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Now that you have been admitted to Yale, your adventure begins as you get ready to depart for your studies abroad. Whether or not this is your first stay in the U.S., you certainly have a lot of things on your mind as you try to get organized. It is a very busy and exciting time as you say your goodbyes to your friends and family and in the midst of it, you don't want to forget anything important. To help soothe your pre-departure worries, we have put together some pre-arrival information and considerations that you may find useful. If you need more information or have any questions that are not covered here, we recommend that you e-mail us at [oiss@yale.edu](mailto:oiss@yale.edu). The OISS website also contains helpful information, including an up-to-date travel advisory <http://www.oiss.yale.edu/visa/travelalert.htm>

### **WHEN TO ARRIVE**

Students should plan to arrive in New Haven in time to settle in and attend orientation sessions held before the beginning of classes. Immigration regulations allow you to enter the United States no more than 30 days prior to the start date on your F-1 or J-1 immigration document, the I-20 or DS-2019. Information about different OISS orientation programs will be posted on the OISS website at [www.oiss.yale.edu](http://www.oiss.yale.edu). Also, be sure to check the information posted on the Yale website about orientation programs for your school [www.yale.edu](http://www.yale.edu). Students and scholars who plan to live off-campus should arrive a couple of weeks before the term begins in order to allow enough time to locate suitable and affordable accommodations. Because of the high cost of temporary housing for families, students with spouses and children may want to come alone to find housing. Never sign a lease (a legally binding agreement) for off-campus housing without first inspecting the property in person.

If at all possible, you should try to arrive at Yale during University business hours, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday-Friday (Tuesdays 10:00am to 5:00pm). When you arrive in New Haven, you should go directly to your housing accommodations to leave your luggage. Your next stops should be the Office of International Students and Scholars and your academic department. U.S. immigration regulations require that you report to the OISS. Bring your passport and immigration documents. When you check in with OISS, we will provide you with information and assistance to welcome you and help you settle into your new surroundings.

## BOOKING YOUR FLIGHT

When shopping around for the best price for a round-trip flight to the U.S., you should keep in mind that there are several airports convenient to New Haven and Yale. Most international flights arrive in *JFK*, also known as *Kennedy Airport*, in New York. You may also wish to check prices for flights that arrive in *LaGuardia*, in New York, *Newark Airport* in New Jersey, *Bradley Airport*, in Hartford, Connecticut, or *Tweed-New Haven Airport* in New Haven. If you arrive at the Tweed-New Haven Airport, you can take a local taxi to Yale for approximately \$20, and it will only take about 15 minutes to get to campus, depending on the traffic. The New Haven airport is the only airport that is close enough to get to campus by a regular taxi. If there is no taxi waiting at the airport when you arrive, you can call 777-7777 to request a pick-up. The New York and New Jersey airports are about 1 hour and 40 minutes to 2 hours away and Bradley is about 40 minutes from Yale. It will cost considerably more time and money to get from those airports to campus, but it may not be possible to fly directly into New Haven since it is a very small local commuter airport. You will find details about traveling to New Haven from the airport in the *Handbook for International Students and Scholars at Yale*, accessible on-line at <http://www.oiss.yale.edu/students/handbook.htm> Don't forget to confirm your flight 72 hours in advance of your departure, and arrive at the airport early!

## BEFORE YOU LEAVE

*Medical and Dental Care:* Schedule all your doctor's and dentist's check-ups at home before you leave. Medical and dental care in the U.S. is excellent, but it makes sense to take care of anything you need before you arrive. Dental care in the U.S. is VERY expensive. While it is possible to purchase a student discount plan, it does not cover all dental procedures 100%. Don't forget to bring any prescription medications (with copies of your prescriptions translated into English) or even non-prescription medications that you take. Sometimes it is difficult to translate a prescription or a non-prescription medication. If you can bring the scientific name of the drug with you, it may be easier to find the equivalent here. Prescription medication will often cost more in the U.S. for the same drug from the same company, so you may want to bring enough of a supply with you (as long as it will remain fresh for the time you are here). For health insurance, students will be automatically covered by the Yale Health Plan and charged accordingly. You will find details about health care in the *Handbook for International Students and Scholars at Yale*, accessible on-line at <http://www.oiss.yale.edu/students/handbook.htm>

