



Handbook for the incoming Indian students

Hello! We, the Indian Student Association – Manthan, realize that you are amidst all your preparations to begin your stay here in Knoxville. We've prepared this handbook to answer some of the common questions that you might have regarding your travel plans. Feel free to get in touch with us (manthan.knoxville@gmail.com) if you have any questions that are not addressed in this handbook. Good luck! We look forward to seeing you here.

What to bring

Baggage

1. Buy one/two strong suitcases - they should be able to withstand a lot of mishandling. They should be within the size limitations (however most airlines are not very strict about baggage size of the checked in baggage). Care must be taken about the baggage size of the cabin/overhead baggage.
2. Put identification marks and labels both inside & outside the suitcases (apart from this, the airlines will also provide you with adhesive labels).
3. For the dimensions and the weight of the checked in baggage, as well as, the cabin baggage that is permitted please check with your airlines/travel agent. Usually 23 kgs/50 lbs per bag is allowed for check in baggage(certain airlines are very strict about these weight restrictions, especially if you are travelling inside the United States).
4. The number of checked in baggage allowed vary for different airlines. Be sure to check if your connecting flights have the same baggage policy as the one at your originating destination.

Dress

Formal dressing is mandatory occasionally. You may, of course, want to bring along some Indian clothes (saris, kurtas, etc) with you. We would also recommend that you get a pair of good leather shoes, as they are fairly expensive here. In general, the following list should suffice:



Formals: One suit (recommended), ties (1-2), shirts and trousers (2-3), traditional saris/kurta (highly recommended; 2-3).

Casuals: Jeans (3-4), T-shirts & sweats (6+), cotton shirts (4+), shorts (for outdoor, indoor, sports use) (2-3).

Footwear: Sneakers, formal shoes, leather chappals/sandals, bathroom slippers.

Winter wear: Sweaters (at most 2), muffler/scarf, woolen cap, thermal wear (optional).

Undergarments: 15 sets of undergarments and socks.

Miscellaneous: Towel (2+), napkins (1-2), leather belts (2+), handkerchiefs (6+).

Linen: Bed sheets (King size, 2), pillow covers (big, 2). Get a thick blanket.

Comforters (multi layered thick blankets) can be bought here.

Winter jacket, winter gloves, caps, windcheaters, tracksuits, good sweaters, comforter could be bought here. Leather jackets are not needed in Knoxville (it's optional); you can buy sweatshirts, and other winter accessories for cheap here. Undergarments decide the frequency of your laundry, so make sure to bring a lot. The washing machines are quite big and u can do your laundry once in 2 weeks. So you can save both money and time.

Kitchenware

Cooking Utensils: Saucepan (1-2), non-stick tava (1), pressure cooker (for 2 people; get spare gaskets and safety valves since you may not find the right size for cheap here).

Others: Spoons, forks, knives, cups, glasses (2 each), cutter plate, a melamine (microwaveable) set (Optional) consisting of plates, soup-bowls and regular bowls (2 each), sieve, water bottle, tiffin boxes, storage containers (could be bought here), tongs, ladles, can opener, etc. All these things can be purchased at Walmart or Dollar Tree.

Condiments and spices: Garam masala, pav bhaji masala, chole masala, sambhar & rasam masala, haldi, chill powder, jeera, dhania, asafetida, soda, cumin seeds, mustard seeds. Daal for 1st month, coffee, tea. All of these things can be purchased at the Indian store. However it is advisable to buy a small quantity of these things since it is hard to purchase these things within the first few days, all at once.

Others: Pickles, papad, homemade snacks etc.

Optional: You could carry about 3-4 ready to eat packets of quick meals, since you may take time to unpack and purchase other things.



Miscellaneous

Toilette: Toothbrush, toothpaste, tongue-cleaners, soap, soap box, a complete shaving kit (all in a toiletry bag), shampoo, talcum powder etc.

Medicines: Medicines with prescriptions for standard minor ailments like fever, cold, cough, stomach-ache etc. Also personal medication and medical history papers. Antiseptic cream, relaxyl etc. Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses. (Get the eye prescription too!) Get a complete medical checkup done before getting here, including a chest X-ray.

