

YOUR FIRST HAMPTONS HOME · NOSTRA HAUS

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Your First Hamptons Home

*An honest guide from someone who's spent six years helping
buyers find the right house on the East End*

By Nathalia Valencia

Licensed Real Estate Broker

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A Letter from Nathalia

Over the past six years, I've sat across the table from a lot of first-time Hamptons buyers. Smart people. Well-prepared people. People who had done their research and still felt completely lost the moment they started actually looking.

It wasn't because they weren't ready financially. It was because no one had ever explained to them how this market actually works. And most brokers — let's be honest — would rather show you houses than answer your questions before you're under contract.

I wrote this guide because every week I field the same ten questions. What's the difference between Southampton and East Hampton? How fast do things actually move? What does my attorney do, and when do I need one? Are there costs I'm not seeing? Should I be looking off-market?

Good questions, all of them. They deserve real answers.

A few things this guide is and isn't. It's written from my experience — one broker's honest perspective after six years in this market. It's not a legal document, not a contract, not a substitute for professional advice specific to your situation. The market changes. Numbers I cite are based on the current environment and recent years. Use this as a starting point, not a rulebook.

And you don't need to read it in order. Skip to the hamlets section if you're trying to decide where to look. Jump to the costs section if you've been surprised by a number. Read the process section when you're ready to move.

My goal is simple: by the time you finish this, you should feel less like a tourist in this market and more like someone who knows what they're doing.

— *Nathalia*

Section 1: Is the Hamptons Right for You?

I'm going to start with a question most brokers won't ask you: *Should* you buy in the Hamptons?

Not because I want to talk you out of it. I don't — this is my livelihood and I genuinely love this place. But I've watched buyers spend six months, and in some cases several years, searching for a house in the Hamptons before realizing the lifestyle wasn't what they'd imagined. That's painful for everyone. A few honest conversations upfront would have changed the outcome.

The seasonal reality

The Hamptons from Memorial Day to Labor Day is extraordinary. The beaches are world-class. The restaurants are genuinely excellent. Main Street in Southampton and the village in East Hampton are alive in a way that's hard to find anywhere else within driving distance of New York City.

The Hamptons from October through April is something else entirely. Quieter. Slower. Some of it is beautifully quiet — the beaches are empty, the light is incredible, the traffic doesn't exist. Some of it is genuinely inconvenient. A handful of your favorite restaurants will be closed. The boutiques on Main Street go dark from January through March. Your landscaper disappears for the winter. The good hardware store closes at 4pm.

If you're buying a weekend home you'll use heavily in summer and occasionally in fall, this doesn't matter much. But if you're imagining a serious year-round residence, go spend a weekend out here in February before you buy. I mean that literally. Drive out on a Thursday night in February and stay through Sunday. See what it feels like.

The drive

I have to mention the drive because buyers who haven't done it in August don't understand what they're signing up for.

On a normal weekday, Southampton is about 1 hour and 45 minutes from Midtown. On a Friday afternoon in July or August, that same trip can take 4 hours. There are weeks in summer where the traffic is so bad that people in the Hamptons community have basically stopped trying to leave on Fridays at all. You either leave by noon or you leave Saturday morning.

This affects how you use the house. It affects your relationship with the place. If you have flexibility in your schedule, it's manageable. If you're locked into a 5pm Friday departure, it can grind on you over time.

The train is a real option. The LIRR runs directly to Southampton, Hampton Bays, and further east. Some buyers use it heavily — especially if they have a car waiting out here. Worth thinking about before you commit to a specific location.

Who the Hamptons is genuinely for

After six years doing this, here's my honest read: the Hamptons is for people who actually like being outside. The beach, the water, the open land. It's for families who want room to breathe in a way that's impossible in the city. It's for people who have friends or family in the area and genuinely plan to see them. It's for buyers who have thought through whether they may rent the property at some point — and who understand that rental rules vary significantly by town and most require permits.

