

# Things to be done before Leaving India...

## **Obtaining the student visa**

1. When you go for the visa dress decently. Avoid any Americanism. Speak slowly and clearly. Don't appear tense and don't look desperate. Showing self-confidence helps often. You may or may not put on a tie and a blazer.
2. Go with a friend having a vehicle (just in case you have to go & get something).
3. The US counselors should never feel that you will have any sort of difficulty in language, in finance, racial, religious, etc.
4. You should be able to convince them that you will come back to India after graduating. If they ask you, points in favor may be
  - a) Only child in the family.
  - b) Hefty immovable property in India (take documents proving the same).
  - c) Lots of relatives in India and none abroad.
  - d) Parents not willing to come to USA for settlement.
  - e) Interest in teaching in India after graduating from USA.
  - f) Willing to serve the Indian industries after completing studies in USA.
5. Suggested ideal timings for getting the visa: to apply for visa - 8:30 AM to 10:00 A.M. to collect passport - 4:45 PM to 5:00 P.M.
6. It is not advisable to reach the consulate at 5:00 A.M. in the morning & wait in the line. Ideal time to reach the consulate is 8:30 AM.
7. Things to be taken with you when you go for the visa
  - a) Signed I-20 form. (School and Student copy ).
  - b) Completely filled visa application form.
  - c) Two 35mm by 35mm size photos (take some glue).
  - d) Your passport.
  - e) Admission & financial aid letters.
  - f) TOEFL & GRE score reports (original and photocopy).
  - g) Original copy of grade reports from your Indian Institution.
  - h) Copy of Statement of Purpose.
  - i) C.A Certificate (not necessary in all cases).
  - j) Affidavit of your sponsor/s addressed to the Consulate General of USA.
  - k) Original copy of I.T returns of your sponsors for the past three years.
  - l) Bank Statement showing the liquid property in the name of your sponsors.
  - m) Original copy of degree awarded if available.

## **Booking Tips for Students**

1. After getting the visa the next thing to do is booking tickets.
2. Days before the flight, call the airline to confirm your reservation and to cross-check everything the travel agent may have told you.

3. Indicate whether you want Asian Vegetarian Meal (AVM), non-smoking section, etc. This can be done at the time of booking the tickets with the travel agent.
4. Some airlines offer Frequent Flier programs (e.g. Air France, TWA, United Airlines) implying that after a certain number of miles of flying with that airline you get a free ticket. Enroll in such programs.
5. Avoid transit of airline at airports .A direct flight is the best. If change of airline can't be avoided, make sure that there is at least 4-6 hours gap between the scheduled arrival of one flight and the scheduled departure of the connecting flight.
6. Baggage is usually safe with a single airline while change of airline sometimes leads to misplaced luggage. Some airlines don't take care about baggage transfer. You may have to personally carry it (check this while booking)
7. Arrive at the airport at least 1 hour before the check in time.
8. Drink lot of fluids on the flight. This will help you recover the jetlag very fast.
9. Many airlines are fussy about the weight of your cabin baggage. The usual weight limit is 8 Kgs but 10 is generally admissible. However, its better to check with your travel agent regarding this.
10. Always keep a photocopy of your passport, tickets, I-20, contact info of your school in every baggage including your cabin baggage.
11. Always keep original copies of your CA certificate, bank statements, sponsor's affidavit, passport, and admission letters in your cabin baggage. Sometimes, the immigration officials may ask you to present them at the airport.
12. Ideally, a student can bring \$ 500/- in cash, \$ 1000/- in travelers cheques and a personal draft of the amount equal to one semester's expenses. You may check your I-20 to determine this amount.

### **Things to be done in advance before departure**

1. Learn typing.
2. Learn driving.
3. Learn to cook.
4. Make your passport valid for 6 months more than your stay indicated in your I-20
5. All other changes are best made in the U.S.
6. Make outstation purchases (sweater, thermal underwear, cassettes).
7. Have a complete medical checkup done.
8. Get prescriptions & medicines for all common ailments (the technical name of the medicine along with Indian/US brand name). See Appendix I.

