

# STUFF TO BRING TO THE US

YOU ARE GOING TO COME TO THE UNITED STATES WITH NOTHING BUT THE BAGS IN YOUR HAND AND THE RESOLVE IN YOUR HEART! MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH AMMUNITION TO LAST AT LEAST A YEAR SO YOU CAN LIVE IT UP IN COLLEGE STATION!

There are so many things one needs to carry; it might make sense for some to share certain possessions between roommates or friends (but keep in mind that you might have to go another town for an internship!). Most commodities are available here, however when you have the constant conversion of dollars to rupees going on in your head, you find that you end up buying less. Take heart in the fact that things here are not as overpriced as they seem, so in case you forget to pack something you can always buy it here after a few months. The list is basically what you might need during your stay here:

## 1. MEDICINES

Medicines in the U.S. are slightly more expensive than in India. But remember you have **MEDICAL INSURANCE!** Your doctor's visit and prescription will be partially covered by insurance; however, you might have to pay some amount as co-pay. (Student Health Services will guide you better for the exact figures)

It is better to have a small medical kit at home for emergencies and backup. Make sure you have a doctor's **PRESCRIPTION** for everything mentioned below here. Use whichever brands that you are comfortable with, but get medicines to cure:

- Fever: Crocin (paracetamol)
- Headache: Saridon (ibuprofen or methyl salicylate)
- Bodyache: Combiflam (ibuprofen)
- Cold: Sinarest
- Cough: any syrup or lozenge
- Nausea/ Motion Sickness: Avomine
- Diarrhoea: Lomotil
- Acidity: Digene
- Vomiting: Domstal
- Weakness/ Malaise: Electral
- Any allegry medications
- First Aid: Band-Aids, Soframycin, Savlon, crepe bandages, cotton balls
- Vitamin B deficiency: Becosule
- If required, eye drops

Disclaimer: The brands are just a suggestion based on common preferences. Please consult a certified medical practitioner for the correct quantities and dosage of medicines.

## 2. CLOTHES

Dress according to your style. People in College Station are laid back and come casually dressed to college. You get a lot of free t-shirts here and there, you end up wearing these everywhere. However, you might want to buy some clothes from India:

- Formals: Keep two sets as the career fair lasts more than one day and you would be smart to have a backup.
- Tops and Bottoms of your liking: Jeans or shorts or skirts or palazzos or trousers, pair these up with shirts and kurtas.
- Undergarments: Just keep in mind that usually people do their laundry once a week, so have enough to last. You might want to buy some extra, as they wear off in a year due to the dryers here.
- Sweaters, scarves, shawls: Texas winters are getting colder by the year with occasional snowfall. So, it's better if you come prepared with good winter clothes.
- Thermal wear: In case you get lucky with snowfall or have to visit a colder state on vacation.
- Raincoats, windcheaters, umbrella: It can rain when it pleases, so have some protection from the showers.
- Belts, wallet, handkerchiefs, towels, napkins among other miscellaneous clothing items.
- Bedsheets, pillow covers, thin cotton quilts: Cotton linen is hard to come by and make sure you buy what you are comfortable sleeping in.
- Comforters or Blankets: But these in the U.S, they are available at fair prices and this way they won't take up half of your suitcase.

### 3.FOOTWEAR

You do get excellent footwear in America, and if you have a chance to go to San Marcos/Cyprus or even online during the Thanksgiving and Labor Day sales, you will get it for a fair price. For now though, you will need to buy a few pairs:

- Sports shoes: At least a pair. This is a necessity since you end up walking quite a bit in and around the campus.
- Weatherproof shoes: You can get really good snowshoes here and since these are really heavy to carry it is generally not advisable to carry these all the way from there. Preferably, do not carry boots, keep some money aside to buy these here.
- Formal shoes: for the career fair again! Expensive, so it is better to get a pair, along with some slick socks.
- Open toed sandals: It might be different than what you are used to, get a pair if you are accustomed to them.
- Flip flops: To wear around the house: or buy them at Walmart for 99 cents!
- Indian shoes: To match your ethnic wear!

### 3. PERSONAL ACCESSORIES

You should bring along personal toiletries to last for the first two months, till you find apt replacements. Here is a list to make sure you don't forget anything!

- Combs, shampoos, conditioners and hair oil
- Soaps, face wash, lens solution (if you use contact lenses)
- Nail clippers, small scissors, safety pins, needles, thread, buttons
- Beauty products like make-up, tweezers, pluckers or electronic eyebrow trimmers, cold/hot wax or epilators (tip: buy a roll-on wax heater here instead)

- Sunscreen is essential, you may want to carry moisturizer, lip balm and other lotions according to your habits.
- Bathing mug: This is not easily acquired but you might buy paint bucket and mug in Walmart, those work just fine!

