NRI Buyer Checklist

Buying property in Kerala from abroad — step by step. From the NRI Desk at KeralaRealtyOnline.com

1. Before you shortlist

- Decide whose names go on the deed. Joint purchase with a resident Indian **close relative** (a parent, for example) is allowed — the payment must come from the NRI's own funds through banking channels.
- Property type check: NRIs can buy residential and commercial property, but **not** agricultural land, plantation property or farmhouses.
- Budget beyond the price: stamp duty (8%) and registration fee (2%) are charged on the **higher** of the sale price or the government fair value — see section 5.

2. Documents to verify on the property

- **Title deed** and the chain of prior deeds — no breaks in ownership.
- **Encumbrance Certificate (EC)** — at least 13 years, from the sub-registrar office.
- **Latest land tax receipts** — in the seller's name, paid up to date.
- **Possession certificate** — from the village office.
- **Location sketch / FMB sketch** — boundaries match the deed and the ground.
- For constructed property: **approved building plan** and **occupancy certificate**.
- For flats in projects: **RERA registration** — verify it yourself at rera.kerala.gov.in.

3. Your documents as the buyer

- Passport (and OCI card, if you hold one).
- PAN card.
- Overseas address proof and passport-size photographs.
- NRE / NRO bank account — payments should move through banking channels.
- If buying through a Power of Attorney: the POA original (see section 6) and the holder's ID and address proof.

4. The money trail

- Pay from your NRE, NRO or FCNR account through normal banking channels, and keep the SWIFT copies / FIRC safe — you will need them when you sell and repatriate.
- Record the payment schedule in the sale agreement; avoid cash components entirely.
- Buying **from** an NRI seller? Tax deducted at source (Section 195) applies to the buyer — take your chartered accountant's guidance before paying.

5. Fair value & registration costs

- Check the land's government **fair value** on the IGR Kerala portal (igr.kerala.gov.in) before you agree on a price — the deed cannot be registered below it.
- Stamp duty (8%) and registration fee (2%) are calculated on whichever is higher: the agreed sale price or the fair value.
- Registration happens at the Sub-Registrar Office for the area where the property sits.

6. If you are not travelling — the POA route

- Get a **specific** Power of Attorney drafted for this property and this transaction.
- Sign it before the Indian consulate, or have it apostilled if your country is a Hague Convention member.
- Send the original to Kerala and have it **adjudicated** before the District Registrar — this must be done within 3 months of the POA reaching India — and stamp duty paid.
- Only after adjudication can your POA holder sign and register the deed for you.

7. Registration day & after

- Deed executed and registered; collect your copy of the registered deed.
- Apply for a fresh EC after registration to confirm the entry.
- **Mutation (pokkuvaravu)**: transfer the revenue records into your name at the village office, and start paying land tax in your name.
- For houses/flats: transfer building tax and the electricity/water connections.
- Scan and store every document — deed, EC, tax receipts, FIRC — in two places.

8. Selling later & repatriation

- Sale proceeds are credited to your NRO account.
- You can repatriate up to **USD 1 million per financial year** in total from NRO balances, after tax compliance and with your bank's documentation (including a chartered accountant's certificate).
- Keep the purchase deed, payment records and tax filings — repatriation paperwork asks for the full trail.

General information only — not legal, tax or financial advice. Rules (FEMA, RBI, Kerala registration) change; confirm the current position with a lawyer and chartered accountant before transacting. KeralaRealtyOnline.com — Kerala's own property portal.

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