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Tips to Sell in a Winter Real Estate Market

Did you know almost 93% of home buyers search for new homes online? That means most buyers will begin their search for a new home from the comfort of their couch. Of course, spring is still the hottest season for home shopping, but today's instant access to listings across the country has dramatically altered the formula for seasonal home buying.

There are benefits to selling your home in the winter you might not realize:

- A winter home buyer is a serious buyer – usually working around a relocation or lease expiration.
- Many home buyers are utilizing time off for the holidays to optimize their home shopping.
- Winter home buyers might be motivated to purchase a new home before the end of the year for tax benefits.
- Fewer home sellers will be on the market in winter, which means fewer homes for buyers to choose from.

Here are our top tips to help you sell your home in a winter market.

Upgrade your outdoor lighting.

Winter days are shorter and it gets dark early. Brighten up your home's exterior with path lighting or spotlights. Add a timer to maintain a cozy glow for potential buyers who might drive by.

Take down those decorations.

Yes, the holidays were great, but the season is over and your decorations should be as well. Lights and inflatable reindeer

have no place in your listing photos or while you "show" your home. If you're selling before the holidays, keep your decorations simple and tasteful so as not to overpower your home's exterior or interior.

Hire a professional.

Another tip on how to sell in a winter market is to hire a professional real estate agent and stager. Look for local agents with a proven track record, who are familiar with the ins and outs of the market and your neighborhood. Many agents promote the sale before the house goes to market. Also, consider a professional stager who knows what works for the sale and how to get the job done in the most efficient way possible.

Don't forget the curb appeal.

Gray winter skies and bare trees are no reason to let your landscaping go downhill. Use fresh mulch and seasonal colors to add life to your winter yard and the front of your house. Remove dead leaves, vegetation, and branches. Use colorful, potted, evergreen shrubs to help.

Use Social Media.

Your real estate agent will be doing the bulk of the work as far as your marketing. However, that's no reason not to do a little (or a lot) of marketing on your own. Use social media to create a campaign. Share your listing on sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Look for local Facebook groups that revolve around local home buyers and sellers in your area and post your details.

Making a move at the end of the year may not feel like an ideal situation, but you're not alone. So, don't be left out in the cold. Use our checklist to get your dream move headed in the right direction.

January Calendar

January 1 - New Year's Day

January 18 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 1-7 is Celebration of Life Week

January is National Radon Action Month

Homeowner Tip:



What's Up With Your Downspouts?

Walk the perimeter of your home this month and take a look at your downspouts. The job of your downspouts is to keep water directed from your home and foundation. Downspouts often detach from your home, especially following heavy rain and storms. Make sure you reattach or repair any faulty downspouts. This is a minor and inexpensive fix that can save you from major expenses later.

January is National Radon Action Month - Here's What You Need to Know

Do you ever think about your home's radon levels? Most of us know very little about this naturally occurring, odorless, colorless gas. Keep your family safe by knowing a few facts about radon.

Is radon dangerous? Yes, radon can become airborne and inhaled. According to the EPA, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

Which homes should be tested? All homes. No home is exempt - from new construction to old Victorians. Even your neighbor's home might have a completely different radon level than your home.

How should I test my home's radon levels? Hire a professional who specializes in radon detection. Radon levels will be tested over the course of a few days to correctly analyze results.

What should I do if my home tests for high radon levels? Fortunately, correcting radon levels is simple and relatively inexpensive, using a radon mitigation system. This system draws radon from beneath your home and releases the gas to the outside.

How much does a radon mitigation system cost? The average cost of this system ranges from about \$800 to \$1,500. For more information on radon, visit RadonResources.com



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Easy Mexican Casserole

Easy to make and perfect for a cold, winter evening.

Ingredients

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 2 cups salsa
- 1 (16 ounce) can chili beans, drained
- 3 cups tortilla chips, crushed
- 2 cups sour cream
- 1 (2 ounce) can sliced black olives, drained
- ½ cup chopped green onion
- ½ cup chopped fresh tomato
- 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook ground beef until no longer pink. Stir in salsa, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes, or until liquid is absorbed. Stir in beans, and heat through.

Spray a 9x13 baking dish with cooking spray. Spread crushed tortilla chips in dish, and then spoon beef mixture over chips. Spread sour cream over beef, and sprinkle olives, green onion, and tomato over the sour cream. Top with Cheddar cheese.

Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes, or until cheese is hot and bubbly.



Photo & recipe courtesy of allrecipes.com