A tip for girls: You will find sanitary products of all kinds in various stores and at reasonable prices. You do not need to stock up for months and let those things take up valuable space in your bags.

#### 4. UTENSILS

Try to get flat bottomed vessels for cooking as most of the apartments have electric coil stoves. You might want to check with your landlord. The cooking habits are unique to each individual, but keep these few things in mind:

- Rice cookers are what most students buy. An electric cooker is quicker and hassle free, but buy that in the U.S since the power ratings are different here. If you buy a pressure cooker to cook *dal* or vegetables, buy a few spare gaskets and other spare parts since they are not available in America as easily.
- Pans, tavas, bowls, plates, spoons, forks and knives will be needed but not more than a few each. You can buy this after you come here, but most students bring at least a few along.
- Tongs, spatulas, serving spoons, peelers and mashers are easy to get.
- Buy kitchen pincers, graters, rolling pin in India, if you need them.
- Metal scrubbers to wash dishes are not available here.
- Containers are cheap and you should buy those in the U.S itself.

#### 5. FOOD ITEMS

Try to stock up for the first two months. Try to stick to packed items, and if at all you do carry home-cooked goodies, try to get them packed from a local grocer. Your food preferences are your own, however you must check the U.S customs and Border Protection [website](#).

Some of the common food items that students carry are raw spices like clove or cardamom or black pepper, readymade *masalas* like *garam masala* or *kitchen king masala*, instant food packets like *rajma chawal* or *pav bhaji* or instant *dosa* mix.

You might want to get basic kitchen ingredients like mustard seeds, cumin seeds, asafoetida, turmeric powder and chilli powder.

#### 6. BAGS:

You are usually allowed two bags, weighing 23 kilograms each on an international flight, some airlines offer a third bag if you present your I-20, some might allow just one. Check this before booking your flights, or call once you have booked to check. Start your packing well in advance. Put identification marks and labels on both the inside & outside the suitcases apart from this, the airlines will also provide you with adhesive labels. Check with your respective airline about the dimensions and weight of the bag.

Buy suitcases with inbuilt TSA locks or buy those locks separately, so that suitcases could be open for custom checking. If you have a domestic flight in your itinerary, there might be different baggage allowances.

Things to be kept in the suitcases:

- Copy of all the certificates/documents (originals in hand baggage)
- Textbooks are expensive, most will be available in the library, but if you have some special needs for a particular course, try to find out.
- Medical history files.
- You do not need to carry a lot of stationery, perhaps just a folder to take on interviews, a few pens, pencils and eraser.

Things to be kept in the cabin luggage:

- Check the airline policy for things that you can carry in the cabin luggage. (Some airlines allow you 23 kgs! Confirm with your airline and pack accordingly.)
- A change of clothes (in case something goes wrong with your baggage, *let us hope not!*)
- Some light reading, in case you are not a movie fan.
- Sweater or some *shawl*
- A few dollars, just in case.
- Travel adapters, for things with Indian plugs

Things to be kept on person:

- It is advisable to get a small slingbag/fannypack to carry passport, copy of I-20, some cash and boarding passes. This does not count as one piece of baggage if it is just enough to fit your passport in there!
- Important numbers and addresses, especially of people in the U.S.
- Handbag or Laptop bag as the personal item (Usually 8 kgs are allowed, confirm with the airlines you have chosen).

Documentation:

This should go inside the handbag, not in your check-in luggage

- Original I-20(s) - Take all I-20s (if you have more than one).
- Admission Letter from University
- Other documents that were needed to obtain the I-20: mark sheets, sponsor letter, degree certificate and such.
- Travel insurance if you have any.

Do not throw away your boarding passes, carry them with you all the way out of the airport.

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LASTLY, SOME TIPS:

- Bring your original Indian driving license along and ensure that it is valid for at least two years after your date of arrival here. Or bring along your Internal Driving Permit.
- Get your application material if you wish to transfer to another university next semester.
- Get a set of transcripts in case you apply all over again for a PhD.
- Do not forget the original Bachelor's or Master's Degree certificate, since you need to show that at the University. For those of you getting this later on in the year, make you have the Provisional Certificate.

- Have a set of copies of visa, passport, I-20 in each piece of luggage.
- Carry some Indian currency too, in case you need it inside the airport before boarding your flight.
- We repeat that do carry a medical prescription for all the medicines you bring along.
- If you have glasses, get a through eye-check-up before and get an extra pair. Get extra sets of lenses if you have the habit of wearing them. You will get the solution in the US, but if you insist on carrying it with you, put it in the check-in bag.
- Keep passport, visa, I-20, and other admission documents in the handbag you'll carry on your shoulders all the time.
- Confirm your ticket a couple of days prior to the flight directly through the airlines you are flying no matter how reputed your travel agent is.

*This list is not exhaustive it is only a suggestion based on the various generations of members who wrote and rewrote this list.*