The Hamptons is probably not the right fit if you're buying primarily for prestige, or because it seemed like the obvious place to buy a second home. Those buyers often end up not using the house enough to justify the cost. The cost here is real — I'll get into it in the expenses section — and you want to feel like the life you're getting is worth it.

Section 2: How the Market Actually Works

The Hamptons real estate market does not work like the market you may have experienced in Brooklyn, or in Westchester, or in whatever city you're coming from. The rules are different. The pace is different. The dynamics between brokers are different. Understanding this before you start looking will save you real time and real frustration.

It's a broker-driven market

In most markets, buyers can search Zillow, find a house they like, and call the listing agent directly. You can do that here too. But the Hamptons market runs heavily on broker relationships, and a significant share of the best properties — especially at the \$2M–\$4M level — are marketed through broker networks before they ever appear on the public sites.

Listing agents here know the buying agents who have serious, pre-qualified buyers ready to move. Those buyers get a call. If none of them close it, the listing goes on Zillow. By the time you see it on a public portal, it has often already been seen by every serious buyer in the market.

This is one of the main reasons I tell buyers to get a dedicated buyer's broker early in the process — not when you've already fallen in love with a house online, but before you start actively looking. A good

broker who is embedded in this market knows what's coming before it's listed.

Off-market is real here

A meaningful portion of Hamptons transactions happen off-market. A seller decides they want to test the price, or they value privacy, or they simply trust a broker to bring them a qualified buyer without the hassle of open houses. These houses never appear on the MLS.

Finding off-market properties means having a broker who has relationships — who gets the call when a seller is starting to think about it. I won't pretend every off-market deal is a better deal.

Sometimes sellers with off-market properties are overpriced precisely because they haven't seen what the market will actually pay. But occasionally you find something with less competition that would have attracted a bidding war on the open market.

How fast does it move?

This is where I'll be honest in a way that might surprise you: the Hamptons market is slower than it looks in magazines.

The frenzied days of 2020 and 2021 — where houses went over ask in days with multiple offers — have passed. The market today is more deliberate. Properties at \$2M–\$3M often sit for 60 to 90 days before going under contract. At \$3M–\$4M, it's common to see listings sit

for 4–6 months. There are exceptions — well-priced, well-presented houses in the right locations still move quickly. But the panic-buying urgency of a few years ago has eased.

This is actually good news for you as a buyer. You have time to look carefully, do your diligence, and negotiate. Don't let anyone rush you into a decision just to create urgency that isn't really there.

The bidding process

New York law requires that all residential transactions use an attorney. Once you want to make an offer, your broker will present it verbally or in writing to the listing side. If it's accepted in principle, the attorneys get involved immediately — unlike in other states, there is no signed purchase contract for some time. Until you have a signed contract, there is no binding deal. The property can be sold to someone else.

This is called "subject to contract" and it creates a window where deals fall apart. Sellers can accept a higher offer. Buyers can get cold feet. The period between verbal acceptance and signed contract — usually a few days to a couple of weeks — is where experienced brokers earn their money, managing the momentum so nothing falls apart.

Why a buyer's broker costs you nothing

In most NY residential transactions, the seller pays the full commission, including the buyer's broker's fee. Following the 2024 NAR settlement, this structure is more explicit and negotiable than it used to be — buyer's agent compensation is now typically agreed to in writing at the start of a buyer's search. In practice, most sellers still offer cooperation to buyer's brokers as part of their listing. I walk every buyer through exactly how this works in our first conversation so there are no surprises.

When I'm representing you as a buyer, my focus is on getting you the right home at the right price — and making sure you understand every step along the way. No pressure, no jargon, no rushing you toward a decision that isn't right for you.

