

MAHAVIR

OVERSEAS EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

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Dear friend,

Congratulations! Now, as I have forwarded you this document, means that you already have got the VISA.

My stay at Vanderbilt University during my MS was just outstanding. I hope you too have a great time in the USA. Here is a lot of information, which will be of help to you.

The next thing to do is blocking tickets (this implies no financial commitment). Just go to a reputed travel agent and book yourself a ticket. If you have time to bargain, block flights with many airlines/agencies. Put pressure on the agencies and get as much info as possible. Four days before the flight, make them call the airlines and reconfirm your ticket.

Important note:

- Indicate whether you want Asian Vegetarian Meal (AVM), non-smoking section, etc
- Cross-check everything the travel agent says
- Buy the tickets with the Air-Port Tax paid to avoid last minute hassles at time of boarding
- Some airlines offer Frequent Flier programs (e.g. Air France, TWA) [i.e. after a certain # of miles of flying with that airline you get a free ticket]. Enroll in such programs.
- Avoid change of airline. A direct flight is the best. If change of airline can't be avoided, leave at least 4-6 hrs gap between the scheduled arrival of one flight and the scheduled departure of the connecting flight.
- Baggage is usually safe with a single airline - change of airline sometimes leads to misplaced luggage. Some airlines don't take care of baggage transfer - you may have to personally carry it (check this while booking).
- Do not depend on domestic (Indian) connecting flights. Gujaratis now have flights from Ahmedabad. If flying from Mumbai, prefer to take a train.

Things to be done in advance

Now as you are going for sure, why not spend some time sharpen your skills....

- Learn typing
- Learn driving
- Learn to cook
- Refresh your fundamentals
- Learn as much about your course, University, location and the country as possible
- Make outstation purchases (sweater, thermal underwear, cassettes, etc. – available cheap in Delhi, Bombay, Ahmedabad ...)
- Get medical and dental checkup done [fresh checkup, especially if you have a major ailment
- Get prescriptions & medicines for all common ailments (the technical name of the medicine along with Indian / US brand name).
- Get requisite immunization done (especially MMR)
- Write to the India club / International Student Office giving your flight #, time & date of arrival; they may pick you up & give temporary accommodation if necessary

Packing

Start your packing well in advance. Buy two good boxes - they should be able to withstand a lot of mishandling. They should be as large as possible within the size limitations (however most airlines are not very strict about baggage size). Put identification marks and labels both inside & outside the boxes (apart from this the airlines will also provide you with adhesive labels).

Box specifications

As an example, the Air India economy class baggage specifications to the USA are given below;

[Note the specifications may differ for other countries/airlines.]

- 2 pieces of baggage with total linear dimension (l+b+h) not exceeding 270cm (106"). Moreover the total linear dimension of each piece should not be over 158cm (62"). The weight of each bag should not exceed 32kg (70lb) [note: they are not very particular about this]
- Carry on baggage: In addition you can carry a bag with linear dimension not exceeding 115cm (45") onboard (fits beneath the seat).

For most other airlines the baggage specifications are similar (confirm).

Things to be kept in the boxes

- Copy of all certificates/documents (originals in hand baggage) [note: don't forget to carry 30-40 passport size photographs – it is much cheaper and convenient to do that in India]
- Important application materials (SOP, reco etc)
- Copy of address book/telephone book/diary
- Medical history files
- Gifts (suggested: roll-able pictures, handicrafts, etc)
- 1 pair leather chappals, 2 hawai chappals (+ extra straps)
- 1 pair of Shoes (get good leather shoes and any decent sneakers, you don't have to buy 'addidas' and 'Nike' they are much cheap during the sales there.
- soap (bath), toothbrushes (slightly costly in the US - 1 or 2 bucks) etc, razor blades, comb, mirror (pocket size), Nail cutter, small scissors, safety pin bunch, and mini sewing kit with some buttons

Clothes

Usually clothes are machine washed once a week (Laundromat) - hence one week supply of clothes (+ one week backup) is needed. Get all clothes little loose - clothes may shrink in machine wash & you will probably grow fatter!

