

Welcome to Kyrgyzstan

Post-arrival orientation handbook
for international students



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Welcome to Kyrgyzstan!

Hello and welcome to Kyrgyzstan!

You have just arrived in Kyrgyzstan - a small landlocked country in Central Asia, bordering Kazakhstan in the north, China in the east, Tajikistan in the south and Uzbekistan in the west.

Geographically Kyrgyzstan consists of 7 regions - “oblasts” - Batken, Osh, Jalal-Abad, Talas, Naryn, Chuy and Issyk-Kul. And each region differs from each other with its nature, weather, customs and traditions.

Kyrgyzstan is stunning with its nature, including majestic mountains, lush valleys, and serene lakes. The Tien Shan mountain range dominates the landscape, with peaks soaring over 7,000 meters, offering incredible opportunities for trekking, mountaineering, and adventure sports. Kyrgyzstan is considered to be “the Switzerland of Central Asia”.

And because of the mountainous features of the country, Kyrgyzstan experiences a diverse range of weather conditions, which differs from locality to locality and from season to season. Here you can witness all 4 seasons as they are. But even in hot summer you can find snow in mountains.

Kyrgyzstan has a multi-national population of almost 7.1 million people. Representatives of about 80 nationalities live in friendship and peace side by side. The major part of the population are Kyrgyz people, then Russians, Uzbeks and other ethnicities. And each of these ethnic groups has its own unique culture, language and traditions, but they also respect and add an invaluable contribution to the culture and language of Kyrgyzstan.

As Kyrgyzstan is a small country, there are only 31 cities, the most important of which are Bishkek and Osh. These two cities are the largest by territory and population. While Bishkek is a political, economical and financial center, Osh holds significant historical and cultural importance. Both cities play a strategic role in the country's well-being and development.

More detailed information about these two cities will be found in the next chapter.

Main cities

Most international students live and study in two main cities - Bishkek and Osh. You will live in one of them for the next 5-6 years, so hope the information below will help you get to know the cities better.

Bishkek is the capital city of Kyrgyzstan. It is a political, economical, financial and cultural hub of the country. Here are located all the main administrative units like “Zhogorku Kenesh” Parliament, Government called “Cabinet of Ministries”, ministries and Presidential Apparatus; financial units like National bank and headquarters of all commercial banks; trade centres, markets, parks, museums and, of course, universities.

Having gained independence in 1991 from the Soviet Union, the capital was renamed from Frunze to Bishkek. Now, Bishkek is rapidly growing in size and is an economically, technologically developing city.

Bishkek has an adequately developed city infrastructure, which has been undergoing modernisation and continuous development. The main infrastructure is presented by a convenient transportation system; social facilities like hospitals, clinics, schools and universities; cultural and recreation facilities like parks, theatres, museums, shopping malls, cafes and restaurants of various cuisines.

In regards to security, Bishkek is considered to be a safer city for foreigners, as its infrastructure contains enough facilities to maintain security. The city is covered with CCTV surveillance and most establishments have their own video surveillance.

Osh is the oldest city of Kyrgyzstan. Osh has been a prominent trading centre and crossroads along the ancient Silk Road for centuries. This city is famous for its iconic landmark the Sulaiman Too Sacred Mountain, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It has historical and religious sites, including mosques, shrines, and a museum, making it a pilgrimage destination for Muslims and a popular tourist attraction. Osh also is known for its bustling and vibrant bazaars, one of them called the Osh Bazaar. This market is

a hub of activity, offering a wide range of goods, from fresh produce to textiles, spices, and crafts. It's a great place to experience the local culture and engage in some traditional shopping.

Osh is the second large city, where international students arrive to study.

Both cities have international airports “OSH” (OSS) and “MANAS” (FRU), which serve as major gateways for traveler’s flying to and from Kyrgyzstan. They offer flights to various international destinations, including cities in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Also, airports serve local flights between each other and other regions like Batken, Issyk-Kul and Jalal-Abad. Millions of tourists visit Kyrgyzstan every year, and each of them visit both Bishkek and Osh.

Cultural awareness

Historically, Kyrgyz people are nomads with great history and cultural heritage. The culture of Kyrgyzstan is a vivid canvas woven from its nomadic heritage, diverse ethnic groups and historical influences. Nomadic heritage is deeply ingrained in Kyrgyz culture. The nomadic lifestyle, with its emphasis on mobility and adaptability, has left a significant mark on the Kyrgyz way of life. Traditional practices like yurt-dwelling, horsemanship, and livestock herding continue to be important cultural elements.

The cornerstone of Kyrgyz culture is hospitality. Kyrgyz people are used to warmly welcoming guests with greeting “Salam” and offering its best food and drink. Sharing meals is a way of forging connections and building relationships. So, if you will go to your Kyrgyz neighbour and ask for “bread and salt” – you will never get a refusal. And please, don’t forget to take off your shoes, when entering somebody’s home, because Kyrgyz people used to take off their shoes. It reflects respect to the owner of the house.

Food and Cuisine:

Every person coming to Kyrgyz, will be offered tea and food. It’s a feature of local culture. Food also manifests the interweaving of

different cultures. Local people like to cook Kyrgyz national dishes, such as beshbarmak, boorsoks, manti (dumplings), and also dishes of other nationalities.

In cafes and restaurants, you can also very often find a variety of national, European and other nations' dishes on the menu. And the main product used in meals often is meat. Kyrgyz people are lovers of meat and eat dishes made from lamb, beef and even horse meat. However, vegetarians and lovers of non-meat meals can easily find the food they need as Kyrgyzstan is rich in fresh and natural vegetables and fruits. Various vegetables and fruits of local and foreign production are available in every supermarket, bazaars and even small shops. Also, cafes and restaurants usually have a vegetarian section in the menus. Most cafes and restaurants are available on application 2GIS.

National drinks are also very popular. Locals drink milk-based, sour drinks - Kymyz and Chalap or grain-based Maksym.

Language:

The official language in Kyrgyzstan is Kyrgyz. It belongs to the Turkic language family, which includes languages spoken across Central Asia, Turkey, and parts of the Russian Federation. So, if you know the Kyrgyz language, then you will be able to understand Kazakh, Uzbek and Turkish languages.

The Russian language is also widely spoken due to the fact that the country was part of the Soviet Union for a long time. Therefore, in the country almost all names of places or establishments are written in two languages - Kyrgyz and Russian. So, it will be useful for international students to learn the basic level of these languages to communicate with the locals, as they much appreciate when foreigners can speak their language.

Basics of Kyrgyz and Russian languages you will get from your universities as a part of your study plan. But it will be an advantage to enroll in additional language courses.

Below you can find some of the courses available for foreigners:

Institution name	Location	Contact details
Preparation Courses of I.K. Akhunbaev Kyrgyz State Medical Academy	Bishkek, Akhunbaev street, 92B	+996 312 545859 admission.kgma@gmail.com www.kgma.kg
Educational Center "Eclectika"	Bishkek, Vostok 5, Chui Ave. 109a	+996 558 200800 eclectica1@mail.ru https://eclectica.kg/
Educational Center "Til Akademiasy"	Bishkek, Baitik-Batyr str. 70	+996 702 61-80-62 til.akademiasy@mail.ru www.tilakademiya.kg
Educational Center "International Language School"	Bishkek, Suyumbayeva str., 49A	+996 700 89 04 05 ilh-kg@mail.ru https://english.on.kg/
Educational Center "Bilim Akademiasy"	Osh, Absamat Masaliyev Avenue, 57	+996 552-02-38-18
International Training Centre "Cambridge"	Osh, Raimbekova str., 13	+996 558-01-10-12 +996 707-26-50-72 +996 708-40-09-80

Religion:

Kyrgyzstan is a secular state and any person is free to choose their religion and belief by the country's Constitution.

The predominant religion in Kyrgyzstan is Sunni Islam. Mosques are common throughout the country, and Islamic holidays and traditions are widely observed. In addition to Islam, there are also smaller

religious communities in Kyrgyzstan. These include Orthodox Christians, as well as small numbers of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews.

Also, in Kyrgyzstan you can observe the traces of Buddhism, which came to the country along the Great Silk Road. The most famous Buddhist sites in Kyrgyzstan are the Krasnorechenskoye ancient settlement near the village of Krasnaya Rechka, where on excavations a statue of Buddha was found dating back to the 8th-10th centuries A.D., and a rock on the territory of the Ysyk-Ata resort, which bears an image of Buddha Bhaishajyaguru dated to the 8th century A.D.. A small Buddhist stupa in Tashtar-Ata near Bishkek is also somewhat famous.

