SURF CHECK:

Coming to UC San Diego
Surf Check:

WHAT TO PACK

UC San Diego
General Temperatures

- Very Cold: below 50°F
- Cold: 50 – 65°F
- Warm: 65 – 72°F
- Hot: 72 – 80°F
- Very Hot: above 80°F

- Make sure to layer to easily adjust to the cold/hot changes!
- Always have a pair of sunglasses and sunscreen with you.

Weather Trends in San Diego

- Inland areas are warmer than coastal areas.
- Temperatures can decrease drastically during the night.
- Mornings, especially by the coast, can be foggy and cool, but the weather warms up as the day progresses.
- Rainy days can be very unpredictable, but usually wetter season lasts from November to March, sometimes May and early June.
- Hottest season is August – September.

Friendly Reminder: Celsius vs Fahrenheit

Freezing: 0 degrees Celsius or 32 degrees Fahrenheit
Boiling: 100 degrees C or 212 degrees F

1 degree Celsius is 1.8 times larger than one degree Fahrenheit

TIP! Temperature in Fahrenheit = Temperature in Celsius x 1.8 + 32
General Tips

- Sometimes feet can be expressed as ‘ and inches as “’. For example, if someone is 5 feet 4 inches tall, it may be written as 5’4”.
- If you want to order a beverage, the 12oz drink would usually be a small, 16oz is medium, and 20oz is large.
- Mattresses in the dorm are usually Twin XL or Extra Long Twin. The dimensions are 38in x 83in.
- Sizes for clothes and shoes are also different in the U.S.! Check-out this website for helpful conversions.

Conversions

- 1 mile (mi) = 1.6 kilometers (km)
- 1 foot (ft) = 12 inches (in) = 30 centimeters (cm)
- 1 inch (in) = 25 millimeters (mm) or 2.54 centimeters (cm)
- 3 feet (ft) is almost exactly 1 meter (m)
- 1 kilogram (kg) - just over 2 pounds (lbs)
- 1 pound (lb) = 454 grams (g)
- 1 ounce (oz) = 28 grams (g)
- 1 gallon (gal) = 3.79 liters (L)

A commonly used abbreviation, MPH, means miles per hour
Plugs and Sockets

US plugs and socket types are **Type A and Type B** as shown on the image on the left.

The standard voltage is **120 V**, but electric appliances that range from **110 – 127 V** will work too.

If you plan to live on campus, check out the [UCSD Housing and Residential Life Policies](#) for detailed requirements on appliances, extension cords, and more.

**Summary**

- Make sure you have a **plug adaptor** if the plugs on your electronics are not **Type A or B**.
- If the voltage on electronic appliances from your home country exceeds **127V**, it may be easier to purchase some items in the U.S., or you will need to get a **voltage converter**.
- Fun Fact: The word “**outlet**” is also used to talk about **shopping centers or malls that sell items for a reduced price**.
- Clothes for all types of weather
- Comfortable shoes, the campus is quite large!
- Things that will help make this your new home!
- Personal hygiene items
- Headphones (highly recommended)
- Laptop and/or tablet/iPad
- Swimsuit. We do live across from the beach!
- 3MT Command Adhesive strips/hooks to hang things on your wall!
- A willingness to learn about yourself and your new community
- A positive attitude and excitement about starting your journey into college!

- Candles, incense, fireworks, or weapons
- Halogen lamps
- Multi-bulb light fixtures or “octopus lamps”
- Pets except fish
- Masking or cellophane tape, nails, and other products that damage paint or wall surfaces
- Two-pronged extension cords — only three-prong cords are allowed
- Hotplates or any electrical appliance with an open or exposed heating element
- Wireless routers or devices that might interfere with our network
- Toasters or toaster ovens
- Air conditioners
- Alcohol, drugs, or drug paraphernalia
- Waterbeds
- Self-built lofts of any kind

*as presented by UCSD Housing • Dining • Hospitality (HDH) and safety policies
You can also order things to be delivered to campus and can pick them up at Amazon Smart Lockers!