A note on financing at this price point

Most Hamptons homes are in jumbo loan territory. For 2026, the conforming loan limit in Nassau and Suffolk counties (both designated high-cost areas) is \$1,209,750, which means anything above that requires a jumbo mortgage with different underwriting, usually higher down payments (25%+ is typical for second homes), and slightly different rates than conventional loans. If you're financing, talk to a lender experienced with jumbo and second-home loans before you start looking — your pre-approval should reflect the reality of this market. Cash buyers are common at this price point, and in a competitive situation, a cash offer often moves faster and closes more cleanly than a financed one.

Section 3: The Hamlets — What's Where and What It Costs

The "Hamptons" is not one town. It's a stretch of the South Fork of Long Island — roughly from Westhampton in the west to Montauk at the tip — made up of distinct villages and hamlets, each with its own character, price range, and year-round community.

First-time buyers often fixate on a single name — "I want East Hampton" — without knowing why. In my experience, when you dig into what someone actually wants, the right answer is sometimes different from what they thought. Here's my honest breakdown of every hamlet we cover.

Southampton

Southampton is where I spend most of my time, and it's where Nostra Haus is based. For good reason: it's one of the most complete communities on the East End, and it's genuinely underrated compared to its more famous neighbor to the east.

The village has a real year-round main street — good restaurants, a hardware store, a grocery store, shops that stay open in winter. Jobs Lane and Main Street are as good as anything the Hamptons has. There's a hospital here, which matters more than people think once

you're living here full-time or with kids. And the housing stock ranges from modest (\$1.5M–\$2M gets you into the market) to exceptional (\$8M–\$20M+ on the ocean).

In my price range of focus — \$1.5M to \$4M — Southampton offers the most variety of any hamlet on the South Fork. You can find a 3-bedroom in Shinnecock Hills for \$1.8M, a newer construction with a pool closer to the village for \$3.2M, or something on a canal with a dock for \$2.5M. The community is mixed — old money, new money, families who've been here for generations. It doesn't have the same scene-y quality as East Hampton, which I consider a feature, not a bug.

East Hampton

East Hampton Village is the most famous part of the Hamptons, and it carries a price premium that reflects it. Main Street is genuinely beautiful — the pond, the Presbyterian church, the old elms that line the street. Main Beach is one of the best on the East Coast. The social scene in summer is as active as anything on the South Fork.

The premium is real and meaningful. A house that might be \$2.5M in Southampton could easily be \$3.5M in East Hampton. In the \$1.5M–\$3M range, your options in East Hampton proper are more limited, and you'll likely be looking at smaller properties or spots that require a drive to the beach or village. That said, if East Hampton is where your community is — if your friends are there and you know you'll use it — it's worth paying for. Real estate is always personal.

Amagansett

Amagansett is East Hampton's quieter neighbor, and it's one I genuinely love for first-time buyers who want the East End energy without the East Hampton price tag. It sits between East Hampton Village and Montauk, and it has a character all its own — more relaxed, more creative, slightly younger feeling than the established villages.

The beach at Amagansett is excellent. The town square has good restaurants and a market. It draws more artists and writers than hedge fund managers, and that makes the community feel different in a way some buyers really respond to.

Sagaponack

Sagaponack is one of the wealthiest zip codes in the United States. It's a small hamlet between East Hampton and Bridgehampton, defined by a combination of open farmland, private lanes, and ocean frontage. There is almost no commercial life here — this is pure residential territory, which is exactly why buyers come.

Properties in Sagaponack are mostly above our \$1.5M–\$4M target range — the median sale price is significantly higher. But if your budget stretches and you want land, privacy, and proximity to both East Hampton and Bridgehampton, it deserves a look.

Wainscott

Wainscott sits quietly between East Hampton and Bridgehampton and is one of the least talked-about hamlets on the South Fork.

Which I think makes it underrated. It's almost entirely residential — no main street to speak of, not much commercial activity — but the land is beautiful and the access to both East Hampton Village and Bridgehampton is easy.

For buyers who want proximity to East Hampton without paying East Hampton prices, Wainscott is worth exploring seriously. It's peaceful in a way that the busier hamlets aren't.

