**CHECK LIST FOR THINGS TO BRING ALONG**

!!!! Don’t miss the International Students Orientation. It is very important!!!!!

Dear incoming students/scholars,

Please find attached a list of things you may want to carry with you. We have merely edited a bit of what we inherited from our seniors. The list is pretty exhaustive and it is upto the individuals to prioritize depending on how much the airlines allow you to carry. In general it will be possible to purchase anything that you may require here, for a cost of course, except perhaps the home/Mom cooked food! Yet it is advisable to bring in as much as you can..

**Clothes:**

Laundry is usually done once in two weeks. Some do it every week and some even less. In any case, it is advisable to have enough clothes for at least 2 weeks.

- **Campus Wear:**
  - Jeans [4-6]
  - Casual T-shirts/Shirts (8-12)
  - Sweatshirt (1-2)
  - Shorts/Cargos/Pants/Bermudas (3-4)
  - 1 Cap (optional)
- **Formal Wear:**
  - Formal shirts (3-4)
  - Formal trousers (2)
  - Formal blazer or suit (for interviews, etc.) (1-2)
  - Tie (2-3)
  - 2 to 3 Belts (formal and informal)
- **Winter Wear:**
  - 1 Light jacket for fall (winter jackets are best bought in the US). It is normally the norm to dress in layers during winters. So a good quality heavy winter jacket would be a must. And below that, it is advisable to put on layers of warm clothes starting with thermals, followed with T-shirt, woolen sweater etc.
  - Sweaters (2)
  - Thermal underwear (2 or more pairs, OPTIONAL but highly recommended)
- **Others:**
  - Underwear (20)
  - 2 Night dresses
  - Few bed sheets, bedspreads and pillow covers. Don’t get too many of them. Beds here are larger than those in India
and these bed sheets fit poorly on them. (Better buy them here.)

- **1 or 2 Traditional outfits (Kurta-Pyjamas/Sarees – for ethnic functions)**
  - Towels [2-3]
  - Handkerchiefs [10-12]
  - Blanket (Light weight) [1] (Recommended! You can buy a comforter(Blanket) here for $15-$35)
  - 1 or 2 Leather wallets

- **Footwear:**
  - Formal leather shoes (carry shoe-polish too) [1 pair]
  - Socks [8-10 pairs, cheaply available here]
  - Slippers/Sandals [1-2]
  - Floaters - You don't get them here
  - **Toiletries:** You will get almost everything you need over here. However, having at least some of these stuffs would avoid the initial expenditure when you are here.
    - Shaving set (Gillette blades are extremely costly so get as many as u can)
    - **Toilet Paper (Must for first few days until you go out to shop)**
    - Combs
    - Hair oil
    - Mirror (small)
    - Toothpaste and toothbrush
    - Shaving cream
    - Soaps
    - Washing powder
    - Cold cream
    - Talcum powder
    - Nail cutter
    - Scissors
    - Safety pins
    - Sewing thread
    - Needles
    - Spare buttons and hooks
    - Small tools like penknife, screwdriver etc.

**MEDICINES**

- Analgesics (e.g. Crocin), pain killers, anti-allergy, cough and cold medicines, band-aids (cotton and bandages), ointments for burns, cuts, etc., medicine for diarrhoea, stomach ache, pain relieving sprays/ointments, antacids, itch relief.
- Spectacles (and its prescription)
- Any other item with doctor's prescription.
- It is also advisable to have an eye and dental check-up prior to coming to the US.
KITCHEN UTENSILS

- 1 or 2 nonstick vessels to make curries (with a covering lid)
- One nonstick pan (tava) to make chapatis, omelets.
- 1 Cooker – 3/5 litre (also carry extra gaskets, whistles, safety valves, etc.)
- 1 Tea strainer
- 1 Strainer spoon for deep frying
- 3 Kitchen knives (different sizes are useful. Indian ones are sharper and better)
- 1 Peeler
- 1 pair of Tongs.
- 1 Egg beater
- 4 Cooking spoons
- 1 Serving ladle
- 2 Wooden spatulas
- Small PET bottles or a box with compartments to put all the frequently used spices
- 1 Cutting board (wooden/plastic) — (Optional as it's cheap over here)
- 4 Dinner plates (preferably microwaveable)
- 2 Plastic bowls
- Eating spoons and forks
- 2 Coffee mugs
- One small vessel to put tadka

Don’t load your bag with un-necessary utensils as it might overload you baggage. Pressure cooker is one thing you definitely need from India. All other utensils can be bought here. Check this link for the things that you get for such a price (around Rs. 2500).

http://www.walmart.com/ip/Mainstays-18-Piece-Non-Stick-Cookware-Set/14918604

MASALAS AND PICKLES:

There are multiple stores in East Lansing where you can easily find most of the Indian spices and other food items. However, it would not hurt to have some essential requirements for the first few weeks in US.

Bringing too much of these things is not advisable as it’s a risk to have them in your luggage given that Airport security could go through all these things in detail (even slosh sealed bags). These could then spoil rest of your belongings.

SPICES:

Turmeric powder, Coriander powder, Red Chilli powder, Channa Masala, Jeera, Mustard seeds, Chicken Masala, Garam Masala, Asafoetida powder, Dried Red Chillies, Dried kadi patta, Rasam powder, Sambhar powder.

Other items like rice, pulses, coffee/tea, salt, sugar, poha, chatpata-mixture etc could also be brought in small quantities.
The U.S. immigration and agriculture department strictly prohibits carrying food, meat, vegetables, fruits, seeds, etc. into the United States. However, most of us have had no problems with the food items we brought into US. Make sure to have all the spices in proper sealed packets.