Study Materials & Stationary: A calculator, pens (1 pack), eraser, stapler & staples, double sided tape, backpack. (Most of the stationary is optional. You can also buy it here). You can also consult seniors from your department to check if you need some textbooks for your first (or second) semester. Textbooks are more expensive here. However it does not make sense to carry the textbooks for all semesters since your textbooks vary based on your teachers and your departmental policies.

Other: Needles & thread, cotton buttons, nail cutter, tool kit, and umbrella, sports equipment if you play tennis, squash, and swimming.

Entertainment: Your favorite Indian/ Western music CDs, mp3 players, Record players (wut!), etc, your favorite books.

Personal: Family photos, 'Indian' ethnic articles (gifts/personal use), an up-to-date address book of all your acquaintances/ friends/ relatives in the USA - Canada region, photos of deities (if religious-minded).

Money Handling

Money transfer from India

Fee payment

Fees can be paid once you log in to myutk.utk.edu using your NetID and password. You will be given options to add a bank account from which your fees will be collected.

Bank Accounts

Students can easily open a bank account after arriving here. To do so, you will need few important documents: apartment-leasing document for address proof, Passport, I-20, offer letter from your professor or employer (for credit card). Once you have an account, it will be easy to transfer money from India through a



bank in which you have an existing account. Western Union money transfer is common too.

Bringing Money with you

Travelers cheques and travel cards are recommended. You can carry \$500-\$1000 in cash since it will take about a week to get your account set up and complete the transfer from India. Once you open a bank account, it is recommended that you carry lesser cash and keep most of your money in your accounts and use your card.

Port of entry procedures ^[1]

1. Before landing the flight attendant will distribute customs declaration forms & immigration forms as mentioned below. Fill these out on the plane (you will submit them to the appropriate authorities when you land). Do not hesitate to take the flight attendant's help. Carry a pen in your carry-on bag.
2. You can indicate that you have nothing to declare & total value of all goods you carry is less than \$100 on the customs form.
3. After verifying your documents, immigration officer will indicate length of stay, university, etc. This will be attached to your passport. You must retain this I-94 form; else you will face trouble in leaving USA later. This may have changed to an online procedure; please confirm with the immigration officer if needed. For more information, check <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/i-94-instructions>.
4. Just before you land the correct local time will be announced. Set your watch accordingly.
5. Once you are out of the plane go straight to the immigration counter to beat the queue. It might take half to one hour here.
6. Keep your I-20, passport, admission & aid letters ready. They might ask few questions like – “Is this your first time in the US?” “Are you a student on F-1 visa?” “Which University are you joining?”
7. Be very relaxed and answer all the questions that the officer will ask. Sometimes the officer may ask you to present financial documents or letters from your sponsors. Thus it is advisable to carry these along with you in your cabin baggage.
8. Then go to the conveyor belts to fetch your luggage. Pick up a cart 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.



9. Cart your baggage to nearby Customs. If asked, tell the officer that you are a student on F-1 visa, school, department and coming to USA for the

In case the person assigned to pick you up from the airport is late, please wait at the airport. You may connect to Airport wi-fi and call **(321) 431-0511** or **(842) 229-5421** using Gmail or using a payphone.

first time. If asked to open the baggage do so slowly but do not mess up the place. Note: In most cases you will NOT be asked to open your boxes at all & will be simply waved through.

