

Some tips for traveling to the United States

- Never carry a package or luggage for someone else unless you have been able to verify the contents completely.
- If you are coming from Canada or Mexico, never cross the border with a hitchhiker or as a hitchhiker. Though you may not be carrying anything illegal, your companions might be and you could be implicated.
- Be careful about who and what you carry in your vehicle. As the driver, you could be held responsible for any illegal actions of your passengers, even if they committed such actions without your knowledge.
- United States regulations explain what you may bring into the United States. These regulations cover gifts, alcohol, tobacco and vehicles. Also included are various prohibited and restricted items such as lottery tickets, liquor-filled candy, seditious and treasonable materials, obscene or pornographic material, products made by convicts or forced labor, and products, such as ivory, made from endangered species. Switchblade knives are prohibited, except those owned by persons with one arm.
- A non-resident may bring in new merchandise worth up to US\$ 200 free of duty for personal or household use. You may of course bring what you need to live here during your studies. On visits of 72 hours or more, you may carry an additional US\$ 100 worth of merchandise free of duty as gifts for other people. However, there are restrictions. Further information can be obtained by phoning one of the U.S. Customs offices. You may also wish to consult the U.S. Customs Web site (<http://www.customs.ustreas.gov/index.htm>). The following electronic brochure provides detailed information regarding your arrival to the United States.

How to Adjust to a New Academic Culture

<http://www.csbsju.edu/internationalstudents/predeparture/adjusttoculture.htm#etiquette>

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/llsu/pdf/otherpdfs/other008.pdf>

The Weather

Adrian, Michigan, has four seasons: winter, spring, summer and fall. The winter months are the latter part of November, December, January, February and the first half of March. Winters in Michigan are absolutely unpredictable. The last two winters (2003-2004 and 2004-2005) were long, cold and snowy. Usually (but not always) you can expect the winter to begin with a snowfall in late November. The average low and high temperatures during the winter are about 25 degrees Fahrenheit to 35 degrees Fahrenheit (between a little below zero Centigrade and a little above zero Centigrade). This varies greatly, however.

Michigan Weather Rule One: The weather is seldom constant in Michigan. It may rain or snow one day, then be sunny the next: or even sunny later on in the day. It may be very windy in the morning, then calm in the afternoon. The temperature also varies. The high temperature may be 90 degrees on one

summer day, then 55 degrees the next. There is an old saying about Michigan weather: "If you don't like the weather, wait a few minutes." It's true.

Michigan Weather Rule Two: Michigan weather tends to follow three to five day "cycles." For example, in the winter there will be three to five very cold days, followed by three to five milder days. Same for the summer. Three to five very hot days will be followed by a cooling period. Generally!

America Month by Month

November: November begins with cool temperatures. November skies are often overcast. The trees are bare, the flowers gone, and occasionally it is rainy. Frost begins to appear on the ground in the mornings. It may snow at any time in November, but especially toward the end of the month. November snows rarely "stick" on the ground. November snows usually melt quickly. Thanksgiving falls on the fourth Thursday of the month and it is a double holiday. Both the Thursday and the Friday are national holidays. The day after Thanksgiving (Friday) is traditionally the first shopping day of the Christmas season and the malls are crammed. It is the best retail day of the year.

December: December is generally a cold month. December is often snowy but not always. Some Michigan winters are almost snowless. December 24 is Christmas Eve and December 25 is Christmas Day, an important Christian holiday. December 31 is New Year's Eve and January first is New Year's Day. The winter solstice occurs on December 20th, 21st, or 22nd. This is the shortest day of the year with the sun rising at 7:18 a.m. and setting at 4:38 p.m. There is little twilight (the period of light after the sun sets).

January: January is the coldest month of the year. Below zero Fahrenheit temperatures are common during "cold snaps" (two to five day periods of very cold temperatures) and the temperature may drop to ten below zero F. January is also (generally) a snowy month. Most Januaries have a "thaw" (a period of a few days when it warms up and the snow melts). Martin Luther King Jr.'s (an important American civil rights leader) birthday (January 15) is celebrated on the closest Monday. Most businesses are open with the exception of government offices and services. Many schools take the day off but usually not universities.

