



Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter from Reloc8 Asia Pacific Group. Reloc8 Asia Pacific is a Regional Relocation Resource –and a joint venture between leading owner-managed relocation services organisations in the region.

Reloc8's founder, Lee Wong - Managing Director of Asian Welcome in Singapore, had a vision that there was a need for a "one-stop shop" for organisations needing on-the-ground support from knowledgeable experts in the Asia Pacific region. I have been involved in many new ideas, and all too few emerge as greater than the expectations – but even we have been surprised at the enthusiasm for what Reloc8 has become in the 3 years since we started.

As a regional relocation resource we can offer quality control, consistency, experience, local knowledge and international business experience that individual companies find hard to match. Additionally, having an owner-managed business on the ground means that when things go pear shaped at 6 am on Sunday the problems get sorted out even before our offices open for business on Monday morning. We are delighted to offer our customers personalised service with an international perspective. This newsletter is designed to support our vision of providing comprehensive information and services for the Asia-Pacific region to assist the companies and people moving there.

Housing

In this first issue we take a look at housing costs in some of the key markets in our region. As you will be aware, with the rapid growth in international assignments to some countries such as India and China, demand for housing has seen residential rents rise rapidly. This can cause housing budgets to become out-of-date quickly & if not addressed can make for a poor

start to an international assignment. In other markets there is greater stability, however, understanding local requirements for contracts, payment terms, dispute procedures, security bonds etc, is critical in ensuring the interests of the company and the transferee are looked after.

"Lopat hiring" and "Localization"

A rule of thumb cost-guideline for traditional expatriate packages is three times the pre-assignment employment cost. Not surprisingly, this has given rise to a search for lower cost alternatives. In the Asia Pacific two other trends are noticeable:

- An increase in the skills of the locally recruited workforce in many locations – with many executives combining "western business skills" with "Asian cultural skills"
- An increase in intra-regional assignments

"Lopat Terms" hiring and "Localization" have emerged as potential responses to these trends. However, what is meant by these terms? What allowances and benefits are offered? What are the savings? It appears there is wide divergence in approaches.

In late 2004, Reloc8 completed a survey designed to gain a snapshot of practices in the Asia Pacific region. The results surprised us by the diversity in approaches and the wide differences in the financial impact of moving away from the traditional expatriate package.

If you would like to know more please let me know – an email to info@reloc8asia.com will reach me quickly.

Nick Woodhams

President - Reloc8 Asia Pacific Group

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Expatriate Housing in Australia

In Australia, the majority of expatriates prefer to lease accommodation. For tax reasons it is extremely rare for expatriates to purchase residential property. Most accommodation comes unfurnished; however furnished accommodation is becoming more common, particularly in the apartment markets closer to city centres.

Availability is generally reasonable except in January (the traditional holiday season, as well as the start of the Australian school year), although good properties are leased quickly, sometimes within a day of becoming available. There is no "multi-listing", and often a rental search can involve contacting 20 or more real estate agents, each of whom may have none or one potentially suitable property. Rental levels have been stable for several years, although with a rapid escalation in the cost of purchasing in recent years yet to work its way through to the rental market this may change.

Leases are generally 1–2 years in length, often with the tenant having an option to renew. "Diplomatic clauses" can be negotiated for inclusion and are generally effective only after the initial rental term e.g. one year. By and large, laws governing residential property rental protect the tenant, for example, there is a standard contract form.

Average Monthly Rental Costs (in US dollars)

Assumes: Suitable for expatriates - Modern kitchen and bathrooms, convenient locations

	Sydney			Melbourne			
	Apartments		Houses	Apartments		Houses	
	City	Lower North Shore	Upper North Shore	Close to City	South Eastern suburbs	South Eastern suburbs	Bayside
2 bedroom	2400-3250	2400	n/a	1700-1950	1600-1750	n/a	n/a
3 bedroom	2925-4875	3250	2600-3250	2500-3000	1900-2250	2000-2900	2500-3000
4 bedroom	n/a	n/a	3250-5525	n/a	n/a	2900-3500	3000-3500

Housing for Expats in China

Expatriate housing in the first tier cities of China (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen), has come a long way in the last ten years. Gone are the days of limited housing options, when expats had to choose from five star hotels, diplomatic compounds (in Beijing) or a handful of apartment/villa compounds. In today's rapidly developing housing market, expatriates can choose from low, medium, high and luxury level expat housing options, usually apartments located near the central business districts or suburban villa compounds with club house facilities, restaurants, supermarkets, beauty salons, post offices and much more.

