Condos vs. Co-ops in Florida

What you actually own — and why it changes everything else.

THE CORE DIFFERENCE

With a condo you hold a deed to your unit — it is real property, the same as a house. With a co-op you own no real property at all: you own shares in a corporation that owns the building, and those shares carry a proprietary lease giving you the right to occupy your unit. Everything below follows from that.

CONDOMINIUM

You own the unit — deeded real property

PROS

+ Easier financing — lenders treat it as real property, so mortgage options are plentiful.
+ Generally more flexible rental and short-term-let policies.
+ Cleaner, more standardized resale and closing process.
+ Value tracks the open real estate market directly.

CONS

- Subject to Florida's post-Surfside milestone inspection and reserve funding requirements.
- Exposure to special assessments, which can be substantial.
- HOA dues can run high in older or amenity-heavy buildings.

CO-OPERATIVE

You own shares — plus a proprietary lease

PROS

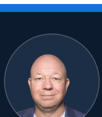
+ Often a lower entry price than a comparable condo.
+ Board screening of buyers can mean a more stable ownership base.
+ Closing costs are sometimes lower.

CONS

- Financing is harder — you are borrowing against shares, not real property.
- The board can decline a buyer, often without stating a reason.
- Tighter restrictions on renting or subletting.
- Few Florida lenders write co-op share loans.
- Rare in Florida, so resale liquidity is thinner.

THE PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY

Co-ops are uncommon in South Florida — the overwhelming majority of what you will see in Brickell, Downtown, South Beach, Coral Gables and the Grove is condominium. If a co-op does come up, budget extra time for financing and board approval, and read the building's financials closely either way.



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