

# Types of Houses

It does seem that there are hundreds of different styles of homes and we use different names for the same type of homes. For example, is there a difference between a bungalow or ranch style? What about a row house or townhouse? Semi, or should I say duplex? Here are definitions for some of the more common architectural styles and types of North American homes, including some you won't often find in Canada.

**A-Frame** -- contemporary, triangular-shaped home with its roof extending down towards the ground on both sides. Often they may have many larger windows on the front and rear facades. They are popular as vacation cottages.

**Bungalow** -- commonly, a one-story house with a low-pitched roof. An alternative is a compact 1 1/2-story home containing small rooms. Variations include enclosed front porches and bay windows.

**Cape Cod** -- simple 1 1/2-story design, with a distinctive steeply pitched roof, shutters, and, centred front door. Variations include dormers and bay windows.

**Colonial** -- a rectangular design, often characterized by double hung windows with multiple window panes, shutters, an overhanging upper story, and, fireplaces. Variations include pillars/columns, fanlight window above the door, dormers and panelled doors.

**Co-operative** -- a dwelling unit owned by a corporation where a purchaser acquires a share in it. Use, rights and obligations are governed by a member's agreement. This is a form of ownership rather than a style of home. Different laws in the U.S. and Canada govern Co-op's.

**Condominium** -- a multi-unit building, with the individual's unit privately owned, and the building and land owned by all individual unit owners. This is a form of ownership rather than a style of home.

**Cotswold Cottage** -- charming English country-style house that features a thatched-style roof, chimneys, varied roofline, low doors, and, small paned windows.

**Detached Home** -- sometimes referred to as single detached home, contains one dwelling unit, and, is not attached to any other building.

**Dutch Colonial** -- a two-story house characterized by a gambrel roofline (a roof with a lower steeper slope and an upper less steep one on each of its two sides), flared overhanging eaves. Variations include shutters.

**Duplex** -- one of two dwellings, one above the other, in one building.

**Federal** -- often made of brick, this is a stately two-story symmetrical house with centred front door, sidelights and fanlight window above the door. Further it has common windows styles evenly distributed across the front and sides of the home as well as identical chimneys at the sidewalls of the house.

**Four Square** -- a two-story, square box, design often having a front porch.

**Freehold** -- a townhouse unit where the owner owns the dwelling and lot.

**Georgian** -- a large rectangular brick house with a formal, classical, design and a hipped roof. Often includes dormers, distinctive corner brick quoins in a contrasting colour, elaborate entranceway and crown mouldings.

**Gothic Revival** -- whimsical in design they feature steeply pitched roofs and gables, complex gingerbread trim and distinguishing vertical siding. Variations include parapet walls made to look like small castles.

**Granny Flat** -- a small apartment in the main house

**Greek Revival** -- these homes are a take-off on the Greek temple design. Often having a front roofline and recessed entrance. Features include pillars along the front of the house, or, pilasters (an upright architectural member, rectangular in shape, that is structurally a pier but architecturally treated as a column).

**Italianate** -- typically a two-story square shaped home, flat roof with wide eaves and complex decorative brackets underneath, as well as arched windows and doors. Often includes an ornamental cupola.

**Mansard** -- this two-story house gets its name from its mansard roof (having two slopes on all sides with the lower slope steeper than the upper one) continuing over the second story of the house only to be interrupted by small windows or dormers.

**Normandy** -- these brick homes with steeply pitched roofs and flared eaves are made to look like small French castles. Commonly, they include entry via the two-story tower complete with a tiny balcony.

**Prairie** -- popularized by architect Frank Lloyd Wright, this style home stresses horizontal lines. Features include a flat or low-pitched roof, wide overhangs, rows of casement windows and decorative banding along the exterior walls.

**Pueblo** -- common to the Southwest desert, these earth coloured distinctive adobe and stucco houses resemble pueblos of Native Americans. Features include round edged exterior walls, flat roofs and rustic support beams extending through walls.

**Queen Anne** -- although simpler and less elaborate than a Victorian home it has many architectural features such as a round turret, wrap-around porch with gazebo, bay window and gables. Commonly, has horizontal bands highlighting differing textures and materials.

**Ranch** -- typically, a rectangular or "L" shaped home with all rooms on its one level. Its simple layout features openness and efficient use of space. Variations include a raised ranch where the basement level extends partially above the ground to allow for larger windows and the feeling of another above ground level.

**Romanesque** -- typically, these impressive homes are made from brick or stone, having rounded turrets and arched entranceways.

**Row House** -- A row of similar, often narrow, attached units with smaller yards.

**Salt Box** -- a simple, distinctive, design featuring a flat front and steeply sloped rear roof that often includes a fireplace.

**Semi-detached** -- one of two dwellings, attached by a common wall, that is located within one building.

**Single Family Dwelling** -- a housing unit provided in detached, duplex, row house or townhouse that is designed to be occupied by one family.

**Shingle Style** -- these homes are covered with dark coloured wooden shingles. Features include steeply pitched roofs and porches.

**Spanish** -- typically, feature a red tile roof, arched doorways and windows, terra cotta tiled floors wrought iron accents light coloured stucco, beamed ceilings, patios or courtyards.

**Split Level** -- these multi-level homes are designed to make efficient use of space by having, for example, their main living space on one level, bedrooms on another, with utility and recreation rooms on another level slightly below grade.

**Tidewater** -- typical features include a wide porch on three or four sides, a hip roof, and many doors and windows for cross ventilation.

**Townhouse** -- a series of multi-level houses, connected by common sidewalls and forming a continuous group, each with private entrances. A type of row house typically with individual facades, staggered set backs, varied heights, and, larger yards.

**Tudor** -- a picturesque old English design, with gables and half-timbered exterior walls, utilizing brick or stucco, Features include diamond shaped windowpanes, arched windows and doorways.

**Victorian** -- whimsical, extravagantly ornamented houses may include multi-coloured exterior walls and trim, a widows walk, complex gingerbread trim, towers, multiple tiered rooflines, stained glass work, tall ceilings, hardwood floors, porches and impressive stairways.