

# 5 STEPS BUYERS DON'T WANT TO SKIP—EVEN IN A HOT MARKET

Florida is one of the hottest housing markets in the U.S., making buying a home challenging. Here are five tips for finding the best real estate deals in Florida and having a smooth closing:

## 1.

View properties in person to make sure you see any aspects of a home not included online. Touring listings with an experienced real estate agent, who can spot potential concerns, is always wise. If you must rely on a virtual showing, you can have an agent visit the property and make a purchase offer contingent upon a satisfactory professional home inspection.

## 2.

Be cautious when buying a home remotely, so you don't fall prey to any scams, such as fake listings or overpriced properties.

## 3.

Use trusted financial institutions for making necessary payments, such as a good-faith deposit to a brokerage with a purchase offer. Online payment apps, such as PayPal and Venmo, don't offer the same protections as a traditional bank with FDIC insurance.

## 4.

Make sure your finances are in order before spending too much time searching for your dream home. Getting a mortgage preapproval is best so you know how much you can borrow and at what terms. It may also carry weight with a potential seller evaluating multiple purchase offers. Also, make sure your credit is healthy so you qualify for a mortgage with the lowest interest rate possible, which can save thousands of dollars over the life of your loan.

## 5.

Use an experienced real estate agent who understands the market where you want to buy a home. They can help you navigate the potentially complex process of making offers, negotiating terms, completing contingencies and getting to the closing table. The right agent can help you get an offer accepted when competing with other buyers in a hot real estate market.