Religion in Kyrgyzstan is closely intertwined with cultural practices, traditions, and festivals. Islamic rituals and customs often blend with pre-Islamic practices, creating a unique cultural identity.

A little more about culture...

Kyrgyzstan boasts a rich tradition of craftsmanship, including felt-making, weaving, and embroidery. Traditional handicrafts like shyrdak (felt carpets), ala-kiyiz (felt appliqué), and traditional clothing play a role in preserving cultural heritage. Anywhere you go in Kyrgyzstan, you can always find and purchase handicrafts, and sometimes try to make such handicrafts by yourself at national art fairs and festivals.

Kyrgyz festivals offer a glimpse into the culture's rituals and customs, accompanied by national cuisine and traditional music.

Traditional music in Kyrgyzstan features a range of musical instruments that contribute to its unique sound. Some of the most prominent instruments include the komuz (a three-stringed instrument), kyl-kiyak (a two-stringed instrument), chопо-choor (a type of flute), and temir ooz komuz (a jaw harp). In unison these instruments create a unique sound of nomadic lifestyle.

Major national celebrations of Nooruz (the local New Year), celebrated on March 21, and Independence Day, celebrated on August 31.

Clothes

The traditional clothes of the Kyrgyz are distinguished by their restraint, while at the same time they are colourful due to national ornaments. Traditional national items include headdresses for men - kalpak, for women - shawl or elechek (worn by married women); outer garments - chapan, chyptama, koinok. Also, women can wear - beldemchi - a loose tight skirt below the knees, usually made of velvet.

Of course, nowadays it is rare to meet a Kyrgyz who wears traditional clothes. However, it is popular among the population to wear modern clothes with elements of national items and traditional ornaments.

National items can be bought as souvenirs at local bazaars and souvenir shops. The most popular place is the Kyyal trading house, which is located in Osh Bazaar in Bishkek.

Weather conditions and clothing

From Chapter 1 you learned that Kyrgyzstan has all 4 seasons and weather conditions in Kyrgyzstan can vary greatly depending on the season and region of the country. And here it is important to be well-prepared for any kind of weather.

As most international students come to Kyrgyzstan from warm countries like India and Pakistan, they face difficulties in adapting to the cold weather conditions in autumn-winter season. The degree in winter can fall down to minus 30. And most students come unprepared for such weather conditions and get sick with colds and flu.

So, it's highly recommended to international students bring with them or buy enough warm clothes like sweaters, hoodies, warm jackets, coats, down jackets, and also warm hats, scarves, gloves and shoes.

Before going outside, check the weather forecast and temperature outside, because it may seem it's sunny and warm outside the window, but it can actually be extremely cold.

And summer also can surprise with its extremely hot weather. Somedays the degree can pass over +40. So, students also should be prepared for such hot conditions.

On very hot days you are suggested to drink a lot of water, wear sun hats and caps, wear light and bright clothes, use sunscreens 50+ SPF, and be more in shadow places.

Immigration matters

Obtaining a Visa:

International students, except those coming from visa-free countries, need to obtain a visa of type “S”- study. Currently, Kyrgyzstan is practicing and accepting documents and issuing visas online via the portal [e-VISA](#).

But, usually, University Visa Department or International Office assists international students in applying for and receiving a visa. You can also contact the official representatives of your country (recruiting agencies) for assistance.

To receive a Study Visa you need to submit the following documents to the official representative or Visa Department of your university:

1. Valid passport for at least one year
2. Recent photo on white background, size 3*4 sm
3. Official Invitation Letter from your University

After successfully obtaining a visa, you are allowed to enter Kyrgyzstan and start your studies.

Visa extension:

Primary entry visa is a single entry and given for 3 months only. After that you have to apply for **visa extension**. You need to submit the following documents to your university’s Visa Department:

- Valid Passport for at least one year;
- 1 copy of the completed visa application form;
- 1 copy of the contract between your University and you;

- 2 photos in on-white clothes on a white background, sizes 3x4 cm;
- A certificate of payment of tuition fees;
- Certificate of residence, which must be obtained from the hostel manager;

OR if you live in a rented apartment/house, provide the following documents:

- Notarised consent from the landlord for the temporary registration at the place of residence;
- Copy of the first page of the Apartment/House Technical Passport
- Copy of the passport of the landlord/apartment owner.

! Please, be aware to file for visa extension 30 days before visa expiration.

While applying for visa prolongation, you can choose “single” or “multiple” entry mode. A single-entry visa allows you to leave Kyrgyzstan and enter back only once, after which you will need to apply for a visa extension again. The multiple-entry will allow you to leave and re-enter Kyrgyzstan any number of times during the validity period of your visa.

Permit to work:

Students, receiving a “Study” visa, are not allowed to have a full-time or even a part-time job during their study. Those wishing to work in Kyrgyzstan need to obtain another visa type - “W1” visa and get a special work permit. So, working illegally with a study visa may turn out into an administrative offence and penalty.

After graduation, students who want to continue their professional way in Kyrgyzstan, should change their study visa to a work visa and receive a special work permit. Students are not able to change their visa type staying in Kyrgyzstan. In order to get a W1 visa, graduates should leave the country, get a special quota for work from their employer, apply for a W1 visa, obtain it and re-enter the

country (Regulation Act No. 175 the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/13564>).

Visa procedure related to changing the university within Kyrgyzstan

If students plan to change the university within Kyrgyzstan, they should keep in mind that they should re-issue their study visa by the invitation of the new host-university. The Visa Department of the University will assist with obtaining the new visa and more detailed information.

Registration:

After entering the territory of Kyrgyzstan, foreign citizens, including international students (except those, whose home-country is in the [List of countries](#), citizens of which are exempt from registration) should be registered in the database of State Department of Migration by their factual address of living within 5 days after arrival date. For that purpose, international students are obliged to contact the Visa Department at their university and submit **their passport (original), copy of visa**, if available, **and proof of residence certificate** from their dormitory/hostel manager or from the owner of the apartment they rent. In the case of last, the **proof should be notarized.** Visa Department officers will submit your documents to the State Department of Migration and get your registration card. This card will be passed to you along with your passport.

Try not to miss the deadline as this will result in a fine.

After receiving your visa and registration card make sure you have made the photocopy and hardcopy of them in case you lose the original ones.

Registration renewal

If your registration validity is expiring, you have to contact your University Visa Department and submit all required documents for registration renewal 3-5 days before the expiration deadline.

And if you've got a new visa after extension, you also should apply for the registration renewal (even if the registration expiration date has not come to an end).

Traveling outside Kyrgyzstan and re-entering

Students, who don't need a visa to enter Kyrgyzstan or have multiple-entry visas, will not have problems with traveling outside Kyrgyzstan and re-entering until their visa is valid. In such cases students should remember only to renew their registration after re-entering the country.

Also, students planning traveling outside Kyrgyzstan should check up with the following tips:

- Check the validity of your visa when planning the traveling. Make sure your visa will still be valid when re-entering the country.
- Don't forget to take your registration card with you. You have to show it when re-entering the country.
- Make sure your dean and university advisors know about your traveling and date of return

Security advices

General tips

Kyrgyzstan is considered a fairly safe country with effective resources and efforts in maintaining a high level of security for both locals and migrants alike.

Bishkek and Osh as main cities, where most of the international students live and study, are generally considered relatively safe cities. The streets of both cities are well lit at night, public transport runs until late, emergency services (ambulance, police, fire brigade and others - numbers available in Emergency Contacts section) are available 24/7, and both cities are covered with CCTV systems that enhance security efforts. In any case, some tips on your personal security in the unlikely event of an unfortunate situations may be helpful.

Late night walks: Avoid walking alone in sparsely populated areas and dark or poorly lit streets. Usually, residential districts (“zhilmassivs”) and areas away from the centre are prone to higher levels of crime such as theft and robbery. You are recommended to learn about districts that are best not to go to from locals (it may be your group mates at university), use local map apps or Google navigator in order to trace your location.

If you live in a hostel, remember that hostels are closed after 10 pm. Try to return to the hostel no later than this time.

Let someone you trust know your whereabouts and plans, especially if you're going somewhere alone or meeting someone new.

Female students can additionally purchase self-defence equipment, such as gas and pepper spray, stun guns, key fob alarm, etc. For example, you can purchase them in special stores like Self-defence Equipemnt Bishkek (@girls power kg)

Personal belongings: Be vigilant with your personal belongings, always keep them in a safe place. When walking around the city, keep your passport and money in a hidden pocket of your clothes or bag. Be especially vigilant on public transport and crowded places, especially bazaars, where foreigners could easily fall victim to pickpockets.

