

20 Good Questions to Ask Potential Roommates

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Whether you're a student in school or just moved to the city for your first job, renting an apartment on your own can be expensive on a shoestring budget. If a financial commitment to a [lease](#) is a major concern of yours, a better option might be to rent with a roommate.

Having a roommate means you should get to know the person you plan on living with. Going with someone random or a prospect that's a friend of a friend is totally your call, but it's important to have good questions to ask your candidate pool. After all, you want to [find a roommate](#) you can trust, right?

Rent and utilities require cash to pay off – so this question needs to be asked upfront. A prospect with no job and **bad credit** may not be able to provide for their portion of the bills. There's a risk associated there, and can you afford to cover their share if they can't make ends meet?

2. WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO ON WEEKENDS?

This is a simple question to determine if you share any interests. How you and the prospect roomie vibe on common interests may determine the success of the apartment living relationship. His or her answer can let y'all **happily coexist** – or it may throw up some serious red flags.

3. DO YOU SMOKE OR DRINK?

Living in an apartment with someone who smokes, drinks, or does both might be a deal-breaker for some renters. It's essential to ask though, especially if you suffer from asthma or alcohol consumption goes against your beliefs. Give the interviewee a chance to ask you the same. If you both agree to smoking and drinking, be sure to discuss where it's permissible, such as the balcony or in your own bedrooms.

4. IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME HAVING A ROOMMATE?

There's pros and cons to rooming with someone that has no roommate experience, as is true for someone with a handful of experience. Knowing your prospect's roommate history can help you plan a course of action. This is a great opportunity to tell a newbie your experiences with roommates, too. If they have roomed with others before, ask how the relationship ended and if they still remain friends – this can tell you a great deal about who you might be rooming with, and if they'll be a **fantastic roommate** or not.

5. ARE YOU OKAY WITH PETS IN THE APARTMENT?

Pets are a great source of comfort and companionship for many renters. Even if there's not a **pet** in the equation right now, a possibility for adoption may arise down the road. Make sure you discuss the topic of pets prior to moving forward with a roommate to avoid conflict.

6. DO YOU HAVE FRIENDS OVER MID-WEEK, OR JUST ON WEEKENDS?

If you prefer to be alone during the week and socialize on weekends – bring this up and have a candid discussion! Otherwise, there could be some **roommate wars brewing** at home. Each person should be able to give a little and make exceptions for special events (birthdays and TV premieres). If you both can be on the same page regarding mid-week visits, it should be all good.

7. WHAT TIME DO YOU GET UP AND GO TO BED?

It'll be too late by the time you move in together, so try hard to gain insight into their morning and nighttime routine during the interview. Let them ask you the same question. If you're an "in bed by 9 p.m." type of person and your roommate stays up past midnight playing video games within earshot of your bedroom, this may not be the best living situation for you. Having conflicting schedules almost always yields irritated roommates.

This might be an awkward question, but it really must be asked. Living with a roommate whose significant other is over all the time can be like having a third roommate who doesn't share the responsibility of paying rent or utilities. Anyone who's ever been in a relationship should expect sleepovers from time to time. Talk with the prospect about ground rules, visitation limits, and anything else that might make the other roommate feel weird in their own home.

9. HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN ON STAYING?

While you know there are circumstances that require someone to move out quickly, it's also incredibly annoying when you're left with the task of finding their replacement. If you want a long-term roommate (one that won't **break the lease** and leave you hanging), then make sure you state that in the interview. Did the prospect mention a short-term lease? Introduce them to **subletting** and move along with the search if you're focused on a long-term roommate.

10. HOW OFTEN DO YOU CLEAN THE APARTMENT?

Roommates have been known to quarrel about the cleanliness of the apartment. Inquire about how often they clean to gauge if their level of cleanliness is on par with yours. While you may have little say about their own bedroom, ask them which communal areas, such as the living room or study, they like **cleaning** and which they don't. Knowing these answers can help set up a chore chart for the roommates to follow.

11. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT OUT OF A ROOMMATE?

This allows the other person to be forward with their expectations on the living arrangement. Allow the prospect to finish his or her thoughts before opening up about your own expectations.

12. DO YOU HAVE ANY ALLERGIES I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

Asking about allergies can help you determine if this person is a good fit for the apartment. Owning a cat (or any other pet) but interviewing a prospect with cat allergies obviously won't work. Share with each other the **kind of allergies** you both have along with the severity of the reaction. You might be able to overlook ones that can be controlled with over-the-counter antihistamines versus allergic reactions that involve an Epi pen.

13. HAVE YOU EVER HAD ISSUES PAYING RENT?

It's common knowledge that a landlord or property manager will review a prospect's rental history before agreeing to move a roommate in. However, it's always good due diligence to vet the prospect yourself as well. Did he or she mention past issues of paying rent on time? How about other legal concerns, such as evictions? Continue on with the roommate search until you've found a reliable candidate.

14. WHAT TEMPERATURE SETTING DO YOU KEEP THE THERMOSTAT ON IN THE SUMMER? WINTER?

It may sound like an odd question, because it very much is. However, living with someone who enjoys the same indoor setting as you can help **keep your electric bills low**.

AND UTILITIES?

Most roommates understand that rent and cost of [utilities](#) will be split 50/50. If you want to discuss another approach to the division of housing costs and living expenses, be sure to mention it.

16. WHAT TRANSPORTATION DO YOU USE TO GET AROUND?

You shouldn't assume that the prospect has their own means of transportation. And you don't want to move in with someone and end up as a personal chauffeur, schlepping them to and from the store, work, and the bank. Simply ask them how they plan on getting around town: car, bike, or public transportation.

17. DO YOU COOK AT HOME?

Two cooks in the kitchen has (usually) never ended well. [Cooking meals for one](#) when you share a kitchen means you'll likely be scheduling your hour of prep and cleanup time to avoid clashing for oven use. Asking this question during the roommate interview can help you determine if the prospect is a cook-at-home-to-save type of person or one who eats out six nights a week. If both of you cook, you'll need to set rules around the use of kitchen accessories and food sharing.

18. HOW OFTEN WILL YOU BE AT THE APARTMENT?

Sometimes you need the apartment to yourself, even if it's only for an hour. Living with a roommate who spends a majority of their day at home may keep you from this need, which can lead to [roommate issues](#). Even asking the person to describe themselves as either a homebody or night owl can tell you everything you need to know.

19. WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT OVERNIGHT VISITORS?

Now we've already established how to approach significant others spending the night. And to be honest, the same can be applied to local friends. But what about out-of-town [overnighters](#)? You'll want to get the prospect's views on overnight visitors, as well as who's visiting and for how long. If they stay weeks on end, [that guest just turned into a roommate](#).

20. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?

This question allows the prospect to bring forth any information they feel is important to share, plus ask any follow up questions they may have.

As you can see, it's very important to conduct a roommate interview so you can find the right match. Once you've confirmed they're the right person, make sure you get a [roommate agreement drafted](#), detailing all the items you discussed and agreed upon.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

11 Responses

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