- 14-15 sets of undergarments, socks, handkerchiefs
- 5 sets of good shirts, pants (not too many in vogue except in formal occasions). Make sure that most of the shirts are of type that does not require ironing.
- a good swimming trunk and Tracksuit (if you are the sports-enthusiast kind)
- a few T-shirts and shorts (very common in the warmer areas and even in the cold areas in spring and summer).
- 2-3 Jeans (the most common wear for students)
- a tie + 1-2 belts (leather)
- 1-2 ordinary towels (Turkish ones start stinking)
- a bed-sheet
- lungies/dhotis/pajamas
- thermal underwear (2-4) [only if you are going to a very cold place]
- extra woolen sweaters
- a small alarm clock, a wallet to carry ATM and credit cards
- Micro tip pencils + refill's, good pens, eraser, stapler and staples

Note:

- Sleeveless woolen sweaters are enough for warm places
- woolen socks not recommended if not going to a very cold place
- don't take Indian files (empty), punching machines, papers, raincoats
- don't buy purse (wallet for carrying cards can be bought in US)

- wear your shoes to save space in the box. For some weather conditions Indian leather shoes may crack.

Don't worry yourself if you can't bring any of the stuff listed above - most of them are available pretty cheap in the US (made in China). Exceptions are leather goods, formal wear. In a month or two you will be in a position to get anything you want (unless you don't work!)

Food stuffs

- Indian instant coffee + Indian tea (takes some time to get used to American stuff)
- Elaichi, clove, cinnamon, Get a couple of bags each of haldi, red chilly powder, garam masala, and dhania powder

Note: most of these items are available in the Indian stores in the major cities. However you need to carry them for use in the first few days. Actually pickles are not allowed - but you can take them in solder-sealed tins. [students are usually not checked for these]

- take all dry food stuff in sealed plastic packets
- take papads, khakharas etc
- take Meggy noodles, Top Rayon etc of at least a week supply

Don't go loaded with foodstuffs as you may have (small) problems with the customs. Try to get "instant" stuff as people generally don't have much time for cooking in the US.

Vessels

Don't bother to carry vessels much. You will certainly 'inherit' some from your seniors. You may want to carry....

- Knife and cook book

List of medicines recommended by a Doc.

- Crocin tablets - 3 strips [For fever, bodyaches, headache - One tablet three times a day as necessary]
- Erythrocin 500mg tablets - 2 strips [One tablet twice a day when necessary, as advised]
- Sporadix 500mg capsules - 2 strips [One capsule twice a day when necessary, as advised]
- Actified tablets - 3 strips
- Cosovil tablets - 2 strips [For common cold & cough - One tablet three times a day].
- Avomin tablets - 1 strip [For air sickness - One tablet as necessary].
- Lomotil tablets - 20
- Digene tablets - 30 [For diarrhea & stomach discomfort - One tablet of each three times a day].
- Baralgam tablets - 2 strips [For abdominal colic pain, backache, etc One tablet every six hours as necessary].
- Dorstal (?) tablets - 10 [For nausea & vomiting - One tablet three times a day].
- Electral powder - 2 packets [One teaspoonful mixed with drinks to make up loss of electrolytes after vomiting or diarrhea].
- Novalgin tablets - 2 strips [For headache & bodyaches -One tablet as necessary].
- Stomatil tablets - 1 strip [For vertigo (giddiness) - One tablet three times a day as necessary till relieved].
- Isabgul (Glaxo) - 1 box [For constipation - One teaspoonful in a little of water at bedtime].
- Brufen 600mg tablets - 2 strips [For arthritic joint pains - One tablet three times a day after food].
- Avil tablets - 1 strip [For allergy - One tablet as necessary].
- Sepmax tablets - 1 strip [For sore-throat. One tablet twice a day after food, till relieved. NOT TO BE TAKEN WHEN ONE IS ALLERGIC TO SULFA DRUGS].

- Relaxyl ointment - 1 tube [To be applied as a pain balm].
- Band Aids assorted – 12
- Soframycin skin ointment - 1 tube

I have included a very detailed list to keep you on a safer side. Don't worry if you have not carried some of them, but I suggest you to carry at least Vicks, Iodex, Moov, Crocin, Disprin, Nebasulf powder, Crepe bandage 1" & 2" size, Band aid assorted box). Also, don't forget to keep the prescription of everything that you carry, and if any question asked at the port of entry, just say that they are "over the counter" preventive medicines.