ON CAMPUS

Target @UCSD
Amazon @UCSD
UC San Diego Bookstore

OFF CAMPUS

Walmart
Target
Bed, Bath & Beyond
HomeGoods
IKEA
Marshalls

Malls near UCSD:
Westfield UTC
Westfield Mission Valley
Fashion Valley
Surf Check:

WHEN TRAVELING

Coming to

UC San Diego
ISPO has created a **Welcome Guide** to help you prepare for arrival. Check it out to access easy checklists and valuable immigration information. We are very excited to see you at UC San Diego and hope these make your journey easier!

- Check out p.7 of our Welcome Guide to learn about immigration documents at a glance!

**Immigration Documents**

**Emergency Contacts & Urgent Requests**

- For **immediate** health and safety emergencies when in the U.S., call **911**
- For immigration and U.S. Port of Entry issues **after business hours**, call **(858) 534-4357**
- For all other matters during business hours (Monday-Friday 9am-4pm PT), call **(858) 534-3730**
- For all other **urgent** matters after business hours, call **(858) 534-4357**
- Finally, we recommend taking a screenshot or saving the **International Student Emergency Contact Card** to your phone when traveling!
This page provides a comprehensive guide for newly admitted international students based on their educational level and type. The guides outline the procedures for requesting documents, preparing for arrival, and upon arrival. You can also find useful information about F vs J Visa Options and answers to frequently asked questions!

Ask Triton is a chatbot designed to help you with all your UC San Diego questions about admissions, visas, enrollment, financial aid, and billing in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish! You can find it on our website at ispo.ucsd.edu

ISPO's team of expert staff provides the highest levels of knowledge and expertise in advising and immigration services to international students at UC San Diego. Advising is provided through virtual Zoom Advising, email, and our online advising guides.
Coming to UC San Diego

Surf Check: Transportation
Chinese Union has been hosting an airport pick-up program for several years. “In order to help more students arrive to campus more smoothly, we will host pick-up services at LAX and SAN from September 11th-19th. This service starts at $12 for San Diego (SAN) pick-up and $35 for LA (LAX) pick-up, paid through Venmo or Chase/Zelle. According to the COVID-19 health and safety protocol, we have also upgraded our services in terms of health protection. We hope all students can arrive to campus and enjoy UC San Diego community safely through our pick-up program.”

**from the San Diego International Airport (SAN)**

**Bus**
- route 992 stops at the airport — you will need to transfer to/from your home or campus
- search the [bus schedule](#)
- ride free with your Triton U-Pass or there is a $5 one-day MTS pass

**Ride share** (take advantage of our [campus partnership with Lyft](#))

**Taxi** (allow about $50+ from airport to UCSD La Jolla campus)

**Private shuttle service** (about $20 each way between SAN airport and UCSD La Jolla campus)
Other traveling options for LAX airport

**AMTRAK**

- Departes from [LA Union Station](#)
- Find schedules on [Amtrak's website](#)
- The closest station to the La Jolla campus is [Solana Beach](#)
- Hop on the [101 Breeze](#) bus between the station and campus, or use another [bus line](#) or taxi to/from the Amtrak station
- [Amtrak offers students 15% off](#) the best-available rail fares for travel on Pacific Surfliner and other California Amtrak routes. Read the terms and conditions, then place your reservation.

**GREYHOUND BUS**

- Find schedules on the [Greyhound Bus website](#)
- The closest station to the La Jolla campus is [downtown San Diego](#)
- Use a nearby [bus line](#) or taxi to/from the Greyhound station
Surf Check:

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

UC San Diego

International Students & Programs Office
On-Campus Housing Update

As of July 2021, every undergraduate bed on-campus has been filled. Housing, Dining and Hospitality (HDH) typically receives cancellations throughout the summer and Fall Quarter. As spaces become available, they will be offered to students on the housing waitlist. Since HDH are not able to predict how many cancellations it will receive throughout the summer, students are strongly encouraged to consider off-campus housing options.