9. Get your eyesight checked - get a new prescription. Buy at least one extra pair of glasses, lenses.

10. Get requisite immunization done (especially MMR). Fill in the Health and Immunization record form that has been sent to you with the I-20 packet.

### **Things to remember:**

- ❖ Get a copy of your syllabus along, as sometimes you may end up having prerequisites and you could waive it by proving you have covered such topics as usually the course requirements may be covered by parts in the courses we do. You require your provisional or degree completion certificate (sometimes they do not accept a provisional from some universities), which has to be submitted at the graduate college. So if you happen to come here as soon as you graduate apply for it.
- ❖ When traveling if you are a vegetarian specify for vegetarian food on your flight.
- ❖ Keep your cabin baggage as light as possible, during transits you may have to walk long distances. It would be good if you could get a trolley.
- ❖ If you could you can try for an International Driving Permit (Driving License)
- ❖ Dental checkup, go for it at least a 15 days in advance to avoid last moment confusions
- ❖ Eye sight check up, and if you have sight get a spare as they are usually expensive here
- ❖ A TB test is also advisable as if they ask you to get one done here, it is also expensive and not only that their tests are sensitive and usually we Indians test positive for it.
- ❖ Carry money as travelers' checks, safest and convenient method of carrying money.

### **What to Get and What Not?**

- ❖ If you intend to cook Indian food then we would suggest getting along a pressure cooker and any flat-bottomed vessels that you would feel comfortable using.
- ❖ You could get along some masala powders, pickles etc. you could even carry some pulses etc but we would suggest not to as we have Indian groceries around our campus.
- ❖ Here usually we wash clothes in Laundromats (maybe once in 15 days) so get clothes that would suit our washing conditions, as usually they are rough and

tough.

- ❖ Get at least 10 to 12 sets of under garments, socks (usually you get better ones here but you can get some to get starting) .(A detailed document on clothing requirements is also provided)
- ❖ Get a good alarm clock (that sounds loud)
- ❖ Do not get any stationary items like ( punchers ,notebooks etc)
- ❖ You should buy a good pair of sneakers, as you have to walk a lot here
- ❖ Do not get along any electronic items here as the voltage is much lower than in India
- ❖ A good school bag, a Visa folder (to hold cards), a wallet/ purses (leather goods are usually expensive here)
- ❖ Get some medicines which you think would be useful or any common health problems that you have you could get some basic medicines for headache, stomach ache, indigestion, fever etc.
- ❖ You could get along some Indian music cassettes, CDs etc that you enjoy.

### **Baggage specifications**

Box specifications: (As an example the Air India economy class baggage specifications to the USA are given below. Note the specifications may be different 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 158 cms (62").
- ❖ The weight of each bag should not exceed 32kg (70 lb) [note: they are not particular about this]
- ❖ Carry on baggage: In addition you can carry a bag with linear dimension not exceeding 115 cms (45") onboard (fits beneath the seat).
- ❖ Put a copy of the documents you are carrying in each piece of your luggage. Do not carry any sharp things along with you as they are usually detected as weapons

### **What should I bring from INDIA?**

- ❖ Books are the first priority. The list of books, being huge, is not provided here. Select the courses you are planning to take and find the corresponding books for those courses. If you don't find the books corresponding to the courses that you intend to take then you may request some of the ISA members from your department for help. Please do not ask ISA about courses you may take.
- ❖ You are advised to have the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) injection, and get a certificate if possible for all the vaccinations you had when you were a child. Hepatitis-B vaccinations are also advised, but it takes 3 injections over 6 months. Consult your doctor on all this.
- ❖ Medicines are pretty costly here. Do get some medicines from home, especially if you have some known problem. Get proper prescription for those medicines you bring along. It's very important as you might be asked at the airport and plus try and get a small note as to what medicine to take for what illness.

❖ **Its time to say....**

