



THE FLETCHER SCHOOL

TUFTS UNIVERSITY

We asked current Fletcher students who are non-U.S. citizens for tips and information to share with our incoming students. Please find the information, in the students' own words, provided below.

WHAT TO BRING

Suggestions on what to bring

- International Driver License
- Razors, warm innerwear, gloves, scarves and caps for those who are not used to the extreme cold and snow.
- It is worth bringing things that you really love and use regularly - your favorite tea, coffee, ramen, spices, snacks, oils. You can get most things here (either in specialty stores or online), but specific things are hard to track down.
- Do not come here without a laptop, or buy one asap. You can borrow one from Ginn Library, but it's a pain, since you have to constantly check it in and out (I think every 24 hours). You will not survive graduate studies with pen and paper alone. There is nothing else you will urgently need and should buy prior to arriving.
- Smartphones are useful (if compatible) due to calling an UBER (form of TAXI) or checking on Social List messages (private e-mail list for Fletcher students). Work out clothes are also good to have in order to kill time if you have settled in and have nothing else to do. I am particularly glad that I brought my credit card from home, as it greatly simplified the process of opening a new account in the bank - that way all my information could be verified, and the opening of the account was much quicker process than it would have been otherwise.
- I always bring towels and toiletries. Sometimes it's hard to get to shopping the day you arrive, or even the few days after, so just come prepared with that stuff.
- Musical instruments that you play from home.
- You could consider bringing ethnic clothing. There will be enough occasions for you to wear it, besides, someone may need to borrow a sari or a kurta for an event, and you would be the lifesaver! Savory snacks are a little hard to come by, so you may consider stocking up on those if you like them . I also got notebooks and stationery from home, and was glad I did because that was many times more cost efficient.

Suggestions on what to bring cont'd

- Basic medicines. Put your important media files - photos and music on the cloud if possible. Many laptops crash after reaching here (its strange!!) but that will save your files.
- Bring some mementos from home. Also, make sure you have at least one month of basic supplies (toothpaste, soap) if at all possible. It's really nice to move in and not have to worry about this for a few weeks.
- Some items in Asia like toothpaste, razors and toothbrushes are relatively cheaper.
- You might want to think about getting some nice noise-cancelling headphones (great for flying and studying in the library).
- Almost everything will be more expensive in Boston. Pack your two allowed suitcases to the fullest. Even consider buying your school supplies from home as they're quite expensive here.
- Traditional clothes, wax and strips (ladies--bring these from home!).
- For black women in particular, not buy per se, but a long lasting protective hair style (like braids or weaves depending on preference) to last the first few months before finding someone to get it done, especially stepping into the winter
- If you're male - safety razors. (Razor blades are ridiculously expensive in the US.) Formal clothing (also, a coat brush. No such concept in the US.)
- Presents from your home country to give out in various occasions is always a good idea. If there's any sort of special tea/ coffee/ candy only (or mostly) available in your home country, stock up!
- Tea, traditional wear, suit, pressure cooker.
- Medical prescription from outside the US are not accepted here. You can get a new prescription at the Tufts health services easily, but if you don't want to do that, bring everything you need from home.

Suggestions on what to bring cont'd

- Stationary items are not that good in US compared to the ones in Japan. Since they are crucial items for your studies, it is better to bring from Japan.
- International adaptors if you have one already. If not, you might need to buy one as soon as you get here as US adaptors are generally not compatible for international chargers.

HOUSING

Useful Information on Housing

- Join the Tufts student housing group on Facebook and use the Social List (Fletcher email list serve)
- The market moves INCREDIBLY fast. Everyone wants to move in Sept 1. Start looking 90 days before that date to make sure you get something decent.
- Studio apartments are hard to come by and usually above the budget. Expect to live with a roommate(s).
- Real estate agents may charge you (and not the owner of the apartment) one month's rent for finding you an apartment. This is called a broker's fee.
- Pay attention to how convenient the location is in terms of transportation and daily commute. The place I found for my first year is really close to bus stops but not T stops. It can get pretty tricky at night because most buses come significantly less frequent during night time. You could find yourself stuck around campus just to wait for your bus to come.
- Make sure you have a warm blanket as many of the houses are not well insulated and do get cold in the winter, especially if you don't want to spend hundreds of dollars on utilities.
- They ask for credit score or something, which is ridiculous given that we are international students and cannot provide this (it's a US thing about having a reliable history). Be careful of the type of payment - month by month payment, full year lease - as well as if utilities are included in the rent, as they are substantial during the winter. Also, the nice option of subletting your room if you won't be here for the entire year (renting it to someone else so that they pay the rent) is not really an option for 1-year MA students. You cannot sublet it easily, you will likely be home when you do, and just about everybody from Fletcher goes away in the summer for internships or work, so they are not an option. I would advise against that, as the owners just want you to sign the 1-year lease (typically from Sep 01 to Aug 31) and then don't care how you'll find the subletter - it's your problem after all. Try to either sign for the exact time period you'll be here, or opt for month-by-month option.

Useful Information on Housing cont'd

- The distance of the neighborhood from the Fletcher campus. I live in a really nice house, but I waste a lot of time waiting for the bus every day.
- There are still houses that use oil heating. These are older, and so may have lower rents, but the price of heating oil (and its unreliability when temperatures fluctuate) actually make it a really bad proposition - so check that your house has gas (or electric, but ideally gas) heating. Options for internet service providers are restricted based on the area in which one lives; the options can be researched by checking on the ISP websites if they provide in a particular zip code. Bicycle parking (porch / street) might be an issue - can check with landlords / potential (non-Fletcher) neighbors.
- Have some orientation about what a typical lease includes, and what are the tenants responsibilities. Since we were looking for housing from afar and were not at all familiar with the U.S. housing system (much less with the Boston area), we were always a bit afraid it was all a scam.
- Look for houses close to School, so you can attend a lot of events - that's the real value add you'll get from Fletcher. Cheapest may not be the best solution.
- Living alone is a luxury that you probably wouldn't be able to afford.
- Proximity to public transport is very important if the student does not own a car.
- Before signing on any rental contract, remember to check whether heating, electricity and water are included in the rental. These can add up quite significantly if they are not.
- You will need to make a choice: live in Medford or Somerville, which are close to school in, but 15-25 min. away from the T (public transportation) and cafes and supermarkets (this is cheaper). **Or** live closer to Davis or in Cambridge which gives you time away from the school and brings you closer to Boston, supermarkets and the T. This is a personal choice and there is no 'right' answer.