Bridgehampton and Water Mill

These two are often grouped together because they're geographically adjacent and share a similar character — quieter than the village hamlets, more land, more privacy. Some of the most beautiful farmland in the Hamptons runs through here. Bridgehampton has a strong polo scene in summer that gives it a particular identity.

Water Mill and Bridgehampton offer larger lots, often with more privacy than you'd find in the denser village areas. If you're prioritizing space and open land over walkability to a main street, this stretch is worth exploring seriously. Pricing is generally strong — it's desirable territory, and the land here is increasingly hard to find.

Sag Harbor

I love Sag Harbor, and I think it's the most underrated value on the East End. It's a working village — it has a history as a whaling port and it has kept more of that character than almost anywhere else on the South Fork. A genuine bookstore. A hardware store. Restaurants that are open in January. A community that lives here year-round and acts like it.

Sag Harbor draws a different crowd — more literary, more artistic, slightly less scene-y than East Hampton. There's a village feel here that's harder to find elsewhere. The waterfront on Sag Harbor Bay is lovely in a different way than the ocean beach towns — more intimate, more protected. For buyers who want community and character and aren't fixated on being on the ocean, Sag Harbor is the first place I'd tell you to look. Pricing tends to run below East Hampton Village, and in the \$2M–\$3.5M range, you can find real, usable property.

Hampton Bays, East Quogue, and Westhampton

These western hamlets are consistently overlooked by buyers who come in focused on the famous names. That's a mistake, especially at the lower end of the \$1.5M–\$2.5M range.

Hampton Bays has water on multiple sides — ocean, bay, the Shinnecock Canal. It has a year-round community, reasonable pricing, and is typically under 1 hour 45 minutes from the city on a good day. It doesn't carry the cachet of East Hampton, but the water quality and the lifestyle are genuinely good.

Westhampton is the westernmost of the "Hamptons" hamlets. It has a charming village center, a walkable main street, and some of the most accessible ocean beach on the South Fork. Property values are generally lower than the core Hamptons hamlets, which means your dollar goes further.

East Quogue sits between the two and has a quieter, more residential character. Good value for buyers who want bay access and a low-key pace.

If you're price-sensitive or your priority is water access and outdoor life over proximity to a specific social scene, this western stretch deserves a real look.

Montauk

Montauk is at the tip of the South Fork and it operates on different terms than every other hamlet I've described. The vibe is completely different — more casual, more outdoorsy, a mix of serious surfers and wealthy weekenders that gives it a distinct energy you either love or don't.

Montauk is growing fast. It used to be a much more affordable alternative to the core Hamptons; that gap has narrowed significantly. Montauk draws a particular crowd in summer — beachgoers, fishers, surfers — which gives the village an outdoorsy character that lasts well past Labor Day. If that's the energy you want, Montauk is worth taking seriously.

A note on neighborhoods within hamlets

Within each hamlet, there are meaningful micro-locations — ocean vs. bay side, inside vs. outside a flood zone, walking distance to village vs. a 10-minute drive. These distinctions affect both price and lifestyle more than most buyers realize from looking at a map. Your broker should be explaining these to you, not just sending you listings.

Section 4: The Buying Process, Start to Finish

Here's what actually happens, in order, from the moment you decide you're serious to the moment you get keys.

Step 1: Get clear on your finances

Before you look at a single house, know your number. Not approximately — precisely. If you're financing, talk to a lender and get a pre-approval letter in hand. In this market, a listing agent won't take your offer seriously without one.

If you're buying all-cash — which a significant portion of Hamptons buyers at this price point are — have your proof of funds ready. A bank statement or letter from your financial institution showing liquid assets. This shouldn't take more than a day to get, and you'll need it quickly once you find something.

Step 2: Find your buyer's broker

This costs you nothing. It gets you access to the market — including the off-market layer I described earlier. And it means you have someone who is working for you, not for the seller.

