Money Matters
The first thing you should do is work out a budget. What are your monthly expenses? What are your “needs” vs. your “like to haves”? You should definitely include entertainment in the equation, but make sure you can pay the rest of your bills first.

In addition to the monthly expenses, you will need quite a bit of money just to get started. Most apartments require a security deposit (usually equal to one month’s rent) that will be refunded to you when you leave – assuming it’s in better condition than when you found it. Deposits are also required for various utilities. Then there are items like furniture, dishes, sheets, towels, pots, pans... the list goes on.

What Can I Afford and Where Should I Look?
That depends... How much space do you need? Do you want a roommate? How far are you willing to commute? The answers will help you determine what you can afford and where you should look. In general, the closer you live to a major metropolitan area, the more you will pay and the less space you will get. The trade off is a shorter commute (usually) and the opportunity for a better (or at least easier) social life.

Renting an Apartment
Here are some questions you want to be sure to ask: How much is the rent? What does this amount include (e.g. electricity, water, garbage, parking)? What kind of heat does the apartment have and who pays for it? Do they allow pets (if yes, is there a fee)? Are washers and dryers available? What are the neighbors like? Can you meet any of them? How safe is the area? What kind of security does the complex have? Are you responsible for any routine maintenance?

The landlord will likely have questions for you as well. You will give the best impression if you are well-prepared. Dress professionally and be ready to provide items such as references, job offer letter, paycheck stubs, bank account information and social security number. You can also expect that the landlord will run a credit check on you.

Rental Insurance
You should consider insurance to cover your personal items, in case of damage, fire, etc. Most landlord’s insurance will not cover your possessions.

Signing the Lease
Never sign anything unless you have read it thoroughly and understand it completely. Once you have signed a lease, you are legally bound to the contents. Ask for clarifications on anything confusing to you, and if you don't agree with something, ask if changes can be made. Always have your terms written, signed and dated, and make sure you have a copy of the original document.

Before Moving In
After you sign the lease, but before you actually move in, do a complete inspection of the property. Notify the landlord of anything that may need to be fixed, or any pre-existing problems, so you are not held accountable for them later. Take pictures or record your walkthrough so you have concrete evidence in the case of a discrepancy.

Packing Up and Going
Check your employer’s relocation policy to see if you are entitled to moving expenses. Some will pay for your entire move, even as a new hire. (In fact, you should have already discussed this as part of your salary negotiation before you accept the job offer.) If not, you can hire a professional mover, or just ask friends and family to help (usually for the low cost of pizza and refreshments!)