Useful Information on Housing cont'd

- I didn't think Somerville housing was going to be as expensive as it is. My assumption was that since it's not in Boston, it should be cheaper. I was proven wrong. Living in Somerville/ Medford is probably just as expensive as some areas downtown.
- Its expensive, but there are a lot of options.
- There is a wide range in the quality of apartments and landlords. Some houses are in much better shape than others and some landlords are much more responsive and helpful than others. Because rent prices are not always a proxy for the quality of the apartment (there can be nice inexpensive apartments and less nice expensive apartments), it definitely helps to visit a few apartments to see the range of options and meet the landlord.
- In most places, you have to pay the first and last month's rent up front + a security deposit equivalent to one month's rent + a broker's fee (if you are using a broker), which is often another month's rent. If you are also buying furniture (new or used), this adds up to quite a lot of money that you need to pay before even moving in.
- Dealing with landlords is particularly hard and you have to be careful not to be ripped off and pulled over the table. Contracts have no cancellation period, you have to stick to them until the end. So make sure you only sign contracts you feel fully comfortable with.
- Do not pay more for a room in Somerville/Medford than \$900!
- It's normal to live in a house and not a flat, most leases run for 12 months, and expect to pay 800 USD for a room.
- The heating source is SO important because it can make or break your utilities bill, especially in the winter. Be very sure of what heating sources the apartment you're interested in uses and clarify all utilities-related questions with your landlord before hand. Broker fees can also be very expensive, so try to source housing from second-year or departing Fletcher students.

Advice on Seeking Roommates

- Believe in your instinct when deciding whether a person is good or bad. That will avoid future problems.
- Check out your class' Facebook group. Over the next months until about mid-September lots of people are going to offer and look for housing/roommates.
- Start early. Be very clear on what are non-negotiable living standards for you. Be open to living with folks from other countries. The intercultural exchange will be the best experience you have here.
- It's very important to set boundaries with your roommates and agree on things at the beginning. Culture has an impact in our lifestyle, so be very mindful of that. A lot of things that are unacceptable at home, are perfectly fine here, so it's very important to discuss things like: cleanliness, house guests, noise levels at different times of the day, maintaining common areas etc. I think I took these things for granted for my first few years of living abroad on my own.
- Have a skype interview with them and see if they match you, just go for it.
- Just be flexible and willing to sacrifice on things. People are really nice but you have to meet them halfway.
- I met my roommates in the Fletcher Alumni gathering for admitted students. We decided we wanted to look for something together after listening to advice from Fletcher alumni that suggested it. It was very helpful because among all of us, we found more options and could decide which one we liked better.
- Make sure your interests and personality matches with those you are looking to live with. It matters a lot as having to live with someone for a whole year could be demanding.
- Make sure that you are 100% on the same page with future roommates about standards for cleanliness (i.e., vacuuming, doing dishes, cleaning bathrooms, etc.).
- Ask about guest policy... Some students might have a significant other who visits very often, and it's important to know how often/long this person might be visiting. Maybe any food restriction? You may not be able to share pots and pans with housemates who have strong allergies etc.
- Pick roommates who are not from your own country. Be accommodative and respectful.

Useful Housing Resources

- There will be google spreadsheets going around on Facebook groups which will be a great resource to have. Also, reach out to the second years if you are looking for housing - we can certainly put you in touch with second years also looking for roommates. Lastly, do apply to Blakeley Hall - living in a dorm at least for a year is an essential part of Fletcher experience in my opinion.
- Various Facebook groups - both Fletcher and Harvard Grad, the Tufts Housing portal can be pretty helpful. Craigslist is another handy website. Asking Fletcher alum and current students is also extremely helpful
- Zillow.com, Trulia.com, jumpoffcampus , fellow students (use Fletcher Facebook page), Tutfts Off-Campus Housing Resource Center
- You can find a lot of housing information below. Boston Internet Community (BIC)
http://www.asagao.com/cgi-local/bic/sublet/sublet_roommate.cgi
- I found housing on Craigslist and it turned out great. I found it difficult to coordinate with other incoming Fletcher students without actually being in Boston, though I know other students figured it out. I did a bunch of skype interviews and people gave me skype tours of their apartments, and it worked out fine (I stayed in the apartment for two years). I would advice students concerned about finances (and who didn't get a spot/don't want to live in Blakeley) to look beyond the immediate area around Fletcher, as there are definitely affordable rooms available if you are willing to bike to school.
- Word of the mouth - try to ask around for information.
- Local people's information, especially those who have lived in this area for more than 10 years.
- Realtor. You can contact from abroad and basically do everything remotely. Do a web search, there's a bunch of good realtors around.
- Airbnb (\$70 a night) and Blakeley guest room (\$40 a night) for the first few days and then Craigslist and the Facebook admitted students group for long-term accommodation

ELECTRONICS

Suggestions regarding Electronic devices

- Bring a multi-plug.
- There is a need for travel chargers and also you need to have a cell phone (device) that can operate here.
- Plugs here are different, you're likely to need some sort of adapter. Voltage is at 110V (compared to 220-240V), so expect devices to charge a bit more slowly. Other than that, there are no compatibility issues.
- Make sure to bring at least two adapter plugs. It is very difficult to juggle things around your laptop if you have just one. If you use an iPhone or Motorola or Samsung's fancier models, those will work just fine here too. However, if you have a local brand (I had a Micromax) or a less fancy international brand, you will have to purchase a new handset (in which case you may find it a better option to get a cheaper model here than an expensive model back home).
- I would suggest bringing a couple of adapters; what I found particularly useful was a Belkin surge suppressor, which has universal sockets - so if you use one adapter to plug it in, you get 3 (or 4) sockets you can use with pretty much any device from around the world.
- Try and bring an iPhone, works best. All others will have problems 'adjusting'. If you're buying anything new, don't. Come here and buy it. Its cheaper, and you'll get a model that has repair and service in America.
- Be prepared to use a converter upon arrival, unless you are planning to buy American made electronic devices. You can also bring one from home (it's actually cheaper to buy it there).

Suggestions regarding Electronic devices

- Blow dryers won't work properly because of voltage difference. However, flat irons do work fine. For chargers, instead of an adaptor I would recommend you buy a US USB adaptive where you can plug any charger in.
- Ideally, you have your converter already with you. But Amazon or (surprisingly) RadioShack can help you out. I haven't faced troubles on that.
- For students coming from India - get a power adapter. It should be available at the duty free shops at the airport.
- One might have to adjust the software from DIN A4 sheet size to US Letter size when using Word on their computer and a US printer.
- Most electronic devices work worldwide now so it has become quite easy. You simply need the adapter which changes from the round pin to the square one. Besides that, there is very little hassle with electronics.
- All appliances such as electric kettles, irons, hairdryers, etc. should be bought in the United States as the voltage can be different from the voltage of Malaysian appliances. In terms of charging electronics, I definitely recommend bringing lots of universal adapters or, if you have a Mac laptop, buy a new charging cable when you get to the US (with an American plug head).

**BOSTON
CLIMATE &
TRANSPORTATION**

Advice regarding Boston climate

- It's not necessary for you to bring all your winter gear in August. Consider having your parents/friends send you your winter coat, for example, or buy things here in Boston. It's expensive, but so much better suited for the weather.
- Invest in a warm coat, good gloves and a hat, as they will be life-savers. Make sure the coat is waterproof and has a hood.
- You can buy thermal underwear via Amazon.
- Definitely buy a heavy coat in Boston. There are good sales around Thanksgiving, if the weather is good enough to wait that long. Also buy a lighter coat, because the weather can fluctuate quite a bit - can get these from thrift stores, or off Amazon. Also buy thermal innerwear + good snow boots!
- I recommend Uniclo for super warm yet super thin thermal wear.
- Buy it during the summer/early fall. You never know when the awful winter is going to hit, Woolen socks and long underwear.
- Yes, don't bog yourselves down in buying gloves and scarfs. They are easily available in Boston and on the cheap as well. Winters will get really cold so brace yourselves! It gets in negative Celsius and can really be challenging at times. So in case you don't find housing on campus, make sure you place is as nearby Fletcher as possible especially if you plan to walk/bike to school.
- The outlets are great -- Columbia at Wrentham Premium Outlet has everything that I needed.
- If you are on a tight budget just go to the Goodwill and buy your winter clothes there. There is a really nice goodwill on the green line (I can't remember the name of the area). Also you should invest in one very good quality coat over multiple not so good ones.