Do this before you start seriously looking, not after you find something. Once you've fallen in love with a property, you lose negotiating time while you scramble to find representation.

Step 3: Active search

Once you're working with a broker, the search begins. You'll tell your broker what you need — bedrooms, distance to beach, pool or no pool, proximity to village, price range. A good broker will set you up on the MLS so you see what comes to market, and will also be working their network for anything coming before it lists.

A few things I tell every buyer: come out with an open mind for the first few weeks. The house that fits you might not match the image you had in your head. Try to see enough properties that you understand the market before you start falling in love.

Step 4: Making an offer

When you find the right house, your broker will present the offer to the listing side. You'll discuss strategy — list price, contingencies, timeline, what to include. In competitive situations, the strongest offers are clean: close to ask (or at ask), short due diligence period, proof of funds or pre-approval included, flexible on closing date.

In today's market, at \$2M–\$4M, you often have more room to negotiate than you think. I've seen buyers come in 8–10% below ask on houses that have been sitting for 60+ days and get countered reasonably. Don't be afraid to negotiate. But don't lowball to the point of offending a seller who's emotionally attached to a number — especially with estate sales or properties that have been in a family for years.

Step 5: Attorney review and due diligence

Once you have a verbal acceptance, both parties' attorneys engage immediately. Your attorney will review the contract, order a title search, and flag any encumbrances, easements, or issues with the deed.

At the same time, you should be doing your physical due diligence: hiring a home inspector, reviewing any septic inspection, getting a survey done if the current one is outdated. In older Hamptons homes, there can be issues with wells, septic systems, old electrical, or undocumented additions. This is not the time to skip the inspection to move faster.

You should also be getting your homeowner's insurance quotes during this period. Hamptons properties — especially those near the ocean or in flood zones — can carry meaningful insurance premiums. FEMA flood maps are publicly available and your broker should be able to tell you a property's flood zone status.

Step 6: Contract signing and deposit

Once your attorney is satisfied with the contract, you sign and deliver a deposit — typically 10% of the purchase price, held in escrow by the seller's attorney. At this point, you have a deal. It can still fall apart over inspection issues or financing failures, but you are under contract.

Step 7: Mortgage commitment (if financing)

If you're financing, your lender will order an appraisal and issue a mortgage commitment letter. This is your lender saying they will fund the loan, subject to final approval at closing. Most contracts give you 45–60 days to obtain this commitment.

Step 8: Closing

Closing typically takes place 60–90 days after contract signing. At closing, the buyer brings funds (either a wire or certified check), signs a stack of documents, and receives keys. Your attorney will walk you through everything at the closing table. For financing transactions, your lender's attorney will also be present.

Welcome to your Hamptons home.

After closing

The first few weeks after closing come with their own to-do list. Transfer utilities into your name, update your insurance policy from a vacant or builder's policy to a standard homeowner's policy, and — if you're making this your primary residence — file for STAR exemptions and update your residency with the town. We stay in touch with our clients after closing and are happy to help navigate any of this. The transaction may be done, but the relationship isn't.

Section 5: The Costs No One Mentions

This section is the one I wish someone had handed me when I first started working with buyers. The headline price of a house is not what you pay. Here is everything else.

New York State transfer tax

New York State charges a transfer tax of \$2 per \$500 of purchase price, which works out to 0.4%. On a \$2M purchase, that's \$8,000. In most standard transactions, the seller pays this, unless the parties negotiate otherwise.

Mansion tax

New York State's mansion tax applies to any residential purchase of \$1M or more. Outside New York City — which includes every hamlet covered in this guide — the rate is a flat 1% of the full purchase price, regardless of how high the price goes. The graduated rates you may have read about (1.25%, 1.5%, up to 3.9%) are NYC-only and don't apply on the East End. On a \$2M purchase, that's \$20,000. On a \$3M purchase, \$30,000. On a \$4M purchase, \$40,000.

Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund (CPF) and Community Housing Fund (CHF)

This is the one most first-time Hamptons buyers don't know about until they're sitting at the closing table, and it's the one that tends to cause the most surprise.

The CPF is a buyer-paid transfer tax that funds land preservation on the East End. Since April 2023, Southampton, East Hampton, Shelter Island, and Southold all charge a combined 2.5% — 2% for the original CPF plus an additional 0.5% for the Community Housing Fund that voters added in 2022. Riverhead stayed at 2%.

Here's where it gets expensive fast: the exemption only helps you on smaller purchases.

- On an improved residential purchase of \$2,000,000 or less in Southampton or East Hampton, the first \$400,000 is exempt. So on a \$2M purchase, you'd pay 2.5% of \$1.6M = \$40,000.
- On any purchase above \$2,000,000, there is no exemption. The full 2.5% applies to the entire purchase price. A \$2.5M purchase in Southampton costs \$62,500 in CPF/CHF tax. A \$3M purchase costs \$75,000. A \$4M purchase costs \$100,000.

This \$2M cliff is one of the most important numbers in this guide. If you're at \$1.95M versus \$2.05M, the CPF/CHF bill jumps from roughly \$38,750 to \$51,250 — a \$12,500 swing for \$100,000 of additional purchase price. Your attorney and broker should both be flagging this.

The CPF/CHF applies in Southampton, East Hampton, Shelter Island, Riverhead, and Southold townships — essentially all of the East End. There are some exceptions depending on the buyer's income and the property price — your broker can explain whether any exemption applies to your purchase. Either way, there's no reason to be blindsided. Know it's coming and budget for it from the start.

Attorney fees

You need an attorney in New York. Budget \$2,500–\$5,000 for a standard Hamptons residential transaction. More for a complex deal, an estate sale, or anything requiring title litigation.

Inspection costs

A thorough home inspection on a typical Hamptons property runs \$800–\$1,500 depending on size and scope. Add a separate septic inspection (\$400–\$800), a well test if applicable (\$200–\$400), and possibly a chimney inspection or oil tank scan for older properties. Budget \$1,500–\$2,500 for the full inspection package on anything you're serious about.

Title insurance

Title insurance is required by most lenders and highly recommended for cash buyers. The cost is roughly \$5 per \$1,000 of purchase price, so approximately \$10,000 on a \$2M purchase. This is a one-time cost paid at closing.

Property taxes

This one surprises people. Hamptons property taxes are significant and vary widely by town and school district. A \$2M house in Southampton might carry annual taxes of \$12,000–\$18,000. The same price home in East Hampton could be different. Look at the actual tax bill for any house you're seriously considering, not just the estimate.

STAR exemptions (New York's school tax relief program) are available for primary residences but not second homes. If you're buying as a second home, you don't qualify.

Homeowner's insurance and flood insurance

Standard homeowner's insurance in the Hamptons runs \$3,000–\$8,000 per year for a typical single-family house at the \$2M–\$3M level, depending on location, construction, and coverage. Properties close to the ocean, in flood zones, or with pool and dock add-ons will be higher.

Flood insurance is separate and can be substantial if the property is in a designated flood zone. I have seen buyers find houses they loved, only to discover flood insurance alone costs \$15,000–\$20,000 per year. Ask about the flood zone status before you fall in love with anything near water.

Maintenance and carrying costs

A Hamptons property has real carrying costs whether you're using it or not. Rough annual budget for a \$2M–\$2.5M house in Southampton:

- Property taxes: \$12,000–\$18,000
- Homeowner's insurance: \$4,000–\$7,000
- Landscaping: \$6,000–\$12,000 (more with a pool)
- Pool opening/closing and maintenance: \$3,000–\$5,000
- Utilities (electric, gas, water): \$4,000–\$8,000
- General maintenance: \$5,000–\$10,000

Add those up and you're looking at \$35,000–\$60,000 per year in carrying costs before you've paid a mortgage or used the house. This is not a reason not to buy. But it's a number to know.