Off-Campus Housing—Trends & Considerations

- Vacancy rates are very low in San Diego, and it may take some time to find an apartment. The largest number of vacancies come up in June-September. It is recommended that you join the apartment complex’s waitlist.
- Living in San Diego, especially in La Jolla, is very expensive, and it is important to set a realistic budget before beginning to look for a place to live.
- Be prepared to pay a security deposit equal to one month’s rent (which may be refunded upon leaving) in addition to the first month’s rent.
Continuing Students Options

- **The Village at Pepper Canyon**: A community of apartments and residence halls designed especially for continuing students. The neighborhood consists of Camp Snoopy Residence Halls, Matthews Apartments, Pepper Canyon Apartments, and the Rita Apartments. This unique community is conveniently located near the new mass-transit trolley that is currently under construction. The Rita Apartments are located within walking distance of shopping and restaurants.

- **UC San Diego Graduate and Family Housing**: Consists of seven apartment complexes: Mesa Nueva, Nuevo West and Nuevo East, Coast Apartments, La Jolla Del Sol, Mesa Residential Apartments and One Miramar Street. Students eligible to live in a Graduate and Family Housing community are Full-time Graduate and Professional Students (i.e. enrolled in 12 units or more throughout the lease term), Graduate, Professional, and Undergrad Students with Children and Full-time Undergraduate Student Couples.

Resources

- UC San Diego Off-Campus Housing Directory

  A rental referral and housing information resource center with listings of apartment, house, and condominium rentals, available in a variety of areas around campus and the San Diego community. Roommates and room rentals are listed online.

**Alternative housing websites**

- Uloop.com
- UCSD Guardian
- Craigslist San Diego
- Penny Saver
- San Diego Reader Newspaper
- For Rent.com
- Apartment List
Short-Term Housing Options

Homestay Programs
Live with an American host family. Private and shared rooms available. **Apply at least 4-6 weeks before arrival.** Homestays are a great way for students to experience American culture and customs!

**Solana Beach Homestay Program:** Would you like to be matched with an American family who volunteers to help newly-arriving international students at no cost? The Solana Beach Host Family Program has been making this possible for 16 years. Please visit our website using this link.

Temporary Housing Providers
These companies own and manage apartments in the local area and can help place you in their temporary or extended-stay accommodation. Additional costs for these services may apply. See websites for more information.

Hotels
There are many hotels with special **UCSD-affiliate discounts** near UC San Diego. Some are within walking distance of UC San Diego. When calling for reservations, ask for the UCSD rate for a discount.

Youth Hostels
Youth hostels in the San Diego area are far from UC San Diego but offer dormitory-style housing at a **lower rate than hotels.** Some have kitchen facilities.

Short-Stay Rentals
Please note you can also use popular sites such as **AirBnB** and **Vrbo** to find short-stay rentals. Please keep in mind that in addition to the rent fee you would have to pay other fees like cleaning.
Be aware of housing scams, particularly on websites like Craigslist! Signs of a scam targeting renters can include the following:

1. The advertised price of the rental property is much lower than that of similar properties.
2. The person trying to rent you the property claims to be an agent for the property owner who is too busy, out of the country, or otherwise unavailable to handle the rental.
3. The owner or agent requires you to sign the lease before you see the rental property.
4. The owner or agent isn’t able to let you enter the home or apartment or charges you a fee to view it.
5. You’re asked to wire money as a deposit or payment of first and last month’s rent. Remember wiring money is the same as giving cash. You can’t get a refund, even if you find out the offer was a fraud.
6. The owner or agent uses high pressure sales tactics, urging you to rent quickly, before someone else gets the property.
7. The person preparing the lease writes in a higher monthly rent or additional fees that you hadn’t agreed upon.
8. The landlord directs you to a website to get a free credit check. This can be a tactic for harvesting your identity. Only disclose this information on a written application after you have seen the property.

