

## ➤ Transportation

### ○ How do I get from Indianapolis airport to Bloomington?

BISM provides rides from the Indianapolis Airport (IND) to Bloomington **between July 30 - August 12, 2023**. BISM staff and volunteers will meet new internationals at the baggage claim area at **3:00 pm and 11:00 pm** daily at the Indianapolis Airport and take you by car or van directly to your IU campus or off-campus apartment or to a Bloomington area hotel as you have arranged. Please do not request for early pickup. BISM Staff will decide on the early pick-up if there are sufficient students arriving earlier than the stated times and we will notify all relevant students. The airport pickup service is offered as a **free service** by the staff and volunteers of Bloomington International Student Ministries (BISM) and does not cost you anything. Visit [www.iubism.org](http://www.iubism.org) to learn more about BISM and the services that we provide international students from IU.

### ○ How do I get from the Chicago airport to Bloomington?

Unfortunately, BISM does not provide any transportation from Chicago to Bloomington. You can **reserve a cab/uber** with a group of friends and coordinate transportation.

### ○ How do I navigate the bus routes?

The Bloomington Transit (<https://bloomingtontransit.com/>) has many bus routes which take you from one part of town to another. You can find the schedule and the various stops on their website. Also, you can download the **app called DoubleMap Bus Tracker** on your phone to track the live location of your bus routes. During the school year, most buses arrive every 20 minutes. IU students can ride the bus for free by showing their Crimson Card.

### ○ What other forms of transit can I use to get around in Bloomington?

Bloomington is a bicycle-friendly town. So during the Fall and Summer, most people like biking to campus. Bikes can be purchased or rented from

many locations in town. We also recommend that you purchase a good lock, and keep your bike secure at all times. You should register your bike with Parking Operations and buy a parking permit in order to park it on campus. Uber/Lyft is another common mode of transportation for places that are inaccessible by bus. You can also rent a car using your driver's license from your home country (valid for up to a year after entering the U.S). Most students use ZipCar, a cost-effective car rental service.

## ➤ Furniture & Utilities

### ○ How do I get furniture for my apartment?

BISM organizes **International Furniture Give-Away for New International Students of Indiana University**. As part of the Furniture Give-Away, students can choose from a wide variety of free furniture, and household and kitchen items which include beds - twin, double, queen, study desks, chairs, couches, bookshelves, dining tables, etc. This giveaway is **free** for all new international students.

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More details and registration information can be found at

[www.iubism.org/event/furniture-giveaway](http://www.iubism.org/event/furniture-giveaway)

### ○ How do I set up utilities(electricity, water, internet) for my apartment?

You will need to check with your leasing office what utilities you need to set up. Your leasing office or your rental apartment lease will tell you the name of the utility provider (eg. most apartments have Duke energy as their provider). The easiest way to set up a connection is to go on the provider's website where they will have information to 'Start a New Service'. Another alternative could be to call the customer support line and they will direct you to the proper steps. Most customer support services in the U.S are very friendly and easy to talk to. You may need to provide some basic identifying information to complete the process. For the internet, most people use AT&T or Xfinity. Check with respective local branches - most of them have good deals for students in August.

○ **How do I set up a bank account?**

To open an account at most banks, you will need your passport, I20, and at least one other form of photo identification. At a bank, you can deposit cash, a bank draft, a cashier's check, or traveler's checks payable in U.S. dollars. Checks from foreign banks may be deposited, but it can take two to six weeks before the money is available. When opening a bank account, you generally have two options:

- Checking: withdraw money or use debit card/checks in place of currency
- Savings: store money safely, earn interest over time, and withdraw cash less frequently

All banks will provide you with an ATM or debit card, which will allow you to deposit or withdraw money directly into or out of your bank account.

Below are some banks in Bloomington. It is recommended to call the bank ahead of time and clarify what all you need to carry as requirements change from time to time.

Bank	Website	Recommended Documents
Chase (Most students use Chase)	chase.com	Passport and I-20
IU Credit Union	iucu.org	Passport and IU student ID
Old National	oldnational.com	Passport and document with your address
Fifth Third	53.com	Passport

- **How do you get a U.S sim card/mobile phone no? Any recommendations for the best providers?**

In the United States, mobile phone plans can be contract-based or pay-as-you-go. Mobile service providers in Bloomington include AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon, Cricket, Mint, and H2O. You will need to shop around to see what phone plans fit your budget. Many providers offer family plans that a couple of friends can be a part of. In Bloomington Verizon and AT&T provide the best network but can be expensive for students without being part of a family plan. Cheaper options would include Cricket, Mint, and H2O.

