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Il that glitters is gold (and occasionally silver) along this covered arcade where dozens of shops overflow with every kind of jewelry imaginable, from delicate pearl earrings to lavish golden wedding necklaces. Simply watching the goings-on is a treat. Settle down on a bench and take in the lively street theater of hard-working Afghan men dragging heavy carts of goods, African women in colorful kaftans and local women out on a shopping spree. The best time to visit is in the bustling evenings. Mornings are busy with tour groups, and the afternoons are sleepy.

Gold has been big business in Dubai since the 1940s. Today, the emirate is one of the world's largest gold markets, accounting for roughly 25% of the global trade

Central Arcade

Dozens

of jewellery shops spilling over with gold, diamonds, pearls, silver and platinum line the souq's car-free, wooden-latticed central axis. From stud earrings to intricate wedding necklaces, it's a dazzling display and a must-see, even if you're not part of the bling brigade. Most shops are run by Indian merchants, while customers are mostly Indian or Arab, which helps explain the deep yellow tint of the gold and the often extremely elaborate designs, as is preferred in those parts of the world.

Record-breaking gold ring

Dubai being the capital of superlatives, the Gold Souq is naturally home to a record-breaking piece of jewelry. Stop at Kanz Jewellers just past the main souq entrance (off Old Baladiya St) to snap a selfie with the world's largest and heaviest gold ring, as certified by Guinness World Records. Called the Najmat Taiba (Star of Taiba), the 21-karat beauty weighs in at nearly 140 pounds (64kg) and is studded with 11 pounds (5.1kg) of diamonds

and precious stones. It is worth a hefty US\$3 million.

What to look for when buying at Dubai's Gold Souq

There's no need to worry about fakes at the Gold Souq (unless you're in the market for a knock-off Rolex watch or Prada bag from one of the touts trying to tempt you). The quality of gold is

regulated by the Dubai government, so you can be fairly confident that the piece buffers accordingly. Since the price of gold itself is fixed, focus on the intricacy of the artisanship as a point of discussion. Buying more than one item should also net you a discount, as does paying in cash, though credit cards are almost always accepted. Sharp bargaining skills usually make merchants drop the initial asking price by 20% to 30%. Don't rush! Remember,

you don't have
to make a
decision on the
spot. Compare
carefully before
you buy and
be prepared to
haggle.



Price is determined by two

actors: weight based on the official daily international rate and the artistry of the item. The latest gold rates are posted throughout the souq and online. Most pieces for sale here are 14 or 18 karat. If you don't see anything you like, don't panic. Most shops will make something to your own design.

Haggling is expected, and vendors build in price

Where to stay near the Gold Souq

Dubai's Gold Souq is in the Deira neighborhood, which is close to the airport and therefore popular with visitors on stopovers. There are plenty of older, smaller, budget places in and around the souqs, although some can be quite – how shall we say? – shady. Nicer properties can be found along the Creek as far south as Dubai Festival City.

Where to eat near the Gold Soug

A classic pit stop in this area is Ashwaq Cafeteria, whose shawarma rocks the palate. Wash it down with a freshly squeezed fruit juice.

How to get to the Gold Souq

Take the Dubai Metro to Al Ras, or ride an abra (a traditional boat) to Deira Old Souk abra station.















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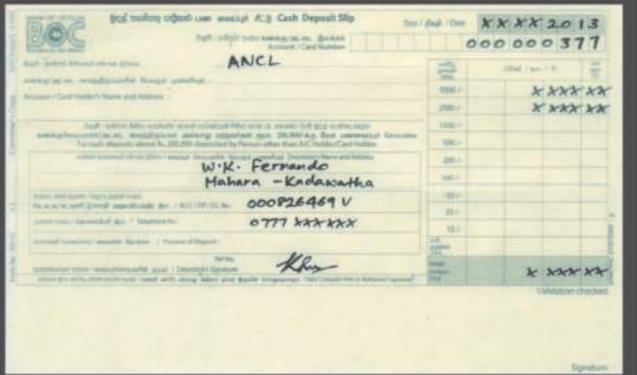
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Apartment

What Seniors Should Look for While



Apartment
Hunting

oving to an apartment is a big change for any senior. But if you keep an eye out for some key features during your apartment search, you will find an apartment you love.

