ISABELLE Beaullieu REAL ESTATE



A GUIDE FOR HOME BUYERS

The Home Buyer's Guide

Everything you need to know about buying a home in Lafayette & South Louisiana

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A NOTE FROM ME

Hi, I'm Isabelle!

Let's find your way home.

Buying a home is one of the biggest (and most exciting!) decisions you'll ever make. My job is to make it feel simple, organized, and even fun.

As a REALTOR® with Compass, I help buyers all across Lafayette and South Louisiana find homes they love. I know our neighborhoods, our market, and the little Louisiana details that can surprise buyers, like flood zones, insurance, and how closings work here.

This guide walks you through every step. Read it at your own pace, jot down your questions, and know you never have to figure any of it out alone.

Can't wait to help you get your keys,

Isabelle

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Your roadmap

From first chat to keys in hand

Most purchases close in about 30 to 60 days once your offer is accepted, depending on your loan. Here's the whole path, start to finish.

1

Let's chat

Coffee and a conversation about your must-haves, your timeline, and your budget.

2

Get pre-approved

Know your number before you fall in love with a house. More on page 04.

3

Sign your buyer agreement

We put in writing how I'll help you and how I'm paid, so there are no surprises.

4

Tour homes

I'll send you homes that fit, and we'll go see the best ones together.

5

Make an offer

We'll write a strong, smart offer and I'll negotiate on your behalf. See page 08.

6

Due diligence

Inspections, insurance quotes, and a close look at every detail of the home.

7

Appraisal & final loan approval

Your lender confirms the home's value and gives your loan the final green light.

Act of Sale: keys!

Sign, celebrate, and step inside your new home. See page 09.

WORKING TOGETHER

Your agent in your corner

The listing agent works for the seller. As your buyer's agent, I work for you, and only you.

What I do for you

Find the right homes, check pricing, negotiate, coordinate inspections, and guide you all the way to closing.

Your buyer agreement

We sign a written agreement before we tour homes. It spells out my services, how long we'll work together, and my pay.

How I'm paid

Compensation is negotiable and agreed on upfront. Sellers often offer to cover some or all of it, and I'll always show you what's on the table.

Get pre-approved first *know your number*

GOOD START

Pre-qualification

A quick estimate based on what you tell a lender. Nothing is verified yet, so it's best for early budgeting.

WHAT YOU WANT

Pre-approval

Your lender reviews your credit, income, and savings, then gives you a real number. Sellers take your offer more seriously.

What to gather

- [ ] Recent pay stubs
- [ ] Two years of W-2s or tax returns
- [ ] Recent bank statements
- [ ] Photo ID
- [ ] Details on other income or debts

Isabelle's tip

From pre-approval to closing, hold off on new credit cards, car loans, or big furniture purchases. When in doubt, ask your lender first!

plan ahead

The costs of buying a home

Here's what you'll pay to buy a home, and when each cost comes due.

Down payment

DUE AT CLOSING

Your upfront share of the price, and often less than 20%. Some loans start at 3% (conventional), 3.5% (FHA), or 0% (VA and USDA, if eligible).

Closing costs

DUE AT CLOSING

Lender, title, and recording fees, plus prepaid taxes and insurance. Plan on roughly 2% to 5% of your loan. Sellers can sometimes help cover them.

Home inspection

DURING DUE DILIGENCE

Paid directly to your inspector, usually a few hundred dollars depending on the home's size. Termite, roof, or sewer checks are extra.

Appraisal

DURING YOUR LOAN PROCESS

Ordered by your lender to confirm the home is worth the price. You usually pay for it upfront, often a few hundred dollars.

Also plan for

- Earnest money (credited back to you at closing)
- First year of home insurance
- Flood insurance, if needed
- Moving costs & utility deposits

Isabelle's tip: Your lender will give you a Loan Estimate that lists your costs line by line. These amounts are typical, so always go by your own estimate, and I'll walk through it with you.

the real numbers

The true cost of owning in South Louisiana

Your monthly cost is more than your loan payment. Out-of-town and first-time buyers are often surprised here, so let's plan for it together.

Loan payment + **Property taxes** + **Home insurance** + **Flood insurance** + **HOA dues** = **Your real monthly cost**

Homeowners insurance

Rates here can run higher than buyers expect. The roof's age, the home's age, and its location all play a part.

