

FIRST-TIME BUYER'S GUIDE

Buying your first home, where do you start?

A short, clear guide for expats buying their first home in and around Maastricht. No thick file, just the essentials.

"Here is your financial future, our priority."

ALCO Hypotheken

LET'S START HERE

Sound familiar?

You're looking for your first home in a new country, and information comes from every direction: colleagues with tips, videos online, calculators on different websites, most of it written for the Dutch market specifically. Before you know it, you're spending more time decoding mortgage terminology than looking at houses.

This guide gives you a broad overview of the key choices, costs and steps involved, written with your situation as an expat in mind. Enough to get a realistic picture and take the next step with confidence. For the translation to your personal situation, with all the details that come with it, we're here for you.

In this guide

- The three key choices in a mortgage
- What you can borrow and what it costs
- The buying process, from offer to keys
- The most common mistakes first-time buyers make

Three choices you'll make

When taking out a mortgage, you'll face a number of choices along the way. Here's a short introduction so you know what's coming.

Repayment type

Determines how you repay the loan: in equal monthly instalments, in decreasing instalments, or partly only at the end of the term. This directly affects your monthly costs and how much interest you pay in total.

Fixed-rate period

The period during which your interest rate stays the same. Shorter means more flexibility, longer means more certainty. What suits you depends on how much risk feels comfortable.

Loan term

The number of years over which you repay the mortgage, usually a maximum of thirty years. A shorter term means higher monthly payments, but you finish sooner and pay less interest overall.

None of these choices stand on their own: they're connected to each other and to your personal situation.

What can you borrow, what's it cost

Two questions on every first-time buyer's mind. Here's the answer in broad strokes; the exact figures depend on your situation.

What determines your borrowing capacity

- Your (combined) gross annual income
- Any existing loans or financial obligations
- The current mortgage interest rate
- The value of the property you have in mind

Just as important: what you're comfortable spending

Your maximum borrowing capacity isn't automatically the amount we'll advise. Just as important is what you yourself want and can afford to spend on housing each month, also with an eye on other goals such as savings or starting a family. We'll go through this in detail during the advice conversation.

Costs on top of the price

- Transfer tax
- Notary fees
- Valuation fees
- Advisory fees
- Optional NHG (Dutch National Mortgage Guarantee)
- Optional structural survey

Good to know as an expat

If you're under 35, you can generally still use the one-time transfer tax exemption for first-time buyers, regardless of nationality, as long as you register and live in the home yourself. Your type of employment contract and any 30% ruling can affect how much you're able to borrow; we'll walk through what applies to you.

A rule of thumb

On top of your mortgage, budget for a few percent of the purchase price in additional costs. The exact amount depends on the price, NHG, and whether the starter exemption applies. We're happy to work through this with you.

The process in a nutshell

1 Orientation and borrowing capacity

Together we work out what's realistic to borrow, so you can search with a clear focus.

2 Making an offer

You find a home and make an offer. We help you think through a realistic offer and the right conditions.

3 Provisional purchase contract

Once your offer is accepted, the purchase agreement follows, including the cooling-off period and financing contingency. We go through this together, so it's clear exactly what you're signing.

4 Valuation and survey

The property is valued and, if needed, structurally surveyed, through our trusted partners.

5 Mortgage application

We arrange the application with the lender and keep you updated at every step.

6 At the notary

The mortgage deed and transfer deed are signed, and the keys are yours.

What we do for you

- Advise and arrange your mortgage and insurance
- Help you think through your offer and the property's value
- Discuss risks, and cover them if needed for death, disability or unemployment
- Fully coordinate with the notary, valuer and structural surveyor
- Short lines of contact: reachable via WhatsApp, phone and email
- Personal contact, at our office, at your home or online

WHO'S HELPING YOU

About Alco Hypotheken

Alco Hypotheken was founded in 2023. We are independent mortgage advisors based in Maastricht and the surrounding region, and have already arranged more than 800 mortgages. We enjoy helping first-time buyers, movers, entrepreneurs and expats find a mortgage that truly fits them.

"As an expat buying with a second mortgage, the process gets complicated fast. Alco cut through it quickly; no jargon, no rushing."

Google review

"Have had a brilliant experience with Alco! Brilliant communication and service, and got me the mortgage stress free!"

Google review

WATCH OUT FOR

Common mistakes first-time buyers make

1

Only looking at the interest rate

Conditions such as penalty-free repayment often matter just as much as the rate.

2

Starting your financing too late

Making an offer without knowing your borrowing capacity can lead to disappointment.

3

Underestimating additional costs

Buyer's costs or a renovation: set aside budget for these upfront.

4

Underestimating the paperwork

Translated payslips, contracts and ID documents take time to gather; start early.

NEXT STEP

Ready to talk further?

Every situation is different, and the details often make the difference. Schedule a free introductory conversation. Feel free to reach out via WhatsApp, phone or email first.

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