Don't leave your personal belongings alone in cafes, restaurants or nightclubs

Taxis: When using taxis, it is preferable to hail a licensed taxi through apps if possible. Some taxi apps have the option, when you can share the details of your trip with your friend or relative. Take this opportunity to make your trip safer.

Local laws and customs: Respect local laws and cultural customs. Learn the basics of local behaviour to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts with locals. Avoid verbal conflicts with locals, especially if they are drunk, and avoid any ongoing disputes or arguments you happen to come across in the street.

Contacts: Write down the contact details of your country's embassy and other reputable sources that may be helpful in case of emergency.

Fire and other danger-causing situations: When living in hostel or rental housing, always be checked with general fire instructions and rules. Every time check cooking stoves, heaters, irons and other electrical devices for being switched off, when leaving your room or flat. In case of smoke or fire, make an emergency call to 101.

In case of incidents on the street or suspicious surveillance, please call the Police Department via 102 number. If the situation requires emergency help, please call 103.

All these and other necessary numbers you can find in the section

Emergency Contacts: As in any other city, it is important to remain vigilant and take care of your personal safety. With sensible precautions and common sense, you can enjoy your time in Bishkek without unnecessary worries.

Remember, personal security is about being proactive and prepared. These tips can help you minimise risks, but it's also important to adapt them to your specific circumstances and comfort level.

Interaction with Police department

The police department (hotline 102) is responsible for maintaining the city as a safe place for locals and foreigners.

Here you can find general recommendations on how to communicate with the police if the situation arises during your stay. First of all, police representatives can come to your university with introductory lecture on familiarising international students about safety rules, as well as about responsibility for violation of laws. It's highly suggested to participate in such a lecture.

Secondly, if you violate the visa and registration regimes, you have to go to the Police department in order to pay a fine and get a Protocol.

And, of course, in case you violate local laws, Policemen can take you to the police department. In such situations, you have to know your rights and duties.

You have a right:

- to talk to the policemen in presence of your lawyer.
- to be introduced on the reason for your detention and what you are accused of
- to have a translator
- to contact the diplomatic or consular representation of your state
- to turn to the Court and other state bodies to protect your personal, property, family and other rights.

Your duties:

- to answer all the questions truthfully
- to give the accurate information
- to appear on call for the body conducting the investigation of the case;
- to obey the requirements of the investigator, prosecutor.

Accommodation

University dormitories/hostels

All international students, especially first-year students, are always provided with hostel accommodation by the university. The conditions in the dormitories may vary from university to university. However, all universities provide all basic conditions such as showers, toilets, kitchens, laundry facilities and internet access. The price of dormitory accommodation varies from university to university.

Rental housing

International students are also entitled to rent accommodation. In Kyrgyzstan, it is common practice for several students to rent accommodation together. The price of rent depends on the district, housing conditions and infrastructure nearby.

Here are some recommendations for finding and renting an accommodation:

1. Look for flats on trusted services such as Lalafo, House.kg, and etc. Also, you can turn to the services of real estate agencies.
2. It is advisable that the area where you will be renting an apartment is close to your university or has access to transport that goes to the area of your university.
3. Research the infrastructure nearby so that you have access to the facilities you need.

Once you have found a suitable flat:

1. Make sure that you have arranged to rent the flat specifically with the owner. Beware of scammers. Ask the owner to provide documents confirming ownership of the flat (apartment specifications sheet)
2. Make sure that you sign a rental agreement with the owner, where all the terms and conditions of rent and accommodation are spelt out. If you are working through a real estate agency, ask for the contract to be in English too. The sample of the rental agreement you can find in the Annex 1 to this PAO.
3. When signing the contract, inspect the flat together with the owner for any existing faults and defects in order to fix them and avoid any problems in the future.

Before renting the apartment, warn the owner about the documentation (notarised Certificate of Residence) you need from him/her in order to obtain registration.

Warn the owner if you are planning to keep a pet in the house. Make sure that you take all measures to keep your pet comfortable in your home.

Rental flats can be furnished or unfurnished. Discuss with the owner what you require and whether he or she will be able to provide it before you sign a tenancy agreement.

Make sure if there is internet access available in the flat. If not, ask the owner to set it up.

In order to make your comfortable living and friendship with your neighbour's, use the following tips and rules:

1. Help to maintain the place you live clean. Do not leave garbage behind you.
2. Keep the apartment clean and in order too.
3. Try not to make a noise after 10 pm. At this time your neighbour's may already be asleep.
4. Learn the exact address of your apartment in case of emergency. Also, learn to spell it in the local language.
5. Do not smoke inside as it may lead to a fire.
6. When leaving the flat, always check all electricity devices and gas stove if they are switched off in order to avoid accidents.

Advantages of university dormitories vs rental housing and estimated prices

The choice between university dormitories and rental housing depends on individual preferences and circumstances of the student. Here are some advantages of both options for comparing:

Advantages of University Dormitories:

- Dormitories are more budget-friendly than private housing.
- Dormitories are typically located on or near the campus, making it easy to access classes and other university facilities without the need for daily commuting.
- Living in a dormitory can provide a sense of community and allow you to interact with other students. It's a great way to make friends and connect with fellow students.
- Dormitories usually offer basic amenities like Wi-Fi, laundry facilities, and common areas. Some may also have cafeterias or dining options within the building or nearby.
- Living in dormitories can be safer as there is round-the-clock supervision of commandants and guards

- In dormitories students take less responsibility for the maintenance and repair of utilities. It is a responsibility of universities to organise facilities for students.

Estimated Prices for University Dormitories in Kyrgyzstan:

The cost of student dormitories in Kyrgyzstan can vary depending on the university and the city.

In Bishkek and Osh, the cost of a dormitory room may range from 3,000 to 8,000 KGS per month.

In other smaller cities, the cost may be lower, ranging from 1,500 to 5,000 KGS per month.

Advantages of Private Housing:

- Private housing offers more independence and privacy. You can choose your roommates and have more control over your living environment.
- Private housing options include apartments, houses, or shared flats, giving you the flexibility to select a living space that suits your preferences and budget.
- Private housing often provides more space, allowing for greater comfort and the possibility of having your own kitchen and bathroom.
- In private housing there is no control by the commandants of the time of coming and going from the house.
- In a private housing, you can often find a quieter and calmer environment to study and concentrate, which is especially important during sessions and exam preparation.

Estimated Prices for Private Housing in Kyrgyzstan:

The cost of private housing in Kyrgyzstan can vary widely based on the location, size, available facilities in the house, depending on the neighbourhood and the condition of the property.

In Bishkek and Osh, a one-bedroom apartment might cost from 15,000 to 35,000 KGS per month.

In other cities, prices are generally lower, and you may find one-bedroom apartments for 10,000 to 20,000 KGS per month.

Transportation

You arrived in Kyrgyzstan to the International airports “Manas” or “Osh”. Perhaps your first trip around the city was accompanied by a person who met you in the airport and who already knows the city well. But from now on, you will have to get around the city on your own. This section will help you to find out which means of transportation you can use in the city.

Kyrgyzstan has a right-hand traffic system. So, if your home country has a left-hand traffic system, it takes some time to get used to local traffic rules.

Public transport:

Bishkek and Osh have a well-developed public transport system. Residents of these cities have access to buses, trolleybuses, shuttle buses and taxis.

Public transport covers almost the entire city, so you can get to any point by bus or “marshrutka” (minibus).

International students are advised to get well acquainted with the numbers of public transports that travel from their accommodation to the university and back.

Here are some tips that may help you in using public transport:

1. The 2GIS map app (see [Useful links](#)) can help you to find out which public transport services go from point A to point B. This app shows you what kind of transport is available for a given route, how long the journey will take and can also be used as a GPS.
2. For payment in buses and trolleybuses of Bishkek city special travel cards Tulpar can be used (they can be purchased at the sales points of mobile operators, as well as from bus and trolleybus drivers; the cost of the card is 50 soms), as well as bank cards VISA and Elkart and electronic wallets (see [Banking Services](#)).

3. Marshrutkas accept payment in cash only. Payment must be made immediately upon boarding. It is recommended to have the money ready in advance so that you do not delay the journey for others.
4. In public transport, be careful with your personal belongings, as you may become a victim of pickpockets. Keep your smartphone and money in hidden pockets.
5. Try to give a place to elderly people and people with children. This is a sign of respect for local traditions.
6. It is not customary to talk loudly, listen to music, watch videos or play games at full volume on public transport. You can always use headphones for this.
7. Please, do not use perfumes or fragrances with pungent odours. The local population is not used to such strong odours.