What surprises most expats coming to China on assignment is the exorbitant monthly rentals (which range from US\$3000 to US\$15 000) and the comparative quality of what you would get at 'home' for the same price. Probably the most frustrating experience about leasing residential property is not finding something within your budget, but in managing your expectations about the development of the real estate market. What this means is that expats come to China and expect that market practices and landlords will behave in the same manner as they do in the home country, and are often rudely awakened to discover that verbal agreements and even formal contractual agreements don't always have the same meaning in China.

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Spotlight on India

The Indus Valley civilization, one of the oldest in the world, dates back at least 5,000 years. Aryan tribes from the northwest invaded in about 1500 B.C.; their merger with the earlier Dravidian inhabitants created the classical Indian culture. Arab incursions starting in the 8th century and Turkish in the 12th century were followed by those of European traders, beginning in the late 15th century. By the 19th century, Britain had assumed political control of virtually all Indian lands. Nonviolent resistance to British colonialism brought independence in 1947 leading to the subcontinent being divided into the secular state of India and the smaller Muslim state of Pakistan.

Geography

Location: Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and Pakistan

Area comparative: slightly over a third the size of the US

Climate: varies from tropical monsoon in the south to temperate in the north

Natural hazards: droughts; flash floods, as well as widespread and destructive flooding from monsoonal rains; severe thunderstorms; earthquakes

People

Population: 1,080,264,388 (July 2005 est.)

Age structure: 0-14 years: 31.2%

15-64 years: 63.9%

65 years and over: 4.9%

Population growth rate: 1.4% (2005 est.)

Ethnic groups: Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3% (2000)

Religions: Hindu 81.3%, Muslim 12%, Christian 2.3%, Sikh 1.9%, other groups including Buddhist, Jain, Parsi 2.5%

Languages

English enjoys associate status but is the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication; Hindi is the national language and primary tongue of 30% of the people; there are 14 other official languages

Economy

India's diverse economy encompasses traditional village farming, modern agriculture, handicrafts, a wide range of

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Spotlight on India (continued...)

modern industries, and a multitude of services. Services are the major source of economic growth, though two-thirds of the workforce is in agriculture. The economy has posted an excellent average growth rate of 6.8%. India is capitalizing on its large numbers of well-educated people skilled in the English language to become a major exporter of software services and software workers. The huge and growing population is the fundamental social, economic, and environmental problem.

Currency: Indian Rupee (INR)
 Indian rupees per US dollar - 45.317
 (2004)Fiscal year: 1 April - 31 March

Strange facts about Malaysia

1. Dogs can be seen riding motorbikes with their owners, either lying across the bike or in the basket on the front of the bike.

2. More on motorbike facts - a whole family of up to 5 persons can sometimes be found riding the same motorbike simultaneously - Mum holding baby, with one child in front of the father straddling in front of him, while another sibling sits in the basket and the last child clings onto Mum (behind her!) and - only the adults wear the compulsory helmets!

Housing for Expats in China (continued...)

With more housing developments regularly opening, supply is generally not a problem, though the more popular housing compounds usually reach capacity during the busy summer season. Private landlords and property ownership is also becoming increasingly popular in China so a housing search can now include properties owned by developers and private landlords, this can complicate the search and the lease negotiation processes further as owners compete for tenants.

You can generally expect that most houses / apartments will come fully furnished if required and normally you can expect to be provided with white goods (fridge/freezer, washing machine, cooker, etc.). The key in China is if you don't ask you won't get, but if you do ask then there is a high probability that something can be done – for the right price!