Things to be kept in Hand Baggage

- some medicines (including for air-sickness)
- novel/mags/books for inflight reading
- sweater
- original important documents (I-20, visa, tickets ...)
- enough money (little cash, travellers' checks)
- address book/phone book (Indian & US)
- copies of your photo (passport size)
- enlisted steps to be followed in case of emergency (accident, theft, etc)
- things to survive for a week in case luggage gets misplaced (two sets of clothes, valuables like calculator, addresses etc)

Things to be kept on person

- your travel documents like passport, tickets, boarding pass etc
- money, travelers' checks [keep a receipt and details of travelers' checks at different place - in case you lose the TC's]
- shorter extract of contact addresses - especially of people coming to pick you up

Things to be left at home

- List of addresses/phone numbers at which information about you can be obtained
- one copy of all your important documents (notorised)
- Traveler's check number and purchase date and Medical insurance- contract date and insurance number and account number
- a copy of all relevant parts of Medical History files
- Arrangement to apply/collect/mail your transcripts (about 10 in number preferable)
- Your tailoring measurements
- a few blank signed papers - so that your parents can be authorized to look after anything on your behalf. It is preferred to give power of attorney to your father and also make all the bank accounts joint.

Things to be done in the last week before the flight

- note down your / parent's bank A/c #, Brach code, Swift code
- call up & find if there is any delay or change of schedule of the plane (inform the people coming to pick you up of any such change)
- rest well - ready to face the long journey/jet lag
- bid bye to all concerned

On the day of the flight and in-flight + later

Since it is going to be a long flight wear something comfortable (cotton dress + full hand shirt). Wear your shoes - inflight you can remove them (some airlines give inflight shoes - else relax in socks).

BEFORE YOU BOARD

Check in 2.5 hours before the flight time. Check in meaning you go in.. after saying final bye to everyone... 2.5 hrs is okay.

1. First your bags will be screened.
2. Then you go to the airline counter. Show your passport and tickets.
3. They will weigh your baggage and put tags on it.
4. Make sure you tell them that you want to check it in till the final destination. So that you don't have to checkout / check in the bags at your stopover.
5. Here, if you have to pay the airport tax of Rs. 750, it means that you have not followed the instruction I gave about buying the tickets!!!

At the Airport (India)....

Answer politely and to the point. Remember one thing you just keep a pleasant and happy attitude with everyone. Smiling and thank you are main keywords. Ask the Gate No. you have to proceed to. Follow Signs for the Gate No. Once you reach the gate, hand baggage will be screened again and a stamp will be put. Also you have to go through security check in person. Then you enter and seat yourself and wait for the Boarding announcement. There will be a public phone available here.. You can call (mobile) your parents' waiting outside the Aiport or home from here. Carry some Indian coins for this purpose. Some flights have call on basis of class. Whenever they call you go.

That is it. Now you will be inside the plane.

INSIDE THE PLANE

You will be handed over the 'GOVT OF INDIA - EMBARKATION CARD'.

In that card, you will have to fill details as under [all capital letters]

Name

Surname

Date of Birth (check what order they have asked.. mm/dd/yyyy or dd/mm/yyyy)

Place of Birth

Nationality INDIAN

Passport No

Date of Issue

Date of Expiry

Address in India

Port of Disembarkation **Your final Destination**

Flight No. Final flight no. you will enter _____

Immigration Stamp Your Signature.

Fill the above and keep it with you till the flight attendant picks it up from you.

Once inside the plane, put your carryon luggage in the overhead compartment and hand bag in front of your seat next to your leg. Keep your carryon luggage in the overhead compartment opposite to your seat so that you can see it.

Flight food etc:

- Relax during flight, sleep as much as possible.
- For vegetarians - watch out before you eat - you may get non-veg even if you had asked for veg. Veg. food is generally bland - fruits/juice are good choices. (Before ordering anything on board check if you have to pay for it separately for it). Don't hesitate to ask questions.

- V8 tomato juice (my favorite - put ice and a pinch of salt), Orange Juice is also okay.
- Eat and relax.. have happy thoughts and be excited.
- If you leave your seat when you come back you just check your luggage. Before you go, keep it in a particular way so that you can know if someone touched or meddled with it.

A word of caution : **DONT TRUST ANYBODY** - not even the prettiest innocent looking thing or that smiley handsome friendly face. No harm in talking and chatting, but keep your distance.

Be vigilant at all times. Don't handover any of your important documents or anything for that matter to anyone at anytime. Even at the airport make sure whoever is attending to you, gives you back all your documents and papers properly. Don't forget to collect boarding passes for every flight and baggage tags.