Advice regarding Boston climate cont'd

- I happened to bring an umbrella, almost by accident - but it does rain, so make sure you have rainwear.
- Invest in one good winter coat and one pair of winter/snow boots. They will be your best friend. Also, utilize winter accessory (earmuffs, scarfs, beanies, gloves) to keep yourself warm when outside.
- It is acceptable and necessary to wear serious hiking shoes or rain boots to school some days.
- Dress smart. Layering up piece by piece instead of throwing on a heavy sweater. Prepare a pair of sunglasses even in the winter. Sun shining down on the white snow can get pretty glary.
- People are very concerned about biking in the winter but I didn't find it to be a problem. On most days the streets were cleared very quickly (even if the bike paths weren't). Whenever it got really bad school was typically canceled. If you have a sturdy bike you should be fine for most of the winter months.
- It's not that bad; people make it sound worse. There's heating everywhere, and all you need is good gear.
- It doesn't get warm till the middle of April, and stays warm only till the middle of September, and even then there are many cold days in between. So you needn't get many summer clothes.
- Don't get too many sweaters / jerseys as you'll have to take them off the moment you enter most buildings. It easier to use a few really good coats or jackets, which you can take off easily when you are indoors.
- Boston can have all climates and it is good to bring a bit of everything.
- Get PROPER snow boots and invest in puffy jackets. Otherwise its all common sense - weatherproof your shoes!
- DO NOT BE WARY OF SPENDING MONEY ON GOOD WINTER GEAR IF YOU HAVE THE MONEY TO DO SO. Canada Goose may be unnecessary, but a good North Face coat is definitely highly recommended. You will be walking a lot to and from campus - good coats are a MUST. They need to be waterproof and resilient to the climate in Boston, which includes heavy rain, heavy snow, sleet, ice and everything in between. Comfort over style always, if you're looking for down coats. I recommend having 1 heavy down coat for the winter and 1 other stylish, lighter option for the fall and transition into spring.

Advice regarding transportation in Boston

- The T (local metro) is very convenient. Price is \$2.25 with Charlie Card (get one issued to you in a central station or other place), it's around \$0.50 more if you opt to pay without a Charlie Card. Bus is like most places - awful choice, use only if necessary. Tufts University has a round the clock shuttle that takes you from Davis Sq. (metro Station, red line) right outside Fletcher. Also has other stops along the way. Good option, especially if you are carrying luggage. There is an application for smartphones which gives you GPS location of the bus - although not always working I've been told. Shuttle has Wifi, code is written above driver's head inside the bus.
- The bus network in and around Medford is awful. There is one bus about every forty minutes or so. It will help a lot to live closer to campus. Get a Charlie Card soon as you get here (it's distributed free at select subway stations) and recharge it as and when needed.
- Tufts campus is reasonably close to Davis, and fairly well connected by bus as well. Bus schedules, however, are unreliable - especially in winter. I highly recommend buying a bicycle (lots available second-hand) - at least in Cambridge, you can get almost anywhere reasonably easily by bike.
- 1. The subway (called the T) runs frequently enough to be reliable (most of the time) but beware, it is filthy. 2. There aren't many bus routes in the city so many neighborhoods can be hard to live in if you don't have a car. Make sure you check the public transport options when finding a house. 3. Many buses do not run frequently enough to be reliable. You will need an app (or Google map) to check when the bus comes. Service intervals vary enormously from bus to bus. 4. Bus stops are nothing but a pole. No information on bus routes, no information on when the next one comes. No shelter, either. You have to look information up yourself on your phone. 5. If you didn't know, zipcar is a good service worth trying. After all, you can't live in America (even though it's Boston) without a car. 6. On many streets, bikes run on the road with cars, not on the sidewalk. 7. Taxis are very expensive. As soon as you get a credit card, use Uber / Lyft. 8. You can get monthly subway/bus passes through school at a discounted price.

Advice regarding transportation in Boston cont'd

- Instead of taking a taxi to and from the airport, I recommend taking the T. The Red Line and Silver Line are very reliable and will save you a lot of money.
- The T is good, reliable, and runs frequently. However, the T is a 20-minute walk from campus, but there is the Tufts shuttle, the “Joey,” that runs between campus and the T-station every half an hour.
- Very convenient. Also, comfort with walking is extremely important. Public transportation isn't too expensive but can still take a toll financially if you are using it too often. Therefore, for short distances (a mile or less), you should be prepared to walk, weather permitting.
- Its takes a long time to get somewhere but its really effective. I tend not to use uber or lyft its expensive unless shared.
- Use the silver line from the airport (which is for free).
- Uber pool and Lyft Line are supercheap.
- Get the Hubway bike share. It costs a 100 dollars annually but if you don't mind the physical exertion, it can save you a lot of money on transport.
- Public transportation in Boston is very easy to navigate as the system is straightforward and not as sprawled out as other transit systems such as the New York subway. Definitely get a reloadable Charlie Card rather than spending money on Charlie Tickets every time you use the transit system.
- If you end up having to use public transportation frequently, get the monthly T pass (costs about \$80)

**GROCERIES
&
COOKING**

Advice on Grocery Shopping

- Try to get a place to live nearby a big grocery store.
- Prefer Market Basket, then Stop and Shop, then Star Market (cheaper to more expensive). Avoid Whole Foods if you can (or visit rarely, it's very expensive) although their products are wonderful!
- Go to Stop and Shop, it's got the best prices and adequate quality and variety. Don't expect the same quality as Greece. Organics cost a fortune. Whole foods are better advertised as good food - but don't expect miracles.
- There are two supermarkets in the Tufts area: Wholefoods, an organic supermarket with a nice buffet/pizza/burrito area, and Stop & Shop, a larger, conventional supermarket. The former is certainly more expensive than the latter, but as a grad student you'll learn quickly to find opportunities for free food, such as lunch events or social hour at Fletcher. Making use of those can significantly reduce the amount of money to have to invest in nutrition.
- Trader Joe's is a great option if you want good quality and organic products at affordable prices. Market Basket is great if you need to get basic items or large quantities of anything.
- Use InstaKart or Amazon Prime Now for home delivery - the delivery charge is low enough that you would likely spend that amount getting to a proper, big grocery store anyway.
- There are a number of Chinese supermarkets, a Japanese supermarket, and a Korean supermarket in the greater Boston area. It's usually pretty convenient.
- Hmart is a big Korean supermarket chain but it is expensive. Buy only the essentials (such as rice) at Hmart and the other regular stuff (eggs, milk, etc.) in other supermarkets. Do make supermarket fidelity cards to get coupons.
- Do not use the drug stores/CVS to buy food, it is more expensive and does not have any fresh food.