*Money Matters:* Most people set up their bank accounts in their first days in New Haven, and because it normally takes a few days before funds are available, it is a good idea to bring a credit card for purchases or an ATM bank card to draw cash from your local account in U.S. currency. You should anticipate needing funds (minimum \$1,500) for airport-to-Yale transportation, getting short-term housing, meals and purchasing things you need to set up house. Remember that it can take several days to have money wired from your country directly into your U.S. account. Some students have had better luck with Western Union wire service, as they will wire funds from an individual directly to

another individual. You may want to see if you have a Western Union office in your city and get details before you leave. It is never a good idea to travel with large amounts of cash, but you should probably get some U.S. currency before you leave your country. If possible, try to get some one-dollar bills so that you will be able to rent a cart for your luggage from the automatic dispenser in the airport (You can also use a credit card to rent a cart). One-dollar bills are also handy to use as tips for people who assist you with your bags, or for taxi fare and tips.

*Important Documents:* You should consider having your important documents translated into English before you leave your country if necessary. School transcripts, marriage license, medication prescriptions, etc.

## **PACKING YOUR BAGS**

*Moving Overseas Rule #1:* Pack as lightly as possible. You will have to carry everything yourself once you arrive, and you will have a better sense of what you actually need once you settle in. You can always have your family mail you a box or pick up what you need during the winter break. Remember too, anything you forget to bring can be purchased. There are many places to go shopping near campus that are within walking distance, and you will have an opportunity during orientation to take a bus trip to the outer shopping areas. There are also public buses that you can take to go shopping, if necessary. [www.onebag.com](http://www.onebag.com) is a website where you will find packing lists, advice and important links, including a link to the U.S. Transportation Security Administration website [http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/assistant/editorial\\_1012.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/assistant/editorial_1012.shtm) where you can find out which items are prohibited for air travel.

*Suitcases:* Cut off all old luggage tags from your suitcases no matter how sentimental they may be. Put your Yale address, or Yale department address and contact information on a tag outside of your bag, and on a card that will go somewhere inside your bag as well. You may wish to tie a colored ribbon to the handle of your suitcases to make them more easily identifiable at the baggage claim. Once you have finished packing, zip up securely, but do not lock (so that they may be opened for security inspection), all of the compartments on your bags. Locks may be broken if additional inspection is required.

*Clothes:* The weather in Connecticut can range from very hot and humid in the summer to quite cold and freezing in the winter. You need to plan for all four seasons – fall, winter, spring & summer. For the summer you will need light casual clothes, and a bathing suit (The beach is a 20 minute bus ride from Yale). To plan for the changing weather from fall through spring, you will probably want to have at least one heavy coat or jacket and a light jacket or sweater to start with. You can buy anything else you need. If you are from a warm weather country and don't yet own a winter coat, the OISS can recommend nearby places to buy a good winter coat at a discount. To stay warm, people will often layer clothes -- for example, a long-sleeved tee shirt under a sweater, with a jacket on top. That way as it warms up during the day, you can shed the layers you don't need. Moreover, if you bring clothes you can layer, then you don't need to

bring as much. Overall, clothing in Connecticut is not too expensive and if you need something once you get here, there are many places to buy discount clothes and shoes.

*Shoes:* You will need an assortment of footwear. Sandals for summer, heavier boots/shoes for winter, something for a formal occasion. You'll probably want to bring comfortable sneakers or flat shoes for walking around campus and New Haven. When the snow arrives, typically in December through February, you will be glad you have a good pair of boots.