DONT HESITATE TO ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU DONT KNOW SOMETHING.. MOST OF THE TIME PEOPLE (Officials) WILL ANSWER YOU PROPERLY AND GUIDE YOU APPROPRIATELY. if required don't hesitate to spend money

STOPOVER

Before you land, they will announce the Flight No / Gate No. for your next flight and the local time. Once you are out of the plane, airline staff will be standing with info lists. Confirm gate no. based on your next flight no., it will be on your boarding pass for that flight. Ask for directions if necessary. Ask for local time and set your watch to the same and confirm how much time is left before departure of the next flight. Check if at that gate there are day care services for showers. Take a shower. You will feel good. Carry your luggage with you at all times. There will be dry partitioned area in the shower so carry your luggage inside with you. After that if you still have time, go and look around duty free. Proceed towards the flight gate and reach that place at least before 45 minutes of departure. Again hand baggage will be screened here. Once you are there, outside there will be display of the flight time and no. check it to be sure. Sometimes they announce gate changes. That's why make sure you reach the gate at least 45 minutes before departure and then wait there till you can board. At the time of boarding, they will collect the boarding pass. Make sure you give the boarding pass for that flight only.

BEFORE YOU LAND

Before you land in the _____, on the flight they will give you two forms [note: "TYPE or PRINT" means you have to fill the form in CAPITAL LETTERS]. Do not hesitate to take flight attendant's help.

1. I-94 [it is a very imp. Document].
2. Customs Declaration

In I-94 You will have to fill in the full details :

Arrival Record

Family Name

First Name Birth Date

Country of Citizenship INDIA Sex MALE / Female

Passport No. Airline & Flight No.

Country where you live **INDIA** City where you boarded

City where visa issued Date of Issue

Address while in _____ City & state

Departure Record

Family Name First Name

Birth Date

Country INDIA

During immigration clearance, they will take the arrival record and give you the departure record part of **I94** back. They will put a date stamp on it. That date is the date till which your stay in _____ is legal. Don't loose it. Ask the person at the counter to staple it to your passport. **That card is required when you go back to India.**

CUSTOMS FORM

Family Name

First Name

Middle Name

Birth Date

Airline Flight No.
members

No.of Family

Country of Citizenship **INDIA**

Country of Residence **India**

CANADA Address
City & state

Purpose of Trip Study

I am carrying fruit..plants NO

currency NO

commercial merchandise NO

Total Value of good (keep it blank or You can indicate that you have nothing to declare & total value of all your things is less than \$100)

Reverse side you have to sign

Port of entry procedures

Form I-20 ID copy - all transactions regarding your non-immigrant status will be recorded in this form. This should be retained at all times (not surrendered when you temporarily leave the US). Your admission number will be given - memorize it & note it elsewhere.

Just before you land the correct local time will be announced set your watch [dual time watch will come in handy here]

Once you are out of the plane go straight to the immigration counter - rush for them to beat the queue. It might take 0.5-1 hour here. Keep your I-20, passport, admission letters ready. They might ask a few questions like - is this your first time in the US? Student? F-1 visa? Which University? After seeing your documents immigration officer will indicate length of stay, University, etc. and stamp your passport and I-94. They will attach a card to your passport. You are now in the USA!

Important: note the expiry date and D/S (duration of status).

- Then go to the baggage area to fetch your luggage. Pick up a cart (you get this at a machine for \$1) to carry the bags. Then pick up your bags as they come out on the conveyor (suitable eye-catching labels help here). If you don't get your baggage inform the enquiry section - you may have to wait 0.5-1 hour here.
- Cart your baggage to nearby Customs. If asked tell them that you are a student, F-1 visa, school, dept., coming to US for the first time. Sometimes they do a random check of baggage.....don't worry, they will just check it and let you go. Just be calm and cool.

Important : Note that if you lose the key to your baggage you are prone to suspicion. Be calm and open your bags. Don't start pulling out things till you are asked to do so.

- If asked to open the baggage do so slowly - do not mess up the place. If asked about the papad / khakharas tell them that they are "dried Indian snacks". Rarely they might ask you to leave any food-stuff. Now they know what Gujaratis eat!