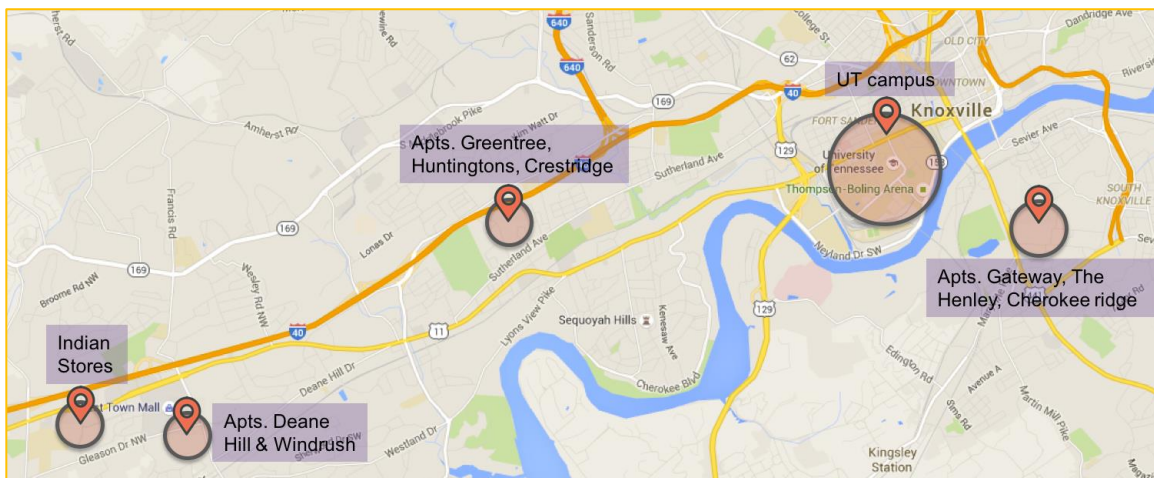
10. Then go & wait at the nearest exit for the volunteers who are supposed to receive you. They will always be standing and waiting for you in the passenger pickup area. Be relaxed, Manthan - ISA will ALWAYS make an arrangement to receive you. If you have asked a relative or a friend to receive you then DON'T make an attempt to call ISA for pick up.

11. Never leave your baggage unattended. Don't go out of the airport until somebody comes to receive you. If you have doubt about the person who has come to receive you, don't hesitate to ask for his/her identification paper or to call up and check with the numbers provided.

12. Once you reach your house (or other destination) call home & inform them that you have reached safely.



Knoxville



Housing

Apartment options

Off-campus housing options are common among Indian graduate students. West-Knoxville is the most developed and safest side of Knoxville. In addition, the Indian stores are located on the west. Here are the apartment complexes preferred by the majority of Indian students:

Apartment Name	Neighborhood	Distance from campus	KAT Route number	Nearby Features	URL
Deane Hill Apartments	Gleason Drive, West Knoxville	~8.5 miles	11	Indian Grocery Shop, Food City (grocery), West Town Mall, Walmart	http://www.deanehill.com/
Greentree Village	Sutherland, West Knoxville	~4 miles	17	Kroger	http://www.liveatgreentree.com/
Huntington's	Sutherland, Bearden, West	~4 miles	17	Kroger	http://www.fieldenandrot hermel.com/huntington-place-apartments/



Knoxville					
Kingston Pointe Apartments	Kingston Pike, West Knoxville	~6 miles	11	Sitar, Walgreens	http://www.kingstonpointe.org/
Kingston Place Apartments	Kingston Pike	~1 mile	11	Close to Campus	http://www.apartments.com/kingston-place-apartments-walnut-creek-ca/1l8vt37/
University Park Apartments (furnished)	South Knoxville	<2 miles	44	Close to campus	https://www.universityparkknoxville.com/
Cherokee Ridge Apartments	South Knoxville	<2 miles	44, 41	Close to campus	http://www.cherokeeidgeapts.com/
The Henley	South Knoxville	<2 miles	44, 41	Close to campus	http://www.thehenleyapartments.com/
Evolve (furnished)	Campus strip	~0.7 miles	11, Trolley, UT bus	Close to campus, Walmart, Publix, bars	http://www.evolveapts.com/
Crown at Campus Pointe	Fort Sanders	1.3 miles	11, Trolley, UT bus	Close to campus, Walmart, Publix, bars	http://crownecampuspointe.com/
University Towers Condominium	Fort Sanders	0.6 miles	11, Trolley, UT bus	Close to campus, Walmart, Publix, bars	http://www.apartments.com/university-towers-condominiums-knoxville-tn/0796tl2/
Maplehurst	East-side of campus	0.1 miles	-	Close to campus, Walmart, Publix, bars	http://maplehurstparkapts.com/



Food Options

Indian restaurants

Currently, there are about 3 Indian restaurants in and around Knoxville. Sitar, Bombay Palace and Tandur are the most visited. The Indian grocery stores have also opened a chaat counter recently.