Taxi Services:

Taxi is a comfortable, fast and secure mode of transport. There are a lot of taxi services available in Bishkek and Osh. The most popular are Yandex, Navi, Zhorgo and Tulpar. Most of them have an interactive mobile application (available on PlayMarket and AppStore) where you can easily order a car. The app allows you to track your exact location and order a car there, and you can also see the price you will pay to the taxi driver. There is an option to pay by cash or bank card (the bank card must be linked to your account in the app in advance).

The following tips will help you to make your traveling in taxi more comfortable:

- Be sure to use a licensed taxi with an accessible mobile app.
- Learn some basic phrases in local languages as most taxi drivers do not speak English.
- Usually, in the morning and evening rush hours (8-9 am and 4-6 pm) the prices are high (starting at 100 soms per trip). So, try to use a taxi after or prior to these hours in order to save your money.

- if you are traveling at night time, share the car and driver details with your close person for security reasons. Usually taxi apps have such an option.
- If you are traveling alone, sit down at back passenger places for your security.
- If you are not using a taxi that was not ordered through an app or service, make a call from the taxi to your close person and share the details of the car and your direction.

Rental cars:

If you have an international driving license, you can rent a car for driving in the city and around Kyrgyzstan.

There are a lot of companies providing car rental services. You need to research the companies and their rental terms in advance.

General rules for renting a car:

1. Age 21+ years
2. Driving experience of more than 3 years
3. International driver license
4. Ability to pay a deposit for car hire of \$300 or more

Prices for rent depend on the company and category of car.

If you don't have a driving license, you can get a local driving license. For that, you have to complete a driving course and pass an exam (theory and practice).

Also, it's recommended to learn local traffic rules in order to avoid accidents and penalties. Note that most streets in Bishkek and Osh are covered with traffic offences cameras. These cameras fix offences and send fines to the car owners.

Eco-transport:

Recently, electric Kick-scooters and electric scooters have become popular in Kyrgyzstan. The road infrastructure of the cities allows to use this economical and eco-friendly mode of transport and get to the desired destination in a very short time.

You can buy your own electric scooter in specialised shops and charge it at home.

Electric kick-scooters are available for private purchase as well as for hire. In almost all cities there are electric scooter sharing points of different companies. All you need to do is download the required mobile application, register with your ID card, scan the code on the vehicle, pay and you're good to go! In the mobile app, familiarise yourself with the rules of scooter use and follow the traffic regulations

And the invariable affordable eco-transport remains the bicycle. You can also rent or buy one.

Whatever transportation you choose, be careful and take care of your safety.

Health issues

University Health Service

Before coming to Kyrgyzstan all international students are obliged to undergo a medical check-up and get tested for HIV, Hepatitis, Malaria and Tuberculosis. During your whole stay in Kyrgyzstan, your university will hold annual medical check-ups according to the approved schedule. This check-up is mandatory for all students and teaching staff.

Medical universities usually have their own medical clinics, where students are able to get additional health services. Students of other universities, which don't have such a facility, can get medical services in private medical centres or state polyclinics.

Health Insurance

Starting from April, 2023, all international students are obliged to obtain a Mandatory Health Insurance Policy (MHIP). MHIP covers free-of-charge medical services at polyclinics and half-price services at hospitals.

At polyclinics you will receive a free-charge package of medical services such as consultancy, doctor's appointment, treatment prescribing, approximately 40 types of laboratory-diagnostic researches, and discount up to 50% for physiotherapy and purchase

of preferential medicines at pharmacies. In the absence of insurance, the student pays according to the price list.

When hospitalised in a hospital, MHIP covers a half price for the treatment, which includes doctor's appointment, examination, treatment prescribing, including operation, anaesthesia, provision of medicines (according the list of vital medicines), etc. In the absence of insurance, the student pays the maximal price of the treatment.

The cost for MHIP is 1366 soms per month. Students can obtain the policy in local polyclinics or at the territorial administrations of the State Mandatory Health Insurance Fund for the period of 6 or 12 months.

How to obtain MHIP?

In order to obtain the MHIP you have to:

1. Submit the copy of your valid passport to your Dean Office or International Students Office
2. Pay the MHIP fee via terminals Pay24 or mobile pockets Mbank and O!Money (Services → Полис ОМС → input your PIN to check your Health insurance status → if not insured, click "Go to payment" → pay the amount on the screen → get your Insurance Policy)

HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other dangerous diseases

HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, along with some other serious diseases, are significant public health concerns in Kyrgyzstan amongst both the local population and foreign inhabitants.

Cases of HIV and multi-drug resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) in Kyrgyzstan have been increasing over the years. Hepatitis and cancer statistics are rising along with them. And also keep in mind that the Covid-19 virus is still a health hazard.

What you recommended to do to avoid catching these and other serious diseases:

- It is advisable to have regular medical examinations and tests for HIV, Hepatitis and TB. These medical examinations will be carried out by your universities on an annual basis.

- Inform your university supervisor about your health conditions, such as epilepsy, allergies, mental health problems, etc.
- avoid drug use, especially injecting drug use, and unprotected sex. These are the main routes of HIV transmission.
- Pay attention to personal hygiene. After visiting public places or taking public transportation, wash your hands or treat them with antiseptic. And, since most of you are medical students, you may encounter TB patients when you are practicing in hospitals. In such cases, it is recommended that you pay special attention to personal hygiene.
- Adhere to a healthy lifestyle. Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. Maintain a healthy diet and get a good night's sleep. Also, keep your home clean and ventilate it more often.
- If you suddenly fall ill or don't feel well, use personal hygiene products such as masks and antiseptics. And be sure to let your university supervisors know about your condition and don't delay in seeing a doctor. Seeing a doctor in a timely manner can help avoid serious consequences for your health. If you need urgent medical help, call 103. Beware those doctors will not be able to understand English, so it would be favoured to learn basic phrases related to health issues.
- Avoid the use of dubious medicines. Always try to take only the medicines prescribed by the doctor.

Reproductive Health¹

International female students are advised to keep the general health tips, described above. However, there are also sensitive issues, which should be covered in this section.

If you are worried about period pain, it is recommended to see a gynaecologist who will be able to prescribe treatment to relieve the

¹ Based on the materials from <https://www.unfpa.org/sexual-reproductive-health#readmore-expand>

pain. Do not take medication on your own if you have doubts about its appropriateness and effectiveness.

Additionally, you can use special mobile applications that help track periods and plan your life during them, stock up in advance on the necessary means of personal hygiene available at pharmacies (pads, tampons, menstrual bowls, **contraceptives**, and etc.).

Another issue is **unwanted pregnancy**. Students, and especially female students who are sexually active, are advised to adhere to certain rules in order to avoid serious consequences such as unwanted pregnancy:

1. If you have a regular partner, use contraception, such as condoms and contraceptives (only as prescribed by a doctor)
2. Follow the guidelines of personal safety
3. It is important to have a sexual education in order to protect yourself from undesirable consequences like pregnancy and sexual infections. Also, it will not be superfluous to discuss intimate issues with a partner.

Unwanted pregnancy can lead to an uneasy decision of **abortion**. Abortion is not prohibited in Kyrgyzstan. But in the case of foreign citizens, especially students, this can be a problematic way of solution.

So, the main point you need to know is that any kind of abortion can be provided only in the clinics or hospitals that have special licenses and equipment. Properly check the clinic for their ability and competencies for conduction abortions. Here are some of the clinics² you could turn to:

² Listed medical centers with a proper license can be checked on the official website of the Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic:

<https://med.kg/lisenzirovanie?locale=en>

Bishkek	Kyrgyz Scientific Center for Human Reproduction	Contact information: www.kncrch.kg Email: kncrch.2017@gmail.com Phone: +996(312) 51-01-37 Address: 7 microraion, 14/1
	Advanced Medical Institute "On Clinic"	Contact information: www.onclinic.kg Address: Kievskaya str., 65 Phone number: +996(312) 62-40-40, +996(556)62-40-40
	Medical Center "Vedanta"	Contact details: www.vedanta.kg Phone: 8088, +996 (998) 100-103 Address: Yulius Fuchik str. 34
Osh	Medical Clinic "MyrzAiym"	Contact information: https://www.instagram.com/@ginekolog.osh Phone number: +996 (555) 59 50 95, +996 (779) 25 97 55 Address: 88/48 A. Masaliev Ave.
	Medical Clinic "Ata-Ene-Bala"	Contact details: Instagram: @ata_ene_bala_osh_ Phone: 0990-79-79-76 Address: 21 Aliev Street

The sooner a woman will turn to the doctor, the safer the abortion will be. Note, that this procedure is held confidentially and only with the consent of women. During the consultation, the doctor is obliged to familiarise a woman with the process, risks and consequences of abortion.