Advice on Grocery Shopping

- Olive oil and fresh vegetables are so expensive!
- Vegetables taste different here, and fruit is not as abundant interestingly enough.
- If you want halal food its available at Davis Square or even Market Basket, Somerville.
- Try to adjust to local foods rather than search high and low for home food ingredients. Vegetables are mostly available chopped and packed, or frozen, or canned. Fresh, whole vegetables are more difficult to come by, and will also be more expensive.
- Online shopping is an option, but probably not a good way to get produce. There are also a number of farmers' markets around Somerville, Cambridge, and Boston.
- If you are on budget the bus ride to Market Basket can be worth it - Goya products in larger super markets are the closest to African food you will find (corn meal=mealie meal, but corn flour is not mealie meal) - If you dig deep in Asian stores you can find some similar foods.
- Use online shopping if you live really far and don't want to drive. Peapod online and Amazon are good choices. For Amazon know that you can get one year of **student prime** membership which is really awesome and has free next day deliveries. If you want to go to a supermarket and you don't have a car, Zip Car is a good choice. There is also the option of walking to the supermarket and then taking a taxi home.
- More convenient to shop in groups. The **World Peace Foundation** has a program that lets you sign up for fresh produce (great for groups of 2-4). In winter, this combined with having groceries delivered can be a life-saver.
- McKinnon's in Davis Square had good meat.
- Get a crock pot or slow cooker of some sort when you come to the US. This will be the best purchase you'll make in your 2 years here. Slow cookers make cooking SO easy, especially with the busy schedules you'll undoubtedly have as graduate students. You can make a variety of meals with a slow cooker, and they are very convenient! Trust me, you'll thank me later.

Advice on Cooking

- Cooking at Blakeley will be a challenge for patience. It all depends on who you live with. Indian food is very spicy and smelly.
- They use gas here for most cooking. There is a microwave oven operating on the 1st floor in Fletcher. Nothing much other than that.
- If you don't know how to cook - take cooking lessons from your siblings/father/mother/others. Eating out daily can be really expensive but cooking daily won't be very manageable either. Be prepared to live with a combination of both.
- Get a rice cooker.
- Use weekends to cook sauces, pastes, soups, etc that can create multiple variation and store for a longer period. That way you don't need to cook as much during busy weekdays.
- Beware of smoke detector that can activate the fire alarms when cooking (just make sure to turn on the stove fan when you cook).
- Don't survive on frozen food. Eat on time, but don't spend more than 30 minutes per meal.
- If you are Muslim and keep to a halal diet, there are some halal butchers in the Haymarket area (on the orange line) where you can buy meat and other assorted grocery goods. Haymarket can be a trek to get to however, as it is located in downtown Boston. There are several grocery stores and supermarkets around the Medford/Somerville area that carry kosher meats such as Wegmans and the Trader Joe's near Assembly Row. You'll be able to find 98% of the things you need at the grocery stores in the area so don't worry too much! Just bring certain spices and ingredients from home (sweet soy sauce, kicap manis, serunding, buillon cubes, curry powders, etc.) and you'll be set for everything else.
- Cooking saves a ton of money.
- Be sensitive to the styles / tastes of your future roommates. Cooking of certain dishes can leave the apartment with strong smells which may not be to your roommates' likings.

LANGUAGE-RELATED TIPS

Advice to non-native English Speakers

- Be aware that you will never be as you are in your native language. Therefore, do not feel bad if you cannot be as effective as your English speaking friends. The technical vocabulary is tough. Would recommend taking a mix between non quantitative and quantitative classes to encourage writing. Also try taking Writing, composition classes at Fletcher or Harvard. Not having a perfect English may bring you down, your self-esteem. Try not to be overwhelmed and overcome your own insecurities by talking in class. It hurts, but helps.
- If you made it to Fletcher, your English is more than adequate. You will not have any problems. You can opt to take foreign language courses here too (there is a bunch and Olin building is really next door to Fletcher), but it's going to be a burden on your academic schedule and it's not entirely free as you may have to acquire textbooks, etc. Seek clarifications for such matters if you wish on the 2nd floor of Olin (the registry). Also, it won't show anywhere on your transcript if you do opt to take a foreign language. I don't really recommend it, it's much more beneficial auditing an additional class instead of doing what can also be done in your home country.
- Fletcher is quite friendly and helpful to non-native English speakers. Do not hesitate to ask faculty and staff for support if you need it. For practice, I would recommend listening to internet radio newscasts - BBC, VoA, and NPR all have excellent reporting. (VoA does specific programs for English learners.)
- Practice English a bit. Watch movies and read in English as much as possible.
- Don't feel self-conscious about your English. Most people (including myself) make language errors, and we are all used to it. Speak up!
- Even for those who are already fluent in English, I would suggest familiarizing yourselves with academic English and language used in specific fields prior to Fletcher. Having in-depth discussion (either in class or casual discussion among peers) in a second language is something I found more challenging when I was first here.
- Give yourself time to do the readings but don't panic. It's most important to understand the big ideas.

Advice to non-native English Speakers cont'd

- Try to interact with people who speak English on a daily basis as much as possible. That is the only way to improve .
- There is a wealth of online sources / material that can help you rehearse or improve. Also, do make use of the writing tutors at Fletcher for written assignments.
- Not to be discouraged at the beginning. If you haven't been speaking English for a while the first few weeks can be a bit tough but then things go way better!
- Just hang out with Americans as much as possible. Consider joining a club or social group outside Fletcher (also good for sanity reasons)
- Here are some useful tips I received from an alum: 1. Recognize that you're not native speaker, but that shouldn't stop you from engaging with anyone! 2. It's normal to feel bad when you miss what someone is saying or you have trouble expressing an idea concisely. However, it should not discourage your effort for engagement with friends and professors. Be patient and maintain the initial motivation. If you step back from the challenge, you will lose a lot of chances to show your "greatness" to others. 3. Language is a like a acting. Learn from your friends. Listen to how they say things in certain situations and follow them. It does not mean that you need to be someone else, but rather it means you need to pay attention to learn some expressions and gestures from your friends. 4. Don't be afraid to use whatever gesture or facial expression that can show the idea or emotion you want to express. Especially Asians, DO learn how to hug and (confidently) shake a hand without bowing. That is how it is at Fletcher. 5. Use all the resources to expose yourself in the English environment. At Fletcher, you can join different types of conferences, attend guest lectures/speakers, join student groups, and attend social hours. Be there and listen and speak. 6. In the end, you will be ok. It's a matter of time and your patience and courage. Be brave so you can meet and talk with new people.

Advice to non-native English Speakers cont'd

- In terms of classes - know basic terms, concepts, theories, references, people beforehand. In terms of day to day use - people at Fletcher are generally kind, understanding and receptive to cultural differences, including language fluency. Don't be afraid to speak with people who are different from you! Practicing is the best way to improve.
- Please make sure of improving your listening capabilities. 3 months is a good period before your arriving to practice by watching US tv shows and listening related podcasts everyday.
- Nobody here mocks you for accents or any other thing like that.

