

# First Apartment Checklist

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A free 3-section printable from RenderedbyDesign. Day One, Week One, Month One. Room by room.

Most "first apartment essentials" lists drop you 200 random items in one bucket and call it done. This one stages the work across three time horizons so you do not blow the budget in week one and run out of money for the things that actually matter in week three.

Print all three sections, fill in checkboxes as you go, and use the per-room subtotals to keep your spend honest.

## Section 1: Day One Essentials (the first 24 hours)

The stuff that has to be in the apartment before your furniture arrives. If you forget any of these, you will overpay at a 24-hour drugstore at 11pm.

### Bathroom (Day One)

- Toilet paper, 2 rolls minimum
- Hand soap
- Shower curtain + liner
- One towel per person
- Toothbrush + toothpaste
- Bath mat or rug
- One small wastebasket

### Kitchen (Day One)

- Trash bags + a single freestanding trash can
- Dish soap + sponge
- One pot, one pan, one cutting board
- Two plates, two bowls, two glasses, basic flatware
- Coffee maker or kettle plus mugs
- Paper towels
- Sealable food containers (3 to 5)

## Bedroom (Day One)

- Sheets that fit your mattress + 2 pillows
- Comforter or duvet
- Phone charger and at least one outlet adapter or extension
- Alarm clock or phone-friendly nightstand surface
- One blackout option (cheap blinds, a sheet, or a tension rod with curtain)

## Living + Utility (Day One)

- Light bulbs for every fixture, correct base type
- One floor lamp or table lamp if any room is unlit
- Power strip with surge protection
- Cleaning supplies (all-purpose spray, dish soap, microfiber cloths)
- Vacuum or broom + dustpan
- Toolkit basics (hammer, screwdriver, level, measuring tape)
- Lease + utility account info in one folder

**Day One spend target:** \$150 to \$300 for a one-bedroom, \$250 to \$450 for a two-bedroom.

## Section 2: Week One (days 2 to 7)

Once you survive day one, fill the gaps. This is the spend that makes the apartment feel like an apartment instead of a campsite.

### Living Room (Week One)

- Sofa or large lounge chair
- Coffee table or large ottoman
- TV stand or media console
- Area rug, 5 by 7 minimum for studios, 8 by 10 for full living rooms
- Curtains or blinds for every window
- One throw pillow set + one throw blanket
- One floor lamp + one table lamp
- Trash can with lid

## Kitchen (Week One)

- Full pot + pan set (small, medium, large)
- Knife set or chef knife + paring knife
- Mixing bowls (3 nesting)
- Sheet pan + casserole dish
- Spatula, tongs, wooden spoon, can opener
- Storage containers (10 to 12 total)
- Dish rack
- Spice starter kit
- Trash + recycling bins

## Bedroom (Week One)

- Bed frame
- Nightstand or two
- Dresser
- Hamper
- Hangers, 30 to 40 if your closet is bare
- Bedside lamp
- Curtains or blackout shade

## Bathroom (Week One)

- Storage shelf or over-toilet rack
- Full towel set (bath, hand, washcloth × 2)
- Caddy or shower organizer
- Toilet brush + plunger
- First-aid kit basics

## Office or Flex Space (Week One)

- Desk
- Office chair
- Desk lamp
- Power strip
- Storage (rolling drawers, shelf, or filing box)



**Week One spend target:** \$400 to \$1,200, depending on whether you bought used or new.

## Section 3: Month One (days 8 to 30)

The layering pieces. Skip these in week one and you save money for the items that actually finish the room.

### Decor + Layering

- Wall art (1 to 3 pieces per room)
- Mirror for the bedroom or hallway
- Plants (real or quality faux)
- Picture frames for personal photos
- Door mat
- Hooks for the entry (keys, coats)
- Smart bulbs or accent lighting

### Kitchen Upgrades (Month One)

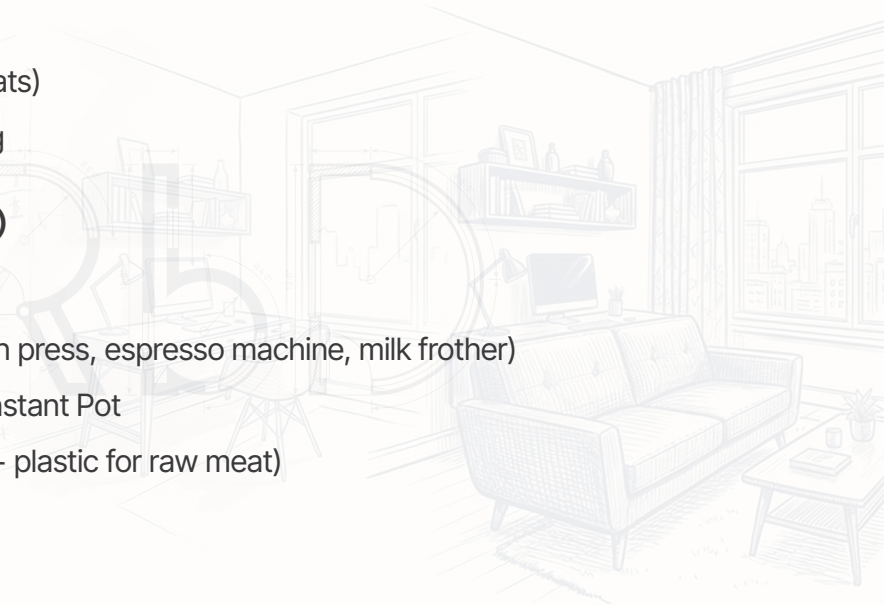
- Toaster or toaster oven
- Coffee or tea upgrade (French press, espresso machine, milk frother)
- Slow cooker, rice cooker, or Instant Pot
- Better cutting boards (wood + plastic for raw meat)
- Salt and pepper mills
- Tabletop dishware upgrade

### Bedroom + Bath Upgrades (Month One)

- Mattress topper if needed
- Second pillow set for guests
- Robe + slippers
- Better hangers (matching wood or velvet)
- Storage solutions (under-bed bins, shelf risers)

### Living + Utility Upgrades (Month One)

- Side table or accent table
- Bookshelf or storage cube unit



- Bar cart or drink station
- Quality cleaning kit (microfiber set, mop, glass cleaner, wood polish)
- Renters insurance review at month 1
- First-month utility audit (electric vs estimate, internet speed test)

### Tech + Adulting

- Mail forwarding follow-up (anything still going to old address)
- Update driver license + voter registration
- Smart smoke detector or carbon monoxide alarm
- Backup phone charger for travel

**Month One spend target:** \$200 to \$600 for layering items. The bulk of the budget is already spent.

## How to Use This Checklist

1. Print Section 1 on day one and check items off as you unpack.
2. Section 2 lives on your fridge for the first week. Cross items off in batches when you do a single trip to IKEA, Target, or wherever.
3. Section 3 is the patience list. Wait until month two before buying anything from it that did not make the cut in week one.

**Total all-in spend across all 3 sections:** \$750 to \$2,250 for a typical first one-bedroom, depending on tier.

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