The location of expatriate housing in the cities, both villas and apartments, tends to follow a trend. The popular villa compounds, often preferred by families, are generally located near one of the main schools and tend to be in the suburbs of the cities. Downtown, you find luxury apartments near the business districts, city schools and popular shopping and / or night life locations.

Average Monthly Rental Fees (in US Dollars)

	Beijing		Shanghai		Guangzhou	
	Apartments	Houses	Apartments	Houses	Apartments	Houses
2 bedroom	1000-5000		3000-4000	5000	2000	
3 bedroom	1500-8000	1500-2500	5000	6000	3000	3500
4 bedroom	2500-10000	3000-15000	6000	7000	4000+	5000+

Residential Property Market in India

Mumbai

Residential options in Bombay mainly consist of apartment complexes, with some semi-detached and independent bungalows available for lease in North Bombay. The properties available for lease range from one-bedroom apartments to three-bedroom apartments, very few four / five / six bedroom apartments are available for lease.

In this area, tenants can choose from different payment options, such as paying a large security deposit upfront, followed by monthly rental payments, or paying the entire lease upfront as well as a small security deposit (typically 2-3 months). Leases are generally based on 11-month periods.

Delhi

Residential options in Delhi mostly consist of independent houses, large apartments and a few farmhouses – all situated in South Delhi. Most of the apartment complexes are situated in the suburban town of Gurgaon, where most of the corporate offices are located. Many of the houses in this area are large farmhouses with four to five bedrooms, a swimming pool, tennis court and sprawling lawns all around the house, spread over three acres. In Delhi, lease terms are generally for a period of two to three years, with a security deposit of approximately three to six months and rent paid three to six months ahead.

Bangalore

Housing options in Bangalore are a mix of independent houses, apartments and apartment complexes. The IT boom has spurred quick

'Many of the houses in this area are large farmhouses with four to five bedrooms, a swimming pool, tennis court and sprawling lawns all around the house'

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Residential Property Market in India (continued...)

growth in apartment complexes in suburbs such as Koramangla and Whitefields; however the city's infrastructure has not been able to keep pace with the resulting rapid population growth. The city of Bangalore, once referred to as the Garden City of India, is now known as the Silicon Valley of India. Lease terms in this area are usually in 11 month periods, with a refundable security deposit equal to 10 months rent.

Due to the Infrastructure issues faced by Bangalore, there is currently a power shortage leading to frequent power outages. While the current water supply is sufficient, future supply issues still need to be resolved.

Approximate Monthly Rental Prices (in US dollars)

	Mumbai		Delhi		Bangalore	
	Apartments	Houses	Apartments	Houses	Apartments	Houses
2 bedroom	1800-3300	n/a	220-400	n/a	330-560	n/a
3 bedroom	2100-5500	3300-6667	1100-3900	1700-4400	560-1100	780-1800
4 bedroom	3300-8900	5500-11000	1500-4400	3300-6100	1000-2800	1300-6700

The Real Estate Market in Tokyo

Most expatriates coming to Japan are looking to lease a home, not buy one. The cost of purchasing real estate centrally in most major cities is too astronomical for practically any newcomer to feel comfortable with, and as well there is the problem of acquiring a mortgage, since most banks will only consider mortgages for long-term residents (at least 4 years) or permanent residents. Closing costs (realtor's fees, taxes, etc.) are also very large, often equivalent to a year's rent or more, so unless the property is to be held for many years, it may not make a lot of sense to buy.

The rental market for the larger western-style accommodation in Tokyo (generally preferred by expatriates) has been weak for several years. Apart from a few of the newer luxury towers, most rental fees have dropped by as much as 30% after their peak in 2000. Prices have been supported by the emergence of more Japanese renting luxury apartments in central Tokyo, as well as buying them for their own use. Nevertheless supply continues to outstrip demand.



This general weakness and oversupply in the market translates to good deals for arriving newcomers. Prices are generally negotiable and owners are also often willing to wait 2 months or more for the tenant to begin paying rent. Owners are also more willing to supply curtains or pay for upgrades to the unit.

