

RELOCATION GUIDE · WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

Moving to Winston-Salem

A local's guide to the neighborhoods, the logistics, and buying a home from out of state, written by a Triad Realtor® who helps people move here every year.

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THE TWIN CITY

WELCOME



Hi, I'm Lynette!

I was born and raised in the Triad, and today I help people move to Winston-Salem from all over the country.

Most of my relocation clients reach out feeling a little nervous. You are making one of the biggest financial decisions of your life from hundreds of miles away, in a city you may have only visited once or twice. That is a lot!

My goal with this guide is to give you the information I would want if I were in your shoes: how the city is laid out, what each area feels like, what to expect day to day, what you need to handle once you get here, and how buying a home from a distance actually works.

Read it, mark it up, and bring your questions. I am always a call, text, or email away.

Lynette

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

Winston-Salem at a glance	3	Health care & the four seasons	13
The honest version	4	Weekends & things to do	14
How the city is laid out	5	Your first 60 days	15
Eight areas to know	6	Buying from out of state	17
Where the jobs are	10	Rent first or buy?	18
Getting around	11	Your move plan	19
Schools & colleges	12	Let's talk	20

Small-city feel, world-class medicine

Winston-Salem sits on the western side of North Carolina's Piedmont Triad, the region it shares with Greensboro and High Point. It is closer to the mountains than any other Triad city, and it has a deep history all its own.



The Twin City

The towns of Winston and Salem merged in 1913. The hyphen in the name is a nod to both.

5th largest

Winston-Salem is the fifth-largest city in North Carolina.

Forsyth County

The county seat. Kernersville, Clemmons, and Lewisville are separate towns in Forsyth County too.

Moravian roots

Moravian settlers founded Salem in 1766. Today it's Old Salem, a living history district you can walk through.

City of Arts & Innovation

Home of UNC School of the Arts and the Innovation Quarter, a downtown research and tech district.

A sweet claim to fame

Krispy Kreme was born here in 1937. Yes, locals have opinions about which shop is best.

What people love, and what to know before you come

I love this city, but it is not perfect. You deserve the real story before you move.

What my clients love

More home for your money

Compared to a lot of bigger metro areas, your budget tends to stretch further here. Many of my relocation clients are surprised by how much space they can get.

Health care is a big deal here

Two major health systems are based in town, which means great care close by and a lot of medical jobs.

History and character

Old Salem, the arts school, Reynolda, and older neighborhoods with tree-lined streets give the city a personality you feel right away.

The mountains are close

Pilot Mountain is about half an hour away and the Blue Ridge Parkway is an easy day trip, with Greensboro and the airport 30 minutes east.

What to know

Pollen season is no joke

Every spring, everything gets a yellow coat: your car, your porch, your windows.

Stock up on allergy meds before March.

You will need a car

There are city buses and rideshare, but Winston-Salem was not built around public transit.

Plan your home search around your commute by car.

The roads are still changing

The Northern Beltway has been opening in sections, and it changes how some commutes work.

Ask me what's open and what's planned near any home you like.

The pace is slower

If you want nonstop nightlife, this may not be your city.

If you want room to breathe and an easy daily routine, it probably is.

Think of downtown as the hub

Downtown sits near the middle, and the main roads run out from it like spokes. I-40 and Salem Parkway cross the city east to west, US-52 runs north and south, and the Northern Beltway, the future I-74, curves around the east side. Most areas are easiest to understand by direction.



START WITH YOUR COMMUTE

Map your work address first. A 15-minute difference each way adds up fast, and the right side of town can make or break your day-to-day.

CITY OR TOWN?

Kernersville, Clemmons, Lewisville, and Rural Hall are separate towns, and Bermuda Run is in Davie County. Taxes, utilities, and services can differ by address.

DRIVE IT AT RUSH HOUR

If you visit, drive your commute around 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. If you can't, I can help you check it.

Close in to downtown

CENTRAL

Downtown & the West End

The feel Walkable and lively, close to the Innovation Quarter, Truist Stadium, Old Salem, and the restaurants along Fourth and Trade Streets.

Homes Historic homes in the West End and Holly Avenue area, plus condos, lofts, and townhomes downtown.

Good fit if You work at the medical center or in the Innovation Quarter and want a short commute.

Keep in mind Older homes can mean older systems. A thorough inspection is a must.

SOUTHWEST & NORTHWEST OF DOWNTOWN

Ardmore & Buena Vista

The feel Established neighborhoods with sidewalks and big trees. Ardmore sits next to the main hospital campus. Buena Vista is close to Reynolda and Wake Forest University.

