

Best Deals in REAL ESTATE

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Bargains in this market? Believe it or not, they're out there. We scoured the country to find the best cities to buy homes in now.

For many buyers, the Canadian housing market is becoming a scary place. Prices are sky high and surging higher by the month. Homes are selling for tens of thousands more than even the sellers expected. Many buyers fear that if they wait, they'll be priced right out of the market, while others worry that if they buy now, prices could tumble when mortgage rates start to creep up later this year.

Real Estate is local – it always has been – and there are still many pockets in the country where you can find amazing housing deals.

To find out where, we decided to take a scientific approach. We figured we could unearth the bargains in the real estate market in much the same way we find the best buys in stocks and mutual funds; by sifting through reams of hard data. In this case we looked for homes that were priced reasonably, but were still increasing in price. In addition, we looked for markets that have strong economies, so we could be sure that prices will keep going up.

We started by collecting data on 35 major markets tracked by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Next we crunched the numbers, and assigned a letter grade to each city for value, momentum and economy. Then we combined all that info to come up with each market's overall grade. Top cities earned an A, average prospects earned a B, while lackluster prospects were handed a C or worse.

THE GRADES ARE IN!

We rated 35 major markets by value (how reasonable prices are). Momentum (how hot the market is), and economy (local prosperity)

City	<u>Value</u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>Momentum</u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>Economy</u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>Overall</u> <u>Grade</u>
Abbotsford	D+	C+	B-	C
Barrie	B	C	B	B-
Brantford	B+	B-	C+	B
Calgary	C+	B	A	B
Charlottetown	A-	B+	C	B
Edmonton	B+	A-	A	B
Fredericton	A-	B-	A-	B+
Gatineau	A-	B-	B+	B+
Greater Sudbury	A	C+	C	B
Guelph	B+	B	B+	B+
Halifax	B-	B	A-	B-
Hamilton	C	B+	B+	B-
Kelowna	D+	B-	A-	C+
Kingston	B	C+	B	B
Kitchener	B	B	B	B
London	A-	C	B-	B

The other cities include: Moncton, Montreal, Ottawa, Peterborough, Quebec, Regina, Saguenay, Saint John, Saskatoon, Sherbrooke, St. Catharines-Niagara, St. John's, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Trois-Rivieres, Vancouver, Victoria, Windsor, Winnipeg.

As you can see in “Where to Buy Now” (below) that left us with 2 big winners – Moncton and Regina – each of which scored an A-. Both cities have relatively low home prices, strong sales and good economies. Coming in with a Solid B+ were 7 runners-up; Fredericton, St. John’s, Ottawa, Gatineau, Winnipeg, Guelph and Saint John. All have reasonable home prices, strong momentum in the housing market and decent economic prospects.

Ratings make a great starting point for both real estate investors and those looking to move to a city with more reasonable housing costs.

WHERE TO BUY NOW

To find out which cities offer the best real estate deals, we graded each market (See “The Grades are In” above) and narrowed the finalists to those which earned at least a B+ overall. Then we discarded markets that earned less than a B-in any one subcategory. That left 9 winners: Each has reasonable house prices, a market that’s on the upswing and a strong local economy.

1. Moncton A-
2. Regina A-
3. Fredericton B+
4. St. John’s B+
5. Ottawa B+
6. Gatineau B+
7. Winnipeg B+
8. **Guelph B+**
9. Saint John B+

GUELPH



\$329,900.00

Building Type: House

Style: Detached

Bedrooms: 3

Bathrooms: 3

Storeys: 2.5

Land Size: 31 x 114 ft

Location: 57 Schiedel Dr.

This one is finished top to bottom! From the beautiful interlock driveway, hardwood and ceramic throughout the main floor, oversized loft, finished rec room with 2PC bath, fully fenced lot with deck and patio. It’s all here and shows lovely. Great location close to trail system, which extends from Guelph Lake in the north to Hanlon Creek in the south.

B+ Guelph

With a low crime rate and clean environment, Guelph is consistently rated as one of Ontario's most livable cities. It has healthy household incomes and its 8.3% unemployment rate (close to the national average) is on a downward trend, mainly because Guelph has rolled out an Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, encouraging growth in key sectors such as the life sciences, biotechnology, agri-food firms, environmental and high-tech. Home prices average a reasonable \$271,000 and over the past four years, a full 60% of all homes listed have sold, making it one of the best resale markets in Canada. Steady house price increases (2.7% last year) also help make it **a market to consider when searching for a place to live or invest!**

Guelph, ON

Prosperity

Household Income (\$):	87,154	Household Discretionary (%):	29.36
New cars (%):	16.44	Unemployment rate (%):	8.00
Population 2001 :	117,344	Population (% change '01-'06):	8.20
Population 2006 :	127,009	Population (% change '06-'10):	3.93
Provincial income tax:	3	Provincial sales tax:	5

Housing

Average household price (\$):	274,726	Time to buy (in years):	3.15
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Lifestyle

Walk/Bike To Work (%):	8.38	College:	Y
University:	Y	Culture:	51
Transit:	38		

Crime

Crime Severity:	49.60	Violent Crime rate:	802
Total Crime rate:	5315		

Health

Doctors Per (per 1,000):	1.93	Health Pros (% of pop.):	4.92
Hospital:	Y		

Weather

Precipitation Days:	166.60	Precipitation (ml/year):	923.20
Days below 0C:	161.10	Ozone (parts per billion):	26
Particulate matter:	8		