On the sales side, there has been a rapidly growing interest among long term expatriates to purchase a home in the very hot (at least centrally) Tokyo real estate market. While land prices are nowhere near the electrifying levels of the bubble era, they have reverted to being merely breath-taking. Fueled by low interest rates, which considerably reduce the costs of servicing a mortgage, purchasing a home has become a more serious consideration, at least for those who are still planning to live here for a number of years.

The problem is trying to determine what a fair price is. Road widths vary greatly as do buildable and coverage ratios, plots are all sorts of shapes and sizes, and all of these dramatically affect the value. In the Azabu area some residential prices are hitting 7 to 8 million yen per tsubo (3.3 square meters) or up to US\$ 2,000 per square foot. But it is also possible to find properties one-third this price. Purchasing can be very rewarding, but it should not be attempted without a significant effort to understand the market.

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The Real Estate Market in Tokyo (continued...)

Monthly Expatriate Housing Rental Prices in Japan (in US Dollars)

	Tokyo		Yokohama	Osaka/Kobe	Nagoya
	Central	Suburban			
1 bedroom 70 sq.m.	4100	3100	2000	2900	1900
2 bedroom 100 sq.m.	5500	4100	2750	4100	2750
3 bedroom 150 sq.m.	8200	6200	4100	6160	3560
4 bedroom 200 sq.m.	11000	8200	5500	8200	5500

Housing news in Korea (Seoul)

The Korean property market is currently affected by government restrictions trying to curb overinvestment in the rising housing market. Recently, another large increase in property prices, led by Kangnam (south of river) area of Seoul and its nearby suburb, has seen increases of around 10% in one month in certain areas. However, rental fees are not increasing proportionally compared with sales price, and rental fees for expatriate accommodation has remained relatively stable so far. The high end of the rental market is still quite expensive, but due to a higher supply of accommodation in the middle range rental market, rental prices are remaining stable, even with the imminent peak season. The payment term in Seoul is to pay full rental up front for the whole lease term with a break clause after half of the term.

The most popular expatriate living areas in Seoul are in Hannam/Itaewon-dong (near the middle of Seoul), Sungbuk/Pyongchang-dong where houses have

'The rental markets for expatriates and locals in Seoul offer very different scenarios'

their own yard (North of Seoul), Bangbae-dong (South of Seoul) and Yonhee-dong near the Seoul Foreign School.

The rental markets for expatriates and locals in Seoul offer very different scenarios, the local market properties

are generally only attractive to returning Korean nationals looking for homes in local areas. The majority of properties on the expatriate rental market belong to individual landlords, and getting landlords to keep up with regular maintenance can be a problem issue - this is where a good relocation consultant can help, by assisting with these types of issues for the length of the lease.

Recently, serviced apartments have been introduced and some international chains of serviced apartments have started operation. Though somewhat expensive, this style of accommodation is very convenient for expatriates needing short-term accommodation.

Average Monthly Rental Fees (in US Dollars)

	Hannam/Itaewon-dong		Sungbuk/Pyongchang-dong		Bangbae-dong	
	Apartments	Houses	Apartments	Houses	Apartments	Houses
2 bedroom	3000	n/a	n/a	n/a	2500	n/a
3 bedroom	6000	n/a	6000	n/a	5500	n/a
4 bedroom	8000	9000	9000	11000	7000	8500

Housing Availability in Expat Locations - Malaysia

The Klang Valley is the hub of the Malaysian business community, besides Penang in the North (together with the FIZ regions of Kulim, Sg Patani and Penang State itself). Over the last few years, the expatriate community in the Klang Valley has expanded from the capital city of Kuala Lumpur, into suburban regions of the valley.

Along with the recent growth in demand from the expatriate market, rental costs have also been increasing, on average by about 5% this year alone (compared with last year) in the city centre and Ampang Hilir (the long-established expatriate suburban district). With this increasing demand, new properties are being developed for completion in 2006 and thereafter. There are currently a good selection of property choices in this area, from 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom apartments (averaging 750 sq ft), to spacious condominium homes (2200 sq ft) and sumptuous homes on the outer fringes of Ampang Hilir.