Homes Ardmore has early 1900s bungalows and cottages. Buena Vista has larger, classic homes on generous lots.

Good fit if You want character, a neighborhood feel, and everything close.

Keep in mind Homes here don't last long. Have your pre-approval ready.

West of the city

WEST, ALONG I-40 & US-421

Clemmons & Lewisville

The feel	Two separate towns with a suburban, family-friendly feel. Clemmons is home to Tanglewood Park and plenty of shopping. Lewisville is a little quieter.
Homes	Established subdivisions, newer neighborhoods, and some homes on larger lots.
Good fit if	You want suburban living with an easy hop into Winston-Salem.
Keep in mind	Town rules and fees differ, so we'll confirm details for each address.

SOUTHWEST, ACROSS THE YADKIN RIVER

Bermuda Run & Advance

The feel	Just over the county line in Davie County, with golf communities, newer construction, and a resort-style feel in places.
Homes	Golf course homes, newer subdivisions, and active adult communities.
Good fit if	You want a newer home and a quick drive to Clemmons and Winston-Salem on I-40.
Keep in mind	Davie County has its own schools and services. Check HOA rules and dues too.

North and northwest

NORTHWEST FORSYTH COUNTY

Pfafftown & Bethania

The feel	Quiet and green, with a more rural feel. Bethania is a small historic Moravian town, and Pfafftown has a mix of neighborhoods and open land.
Homes	Single-family homes on bigger lots, some acreage, and pockets of newer construction.
Good fit if	You want space and quiet, and don't mind driving a bit for errands.
Keep in mind	Some homes use well water and septic. We will want to inspect both.

NORTH, ALONG US-52

Rural Hall & King

The feel	Small-town living north of the city. King is mostly in Stokes County and sits closer to Pilot Mountain and the outdoors.
Homes	Older homes, newer subdivisions, and homes on land, often with more square footage for the price.
Good fit if	You want small-town life and easy weekends outside.
Keep in mind	Most of King is in Stokes County, so schools, taxes, and services can differ. We'll confirm the county for any address.

East and southeast

EAST, BETWEEN WINSTON-SALEM & GREENSBORO

Kernersville

The feel	A separate town with its own historic downtown, parks, and festivals, right in the middle of the Triad.
Homes	Everything from older homes near downtown to newer subdivisions and new construction.
Good fit if	Your household commutes to both cities, or one of you works near PTI Airport.
Keep in mind	It's popular for a reason, so be ready to move when the right home lists.

SOUTHEAST & NORTHEAST

Union Cross & Walkertown

The feel	Growing areas on the east side with quick access to I-40 and the Northern Beltway.
Homes	Newer subdivisions and new construction, plus established neighborhoods and homes on land.
Good fit if	You want a newer home at a good value with an easy commute east or into town.
Keep in mind	With new construction, the builder's agent represents the builder. Bring your own agent to the first visit.

WANT TO SEE THESE AREAS BEFORE YOU VISIT?

I cover Winston-Salem and the rest of the Triad on my YouTube channel, youtube.com/@lynetteselbyrealestate. Watching a few videos first makes our first call much more productive.

Medicine, research, and education lead the way

Winston-Salem's economy was built on tobacco and textiles. Today it leans on health care, research, education, finance, and manufacturing.

HEALTH CARE

Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist is the largest employer in Forsyth County. Novant Health also has major hospitals and practices across the area.

EDUCATION

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem State University, UNC School of the Arts, Forsyth Tech, and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools are all big employers.

MANUFACTURING & LOGISTICS

I-40, I-74, and US-52 make the area a natural fit for manufacturing and distribution, and PTI Airport's cargo and aviation jobs are a short drive east.

THE INNOVATION QUARTER

A downtown district for research, biotech, and startups, including the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine and the Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

CORPORATE & FINANCE

Reynolds American is headquartered here, and Truist, which grew out of Winston-Salem's BB&T, still has operations in town. Many other companies keep regional offices downtown.

WORKING REMOTELY?

Lots of my clients work remotely for companies in other states. If that's you, focus on internet options at the address and a home office that works.

MY COMMUTE TIP

Working at the medical center or in the Innovation Quarter? Look at Ardmore, the West End, Buena Vista, and Clemmons. Working in Greensboro or near PTI? Look at Kernersville and the east side. Company plans can change, so confirm details with your employer.

Easy to get around, easy to get away

HIGHWAYS

I-40 runs east to west across the area, and Salem Parkway (the old Business 40) cuts right through downtown. US-52 runs north and south, and US-421 heads west toward Wilkesboro and Boone.