Why an Apartment?

Many modern seniors are trading in their single-family home for an apartment all their own. A big house can feel empty if you're by yourself, and it can be a lot to take care of. Here are some of the perks of renting an apartment:

- 1. It frees up equity to help pad your pockets and supplement your current funds.
- 2. Things to do, places to go, and people to see. One of the best things about apartment living is that there are so many people to meet. Your new neighbors might become your new best friends!
- 3. Your landlord will take care of the building. In an apartment, it isn't your job to clean the gutters or replace the roof.
- 4. No more yard work. Goodbye lawnmower! You can always create a small indoor garden if you miss getting your hands dirty.

So now that you've made your decision, what should you be looking for in your new apartment?

Location is Everything

Everyone knows the realtor's motto: "Location, location, location." And if you don't want to drive everywhere, it should be your motto too.

Think about everywhere you like to go on a regular basis. See how close each apartment you look at is to everything you need, including:

- Grocery stores
- The library
- Convenience stores
- Your pharmacy
- Your doctor
- Medical facilities
- Parks

If your doctor is too far away to walk to, how will you get there? See what it would be like to take public transit there and back. If you are looking at a senior community, ask if they provide transportation.

What Amenities Does the Building Have?

You will be happiest if there are fun activities to do and plenty of places to meet up with friends. You should keep an eye out for these amenities:

- A pool
- On-site laundry facilities
- Fitness center
- Medical personnel on site
- Outdoor areas
- A café
- Dining room
- Computer rooms

You love your house, but you're ready to move on. You dream of a small apartment, with less upkeep. You imagine spending more time with friends and no longer needing to drive to get everywhere. But how can you make that dream a reality, without sacrificing your quality of life?

You need to eat, exercise, and do laundry. You want all of those things nearby, preferably within the building itself.

And don't forget that you need to have fun. Is there a clubhouse where you can play games? A sitting room where you can knit and talk with others? If you have a hobby that you love, be sure to find a place to do it.

Is the Apartment Safe and Easy to Live In?

Your apartment should be a comfortable place for you as you age. Look for:

- A one-level apartment. It should either be on the first floor or in a building with an elevator. You don't want to deal with stairs.

- Grab bars in the bathroom. You will need permission to have these installed. They will help you stay balances if the floor gets slippery
- A safe neighborhood. You need to feel comfortable walking around outside.
- A secure building. Do residents need a key card to enter the building? You don't want strangers wandering around. Make sure each apartment has a secure lock and deadbolt.

What is it Really Like to Live There?

Nobody can answer that question better than your future neighbors. Talk with them and learn what it's really like to live there. Think about asking them:

- Do they like living there?
- Is the landlord good at fixing problems with the building?
- Is it quiet at night?
- What is the neighborhood like?
- Do the neighbors get along?

If you decide to move in, you will already know your neighbors. And if they turn out to be rude and unlikable people, you know to keep looking.

Home Sweet Home

Remember when all you needed to do was look in the newspaper for available apartments? Things have certainly changed. But that change means you have more options. Now you can look at pictures of apartments without leaving your house!

In your search, don't overlook senior apartments that are designed with older adults in mind. They will have a thriving community and they specialize in the amenities you're looking for. Some senior apartments have flexible levels of care so if you ever need more help, it's available.