Note : In most cases you will NOT be asked to open your boxes at all & will be simply waved through. Now go & wait at the nearest exit for the guys who are supposed to pick you up. If nobody turns up after some time (say 0.5 hour) make a collect call (at the public phone dial a '0', get the operator & ask for a collect call). Else call i) your Prof ii) dept. iii) International Students' Office iv) admissions office v) any Indian guy in the directory Go & ask for an announcement to be made over the PA system. Get a card, write your name & hold it up.

- Never leave your baggage unattended. Don't go out of the airport until somebody comes & picks you up. If you have doubts about the guy who comes to pick you up, don't hesitate to ask for his ID. [All this is of course being a little extra cautious]. Once you reach your friend's house (or other destination) call home & inform them of reaching safely. Keep a readymade card - add a few lines - go to the nearest post office, get stamps & mail the card immediately.

A few things of importance in after (arrival) life

- Your first work is to meet the Foreign Students' Advisor in the International Student Office (ISO). They keep a record of you (passport, visa details etc). When you leave the US (temporarily or permanently) you have to go there again. They are very important people. The person who signed your I-20 also has the authority to change your status to work permit.
- Get your University ID card
- Open a bank account
- Pay the appropriate fees and register yourself
- Meet the HOD/graduate student advisor/advisor
- Register for classes

Note: Reach there in the Orientation week. It is the easiest way to begin your life on campus and make maximum number of friends.

Later on.....

- Get your Driver's License
- Tax forms, etc some paperwork in the dept.

Be happy now that your dream has come true!

Other important information:

Insurance

Most universities requires all new and continuing international students in both F-1 and J-1 status to carry health insurance that meets certain minimum standards determined by the United States Information Agency (USIA) which are:

- A maximum deductible of \$500 per accident or illness
- Medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness
- Medical evacuation benefits of \$10,000 or more
- Payment of at least 75% of covered medical expenses
- Repatriation benefits of \$7,500 or more

THIS MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE POLICY HAS BEEN IN EFFECT SINCE

SEPTEMBER 1, 1996. Most universities also have opportunities for students to enroll in a university-sponsored health insurance plan. Refer to the International Centre at the university you will be attending. If no university-sponsored program exists, you'll have to obtain private company coverage, of which there are many options to choose from.

As students in non-immigrant status, you and your dependents are not eligible for federal aid from the U.S. government. You should also be aware of the fact that taking advantage of these U.S. federal funds may have a negative impact upon future applications for U.S. permanent residency.

Accommodation

Most universities offer a variety of on-campus residences. Accommodations may range from traditional two-person dormitory rooms to suites with private baths to apartments. The typical room is furnished with a bed, desk, chair, and dresser for each student. Residence halls usually feature lounges for studying and socializing, recreation areas, laundry facilities, and a convenience store. In most cases, meal plans may be purchased in addition to the room for an all-inclusive plan. Most students choose to live on-campus in their first year, and later move off-campus in shared accommodation in senior years. Your university will usually keep a listing of all housing on and around campus that is available to students.

Surviving Winter

If you'll be studying in the Northern part of the U.S, you should prepare yourself to experience the cold and snow of winter. Winter usually from late November to early March in the Northeast part of the US. Temperatures during this time will often reach 0 or 10 F. It is important to take precautions to avoid the negative effects of the cold. The main precaution taken by most North Americans is to go outside as little as possible. When you do have to go outside for long or if you are finding even short periods in the cold difficult to handle keep these simple tips in mind.

Don't take chances with the winter cold. Get into the habit of listening to the weather forecast on a local radio station at the beginning of each day and dress accordingly. Warm, winter clothing should not be considered a luxury. You will need it to ensure that you stay healthy and enjoy life.

Seek advice from individuals who are familiar with the climate. North Americans like to talk about the weather, and in general are very willing to give you advice on getting through the winter. Look for comfort and simplicity in clothing. Ideally, and in order to withstand slush, snow, sleet and rain as well as the sand and salt used on icy sidewalks and roads, winter boots should be waterproof, warm, lightweight and stain repellent.

Winter clothing essentials might include a down (or polyester) coat or parka, mittens or gloves, and a wool hat or earmuffs. The layered look is not only fashionable but also an extremely effective way of insulating the body. Try wearing a woollen sweater over a cotton shirt or a pair of corduroy pants over cotton "long johns" (long underwear) and you should feel warmer. Don't worry about how strange you may look; your main goal of keeping warm will be accomplished.

Eat breakfast! You will be warmer if your body has some fuel to burn.