THE NORTHERN BELTWAY

This new loop around the east side of the county, which will carry I-74, has been opening in sections. It now connects US-421, I-40, US-311, and US-52 and takes pressure off older roads. Ask me what's open near any home you like.

FLYING

Piedmont Triad International (PTI) is about 25 to 30 minutes east, with nonstop flights to major hubs. Routes change, so check flyfrompti.com. Charlotte's airport is about 1 hour 15 minutes away for more options. Smith Reynolds Airport, northeast of downtown, serves private and corporate planes.

BUS & TRAIN

Winston-Salem Transit Authority runs city buses, but most people drive. The closest Amtrak stations are in High Point and Greensboro, and a daily connector bus runs from downtown to the High Point station.

APPROXIMATE DRIVE TIMES FROM WINSTON-SALEM

Greensboro	**30 min**
High Point	**30 min**
Pilot Mountain State Park	**35 min**
Hanging Rock State Park	**45 min**
Charlotte	**1 hr 15 min**
Boone & the Blue Ridge	**1 hr 30 min**
Raleigh	**1 hr 45 min**
Asheville	**2 hr 15 min**
Wilmington & Wrightsville Beach	**3 hr 45 min**
Myrtle Beach	**3 hr 45 min**

Estimates without traffic. Times vary by route and starting point.

How school assignment works here

Public schools in Winston-Salem and the rest of Forsyth County are part of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS). Your assigned school is based on your home's address.

CHECK THE ADDRESS, NOT THE ZIP CODE

Two homes on nearby streets can be assigned to different schools. Look up any home you are serious about at wsfcs.k12.nc.us before you make an offer.

WATCH THE COUNTY LINE

Homes in Bermuda Run and Advance go to Davie County Schools, and most homes in King go to Stokes County Schools. Boundaries can change, so always check the current map.

CHOICE & MAGNET PROGRAMS

WS/FCS offers choice and magnet schools you apply to. Application windows follow the district calendar, so look them up early if you're interested.

CHARTER & PRIVATE OPTIONS

The area has public charter schools, usually with lottery admission, and private schools such as Forsyth Country Day School and Salem Academy.

REGISTERING WHEN YOU ARRIVE

New WS/FCS families enroll online. Plan to have a certified birth certificate, immunization records, a recent health assessment form, proof of a Forsyth County address, and your ID. Questions? The district's student assignment office can help.

Colleges & universities

Wake Forest University
Private research university

Winston-Salem State University
Public HBCU in the UNC System

UNC School of the Arts
Public arts conservatory

Salem College
Private women's college focused on health leadership

Forsyth Tech
Forsyth Technical Community College

Carolina University
Private Christian university

Great care close by

ATRIUM HEALTH WAKE FOREST BAPTIST

- Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, an academic medical center in Ardmore
- Brenner Children's Hospital, on the same campus
- Davie Medical Center, with a campus in Bermuda Run
- Clinics and urgent care around the county

NOVANT HEALTH

- Novant Health Forsyth Medical Center, Winston-Salem
- Novant Health Clemmons Medical Center
- Novant Health Kernersville Medical Center
- Primary care and urgent care practices around the area

BEFORE YOU MOVE

Check which systems are in network for your new insurance, then book new-patient appointments early. Some practices have waitlists, and prescriptions are easier to transfer before you run out.

What the seasons are really like

Spring

Beautiful and blooming, and also pollen season. Expect a yellow coat on everything for a few weeks.

Summer

Hot and humid, with pop-up afternoon thunderstorms. A good AC system matters here.

Fall

My favorite. Warm days, cool nights, and great color, with the mountains less than two hours away.

Winter

Mostly mild with a few cold snaps. A light snow or ice storm can slow the city down for a day or two.

How locals spend a Saturday



OUTDOORS

- Walk or bike the trail around Salem Lake
- The Muddy Creek Greenway and the Salem Creek Greenway
- Tanglewood Park in Clemmons, with trails, golf, and a big holiday lights display
- Hike Pilot Mountain or Hanging Rock, both under an hour away

HISTORY & CULTURE

- Old Salem Museums & Gardens
- Reynolda House Museum of American Art and Reynolda Gardens
- Shows and concerts from UNC School of the Arts
- Winston-Salem Dash minor league baseball at Truist Stadium
- The National Black Theatre Festival, held every other summer

WITH KIDS OR GUESTS

- Kaleideum, the hands-on science and children's museum downtown
- Wake Forest football and basketball games
- The Carolina Classic Fair every fall
- Dinner and a stroll downtown on Fourth and Trade Streets

DAY TRIPS

The Yadkin Valley wineries, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Greensboro, and the NC Zoo in Asheboro are all easy day trips. The beach is a weekend trip.