**MONEY:**

If you have assistantship then you will get your first paycheck by mid September (for fall admittance or by mid February for spring admittance). It is recommended to bring atleast 1000-1500 dollars with you until you get your paycheck. This will cover your house rent and initial expense for setting up your home.

For students having no assistantship, you should be prepared to spend at least 600 bucks for living expenses (including rent)/per month. This does not include your expense on books and other luxuries spending.

**Mobile Phones:**

Similar to India, there are two types of connection here- Prepaid and Postpaid. There are mainly 2 mobile phone companies that have decent coverage and network strength in East Lansing- AT&T, Verizon and H2O.

**AT&T:**

They are GSM supported Mobile phone network and phones from India can be used with their Sim cards. However, if you intend to go for prepaid, you can use your phones from India but the call rates (Incoming and outgoing) are 0.10 dollar per minute. For message (sending and receiving) they charge 0.20 dollars. This turns out to be a costly affair at the end of the month if you call frequently.

Another option is to take a postpaid connection form AT&T. But for that you have to keep a deposit of 500 dollars with the company to get that connection. This is required since you don’t have a credit history here and they keep that money as a security deposit and will give you back that amount once your credit history is built i.e. if you pay all your bills on time. Another way to get a postpaid connection is to get into someone’s family plan. This means that add a line to the connection of someone who is already here since sometime and have a post-paid connection. (your senior, friend, relative). This way, depending upon number of people and talk time you share, you might have to pay anything between 30-50 dollars per month. Also if you take a Smartphone, say i-Phone, you will be paying $15 extra (minimum) each month for data usage. This might look costly now but virtually you get loads of minutes through this plan because they have unlimited minutes for nights and weekends, AT&T to AT&T, and thus your minute is deducted only for calls made during daytime and to mobile phone of other network.

Anyway get ready to pay around $40-$50 per month.
Verizon:

They support CDMA phone. Cell phones from India will not work with this network. All the conditions and rates are almost similar to AT&T except that it has a CDMA network. It is slightly costly than AT&T but it has a better network coverage than AT&T.

H2O:

The most economical carrier, which we prefer if you don’t have plans of buying a contract phone. You can get H2O sim card at the Best buy store in Meridian mall. Cost of the sim card is approximately $10. If you opt for monthly $30 plan, you will get unlimited talk & text throughout US, 100 international SMS, 500MB data and approximately 1.5hrs of India calling. If you subscribe for autorecharge, its gonna be $27/month. H2O network is good in Lansing as it catches AT&T signal. Activation of the sim can be done online. For more info visit:


Miscellaneous:

- Good durable travel trolleys and hand baggage following the rules laid down by your airlines.
- Do not bring too many electronic gadgets as they are cheaper here.
- Contacts and addresses of all acquaintances in USA.
- Other ethnic and religious items.

Travel Preparations:

- Start looking for the best flight deals at least a month ahead of your date of travel. Few airlines still provide the option of “blocking” tickets (Air France and few other European airlines allow blocking for a maximum of 2 weeks, most others do don’t have this option or allow just 24 hours blocking).
- Make sure that you have enough time between the connecting flights especially at the port of entry where the immigration procedures could delay you.
- Make all the necessary financial arrangements.
- Finish off your VISA applications and get your VISA ASAP.
- Verify all other documents like passport (its expiry date and all), I-20 etc and read thoroughly all your immigration documents to avoid last minute glitches.
- Make multiple copies of the entire set of your documents. Keep the originals with you in the hand baggage and keep one set in each of the luggage.
- Check with the airlines about the baggage limitations and specifications.
• Get a complete medical and dental checkup. Get all the prescriptions with you.
• Get your eye sight tested. Get at least one spare pair of spectacles.
• Follow the University directives and get the required immunizations.
• **Prioritize on having your final flight destination as Lansing, MI (LAN-Capital Region Intl).** Other close airports are Detroit and Chicago. There is bus service – Michigan Flyer – from Detroit airport to East Lansing, and train (Amtrak) or bus (MegaBus) from Chicago (both train and bus starts from Downtown Chicago which is around 1 hr travel from the Airport).
• Visit [http://liveon.msu.edu/](http://liveon.msu.edu/) and check out University accommodation options. Many of you might end up staying at the Spartan Village Complex. Look for potential roommates and make an early application for an apartment.
• Inform the MSU - ISO about your travel plans as and when it is finalized so that we can arrange for pick-ups and temporary accommodations for those who need it.
• Have all the “really” important things in your hand baggage including one set of clothing for the eventuality of your luggage being misplaced, some medicines, toilet kit, novel/magazines, all original documents, money and important contacts (there are very strict limitations on the kind of things you can carry in your hand baggage. Comply with it fully as everything else shall be removed in one of the multiple security check-in).
• It is going to be a long flight so wear something comfortable.
• Relax during your flight, watch movies and enjoy the flight food. Ask around whenever in doubt. Follow all the directions in the airport properly and you should be just fine!
• Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions!
• Don’t miss the International Students Orientation. It is very important !!!!
• MSU ISO(Indian Students Organization) is an affiliate of ISA(International Students Association), which is a main part of OISS (Office of International Students and Scholars)

**Important links:**

1. **MSU Indian Students organization:**
   Official webpage: [www.msu.edu/~msuic](http://www.msu.edu/~msuic)
   MSU ISO mail id: music@msu.edu
   Fb group: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/1467681283461849/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1467681283461849/)

2. **OISS (Office of International Students and Scholars):**- Your government check in and International students Orientation
   Official webpage: [http://oiss.isp.msu.edu/students/orientation/](http://oiss.isp.msu.edu/students/orientation/)

3. **ISA (International Students Association):**