Apartment Hunting Checklist for LA Renters (2025 Edition)

Before You Search

- [ ] Check your credit score (aim for 600+ or prepare alternatives)

- [ ] Calculate your monthly budget using the 50/30/20 rule

- [ ] Get pre-approved or gather proof of income

- [ ] List your must-haves (e.g., in-unit laundry, pet-friendly, parking)

- [ ] Set your max rent limit (don't forget utilities, deposits)

While Browsing Listings

- [ ] Use trusted platforms: Zillow, HotPads, Apartments.com

- [ ] Compare neighborhoods (consider traffic, amenities, safety)

- [ ] Save top 5-10 units with price, size, and move-in date

- [ ] Create a spreadsheet or use a free Notion template

- [ ] Check for red flags (e.g., vague descriptions, no photos)

During Virtual or In-Person Tours

- [ ] Inspect unit condition (walls, windows, appliances)

- [ ] Ask about lease length, rent increases, and utilities

- [ ] Test water pressure, outlets, and cell signal

- [ ] Look at the building/community (noise, security, parking)

- [ ] Review online reviews on Google or Reddit

Before You Apply

- [ ] Confirm all costs: rent, deposit, fees, parking, pet rent

- [ ] Prepare ID, proof of income, and references

- [ ] Ask if application fees are refundable

- [ ] Understand the lease terms and early termination policy

- [ ] Be ready to apply quickly (units move fast!)