*Fashion:* Dress at US universities is generally quite casual. Most people wear jeans and tee shirts like a uniform. If you have it, you might want to bring some traditional dress from your country for festivals and/or special occasions, and it is recommended that you bring at least one formal evening outfit and a semi-formal outfit.

*Mementos from Home:* Bring photographs of friends and family. Some familiar objects to make you feel more at home might seem like a silly thing when you are packing, but can make you feel a lot better when you are feeling blue and missing home. Consider bringing some small significant items to place next to your bed or hang on the wall.

*Household Items:* Plan on buying most of your household items (small electrical appliances, bed sheets and towels, cooking and eating supplies) once you have arrived. If you have space in your suitcase, you may want to bring a set of sheets and towels from home to get started. You can always purchase what you need at second-hand or discount shops. To get an idea of what it may cost to purchase these items once you have arrived, go to <http://www.ikea.com/> There is an Ikea store and other good choices for discount shopping located a convenient distance from the Yale campus.

*Valuables:* Make sure you don't pack anything valuable into the suitcase that you are going to check through in case it gets lost. Carry all your important documents, medications, toiletries etc. in your carry-on luggage, and in case your checked luggage gets lost, you will want to also have a change of clothing with you. Sometimes it can take a couple of days to locate misplaced luggage.

*Don't Forget:* Here are some items that should be carried on your person or go into your carry-on luggage:

- ❑ **Documents** – Your I-20 or DS-2019 visa document, valid passport (for at least six months! ), and any other important documents (marriage license or school transcripts for example).
- ❑ **Financial statements** – Your original supporting financial documents, such as personal bank statements, a financial aid award and/or the offer letter from your department.
- ❑ **The street address of where you will be going in New Haven** when you arrive. You will need it to give to the taxi driver.
- ❑ **Medications you use regularly; extra prescription eyeglasses or contact lenses.** Make sure that you use the original container with the doctor's information

on any prescriptions you bring. If you have a health problem that requires medication, bring enough to last as long as possible.

- ❑ **English Translations** of your important documents, medical records, school transcripts, marriage license, medication prescriptions, etc.
- ❑ **Your valid driver's license** – accompanied by an *International Driver's Permit (IDP)*. You will not be able to drive in Connecticut without the IDP. You can inquire at a local travel agent on how to obtain an international driver's permit. An International Driver's Permit is valid up to a year after your entry in the United States.
- ❑ **A credit card that you can use in the U.S.** – You can use it to pay for things while you are getting settled and you won't have to carry so much cash with you. You can also use it at the airport to pay for the cart to carry your luggage, and your transportation to Yale. You never want to carry large amounts of cash as a safety precaution.
- ❑ **An ATM card (bank card)** – that can use at automatic transfer machines (ATM's) to withdraw cash in USD from your local bank account. You will normally pay a small fee to the U.S. bank, and possibly to your bank too, but you will get the most up-to-date exchange rate.
- ❑ **Some U.S. currency (dollars)** – Between \$200 to \$300 so that you will have some cash to pay for immediate expenses like meals, transportation, or a telephone card. You might want to bring more in traveler's checks, if you know you will be waiting for a wire transfer to come from your bank at home to your bank in the U.S.
- ❑ **U.S. traveler's checks.** – If you plan on carrying more than \$200 in cash, you should carry U.S. traveler's checks or credit cards for additional expenses (You may want to plan on bringing enough in traveler's checks to cover your first month's expenses). Traveler's checks are recommended because of their security – they can be replaced if lost or stolen.