Proper adherence to all recommendations for maintaining health will make your stay in Kyrgyzstan painless and pleasant.

Access to services

Services of state authorities

Sometimes International students need to contact state authorities or public bodies in order to get any kind of public services referred to their migration, education, health, presence or absence of offences and other, excluding those that their university provides. Before going to any state authority office, first visit their website in order to know the availability of services, the rules and order of getting certain services, required personal and non-personal

documents, timing, pricing, open hours, etc. International students are recommended to turn to state authorities together with their official representative (agent/contractor) or dean from their university.

Different public bodies issue the references, certificates you need within different periods of time. But usually, it takes 14 business days when your document will be ready. Be patient and do not disturb the specialist dealing with your case by calling or visiting without a good reason.

Mobile and Internet communications

After arrival in Kyrgyzstan international students will need to connect to local mobile operators in order to stay tuned.

In Kyrgyzstan there are 3 mobile companies offering connection services - [MegaCom](#), [O!](#) and [Beeline](#). All of them offer package tariff plans which include communication within the network, out of the network, mobile Internet and messages. Tariff plans are varied by the number of available minutes of outgoing communication, text messages and gigabytes of Internet, and by their prices.

You can connect to a mobile operator, visiting their office with your valid passport with visa and registration. Their offices are usually located in malls and trade centre's. At these offices consultants or sales managers can provide you with tariff plans, prices, options and numbers. They also will help with setting up a sim-card on your phone and activating it. Don't forget to clarify the support service numbers in order you can call them in case of connection problems. Also, find out about the coverage zones, as some operators may not be available in remote or mountainous areas.

Internet access is also offered by various providers - Aknet, Megaline, Homeline, Saima Telecom, Sky Net and others. Usually, students living in university dormitories have access to the internet connection provided by the university. But, If you rent an apartment and don't have an Internet connection there, you can ask the owner to connect to the internet or you can connect to any provider by yourself, calling their office and leaving a request for connection. A provider team will come to you and set up Wi-Fi utilities and internet connection.

When calling the Internet Provider company, clarify on all details like tariffs, coverage zones, internet speed and appliances.

Cleaning services

International students in Kyrgyzstan may require cleaning services to maintain a clean and comfortable living environment.

To maintain cleanliness, you can use the services of cleaning companies. In recent years, the number of such companies has grown and you can choose from this majority based on your budget and wishes. Information about such companies is available in the 2GIS app. There you can find their contact numbers, as well as links to their websites (if any) and to social media profiles (Instagram, Facebook).

Most companies do not have English-speaking staff, so it will be useful for you to learn the necessary phrases in Kyrgyz or Russian. Here are some tips before using the cleaning services:

- Make a request to multiple companies in order to know the price differences, features of companies and their schedule.
- After you choose the company, arrange an in-person consultation with the cleaning service providers to discuss your cleaning needs and expectations.
- Ensure you understand what services are included in the cleaning package and how pricing is structured (hourly, weekly, monthly, etc.). Also, discuss the insurance in case the personnel can damage furniture or appliances.
- When the cleaning personnel come, warn them about things, with which they need to be careful.

Additionally, you can use the services of dry cleaners to keep your clothes clean. You can take things to the dry cleaners that are difficult to clean yourself, such as winter jackets, coats, fur coats, things made of special materials (silk, leather). Information about such companies is also available in the 2GIS app.

Banking services

To make the usage of services in Kyrgyzstan more comfortable, international students may need a local bank card as most of the

services and goods can be paid by bank transfer. Moreover, recent developments in the local banking system allow people to make payments directly from their phone.

Of course, international students can continue to use their VISA cards from their state banks. But, in this case, the commission for conversion will be taken every time.

So, the best solution is to use the services of local banks. You may turn to banks, who serve international citizens such as Demir bank, Optima, KICB, Mbank and Dos-Credobank. **You need to have a valid passport, visa and registration to open your bank account.** Sometimes, you may be required to submit additional documents like a certificate or reference from your university.

While opening your personal bank account you will be offered to choose the currency of it. But, of course, the account in local currency is generally preferable.

After you successfully obtain your personal bank account, you can link it to the respective mobile application offered by banks, which are available for Android and iOS systems. Advantages of such an application are:

- you can pay most of services and goods via QR code
- you can pay for your house utilities, Internet
- you can transfer money to other users
- you are able to pay for public transport (trolleybuses and buses) via QR code
- you can pay university invoices, i.e. tuition fee, courses and missed lessons
- you are able to recharge your phone balance, and etc.



International students are not able to get loans from local banks.

International transfers

When it comes to international money transfers, it can be done through the international money transfer systems "S.W.I.F.T", "Western Union", "UPT", "Ria Money Transfer". Each bank works with all of these or one of them. and all these systems charge a

transfer fee. You can visit the official websites of local banks or the money transfer systems own websites to calculate the approximate transfer fees.

For example:

Money transfer system	Country Coverage and Conditions	Website
Western Union	Coverage: countries of Europe, USA, near and far abroad Currency: US Dollars Commission: depending on the amount and direction of the transfer *issuing and sending transfers through the bank's offices	
S.W.I.F.T	Coverage: more than 200 countries and territories Currency: US Dollars, EUR, Pond Sterling, Yuan Commission: 0.5 – 1% *issuing and sending transfers through the bank's offices	
Ria Money Transfer	Coverage: countries of Europe, USA, CIS countries Currency: Euro/US Dollars Commission: depending on the transfer amount	
UPT	UPT money transfers available only in Bishkek city offices Coverage: worldwide Currency: US dollars, Euros Commission: depending on the amount and direction of the transfer *issuing and sending transfers through the bank's offices	
Contact	Coverage: worldwide Currency: US dollars, euros, rubles Commission: depending on the amount and direction of the transfer *issuing and sending transfers through the bank's offices	

Currency exchange

To change your currency, you can go to banks or private exchange points. Rates of banks and private points usually differ in favour of the second. The currencies that can be exchanged are USD, Euro, British pounds, China's yuan, Turkish lira, Kazakhs tenge, Russian ruble, and UAE dirham.

The most famous exchange centre in all of Central Asia - Mossovet - is located in Bishkek. It's located in the perimeter of the crossroads of Sovetskaya (Yusup Abdirakhmanov) and Moskovskaya streets. As there is always risk in money places, take some tips that may help you a benefit and secured exchange:

- Even though exchange points are popular in Kyrgyzstan, it is safer to change currency in banks.
- When exchanging, pay attention to rates. You can choose the most profitable
- In order not to be deceived, recalculate the equivalent in soms as you have changed the currency.
- If you go to the bank for exchange, you must have a passport with you.
- Hide your exchanged money very well in order not to become a victim of theft.

Beauty services

Foreigners visiting or living in Kyrgyzstan can access a range of beauty services similar to those available in many other countries. These services cater to personal grooming, wellness, and beauty enhancement. Here are some common beauty services you can find in Kyrgyzstan:

Hair Salons: In any city, big or small, you can find a lot of hair salons offering services such as haircuts, styling, colouring, and hair treatments. Some salons may also provide barber services for men.

Nail Salons: Nail salons provide manicures and pedicures, nail extensions, nail art, and other nail care services. There are both

networks of nail service salons and individual nail studios. Prices for services vary from 200 SOM and above, depending on what you want.

Beauty Salons: During study in Kyrgyzstan, there will be a lot of events like “Students Initiation Ceremony”, “Graduation Prom”, New Year parties and others. Especially for these events girls wish to be fancy and elegant. Beauty salons offer a wide range of services, including makeup application, hairstyling, eyebrow shaping, eyelash extensions, waxing, and etc.

SPAs and Wellness Centers: Spa facilities offer a variety of treatments, including massages, facials, body scrubs, different types of massages and relaxation therapies. These services promote relaxation and rejuvenation.

Tattoo and Piercing Studios: If you're interested in getting a tattoo or body piercing, there are studios that provide these services. Make sure to choose a reputable and hygienic studio.

Barber Shops: Men can find barber shops offering haircuts, beard trims, and grooming services.