If your skin and scalp become dry and flaky because of the cold and dry heat indoors, try using a moisturising cream and conditioner. As well, drinking water regularly will help prevent dehydration.

Sunlight reflecting off snow on sunny days may damage your eyes or skin. You can protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses and your skin by using sunscreen.

Take into consideration the wind chill factor. High winds blowing on a cold day lower the temperature even further and a temperature of 20o F with a wind of 10 miles per hour can feel like 0oF.

Be alert to frostbite. Ears, fingers, toes or cheeks that have been exposed to freezing temperatures for even a short period of time may be severely damaged. If any part of your body should lack feeling or become pale or slightly blue, seek medical help immediately.

If you do become stranded in the cold (for whatever reason), don't hesitate to seek help. Prolonged exposure to freezing temperatures can be life threatening!

Some notes about American culture

This is a very general description of the way North Americans think and behave. It does not describe the attitude of EVERYONE, but it's a very good guideline.

Importance of Time: North Americans are very concerned with time. They give an enormous importance to punctuality. If they say there's a meeting at 10 am, it will be at 10 am, not noon. They might seem to be in a hurry all the time to you, but they simply organise all their activities in a schedule.

Conversations: Generally, avoid topics of politics, sex or religion with people you don't know. They are regarded as controversial topics and put people ill at ease if they are brought up. Often people will ask "How are you?" They do not often expect much of an answer in response, so don't feel insulted if they don't wait for your answer.

Personal space: When talking to one another North Americans limit their movements and there is rarely any touching between the parties. They like a space between them and the person they are talking to. If you move too close, the personal may be uncomfortable and back up.

Handshakes: Handshakes are extremely important in North America. If you meet someone and they offer you their right hand, you do the same. Shake the hand firmly. This is the standard greeting in North America. Usually only close friends kiss each other in greeting, or hug each other. When going to business meetings, use the handshake.

Visiting North Americans: In North America, you knock on the door to ask permission to come in. If you are invited to dinner, it is always nice to bring a little something (ex. a bottle of wine, chocolates, flowers), however it is not expected of you. If your host offers you something to drink and you prefer to drink something without alcohol that wasn't offered to you, it is perfectly polite to ask for it. The reverse is not true.

Food and Drink American Cuisine

A common American meal is meat, potatoes and vegetables. Eggs, cheese and fish are common meat substitutes, while spaghetti, noodles, rice and beans are a few of the common substitutes for potatoes. Fish is more common in the Eastern regions of the U.S. Salads and fruit are included in most meals. There are also many vegetarian meals in the U.S.A. Supper is the main meal of the day and is served early in the evening (around 5-7 pm). 'Fast food' such as McDonalds is very popular in the U.S. Other popular foods include pizza, Chinese food, salad bars, Mexican food, muffins and croissants. In general, Americans do not spice their food heavily although there has been an increase in the popularity of food from other countries in recent years.

The diet of students is often quite different from 'real food.' During first year when students are in university dormitories, they eat in a cafeteria. When they are living in houses with friends, popular meals are Kraft Dinner (a cheap type of cheese covered pasta), spaghetti, and take-out pizza (delivered right to your door). Pitas and gyros are also popular with students.

3) Culture Shock

What is it? The Adjustment Process in a New Culture

Cross Cultural Adjustment Cycle: Each stage in this process is characterised by "symptoms" or outward and inward signs representing certain kinds of behaviour.

Honeymoon Period: Initially, you will probably be fascinated and excited by everything new. Visitors are at first elated to be in a new culture.

Culture Shock: The visitor is immersed in new problems: housing, transportation, food, language, and new friends. Fatigue may result from continuously trying to comprehend and use the second language. You may wonder, "Why did I come here?"

Initial Adjustment: Everyday activities such as housing and going to school are no longer major problems. Although the visitor may not yet be perfectly fluent in the language spoken, basic ideas and feelings in the second language can be expressed.

Mental Isolation: Individuals have been away from their families and good friends for a long period of time and may feel lonely. Many still feel they cannot express themselves as well as they can in their native language. Frustrations and sometimes a loss of self-confidence result. Some individuals remain at this stage.

Acceptance and Integration

A routine (e.g. Work, school, social life) has been established. The visitor has accepted the habits, customs, food and characteristics of the friends, associates, and the language of the country.

Return Anxiety, Reentry Shock, Reintegration

These stages should be mentioned, even at orientation, because of the very important part they play in a visitor's stay in a new culture. It is interesting to note that Reentry Shock can be more difficult than the initial Culture Shock.