February: February is a strange month. It may be just as cold as January, but generally it is warmer. As in every other month, the weather changes frequently in February. February generally brings a lot of snow: and mud. Valentine's Day (February 14), a non-secular day of friendship and giving. President's Day is the third Monday of February. All government offices (including the Post Office) are closed. February is African American Heritage month.

March: The first half of March is often a winter month, with snow and cold temperatures (sigh, but not always!) We have an expression about March: "In like a lion, out like a lamb," or vice versa ("In like a lamb, out like a lion"). This means that if the weather is terrible at the beginning of the month (strong winds, snows, driving rain, etc.), it will probably be calm and warmer at the end of the month. March is often gusty and rainy. It is also muddy, like February. Normally, at the end of March the temperature is rising. The spring's first flower, the small, colorful crocus, may even push its way up through the snow.

Farmers and gardeners plant peas on St. Patrick's Day, an Irish origin holiday of wearing green (March 17). The spring equinox (equal length of day, equal length of night) occurs on March 20th, 21st, or 22nd. The sun rises at 6:04 in the morning and sets at 6:12 in the evening. Twilight (the period of light after the sun sets) grows longer. March is often windy and great for kite flying. In a state of highly and quickly changeable weather, Spring in Ann Arbor the most highly and quickly changeable season. It may begin in March or April, and it may snow in May.

April: "April showers bring May flowers" is a common saying, and generally this is true. April tends to be a rainy month with cool days interspersed with warmer days. The temperature in April reaches the 50's and 60's, and occasionally, the 70s. The lows tend to be in the 40s, but nighttime temperatures below freezing (32° F) sometimes occur. The buds on the trees begin to swell and more flowers appear, especially daffodils. Tulips appear late in the month. Beware of April 1st ("April Fool's Day") when people will pull tricks on you. It is too early to plant most flowers and plants, as there are frequent frosts in April.

May: Now spring is in full swing. The temperature increases during May and all of the trees regain their leaves. Flowers appear everywhere. May is a beautiful month. The high temperatures range from the 50's early in the month to the 70's late in the month. The nights are cool with lows in the 40's and 50's. Memorial Day is the last weekend in May and it is a three day holiday (Saturday, Sunday, and Monday). Careful: Snow can still appear in early May! May is perfect for planting. Most farmers sow their corn and soybeans in mid to late May. Mother's Day is the second Sunday in May. May brings thunderstorms as well. Be very careful when there are thunderstorms. Lightening kills people in Michigan every year, mostly on golf courses and lakes. If you see lightening, go inside and stay there until the storm passes. And stay away from the telephone, as lightening sometimes discharges through home phone lines. If you are out in the open, DO NOT STAND UNDER TREES, as a lightning bolt hitting a tree may kill everybody standing underneath it! If you are swimming or in a boat and you see a storm coming, GET TO SHORE AND OUT OF THE WATER!

Tornadoes: Tornado season begins in May, but normally, tornados are more frequent from June through August. A tornado is a violent wind storm that generally occurs in the late afternoon or evening. Typically, the day starts out hot and humid. Toward the afternoon the winds stop blowing and the trees hang (droop) from the trees. The sky begins to look funny (strange) and may even turn pink or greenish. Then, suddenly, the winds pick up and become very strong and gusty. Rain begins to fall and the winds increase in strength. Trees bend over and look as if they are being "whipped" by the wind. These are preliminary warnings. Michigan does not have many tornados, but occasionally one comes our way. A few years back, a tornado came down Main Street in Kalamazoo! (No one was hurt, thank goodness!). In Adrian, a siren will sound announcing "W-1", or "Tornado Watch." This means that the conditions are right for a tornado, though none have been sighted. A second siren would announce a "W-2", or "Tornado Warning". "Tornado Warning" means that someone has seen and reported a "funnel cloud" near Adrian. Tornados drop out of the sky and look like funnels when they start. If you hear the "Tornado Watch" or "Warning", or see or hear it on TV or the radio, stay inside. Don't go out. If you are in a house, go to the basement and stand in the southwest corner of the basement. Tornados typically travel in a southwest to northeast direction. If one hits your house, it may push your house or roof in the

