current [e-Residence application materials](#) before relying on any checklist.

6. Be Very Careful With “Guest” Arrangements

A notarized host or “guest” declaration is not a rental agreement and must never be used to document a paying tenancy. If a person pays rent, he or she is a tenant and must be documented as such under a rental agreement—not declared a guest or financially supported by the host. A landlord with a paying tenant should never characterize that tenant as a guest. Doing so misrepresents the actual arrangement and can create complications involving address registration or residence-permit records.

Do not accept a “guest” arrangement: A paying renter should refuse documentation that identifies the renter as a guest and require rental documents that accurately describe the tenancy.

7. Get the Correct Rental Documentation From the Beginning

Do not assume something can easily be fixed later. Before signing, determine:

- What kind of lease you need
- Whether it needs notarization
- Whether an electronic rental contract is appropriate or available
- What documents you need for address registration
- Whether the landlord must provide additional documents
- Whether utility accounts need to be placed in your name
- What documentation you will need for your residence-permit status

Treat this as part of the apartment-search process—not something to figure out after moving in.

Protect Yourself Before Move-In

8. Photograph Everything

Before moving your belongings into the apartment, take photographs and video. Keep the original files with their dates.

- Walls, floors, and ceilings

- Furniture and appliances
- Bathroom fixtures and shower
- Windows, doors, cabinets, and balconies
- Existing scratches, stains, broken items, and water damage
- Electricity, water, and gas meters

If there is ever a dispute about whether you caused damage, you want evidence showing the apartment's condition when you received it.

9. Create a Written Move-In Condition Report

Do not rely solely on a sentence in the lease saying the apartment was delivered in good condition. Make your own detailed list of anything that is:

- Broken
- Dirty
- Missing
- Damaged
- Partially functional
- Waiting for repair

Send the list to the landlord or agent in writing and keep the message.

10. Put Repair Promises in Writing

If the landlord says, “We’ll fix that after you move in,” get the promise in writing. Include:

- What will be repaired
- Who is responsible
- When it will be repaired
- Who will pay

A surprisingly large number of “we’ll fix that next week” problems seem to develop a mysterious allergy to calendars once the lease has been signed.

Real Estate Agents

11. Remember Who the Agent Represents

A friendly real estate agent may be helpful, but friendliness is not the same as independent representation. Even though the tenant pays the agent’s commission, it is important to verify what services are included, and whether the agent has authority to make promises on the landlord’s behalf.

Verify the agent's identity and office details.

Get the commission and payment terms in writing.

If the agent requests the commission in cash, proceed cautiously.

Do not let anyone rush you into paying or signing.

Confirm important statements directly with the landlord and in the lease.

Keep copies of listings, messages, receipts, and documents.

Treat statements from an agent as information to verify, particularly when they concern ownership, repairs, payments, documentation, or residence-permit eligibility.

12. Ask Direct Questions

Who owns the apartment, and will that person sign the lease?

Are there any outstanding building dues, utility balances, or disputes?

Has the building been selected—or might it be selected in the coming years—for urban renewal (kentsel dönüşüm)?

Who handles repairs after move-in?

How quickly are urgent repairs addressed?

What is included in the furnished inventory?

How and when is the deposit returned?

Are pets expressly permitted in writing?

Are there building rules that affect tenants?

Can the address be registered for residence-permit purposes?

Communication and Records

13. Keep Everything in Writing

Use written messages or email for important points, and keep copies outside the messaging app. After a phone call, send a short written summary: "To confirm our conversation..."

Save the original listing and photographs.

Keep the signed lease and every attachment.

Keep payment receipts and bank-transfer records.

Save repair requests and responses.

Record dates, names, and what was promised.

14. Know the Red Flags

Pressure to pay immediately before documents are ready

Refusal to let you read or translate the lease

Requests to sign blank or incomplete pages

A landlord who will not be identified in the paperwork

A “guest” declaration that does not match a real rental arrangement

Promises that important terms can be fixed later

Refusal to provide receipts or copies

Requests to give large sums of money for any sort of payment in cash

Discouraging you from checking requirements independently

Visible damage dismissed as “nothing” without a written repair plan

Different people giving different explanations of the same document

Trust the pause. If something feels wrong, stop. A legitimate apartment will still require clear documents, clear payments, and clear answers.

Before You Sign: Final Checklist

I have independently understood or translated every document.

I confirmed whether the notary will accept the bilingual lease without an attending interpreter and obtained all expected fees in advance.

The landlord’s identity and authority to rent the apartment are clear.

I asked whether the building has been—or may soon be—selected for urban renewal (kentsel dönüşüm).

I compared the apartment with similar listings in the same neighborhood and price range.

The negotiated rent, deposit, commission, aidat, utilities, and extra fees are written down.

I know which residence permit and address registration documents I will receive.

I have checked current official requirements.

I have tested the appliances, plumbing, heating, windows, doors, and locks.

Every promised repair has an owner and deadline in writing.

The furnished inventory and existing damage are documented.

I will receive a signed copy of the complete lease and all attachments.

I have receipts or traceable records for every payment.

Nothing in the paperwork describes the arrangement inaccurately.

I am not being rushed past a question I still need answered.

Helpful Resources

- [Türkiye Presidency of Migration Management: General Information](#)
- [Türkiye Presidency of Migration Management: FAQs for Foreigners](#)
- [e-Residence application materials](#)
- [Türkiye Notary Law \(official legislation PDF\)](#)

*Check official sources again immediately before applying or reporting an address change.
Requirements can vary by situation and can change over time.*

Careful preparation cannot guarantee a problem-free tenancy.

It can, however, support clearer decisions, stronger documentation, and fewer avoidable surprises.

Expatriate Housing Resource