Consult with UCSD Student Legal Services if have any questions about a property you are renting/would like to rent.
List of San Diego Neighborhoods
30 minutes or less by car / 15 miles or less away from campus*

Here are a list of San Diego neighborhoods and bus routes available for your reference during your housing search (listed in order of closest to furthest):

- Torrey Pines
- University City [MTS 41 or 105]
- La Jolla [MTS 30]
- Sorrento Valley [MTS 237 or 921]
- Mira Mesa [MTS 237, 921 or 31]
- Miramar [MTS 31]
- Del Mar [MTS 101, 202 or 41]
- Clairemont [MTS 41]
- Kearny Mesa [MTS 27, 41, 44, 50 or 201]
- Pacific Beach [MTS 27, 30, 41, 50, 150 or 201]
- Carmel Valley
- Linda Vista [MTS 41]
- Mission Valley [MTS 41]
- Mission Beach [MTS 8, 30, 105 or 202]
- Ocean Beach [MTS 35 or 150]

Metropolitan Transit System allows you to plan your trips via their website. It’s a great tool for checking which bus you need to take, duration of the trip, and more.

Check for traffic during certain hours of the day as it may impact the time needed to get to campus.

Check out the next page for a map visualizing the neighborhoods’ distance from campus!

Download the Compass Cloud App to access the Triton U-Pass for Students and to get UNLIMITED rides on all regional MTS and NCTD mass transit!

*Time estimates do not account for traffic or using public transportation; distance may vary depending on the route or the exact location.
San Diego Neighborhoods Map

- La Jolla
- Torrey Pines
- Carmel Valley
- University City
- Sorrento Valley
- Mira Mesa
- Mira Mesa
- Miramar
- Clairemont
- Kearny Mesa
- Linda Vista
- Pacific Beach
- Mission Valley W.
- Mission Beach
- Ocean Beach

Legend:
- UCSD
- <5mi.
- 5-10mi.
- >10mi.
Surf Check:

WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN SAN DIEGO

UC San Diego
EXPLORE CAMPUS
- Stuart Collection Walking Tour
- Walk UCSD

HIKING ROUTES
- Scripps Coastal Reserve
- Scripps Coastal Reserve Biodiversity Trail
- Torrey Pines
- Ho Chi Minh Trail
- Tide Pools Walk
- La Jolla Heights Preserve Walk
- Gliderport
- Bird Rock Bike Path

BEACHES
- La Jolla Windansea
- Blacks Beach
- La Jolla Shores
- Pacific Beach (PB)
- Mission Beach
- Del Mar Beach
- Ocean Beach (OB)
- Coronado Beach

PARKS
- Mission Bay
- Ellen Browning Scripps–Park
- La Jolla Cove
- Kate Sessions Park
- Chicano Park
- Mission Trails Park
- Presidio Park
- Rose Canyon Open Space Park

Learn more about some of the pieces at page 26-29!
**BALBOA PARK**
- San Diego Air and Space Museum
- San Diego Museum of Art
- Fleet Science Center
- San Diego Model Railroad Museum
- San Diego Natural History Museum
- Museum of Photographic Arts
- Timken Museum of Art
- Museum of Us
- The Old Globe
- Spreckels Organ Pavilion
- San Diego Art Institute (free admission)
- Japanese Friendship Garden

**MORE MUSEUMS**
- USS Midway Museum
- Museum of Contemporary Art
- Cabrillo National Monument

**OTHER**
- Old Town
- Seaport Village
- Farmer’s Markets
- Hotel Del Coronado
- Hidden San Diego
- Liberty Station
- UCSD REC Adventures*
- Haunted Places in San Diego

*check later for updates; currently no trips due to COVID
FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS

TACOS
- Little Italy
- Clairemont/Kearny Mesa [Convoy]
- Old Town
- Gaslamp
- Pacific Beach
- Encinitas
- Hillcrest
- North Park
- Liberty Station

DESSERTS
- The Taco Stand
- Board & Brew
- Cake De Partie
- Menya Ultra
- Sushi Ota
- Buona Forchetta
- Crack Tacos
- Rare Tea
- Bobboi Natural Gelato
- Rakiraki Ramen & Tsukemen

PIZZA

BREAKFAST

SUSHI

RAMEN
FALLEN STAR, SNAKE PATH, AND A BEAR, OH MY!