*Other suggestions:* You may also want to consider bringing the following:

- ❑ **Recipes of native foods** – There will be international 'potluck' dinners that you may wish to attend, and you will be asked to make a dish from home. Also, you will sometimes prefer your own cooking over American food!
- ❑ **Small souvenirs** from your country to give as gifts.
- ❑ **A camera** – especially a digital camera so you can e-mail photos to your friends and family at home.
- ❑ **Music** – CD's of favorite music. Musical instruments and music.
- ❑ **A travel alarm.**
- ❑ **An umbrella.**

## **LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AT YALE**

*Finding Off-Campus Housing:* Never sign a lease for off-campus housing without first seeing it in person. New Haven is a student town and although you may have to search a bit to find exactly what you are looking for, you should find a quite a few options for getting a place on your own or sharing with someone else. Remember that everyone

who comes to Yale finds a place to live! Apartments are mostly rented unfurnished, but you will be able to put together a livable household with very little money by shopping around at local thrift shops (pre-owned items) and discount stores.

Go to <http://www.oiss.yale.edu/students/housing.htm> for more information on housing. You will also find detailed information about seeking off-campus housing in the Handbook for International Students & Scholars at Yale <http://www.oiss.yale.edu/students/handbook.htm> It is recommended that you arrive at least a couple of weeks before the start of your program in order to make off-campus housing arrangements in person.

## **JOINING THE YALE COMMUNITY**

One of the best parts about coming to Yale is the lively and diverse community. You may wish to make community connections prior to arrival via the YaleInternational e-mail list. With nearly 3,000 members, this busy interactive list will help you learn about events of interest, get information about housing and shares, and it is an excellent place to post questions about any aspect of life at Yale and in New Haven. To join, simply send a blank e-mail to [yaleinternational-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:yaleinternational-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

You will also want to sign up for the OISS official electronic newsletter (sent during the academic year only) at <http://www.oiss.yale.edu/about/oiss-l.htm>

## **SURVIVING THE FLIGHT**

As soon as you get on the airplane, set your watch to local New Haven time. It will help ease the effects of jetlag by getting you mentally prepared for the new time schedule. Once you arrive, especially if you have crossed many time zones, you will probably feel like eating and sleeping at the wrong times. You may need to take a short nap when you finally get here (not more than an hour and set your alarm!). Whatever you do, resist the urge to fall into a bed somewhere to 'sleep it off'. It's best if you try to eat and sleep at normal times. If you stay up until a normal bedtime once you've arrived and then set your alarm to wake you up in the morning, you will get over your jetlag much more quickly.

For a long flight, ear-plugs, an eye-mask, an inflatable travel pillow and some herbal tea to help you sleep can help make your flight more comfortable. Because of the dehydrating atmosphere in the air cabin, it is recommended that you avoid drinking alcohol or caffeine. The dehydrating effects of these types of beverages will generally be intensified when flying, and can be quite negative – causing headaches or nausea. It is a much better choice to drink plenty of water and juice on the plane. To have a more restful journey, you may wish to carry your own sleep-inducing herbal tea with you and ask for hot water from the flight attendant so you can make your own tea before settling in for a sleep. You may also want to bring some healthy snacks for the longer portions of your flight in case you get hungry in between meal services.

## **ARRIVAL, BAGGAGE CLAIM & GETTING TO YALE FROM THE AIRPORT**

Most people have concerns about how they will manage on their own with all of their luggage, and if you have never navigated the New York airport and the transportation to Connecticut, it can be (understandably) worrisome. However, managing on your own is really not so difficult. Here's how it will be when you arrive:

You will go first to immigration inspection. Make sure you remember to present your I-20 or DS-2019 along with your passport (all packed in your carry-on bags!) to the border official so that you will enter in the correct visa status (Example: F-1 or J-1) The border official will give you a little white (NOT green!) "Departure Card" (the I-94 card), which should be stapled into your passport. Whether it is or is not stapled there, please keep track of this very important little white card. You will need it to leave the country! For details about this card, go to [http://www.uscampus.com/arrive\\_usa/arrive\\_i94.htm](http://www.uscampus.com/arrive_usa/arrive_i94.htm) You can also find an example of this card at <http://www.yale.edu/icenter/images/I-94.pdf> When you fill out your name on the card, make sure you print your first and last name exactly as printed on your I-20, and your passport identification page. Your name must match identically on all your important documents or you are likely to encounter administrative or immigration difficulties. Before leaving immigration, always check this card carefully to make sure it's correct: name, status (F-1, J-1, F-2, J-2 etc.), end date (for F and J it should read D/S) and the color of card (should be white not green).

