

## How much does one of your homes cost per square foot?????

Question: **How much will it cost to build a custom home in \_\_\_\_\_?**

Answer: **A high quality energy efficient custom home can cost (turnkey ready to move in) between \$145 and \$200 per square foot and up .....**

In some form or another, this is the most frequent question I receive. Regrettably, it's also one of the few questions that can't be answered specifically. Do we know how much it'll cost to take a vacation or to obtain a masters or doctoral degree? Or what the "average cost" of a dinner for two would be or how much is a new car?

All of these questions contain so many variables that it's impossible to answer them accurately without first asking additional questions and gathering much more information. The time of year, complexity of the project, jobsite conditions, labor and unemployment rates, local building codes, zoning laws, covenants and restrictions, availability of supplies and workers, weather conditions, natural disasters, good or bad economic times, and hundreds of other factors.

To make things more confusing there isn't a consistent process of calculating square footage or defining what is included in the numbers. Are they using exterior or interior dimensions to figure the square footage? Is the basement or garage included in their square foot price? What about porches, decks, fireplaces...

Unfortunately, the only way to be certain that your building budget is realistic is to identify and price every item that will be used to construct your home along with obtaining bids on all associated subcontracts and labor costs. To do that you'll need detailed floor plans and specifications to develop a complete and thorough cost. Not many people want to buy a dozen different home plans or spend months finding contractors to provide accurate bids on projects that might never happen. A more realistic approach is to simply work backwards.

Start by filling out a financial statement with your local lender— it doesn't cost anything and will probably take less than an hour. Knowing how much money you have to work with will save you a tremendous amount of backtracking, revisions and disappointments in designing a home you can't afford to build.

Based on my experience I can certainly tell you what the cost range has been historically with my clients in different geographic regions. Many builders and log home companies will tell you what you want to hear, but leave out the true turnkey (ready to move in with appliances and all finishes) costs. Local builders tend to quote attractive low numbers to keep you interested on the average cost of their homes. However, before you put too much faith in "average" numbers, keep in mind *that the only home that you really care about is the one you are about to build*. I rely on my 30 years of experience along with our full time design and drafting departments at Wisconsin Log Homes. Since 2006 I have managed over \$12M dollars worth of residential homes. Working with my clients to design a custom home plan in balance with their lifestyle needs and cost engineered to meet a budget they feel comfortable with is my primary focus.

This is not a side line for me. It is my passion. Please let me know if I may be of service to you.



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