The UC San Diego campus is filled with interesting landmarks and viewpoints. Join Danny, a curious young lad, finds himself on an adventure to encounter art pieces from the Stuart Collection, such as Do Ho Suh's Falling Star, Alexis Smith's Snake Path, and Tim Hawkinson's Bear.

Check out the video on our IGTV (@ispo.ucsd) or by clicking below!

Learn more at stuartcollection.ucsd.edu
FALLEN STAR (2012) BY DO HO SUH
Location: Jacobs Hall

• Do Ho Suh’s work explores the notions of home, cultural displacement, one’s perception of space and how one builds a memory of it. These explorations grew out of Suh’s experience when he arrived in the U.S. in the early 90's to study at the Rhode Island School of Design.
• The Fallen Star is a sheer fabric replica of Suh’s home in Seoul and his American apartments.

Have you ever felt like you are in the right place where you want to be, but things still feel a bit off? Your dream career is just a touch out of color from what you thought it was going to be like? This is similar to what Do Ho Suh was feeling when recreating an almost exact replica of his home in Seoul but setting it off-balance teetering off of the edge of a building.

The best way to experience this piece is making your way to the rooftop and walking into Fallen Star. The entire room is tilted ever so slightly to ensure for a mixture of home-ly comfort yet off-kilter instability.
Snake Path (1992) by Alexis Smith
Location: near the Geisel Library

- Snake Path consists of a winding 560-foot-long, 10-foot-wide footpath in the form of a serpent, whose individual scales are hexagonal pieces of colored slate, and whose head is inlaid in the approach to the Geisel Library. Along the way, the serpent's slightly crowned body circles around a small "garden of Eden" with several fruit trees including an apple, a fig and a pomegranate.

What comes to your mind when you think of what the word "paradise" means to you? Alexis Smith tackled this notion with the creation of Snake Path, a large walkway that serpentine up the side of the hill towards Geisel Library.

In working with the idea of a "movement towards knowledge" that one would do when going towards the site of the library and the potential for breaking away from the comforts of one's own understanding of their world, or paradise, Smith deliberates on this idea of ignorance is bliss and what happens when leaving from that in the pursuit of knowledge.
BEAR (2005) BY TIM HAWKINSON

Location: Academic Courtyard
(formed by Atkinson Hall of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology, the Computer Science and Engineering Building, and the Powell-Focht Bioengineering Hall)

- The Bear is 23’6” feet high and weights 180 tons as it is constructed out of 8 granite stones and pushes the bounds of credibility.
- The Bear has inspired many students who have given it Valentines’ Day “heart glasses”, an entire crew team uniform, and a “Beary Potter” costume.

Have you ever had a small plush teddy bear when you were younger? How would you feel if you were to encounter that same bear but scaled up to the size of a building and made out of stone?

Playfully working with these concepts, Tim Hawkinson’s Bear statue entices the viewer to look with awe at an almost fantastical structure that seems to break all conventions of scale.
Surf Check:

GETTING SET UP IN THE U.S.

UC San Diego
International Students & Programs Office

Coming to

UC San Diego
How to Set Up a U.S. Bank Account

• In the United States, it is customary to use checks and credit cards rather than using cash because it is easier and safer.

• Most banks are open Monday through Friday from morning until mid-afternoon, and some are also open Saturday mornings.

• Upon opening an account, a “cash machine” or ATM card will be offered in order to get money out of the account at any hour, day or night. These cards can be used at automated teller machines (ATMs) all over the world.

The two main types of bank accounts:

• **Checking accounts** allow you to make purchases, pay bills, write checks, or transfer money.

• **Savings accounts** offer a place to keep larger sums of money and earn interest.

Common Banking Options

- **Chase**
- **USE Credit Union**
- **Bank of America**
- **Citibank**
- **Wells Fargo**
- **San Diego County Credit Union**

*Branches on campus
**ATM on campus

• Study up on the location of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) to make sure they are near campus. You’ll pay fees if you use an ATM that is outside your bank’s network!