Fitness and Yoga Studios: For overall well-being, you can join fitness centre's or yoga studios to maintain physical and mental health.

Dermatology Clinics: If you have specific skin concerns or require dermatological treatments, you can turn to dermatology clinics. Before going to procedures, make sure the clinic has a appropriate license, required equipment and their doctors are medically educated.

When seeking beauty services in Kyrgyzstan, consider the following tips:

- Research and read reviews about the establishment or service provider you're interested in.
- Verify the qualifications and certifications of beauty professionals.

- Ensure that hygiene and cleanliness standards are met, especially with nail, tattoo, piercing services. Inappropriate service can lead to serious consequences for your health.
- Ask for price quotations before services to avoid surprises.
- Respect local customs and norms while receiving services. Also, don't forget about etiquette.

Libraries

Most international students use the library services within their universities, as they provide books and materials concerning their field of study. However, you can also visit public libraries and use the services they provide. The biggest library in the country is the National Library named after Alykul Osmonov and it is located in Bishkek. The total fund of the library is about 2.1 million books and publications.

Readers can find any material they need starting from archival historical books to modern electronic publications. The library has a department of literature in foreign languages, where you can find books, periodicals, publications and other materials in 82 languages. There you will find materials about Kyrgyzstan and its history and culture. And also, will find English-Russian and English-Kyrgyz dictionaries. which can help you to improve your language skills.

Also, the library serves as a venue for some cultural and educational events, which you can visit too.

Entertainment

Shopping

Shopping as a form of entertainment can be a great way to relax after a hard day

Bishkek and Osh offer a variety of local shops, malls and markets where you can explore and purchase a wide range of goods, including fresh produce, handmade crafts, clothing, jewelries and more.

Shopping malls and trade centre's offer a diversity of boutiques and shops. Taking a round the mall or centre suggests not only interesting shopping, but also an exciting pastime in cinemas and gaming halls. Also there you can taste the cuisines of different countries, including the local ones at the food courts.

Usually the layout of malls is similar, so all groceries and supermarkets, banks, pharmacies are located on the ground floor. The first, second, and sometimes, the third floors have clothes and shoes boutiques and shops of cosmetics, perfumes and accessories. The last floors have food courts with a diversity of cuisines, cinema zones and playgrounds.

The most famous malls in Bishkek are Asia Mall, GUM, TSUM, Dordoy Plaza, Bishkek Park, and in Osh it is a Megapolis, Nurzaman Plaza, MK Grand.

Shopping at local bazaars gives an especially exciting experience to foreigners. Bazaars in Kyrgyzstan often have a lively and colourful atmosphere, making them excellent places to experience the local culture, try traditional foods, and shop for souvenirs, clothes and almost everything you need.

Almost every city and big villages in Kyrgyzstan have their own local mini bazaars, but Bishkek houses the two largest bazaars in the country where people travel from far and wide for shopping - Osh bazaar and Dordoi.

Located in the south part of Bishkek, Osh Bazaar is one of the most famous markets in Kyrgyzstan. It offers a wide range of products, including fresh produce, clothing, household items, and traditional Kyrgyz crafts. It's a great place to sample Kyrgyz cuisine as well. Most of the local population buy meat, fresh vegetables and fruits and dried fruits right here. Osh bazaar is considered to be the cheapest places for such items.

Dordoi Bazaar is the well-known and largest wholesale bazaar not only within the country, but in the whole Central Asia. It's located in the north part of Bishkek. Usually, people come to Dordoi for clothes and home appliances. Both women and men, adults and children can find what they need here and within their budget.

Osh city has its own Osh Bazaar. This bazaar is famous for its spices, nuts, dried fruits, and traditional Kyrgyz dishes. But the thing that makes this Osh bazaar special is a large number of

“chaikhanas”, surrounding the bazaar. Chaikhanas offer traditional foods like pilav called “ash”, lagman, chuchvara, shashlik, samsa, and green tea to drink.

Remember to practice your bargaining skills when shopping, as it's common to negotiate prices. Sellers at bazaars accept only cash, so prepare the cash in advance.

Pickpocketing is a common type of theft in crowded places. That's why, it's highly recommended to be attentive to your personal things while shopping at bazaar. Hide your wallet, phones, and personal documents well.

Everyday products you can buy at supermarkets. Here are supermarket chains called Globus, Asia, Narodnyi, which you are able to find in any city of Kyrgyzstan. Besides foodstuff, you also can buy cleaning supplies, stuff for home, food for pets, grocery, drinks (including alcohol), bakery, cigarettes and ready-made food. In supermarkets you can pay both in cash and non-cash (bank cards, QR payments, GooglePay services).

Cafes and restaurants

Kyrgyz people have many rich culinary traditions. That's why there are a lot of various cafes and restaurants located in cities. You can find almost any famous cuisine in the world: traditional, Uzbeks, Uighurs, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Mexican, Russian, Georgian, Azerbaijan, European, Pakistani and Indian.

Most local traditional foods are made of meat. Usually it's beef that is used in dishes. So, if you don't eat some kind of meat, please clarify the ingredients of the dish from the waiters. Also, some cafes and restaurants offer vegan menus, so it wouldn't be a problem for vegetable-lovers.

Fast food is widely distributed too. Most fast food points offer burgers, shawarmas and kebabs. Also, there is the world famous fast food restaurant chain KFC, which restaurants are located in several points of Bishkek.

As most of the international students are coming from India and Pakistan, there are a range of traditional cuisines of these countries. The most popular Indian and Pakistani restaurants are Gandhi

Restaurant, The Host, Salaam Namaste, Pappa Roti, Welcome and Oops.

Due to the diversity of cafes and restaurants, and also fast food points, every student coming to Kyrgyzstan will find an appropriate food for him/her. Just need to follow some cultural norms and table etiquette:

- As cafes and restaurants are public places, it's not allowed to speak loud. It can bring inconveniences to others
- In Kyrgyzstan, it is not customary to slurp while eating.
- If there is a self-service in cafe, you have to clean up after yourself
- Be careful with the dishes. and furniture. Carelessness can lead to the damage and breaking.
- Do not climb on the sofa or chair with your feet, and especially in shoes.
- Use napkins
- Do not smoke in places where it is not allowed. Check with the administrator if there are special smoking areas or a smoking room
- At the table while eating, do not rattle the cutlery.

Dance clubs

Bishkek has a vibrant nightlife. Young people like to spend time in nightclubs and karaoke clubs.

In this regard, Bishkek is much ahead of Osh, since there are not so many night clubs in Osh.

Young people go to night bars and clubs to dance, sing, often celebrate holidays, go to performances of famous DJs, and can make new acquaintances. The most popular night clubs in Bishkek are Molecula Bar, Suzy Wong, Hills Bar, PromZona, Munchen Pub, Allan bar, Omar Khayyam and others. All these bars offer a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktails, spirits, beer and snacks.

Usually, all night establishments start working from 8-9 pm and work till 4 am.

Some bars have a dress code, age control and some require a face scan for entry.

Visiting night establishments also requires following certain rules of conduct and your personal safety. Here are some tips that can help you avoid trouble:

- Before going to a club or bar, make sure that you comply with their dress code and age control.
- Make table reservations in advance if you want to eat and drink comfortably.
- Girls are recommended to go to nightclubs accompanied by someone for personal safety. Also, inform someone close to you about which bar or club you are going to go to.
- Do not engage in verbal or physical conflicts with the locals. You may be taken to the police.
- Do not take important documents with you so as not to lose, and a large amount of money to reduce this risk of becoming a victim of theft. Using bank cards will also help minimise this.
- Do not lose sight of your glass with a cocktail or drink, so that you are not spiked with a dangerous substance. This rule is very important for girls.
- Do not come into contact with drunk and suspicious people.
- Be polite and respect personal boundaries when communicating with people.
- Be attentive to personal things.

Following these rules and have a great evening.

Parks

Kyrgyzstan is a green country with a vast array of national and local parks. If you like to relax and unwind in the fresh air among the trees, then you can go to the nearest local park or go out of town to national reserves and parks.

The most famous national reserve located near Bishkek is Ala Archa. Also, not far from Bishkek there are landscape places for recreation - Orlovka, Chunkurchak, Ysyk Ata and Alamedin gorge.

In the Osh region, the most famous nature reserves are the Kyrgyz Ata National Park, Apshyr Ata, Kara Shoro and Kulunatinsky Reserve.