@ Internet



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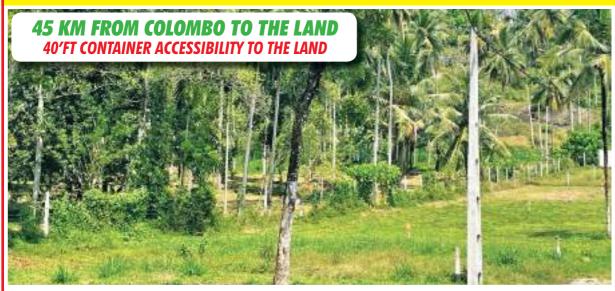
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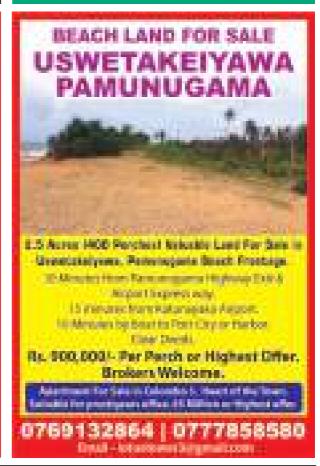


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Planning a New Home?

Planning to build a new home doesn't always require an environmental assessment to be performed. About fifty thousand environmental assessments are performed each year to ensure that the land won't have a significant effect on the quality of the human living environment. Some may find that they need more detailed assessments as a result of the primary environmental assessment.



Why You May Need an Environmental Assessment Before Building

Why is an environmental assessment necessary

People may not feel they need an environmental assessment while they plan on building a new home, but then how would they know where they are building is safe? You would want to make sure that the water in the area, whether it be city or well water is safe and drinkable for you, your family, and anyone else that may be living with you.

conditions. People may want to reconsider building on (or even owning) the land as a result of completing an assessment.

What goes into an environmental assessment

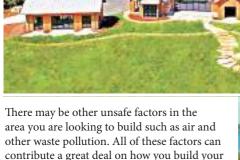
An environmental assessment is identified

as a brief (but thorough) process which is centered around researching and essary, and the land is to be inspected so that its current condition can be documented.

They may also:

- *Review historical records to gather an idea of the land's previous uses.
- *Search state and federal environmental databases to acknowledge any environmental





While people may not need to complete an environmental assessment, it may be a good idea if they want to avoid paying out of pocket for damages to the land that were not within their control. People can apply for environmental liability protection which may help with the cost of cleaning up the environment. Perhaps more importantly than the additional expense, living in harsh environmental conditions could bring about a plethora of health

house in a particular area. It may even mean

looking for another area entirely.



speculating on previous uses for the land. Inspectors will walk across the property to see if there are any clear signs that the land is contaminated. Those completing an assessment must explain why the proposed project is nec-

violations committed on the land or surrounding lands.

- **★**Review previous site plans.
- *Interview current and previous owners to add information not found in the databases.



*Take photographs to see if an environmental concerns become obvious when observed from afar.

A lot of work may be necessary if contamination is suspected, so people should make sure they are working with a corporation, that offers services for as many of their needs as possible.

While an environmental assessment may not seem necessary, those who plan to build a home on the land may want one to be sure they are not putting themselves or others at any risk. Although residential contamination may seem rare, it is not unheard of. People should be prepared, and if they are considering buying land on which to build, they may want to have an environmental assessment done to alert them of the tainted land

@ Internet



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Here's how to greet yourself with a sweet scent each time you open the

door.

7 Ways to Make Smell Your Home Smell Amazing



1. Make a stove simmer.

"I learned this from my crafty and cleaning obsessed mother," says interior designer Rhobin DelaCruz. "Simmer water in a small saucepan and add citrus slices and herbs, like lavender or mint." The heat permeates the sweet scent throughout your house an easy trick that is as lovely for a party as it is for any ol' Tuesday.

2. Clean your garbage disposal.

Notice a lingering stink? Might want to check the sink. "First try spritzing a dollop of lemon-scented dish soap down into the disposal, run the water, then turn it on," says interior designer Keita Turner. You can also run lemon or lime rinds through the disposal, followed by lots of water. If the smell persists, pour in a 1/2 cup of baking soda while running warm water.