LIFE @ FLETCHER

Tips on Life at Fletcher

- Get here a week early; use those days to open a bank account, get a cellphone, figure out transit.
- It's a beautiful and convenient city. It has a lot to offer. I would suggest coming a few days or even weeks before school starts to explore the city a little. Once school starts, you might find yourself stuck in Medford/Somerville with all the busy school works.
- Explore the area beyond Medford! If you have friends with cars or can rent a car, make sure to take lots of weekend trips to New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine to explore the beautiful mountains just 2-3 hours away. Lots of great camping and beautiful beaches!
- It's not extremely easy to find a student job! If you believe you'll be working on campus, make sure you start looking early. Reach out to various offices on campus (get in touch with current students to seek their advice) and take full advantage of few student jobs that will be posted on the Facebook group. Subscribe to the Tufts job portal. You'll need to start right away to be able to find a good job within reasonable time period.
- You'll have a great time at Fletcher. There will be plenty of friends to make, courses to take, and opportunities to seize. But have some idea what it is that you want to get out of your two years here. I know, you provided the Admissions Committee with some compelling narrative and reasons for why they should invite you to join us. (But honestly, few people really know what they want to do after Fletcher when they arrive in Boston for their first semester. And that is okay. It was the same here.) Take some time to reflect upon your goals, what courses to take, what skills to acquire, and whether they will help you two years down the road.
- Take advantage of classes, events, organizations here. Meet as many people as you can. Most importantly, try to not get too overwhelmed and have a balanced lifestyle.
- Talk to a lot of people. Set your expectations right. Try to have an idea of what you want to study and how you would like your career to pan out beyond Fletcher. Reach out to faculty whose academic and research work interests you.

Tips on Life at Fletcher cont'd

- Make as many foreign friends as possible, don't stick with one group/nationality.
- School will take over a lot (i.e. all) of your time, so try to get in a little early to get some sense of the local area and of Boston.
- Engage in the Fletcher community. If you're getting sponsorship from the government, organization or company, think of this as an opportunity to step away from the position that you hold at home, and explore. It probably feels comfortable hanging out with other Japanese people, but what's the point of coming to the US and studying in such diverse place like Fletcher, if you're doing the same thing as back home?
- There are so many wonderful aspects about Fletcher, but if I pick up just one, you'll be surprised to find the friendliness and cooperativeness of the Fletcher students and faculty. If you are in trouble (writing long English essays, for example), there's always help. Also, if you get courage to participate in this community, you can be of great help for someone too.
- Enjoy your time at Fletcher, you have decades ahead of you to concentrate on the professional aspect of things. Forge true friendships, as many of us have, which stand the test of time.
- Get to know your classmates as much as possible. It will help you settle in faster, especially when dealing with culture shock.

One thing you wish you had known...

- How active people are. Was not expecting these people to always be on the move
- How to write academic papers.
- How difficult it would be to learn by yourself, particularly quantitative classes. In my home country, the approach is different, and that was the main challenge for me at the school. Depending on the professor, this way of teaching had a bigger/smaller negative impact on my learning experience.
- Do not feel stressed on whether you will be failed or not. The academic system is different. Expect friendly working group environment.
- Book office hours with faculty often - go talk with them about your plans.
- *First*, as great as your two years at Fletcher will be, be also aware that it is a considerable financial commitment. If you don't have a bulletproof financial plan for the next two years (or the second year), start early in seeking out information about scholarships and grants, not only at Fletcher, but also beyond. Talk to people, your fellow students and staff. They've had similar experiences and are mostly happy to share their wisdom. *Second*, read and write over the summer. Professors (as well as your future employers) immensely appreciate students who can write clearly, coherently, and compellingly. Practice that skill if you haven't written a paper or policy memo in a while. Also, consider publishing your work on blogs or in student-run academic journals and go through the peer-review/editing process. There will be plenty of opportunities to do that at Fletcher, but why not get a head start. *Third*, keep in touch with your friends back home, send them a holiday card or birthday wishes. It would be unfortunate to lose them and your network just because you're in Boston for two years. Eventually, you'll probably go back. To not start from scratch again might be helpful. *Fourth*, get to know your fellow Fletcher folks. Not only your fellow students will be of immense support and great friends for the years to come, but also professors and staff. Two years are not that much. (I'm writing this toward the end of my first year.) So, maybe start tossing around ideas for your capstone, approach professors strategically for them to be able to provide you with good recommendation letters after your time at Fletcher. But, above all have fun at Fletcher.

One thing you wish you had known cont'd...

- Massachusetts will only accept your passport as valid ID, and not issue state ID against a campus address.
- The campus on a hill - getting to school can be tiring. Community is very important and everything is centered around getting to know your classmates better.
- That everyone would be extremely welcoming
- The Social List (the all-student email listserv) can, and will, answer every single doubt and request.
- Fletcher is not just about studying, it's about community. Professor Mazurana said a lot of grad school is about networking. I don't agree with networking just for the sake of networking, but I think it's a great way to connect and meet people who you can maintain the relationships for life.
- Courses - how to navigate. "How to network" skills. Graduate school is expensive.
- This will be an expensive year with many weekend travels and intense weeks - so save up as much as possible before to make all the trips you want to do actually happen.
- Go to office hours with every professor. It's a great way to ask more questions about the course material, about their careers, or ask for internship/job advice.
- I wish I had known that I was going to be so busy that I hardly go to Boston! I thought I'd be there all the time. So, even though I think it is great to live near Fletcher I would say that you should know you have to make a conscious effort to leave Medford-Fletcher area, and you should!!
- how cold it was going to be!

Useful Websites or Resources to acclimate

- <http://thegreatmaldeagle.tumblr.com/>
- <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/Congratulations/Contact-a-Current-Student>
- Fletcher website, Tufts website, Boston related sites (Boston Magazine, ArtBoston, Boston.com etc.)
- Fletcher Connect
- Join the incoming student Facebook group. Get yourself on the Social List as soon as you are allowed to.
- Craigslist. Facebook groups. Reaching out to Alum or current students!
- boston.com is pretty useful when wanting to learn about local news and events.
- The Admissions Blog. Google Maps. (No, really.)
- Keep a keen eye on the Social List in the beginning of the year for books, furniture, housing tips etc.
- Join the Museum of Fine Arts newsletter
- A bunch of useful apps: yelp, lime, wanderu, uber eats, google maps. Any relevant Tufts app can also be useful initially.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Advice on what NOT to bring

- Some bigger electronics like hairdryers/ irons.
- Pots, pans and cutlery. Buy them here.
- Exercise stuff like mat and foam roller
- Books: "didn't have the time to read anything and there are so many wonderful books in Ginn and Tisch!"; "You don't need to bring books that you think them useful. If you want to read these books, you can read electronically (e.g. kindle). That is cheaper than that you pay for bringing them."
- Winter Clothes: "No need to bring too many heavy sweaters or sweatshirt. Even during the worst days in the winter, it is usually pretty warm once you get inside the building. Heavy sweaters will leave you awkwardly sweating when indoor. Layering is the key!"
- Household usual medicine - CVS and Walgreens have more varieties of usual medicine
- Bike locks - In many places, the heavy U-shape American bike locks
- If it's your first time being abroad for a long period of time, then do not over-pack. That's one tendency that most students have when moving away for school. If you never wore that dress/ shirt while you were at home, you probably won't wear it here either, so it's best to just not carry extra weight.
- Don't bring any folders or paper - as the format is different.
- Basic cooking spices (salt, pepper, chilli powder, turmeric). You can easily get them in any grocery store.