direction of its travel. If you are in the southwest corner of the basement, you will be safest. If you are in a house or an apartment, stay away from the windows. The strong winds of a tornado can smash windows and send bits of glass flying. If you are out in your car or out on foot, remember that tornados travel more or less in a straight line. It is always best to travel at a right angle from the coming tornado. Never flee in the same direction in front of it and try to beat it. If you are on the highway, drive under an overpass (bridge) and wait there. Tornados typically “skip over” overpasses. You should be safe there. If you are caught out in an open field on foot, look for a ditch or low spot to hide in.

June: June is typically a beautiful month in Michigan. June is warm and even hot, with cool evenings and occasional rains. It is a perfect month for picnics and barbecues. The trees are now deep green and there are flowers everywhere. Lawns are green and Michigan becomes a land of summer enchantment. June 20th or 21st (the summer solstice) is the longest day of the year. The sun rises at 4:31 in the morning and sets at 7:33 in the evening, although daylight lasts until after 10 p.m. This period of light after the sun sets is called “twilight” or “dusk”. June bugs come out in June, often in great numbers. June bugs are brown beetles that suddenly appear on the ground everywhere, and just as soon disappear. In the mornings there will be “dew” on the grass, the same moisture that freezes and is called “frost” in the fall and winter. Humidity is often high. June doesn't have many holidays. Father's Day is the third Sunday in June.

July: July is the depth of summer in Michigan. This is one of the state’s hottest months with temperatures sometimes soaring into the 90’s and at times, crossing the line to 100° F. Hot and humid spells last for three to four days. A thunderstorm often (but not always) signals a “break” in the temperature. Cooler temperatures often follow thunderstorms. Thunderstorms normally occur in the afternoon in Michigan. July 4th is Independence Day. The holiday is often stretched into a three day weekend. Many towns celebrate Independence Day with parades and fireworks. The best fireworks in Michigan are held on the Detroit River. Check with your teacher for the location of fireworks in Michigan. Manchester, Michigan, about 45 minutes from Ann Arbor, has a nice 4th of July fireworks celebration. July is typically not so rainy. The spring rains diminish and lawns begin to turn light green, then yellow, then brown. The sprinklers come on as gardeners try to keep their lawns green and their flower beds moist.

August: August is perhaps the hottest month of the Michigan year, and one of the driest. Lawns turn yellow and brown, but who cares. August, like June and July, is great for picnics at the lake, Detroit Tiger baseball games, and barbecues. Back to school! August is the last month of summer's lazy, crazy days!

September: September begins as a summer month. It is hot and humid, and the trees and plants are still bright green. September signals a beginning for many Americans. It is the beginning of the school year (after the brief August introduction), the beginning of the college and university years, the beginning of high school and college football, the beginning of a new routine for mothers (packing kids off to school), and the beginning of a new year in many ways. September is charged with energy in Michigan. September 20th, 21st, or 22nd is the autumn equinox, with equal days and nights. The sun rises at 5:47 a.m. and sets at 5:58 p.m. During the second half of September, fall arrives. The Director of Access International says that there is a thunderstorm and violent weather in mid or late September that

signals the “fall break”. When that storm passes, the temperatures drop and fall is here. “Labor Day” is the first Monday in September, and it signals a three day weekend. Labor Day is traditionally regarded as the last day of summer. Labor Day hosts the last barbecues of summer. Many Michigan farmers harvest their corn and soybeans in late August and September.

October: October is the premier month of fall. The temperature is deliciously crisp and cool, and there is energy everywhere. October is a great month for hayrides and visits to the apple orchards and apple cider mills. Go see a football game! The great October holiday is Halloween, on October 31st. It isn't a national work holiday (no time off work or school), but it is possibly the best American fun day. Children and their parents carve “jack-o-lanterns” (pumpkins) and set them on the porches with candles inside. Then the children dress up in costumes (witches, Spider Man, Sponge Bob, Cinderella, etc.) and go from door to door asking for candy. “Trick or treat!” they cry out. They return home with bags full of candy and provide job security for America's dentists.