There's just something about a special scent you're not always totally aware it's there, but when you walk into a room that has a certain smell, you're immediately hit with a memory of a time or place. (Remember how distinctive your grandma's house used to smell?). Create that effect in your home or simply kick a room's stink with these tricks.

3. Place candles strategically.

Candles are an obvious way to make your home smell sweet, but some clever placement can increase their efficiency. "Anchor a few candles where you would least expect them to be but don't light them," says interior designer Dee Murphy. "Try the linen closet, or anywhere fabrics might live and be able to absorb the scent. Not only do you get a nice surprise every time you open the door, but your linens will carry the aroma with them wherever you use them." Unstopables candles have a long-lasting scent and come in cool, modern designs.

4. Bring the outside in.

"Indoor plants clean the air while beautifying your home," says Turner. And many offer pleasant fragrances, too. Turner suggests geraniums, Arabian jasmine, eucalyptus, gardenias, corsage orchids, and Cuban oregano.

5. Soup up your air vents.

"Clip a car deodorizer (like one from Febreze or Glade) to a vent's metal slats," says DelaCruz. "As the air blows through, the scent will waft throughout the room."

6. Turn on the oven.

Nothing beats the aroma of warm baked goods. "When I know I am having guests over, I will purposely have a baked good on the agenda," says Murphy. "Something simple like cinnamon rolls or a banana bread fills the house with good ol' fashioned yumminess."

7. Use dryer sheets outside the laundry room.

"I like to place a few sheets in my family's closets and in our dressers. Our clothes always come out smelling fresh,"

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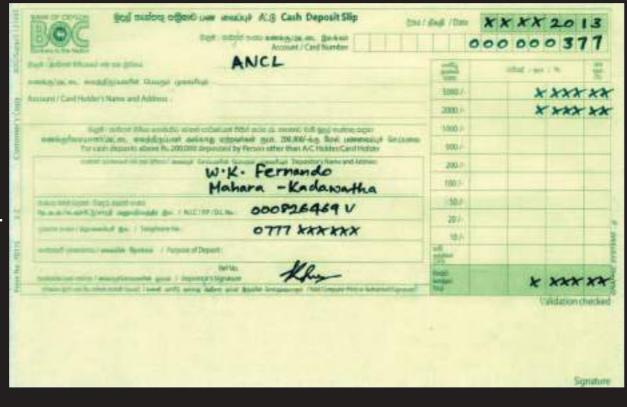
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Govinda Hela





ooking at the 500-metre tall
Govinda Hela (Westminster Abbey)
rock mountain from a distance,
one may need to whip up some
courage to walk along hilly forest paths.
But once you reach the summit, the
weariness evaporates the moment the
eyes behold the spreading vista below in
360 degrees, dotted with tanks, lakes, hills
and lush greenery.

According to Chulavamsa, att the top was the fortress of the Adipada (Sub King) Bhuvanekabahu during the reign of the invader Magha (1214-1235). Adipada Bhuvanekabahu was ruling over the area surrounding this rock during the time of Magha protecting the regin from Magha's army. On the summit of this imposing and formidable rock, the prince fortified himself and kept up resistance in this part of Rohana.

The trek along the footpath begins from the Sri Buvaneka Vihara lying at the foot of the massive rock. in Siyambalanduwa, about 300 km from Colombo, in the Moneragala district.

The dry months of the year are the best to wander around the area and according to this elderly monk July and August are popular with visitors.

Govinda Hela, a protected forest, has probably the largest number of ebony trees in a single location. At every nook, corner and turn amidst hundreds of rocks stand sentinel, both ageing and young ebony trees, with mature specimens dark black in colour.

Rocks of all sizes small, large and giant, some forming deep caverns – dominate the forest. Trees with vines snaking around their trunks and thick scrub complete the image of the wilderness. The winding paths and stepping stones are often treacherous not due to moisture but a carpet of dry leaves.

Be sure to wear a good pair of trekking shoes able to grip the ground firmly. For a snarl of giant roots covered with dry brown leaves gives a false sense of firm and many a time our feet slipped into deep holes.