You can visit city parks within the city limits. In Bishkek - Oak Park, Karagachev Grove, Ata Turk Park, Asanbai and Panfilov parks. In the last two parks there are attractions. In Osh there are parks named after Toktogul Satylganov, Alisher Navoi, the park of love, as well as the youth park.

In addition to parks in cities, there are city squares where locals like to walk with children and pets.

Theaters and museums

Both Bishkek and Osh have several theatres and museums that offer opportunities to explore the country's culture, history, and arts.

The most Popular theatres and Museums in Bishkek:

1. Kyrgyz National Opera and Ballet Theatre (Bishkek Opera House): This grand theatre hosts opera and ballet performances. It also serves as a hub for cultural events in Bishkek.
2. Kyrgyz State Philharmonic Hall: The Philharmonic Hall features classical music concerts, chamber music, and other performances. Recent years, Philharmonic Hall made it a habit to arrange evenings of thematic soundtracks from films and anime and evenings of orchestral music in modern processing.
3. State Museum of Fine Arts, also known as the Gapar Aitiev Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts, houses an impressive collection of Kyrgyz and Central Asian artwork, including paintings, sculptures, and traditional crafts.
4. State Historical Museum, which is located at Ala-Too Square, showcases Kyrgyz history from ancient times to the present. It features artefact's, exhibits, and displays that provide insights into the country's past.

The most popular theatres and museums in Osh:

1. Sulaiman-Too Museum is the most famous and visiting place in Osh. It's located in the very centre of the city and is a five-domed

limestone cliff stretching from west to east with a length of 1,140 meters. There are many historical monuments and sacred caves at the mountain, visited by numerous pilgrims. The museum, built in 1949, is carved right in the mountain.

2. Osh Regional Museum, also known as the Osh Historical and Archaeological Museum, offers a comprehensive look at the history and culture of the Osh region, with a particular focus on its ancient history.

3. Osh State History Museum: This museum covers the history and culture of the Osh region, including exhibits related to Kyrgyz traditions, crafts, and local history.

4. Osh State Art Museum: Featuring a collection of artworks by local artists, this museum offers a glimpse into the artistic heritage of the region.

5. Osh Regional Drama Theatre will assist in Enjoying local theatrical performances, including traditional Kyrgyz plays and contemporary works.

Please note that museum hours and theatre schedules may vary, so it's a good idea to check their websites or contact them directly for up-to-date information on exhibitions, performances, and opening hours before planning your visit.

Traveling around Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan has a lot of beautiful and unique places that everyone, including foreigners, should definitely visit. These places are picturesque places of nature and historical heritage.

Usually, foreign students go on weekends to the nearest mountains, which are located 20-40 kilometres from the cities of Bishkek and Osh. But on long weekends or holidays you can plan trips to distant regions.

Especially popular are trips to lakes Issyk-Kul, Son-Kol, Sary-Chelek, Kol-Tor and places with unique nature, such as Tale Canyon, Kok-Zhaiyk Valley, Altyn Arashan, Kol-Suu, Chunkurchak gorges, etc. All these places are better to visit in summer, when there is a lot of greenery around and weather conditions are good.

And in winter you can go to Karakol, Too-Ashuu, Orlovka, Chunkurchak and other ski bases to ski and enjoy snowy peaks.

Traveling around Kyrgyzstan will give you a bright and unforgettable experience if you plan your trips carefully and use the following tips:

- Learn more about the place you wish to visit via Internet and from locals
- Learn some basic Russian or Kyrgyz Phrases. While some people in Kyrgyzstan don't speak English, especially in urban areas, it's helpful to know a few common Russian or Kyrgyz phrases to facilitate communication, especially in more remote areas.
- Familiarise yourself with Kyrgyz customs, traditions, and etiquette in order not to subject yourself to culture shock
- Check the weather before going on the trip, using weather apps. They will show an approximate forecast for a week, month ahead.
- Dress in layers, as weather conditions can vary significantly throughout the day and depending on your location. Comfortable hiking shoes are advisable if you plan to explore the mountains.
- Search how you can get to the location. It can be traveling by car or minibus. Learn about the tariffs beforehand. Sometimes, drivers may inflate the price for tourists. Be prepared for this. Unfortunately, the state cannot control private carriers and influence prices.
- While credit cards are accepted in some hotels and restaurants in main cities, it's wise to carry cash, especially in more rural areas where card acceptance is limited. ATMs may not be available there.
- For your safety and health follow safety tips (see [Security Chapter](#)), avoid risky areas at night, especially in mountains.
- Consider carrying a basic first-aid kit.
- Respect the Environment by not littering, and follow Leave No Trace principles when camping and trekking. Kyrgyzstan's natural beauty is one of its main attractions.
- Download offline maps and purchase GPS navigators, because there may not be a stable mobile connection.

By being well-prepared and respectful of the local customs, you can have a memorable and enjoyable travel experience.

Environmental awareness

As many countries face ecological and climate changes, so does Kyrgyzstan. And it's a responsibility of every person, living in Kyrgyzstan, including international students, to maintain a healthy environment and ecology.

International students can promote a support for local ecology by:

- participating in eco activities and environmental initiatives organised by your universities
- maintaining the tidy and cleanliness at places of your studying and living
- throwing the garbage into special containers or bins
- learning about the local environment and environmental challenges and laws in the host country. Share this knowledge with peers, friends, and host community members to raise awareness.
- incorporating in researches and projects aimed at sustainable environment development
- implementing an ecological initiatives
- not leaving a trash behind in places of recreation and nature

By taking these actions, international students can contribute to a broader global effort to address ecological challenges and promote sustainable living practices.

Socialisation

It is difficult for international students to quickly adapt and socialise with local communities. But this can be gradually eradicated by getting involved in the student communities at your university. Every university has student councils that you can join and meet like-minded individuals and engage in activities you enjoy.

You can also join science clubs or creative teams within your university. Participating in these groups can help you better understand the local culture and lifestyle, adapt to the local community and improve your language skills in Kyrgyz and Russian. In turn, local students can learn more about your culture and country and improve their language skills.

Tips on how to socialise within local community:

- Embrace opportunities for cultural exchange. Attend cultural events, festivals, and workshops (list of Public and Religious holidays is available in the Annex 2) to learn about the host country's culture and share your own.
- Join social media groups or forums for international students at your university or in your city. These online communities often organise events and provide a platform for connecting with others.
- Be Open and positive. Smile, introduce yourself, and be open to conversations with local students and people.
- Consider volunteering for your university or local organizations.
- Don't hesitate to ask for help or guidance when needed. Universities often have support services and counsellor's available for international students.
- If you have the opportunity, travel with other students. It can be just a little trip to nearby mountains, but it can forge friendship and mutual cultural understanding.
- Participate actively in your university life and events.

In addition, intercultural dialogue with locals can be established by attending or participating in various cultural events such as international film, opera and theatre festivals, international library conferences and youth forums, as well as days dedicated to intercultural and interethnic dialogue.

Information about these large-scale events can be obtained from the local media and the media service at your university.

Your rights

Every foreign student who has come to study in Kyrgyzstan, along with local residents, has a large list of rights and freedoms that no one has the right to violate.

Below are the main priority rights that every foreign student in Kyrgyzstan has:

- the right to free movement in the country, except when it is necessary to ensure state security, protection of public order, health and morals of the population, protection of the rights and legitimate interests of citizens
- the right to freedom of religion and to visit sacred and prayer places
- the right to quality and decent education in available specialities
- the right to health care and to receive emergency medical assistance
- the right to own property, its inviolability and the protection of personal property
- the right to inviolability and self defence
- the right to freedom of conscience. Incitement of enmity and hatred in connection with religious beliefs is prohibited.
- the right to rest, to visit places of cultural heritage. But you are obliged to carefully treat historical and cultural monuments and other cultural values.
- the right to marry and have a family

If your rights as a foreign student are being violated in Kyrgyzstan, the following steps should be taken:

1. Contact the university administration: The first step is to contact the university where you are studying and express your concerns about the violations. Contact the international or legal department or university administration to explain the situation and request assistance.
2. Consultation with your country's representative: Contact your country's embassy or consular representation in

Kyrgyzstan. They can provide advice and support as well as guidance on how to proceed.

3. Contact law enforcement authorities: If you believe the violations are serious and/or concern your safety, contact the police department. Write down details of the incidents, collect evidence if possible.
4. Seek legal assistance: You can contact the Institute of Ombudsman or other national and international organisations, providing legal assistance. Also, you can contact a private lawyer or legal aid clinic. The details for these services are in the emergency contacts information.
5. Inform your country: If the problem remains unresolved, contact your country's diplomatic representatives and inform them of the situation. They can intervene to protect your rights and interests.
6. International Student Community: Reach out to other international students who may have experienced similar problems and may be able to offer advice or support.