Now you walk to 'Baggage Claim' where you will get your suitcases. You can get a luggage cart for a few dollars by putting in U.S. dollars or by swiping a credit card. Depending upon what terminal you arrive in, the cart dispenser could be located near the baggage claim or it could be found right after immigration. If you see the carts, don't wait, just get one! They disappear quickly. Now load your bags onto the cart (If you need a hand you may want to politely ask a strong-looking person to help you).

Next, head to the "Ground Transportation Desk". Once there, you can request either "CT Limo" or "Primetime Shuttle" They offer comparable transportation services to New Haven. You can visit their websites on-line at CT Limo <http://www.ctlimo.com> or Primetime Shuttle <http://www.2theairport.com> The buses leave frequently and run continuously between approximately 6:30am and midnight, and there is no need to make a reservation beforehand. Once you check in with them, the desk clerk will give you information about your pick-up time and details. Shortly thereafter you will be on the bus and on your way to Yale!

It helps to have with you some U.S. dollars in one dollar denominations (if you can get them). They can be used to get your luggage cart from the dispenser or to tip a couple of dollars to someone who helps you with your luggage or if you need to tip a dollar (or two if s/he helps you with your bags) to the taxi driver in New Haven.

If you would like, you can visit the Kennedy Airport Website at <http://www.panynj.gov/aviation/jfkframe.HTM> and the OISS Handbook on-line contains

an arrival checklist that will be useful once you are at Yale  
<http://www.oiss.yale.edu/students/handbook.htm>

## TELEPHONING HOME

One of the first things you'll want to do in the U.S., is make a call home to let folks know you've arrived safely. To make an international call, you will need to purchase an international phone card, available in the airport, or once you are in New Haven, you can buy a phone card at local pharmacies and convenience stores, such as *Walgreen's Drug Store* on York Street (at George Street), *Yorkside Pizza* (just inside the entrance) at 288 York Street, local pharmacies and convenience stores, such as *Gourmet Heaven*, 15 Broadway or 44 Whitney Avenue or on the Internet. Students and scholars at Yale have gotten good rates at *Zaptel*, a website where you can search for the best card rates to your country at [www.zaptel.com](http://www.zaptel.com) You may purchase the phone card of your choice on-line instantly. First time Zaptel purchasers can get a free \$5 phone card through the mail by entering the coupon code ZAP-5555 at checkout. OISS will also give you a free telephone card in your welcome packet when you come to check in.

*Telephone card instructions:* To make a call using a telephone card, the instructions are generally printed on the back of the card. Normally you will be instructed to dial a toll free number, a free call from any public or private phone. (Toll free area codes are generally "800" or "888") You will then be asked to enter the PIN number on the back of the card (often under a scratch-off panel), and then you will be instructed to dial the number. Some telephone cards deduct an additional fee for dialing from a public phone; you may want to inquire when you purchase the phone card. Follow the dialing instructions below for making an international call.

- *International call:* Dial 011+country code+(area code+number) Country codes are listed in the New Haven telephone directory.

## CHECK IN WITH THE OISS

Don't forget to check in with the OISS in the first days of your arrival. We will check your immigration documents (and those of any accompanying dependents) and provide you with a lot of helpful information! The OISS (your 'home away from home') is located in the International Center at 421 Temple Street.

We hope this information helps. If you have any comments or questions, please contact us by sending an e-mail to [oiss@yale.edu](mailto:oiss@yale.edu)

We wish you a safe and pleasant journey. Most of all, we look forward to meeting you soon, and welcoming you to the Yale community in person!