Crossing two
bridges over parched
earth that was strong,
flowing streams during
the monsoon, the paths
are visible with cemented steps
or those carved out of stone. However,
watch your step, as at times stray vines
spread across the ground or
hanging down
from

could cause you to trip or get hit on the head.

After half a kilometre, the path gets more arduous as many steep rocks and high slopes have to be negotiated with care. Losing one's way in the thick jungle is easy. As such in case you do get lost, look for a path with tell-tale signs of trampled leaves to get you back on track.

But the wonder of Many years back, wonders is the hulang kapolla trekkers climbed up a rope or primitive a space between two rocks ladders made of through which a gushing branches with some rock climbing thrown wind blows, with the loud but in. A treacherous unmistakable "ho, ho" sound of climb no doubt. The foot paths were also a strong blast.

That has changed to the occasional cemented steps and the five aluminium ladders with hand rails for safety as one steers along the face of the mountain.

rocky and uneven.

The summit of the" chimney" is nearly fiat, and probably about four acres in extent, a great proportion of which is exposed rock, broken by patches of stunted vegetation. On reaching the top of the rock from its southward extremity one finds at once the

remains old tanks, the first of which is a small stone Pokuna (pond). The source of the water is unknown but villagers vouch that it never dries up.

Next to this is a second pond, partially natural and supplemented on its western flank with stonework terminating in a brick walling. This reservoir appears once to have been roofed in, as a number of narrow, thin; flat tiles indicate that such had been the case.

To the northwest of the second pond is a third, and by far the largest of them. It consists of a large mass of stonework erected bundweise at the lower extremity of a natural hollow, or valley, between the rocks, in order to dam up the rain water. The stonework is in good reservation and consists of cut stone blocks, bound together and set in a semi-circular outline.

But the wonder of wonders is the hulang kapolla a space between two rocks through which a gushing wind blows, with the loud but unmistakable "ho, ho" sound of a strong blast.

The power of the mighty wind can be measured by dropping a handful of leaves, which is caught in its swirls like a dancer's frenzied movements and sent upwards. After a 30-minute relaxed stretch-out on the summit, we make our way back, the climb down is quicker, taking about an hour. The heart beats rapidly and the legs are about to give-way but the exhilarating experience

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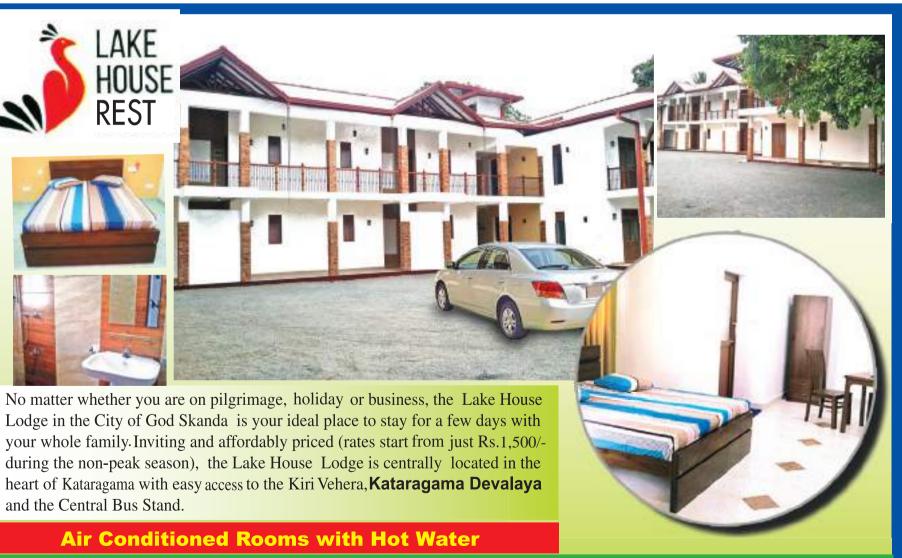


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