In the northern region of Penang, apartments with an average space area of 1500 to 5000 sq ft are plentiful, and fully furnished apartments in the popular suburbia region of Pulau Tikus are priced at RM3000 to RM12000 per month. Houses in Penang are in short supply and are priced in the region of RM3000 to RM8000 per month. Houses with pools are even more limited. However, Penang has one of the largest collections of heritage style homes in South East Asia, some of which have been restored, but many of which still need to be restored.

Some of the newer expatriate districts, such as Damansara Heights, Sri Hartamas and Mont Kiara, have spacious condominiums and houses in the new gated-community style. Sri Hartamas district also offers newly completed semi-detached homes on a semi-furnished basis. Newer developments are now concentrating on spacious apartment homes with an average area of around 2000-3000 sq ft. The suburban district of Bangsar continues to be one of the most popular residential areas; with its chic, cozy restaurants, trendy al-fresco sidewalk cafes, wine bars, pubs and shopping malls, Bangsar has also easy access to the freeways and link roads to every part of the valley.

Approximate Average Monthly Rental Fees (in US Dollars)

	Ampang Hilir		Mont Kiara, Sri Hartamas, Damansara Heights		Bangsar		Penang	
	Apartments	Houses	Apartments	Houses	Apartments	Houses	Apartments	Houses
2 bedroom	2200	n/a	1350	n/a	1350	n/a	n/a	n/a
3-4 bedroom	3200-4000	2650	2200-4000	2650	2000	2650	800-4000	1800-4000

New Zealand Rental Housing Information

There is always limited availability of executive 3-4 bedroom homes in New Zealand, as most people own their own home and only lease these when going overseas on assignment. As a result, rental prices are high, especially in the Auckland area, where demand for rental housing is extremely high. Two bedroom apartments are reasonably prevalent in and around the city centres, although many of these do not include parking. The majority of properties are let unfurnished. Rental furniture is available in Auckland, with Wellington having limited availability and Christchurch having very little on offer, mainly just white ware and televisions etc. Furnished apartments are suitable for short term accommodation, but also have limited availability and need to be booked well in advance if possible. These are expensive, particularly in Auckland where many are owned privately and landlords look for longer term tenants and increase prices for shorter term tenants

Good quality and executive standard homes let very quickly in New Zealand, as there is often considerable pressure on rental

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New Zealand Rental Housing Information (continued...)

markets. Auckland is faster moving, so decisions need to be made quite quickly to secure a property. During the winter months, prices in Wellington and Christchurch usually drop and rental prices can be lowered on some longer term rentals for a fixed period of at least 1 year.

Houses and apartments are small in New Zealand and only newer homes have central heating systems. The majority of apartment blocks do not offer facilities such as swimming pools, gardens, gyms etc., as many apartment complexes do in other countries. Many average-priced apartments are older in style, and do not have modern kitchens and bathrooms, or parking. Prices are much higher than expected by most expatriates, especially in Auckland, where this is also compounded by the fact that the type of apartment or home that expatriates have in their own countries is only available in the more expensive residential areas of Auckland.

Schools in New Zealand are zoned with enrolment policies in place, particularly for the more popular schools. This means that the family has to have proof of residence within a school's catchment zone. However, if they have this, the school must accept the children. Rental homes are also dearer in some secondary school zones, such as Auckland Grammar, Takapuna Grammar, and Epsom Girls Grammar School. As a result families find the schooling, usually a high priority for families, also makes the housing decision more difficult. Private schooling is chosen by many expatriate families, and places are not always available at the level of their children in their chosen school.

Average Monthly Housing Costs (in US Dollars)

	Auckland	Wellington	Christchurch
Villa - 3 bedroom	1550	1410	780
Apartment - 2 bedroom	1830	1270	990
House - 4 bedroom	2400	1830	1340

Housing Information - The Philippines

Houses in the Philippines are usually gated and high-fenced especially in upscale villages located in cities such as Makati, Pasig, Quezon City, San Juan and Alabang. Makati City is the economic business center in the Philippines, and also the area in which most assignees prefer to reside in villages or flats, however, its central location makes housing more expensive. Newer developments in this area are popular with expatriates.