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## ➤ Groceries/Food/Shopping

- **What is a good place to get International groceries?**

Bloomington has a couple of international grocery stores. Apna Bazaar International Market is an Indian grocery store located at [2556 E 3rd St](#) where you can get most Indian groceries. B-Town International Market located at [2901 E Covenanter Dr](#) has a lot of Asian groceries one can shop for. Other options include World Foods Market and 4th Street International Market.

- **Where can I find good international food in Bloomington?**

Bloomington's 4th Street is home to a number of international restaurants. Cuisines include Burmese, Cajun, Greek, Indian, Korean, Thai, Tibetan, and Turkish. Many Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican food places are also close by.

**BISM Recommends:**

- Favorite Chinese Restaurant - Gourmet Garden - 3rd Street
- Favorite Boba Tea - Bapu
- Favorite Indian Restaurant - Taste of India
- Favorite Mexican Restaurant - Juanitas
- Favorite Korean Restaurant - Mama's - 10th Street
- Favorite Ice Cream Place - The Chocolate Moose - S Walnut
- Favorite Coffee Shop - Inkwell

○ **What are the common grocery stores in the area?**

**Kroger**

- Shop for groceries, food items, household supplies, and pharmacy
- Increase your savings by getting a Kroger card (free to sign up)

**Aldi**

- On the eastside, located beside Staples/ Best Buy (Closes at 8 pm)
- Great prices on groceries.

**Fresh Thyme**

- Produce, special diet or allergen- restrictions, and vitamins.
- Has café with kombucha, coffee, and other drinks

**Lucky's Market**

- Food Allergy-friendly products, beauty supplies, vitamins, and produce
- Sells pizza, tea, coffee beverages, and other drink selections

- **Where can I get things for my house? ( eg. stationary)**

To get household goods, you can go to Walmart or Target. Both stores have good back-to-school deals you can take advantage of. BISM provides **free transportation to Walmart Superstore (Aug 11-12)** so that you can shop for household items and groceries at discounted prices. Check out [www.iubism.org/event/walmart-shopping](http://www.iubism.org/event/walmart-shopping) for more information

## ➤ Weather

- **What is the weather like in Bloomington?**

In Bloomington, the summers are long, warm, humid, and wet; the winters are a bit cold and snowy, and it is partly cloudy year round. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from 22°F to 85°F and is rarely below 4°F or above 93°F. Having a good umbrella or raincoat is very handy as we get rain often. It is advisable to get into the habit of checking the weather app before planning your day.

- **What is winter like in Bloomington and how do I get winter clothes?**

The cold season lasts for 3 -5 months, from November to March, with an average daily high temperature below 47°F. The coldest month of the year in Bloomington is January, with an average low of 23°F and a high of 38°F. Every fall in October, BISM organizes a trip to shop at Burlington Coat Factory in Indianapolis where you can get good deals on winter supplies like coats, boots, sweaters, etc. Check our website regularly for more updates.

## ➤ New culture/community

- **I don't know much about American culture. How do I settle in?**

Being a college town, Bloomington is a very friendly town and people are open to being asked questions about American culture. Being observant and respectful is always encouraged. BISM conversation cafe is also a great place to learn about American culture

- **How do I make new friends in a new place? How can I meet new people?**

Outside of meeting people through school, events organized by BISM or OIS are a great place to meet new people and build friendships. You can check [BeInvolved](#) which has a list of IU Clubs and organizations you can be part of and meet new people. For updates on events organized by BISM, check [iubism.org](http://iubism.org).

- **How do I deal with an alien country, lack of friends, loneliness, and the new culture?**

Although the initial days are the hardest, being engaged in social events always helps. Be it through school or BISM/OIS, try to attend events and establish friendships. Bloomington is a beautiful town so going on walks around town also help get away from negative emotions that are common during the first month of moving to a new place.

- **What activities can I look forward to in my free time? Are there any groups, or clubs I can join?**

IU has a variety of organizations and clubs you can be part of be it art, dance, craft, sports, religion, etc. Check out the BeInvolved website for a list of events and clubs. BISM also organizes various social activities you can register for. This Labor Day (public holiday) BISM is organizing a hiking trip to Mc Cormick's Creek State Park.

Later in September, we will be going to an apple orchard. Check our website regularly for more info and signups.

- **How can I get connected to a local church?**

Bloomington has many churches depending on the denominations, worship style, etc. BISM organizes International Coffee Hour which is an opportunity to connect with other internationals and Americans to explore the message of the Bible, Christianity, and Jesus. Please contact Elan Rajamani at [elan@ifmusa.org](mailto:elan@ifmusa.org) if you have questions or are interested in attending or have any inquiries.