For More Details, Visit ISPO’s Financial Resources Page Here
What You Need

- 2 valid forms of identification (passport & UC San Diego identification card are usually sufficient)
- Local mailing address to receive mail
- At least $25 (Depending on your account, there will be a monthly service charge unless a “minimum balance requirement” is maintained.)

Check the bank requirements! Here are some optional documents that the bank may ask you about:

- Social Security Number (SSN) (NOT ALL banks require a Social Security Number, however, bank services may be limited if you don’t have a SSN.)
- Proof of a local address (e.g. apartment leasing agreement or bills)
- Government forms related to your domestic studies and a letter proving you are enrolled in university (I-20, I-94, DS-2019)
- Letter of Employment from UCSD (if you are going to be a TA)

- Read the documents carefully and ask if the bank has any “hidden” fees, especially those for international transfers.
- Make an appointment ahead of time.

Apps for Money Transferring

- Need to transfer money between bank accounts or send money to a friend to cover the cost of dinner? Money transferring apps can come in handy! Here are some you may find helpful:
  - Venmo
  - Zelle
  - PayPal
  - Cash App
How to Set Up a U.S. Phone Account

Cell Phone Plan vs SIM Card

• **Cell Phone Plan** – paid monthly contract with a mobile carrier company that covers phone calls, text, and cellular data as well as a purchase of a cell phone.

• **SIM Cards** - can be purchased for *unlocked* phones. Prepaid phone plan works very similarly to a monthly plan but on a pay-as-you-go system.

• Another option is **Campus SIMS**. Campus SIMs is offering free SIM cards to students to help connect you with mobile phone service in the United States (U.S.). Plans start at $15/month and you can get your U.S. phone number before you leave your home country. Click [here](campussims.com) to get your free SIM card mailed to you, so can use your phone as soon as you arrive in the U.S. For more information, visit [campussims.com](http://campussims.com).

Common Providers & Things to Keep in Mind

- Compare plans and services before settling for a vendor. You can checkout this [WhistleOut tool](https://www.whistleout.com) to compare plans.
- Getting a cell phone plan in the U.S. requires a Social Security Number and a Credit Score.
- You may not need to set up a U.S. phone account IF your current carrier has international roaming options. Check with your current phone carriers to see if there are roaming plans available!
- How much data do you need? What is your budget?
- Does your cell phone work overseas? Which Mobile Network Operator will your phone work with?
**GETTING A GOVERNMENT ISSUED PHOTO ID**

**What is a government issued photo ID?**

A government issued photo ID is an official document that includes your picture and personal information such as full name, date of birth, address, and more. This can be a driver’s license, a state issued photo ID, or a passport.

**Why do people get a government issued photo ID?**

It can be used for local transactions where an identification is required such as purchase of alcohol. It is a convenient alternative to carrying a passport with you.

**What’s the difference between an ID Card and a driver’s license?**

Unlike a driver’s license, you cannot use your state issued ID Card for driving. In California, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) oversees issuance of driver’s licenses & state issued photo ID cards.

**What is a REAL ID?**

REAL ID is a driver’s license or ID card that is also a federally accepted form of identification. For example, it can be used to fly within the U.S. The REAL ID Cards are marked with a gold bear and a star. The state of California is transitioning into only using REAL ID cards by May 3, 2023. Please note that a REAL ID is used for photo identification and is not evidence of legal presence in the U.S.
What you need to do get an ID Card:

- Make sure your SEVIS record has been activated
- Complete an ID Card Application.

What to expect at the DMV:

- Some services do not require an appointment and you can just walk in, check the DMV website for information.
- Once a staff member looks over your documents, you will be given a number. When it is your turn to approach the window, your number and the window number will appear on the screen. *(Fun Fact: Different letters that are part of your “number” are associated with different services. The numbers and letters are not called in a sequence!)*
- DMV can be a bit slow, be patient and **set aside at least 2-3 hours** to go to the DMV.
- You will be asked to provide a thumbprint and a signature as well as take a picture as part of the process. *(Please note that this may be different if you are applying for the driving license.)*
- The ID card will be mailed to you. In the meantime, the DMV will give you an official paper that acts as your ID.