If you're considering renting the property

Some buyers consider whether they may rent the property at some point. Rental rules on the East End vary significantly by town and most require permits — short-term rentals especially. If rental use is part of your thinking, talk with your accountant about tax treatment and contact the relevant town for current rental regulations before you buy.

Section 6: Mistakes I See First-Time Buyers Make

After six years of watching transactions come together and fall apart, these are the patterns I see over and over.

Waiting too long once they've found the right house

Buyers who have been searching for months sometimes get cautious right when they should be decisive. They've finally found something that checks all the boxes — and then they want to think about it for a week. In a slower market, that can work out. In certain pockets, it won't. If a house is right for you, move on it.

Only looking in summer

I understand the impulse. Summer is when the Hamptons is most beautiful and most alive. But summer is also when the market is most crowded and when sellers know they have a captive audience. Some of the best buying happens between October and March. The selection is different, sellers are often more motivated, and you can see a property at its worst — which tells you things you won't learn in July.

Skipping the inspection to win a deal

In competitive markets, buyers sometimes waive inspection contingencies to make their offer more attractive. I advise against this in almost every situation. I have seen buyers waive inspections on houses that turned out to have \$80,000 in septic issues, foundation cracks, or rotting structural members. The inspection is not just a negotiating tool — it's how you find out what you're actually buying.

Using the listing agent as their broker

The listing agent works for the seller. Full stop. They are legally obligated to represent the seller's interests. They can be perfectly nice people. But when you ask them "how much should I offer?" or "what are the seller's motivations?" — they are not in a position to answer honestly. Use your own representation.

Buying the neighborhood rather than the house

The zip code or hamlet name becomes a kind of goal. "I want Sagaponack." "I want East Hampton Village." Then they buy a house in that hamlet that doesn't actually suit them — wrong layout, wrong lot, wrong proximity to what they care about — just to be able to say they're there. The hamlet matters. The house matters more.

Not running the numbers on carrying costs

I covered this in the expenses section but it bears repeating. Go into this eyes open about what it actually costs to own. Not to scare yourself out of it — but so you're choosing the right house for your actual budget, not just the purchase price that fits your number.

Not accounting for the CPF/CHF tax

Every year I see buyers who budgeted carefully for purchase price, transfer taxes, and closing costs, but didn't know the Peconic Bay CPF/CHF was coming. On a \$2M purchase in Southampton, that's \$40,000. On a \$2.5M purchase, it's \$62,500. Read Section 5. Budget for it upfront.

What to Do Next

If you've made it to the end of this guide, you're more prepared than most buyers who start looking in this market. That matters.

Here's what I'd suggest:

If you're 6–12 months out from buying: Start visiting. Come out on weekends in different seasons. Walk Main Street in Southampton in February and in July. Drive through Sag Harbor. Spend a morning on the ocean beach. Get a feel for the different hamlets before you start making financial decisions. The relationship with a place matters and takes time.

If you're 3–6 months out: Get your finances in order. Talk to a lender experienced with jumbo loans, get a pre-approval letter, have your proof of funds documentation ready. Then find a buyer's broker and start the formal search. At this range, you have time to look carefully without rushing.

If you're actively looking now: Make sure you have your own representation, that your finances are documented, and that you've done your homework on carrying costs — including the CPF/CHF — before you fall in love with a specific property.

Ready to talk? The best next step is a 15-minute conversation. Not a sales call — a real conversation about where you are in the process, what you're looking for, and whether we're the right fit to work together. I talk to buyers every week who aren't ready to start for six months, and that's fine. I'd rather answer your questions now than have you make a mistake before we've spoken.

Book a free call with me directly on my calendar: cal.com/nathalia-valencia-xqk6cu/15min

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