Campus cafeterias

ut.campusdish.com has the list of all the on-campus food options. Apart from this, there are scores of restaurants on the strip – a segment of Cumberland Avenue that runs through the campus.

Indian Grocery

There are 2 Indian stores, both located close to the West Town Mall, on KAT bus route 11. Almost all the necessary groceries can be found here.

Phone

Network options

Many companies (ATT, Verizon, Sprint, T-Mobile, etc) offer both post-paid and pre-paid options. To start an account, you will be asked for your Social Security Number (SSN), which you will receive between 2-4 weeks of submitting your application. Pre-paid phones can be purchased without SSN. In order to purchase a mobile phone ASAP, the best option will be to find a friend who is willing to add you in his/her “family” plan. More information on the rates and the plans can be found on the respective websites of these providers.

Calling India

Apart from free services such as Skype and Google Hangout, you can call your loved ones using your mobile phone by purchasing third-party “calling cards” such as [IndiaLD](#), [vonage](#), Reliance, etc.

Manthan Activities

Diwali

Every year, Manthan celebrates Diwali by bringing together Indian students, faculty, and family who live in and around Knoxville (and others) for a fun-filled



celebration with dance, music, drama, and food! This is the event that is looked forward the most by the Indian community in Knoxville.



Other Events

Holi: Students get together to play with colors at a local park. This was the second biggest event that was hosted by Manthan in 2018.

Independence Day: New Manthan Team is appointed/ sworn in on August 15th every year. Please contact Manthan if you want to be part of the upcoming Team.

Republic Day: Manthan members meet up on this day to welcome the incoming spring semester students.

International Festival: I-house sponsored cultural event (fall semesters). Manthan has won several 1st and 2nd place prizes at this event.

International Dance Competition: I-house sponsored dance competition (fall semesters). Manthan has consecutively won 1st place prizes in the last few competitions. Yes, we have a great history!

Asian Festival: A cultural festival for the Asian community in Knoxville (fall semesters).



India Festival: A celebration of the Indian culture. This is hosted by the Hindu Community Center (HCC). Manthan members take part in this event.

Transportation

Within Campus

Campus bus shuttles are available throughout the fall and spring semesters. You can use these shuttles to commute within the campus. A map of their routes of operation can be found at various bus stops within the campus, or at the trolley itself.

Within Knoxville

KAT (Knoxville Area Transit) buses run through some of the main neighborhoods in Knoxville. Bus routes and schedules can be found in www.katbus.com. For students who do not plan on buying a car while they stay here, it is advisable to look at the bus routes while booking an apartment. This is because buses do not operate for 24 hours here. They also have a varying frequency and schedule based on the routes.

Car Rentals

There are various car rental options while you are travelling in and around Knoxville. Some of the most popular companies are Enterprise, Budget and Avis. It is advisable to get an insurance while you rent a car here. Some credit cards cover basic insurances. Please contact the credit card company and the rental company for more details. Drivers under the age of 25 would be charged an additional underage fee.

Important Contacts

I-House: (865) 974-4453

CIE: (865) 974-3177

Manthan - ISA: (865) 236-8654; (865) 441-7219

Knoxville Police Department: (865) 215-7000

UT Police Department: (865) 974-3114



Useful links

International Student Pre-Arrival Handbook

<http://international-utk-edu.wengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/106/files/2014/06/Student-Handbook-2014-2015.pdf>

www.desigrad.com

www.garamchai.com

Reference:

[1] – Indian Student Association – Ohio State University.

Manthan – ISA is a registered student organization dedicated to serve the Indian students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The information provided in this document is written solely to help the new incoming students. We hope this document is useful.

Website: web.utk.edu/~manthan
Facebook: www.facebook.com/manthan.utk
Email: manthan.knoxville@gmail.com