High-end houses usually have at least three bedrooms, a den, swimming pool and large gardens. Accommodation in suburban villa-compounds usually includes a country club, playground and tennis courts. Leases are typically one year long, with an option to renew. Escalation is basically 10% based on the basic 1st year rental.

Over the last two years, availability in the rental market, specifically in popular areas for expatriates, has increased to keep pace with increasing demand. The demand for condominium living is getting popular due to the good range of amenities provided, and the lower maintenance needs compared with single detached homes.

Housing Rental Range (in US Dollars)

* Rents reflect semi-furnished units and do not include association dues.

	Makati Area		Outlying Areas	
	Apartments	Houses	Apartments	Houses
1 bedroom	720-1440			
2 bedroom	1100-2700		800-1100	
3 bedroom	1800-3600	1100-3050	970-1380	1350-2160
4 bedroom		1800-3950		1620-2700
5 bedroom		1980-6300		1800-4500

Life as an Expat in China

Bernadette has been working at an international school in Beijing since she arrived 6 months ago. We asked her for her impressions about life in China's capital city.

Reloc8: What are your general impressions of the city?

Bernadette: It's a huge city with lots of people and many things to do and see. The buildings are really diverse, from modern skyscrapers down to traditional single-level homes built as four sides around a courtyard.

Reloc8: What surprised you about Beijing? In what ways did it differ from your expectations?

Bernadette: I'm surprised by the traffic here, there are so many cars now, including expensive ones, so traffic jams are a normal part of life. Bikes are still a popular mode of transport too, although I was expecting there would be more of them. The department stores are becoming quite modern too, which I wasn't expecting.



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Reloc8: Does an Expat living in Beijing need to speak Chinese to get around?

Bernadette: I think speaking at least a little Chinese is definitely a help, but most people working in international companies, big hotels and shopping venues can speak some English. In smaller cities in China you would definitely need to be able to speak some Chinese. In the larger cities, there are things that can help you get by, such as magazines and taxi books which have addresses written in Chinese that you can show to the driver. Wherever you live, though, it's a good idea to study some Chinese.

Reloc8: What are your favourite things about Beijing?

Bernadette: There are so many interesting tourist places to visit very close by, which is also great when family and friends come to visit. I also love the variety of food available; there are many different restaurants around the city - not only Chinese restaurants, but also Italian; Thai; Japanese and many others. Beijing is a very flat city, so it's great for walking or cycling around and there are

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Life as an Expat in China (continued...)

always interesting things to see on the street. The people here are very nice too; they always compliment me when I try to speak Chinese. It's also pretty inexpensive to travel.

Reloc8: What are your least favourite things about Beijing?

Bernadette: It gets pretty cold here in winter, but the buildings have good heating systems. Grocery shopping can sometimes involve going to two or three supermarkets to get everything you need. Traffic jams that happen just because someone wants to look at something on the side of the road - but that tends to happen everywhere. Also, many people here are still not used to queuing up, so queue jumping is a bit of an annoyance.

Reloc8: What useful things should expats living in China know about?

Bernadette: There are a few good, free English-language magazines that come out fortnightly or monthly, they're great for letting you know about upcoming events, new restaurants etc and they have a directory of places with phone numbers and the address in Chinese. Clothing in foreign sizes is hard to find, and women with larger feet will have trouble finding shoes here.

Reloc8: Besides work and shopping, what else is there to do?

Bernadette: Beijing has lots of different clubs and expat groups which organise hiking, cycling and sightseeing outings; there are also computer clubs and networking groups and seminars on Chinese culture and history. In the city, there are many interesting museums, galleries, theatres, parks and sporting facilities. There's also a lot to do just outside the city too so its great to hire a car for a day trip out of the city to visit the Great Wall, 1000-year old temples and ancient villages.



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Singapore Rental Housing Information

There is always a limited supply of executive houses for rent as most are owner occupied. Most rental properties are apartments in a condominium set up which offers facilities such as swimming pool, tennis, gym, children's playground, security guard service.