New-resident checklist

North Carolina gives new residents 60 days to handle the big DMV items. Here is everything in one place so nothing slips.

BEFORE MOVE-IN

- [ ] **Set up electricity with Duke Energy**
  Duke Energy serves Winston-Salem and most of the area.
- [ ] **Set up natural gas with Piedmont Natural Gas**
  Only if the home has gas service.
- [ ] **Set up water and sewer**
  Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities serves the city and much of the county. Some towns, Davie and Stokes County addresses, and rural homes on wells are different, so confirm for each address.
- [ ] **Compare internet providers for the exact address**
  Especially important if you work from home.

WITHIN 60 DAYS

- [ ] **Get your NC driver's license**
  Book an appointment through NCDMV. Bring your out-of-state license, proof of Social Security number, proof of residency, and proof of NC car insurance.
- [ ] **Title and register your vehicles**
  After your license, visit a license plate agency, which is a different office from the driver's license office.
- [ ] **Update your car insurance to an NC policy**

A few things that surprise newcomers

GOOD TO KNOW

- [ ] **Vehicle property tax comes with your tag renewal**
  North Carolina's "Tag & Tax Together" program bills your vehicle's property tax with your yearly registration. It surprises a lot of newcomers.

- [ ] **Inspection before your first renewal**
  You can register without one, but your car will need an NC inspection before you renew next year.

- [ ] **Register to vote, register kids for school, and find new doctors**

Requirements can change. Confirm current details at ncdot.gov/dmv before you go.

How we'll find your home from a distance

The biggest worry I hear is buying a home you haven't seen in person. Here's how I make sure you're never guessing.

1 **We start with a real conversation**

Why you're moving, when you need to be here, your commute, your budget, and the life you want here, not just the number of bedrooms.

2 **You get pre-approved**

I'll connect you with lenders who know North Carolina programs, so you know your numbers before we start touring.

3 **I tour homes for you on video**

The listing photos show the best parts. I show you everything else: the imperfections, the things that need attention, and the street and neighborhood around the house.

4 **We build a smart offer together**

I pull the comparable sales and we go over them together, so your offer is based on data and not a guess.

5 **Due diligence, explained up front**

In North Carolina, buyers usually pay a due diligence fee to the seller and get a set window for inspections, appraisal, and research. I explain how it works before you ever make an offer, so there are no surprises.

6 **Closing with an attorney**

Closings in North Carolina are handled by a real estate attorney. If you can't be here in person, ask me about your options early so we can plan ahead.

PLAN AROUND THESE DATES

Start conversations with me and a lender about 90 days before your move. Start touring about 60 days out. Most purchases take roughly 30 to 45 days from accepted offer to closing, so time your lease or temporary housing around that.

Two good paths. Pick the one that fits you.

Renting first can make sense if

- You don't know the area yet and want to learn it before committing
- Your job or timeline isn't settled
- You may move again within a couple of years

Buying now can make sense if

- You're settled on your job and the side of town you want
- You're pre-approved and comfortable with the monthly payment
- You'd rather move once instead of twice

Either way, we can talk through both on a call. There is no pressure, and my goal is to help you make the choice that's right for you.

Your move plan

Fill this out and bring it to our first call. It makes everything faster.

TARGET MOVE DATE

WORK ADDRESS OR AREA

COMFORTABLE MONTHLY PAYMENT

PRE-APPROVED? LENDER

BEDROOMS / BATHROOMS

LONGEST COMMUTE YOU'D ACCEPT

MUST-HAVES

NICE-TO-HAVES

AREAS FROM THIS GUIDE I WANT TO SEE

LET'S TALK

Ready to plan your move?

Book a free 30-minute relocation consultation with me. We'll talk through your timeline, the areas that fit your life, and the next steps, whether you're moving next month or next year.

Scan to book your free consultation

Pick a time that works for you. The consultation is free, and there's no obligation.

https://tidycal.com/lynetteselbyrealestate/free-30-minute-relocation-consultation

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WEBSITE
lynetteselbyrealestate.com

YOUTUBE
youtube.com/@lynetteselbyrealestate

> I was relocating from TN and she assisted me with finding the perfect home for my family.
>
> RELOCATION CLIENT

> She held my hand throughout the entire process and kept me calm and informed.
>
> RELOCATION CLIENT

> There is NO QUESTION we found the right agent for us.
>
> BUYERS WHO FOUND ME ON YOUTUBE

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