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How to rent an apartment in Belgrade?



HOW TO RENT AN APARTMENT IN BELGRADE?

Identify your needs first

What will be the best solution for you and your family, what are your priorities and which are the “must have” and the “good to have” features:

❶ **Type and size of property, number of bedrooms, equipment and furniture:** the market offers all; bigger percentage of the smaller properties /1-2 bedrooms/are usually offered fully or partially furnished while the larger apartments and houses /3 bedrooms and more/ are offered in most cases only with equipped kitchen; some landlords are ready to furnish the property according to the tenant’s wish but you should have in mind that this will take some time and more logistics.

❷ **Location:** Belgrade is a busy city and the traffic jams can cause a lot of troubles so evaluate carefully what will be the best location for you - for most people the key things are to make sure that their commute to work is easy, whether there are good restaurants and supermarkets nearby, quick access to international schools or kindergartens, sports centers, parks, etc.

The most sought after areas are:

- City Center, Vracar: if you are fond of the busy city life. There you should have in mind the difficulty to park your car if you do not have a parking place or garage
- Dedinje and Senjak: where the air is fresher and the pace of life less hectic, you are close to most international schools and kindergartens, with primarily house supply.
- New Belgrade: where most of the new business centers have been built, the shopping malls – Delta city and Usce are situated, neighborhood with ample parking and easy commuting to the river banks and the walking lanes and, floating restaurants and night clubs ‘splav’.
- Vozdovac and Zvezdara: as a very good substitute for the Center, Dedinje, Senjak and Vracar with good quality of properties at more favorable prices.

❸ **Budget:** estimate carefully your budget. You should have in mind that when the landlord is a legal entity VAT should also be accrued.

Research the market

You have two options when searching for a property to rent:

- ❶ To do it yourself through searching the net: checking specialized property websites, on line direct adds by landlords or real estate agencies, checking newspaper adds, etc and organizing the visits alone though in the majority of cases the offered properties are not available as adds or websites are not updated on regular basis.
- ❷ To contact a real estate agent who will do that on your behalf and even more.

What are the advantages of choosing the second option?

You will have one point of contact. This will save you time, energy and a lot of stress. A professional and experienced real estate agent will consult you on the current trends in the market, will be able to offer properties still not officially on the market or soon to become available, will speak your language or at least English, will carefully evaluate your needs and will offer and show you properties that best answer your requirements at a time convenient for you. An experienced consultant with a good knowledge of the market will be able to negotiate for you much better terms, as well as advise you on the advantages and shortcomings of the visited properties. He can even check for you the properties you have selected on the net.

Belgrade has some excellent and highly professional real estate agencies that have experience in servicing mainly expatriates and by contacting them you would expect high standards of service. In accordance with Serbian Law on Mediation in Real Estate and Leasing, in order to cooperate with the real estate agency, the brokerage agreement needs to be signed.

Sign the lease agreement and enter the property

When you finally choose the property, which will be your home for a presumably long period of time, the consultant will be invaluable in negotiating on your behalf the terms and conditions of the lease agreement with the aim to achieve the best terms and protect your interests. An experienced real estate agent in some cases has an already established relationship with the landlords, which is a good base for a positive outcome of the negotiation process.

Lease agreement

The main elements of the lease agreement are as follows:

- Rent amount and payment structure: monthly, quarterly, etc.
- Term of the agreement: in months or years.
- Ways for terminating or extending the lease term, advance notices.

- Payment of deposit: the standard practice requires a one month rent as a security deposit paid upon signing of the agreement. The deposit is returned upon expiry or termination of the agreement, provided that there are no damages to the property and all utility bills have been paid. There are specific cases when the landlords would require 2-3 months' rent deposit but it usually goes for fully furnished top market properties.
- Agreement on the mode of payment of the utilities: whether the rent paid is a package price, i.e. including utilities, or they should be paid separately, whether the tenant will pay directly to the providers or the landlord will do it on his behalf and the tenant will reimburse the amounts due.
- Maintenance charges: maintenance of the common parts, yard, parking, swimming pool.
- Need for additional furnishing/equipment, etc.

Once the parameters are agreed upon, the agreement is drafted and then signed by the parties.

Entering the property*

Upon handing over the property to the tenant a Delivery and acceptance protocol should be signed. It describes in detail the state of the property at that moment, as well as all the items of furniture and equipment /the best will be to enclose also the photos of the items for valid evidence.

*Upon leaving the property and handing over the keys, a similar protocol is signed with a detailed description of the state of the property and its furniture and equipment. If there are any damages, which are not due to normal wear and tear, they should be listed and respectively - covered by the deposit.

Register yourself at the address of your new home

You should go with the landlord to the relevant police station to register at the address and get your White card, which will be needed for all subsequent procedures, i.e. when applying for permanent residency and work permit. The landlord has to bring the original of the document, which evidences his ownership, while you have to bring only your passport.

Now you can start enjoying your new life experience in Belgrade!

CBS International is the leading real estate consultancy in Serbia in terms of revenue for seven years, providing variety of services including: Office Agency, Retail Agency, Residential Sales and Leasing, Industrial Agency, Land Agency, Valuation and Development Advisory, Capital Markets, Market Research, Project Management, Facility Management, Property Management and Marketing. CBS International is a member of Cushman & Wakefield Alliance. Cushman & Wakefield is a leading global real estate services firm with 45,000 employees in more than 70 countries helping occupiers and investors optimize the value of their real estate.

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