Rental prices have increased in the last six months, particularly for Good Class Bungalows and Condominiums in popular locations. The peak season for home finding in Singapore is from April till July, during this time premium properties are let very quickly and expatriates are expected to decide quickly when they see a property they like .

Houses for rent have always been scarce and if they are new or nicely renovated, they tend to attract a lot of interest and competition from prospective tenants. Serviced apartments suitable for short term lease (1-12 months) are limited in supply and need to be booked well in advance if possible. Minimum stay at such temporary accommodation is one week and offers a good alternative to staying at a hotel.

Most rental properties are partially furnished (i.e. Fully fitted kitchen with all white goods provided, window dressing, lights, wardrobes & airconditioners). Fully furnished properties are becoming more popular in the lower rental range.

Most leases are for 2 years with an option to renew for the third year. Most landlords prefer company leases. Security Deposit is typically 2 month rent and rents are usually paid in advance. Diplomatic Clause is standard for most leases and becomes effective after 12 months giving 2 months notice to landlord. Minor Repair Clause is standard and can range from SGD100 to SGD300.

There are two steps to the lease agreement process – the Letter of Intent (offer) and followed by the Tenancy Agreement. The whole process takes about two weeks from the time of the Letter of Intent. Comfortably, we would advise tenants to allow one month from the time of home finding to finalizing the tenancy agreement.

Houses with a pool are usually more expensive to rent and big gardens are rare in Singapore. Newer homes are built with 3 or 4 levels to maximize the usage of land, and they usually offer 4 or more bedrooms. The majority of newer apartments are smaller in size compared to the older properties.

Furnished properties are less common and if required, rents can be adjusted to include the renting of furniture during the tenancy. In the lower rental range, most tenants would expect the property to be fully furnished.

Landlords are usually fussy about the type of tenancy (personal or company) and type of tenants.

Construction is a common feature in Singapore and finding a home that is not going to be next door to construction is important, but sometimes difficult to predict or check.

Average Rental for Partially Furnished Properties in Singapore (Rent Per Month in USD)

	Popular Districts	Other Districts
Apartment - 2 brm	1200-2100	475-600
Apartment - 3 brm	2400-3000	710-1420
Apartment - 4 brm	3000-5300	1420-3000
Premium Apartment Penthouse - 4/5 brm	5300-8300	3000-5100
House 4 brm	2400-4800	2100-3000
House 5 brm	4800-7100	2400-3600
Good class bungalows - Exclusive houses with pool and garden	7100-14800	n/a

Fun for Families In Tokyo

Once you get used to the public transportation system in Japan, family activities are a plenty. Though the majority is Japanese-language based, some have started introducing some English support and in many cases, languages are often superfluous as the activities speak for themselves.

Parks:

- Yoyogi/Meji Jingu Park
- Hibiya Park & the area around the Imperial Palace
- Arisugawa Park
- Shinjuku Park

Amusement Parks:

- Tokyo Disneyland & Disney Sea: <http://www.mickey-mouse.com/tdl.htm>
- Toshima-en. Standard.
- Tama Sanrio Playground (Hello Kitty)

- Korakuen. Standard. <http://gojapan.about.com/qa/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=gojapan&zu=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tokyo-dome.co.jp%2F%2Fpark%2F>
- Sega Joy Polis. Virtual amusement park
- Children's Castle: http://club.nokia.co.jp/tokyog/weekly_updates/tqoole/kidcenter.html

* All above in metropolitan Tokyo except Tama Sanrio.

Zoos & Aquariums :

- <http://www.tokyo-zoo.net/english/>
- http://www.tokyowithkids.com/entertainment/aquarium_maps.html
- Ueno Zoo
 - Tama Zoo
 - Inokashira Zoo.

- Tokyo Sea Life
- Shinagawa Aquarium.
- Sunshine City Aquarium

Sports:

- Japanese baseball: At least 4 teams in area with both day and night games.
- Soccer: J League as well as the odd international competitions.
- Sumo. Held once or twice a year here in Tokyo.

Festivals:

- Too numerous to list but most popular time is in summer. Lot's of kids' games, food, etc. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/festivals.htm>

Useful Site:

<http://www.tokyowithkids.com>