Flood zones & insurance

Every address sits in a FEMA flood zone. In higher-risk zones your lender will require flood insurance, and it's worth considering everywhere.

Elevation certificates

This shows how high a home sits compared to expected flood levels, and it can change your flood premium. We'll ask the seller for one.

Property taxes

These are set by your parish. Once you live in the home, the homestead exemption can lower your bill. More on page 09.

Isabelle's tip

Request insurance quotes the day your offer is accepted. Your due diligence period goes by fast!

Look up any address at the FEMA Flood Map Service Center (msc.fema.gov), and check your parish assessor's website for tax details. Rates and programs change, so always confirm current numbers with your agent and insurance provider.

find your spot

Choosing where to live

Acadiana is full of wonderful communities, each with its own personality. Here's a quick peek at a few favorites.

Lafayette
The heart of Acadiana, with amazing food, live music, festivals, and UL Lafayette close by.

Youngsville
Just south of Lafayette, loved for its newer neighborhoods, Sugar Mill Pond, and busy youth sports.

Broussard
Southeast of Lafayette, with a growing mix of new homes and an easy drive into the city.

Carencro
North of Lafayette, with a friendly small-town feel and quick access to I-49.

Scott
West of Lafayette along I-10, and proudly known as the Boudin Capital of the World.

And beyond
Milton, Maurice, Breaux Bridge, and more. Ask me about any area on your list!

Questions to ask yourself

- [ ] How long of a commute works for me?
- [ ] What flood zone is the home in?
- [ ] How much yard do I really want?
- [ ] Which school zones matter to me?
- [ ] Is there an HOA, and what does it cover?
- [ ] New construction or established area?

YOU FOUND THE ONE

Making an offer

Your offer is written on the Louisiana purchase agreement. Price matters, but so do the terms. Here's what we'll decide together.

Price
Backed by recent sales nearby.

Earnest money
A good-faith deposit that shows you're serious.

Financing
Cash, conventional, FHA, VA, or USDA.

Due diligence
Your window for inspections and research.

Closing date
When you'd like to get your keys.

What stays
Appliances, fixtures, and extras.

Inspections *peek behind the walls*

Home inspection. A top-to-bottom look at the structure, roof, plumbing, electrical, and HVAC.

Termite report. Checks for termites and wood damage. Many lenders require one here.

Roof. Worth a closer look, since its age and condition affect your insurance.

Foundation. Our clay soils can shift slab foundations, so an engineer may take a look.

Sewer scope. A camera check of the main sewer line, especially smart for older homes.

Appraisal. Ordered by your lender to confirm the home is worth the price.

Isabelle's tip: Every home has something! We'll decide together what to ask the seller to fix or credit.

almost home!

Your closing day

Here, closing is called the Act of Sale. You'll sign your final papers before a notary, usually at a title company or closing attorney's office. Then the keys are yours!

1

Review your numbers

Your lender sends a Closing Disclosure a few days ahead. We'll go over it together.

2

Final walkthrough

A last visit to make sure the home is just as we agreed.

3

Sign & celebrate

Bring a photo ID and your funds as instructed, then grab your keys!

⚠ **Protect your money from wire fraud.** Before sending funds, call your title company at a number you already know. Never trust wiring changes sent by email.

After you move in *welcome home!*

✓ **File your homestead exemption.** Apply with your parish assessor's office once the home is your primary residence. It can lower your property taxes, and many buyers forget!

- [ ] Set up utilities with LUS, SLEMCO, or your local provider
- [ ] Change or rekey the locks
- [ ] Update your address and driver's license
- [ ] Keep your closing documents somewhere safe

And send me a picture on move-in day!

Glossary *real estate, decoded*

Act of Sale
Louisiana's name for closing, signed before a notary.

Appraisal
An independent opinion of the home's value for your lender.

Closing costs
Fees for your loan, title, and transfer, paid at closing.

Due diligence period
Your window for inspections and research after your offer is accepted.

Earnest money
A good-faith deposit that goes toward your purchase.

Elevation certificate
Shows how high a home sits compared to expected flood levels.

Homestead exemption
A property tax break on the home you live in.

Pre-approval
A lender's verified estimate of how much you can borrow.



Let's find your way home

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