Suggestions on what to buy after arriving in Boston

- I think my most useful purchase was a bike! It had a huge impact on my mobility and lifestyle. It might be good to alert international students to Craigslist as not everyone might be familiar with it, and it's a great place to find affordable bikes.
- Snow shoes and snow-resistant coat (unless you are from a place where those are easily available!)
- Winter clothing, especially a heavy coat, should definitely be bought in Boston. I would also suggest getting cutlery / cooking utensils once here (probably off the social list).
- Get some winter clothes, and waterproof boots because winter in Boston is not survivable with sneakers. A phone plan is a good idea - I went to 3 major telecomm companies and found the best plan to be offered by Verizon. You can opt for a family plan, too, but I didn't look into that.
- Get an American bank account and preferably a credit card. It makes things so much easier dealing in one currency, than having to use an international card every time. -
- Upon arrival, priorities should be (1) getting a local mobile phone number, and (2) setting up a banking account and getting a debit/credit card as soon as possible. The mobile phone number is critical because it is required for deliveries, contact information, etc. A debit card is also very, very important because you will need it for online shopping (which is amazing here).
- Buy a fan so you can sleep at night. I bought a fan when I came here. It gets extremely hot, humid and sticky here during the summer.
- Printer - printing at school can be expensive

Suggestions on what to buy after arriving in Boston cont'd

- I think important thing to note is that basic stuff such as toiletries, bedsheets, quilts, notebooks, stationary, flip flops etc are available on cheap here if one goes to the right places. So there's no point of overloading your luggage with those. Additionally, I would consider buying a cell phone from here as well as most of the cell phones available in Pakistan don't support 4G/LTE mobile network. Buying a new phone costs same amount of money in both the countries so unless you are using an old phone that you are really attached to, I suggest buying a new cell phone from the States.
- If you need furniture, sign up for the Social List (all-student email listserv – which you can join in late August/early January). This will allow you to find out early about furniture sales by departing students.
- A SIM card you receive by the school.
- I bought a recharging wire for my laptop when I moved here. This has been very convenient and helpful!
- Don't worry about bringing too many books or study materials. They just add bulk and you can sort that all out later!
- Spices. Plenty of Indian stores here so don't waste baggage space. Don't bring too many summer clothes too.
- Research mobile plans. The most popular mobile networks are also the most expensive, unless you are on a family plan. Try to get on a no-contract plan (Virgin, Metro PCS, Mint) . Much cheaper and flexible.
- Weather essentials (raincoats, winter gears) are better bought here.

TIPS
from your
COUNTRY-MATES

Bangladesh

- Bring custom suits
- Warm clothes. Believe me when I say this, make sure to factor in clothes for the winter into your budget. The 'warm' clothes that you will buy in Bangladesh (because it is much much cheaper) will lead to nothing but pain and suffering. Do yourself a favor and do not attempt to buy jackets and such from Bangladesh because those will not stand up to the Boston winter. I ended up throwing away all my winter clothes that I bought from Bangladesh. Such a waste of precious luggage real estate.
- Basic info: In Bangladesh we use 220V but in the US its 110 or 120V. So it would be prudent to bring along an automatic converter. Usually most devices (laptops, etc)
- Buy loads of t-shirts, shirts and underwear from Bangladesh. Also go to one of the nice tailors and buy custom made suits. Custom made suits are ridiculously expensive in the USA and you will thank yourself later for taking this advice.

Brazil

- If buying electronics, bring money to buy here - do not do that if using a Brazilian credit card, the taxes will increase the price. Winter clothing - nothing you have in Brazil compares to what you should wear here. Your Brazilian winter clothes can be helpful as layers, but you'll need winter coats. Buy it here.
- Cachaça. The ones you find here are bad quality and way too expensive. A bottle of 51 costs around U\$20. If you like cachaça and/or want to prepare caipirinhas to your Fletcher friends, bring your own bottle.
- You can find almost anything you miss from home: café, coxinha, pao frances, guaraná, picanha. There is a huge Brazilian community in the area and a lot of markets and restaurants where you can find Brazilian goods.
- You probably know this, but winter clothes and boots that can get you through snow. You can survive without those boots, it will just be a bit more miserable. No, Brazilian boots will not get you through -15 celsius.
- Meat and some vegetables taste different, you will need to adapt but very little changes in our lives around here. I eat Brazilian every day, at home or restaurants. Beware if you change your diet that you need to balance it. When I moved abroad I got anemic because I didn't substitute beans for anything with iron, so I switched back to home food.

Colombia

- If they are planning on buying a laptop (or any other electronic device), wait until you get to the US, where prices are significantly lower. I bought a refurbished laptop for about 1/4 the price of laptops in Colombia.
- I normally bring Colombian coffee, and when I run out of it, I go to East Boston (the Latino neighborhood) to buy more. There are several shops from Latin American countries - you would feel like home.
- If you are on a budget, go to Market Basket, which besides being less expensive than other supermarkets, has a wide variety of Latin American products (including arequipe!).

Germany

- Compared to Germany (expect for maybe Munich) Boston is quite expensive. However, the Medford/Somerville area is mostly residential and relative to Boston proper or Cambridge significantly more affordable.
- At times it is a bit chilly here in Boston. And winter can drag on for quite a while. Relative to Germany, Boston probably also gets more snow. Nothing you can't handle though, Fletcher is very supportive, emotionally and materially, when it comes to winter.
- **Bring Food items:** German bread mix, Bergkäse, Emmentaler, Schweizer Käse (good cheese here is stupidly expensive) **Clothes:** I wish I had brought/bought a pair of LL Bean winter shoes with the bottom half being rubber to withstand the snow and salt used on the roads, traditional outfit (lederhosn & dirndl), and 2nd suit for multiple-day conferences
- Your basic Hausapotheke (aspirin, cough syrup)- you can get everything here as well but there is something to be said for using the products that are familiar and you know will help.
- Bring some good chocolate with you. If you like cooking/baking there are some things that are difficult to find here, including Gemüsebrühe (Würfel) and Vanillezucker.
- Get into friends group with non-European students as well instead of just the European students.

Greece

- Check out MIT Greek students (they have a large community and a FB page).
- Person 1: Prefer Basket market then Stop and Shop then Star Market (cheaper to more expensive). Avoid Whole Foods if you can (or visit rarely, it's very expensive) although their products are wonderful! Person 2: Go to Stop and Shop, it's got the best prices and adequate quality and variety. Don't expect the same quality as Greece, most stuff here is plastic. Organics cost a freaking fortune. Just be patient until you return home to have some real food. Whole foods are better advertised as good food - but don't expect miracles. Avoid CVS pharmacy, it's exactly that a "pharmacy". Greeks will get it.
- Avoid CVS pharmacy, it's exactly a "pharmacy". Greeks will get it.

