

Broker Review Guide :

In order to save you your valuable time, we have done some research on the best brokers. We will discuss each big brokerage firm in detail, so that you know exactly about their pro's and con's. This way, you can conveniently find out which broker fits you best. But first, some general tips on brokerage firms.

General Tips :

Minimum Deposit – Most brokers require a minimum deposit on your account. For some, this minimum deposit could be much higher than the amount you have available. Therefore, pick a broker that suits your level of capital.

Investment Possibilities – Can you invest in all of the asset types that we have discussed in the course? Are there enough options for investing in real estate, emerging markets, small-caps? This is super important to analyse. We prefer brokers with a lot of investment possibilities so that we have completely freedom to move our money where we want to.

Commissions – It is quite normal to pay a commission when you invest in an ETF or index fund. However, some brokers ask ridiculously high commissions, which will eat away your profit. Look for brokers with low commissions for the assets that you will be using the most. For example, my broker (ING) asks for 0 commission on ETFs and Index Funds, which saves me a lot of money!

Maintenance Fee – The maintenance fee is the amount of money (or percentage of your capital) that the broker asks to 'maintain' your money. It is basically a fee you pay each year for making use of their service. It is absolutely essential that this maintenance fee is as low as possible. A high maintenance fee will eat away your returns and can literally cost you (hundred)thousands of dollars over your investment lifetime (compound interest, remember).

Don't worry, because all of these points will be specifically discussed for each broker.

US Brokers (Some can't be joined by non-US citizens) :

Fidelity Investments (9.0 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : \$0 for IRA (Retirement account) \$2500 for other accounts

Commission : \$7.95 per trade

Pro's	Con's
Platform useful for all devices	High minimum deposit
Webinars	
Morning Briefing	
Leads on research reports from 20+ firms	
More than 3,600 no-transaction-fee mutual funds	
98 commission-free ETFs	

Scottrade (7.5 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : \$0 for IRAs; \$2,500 for brokerage

Commission : \$7 per ETF, \$17 for mutual funds

Pro's	Con's
Very good mobile app	No commission free ETF's
More than 2,500 no-transaction-fee mutual funds	
Good customer service	

Interactive Brokers (8.0 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : \$10,000 (\$5,000 for IRAs and \$3,000 for clients 25 years or younger)

Commission : \$1 per trade

Pro's	Con's
Wide offer to international markets	Due to many different account types and structures it may be confusing for beginning investors
Low fees	
Platform useful for all devices	
Easy screener that look for the ETFs/Index Funds with the lowest costs	
More than 1,700 no-transaction-fee mutual funds	
More than 50 commission-free ETFs	

TD Ameritrade (8.0 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : \$0

Commission : \$9.99 per trade

Pro's	Con's
\$0 account minimum	standard commission structure makes it an expensive broker for long-term investors
A lot of different platforms useable on all devices which may be confusing for some
More than 2,000 no-transaction-fee mutual funds	
More than 100 commission-free ETFs	

Merrill Edge (9.0 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : \$0

Commission : \$6.95 per trade

Pro's	Con's
Very easy to use for Bank of America customers	No commission free ETF's
Well-developed learning centre	
Great guidance towards reaching big goals such as buying a house, retirement and many other important financial goals	
High-quality customer service	
low commissions and fees	
Over 5,000 no-transaction-fee mutual funds	

Charles Schwab (8.5 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : \$1000 (often waived for customers who automatically transfers \$100 or more each month)

Commission : \$8.95 per trade

Pro's	Con's
Education Platform available	High fee per trade
More than 3,000 no-transaction-fee mutual funds	High fees for funds not on the 'no-transaction-fee' list.
More than 200 commission-free ETFs	

E*Trade (8.5 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : \$500 for brokerage accounts (\$0 for IRAs)

Commission : \$9.99 per trade

Pro's	Con's
Education Platform available	High commissions per trade
Large offer of investments	
Over 1,300 no-transaction-fee mutual funds	
Over 100 commission-free ETFs	

Vanguard (7.5 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : Account minimum: \$0; however, fund minimums start at \$1,000

Commission : \$7-20 per trade

Pro's	Con's
Industry leader in low-cost mutual funds, ETFs and index funds	No app
More than 120 no-transaction-fee mutual funds	High fund minimums of \$1000 or even \$3000
More than 50 commission-free ETFs	Not that suitable for low capital investors
Well suited for the investor with a lot of capital	

European Brokers :

ING (9.0 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : €0

Commission : €4 + 0.04% (max €150)

Pro's	Con's
Education Platform available	
Commission free ETF's	
Commission free Mutual Funds	
Easy to combine for ING banking customers	

DeGiro (8.5 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : €0

Commission : €2 - €4

Pro's	Con's
A lot of no-commission ETF's	No App
A lot of no-commission mutual funds	
No minimum deposit	
Low commissions	

SaxoBank (8.0 out of 10)

Minimum Deposit : €0

Commission : €5 - €15

Pro's	Con's
A lot of platform and account type choices...	... which may be confusing for beginning investors
A lot of investment possibilities	
Educational platform	
Good customer service	