Suggestions for dealing with Culture Shock

- Keep in touch with friends and family at home
- Try to look for logical reasons why things happen. This may help you view your host culture in a more positive light.
- Try not to dwell on the negative things about your host culture and don't hang around people who do.
- Make an effort to restore communication by making friends in your host culture.
- Keep your sense of humour!
- Set small goals for yourself as high expectations may be difficult to meet.
- Speak the language of the country you are in and don't worry if you sometimes make a fool of yourself doing it!
- Take care of yourself by exercising, getting enough sleep, eating properly, and doing things you enjoy.
- Try to fit into the rhythm of life in your host culture. Adjust to their time schedule for meals and work.
- Find out where people meet and socialise. Make an effort to go to those places and observe.

- Draw on your own personal resources for handling stress. You've done it many times before and you can do it again!

How to Get Used to a New Country Quickly and Comfortably

Get a sense for the physical environment:

- Go on a tour of your locale.
- Find a colleague to show you around.
- Find a friend and do your own walking tour
- Take a walk around your neighborhood.
- Note locations of shops and post offices and when they are open.
- Look for recreational areas such as parks or sports facilities where you could relax or rejuvenate yourself.

Get a sense for the norms of behaviour:

- Observe people's behaviour
- How do they greet each other?
- How do they line up for a bus or train? How do they seat themselves in it?
- How do people behave in shops?
- How do people behave walking on the street?

Be Slow to Judge

Observe first and then find a "cultural informant", someone who knows the culture, and then ask. Phrases like "tell me about...", "I'm curious about...", or "what does it mean when..." show respect and invite conversation. If you demand to know "why" people act as they do, people think that you are judging their culture.

While you are observing behaviour in a given situation, you might want to be thinking about how people in your culture would behave in a similar situation. That way you will learn about your culture as well as have a basis of comparison.

Amber Bavishi

FINAL CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS TRAVELLING TO USA

- Airline tickets, Passport, I-20 (Travel documents/immigration documents).
- Health care documents/Immunization form and immunization completion certificate.
- General and specific medication/Spectacle and Contact Lenses and spares.
- Clothing and Accessories: Sweaters, Umbrella/raincoat, razors
- Formal attire and traditional attire. Atleast 2 weeks supply of daily-wear garments.
- Edible items/Spices/ Masalas
- Your list of contact numbers and useful addresses.
- Some loose change in quarters, dimes and nickels (25 cents, 10 cents and 5 cents respectively).
- Travelers' checks/cash for foreign exchange.

ESSENTIALS	✓	TOILETRIES	✓
CASH (CANADIAN OR		TOOTHBRUSH	
CREDIT CARDS		TOOTHPASTE	
INTERNATIONAL		DENTAL FLOSS	
MEDICAL INSURANCE		SHAMPOO	
PASSPORT / VISA		CONDITIONER	
AIRPLANE TICKET		COMB / BRUSH	
TRAVELER'S CHEQUES		SKIN LOTION	
WALLET / PURSE		PERFUME / AFTERSHAVE	
STUDENT		DEODORANT	
PHOTOCOPY OF CREDIT		HAIR SPRAY / GEL	
PHOTOCOPY OF		SHAVING KIT	
IMPORTANT TELEPHONE		TOWEL	
PASSPORT-SIZED		FINGERNAIL CLIPPERS	
CLOTHES		MISCELLANEOUS	
BATHROBE		ADDRESS BOOK	
PAJAMAS		ADDRESS BOOK	
SHIRTS / BLOUSES		RADIO / WALKMAN	
T-SHIRTS		BATTERIES	
JACKET		BOOKS / MAGAZINES	
PARKA (FOR WINTER)		PAPER / ENVELOPES	
SWEATER		JOURNAL	
DRESSES		PENS / PENCILS	
EVENING WEAR		CAMERA / FILM	
SUIT / TIES		GIFTS	
JEANS / PANTS		VITAMINS	
SHOES / BOOTS /		MEDICINE /	
SWIMSUIT		ALARM CLOCK	
SOCKS		UMBRELLA	
UNDERSHORTS		GAMES /	
UNDERSHIRTS		SEWING KIT /	
HAT GLASSES /		DICTIONARY	
RECREATIONAL		MUSICAL INSTRUMENT	
OTHERS		OTHERS	