India

- Bring formal clothing (including Indian formals). A pressure cooker (if you plan to do much cooking).
- Indian formals and accessories. Small items for gifting - I bring local handicrafts or stationery, which make for unique gifts.
- Bring gift stationery, a throw rug, spices (especially chaat masala).
- Bring multiple pairs of warm innerwear and thick woolen sweaters from home, but buy your snow coat here. Similarly, woolen socks can be brought from home, but snow shoes can be purchased here. Depending on where in India you are from, you could bring gloves, mufflers and woolen caps from home, or get them here.
- Bring warm innerwear. If you are from Northern India, or generally have a lot of warm clothes, bring them along. Layering is the survival trick, so you want to be well stocked. Do not buy coats and jackets from there! And spices (why buy for \$2 what you can get for Rs. 50?)
- You can buy a lot of Indian snacks here, so don't fill up your bags with unnecessary packets.

India cont'd

- No need to bring spices unless you are particularly attached to a given brand. There are reasonably well-stocked (and reasonably priced) Indian grocery stores in Cambridge.
- Look for Bangladeshi store (Foodland) on Mass Avenue for all Indian stuff. Don't bring masalas etc. Its all here!
- Fire alarms can go off when you cook Indian. Be aware of that.
- If you need new electronics (laptop, tablet, phone) buy them in the US. They're much cheaper - Super warm clothes and shoes. DO NOT buy these in India. They're not going to be warm enough!
- Bring (or buy) a pressure cooker or rice maker, if you're used to a rice-heavy diet. (Although it's also entirely possible to make rice in the microwave.) Similarly, if you're particularly attached to fresh roti, consider bringing or buying a roti-maker.
- Indian electronic devices' chargers do not work with US sockets, but adapters are easy to get. I would suggest picking up a good quality surge suppressor (e.g. Belkin), with sockets that can accommodate Indian / US / European chargers - that way a single adapter can get you 3-4 devices worth of charging points.
- Bring plenty of adapters. Certain items (such as epilators for women!) won't work on the lower voltage in the US. Just do your research beforehand so you can buy replacements here rather than bringing those items with you. I originally invested in a voltage converter (like \$50 on amazon) when I could have just bought a new compatible version of the same device for \$30.
- Apple devices will work fine. Bring a universal adaptor if you have different plugs. My Nokia smart phone refused to recognize the US sim; so ensure your smartphone will be compatible with a foreign sim.
- While it's tempting to clique up with the other indians, the true international experience lies in hanging out with people from other cultures too!
- Many landlords do not want to lease to Indians / foreigners, but will not say it. If you get a lot of excuses and delays, understand that they probably don't want to lease it to you. Move on or keep other options open.

Indonesia

- Do not bring too many Indonesian foods, spices, instant noodles, etc. You can find it easily here in Chinatown. There are many options to go grocery shopping in Boston area.
- Buy winter gear here. Bring more cajuput/balsam/telon oil from Indonesia. It's rather difficult to find those oils here in Boston area.
- I wish I brought more cajuput oil or telon oil to keep your body warm.
- Bolster and Indonesian instant spices. You won't find any decent bolster (Dutch wife) around the States.
- Make sure to build contacts with the Indonesian community in Boston, for example with ICONE (Indonesian Community in New England), Harvard Indonesian Students, and Tufts University' Singapore Indonesia Malaysia Students Association (SIMSA).

Israel

- Focus on winter clothes. If you're from a tropic/sub-tropic/desert - bring what winter clothes you have but know that you will have to supplement them here.
- Bring Turkish coffee. Also electrical kettle (I didn't bring it from home, but I had to order it since Americans don't really use them here for some reason). Also, scarves are always a good bet.

Japan

- Bring Japanese stationery products (such as pen, scissors and staplers) are much better than those of U.S. I recommend you to bring a set of your favorite ones from Japan. That will help your study.
- I brought minimal dishware, utensils, and little cookware, but I absolutely didn't need it. It's cheaper to buy these things at Target. If I wanted to get something specific to Japan, I can get it in Chinatown.
- Plugs can be used here even if you bought electronic devices in Japan.
- I think Japanese electronics are compatible to the US plugs, so I had no issues.

Japan cont'd

- Monthly payment of rental is so much more expensive than that of Tokyo.
- Boston is much colder and much more snow than many parts of Japan. But it is very warm (sometimes hot) inside of buildings because of development of the central heating system. As long as you stay inside of buildings, it is very comfortable. While it is so cold in winter, it is almost as hot as Japan in summer. Even in summer, it is a little dry. It would be helpful if you would consider buying skin-care cream after coming here.
- Coats and boots are cheaper (and more compatible to the weather) here – wait to purchase them here.
- If you have an extra space in your suitcase, you might want to bring some retort-pouch food (but be aware of the US customs regulations!)
- If you look for Asian foods in particular, there are some Asian supermarkets accessible from school. You can buy good-quality rice, dried soba/udon, seasonings (shoyu, miso, mirin), and so on.
- Compared to Japan - unfortunately, quality of public transportation is quite low in terms of price, comfort and punctuality. Car is essential for those who have a child.

Kosovo/Albania

- Bring Milka chocolate (chocolate here is not the best). Maybe some snacks that you can't find here: Kras chocolate, plazma.
- Climate is my nr. 1 least favorite thing about Boston, and the area around. Summers and even autumns are really hot and humid (humidity is too much for any Southern / Eastern European to handle), and winters are really really cold. I don't know what recommendations I could give except for: bring appropriate clothing. Don't underestimate the cold in the winter, but also be prepared for humidity and heat. The days when it's "just the right weather" : not too hot, not too cold are very rare.

Korea

- 1. Stationary - American stationary is expensive and of poor quality. 2. Clothes - Koreans are used to slim fits but American clothes can be loose-fitting. It wouldn't matter if you're buying sweaters here but it does matter if you're looking for a shirt. 3. Rice cooker - cookers in America are mostly cheap but bad-quality Chinese products. Even if you do find Korean ones they are much more expensive than at home.
- Sleeping socks - people don't heat houses as warm as they do in Korea. Socks are also five times the price here so bring them from home.
- People complain all the time about how awful and dreadful the winter is but it's not that bad. It's not colder than Korea in general but it can snow more than in Seoul. Get water-proof (Goretex?) shoes. People exaggerate about how terrible winter is but it's not much colder than in Korea.
- Bring your Korean driver's license because you can convert it to a Massachusetts license without having to take the tests. If you do not have one, get one before coming here. If you take the tests here, it takes up to 3 months just to get a license because DMV does not have enough examiners for road tests due to budget problems.
- Hmart is a big Korean supermarket chain but it is expensive. Buy only the essentials (such as rice) at Hmart and the other regular stuff (eggs, milk, etc.) in other supermarkets. Do make supermarket fidelity cards to get coupons.
- Korean uses 220V and America uses 110V - other than that it's ok.
- Check out the "Boston Korea" site.