International students should be aware of the laws and regulations of Kyrgyzstan, as well as the policies and procedures of their institution. In case of problems or questions regarding their rights and status in the country, it is advisable to contact the above organisations and institutions for support and advice.

Emergency contact numbers and useful links

Emergency contact numbers

1. fire station - 101
2. police department - 102
3. ambulance - 103, 110
4. psychological help - 111
5. rescue service - 112, 161
6. health insurance fund - 113
7. legal aid - 114
8. Institution of Ombudsman - 115
9. COVID-19 hotline - 118

Embassies



Embassy of India	100-A, Mahatma Gandhi Street, Bishkek Working hours: 09:00 - 17:30. Consular hours: 09:30 - 11:30	+996-312-979256, +996-312-979257 cons.Bishkek@mea.gov.in https://indembbishkek.gov.in/
Embassy of Pakistan	37- Serova - Bayalinova Street, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan Working hours: 09:00 - 16:30	+996 (312) 37–39–01 https://mofa.gov.pk/bishkek-kyrgyzstan/
Embassy of Uzbekistan	Chyngyz Aitmatov Ave., 177, Bishkek Working hours: 10:00 - 17:00	+996 (312) 98–62–96 +996 (312) 98–60–43 +996 (312) 98–62–95 http://www.uzbekistan.kg/uzbembish@elcat.kg
Embassy of Kazakhstan	Chyngyz Aitmatov Ave., 95A, Bishkek Working hours: 09:00 - 19:00 Consular hours: 09:00 - 12:00	+996-312-56-54-01 Bishkek@mfa.kz https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa-bishkek?lang=en
Embassy of Turkey	Moskovskaya street, 89, Bishkek Working hours: 09:00 - 18:00 Consular hours: 09:00 - 12:00	(Main number): +996 312 627 201 (Emergency line): +996 990 001416 (Emergency line): +996 990 007737 embassy.bishkek@mfa.gov.tr http://bishkek.emb.mfa.gov.tr

Legal assistance

Institute of Ombudsman	Tynystanov str., 120, Bishkek Working hours: 09:00 - 17:30.	+996 (312) 66-32-80 Hotline: 115 ombudsman@inbox.ru https://ombudsman.kg/index.php?lang=en
Information and Resource Centre of the Association of NGOs "Advocacy Centre for Human Rights"	273, Lenin str., Osh	+996 3222 7 04 52 email: advocacy.kg@gmail.com www.advocacy.kg
ADVOKAT.KG	28/2 Suerkulova str., office 107, Bishkek Working hours: 9:00 - 18:00	+996 (709) 61-67-08 cholpon2009_82@mail.ru https://advocat.kg/index.htm
Association of Lawyers of Kyrgyzstan	Abdrakhmanova str., 204, 4th floor, office 8, Bishkek Working hours: 9:00 - 23:00	+996 (709) 12-12-12 +996 (700) 41-00-42 https://ba.com.kg/
The Board of Lawyers "BIZ" (the Bar Association)	Supanalieva str. 5, Osh Working hours: 9:00 - 18:00	+996 773 360000 (WA) https://bizlaw.kg/











Useful links

Maps:



App name	URL	Download here	
		Android	iOS
2GIS	https://2gis.kg/bishkek https://2gis.kg/osh		

Google Maps:	https://www.google.com/maps		
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Taxi:



App name	URL	Download here	
		Android	iOS
Yandex Go	https://taxi.yandex.ru/bishkek/tariff/		
Navi Taxi	https://navi.kg/landing		
Jorgo Taxi	http://jorgo.kg/ru.php		
Bi Taxi	https://bitaxi.kg/en/		
InDrive	https://indrive.com/en/home/		

Public transport:





App name	URL	Download here	
		Android	iOS
Tulpar	https://www.tulpar-card.kg/		

Applications, useful for inside-of-country trips:









Intercity transport:

App name	URL	Download here	
		Android	iOS
Gettik.kg	https://gettik.ru/		

Accommodation:

App name	URL	Download here	
		Android	iOS
Booking.com	https://www.booking.com		
Trip Advisor	https://www.tripadvisor.com/		

Search for services:

App name	URL	Download here	
		Android	iOS
2GIS	https://2gis.kg/bishkek https://2gis.kg/osh		
Lalafo	https://lalafo.kg/		
M.Services in Mbank application	https://mbank.kg/en		
Yandex Services	https://uslugi.yandex.ru/		

Students' Organisations and Communities

Name, University/Organization	Activity	Location	Contact details
Student Council of I.K. Akhunbaev KSMA	The Student Council is designed to make student life brighter and more diverse, to unite students on the basis of common interests.	I.K. Akhunbaev Kyrgyz State Medical Academy, Akhunbaev str., 92	Студенческий Сенат КГМА (@stud.ksma) • Instagram photos and videos
UNIHOOD, I.K. Akhunbaev KSMA	Orientation Program and Student Mentoring Program	I.K. Akhunbaev Kyrgyz State Medical Academy, Akhunbaev str., 92	studclubunihood@gmail.com https://www.instagram.com/uni_hood?igshid=1qj3pu9rgd21h
Student Council of International High School of Medicine	Platform to students for being a part of academic programs, to build up a bridge between administration and students.	Central Campus, Intergel'po Street, 1F	+996 744 30872 ismstudentscouncil@gmail.com
International Student Network Tunduk, International High School of Medicine	Working for the interest of students who seek to acquire the overall advancement of their personalities.	Central Campus, 1F Intergel'po street, Bishkek	+996 779 75 88 94 tunduk@ism.edu.kg
Student Council of Osh State University	Associations of leaders and students	Main Campus of OshSU, Lenin Street, 331, Osh	0706 59 34 38 0700 04 53 53
Asian Medical Students Association - KG	Create and develop opportunities for medical students in Kyrgyzstan through participation in local health projects, professional exchanges, research with Kyrgyz faculty and scientists	Intergel'po street, 1F, Bishkek,	+919075086888 +996 557 003 657 amsakyrghyzstan@gmail.com

Institute for Youth Development	Leading youth organization on youth work and promotion of youth policy development in Kyrgyz Republic	Manas Ave. 41A, Business Center "Admiral", 8 Floor, Bishkek	+996 220 69 99 09 (WA) +996 505 69 99 09
AIIESEC Kyrgyzstan	AIIESEC is a youth organization that brings together young leaders who are passionate about changing themselves through global learning, leadership development, cultural understanding and experiential learning.	AIIESEC в Кыргызстане КГ (@aiiesecinkg) • Instagram photos and videos	0700 445 858 office.kyrgyzstan@aiiesec.net
ENACTUS Kyrgyzstan	Development of social entrepreneurship among students	Ibraimov str. 103, 10th floor Business Center "Victory" Bishkek	+996 555 973 001 enactuskyrgyzstan@gmail.com
Red Crescent KG	Support to vulnerable groups through the humanitarian, social, psychological and voluntary aid	Erkindik Boulevard, 10, Bishkek	https://www.redcrescent.kg/en/ info@redcrescent.kg

Checklist

You have read this Post-arrival Orientation thoroughly and are now ready for your upcoming study trip to Kyrgyzstan. For your convenience, you may use the following checklist to better prepare for your departure and to carry out the necessary procedures upon arrival.

Before departure

- obtain your study visa
- prepare all documents related to admission in the university (copies of admission letter, visa support letter)

- check the weather conditions of the country of arrival and prepare relevant clothes
- warn the person who will meet you upon your arrival about the date and time of arrival

Upon arrival

- check-in to the university hostel
- visit your university Visa Department in order to get a registration
- obtain Mandatory Medical Insurance Police (see the section [Health Insurance](#))
- change money to local currency as you may need to cover your primary needs
- purchase a local SIM-card for your connection
- learn on the map the location of your university and hostel, routes towards and back
- install on your phone all the necessary applications that you will need in your daily life (taxis, maps, public transport, translators and etc.)
- learn the location of the nearest supermarkets, pharmacies, clinics, hospitals and cafes
- save the emergency contact numbers (fire, police, emergency) on your phone
- learn the location of the Embassy of your country and save their contact details

At university

- familiarise yourself with Dean Office officers
- check your academic schedule, including the location and time
- get all necessary books at library and purchase academic supplies
- get your Student's Record Book (zачетка) at Dean Office