Mexico

- Bring your first aid kit in Mexico! Things here are much more expensive and they don't have some stuff here. Vitacilina! They don't have it here and since we all know, it's our mother's favorite remedy.
- Food!!!! All the Mexican food you can bring (moles, chiles, rice, etc). Everything here is so expensive! And of course there are things you cannot find, so I would recommend bringing as much as you can and freeze it or keep it in your pantry (if they are cans). There is always good to have Mexican food around.
- I wish I had brought a typical Mexican blouse or dress, especially for the Fiesta Latina, but also just in general.
- It won't taste the same, and you won't find the ingredients as easy as for some other cuisine, but looking a bit (shopping in the right place, rather than in the close one), you can make a good Mexican food meal.
- Practice reading in English. Writing in English is not like writing in Spanish; conciseness and precision are much more important in English. You'll only really catch on to the nuances of proper writing style if you read a ton.
- Mexican cellphones, it turns out, are "unlockable". There is simply no way of using your Mexican phone within

Malaysia

- Do NOT be afraid to live with non-Malaysians. In fact, you should definitely do this! I would recommend finding other Fletcher students rather than finding vacancies through Craigslist or the Boston housing group on Facebook. Having Fletcher students as roommates can definitely make the transition to leaving abroad (if it's your first time) easier to handle, and you'll have at least one thing in common with your roommates! Look early, and try to find someone who is familiar with renting in the United States so they can help explain things to you if you don't understand anything.
- Bring cultural items of clothing (baju kurung - multiple options!) Spices and cooking ingredients Some cookware (cheaper to buy good quality pots and pans from home than to buy everything here) LOTS of pictures of family Other small mementos such as soft toys or cushions Favorite or helpful/relevant books A Quran Malaysian snacks and ramen brands (Maggi! Samyang!)

Nepal

- Definitely bring your traditional wear. We have Asia Night every year where you can wear it.
- Highly encourage bringing *Sancho*, Wai Wai(!), Titauro (if you like) and maybe even consider bringing some antibiotics or other medicines that you take (eg. I brought Zytee, Brucet and have used it a lot)
- I have been able to find all basic spices in the Boston area but not BMC Masala So if you are into cooking and like this particular one, would suggest bringing a big packet or a few from home.

Pakistan

- Bring a couple of traditional clothing articles - shalwar kameez - as I got a chance to wear those for cultural nights. You won't find them anywhere in Boston. Nothing specific to Pakistan unless of course there are sweets that you must insist on having. Bring teabags.
- New devices are equally compatible in both the countries but if you are using a 6-7 year old electronic, you might want to bring an adapter alongside. Also, all charge points are three pin in the States so even if the charger is compatible, do bring a "shoe" with it.
- Foodland - that's where you'll find most of the things you want from home. You get everything here, but bring some snacks/masala packets from home if you plan on cooking.
- If you want halal food its available at Davis Square or even Market Basket, Somerville.

Switzerland

- Bring yeast from Switzerland if you want to bake bread. The yeast here does not seem to work well.
- Enjoy the time as much as you can, get into Boston often, make the best out of this year which is so different than studying in Switzerland.
- Bring more chocolate! Also bring Rivella, Sugus, Ovo. But hey, there is Swissbäkers in the area :)
- The weather is as I expected it to be. Compared to the Swiss weather, I can probably say that the weather in Boston is very similar but a bit more extreme (colder in winter, hotter in summer) and more windy.

Taiwan

- Stationary and basic school supply (pens and notebooks especially) Personal medicine (Chinese medicine) For female students who use sanitation pad, I would suggest bringing some from Taiwan. If female students are used to using Asian brand for makeup, I would suggest preparing some back up make up.
- Boston is filled with students from Taiwan. If you are seeking specifically Taiwanese roommates, definitely utilize many of the Facebook groups for Taiwanese students/young professional seeking housing and roommates in Boston. There are some Facebook groups for international students as well. But always be extra careful when interacting with potential landlords/roommates on line.
- Be sure to bring your Taiwanese driver license, international driver license, and verification certificate of driver's license with you. We can now exchange Taiwanese driver license for Massachusetts' driver license directly. No need to take written nor driving test.
- The voltage difference is only 10 V (120 V in Taiwan and 110V in the States). Basically, all electronic devices brought from Taiwan can work fine in Boston.
- If you cook, some sauces or spices such as Zha Cai, sesame paste, or dou-bang paste may come in handy. Though it's generally pretty convenient to get ingredients for Asian food in Boston, some taste from home is always helpful.
- There are a number of Chinese supermarkets, a Japanese supermarket and a Korean supermarket in greater Boston area. It's usually pretty convenient.
- Use weekends to cook sauces, pastes, soups, etc that can create multiple variation and store for a longer period. That way you don't need to cook as much during busy weekdays.

Singapore

- Bring kaya, bbq pork, pork floss. Instant noodles are available here so don't bother.
- You'll need an adapter because the electrical outlets here are different from those in Singapore. But the adapters in Singapore are big, bulky ones that are troublesome to carry around. Buy them here. You should have no problem with Apple products, but for other electronic devices, it is important to note that the voltage used here is different from that used in Singapore. If you must bring electronic devices here (beyond laptops, tablets and hand phones, which are fine), you must be prepared to buy a voltage converter or your device won't work.
- Bring as much of your wardrobe as you can! I mistakenly thought there would not be much use for tropical weather clothing, but the weather here really fluctuates (and you acclimatize). Also bring stationery (especially pens) from home, the selection here is not great and expensive.

Vietnam

- Unless the student is from a textile/garment manufacturing country, it is possible to find affordable winter clothes here.
- I'd say most of the stuff I need for cooking is available especially at the Asian supermarket. Bringing food to the States is tricky because it's very likely that everything will be thrown out by the US customs.

Zimbabwe/Zambia

- Well US in general (since I've been here a while), finding any hair products and anyone to do your hair is difficult so not to fear asking any black female student what she does because that information is only available by word of mouth!
- I'd suggest rooming with Fletcher students or students in general, or join the Africans in Boston Facebook group and network and try to find someone through there. I would also slip it in pretty early on in conversation that you are African to avoid people who might waste your time but are not actually interested in an African roommate.
- A sentimental blanket and stuffed animal, nice traditional attire (chitenge/zambia), Royco/Maggi soup mixes, small but lovely (pretty Zambia/Zimbabwe specific), sadza/nshima/ugali/pap cooking stick (also East/Southern African specific specific), bar washing soap. For black women specifically: braids (LOTS of braids) and/or weaves whatever your preference, hair products in general to last the first month or so before finding places, particularly deep conditioner, hair oil/lotion/leave-in moisturizer, hair spray, A hat for the inevitable bad hair day in between finding someone to get your hair done.

Turkey

- There are several Turkish markets in the area and one can easily find almost everything. The prices in these markets are more expensive than Turkey's prices but according to here prices are normal.
- You will struggle in the first couple months to understand people and to speak fluently. Don't worry. Watch tv, it helps a lot. Don't use subtitles. Don't hesitate make mistakes. Try to find friends you can communicate only speaking English.

Still have questions – email us anytime at
fletcherstudent@tufts.edu

